

Holy Family Catholic School

Family Handbook



2011-2012

SECTION I. OUR SCHOOL

Our history

Holy Family Catholic School is the result of years of praying and hard work on behalf of families in seven Catholic parishes with no parish school. Those parishes are St. Albert the Great, St. John Vianney, St. Margaret Mary, St. Mary Our Lady of the Lake, St. Thomas More, St. Vincent de Paul, and St. William. Individuals from these parishes formed a non-profit corporation which sponsors and governs the school. Therefore, Holy Family is an incorporated school that operates fully under the auspices of the Diocese of Austin.

Our mission statement

Holy Family Catholic School is a regional school that works with parents to nurture the growth of the whole child- spiritually, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. Our school is Catholic-promoting the teaching of the Church and inclusive of diverse cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Our philosophy and goals

It is our philosophy that the Catholic faith and Gospel values are fully integrated in the learning and culture of our school.

Our goals provide clear statements of commitment in five key areas that are used to guide the development of our students, including:

Spiritual- Fostering a commitment to know, love, and serve God and one another

Intellectual- Encouraging each child to attain his or her fullest potential

Social- Guiding students to become conscientious, successful members of a global community

Emotional- Respecting and celebrating each child's individuality

Physical- Promoting a positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle

Our core values

Holy Family Catholic School holds firm to core values which define our identity and culture and are the fundamental beliefs that guide the daily life of the school.

Catholic Identity- The atmosphere at HFCS provides a sound spirituality for the students. The school provides experiences and opportunities for students to know that God is a real presence in life. Our Catholic expression is embodied in Christian living, faith symbols and sacramental participation. Worship and spirituality are the essence and moral fiber of HFCS. The Catholic identity of HFCS is not taken for granted, it is worked at, it is nourished, and it is engaged by the students, the faculty, the families, and the community.

Faith Formation- The Holy Family Catholic School community strives to foster spiritual growth by modeling the Gospel values of faith, hope, love, community, reconciliation, service, justice and courage. Daily prayer and the Good News of Jesus Christ are integrated into the total school community through education and witness.

Academic Excellence- Holy Family Catholic School is dedicated to the highest academic standards, Excellence is the norm. Teachers are expected to teach; students are expected to learn. HFCS offers students the means to receive a comprehensive, well-rounded education built on traditional foundational knowledge and skills. This education also includes training in technical and scientific skill, complex communication, collaborative processes, and the Christian ethical formation to use these tools to make a positive contribution to society.

Stewardship- The Holy Family Catholic School community promotes stewardship in our daily lives. As Jesus teaches us, HFCS promotes living Gospel values with a call to action for all students, faculty and families through the offering of time, talent and treasure to the Church and to the community. HFCS will act as responsible stewards of the gifts it has been given and will require fiscal responsibility in all its activities. HFCS must provide students, our most precious responsibility, an environment where they are protected and safe.

Living our Name- Holy Family

Holy Family Catholic School intends to live up to its name. All students, staff, parents and community members are called upon to show unity of purpose, as well as other characteristics of holy families such as respect for all things sacred, respect for all life, inclusiveness, responsibility, collaboration, and having each other's best interest at heart. We seek to establish a school climate that mirrors family life through trust, spirituality, closeness, collaboration and responsibility, where faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony (Congregation for Catholic Education, Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, n. 33).

Accreditation

Holy Family Catholic School is fully accredited through the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission, which is recognized by the Texas Education Agency. As part of this state Catholic system, we meet or exceed all applicable standards and guidelines, including following the statewide mission statement for Catholic schools printed below.

Mission statement of the Catholic Schools of Texas

The ministry of Catholic Education in general is the fulfillment of the educational mission of the Catholic Church and has as its primary goal the continuous formation of the Christian person.

As a pastoral instrument of the Church, the strength of the Catholic School is its ability to respond to the needs of the whole person, the Church in a time of transition, and the world with a global perspective for a peaceful and sustainable future.

The Catholic School is a unique environment in which pupils can experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. It's focus is on the individual person's spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical development. In the Catholic School, pupils and teachers are drawn to proclaim the Gospel message, to unite in worship, to respond to the needs of the community through fellowship and social justice, and to serve all people through the sharing of their spiritual gifts and temporal goods.

Intellectually, students are challenged to work to the best of their abilities. In a world of diversity and absolutes, students need to be freed to appreciate and understand the living organism called Earth, and the people and cultures that inhabit it, and to develop global perspectives by which to form their lives and consciences. Students are provided opportunities to develop basic academic and physical skills, pursue knowledge, and critically study and analyze the world in which they live.

The effective Catholic School must call its students to the conviction that people are more important than material gain, that justice is more important than success, that love is more important than esteem, and that collaboration unites while competition divides. The truly successful Catholic School student is not necessarily one who is successful in every endeavor, but one who accepts Christian responsibility for fulfillment of personal potential and shares these gifts with others.

How the school is governed

The Board of Directors of the North Central Catholic School Corporation is a board of limited jurisdiction in regard to planning, broad policy, finances, and development. This Board is subject to the applicable laws of the state of Texas and to the policies of the Catholic Diocese of Austin. The Board has delegated to the Office of Principal the full responsibility for the educational program and the expectations and procedures outlined in this handbook. (See "How to Solve a Problem" in Section II.)

If a problem is not resolved satisfactorily with the principal, one may request a meeting with the president of the Board of Directors.

Membership on the Board, according to the 1996 Articles of Incorporation and the by-laws, is elected by the Board and numbers between 6 and 15 persons. Most often, new members are recruited for certain skills or talents they may bring to the Board. Any person who wishes to serve on the Board may express an interest in being considered by contacting the school office.

Regular board meetings are open to any interested person. Board by-laws, policies, and minutes may be viewed in the school office during regular business hours. The Board may be contacted by a letter to the president sent in care of the school office.

How the school is financed

As a Diocesan, incorporated school serving grades pre-kindergarten through eighth within the Catholic Diocese of Austin, Holy Family is a self-funding entity. Unlike a parish school or diocesan school, our school is solely responsible for generating the necessary annual income to fund operations, enhancements, maintenance, emergency reserves, and debt service. While this income is derived mainly from tuition & fees plus the Choir of Angels appeal and annual fundraising events, the school also relies upon the voluntary contribution of our supporting parishes.

The planning and management of the school's finances are guided both by our core values and by our fiscal principles of integrity, affordability, justice, and practicality. The responsibility for the financial security and future of the school is shared by the whole school community for the benefit of the children.

Nondiscrimination

Holy Family Catholic School complies with all applicable state and federal laws regarding nondiscrimination. Our doors are open to children of all faiths.

SECTION II. PARTNERING WITH THE SCHOOL

Your relationship with the faculty and staff

The Catholic Church teaches that parents are the primary educators, and the faculty and staff at Holy Family are honored when a family entrusts a child to the program that has been designed for our school. You know your child better than anyone. At the same time, the individual and collective experience of people who work their ministry at Holy Family can offer valuable perspective on not only your child's educational development but on a wide range of other developmental issues. Don't hesitate to ask for advice!

Sometimes parents wonder what to call the teacher. At school and in front of children, parents and all school staff should address each other by their title and last name, such as "Mrs. Perez" or "Mr. Jones."

Communication from and to the school

Holy Family places a high value on keeping you informed about upcoming school events and other developments. The school will regularly communicate through school email, the school website or the Thursday e-newsletter. Occasionally, printed material will be sent home using a family folder system on Thursday.

Parent conferences will be held at the time of the first report card and again in late spring. You are free to ask for a conference at any other time, if needed. Telephone calls between teacher and parent are often the most timely way to share information, and voice mail is available. E-mail is a good tool for routine communications but should not be used for expressing concerns or complaints. We ask your understanding that supervision is our priority; therefore, arrival or dismissal time or lunch periods are generally not a good time to have such a conversation because the teacher needs to ensure the safety of the youngsters under his/her supervision.

We take pride in our intent to minister to families as well as individuals. It is a good idea to keep your child's teacher informed of important events at home and their effect on your child.

How to solve a problem

In the course of a school year, there may be a time when a parent hears or observes something related to your child's experience at school that causes concern. We encourage you to follow up on the concern by approaching the staff member in the best position to work with you on the situation. In most cases, this first contact will involve a note or a phone call to the classroom teacher or the special area teacher so that you may learn that person's professional perspective on the situation. The tone of both parties should be one of mutual respect and Christian conciliation.

If the concern persists and becomes serious, the parent may contact the principal to work toward resolution. Occasionally, it will be correct to call the principal first, in case the concern is not about a specific employee's responsibility, or if the concern is resulting from an administrative decision. Every effort will be made to provide prompt and beneficial resolution to the concern. According to diocesan policy, if the problem is not resolved satisfactorily with the principal, the parent/guardian may proceed to the second step and request a meeting with the President of the Board of Directors.

Non-custodial parents

A parent who has other than primary custody may ask for and receive a copy of the student's academic and health record. Holy Family is happy to meet this request and will provide further communication through the use of stamped, self-addressed envelopes provided by the non-custodial parent. The parent may provide, in the beginning of the year, a letter envelope for each report card; or provide a collection of weekly mailers (8 ½ x 11) to receive other school communications as well. Visiting the office in person to get the copies is also an option.

In all custody arrangements when parents are not living together, parents are expected to designate one parent as the primary school contact who will share information with the other parent.

Family Service to the Community

We encourage each family to support the school community by offering a minimum of **15 service hours** per school year. These can be completed through participation in the Parent Association service committees, as well as fundraisers and other opportunities offered by the school. To log service hours, parents must log onto ParentsWeb and click on Family Information on the navigation menu (located on the left side of the screen). Once you select which parent will be recording hours, you will click on the tab labeled "Service Hours" in the middle of the screen. You may record service hours by selecting this tab and clicking on "Add Service Hours." The identification of total service hours is required in many grant applications for the school, so please be sure to record your hours.

Blue Angels Parent Association

The Parent Association exists for the purposes of service to the school and fundraising. The Executive Committee meets monthly during the academic year, and their minutes are published on the school's website. Committee chairs carry out a variety of school community activities throughout the year for service and fundraising. Parent volunteers actively participate in school life through the many services and activities that are offered by the Parent Association. There is a 15 hour volunteer requirement per family that can be completed through participation in Parent Association activities and other school opportunities. The general assembly meets at least twice a year and elects officers in the spring. The Parent Association is not part of the governance structure of the school. *(See "Fundraising" in Section VII.)*

Use of school logo

The Holy Family Catholic School logo, in part or entirety, is the service mark of the North Austin Central Catholic School Corporation. It may be used in written or electronic correspondence, marketing, gifting, or any other purpose only with the expressed permission of the Principal or Development Director.

SECTION III. SAFETY AND HEALTH

School hours and supervision

Holy Family office hours are 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Holy Family Catholic School class hours are as follows to allow for staggered dismissals of groups of students:

PK, K, and 1st grade- 8:00 a.m.-3:05 p.m.

2nd grade- 8:00 a.m.-3:10 p.m.

3rd- 5th grades- 8:00 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

6th-8th grades- 7:50 a.m.-3:25 p.m.

On school days when a noon dismissal is scheduled, the following schedule is used:

PK, K, and 1st grade- 8:00 a.m.-11:35 a.m.

2nd-5th grades- 8:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m.

6th-8th grades- 7:50 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Supervision of early arrivals begins at 7:30 a.m. The school does not accept responsibility for supervision before that time so please do not leave students on the sidewalk before a staff member arrives. Any parent who wishes to walk his/her student to class is welcome to do so between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m.

All students who will be picked up at dismissal are escorted to the Faith sidewalk and supervised by staff. When the last car in line has driven away, remaining children will be escorted to the office. Families are encouraged to place their names on the carpool list through the admission office or consider a separate after school care program.

After-school care options

Several local licensed day care facilities provide transportation and after school care for our students. For information about their after school programs, please contact the facilities directly:

Stepping Stone III

6616 McNeil Dr.
Austin, TX 78729
(512) 258-9141
www.steppingstoneschool.com

Stepping Stone VIII

7601 O'Connor Dr.
Round Rock, TX 78681
(512) 246-8344

Stepping Stone XII

7700 W. Parmer Ln.
Austin, TX 78729
(512) 336-5237

Rainbow Station

11651 W. Parmer Ln.
Cedar Park, TX 78613
(512) 260-9700
www.rainbowstationaustin.org

Kids R Kids

15111 Avery Ranch Blvd.
Austin, TX 78717
512-218-9669
www.krkaustin.com

Children's Courtyard

12336 N. Mopac
Austin, TX 78758
512-339-0727
www.childrenscourtyard.com

Tutor Time

10321 Boulder Lane
Austin, TX 78726
(512) 249-9191

Primrose School of RR

3313 Forest Creek Dr.
Round Rock, TX 78664
(512) 828-5777

Abacus School of Austin

14115 Avery Ranch Blvd.
Austin, TX 78717
(512) 381-2200

If you would like for a licensed day care facility that is not listed above to pick up your child from our campus, please have the facility contact the office at 246-4455.

Walkers and cyclists

Parents who wish for their children to walk off the campus unsupervised or with a teen sibling must file a Walker/Biker Permission form that releases the school from any responsibility after the student leaves the immediate school area. Please note that St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School does not allow children who are not students of the high school, including younger siblings, to wait on their property without an

adult supervising them. St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church also no longer allows students to be picked up on their property.

If biking is necessary, parents should plan to bike with their students. If it is necessary for a student to bike alone, the Walker/Biker Permission form must be filed to release the school from liability. Bikers should dismount as soon as they reach the property. Walkers and bikers both should use the Neenah Avenue sidewalk across the front of the property and the main crosswalk.

The safest dismissal plan is for students to be picked up in the carpool line at dismissal. We **strongly discourage** parents from directing their children to walk to another location off campus to be picked up.

Parking and pick-up plan

In general, cars will enter at the first entrance and will loop around the back of the campus to drop off/pick up at the Faith building. In order to provide for the safety of our students and staff, we insist that drivers do not use cell phones in the car line. Signs are posted along our drive to remind parents of dismissal times and lanes, speed limits and restricted cell phone use.

To assist the teachers during dismissal, we will distribute signs during Orientation for families to display in their front passenger side window with the family name and grade level of students. Please continue this practice throughout the year; tinted car windows make it difficult for supervisors to identify drivers otherwise. We also ask that you send in a note to your child's teacher when he/she is riding home with someone different than your usual routine.

The front parking lot is available in the morning for any family that wishes to park and walk their children to class. The front parking lot is limited in the afternoon to only those families picking up PK and Kindergarten students or for families attending to business on campus.

The back parking lot behind the Charity and Grace buildings is not available for parking and walking students to class in the morning because of the amount of vehicle traffic using the drop off lanes.

The Hope parking lot can be used in the morning and afternoon for parking and walking with students only. Do not allow students to walk through this or any parking lot unaccompanied.

Please note: The circle between Holy Family and St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School is designated for emergency vehicles only. Please do not use this area at any time for parking.

Ethics and Integrity in Ministry

It is diocesan policy that anyone who serves in ministry to minors or vulnerable adults must have completed a criminal records check and attended an Ethics and Integrity Workshop Protecting God's Children workshop. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops maintains auditing processes for all dioceses in the country to monitor our efforts to comply with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

The directive from the policies of the Diocese mentions many categories of volunteers affected by the policy, including youth ministry volunteers, classroom volunteers, leaders and volunteers of Catholic boy and girl scout troops, anyone serving in a program for minors that is hosted on school property, anyone transporting minors in vehicles, and anyone who fills a one-time need in ministry to minors or vulnerable adults.

At Holy Family, all persons who volunteer at school in any capacity must first complete the on-line application and attend the three-hour workshop. **The workshop must be retaken every three years**, but the application process is completed only one time. **If you have taken the workshop previously, you may sign up for a renewal workshop if available.** Please turn in a copy of your certificate to the school office for record keeping. The listing of dates and locations may be found at www.austindiocese.org.

Non-staff adults who have documented completion of the process will be issued a badge upon request from the school office, which must be worn at all times when helping on campus or on school related trips. We encourage all adults in the school community to complete this process as promptly as possible in order to participate fully in the life of the school and to be prepared to help with needs we have for volunteers. The Diocese of Austin is placing more stringent rules and will not be making any exceptions for EIM certification. The classes are being offered in limited capacity, so please be sure and sign up as soon as possible.

Called to Protect

Called to Protect for Children is the safety education piece of our diocesan Ethics and Integrity in Ministry program designed specifically for elementary grade students K-5. CTPC focuses on understanding rules, appropriate touch, boundaries, how to respond to uncomfortable situations and introduces technology safety. CTPC sequentially builds on developmentally appropriate topics each year from Kindergarten through 5th grade. It has been approved by the Catholic Church and promotes our teachings regarding respect for all human life. Teachers facilitate these simple lesson plans with their students. Called to Protect for Youth is the companion piece of CTPC and is designed for grades 6 and 9. A Diocesan trained facilitator and two Holy Family teachers conduct three lessons for our sixth graders in the spring of each year. Parents will receive notification letters each year and be given the option to remove their child from these presentations.

How to report an incident of concern

The Diocese of Austin, the Catholic Church of Central Texas, is committed to preventing harm from happening to any of our children or vulnerable adults. If you are aware of sexual abuse and/or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult by a volunteer, employee or clergy member, our Ethics and Integrity in Ministry policies require that you report that information to the diocesan chancellor by calling (512) 476-4888. A Notice of Concern form can also be used and is available on our diocesan website, www.austindiocese.org (click on the link "To report abuse"). These reports may be made anonymously. It is also state law that abuse and/or neglect of a minor must be reported to local law enforcement or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400.

Safety precautions

To keep our students and staff safe and to prevent interruptions to the instructional program and good supervision, no visitor on campus is permitted to proceed directly to a classroom, the office or library for any reason, including scheduled appointments. All visitors must come to the school office to be helped. If the visit involves a message or a delivery to a student (such as a forgotten lunch), the office staff will take care of the delivery at a suitable time.

All persons driving on school outings or providing any transportation for Holy Family students must provide proof of insurance and a valid driver's license. Transportation of students as part of official school activities must comply with seatbelt laws.

Because we take seriously the safety and health of all persons on our campus, the following prohibitions are enforced:

- (1) Holy Family is a non-smoking campus, both indoors and outdoors.
- (2) Adults and students may not share restrooms. Public restrooms are available at the west end of the Charity building.
- (3) Children not enrolled in the school may not accompany a chaperone at a school event.
- (4) Children under grade 6 may not be left unattended in a vehicle on the campus unless the driver is maintaining constant visual contact with the child.
- (5) Parents on campus for a meeting or for volunteering in areas such as sports or liturgy set-up must keep their children under supervision, under grade 6.

Safety drills and procedures

Students are taught early in the year what to do in the case of an adult or classmate getting hurt, unsafe behavior by a classmate, or a stranger on campus.

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Tornado drills are conducted at least twice yearly, in October and March. The procedures for these drills were designed from Travis County Schools Safety Consortium recommendations.

The school maintains and routinely updates a comprehensive emergency management plan to respond to any emergency which brings normal operations to a halt.

Evacuation

In some circumstances, it may be necessary to evacuate all or part of the school. The level of the crisis and emergency personnel involved will determine the evacuation process. If emergency services (police, fire, EMS, etc.) are called to the scene, they will decide the level of evacuation needed. Their main concern will be to contain the emergency; if necessary, they will evacuate students and personnel to the closest safe area available. School officials' responsibility will be to cooperate with these authorities.

Once the situation is under control, it may be necessary to have secondary locations to regroup. Parents will be notified of the locations to be used, which will depend on the type of emergency and the level of evacuation.

In the case of evacuation, a student will be released to his/her parent or the individual named as the alternate emergency contact on the Emergency Care Card on file in the office, but to no one else. If unplanned early release for reasons other than weather occurs, you will be notified. (See "Bad weather closings" below.)

Bad weather closings

In accordance with Diocesan policy, our school will follow the bad weather school closing or bad weather early-release decisions of the public school district where our school is located, Round Rock ISD. To learn the latest school-closing information, tune to a local television station, radio station, or the Round Rock ISD website- www.roundrockisd.org. It is not necessary to call the school to confirm this information; we request that our telephone lines not be tied up this way when it is important for us to attend to unusual conditions.

If unfavorable weather develops during the school day but not so bad as to cause the school to close, we discourage picking up your children early. The staff at Holy Family are committed to the students' safety, and we would prefer to be able to direct our attention to that end, as well as continuing instruction.

If severe weather prevents students from waiting outside at dismissal safely, then students will be held in their classrooms until the weather improves. In this event, parents are welcome to park in a designated parking space and pick-up their children from the classroom.

Health care at school

Holy Family does not maintain a health clinic at this time. We will provide basic required school health services as described below, and we will ensure that at least one staff member is trained and certified in First Aid and CPR.

Emergency contact and medical information is kept on file for every child enrolled in the school. It is essential that parents keep this information updated on ParentsWeb so that we may reach you right away in the event of an emergency. When an ambulance is needed, EMS officials will decide the hospital where a child will be taken to best meet the need. The school cannot override this decision.

Medication at school

School office personnel may give medication – including over-the-counter medication -- only when it is prescribed by a physician, is kept in the original prescription container, carries a prescription label that states the administration schedule, and comes with a completed medication form found at the back of this handbook. Medicine may not be given on an "as-needed" basis except in rare emergencies. Students may not carry medication, prescription or over-the-counter, on their person or in their belongings since the

medication cannot be secured to prevent accidents. This includes creams, ointments and inhalers. All medication must be given to the office.

When to stay home for illness

Coming to school every day and being on time are very important routines that support a successful experience at Holy Family. However, when illness occurs, students should be kept home to avoid contagion and to rest. A student should be free of fever (without fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours before returning to school. Vomiting or diarrhea are also reasons to stay home, as well as contagious or spreadable illnesses such as chicken pox, conjunctivitis (pink-eye), strep throat, pediculosis (head lice), ringworm. (See *"When a child is absent" in Section IV.*)

Communicable diseases

In order to avoid contamination, children are taught to handle their own biohazards, e.g. blow their own noses and handle their own tissue, to the best of the child's ability. To meet health standards called "universal precautions", staff will wear rubber gloves when they may be coming into contact with a child's body fluids.

If your child gets a serious disease or condition that could have already spread to other children, it is important to notify the school office right away. (See *"When a student is absent" in Section IV.*)

Immunizations and health screenings

Students must be up to date on required immunizations and must provide written proof to the school. If someone from school contacts you about a needed immunization, it is important to follow up right away. Please note that although conscientious objections and waivers may be accepted in some schools, they are not acceptable for the use within schools of the Diocese of Austin.

The law gives the school the job of screening students in certain grades to find problems with vision, hearing, the formation of the spine, and signs of Type 2 diabetes. These screenings are conducted by persons who are certified to do so. You will be contacted about required follow-up if a concern is found.

The school may also choose to screen for pediculosis (head lice). Here again, it is very important that you follow required procedures all the way through and provide follow-up proof to the school.

Use of school grounds

Only persons and activities with permission from the school office may be on the school grounds at any time. Persons waiting on the campus for certain activities must follow all safety rules. (See *"Safety Precautions" in Section III.*)

Lunch procedures

Students at Holy Family usually eat lunch in their classrooms. Classes may also alternate the use of outdoor tables when weather permits. Students need to bring their own lunch (unless participating in a purchase program at school) as well as all utensils needed.

We are unable to warm, cook or refrigerate lunch items for the students. Milk may be purchased by the semester, for cold daily delivery. A lunch purchase program is available Mondays through Thursdays. Refunds are not available for absent days.

Students pray and wash hands before lunch. Each teacher will establish standards for table manners, cleanliness of the environment and appropriate lunchtime behavior.

We suggest lunches be simple and nutritious in nature so that your child can enjoy and manage them as independently as possible. In order that your child's mealtime be as safe and pleasant as possible, the following are not allowed:

- Glass containers of any type
- Soft drinks

- Food or drink with red or purple dye
- Sharing or selling lunch items of any type
- Delivery of a forgotten lunch to the classroom by a parent. (Bring the lunch to the office.)

Parents may wish to enjoy lunch with their students. In order to make the transition to school smoother for your child, we ask that you wait until October 1. An exception will be made if you would like to enjoy lunch with your PreK, Kindergarten or 1st grade student who is celebrating a birthday in late August or September. Teachers should be notified 24 hours in advance for space and scheduling considerations.

Snacks and treats

Teachers in PreK and Kindergarten coordinate parent donations of nutritious daily snacks. Students in 1st grade bring their own nutritious snack each day. Milk for students in PreK-1st grade may be purchased by the semester for snack, as is done for lunch.

Parents who wish to send a snack to the homeroom to share in honor of a student's birthday are welcome to do so, by notifying the teacher ahead of time and by choosing a nutritious and non-allergy item from the list below. Please be especially careful of food items that contain peanuts since they are a common food allergy in our community. Parents of students with summer birthdays are invited to select a school day for this observance.

Recommended treats include

1. Decorated cookies (single large or several small)
2. Muffins or cupcakes
3. Rice Krispie treats

Parents are asked not to send any type of snack or birthday treat that requires utensils, such as cakes or any other item that takes preparation on the part of the teacher. Only snacks are permitted (no lunches). Please do not send balloons or flowers as they create a distraction to the instructional day. (*Please refer to "Regulations" regarding party invitations in Section V.*)

SECTION IV. ATTENDANCE AND ADMISSIONS

Requirements

Coming to school every day and being on time have a very high priority at Holy Family. Our plan is to make every moment part of the learning and community-building experience, and it hurts a student to miss out. Appointments such as doctor and dental visits should be scheduled outside school hours whenever possible. Family vacations on school time, including leaving early for holidays, are discouraged. More than 10 absences in a school year for any reason is considered too many. More than 15 absences for any reason will result in failing the class/course for the year. Middle-school teachers monitor absences class period by class period. In some cases, an appeal may be granted.

Tardies, even though they may not be the student's fault, can eventually cause a problem with the student being allowed to remain at Holy Family because of the interference it poses for the student's adjustment and welfare, and the disruption that results when a student arrives late. For every 8 tardies, an absence is recorded.

According to diocesan policy, to be counted present, a student must be in attendance at school for a minimum of four hours of the instructional day. Recess, lunch and rest time are not counted in the four hours.

When a child is absent

It is not necessary to call the school office to report an absence, unless you are reporting an illness that the school needs to know about. (See *"When to stay home for illness"* and *"Communicable diseases"* in Section III.) When the child returns, s/he must give the homeroom teacher a signed, dated note from the parent with the reason for the absence.

Obtaining make-up work

If a student has a one-day absence, s/he should take the day to rest and recover. In the case of two days of absence in a row, a parent may call the school office by 9:00 a.m. on the second day to ask for assignments and books to be left in the school office for pick-up after school. All work may be made up from absences. However, the teacher is not required to provide the work in advance. Make-up work is to be completed in one day for each day absent.

When a child needs to leave early

If you know in advance that a student must leave early, for example, for a dentist appointment that could not be scheduled outside school hours, you may send a signed, dated note to the teacher on the day of the appointment. Please come to the office early enough to sign out and pick up your child. Please try to avoid picking up your child from the office between 3:00 p.m. and dismissal time because of the increase in traffic. We recommend that if appointments must be scheduled during the school day, that they are scheduled during Physical education or elective classes. Class schedules are available on ParentsWeb.

If the need arises during the same day to pick up your child early, please call the office in advance. To avoid disruption, parents may not go to the classroom for the child. If the child returns during the day, s/he should come to the office to check back in, and then school staff will escort the student to class. If the student has been in class for any part of the day, it is not necessary to provide a note the following day when the student returns.

Tardies

As exterior doors of the buildings will be locked shortly after 8:00 a.m., the parent is to accompany the student to the office and complete a tardy form with the reason for the tardy. An office staff member will escort the student to class.

If you know in advance that an event such as a doctor's appointment will cause your child to arrive late, the teacher would appreciate a note on the previous day. Upon arrival, the parent is to accompany the student to the office and complete a tardy form with the reason for the tardy or with an excuse from the doctor or official with whom the appointment was held. Please note that middle school students are

counted absent for any class period that is entirely missed, including first period. **For every 8 tardies, an absence is recorded for all students.** Students are counted tardy if they are not in the classroom by the start of class.

Admissions procedures for new students

Holy Family has a relationship with certain supporting Catholic parishes that includes special consideration in the admissions process. New students who have met the admissions requirements (age, ability to succeed academically, and behavioral acceptability) may be accepted into the school in the following order:

- Sibling relationship with a continuing student
- Participating parishioner in one of our 7 parishes
- Additional Catholic students
- Non-Catholic students

School parents and the community at large will be notified in a timely way about the deadlines, requirements and fees for new admissions. Re-registration is usually in January.

Membership in the supporting parishes

For purposes of admissions and tuition rate, membership in the supporting parishes means that the family has satisfied their respective pastor's definition of a participating parishioner. Different pastors use different criteria.

Inquiries/Application process

A parent may submit an inquiry form for a new student up to 20 months in advance of the time the student would enter the school for the first time. The school will maintain contact through additional mailings of information, timeline, requirements and application form. The admission cycle begins in the fall preceding the year of enrollment. Families should watch the school website for information regarding Parent Information Sessions. The inquiry form can be found online in the Admissions section.

Continuing students

Students continuing from one year to the next do not have to re-apply for admission. The re-registration procedure includes completing a simple document online, paying the annual fee, arranging the preferred method of paying tuition, and the office verifying the family's parishioner status.

Teacher/class requests

Sometimes at re-registration a parent may have a belief that a certain type of teacher will best serve the child in the coming year. The administration respectfully declines to accept requests for specific teachers because such requests are often based on limited information or information taken out of context. In preparing classroom assignments, the administration and faculty do consider classroom balance and individual student needs.

SECTION V. SCHOOL CLIMATE

Holy Family Catholic School intends to live up to its name. All students, staff, parents and community members are called upon to show unity of purpose, as well as other characteristics of holy families such as respect for all things sacred, respect for all life, inclusiveness, responsibility, collaboration, and having each other's best interests at heart.

Holy Family Catholic School seeks to establish a school climate that mirrors family life through trust, spirituality, closeness, collaboration and responsibility, where *faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony* (Congregation for Catholic Education, *Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, n. 33.).

Standards of behavior for students

We want each student to develop into a responsible Christian adult, based upon free will and conscience. Class and school policies are designed to offer increasing expectation of self-discipline as the child matures. The purpose of discipline is to enable students to move from externally imposed discipline to self-discipline, which is an indication that one is capable of accepting responsibilities and privileges.

All students, at their appropriate developmental level, should

- Be polite and kind to others, both adults and students, in speech, action and manner
- Display respect and prayerful participation during worship times
- Work in cooperation with others
- Obey all school and classroom rules and procedures
- Respect school and personal property
- Properly greet adults and use mannered language ("please", "thank you", "yes, ma'am", "no, sir")
- Include and help others whenever possible
- Be prepared for class with materials and assignments
- Work conscientiously and use time wisely
- Display good grooming
- Observe quiet when they should

Standards of behavior for adults

Staff, parents and other members of the school community are called upon to model similar good standards of behavior as well. Adults in the Catholic community should be good listeners, remain mutually supportive and inclusive of one another, maintain appropriate confidentiality, and handle disagreements in a spirit of conciliation.

Volunteers on the campus are especially reminded to keep conversation positive and limited to appropriate topics.

A climate of inclusiveness

Most of the offenses listed below under "regulations" will rarely occur in our school. They are listed here for the purpose of outlining examples of unacceptable behavior. However, a special word is needed about the goal of inclusiveness, since this principle is frequently violated among children and in schools. Students of all ages will be taught that name-calling, bullying, ridiculing, teasing, and excluding have no place at school and are not only unnecessary, but also intolerable. Parents are encouraged to reinforce these ideas at home.

Bully Free Classrooms

Holy Family has adopted the practices of The Bully Free Classroom, which was developed by Dr. Allan Beane. This program defines bullying as: *a form of overt and aggressive behavior that is intentional, hurtful, and repeated. With bullying, there is an imbalance of strength: bullied children are taunted, harassed, rejected, and assaulted by one or more individuals. A bully's goal is to have power over people.*

Examples of bullying include: Relational (intimidation, coercion, spreading rumors or lies, and exclusion), Verbal (name-calling, teasing, threats, and racist, sexist or bigoted remarks), Physical (pushing, shoving, tripping, hitting, slapping, kicking and pinching)

According to The Diocese of Austin policy #321, “bullying” means:

- An expression of any kind, whether written, oral, or physical conduct, that is determined to have the effect of physically harming another, damaging another’s property, or placing another in reasonable fear of harm to another’s person or property; or
- Any conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for another; or
- Any conduct that is designed or likely to result in causing physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another.

In addition, the policy also states that “Students or faculty/staff are to report all allegations or believed cases of bullying, of any kind, to the Principal. All allegations will be promptly investigated. Persons who allege bullying by others should, to the extent possible, maintain evidence of the alleged bullying (for example, copies of cyber-bullying statements or other evidence of other types of bullying). The proper disciplinary action against any person found to be in violation of this policy will be determined by the Principal.”

Holy Family is committed to helping students learn proper ways to interact with others. Our classrooms will include strategies and consequences designed to discourage bullying behaviors.

Behavior Guidelines

Holy Family is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment that promotes the sound development of our students. For this reason, appropriate student behavior is of utmost importance. A range of consequences and disciplinary actions will be used in response to behavior problems, including but not limited to:

- Disrespectful word or action toward an adult
- Fighting or physically harming another
- Bullying behavior such as the verbal, relational and physical behaviors listed in the section above
- Any kind of threat or harassment
- Defacing property
- Misbehavior during worship, emergency drills, field trips or other situations that call for a greater sense of cooperation
- Leaving the campus without permission or failing to go where directed
- Dishonesty, including cheating or stealing
- Disruptive behavior in a classroom, activities, or on school property
- Use of obscenity or profanity in any form
- Bringing illegal or dangerous items to school, or being in possession of such items
These items include weapons; drug-related products including alcohol and tobacco; other dangerous objects, such as matches; items associated with gangs; or any replica of these items.
- Any repeated behavior which places repeated demands of supervision on the staff
- Any behavior at school, a school event, or away from school (outside school supervision) that is contrary to the mission and dignity of the school, including electronic communication
- **Toys, stuffed animals, sports equipment, radios, tape recorders, electronic games, beepers, lasers or any replica of any of these items are not to be brought to school. They will be taken up and held for the parents. Unclaimed items will be given to charity.
- Cameras and other electronic devices are not permitted on campus by students at any time. They will be taken up and held for parents. Special note: Cell phones may be brought to school under the following circumstances:
 - Phones must be kept in the OFF position between 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. and during any after school activity in which the student is participating.
 - No cell phones may be used for picture taking.

- Cell phones may not be used for game playing, internet or email access or making purchases of any kind.
- Students who violate any of the rules regarding cell phones may forfeit their privileges of bringing them to school.
- Rolling backpacks are not permitted for students in grades PK-1. These young students are not able to maneuver rolling backpacks well enough to avoid creating safety hazards.
- Gum is not permitted on the campus.
- Selling items on campus which are not part of a Holy Family fundraiser is not allowed.
- The distribution of party invitations of any kind on the campus is not allowed, except for school-sponsored events.

****Special note:** Students in PreK and Kindergarten may bring nap items, such as a small stuffed animal, blanket and/or travel pillow. These items should all be small enough to fit inside the backpack.

Acceptable use policy

All parents will be asked to sign that they agree to uphold the acceptable use policy for technology at school, in school-related activities, and away from school. Students in grades 2 and above will be asked to sign as well. (See “Technology” in Section VI.)

Academic Integrity

In keeping with the mission of our school, students are expected to participate in the learning process through earnest participation and preparation, honesty and personal responsibility. Students should be respectful of their peers, the faculty and the school by being trustworthy. These essential values should influence student behavior as they experience opportunities for cheating and plagiarism. Essentially, each student should do their own work and credit sources properly. Any violation of cheating or plagiarism will result in disciplinary action and/or loss of credit.

Discipline procedures

As a Catholic school, we recognize the importance of creating a supportive environment, that values the uniqueness of each child, family, faculty and staff member. To accomplish this, the staff seeks to clearly define expectations, communicate effectively with all involved and consistently implement discipline strategies.

Each teacher writes a grading plan and a classroom management plan broadly based on the principles discussed in this handbook. Teachers will instruct students, according to their developmental level, in information regarding grading procedures and expected student behavior. Some teachers may ask students and/or parents to sign a document indicating they have been told about the classroom rules.

When there is a problem, the teacher tries to handle discipline within the classroom through verbal correction, redirection, counseling, and natural and logical consequences. When informal strategies are unsuccessful, the teacher may use several more formal methods, which may include staying after school. The middle school has a separate demerit program. If behavior problems persist, teachers will refer and/or consult with the Assistant Principal and/or Principal.

At this point, strategies such as a required parent conference, in-school suspension, assignment of school service, out-of-school suspension, probationary periods, assessment recommendations, scheduling a discipline review board, and expulsion.

Suspension and expulsion

When disciplinary measures have failed to bring about desirable behavior, or when the offense is extremely serious, a temporary suspension or permanent expulsion may result.

The student may be suspended for up to three days or expelled. A reasonable attempt will be made to hold a conference prior to a suspension; the student may not return to school without a conference at that time. The student may complete make-up work for partial credit.

The expulsion of a student is a last resort. Expulsion is for the remainder of the year. Readmission for the following year is unlikely.

Enrollment continuation

According to the Handbook of School Policies for the Diocese of Austin: "Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right. The Principal can, at any time, withdraw any student when such is in the best interest of the local school and/or the student."

Appeals

The principal has the right to waive any or all disciplinary rules or procedures at the principal's discretion. The principal is the final authority on disciplinary matters and actions with the exception of expulsion. An expulsion may be appealed to the president of the Board in writing, care of the school office.

Search and seizure

Lockers, desks, and other storage spaces are school property. The school reserves the right to search anything brought on to school property at any time. The school may confiscate any articles seen as outside good judgment, including those items which violate uniform rules.

School outings

School outings are a privilege, not a right. Only students who act responsibly will be permitted to go on school outings.

School uniforms

The school uniform symbolizes and reminds students of solidarity and unity of purpose. It is to be worn as intended, that is, simply, without adornment, and without faddish adaptation. The uniform focuses members of the school community away from students' outward appearances and, instead, toward the individuality within each person: what they do, what they say and the radiance of their fresh young faces.

School Uniforms – Holy Family Catholic School 2011-2012

Risse Brothers serves as our uniform store and sells our required uniform elements and other accessories. The store is located at 7301 Burnet Road, Suite 106, Austin, 78757. Their phone number is (512) 454-3900. We recommend that you call before you make the trip to ensure that store hours and days of operation have not changed. The company website is www.rissebrothers.com. Our school code for website orders is HO1504.

The “required” uniform elements are ones that must be worn on Mass days, group and individual picture days, and other specified days. These items must be purchased at Risse Brothers. Items listed as optional may be worn on other days. The following details are provided for the fully adopted Risse Brothers uniforms and their proper guidelines:

Girls Uniform- PreK - 4th Grade

Required

Plaid jumper

White puff sleeve blouse with navy piping (or long sleeve blouse with piping)

Saddle Up shoes in navy and white or White New Balance athletic shoes (Velcro shoes for PK-K)

White or navy knee high socks or white crew socks (crew socks are several inches above ankle)

Optional

Navy pants with white or light blue logoed knit shirt or puff sleeve blouse (short or long sleeve)

Uniform belts if pants have loops (black solid leather or braided style)

Plaid skort with logoed pique shirt or puff sleeve blouse (short or long sleeve)

Logoed navy fleece jacket (can be worn anytime)

Logoed ash sweatshirts (can be worn anytime)

Logoed navy cardigan sweaters (can be worn anytime)

Logoed Nylon Navy Jacket (can be worn to and from school, outside of class only)

White or navy tights for cold weather

- For P.E. classes, PreK, K and 1st grade students may not change shoes. Students in grades 2-4 may wear the New Balance athletic shoe, the Saddle Up shoe (girls grades 1-4), or bring an athletic shoe to change into for additional support.

Girls Uniform- Grades 5-8

Required

Plaid Kickpleat Front and Back Skirt

Light blue Oxford shirt (no tuck and tuck in style, short or long sleeve)

Saddle Oxford Shoes – navy and white or white New Balance athletic shoes

White or navy knee high socks or white crew socks (crew socks are several inches above ankle)

Optional

Khaki skort worn with logoed white or navy pique shirt, either style blue oxford blouse

Khaki pants, with logoed white or navy pique shirt or either style blue oxford blouse

Uniform belt if pants have loops (black, solid leather or braided style)

Logoed navy fleece jacket (can be worn anytime)

Logoed navy sweatshirts (can be worn anytime)

Logoed pull over or navy cardigan sweaters (can be worn anytime)

Logoed Nylon Navy Jacket (can be worn to and from school, outside of class only)

White or navy tights for cold weather

- For P.E. classes, girls in grades 5-8 may wear the New Balance athletic shoe or bring an athletic shoe to change into for additional support.

Boys Uniform - PreK- 4th Grade

Required

Youth Pull On Trousers (PreK required, K optional) or Boys Flat Front Pants

Uniform belt if pants have loops (black solid leather or braided style)

White oxford shirt (short or long sleeve)

Black New Balance shoes, Velcro required for PK-K

Black, brown, navy or white crew socks (crew sock are several inches above ankle)

Optional

Youth Pull On or Boys Flat Front Shorts, worn with white or light blue logoed pique shirt or white oxford

Black, brown, navy or white crew socks can be worn with shorts

Logoed navy fleece jacket (can be worn anytime)

Logoed ash sweatshirt (can be worn anytime)

Logoed navy pull over or cardigan sweater (can be worn anytime)

Logoed nylon navy jacket (can be worn to and from school, outside of class only)

- For P.E. classes, PreK, K and 1st grade students may not change shoes. Students in grades 2-4 may wear the black New Balance athletic shoe or bring an athletic shoe to change into for additional support.

Boy's Uniform – Grades 5-8

Required

Khaki flat front trouser

Uniform belt (black solid leather or braided style)

Light blue oxford (short or long sleeve)

Black New Balance shoes or black dress shoe

Black, brown, navy or white crew socks (crew socks are several inches above ankle)

Optional

Khaki flat front shorts worn with logoed white or navy pique shirt or light blue oxford (long or short sleeve)

Black, brown, navy or white crew socks can be worn with shorts

Logoed navy fleece jacket (can be worn anytime)

Logoed navy sweatshirts (can be worn anytime)

Logoed navy pull over or cardigan sweaters (can be worn anytime)

Logoed Nylon Navy Jacket (can be worn to and from school, outside of class only)

- For P.E. classes, boys in grades 5-8 may wear the black New Balance athletic shoe or bring an athletic shoe to change into for additional support.

Other Options

- Girls' hair is to be worn in a non-distracting style in the natural color. Also, girls may wear hair accessories purchased from Risse Brothers in the school plaid or coordinated dark colors; or small hair accessories bought elsewhere in navy, black, gold, silver, brown, or clear.

- Boys' hair should not exceed the top of the eyebrow in front, mid ear or the top of the uniform shirt collar. Boys should be clean shaven, with no facial hair.

- A t-shirt worn under a shirt may not show at the collar or sleeve.

- Shirts must be tucked in throughout the day unless the no-tuck oxford is being worn.

- No other accessories, jewelry, body piercing, temporary or permanent tattoos, make-up, nail polish or other distracting items may be worn. These items, plus items such as hair preparations and cologne, are not to be brought to school. The following exceptions apply:

- One pierced earring per ear may be worn if it is a small gold or silver ball within the scope of the earlobe. Hoop earrings of any size are not included in the uniform.

- Eighth grade girls may wear modest amounts of powder, concealer, clear lip gloss and mascara.
- A wristwatch without a calculator may be worn.
- Scapulars and religious medals worn inside the blouse or shirt are permissible

SECTION VI. ACADEMICS/ SCHOOL PROGRAM

The curricular program

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten at Holy Family are developmental programs that offer the student a gateway to a multi-year program of educational experience. They take into consideration the emotional, physical, social, spiritual, and intellectual development of 4- and 5-year-old children, exposing them to a wide variety of curricular elements at an age-appropriate level. These programs are substantially different from nursery school.

Students in grades 1-5 will study, according to minimum daily time requirements,

- religion
- language arts (includes reading, literature, vocabulary, English grammar and composition, spelling, handwriting, speaking, listening)
- mathematics and, according to minimum weekly time requirements,
- social studies (includes elements of history; geography; economics; government; citizenship; culture; science, technology, and society; and social studies skills)
- science
- physical education
- health
- fine arts (art, music, theater arts)

An appropriate curriculum or set of concepts will also be taught for Spanish, for guidance and for technology. Students will be assigned to a homeroom teacher each year and will have other elective and core teachers assigned as students progress in grade levels.

Students in grades 6-8 will study a year each of religion, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and Spanish, plus a half-year credit each of physical education and fine arts or other elective.

The religion program

Holy Mass and worship activities

Our most important activity of the week is participation in the Holy Mass. Students in grades 1 and above attend Mass weekly, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten less often. Parents and guests are always welcome. Mass begins promptly at 8:00, and it is important for students to be on time, just as any other day. Students who have to bring backpacks to the gym in order to be on time are to follow procedures for placing them out of the way.

While our aim in worship activities is joyful praise, the school staff also seeks to ensure the highest standards of respectfulness at these times. We transform the gymnasium into sacred space by the physical arrangements but also by our own behavior. Students enter the space in silence and in prayerful preparation for the celebration and participate with disciplined reverence. Parents and guests in attendance are asked to model this same disciplined reverence by maintaining quiet before, during, and after Mass.

Other examples of how we recognize the special atmosphere of these activities:

- Because student contributions to Mass or a prayer service are acts of worship, we do not applaud them.
- No video or still pictures may be taken during these celebrations.
- Guests needing a restroom exit the back of the gym and travel outside to the east end of the Faith building, rather than distracting students by circling the inside perimeter of the gym. The restrooms inside the gym are for students only.

Sacraments

The religion curriculum includes knowledge and application of concepts regarding the sacraments of the Catholic Church. However, only a parish has jurisdiction to oversee and provide specific preparation for first reception of the sacraments, such as First Holy Communion and First Reconciliation. Therefore, children preparing for these sacraments will need to participate in their home parish programs designed for this purpose. The school has offered to help each parish religious education coordinator to provide timely information regarding home parish dates and rules.

At Mass, students who have not made their First Communion and non-Catholic students will have the opportunity to approach the altar with their class. These students may cross their arms across their shoulders and receive a blessing from the priest.

Service activities

Service in charity is an important part of the religion program and the overall school experience. The priorities for these activities at Holy Family include: (1) school wide activities that support the needy in the Austin area 2) class/grade level activities that support areas of focus or study; and (3) the staff's personal involvement in specific activities to support families in crisis within our school community.

In addition to these school wide service activities, the eighth grade students will participate in service projects in the community that highlight the social justice component of the religion curriculum. The Legacy of Giving program will help students to grow in their understanding of the need to support others through a more comprehensive service learning experience.

Report cards/Progress reports

Teachers monitor student progress in many ways, including direct observation, teacher-made tests, published tests, performance assessment, and so on. Each nine weeks, marks are determined for each subject area for the report card to be issued to students and parents. For the first report card of the year, a brief parent conference is held to discuss strengths, areas of improvement, and the student's overall adjustment. Progress reports are sent approximately during the sixth week of the quarter if the student's progress needs attention. Progress report dates are listed on the school's main calendar. Parents are encouraged to visit RenWeb frequently to see their child's academic progress. Another parent conference is held in the late spring. (See "Testing Program" below.)

Grading scale

In grade levels and courses where letter and/or number grades are used, the following grading scale conversion will apply:

A = 93-100 B = 83-92 C = 70-82 Failing mark = 69 and below

Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's progress on RenWeb for those students receiving numerical grades in grades 2-8. They are encouraged to sign up for e-mail notifications for grades that drop below 70.

Promotion requirements

Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, as developmental programs, recognize that students make progress at different rates. Promotion is based on a holistic picture of the student's readiness for the expectations of the next level. Students are assessed on a list of skills as to their level of mastery, which provides information for student progress.

All students applying for Kindergarten must participate in readiness screening through the school. There will be a small fee for the assessment, which will be conducted during the school day by a trained evaluator. The results will be made available to the family and school and will be used to make developmentally appropriate placement decisions.

To be promoted in Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten, a student shall attain for the year an overall average of Satisfactory or above in the areas of: Social/Emotional Development/Work Habits, Language Arts, Math, Social Studies/Science/Health and Religion. In addition, students must meet the attendance requirements for promotion.

Grade 1: A student shall attain an overall average of Satisfactory or above in the areas of: Language Arts, Reading, Social Studies, Math, Science and Religion. In addition, students must meet the attendance requirements for promotion, which is noted below.

Grading Scale for PK, K and 1st grades

- O- Outstanding
- S- Satisfactory
- N- Needs Improvement
- U- Unsatisfactory

Grades 2-5: To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain for the year an overall average of 70 or above which is derived by averaging the final numerical grade for language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and religion. In addition, a student shall attain an average of 70 or above in language arts and in mathematics. In addition, students must meet the attendance requirements for promotion, which is noted below.

Grading Scale	Personal/Social Development
A= 93-100	O- Outstanding
B= 83-92	S- Satisfactory
C= 70-82	N- Needs Improvement
F= 69- Below	U- Unsatisfactory

Grades 6-8: To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain an overall average of 70 or above for the year in all courses taken. In addition, a student shall attain an average of 70 or above in four of the following subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and religion. In addition, students must meet the attendance requirements for promotion, which is noted below.

Grading Scale	Personal/Social Development
A= 93-100	O- Outstanding
B= 83-92	S- Satisfactory
C= 70-82	N- Needs Improvement
F= 69- Below	U- Unsatisfactory

Attendance Requirements for promotion

More than 15 absences for any reason at any grade level will result in failing the class/course for the year. Middle-school teachers monitor absences class period by class period. In some cases, an appeal may be granted.

Learning Differences

Holy Family currently serves a wide range of academic abilities within its student population. While all enrolled must be able to meet at least the minimum requirements for promotion, many students with special needs are served at Holy Family. The ability of special needs students to be academically successful at Holy Family depends on the degree of the disability, the age of identification, the remediation efforts by the family and the degree of academic success each year. Holy Family's goal is to recognize possible symptoms and refer students for evaluation as early as possible. Private tutoring or therapy may be recommended. Early identification often enables remediation to be completed by the early elementary years when formation is so important.

Generally, the first contact for parents with concerns about their child's learning is the teacher. Early conferences will help to understand the different symptoms being recognized, and determine what course of action might be considered.

Those students who have had an evaluation completed that resulted in a diagnosis are eligible for some accommodations during the school day at Holy Family. While the school might not be able to provide some services that are recommended, many times the school can accommodate the student. After a student is evaluated, the documentation should be submitted to the school, so that our own accommodation sheet can be created and submitted to faculty.

While it is hoped that many students can be accommodated, it occasionally happens that the needs of the student cannot be met by the school. In this case, the Principal will require an alternative school placement.

Classroom enrichment & remediation in grades 1-8

The early childhood years of PreK, Kindergarten and first grade provide an opportunity for the child to grow socially, emotionally and academically. This is the time that a strong foundation is formed and there is broad learning in many new areas. Children begin to develop skills in language, reading, phonics, and mathematics, and while there are developmental milestones, each student progresses at their own individual rate. Teachers at these grade levels will have some benchmark goals for learning that they will share with parents throughout the year. It is important that families support the efforts of the faculty and work with their children as suggested. While group learning will be the norm, as they grow and develop, they will be exposed to individualized instruction as needed.

Standardized test scores, given in February of each year to students in the first through eighth grades, will serve as a guide for any needed remediation and enrichment. Students in first through eighth grades whose scores fall at or above the 90th percentile in Reading Total and/or Math Total will qualify for classroom enrichment in those areas. Students whose scores in Reading Total or Math Total fall at the 50th percentile or below will qualify for classroom remediation in those areas. Enrichment and remediation will be provided in the regular classroom setting through a variety of methods by the subject area teacher.

Duke TIP Program

Each fall, seventh grade students who score in the 95 percentile or above in at least one major subtest of the ITBS achievement tests are eligible for Duke University's TIP (Talent Identification Program). This program allows the students to take the SAT or ACT as seventh graders and also provides opportunities for further study in their area of strength. Each winter, fourth and fifth grade students are also identified using the same criteria to provide extension opportunities in their area of strength as well.

Math enrichment- grades 7-8

In the 7th and 8th grades, some acceleration in math will be offered for those students that are ready for the additional challenge. Specific criteria will qualify a student for Math 7 Accelerated, Algebra, or Geometry.

The following criteria qualify a student for **Math 7 Accelerated in 7th Grade:**

- 90% or higher on the 6th grade achievement scores on ITBS Math subtests and total
- 90% or higher on the algebra readiness assessment given at the end of the 6th grade
- Grade of 90% and above in 3 of 4 quarters in 6th grade

The following criteria qualify a student for **Algebra in 7th Grade:**

- 95% + on the 6th grade achievement scores on ITBS Math subtests and total
- 95% + on the algebra readiness assessment given at the end of 6th grade
- Final course grade of 93 and above in 6th grade Math

The following criteria qualify a student for **Algebra in 8th Grade:**

90% or higher on 7th grade achievement scores on ITBS Math subtests and total
90% or higher on the algebra readiness assessment given at the end of 7th grade
Grade of 85 % and above on 3 of 4 quarters in 7th grade Pre-Algebra

The following criteria qualify a student for **Geometry in 8th Grade:**

95% + on the 7th grade achievement scores on ITBS Math subtests and total
Final course grade of 93 and above in 7th Grade Algebra

Determination about class placement will be made each summer, following a review of assessment information and grades. Letters will be sent to parents in the school's summer mailing if the school is recommending placement in advanced classes or if their placement in advanced classes changes between 7th and 8th grade. *In the event that students do not meet the criteria at the end of an advanced course, repeating of the course may be required.*

While most parents prefer for their students to be "challenged," there are sometimes unintended consequences to those decisions. For this reason, we believe there are several things for parents to consider before placing students in advanced math classes, including the following:

Algebra is a high school course, with much content to cover and a high degree of mastery to be achieved. Often considered a key foundation course, its full mastery is essential to future courses such as Algebra II and beyond.

Course grades often include grades that might result in an impression of greater mastery than actually exists, such as homework where assistance is available or the opportunity given to redo assignments. For that reason, the information gathered on independent assessments can be more helpful in making decisions.

Important Additional Information:

High schools vary widely on how they will view the successful completion of Algebra in the 8th grade. At this time, public high schools accept Catholic middle school Algebra courses once we verify that the course follows the state TEKS (objectives.) They are implementing End of Year exams for their own students, but it is our understanding that our students would not be required to take it.

Catholic high schools vary in how they assess students and what their suggested placement is for their high school math program. Summer school is sometimes required the summer before the freshman year to verify skills. In some cases, it will be required to retake Algebra as a freshman if math placement scores don't meet the criteria.

Receiving high school credit for Algebra in 8th grade may result in the child taking considerably harder classes to complete their four years of required math credit in high school. Many high school teachers will say, "be sure that this is a Calculus kid." While the high schools vary in the number and type of math course options available, it should be a consideration. At this time, most high schools appear to accept 8th grade Algebra as one of the four years of required high school math. However, at this time, St. Dominic Savio states that they will be accepting Algebra as a math credit, but students will still need to obtain an additional four credits of math at that school. St. Michael Catholic School currently has a limitation on the number of credits that may be applied from the middle school to the high school transcript (ie Algebra, Geometry and Speech).

Homework

Students in PreK do not receive formal homework. Kindergarteners may occasionally be given a home assignment to introduce the concept of homework and to build responsibility. Students in grades 1-8 may expect homework on most weeknights and some weekends.

Homework will usually be specific assignments to be begun and completed outside school hours. Sometimes a student may be instructed to finish at home classwork that was not completed in the appropriate time at school.

Teachers' specific homework policies will be discussed with students as part of the grading and management plan orientation. Make-up work should be completed in one day for every day absent. (See "Obtaining Make-up Work" in Section IV.)

School outings

When the faculty judges that a school outing is a significant enhancement for the instructional program, information will be provided to parents, and a signed permission slip is required. Since behavior expectations will be clearly specified for each outing, the school does not accept liability for injuries sustained through not meeting those expectations while participating in a school outing. Parent participation in school outings may be limited by transportation safety or the requirements of the organization being visited. EIM certification is required of all volunteers who accompany students on school outings.

Testing program

Students in grades 1-8 take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) testing series in February of each year. This assessment will compare the student's scores with grade-level counterparts on the national level and provide information for future instruction and curriculum planning, as well as a broad picture of our school's performance. The student's individual scores will be sent home in early spring with additional explanation and discussion available during the Spring parent conference.

Students in grades 5 and 8 take the ACRE, a standardized religion test. Parents receive a copy of individual results for all of these tests, except the ACRE.

Students in Pre-kindergarten take a Kindergarten readiness test in the late spring that determines their developmental readiness for Kindergarten. There will be a small fee for the assessment, which will be conducted by trained evaluators during the school day. The results will be made available to the family and school and will be used to make developmentally appropriate placement decisions.

Students in grades 6 and 7 take an algebra readiness test at the end of the school year. This information along with ITBS scores and report card grades are used to recommend placement in advanced math courses.

RenWeb/ParentsWeb

Holy Family uses an integrated school management software, RenWeb, that supports the administration, faculty, parents and students of the school with a comprehensive database of information. ParentsWeb, which is the parent component of RenWeb, can be accessed from the school website and allows families to enter emergency contact, demographic and other pertinent family information. Students in grades 2-8 will have numerical grades, attendance, and homework entered in ParentsWeb. To establish an account, each family should access the RenWeb logo located on the homepage of the Holy Family website, and follow the first time user directions to create an account and login. The District code is HOLY-TX. It is important that you use the email address that the school has on file for you, to set up your ParentsWeb account. Parents must log on and update ParentsWeb whenever there is a change in information and upon the start of a new school year.

Students in grades 5 through 8 will be given a user name and password that they may use to access ParentsWeb. They will be able to see their grades, homework and assignments but will not be able to change family demographic information. They may also login under your email and account information. However, be aware that anyone that has access to your account can make changes to contact information also, as well as to set notification requirements for grades and missing work that the parent has established.

Students can obtain a free email address at [www. Google.com](http://www.Google.com). Once students have an account established; they can also create Google documents and Google calendars online. These documents can be accessed online from any location or computer, and offer very up to date applications, without it having to be loaded onto individual machines.

Technology

Holy Family Catholic School intends to teach students to use technology as a tool for acquiring and sharing knowledge. As technology is so much a part of the fabric of our daily lives, the approach used at Holy Family is integration. This approach means that technology is used by all teachers as a support to their content areas.

We believe that technological proficiency is not only a workplace skill but also a high-school skill. Therefore, the Internet principles included in the Technology Applications curriculum used by most accredited schools in Texas must be addressed with our students in a meaningful, timely and developmentally appropriate way.

We believe that it is consistent with a philosophy of challenging Catholic school education that students be taught responsible use of the Internet, implemented through systematic teaching and scrupulous supervision. However, students' use of the Internet should be conducted according to the maturity in responsible use that they have had time to develop.

Technology is experienced throughout the campus, with most classrooms containing a small bank of 3 to 5 computers. A separate 29 terminal computer lab is located in the Charity building. Our campus has internet access provided through a high speed TI internet line. A web filter is installed on our network that is compliant with the Children's Internet Protection Act*. It offers internet security for our students and protects our network. Generally, classroom computers offer instructional support, and the computer lab offers access and training for applications. Middle school faculty will occasionally incorporate the use of a class set of laptops to enrich instruction. Students are encouraged to do all printing for assignments at home before coming to school.

Students in all grades have access to a range of software packages including KidPix, Inspiration and Microsoft Office. Instructional focus is placed on the student's developing thinking, literacy and numeracy skills in a problem solving process. Additional skills of planning, organizing and evaluating information are taught by the technology teacher who collaborates with classroom teachers to integrate technology into classroom assignments.

*CIPA is a U.S. federal law enacted by Congress in 2000 to protect children using school, college and library computers from offensive internet content. Our filter meets or exceeds the requirements of CIPA and helps to protect our network. (See "Acceptable use" in Section V.)

Guidance and counseling

There is a distinction between guidance and counseling. *Guidance* consists of instructional practices and strategies that assist students' understanding of their unique worth and purpose in society.

Holy Family Catholic School's guidance program is a part of the total school program and complements learning in the classroom. It is child-centered, developmental and proactive. Teachers occasionally invite approved guest speakers to team teach guidance curriculum objectives. The program encourages students' social, emotional, spiritual, physical, and educational growth at each stage of their development. The purpose of guidance with students, parents, and teachers is to help students maximize their potential.

Private Counseling, on the other hand, is more of a one-on-one interaction between an adult and a student or small group of students that takes place to help resolve a particular issue or problem. The Principal and Assistant Principal maintain a list of professional counselors and counseling agencies. We can also help by reviewing the list of counselors covered by your insurance and sharing information we may have about a good referral.

School Counselor Holy Family contracts annually with a professional licensed counselor that will provide class sessions to discuss broad topics that are part of the guidance curriculum.

Library

The Holy Family library is located in the Grace building and serves as a resource for students and faculty. Classes are regularly scheduled during the school day for library time. The library currently houses 8,000+ volumes. The library is fully automated, which allows books to be located by title, author, subject, and level.

In addition, the library has the Scholastic Reading Counts program for grades 2-5. After reading a book from the library of Reading Counts titles, students can take a unique quiz appropriate to their grade level. They will receive immediate feedback. This program allows for self-paced reading at individual student levels regardless of grade level. The software is installed on computers in the library, computer lab and grade 2-5 classrooms. Parent volunteers and parents visiting the library must sign in at the school office before entering the Grace building. The library is open from 7:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Families are welcome between 7:30 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. and anytime between your student's dismissal time and 4:00 p.m.

Educational Referrals and Tutoring

Occasionally, a student may need assistance from a resource outside the school staff to be successful at school. If a parent is interested in academic testing, a public school district is legally obligated to provide the service at no charge. This process may be initiated by a parent, but can often be accomplished faster by allowing the Holy Family administration to make the first contact.

If a parent is thinking of selecting an outside tutor, we strongly recommend a conference with the teacher and an administrator first, to help determine if tutoring is needed and, if so, what type will be most beneficial. Sometimes we are able to make an appropriate referral.

SECTION VII. STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND RECOGNITION

Student activities program

In keeping with our stated mission to develop the whole child, Holy Family strives to offer a variety of stimulating but developmentally appropriate student activities outside the regular class period. These activities are chosen and approved in order to enrich the school experience; to provide opportunities for students to extend their abilities and interests and to develop new ones; and to foster self-esteem through purposeful participation.

A student activities program should emphasize skill-building, team-building and a student's pride in his or her involvement and improvement. We believe that is in the best interests of the students developmentally to avoid competition as a component of student activities prior to grade 5. These early-age activities should discourage scorekeeping, player elimination and comparisons of ability. Holy Family uses the "Play Like A Champion Today" educational program as the backdrop to our athletic program. This *Sports as Ministry Initiative* was designed by the University of Notre Dame's Center for Ethical Education. At least one parent per family involved in Holy Family Athletics will be required to attend a parent training.

In order to make avenues of exploration available to students, the school will endeavor to schedule the activities seasonally, rather than year-round.

Student activities are a privilege, and participation implies certain responsibilities on the part of the student and his/her parent. To participate, a student must meet the age requirement for the activity, must be prepared to fulfill the responsibilities of the activity and, in most cases, must be in good standing academically and behaviorally. The exceptions would be Liturgical Choir and Altar Servers which hold special status because they are ministries, they facilitate our worship, and their existence and success has direct influence on an integral part of our program. Rainbow Station, an afterschool care program, has a bus that will pick up any of their students at 4:50 p.m. who attend after school activities on campus.

A middle-school student who is absent from school for illness or who leaves during the school day for illness may not attend an athletic or social activity after school or in the evening.

Scouting programs

Scouting programs for boys and girls are enthusiastically supported by Holy Family. Since the school sponsors these groups, those groups with 75% of their membership enrolled at Holy Family are invited to meet on campus as space is available, and they are subject to school rules for students and sponsors. However, since they are staffed and supervised by Holy Family parents and not school staff, students are not required to maintain school academic/behavioral eligibility in order to participate.

Non-credit enrichment programs

Occasionally the school may make space available to an extracurricular activity offered by someone outside the school staff for a fee. These persons are screened for permission to advertise and must comply with Ethics & Integrity policies. However, they are not officially sponsored by the school. If a concern arises with one of these programs, it should be resolved between the parent and the provider.

Students signing up for these programs do not have to remain eligible to participate, but parents should consider withholding the privilege when grades or behavior needs to improve.

Student recognition

The student recognition program is based upon developmental appropriateness and is designed to promote student pride in accomplishment and improvement. Our focus is to recognize personal achievement rather than competition among peers.

In grades 2-8, students are eligible for Blue Angel awards each quarter, based on outstanding traits or virtues. Grades 5-8 are recognized at each report card for A honor roll or A/B honor roll, both of which require satisfactory conduct grades as well.

At the end of the year, each student in grades 4-8 receives a LaSallian award, named for St. John Baptiste de la Salle, the patron saint of Catholic educators. Each award is named for a saint and highlights a related strength or quality that the student possesses.

SECTION VIII. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Tuition and fee policies

The Board of Directors has adopted local policies #301.1 (Tuition and Fees) and #301.11 (Tuition for Students Enrolled for Less than a Full Year). The full text of these policies is available upon request. The main features are described below.

A family's tuition category, which may be

- qualified parishioners of the seven supporting parishes or
- registered members of other Catholic parishes or
- non-Catholics

is determined by the parents' parish membership at the time of registration and may not be changed once a payment plan has begun.

For students who enroll after classes have begun or leave before the end of the year, the tuition payable is calculated with a formula based on the time the student was actually enrolled. Therefore, depending upon the payment plan, a withdrawing student might be due a refund or might owe additional tuition. No other refunds of tuition are authorized.

New student fees are refundable only if the family withdraws prior to the first day of classes *and* a receiving school beyond commuting distance notifies Holy Family that the student has enrolled there. Annual registration fees are nonrefundable.

The school uses a tuition management company which charges an annual administrative fee per family for those who wish to pay out tuition over several months. This fee is nonrefundable according to the company's policy.

Tuition assistance

Need-based tuition grants are available. Families who wish to apply must complete an application and attach the most recent W-2's and tax return and submit the form to a company that the school has selected to perform financial need analysis. The company takes into account the cost of living in the Austin area plus many other factors. The Business & Finance Committee of the Board of Directors uses this analysis as a guideline when matching need with the funds available. This process is confidential.

The usual time for this process coincides with the IRS's annual tax-return deadline, but a family may apply at any time. Families must apply for the grant each year. Receiving a grant one year does not guarantee the same grant or any grant for the following year.

Financial obligations and records release

All financial obligations must be satisfied before academic records for a withdrawing student may be released and before the year-end report card for any student may be released.

Charitable Giving

Holy Family enjoys a long history of philanthropic support from school families, grandparents, friends and area businesses. Their generous contributions have helped to ensure the continued development of a superior faculty, enriched classrooms and beautiful grounds and facilities. These charitable gifts help to supplement the school's operating needs, while allowing for a fully tax-deductible gift according to IRS regulations.

While the Choir of Angels appeal, held each fall, forms the foundation of giving at Holy Family, several fundraising events are held throughout the year by our Parent Association and parent volunteers. Each year, approximately \$400,000 is raised in these combined efforts, making a significant impact on the operational budget which supports school programs and faculty salaries. Families are encouraged to attend these events including Fall Festival, Gala, and Run With The Angels.

Each year, a GAP amount is established that is the difference between each student's tuition and the actual cost of educating them. It is that amount that our Development efforts work to fulfill. We encourage each family to participate in the Choir of Angels to the extent that they are able and to support the fundraising events of the Parent Association.

There are many ways to make financial gifts to the school including current gifts of cash or securities, employer matching gifts, and in-kind gifts. For those interested in donating to specific needs or in discussing options for planned gifts, please contact our Development Director.

Tuition and fees related to initiating or continuing admission are not tax-deductible; however, donations to the school are deductible since Holy Family is a 501 3(c) organization.

Patrons' Family Businesses

Patrons who have family business enterprises are invited to advertise at no cost. These businesses will be posted in the Resource Document section of ParentsWeb. However, access to ParentsWeb is a privilege designed to enhance social communication and therefore is not intended to be used for the purpose of facilitating business solicitations. We respectfully request that patrons' business conversations and transactions take place at times that do not interfere with student activities or procedures.

There are several opportunities throughout the year for businesses to serve as sponsors of various events or through our Business Sponsorship Program. These opportunities allow businesses to support our school and to receive additional recognition. Contact the Development Office for more information.

The Hope building now serves approximately two hundred students and over ten faculty members. The purpose of this information is to inform parents, students, and faculty of the policies and procedures of Holy Family Catholic Middle School.

Rationale

Young people undergo more rapid and profound personal changes during the years between 10 and 15 than at any other period of their lives. The self-contained elementary classroom with one primary teacher is not able to optimally address the intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, or emotional needs of the middle school adolescent. Therefore, the middle school model was created as a transitional period between elementary school and high school.

Fifth grade is the “hinge” year between elementary and the full middle school program. Fifth grade has two primary teachers who teach core classes. Students are offered elective courses. In order to meet their developmental needs, capabilities and talents, grades six through eight have a homeroom, and several educators teaching core subjects. They are offered a more varied choice of elective courses as they advance in grade. They have opportunities for additional extra-curricular activities.

Philosophy

Holy Family Middle School creates warm, inviting classrooms where learning and learners are celebrated. A climate that is safe, inviting, and caring promotes a sense of community.

Our philosophy is that each of us needs to take **responsibility** for our thoughts, words, and deeds. They are encouraged to have **self-discipline**. However, if a student has difficulty with following expectations, they need to learn the life lesson that decisions and choices come with both privileges and consequences.

It is our expectation that individuals treat all others and him or herself with dignity and respect. Students and adults recognize, accept, and celebrate one another’s differences and diversity with a spirit of inclusiveness. Our middle school students are expected to adhere to the following expectations.

GENERAL BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

All students, faculty, staff, and parents exhibit a Christian spirit by respecting self, others, and property, contribute positively to the learning environment, and follow school and classroom procedures.

Discipline

Middle school students must comply with the general behavioral regulations stated for all students in this handbook. In addition, the middle school discipline system has been designed to allow parents, teachers, and students to be readily aware of rule infractions and to provide a concrete way to assess the student’s citizenship grade. Students can be awarded merits or demerits based on their behavior. When a student receives a demerit for not adhering to the expectations, the teacher will document it. Demerits will be recorded under the behavior tab on ParentsWeb for Middle School students. At the end of each quarter the homeroom teacher tabulates the total number of demerits, which directly impacts the student’s citizenship grade.

Demerits

Demerits are given when students do not comply with defined school rules. After receiving a demerit, the teacher will record it in RenWeb. RenWeb will automatically send an e-mail to parents notifying them that their child earned a demerit. *Demerits will be cumulative for the school year.

The student will have 4 warning demerits. After a 5th demerit is earned, a detention will be assigned. Notification will be sent home stating the date, time, and place of the detention. For every 5 demerits earned, a detention will be required. Prompt arrival for required detentions is mandatory.

Excessive demerits will result in a reduced grade of “Needs Improvement” or “unsatisfactory” on the student’s report card for the quarter in conduct. A conference may be required involving the Principal, Assistant Principal, homeroom teacher, the MS Coordinator, the student and parents.

*Severe offenses include: physical or psychological danger to self or others, use of profane words or gestures, or out of control behaviors. Bullying is considered a severe offense and will not be tolerated. These behaviors are in direct violation of our expectation to be respectful. These behaviors may result in detention, suspension or expulsion.

Detention

A student will be required to serve a detention if s/he receives 5 demerits. Detentions will be held before or after school in the Hope building. Detention periods will be every other week on a Wednesday morning from 7:00-7:45 a.m. or Wednesday afternoon from 3:30-4:15 p.m. A teacher will supervise the detention. Time and days may occasionally vary to accommodate the supervisor’s schedule.

After a student has served two Wednesday detentions, the third detention and each thereafter will be served for one hour on a Saturday morning. There will be a \$25 fee for Saturday morning detention.

Holy Family Middle School uses a merit system as well. A point system helps classes earn extra privileges for positive behavior when the homeroom class reaches 100 privilege points. For example, points may be earned if everyone in class is wearing his/her uniform properly, is on time for class, or any other positive behavior delineated by the teacher.

Homework

Homework is designed to enrich and reinforce the material taught during the school day. Students are expected put forth their personal best on all assignments. When students do not complete their homework they fall behind in their academic success. To ensure that students have an opportunity to be successful academically as well as to develop the life skills of responsibility, time management, organization, working independently, and meeting deadlines, the middle school faculty will follow these procedures concerning late or unacceptable homework:

- All assignments are to be completed and turned in on the date due.
- Assignments may be submitted up to three days following the original due date for a maximum score of 82%.
- After the 3rd day, a 0% will be recorded for work not received.

*We recognize that occasionally extenuating circumstances arise at home that make it not possible to complete homework. In these limited situations, a late penalty will not be assessed for missing homework if a parent sends a note the next morning. The homework is expected to be completed at the earliest opportunity.

Parents and students are encouraged to check grades on ParentsWeb regularly. Teachers will record scores within one week of the due date and usually two weeks for projects. Please contact the admission coordinator if you have a problem accessing your child’s RenWeb grades.

As a general guideline, middle school students should complete about one and one half-hours of homework Monday through Thursday. This may vary according to the student’s individual work and study habits. The homework may be mental (studying) or written. Regular homework assignments will not ordinarily be given on Fridays or during holiday breaks. Occasionally there may be an exception to this policy. Weekend work may be necessary to complete long term assignments such as reading books for book reports, editing compositions, memorizing, or gathering research. Good time management habits will decrease the amount of stress a student experiences in completing homework. Long term assignments and projects will be assigned well in advance and students are responsible for keeping track of all assignments and test dates.

Student Council

The purpose of the student council is to lead and represent the student body. The goal is to form a positive, unified student community. The student body is responsible for planning and facilitating a variety of school events and projects. In order for students to participate in student council, they must meet the criteria adopted. If a student council member's grades or conduct do not meet the requirements, s/he will be placed on probation. If there is no improvement, s/he will be replaced by an alternate chosen by the student council advisor in consultation with the middle school coordinator.

Textbooks

In order to keep textbooks in good condition and avoid unnecessary replacement costs, students must keep their textbooks covered all year. Students will be given a verbal warning for an uncovered book. The student will have two days after the verbal warning to cover the textbook. A demerit will be given on the third day for any book that is uncovered following the initial reminder. The only writing allowed on the book cover is the student's full name, grade and subject.

Uniforms

In order to foster a positive environment of excellence and school identity, uniforms must be worn appropriately at all times. See the parent handbook for the new uniform regulations. Failure to comply with the uniform standards will result in a demerit.

Alternative dress day code

Circumstances will arise where middle school students will be given the privilege of wearing alternative attire to school. Modest attire must be worn. Inappropriate messages on tee shirts are not allowed. The teachers or administration will determine if a student is inappropriately dressed. If a student is inappropriately dressed the student may be sent home to change.

Cell phones

Cell phones may be brought to school under the following circumstances:

- Phones must be kept in the OFF position between 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. and during any after school activity in which the student is participating.
- Cell phones must be kept in lockers or backpacks during school hours.
- No cell phones may be used for picture taking.
- Cell phones may not be used for game playing, internet or email access or making purchases of any kind.
- Students who violate any of the rules regarding cell phones may forfeit their privileges of bringing them to school and receive a demerit.

Lockers

Students in grades six through eight will be assigned a locker. Lockers are a privilege, not a right. They are to be treated properly, for example, do not overstuff. Students may only use lockers at designated times. They are to be opened and closed gently. The locker must be kept orderly and the floor area around lockers neat at all times. Be courteous and aware of noise level when classes are in session.