



2023-2024

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Green Edition
Please see inside for details!



Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Mission Statement	4
Philosophy	4
Vision	4
History	5
State License Requirement	5
Statement of Policy	5
Admissions Policy	5
Absence and Attendance Procedure	6
Administrators Right to Amend Handbook	6
Age for School Entrance	6
Arrival	7
Before and After School Supervision	7
Before School Breakfast	7
Bullying	7
Cafeteria/Lunchroom Rules.	11
Calendar	11
Care of Books	11
Cell Phones and Electronic Devices	11
Child Abuse/Mandated Reporting	12
Circle of Grace	12
Civil Rights/Legal Rights	12
Clubs (extra curricular)	12
Computer Network and Internet Acceptable Use Policy	12
Conduct	13
CORI	14
Curriculum	14
Detention	16
Dismissal	16
Dress Code	18
Preschool Dress Code	18
Dress Uniform.	18
Gym Uniform	18
School Uniform Apparel	19
Early Childhood Program	20
Extended Care.	20
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act	20
Field Trips	21
Financial Aid	21
Fire Drills	21
Homework	21
Honor Roll	22
Lunch and Breakfast	22
Medical Rules	22
National Junior Honor Society	23

Parent-Administration Cooperation	23
Parent Support.	23
Parent Support Group	24
Parent-Teacher Communication	24
Party Invitations/Class Birthday Celebrations	24
Phone Calls	24
Photo/Contact Release Waiver	24
President’s Education Award	24
Progress Reports	25
Religious Activities	25
Respect of Property	25
Report Cards	25
Safety and Security	25
School Cancellation	26
School Hours.	26
Search & Seizure.	26
Sexting	27
Smoking/Vaping.	27
Standardized Testing.	27
Student Learning Expectations	27
Telephone Numbers	28
Threats of Violence.	28
Traffic Policy	28
Tuition.	28
Middle School Behavior Policy.	Appendix A
Reflective Essay Format.	Appendix B
Student Handbook Contract Signature Page	34
Traffic Pattern	Appendix C

Introduction:

Saint Joseph School is a Catholic, co-educational school that serves students in preschool through grade eight. The purpose of this booklet is to inform parents and children of the school regulations, policies, and general information regarding the programs and services offered by the Saint Joseph School.

Please understand that no set of rules or guidelines can cover every conceivable situation that might arise at a school. The rules, policies, and procedures set forth in this handbook are intended to apply under normal circumstances. However, from time to time, there may be situations that require immediate or nonstandard responses. This handbook does not limit the authority of Saint Joseph School to deviate from the normal rules and procedures set forth in this handbook and handle circumstances as they arise in the manner deemed most appropriate by the school (including but not limited to student discipline), taking into consideration the best interests of the school, its faculty, employees, students, and community. The policies may also be revised or updated periodically, even during the current academic term. You will be advised of any substantive changes as they are made

Mission Statement:

Saint Joseph School is a Catholic learning community devoted to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and dedicated to providing a quality spiritual and academic education based on faith, values, and excellence that meets the needs of our students and their families.

Philosophy:

Saint Joseph School is a Catholic learning community that is an integrated part of a larger faith based parish community that is dedicated to proclaiming the love of God as found in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Our school seeks to provide a quality Christian education that meets the academic and spiritual needs of our students.

The school community is dedicated to promoting a Catholic faith environment in which the student's growth as a person is central to all its work. Our faculty is composed of individuals whose common purpose is "To Teach as Jesus Did." We are committed to the vision and values of Christ's way of life.

Saint Joseph School supports the efforts of families to provide a quality Catholic education based on Christian values. In partnership with parents, the child's primary educator, we seek to model the principles of Jesus and nurture the child's intellectual, religious, spiritual, social, civic, psychological, moral, physical, cultural, and aesthetic growth.

Our school environment fosters love of God, respect for oneself and others, compassion, justice, and service. Learning experiences challenge students to grow in understanding and appreciating their human worth, to take responsibility for their own learning and development, and to care for the world in which they live. The school encourages students to develop responsibility towards themselves and others and fosters respect for all persons and the world around us. Guidance in making good choices based on Catholic values is integrated throughout the curriculum.

Vision:

All children will learn and grow in a faith-based environment that is nurturing, safe, and encouraging. Students will grow in their faith, develop their God given talents, learn the values that will help them to make meaningful choices, become active lifelong learners, and seekers of God's truth. With parents as partners, we strive to build a Catholic Faith community that models the teachings of Jesus and empowers each child to:

Become a faithful witness of Jesus Christ.

Develop their individual, God-given talents and seek academic and aesthetic excellence. Become an independent and life-long learner.

History:

In 1908, the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary began a teaching ministry in classrooms located in the original St. Joseph Church structure in Fairhaven, Massachusetts in the Diocese of Fall River. When a new church was built in 1924, the original structure was redesigned to serve exclusively as a parochial school. Under the guidance of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts demands for admission to the parish school grew. This resulted in the construction and dedication of a new school building in 1964. Currently, Saint Joseph School continues to provide a quality Catholic education for children in grades preschool through eight.

State License Requirement:

Saint Joseph School is operated by the Dioceses of Fall River and is not required to be licensed by the state. The statutory definition of a day care center (M.G.L. c.28A, s.9 and 102 CMR 7.2) specifically excludes “any part of a private organized educational system, unless the services of such a system are primarily limited to kindergarten, nursery or related preschool services.” Although our preschool component is not required by the state to be licensed we are accredited and follow the regulations and guidelines from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for operation.

Statement of Policy:

“All Schools in the Diocese of Fall River are subject to the policies of the Dioceses of Fall River. The **policy manuals of the Diocese of Fall River replace and supersede any contrary statement of policy, procedures, programs, or practices, including but not limited to, any such statement contained in any handbook or manual prepared by any school in the Diocese of Fall River.”

**These manuals are available to be read at the Catholic Schools Alliance, 373 Elsbree Street, Fall River, MA 02720

Admissions Policy:

“The non-public schools of the Diocese of Fall River admit students of any race, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the schools...and do not discriminate on the basis of race, national and ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, as well as athletic and other school administered programs.”

Saint Joseph School encourages a school climate of respect, inclusion, and equality.

Parents of students entering for the first time shall provide:

- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate (if applicable)
- Medical immunization records required for school entrance
- Non-refundable registration fee

Parents complete an online application form and state any medical, physical, emotional and academic needs that may require special attention. Students being considered for admission need to submit copies of the last report card and any individual and/or state test results if available. An interview with the principal may also be required.

All acceptances are conditional and rooted in the student’s ability to adhere to the rules and regulations as outlined in the student handbook and the school’s philosophy. If a disagreement develops regarding a student or parent’s ability to support the school’s philosophy and policies, the administration reserves the right to ask to have your child/children transferred to another school. Further conditions are dependent upon the school’s ability to provide the appropriate academic program that meets the needs

of each child. The principal shall make final decisions in all matters requiring discernment. Priority for admission is given to siblings of currently enrolled students and children of parish families.

Absence and Attendance Procedure:

Regular school attendance is essential to successful performance in school. Both school and home have the responsibility to encourage regularity of attendance. Valid reasons for absences are illness, death in the family, religious holidays and other reasons for absence approved by the principal. Medical and other appointments should be made during non-school hours whenever possible. Non-acceptable absences are those activities that can be conducted after school hours.

When a child is absent on any given day parents are required to:

- **Call** the school at 508-996-1983 **or email** the secretary (idacosta@sjsf.dfrcs.org) **before 9:00 a.m.** The school office has an answering machine to take your information, so calls may be made throughout the night if more convenient
- Provide a reason for the student's absence which is recorded in the daily attendance log. The school office will contact the parent or person designated as the emergency contact if the parent has not called by 9:00 a.m. For emergency purposes, **parents are reminded to make sure telephone numbers are current throughout the school year. Parents can update student information, as needed, via the online parent portal.**

Every student is expected to be in school on time and attend all classes every day. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure the regular attendance of their children. The Massachusetts General Laws (Chapter 76, Section 2) specify that a student under sixteen years of age may not be absent more than seven (7) days within any period of six (6) months. A student absent for five or more successive days is required to present a doctor's certificate stating the reason for the absence and permission to attend school again.

If a student is absent, it is the student's responsibility to complete and submit work within the deadline set by the teacher. Students not attending school field trips must be in school on that day.

Parents who wish to pick up school work for a child who is absent, need to call the office by 9:00 a.m. in order to give teachers ample time to gather the necessary textbooks and school work. Middle school work will be available for pick up **after** dismissal.

Parents who elect to remove their children from school during non-scheduled vacation weeks are in violation of Massachusetts's law. Prior notification must be given to the school in writing by a parent or guardian if a student is going to be removed from school during non-scheduled vacation weeks. ***Our teachers may not provide schoolwork and/or prepared lessons in advance.*** Even if all written work is made up, valuable instructional time has been lost and cannot be recovered. **Effective instruction requires discussion, group activities, and in-school practice and moves at the pace of the class. These learning opportunities cannot be replicated for students who have been absent.**

Excessive absences and tardiness may result in non-promotion and/or non-graduation.

Administrations Right to Amend Handbook:

The school administration (principal) retains the right to amend the handbook. Parents will be given prompt notification of any changes made. Any situation not included in the handbook will be handled at the discretion of the principal.

Age for School Entrance:

School entrance age shall be the same as that determined by the public school district in which the Catholic school is located. A child must be:

- 2.9 years of age for entrance into the Preschool program and **independently use bathroom facilities**
- Five years of age by August 31st for entrance into Kindergarten

Arrival:

- Students enter the school via the northeast entrance between **7:45 - 8:00 a.m.**
- Younger students are assisted by school staff who are positioned in the drive thru area of the parking lot. **If you do not wish for your child to be assisted from the vehicle, please park and walk your child to the door as there is NO parking/standing in the drive thru.**
- Students in Grades K-2 **must** be in the **gym** at 8:00AM and Grades 3-8, in their classroom by **8:00 AM**, or they will be considered tardy. After eight (8) consecutive late slips are issued in one semester the principal and/or teacher will contact the family to work out an arrival plan.
- Any student that arrives **after 8:00a.m.** must report to the office for a tardy slip before going to the gym for school wide morning prayer.

Before and After School Supervision:

There is no supervision on the playground before or after school. Morning and Afternoon Extended Care (*See Extended Care on page 15*) and Breakfast Program are available at no cost for families who require these services. **NO STUDENTS ARE TO BE IN THE HALLS, ENTRANCES, OR SCHOOL YARD UNATTENDED.**

Before School Breakfast:

Breakfast is offered during our morning extended day care program between 7:00 a.m. - 7:45 AM. daily (Gr. K-8). The Breakfast Program will be offered to PS and PK upon arrival to their classroom after prayer (about 8:15). **NO OUTSIDE FOOD IS ALLOWED.**

Bullying:

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan for the Diocese of Fall River

“Every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family.

The body of Catholic social teaching opens with the human person, but it does not close there. Individuals have dignity; individualism has no place in Catholic social thought. The principle of human dignity gives the human person a claim on membership in a community, the human family.” (Taken from Byron, William J. S.J., *Ten Building Blocks of Catholic Social Teaching*. (2010). America: The National Catholic Weekly. American Press Inc.)

This plan is to be an addendum to the parent/student handbook, and it will immediately become part of the policy book of the Diocese of Fall River. The plan will be available on the diocesan website as well as each school’s website.

The Diocese of Fall River will review and/or update the plan at least biennially. The school will give notice to and provide a comment period for families that have a child attending the school. The plan shall apply to students and members of the school staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses.

Parents/guardians and students shall receive annual written notice of the relevant student-related sections of the plan.

All school staff shall receive annual written notice of the plan. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the plan applicable to the school. Relevant sections of the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

I. Definitions

The Diocese of Fall River and Saint Joseph School prohibits bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation as defined below. Bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation can occur on or off school property, and during or outside of school hours.

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students *or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional* of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school. *For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.*

“Cyber-bullying” is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include: the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions included in the definition of bullying. (Massachusetts General Laws c. 71 § 37O)

“Retaliation” against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited. (Massachusetts General Laws c. 71 § 37O)

“Hostile Environment” is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student’s education. (Massachusetts General Laws c. 71 § 37O)

“Aggressor” is a student, *or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional*, who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

“Target” is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

“Staff” includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals. (Massachusetts General Laws c. 71 § 37O)

Bullying shall be prohibited: (i) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a

school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school and (ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs. (Massachusetts General Laws c. 71 § 37O)

II. Formal Procedure for Reporting

Students are to report any and all bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation to teachers or staff.

Staff and teachers are to report any and all bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation to the principal or his or her designee.

Parents, guardians, and others are to report all bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation to the principal or his or her designee.

This reporting may be done verbally or in writing. This reporting of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation may be made anonymously; however, no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The principal and his or her designee will respond to and investigate all **credible** reports of bullying, and ensure proper documentation. This investigation will provide for the following:

- **Safety of the target**

The principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidences. Responses to promote safety may include but are not limited to: predetermining seating arrangements in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the classroom schedule to reduce that aggressor’s access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during or after the investigation, as necessary.

- **Protection of the reporter, witness, or provider of information during the investigation** The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting a student who has reported/witnessed or provided information during an investigation of a bullying situation. These responses may include but are not limited to the same responses noted for the safety of the target.

- **Notification, including the parents of both the target and the aggressor, as well as notification of law enforcement**

- a. **Parents/Guardians**: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- b. **Notice to another school**: If the incident involves students from more than one school, the principal or designee will notify by phone any and all schools so that each may take appropriate action.
- c. **Notice to Catholic Education Center**: After determining that bullying has taken place, notice should be given immediately to the superintendent or his or her designee.

- d. Notice to law enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal or designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the law and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency.

III. Investigation

The principal or designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

IV. Determinations

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

V. Range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against an aggressor for bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation

Each school in the Diocese of Fall River will include bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation into the age appropriate disciplinary code that is included in the student/parent handbook. These disciplinary codes may include, but are not limited to, suspension and expulsion.

VI. Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

VII. At the discretion of the principal or his or her designee, counseling or referrals will be made available to targets, aggressors, and/or family members.

VIII. **Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent the school administration from taking disciplinary action against a student for conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying, as defined above, but nevertheless is inappropriate for the school environment.

Cafeteria/Lunchroom Rules:

- Students are to enter the cafeteria quietly; go to assigned seating and wait to be called to the lunch line.
- Students may talk in a quiet, respectful, conversational tone during lunch.
- Students are expected to use appropriate manners and display good eating habits.
- Students are to remain seated, no running allowed in the cafeteria.
- Students are expected to clean up after themselves.
- Students are not allowed to bring food or beverages outside for recess.
- Students are to line up quietly and orderly when requested to do so.

Unacceptable behavior will result in disciplinary action.

Microwaving of food items brought from home is NOT ALLOWED. Please use “hot” thermos for necessary items.

All “forgotten” lunches must be delivered to the office. Parents may not bring lunch directly to students. **NO fast food meals** (McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy’s, Subway, etc.) are to be brought to school.

Saint Joseph School does not have the facilities to provide “safe allergy free meals” to students. The parent/guardian is responsible for providing an allergy free lunch for their child daily. Personnel will be made aware of students with such allergies. A peanut/nut or specified allergen free lunch table will be provided. Peanut/nut or specified allergen free lunch table will be washed thoroughly with soap and water between each lunch shift.

Calendar:

Calendar is available on the website: www.saintjosephschool.org.

Care of Books:

Students are expected to use textbooks and school materials with care. Textbooks must be covered at all times. Please see the teacher to find out which way will be allowed for each classroom. All textbooks must be transported to and from home in a backpack. Students are expected to pay in full for textbooks, library books, etc they damage or lose. The school administration will determine the cost of lost or damaged books. The price may also reflect shipping and handling fees.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices:

Students are not allowed to use cell phones, smart watches or electronic devices in the school building, on school grounds, on **field trips** or before, during or after school. Students may carry a cell phone or smartwatch to school and **place it/them in his/her locker**. **During the school day, cell phones and smart watches must be turned off**, not just silenced. **Prohibited use of cell phones and smart watches** for students on school property/ at school events includes, but is not limited to: taking pictures or videos, web access, text messaging – including texts/**emails** to/from other students or parents, alarm, calculator and date book functions, game functions, calling student to student or to anyone other than a parent/guardian, use of Bluetooth or other earpiece devices. **Violation of this policy will result in confiscation of the cell phone, smart watch or electronic device. Multi-Violation may be cause for suspension.**

Use of cell phones will not be allowed during school hours except with teacher permission.

- **Chromebooks are school property and trusted to the students' respectful care. Violation of Chromebook policies will result in a one hour, after school detention.**
- **Students will follow the expectations and guidelines as stated in the Internet Use Agreement.**
- **The only websites and searches allowed are those authorized by a faculty/staff member.**
- **Students will not engage online (searching, emailing, browsing, gaming) without teacher permission.**

Chromebook policies apply to class time as well as unstructured/down time.

Saint Joseph School is not liable for lost, missing, stolen, or broken cell phones, smart watches or electronic devices.

Child Abuse Laws/Mandated Reporting:

Saint Joseph School abides by Massachusetts General Law chapter 119, section 51A. This law mandates that all cases of **suspected** abuse and/or neglect be reported to the Department of Families and Children (DCF). The administration, faculty, and staff of Saint Joseph School are mandated reporters.

Circle of Grace:

The goal of the Circle of Grace program is to educate and empower children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others. Children/Young People will understand they are created by God and live in the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Civil Rights/Legal Rights:

Lockers are the property of the Saint Joseph School. Middle School students are assigned lockers and combination locks. Lockers should be kept locked and nothing of value should be in lockers. With reasonable suspicion that the contents of a locker is not in the best interest of the school, the principal has the right to search any locker, area or enclosure where illegal or harmful materials may be stored. Permission to search and seize materials is not needed in these instances. If illegal drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or harmful materials are found, this information shall be given to police or proper authorities. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.

Clubs (Extra Curricular):

SJSF offers after school clubs (i.e. drama, cooking, legos) for students to engage socially in a different aspect of school life. Here students can socialize with one another outside the classroom and foster relationships. Although clubs are to be a time unlike academics, students must still behave in a Christian manner, obeying the code of conduct of St. Joseph School. If a child is asked to leave the extra curricular activity due to inappropriate behavior, any fee incurred will not be refunded. If your child cannot continue for a medical reason, a refund may occur with the documentation from a physician.

Computer Network and Internet Acceptable Use Policy:

Rules for Use of School Computers

All students in grades Preschool through Grade 8 have regular use of Chromebooks and classroom computers. Saint Joseph School is connected to the Internet. Each student shall require parental consent to use computers. Every parent is asked to carefully read and review with your child/children the contents of the computer contract from the Diocese of Fall River Policy regarding computer systems and Internet Acceptance Use and Agreement.

- **Parents/Guardians of students in grades Preschool through 2 are required to sign the contract and return it to school for your child to use computers.**
- **The document is to be signed by both parents and students in grades 3-8 and returned in order for your child to use computers.**

Conduct:

Discipline is fundamental to Catholic education and Catholic life. Worthwhile discipline teaches and directs students to become loving Christians who act and react constructively and in accord with Christian charity and Gospel Values. Every effort will be made to nurture individual responsibility, self-discipline, and self worth. Courtesy and respect for the dignity of all are expected of all individuals in the school community at all times.

The Saint Joseph School vision is to create a caring and safe learning environment that exemplifies the Sacred Hearts charism and provide a school climate in which all can learn, work, cooperate, and pray in peace. All teachers have established classroom behavior guidelines based on our RESPECT model that are posted in each classroom. As a result, each student is held accountable for his/her own actions and must accept the consequences of those actions. Parents will be contacted when a student's behavior is interfering with the learning environment.

Saint Joseph School is a Catholic school where respect for every member of the community is expected. Conduct that maintains school order and discipline, that protects the safety and welfare of others, and that promotes a positive reputation of our school is required. These expectations apply to any student who is on school property, in attendance at school and at all school sponsored events and activities. Inappropriate conduct, language, rudeness, disrespect either spoken or written is not permitted. Any infraction is subject to administrative action.

Substance abuse: Drugs consist of anything illegal by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (alcohol, tobacco and e cigarettes are included) and therefore are not permitted at Saint Joseph School. Any child in possession of or under the influence of any drug will have the drug confiscated and their parents and the police will be notified immediately. Disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the principal and proper legal authorities.

The following are meant to serve as general guidelines for disciplinary actions. The respective classroom teacher maintains classroom discipline. However, the principal reserves the right to issue a detention at his/her discretion. Suspension and expulsion is the sole responsibility of the principal. **All actions outside the school are punishable inside the school including over the Internet, cell phone or other electronic devices.**

Behaviors that may cause detention, suspension, or expulsion:

- Continuous attitude of disrespect
- Arguing with authority
- Changing grade on papers or report card
- Dangerous behavior to oneself or others
- Forgery of parental guardian, or other person's signature
- Harassment of any type, including Internet or Cyber Bullying
- Insolence, disrespect and/or insubordination
- Leaving a classroom or school grounds without permission from the teacher and/or principal
- Possession or transmission of dangerous or controlled substances, materials, and/or weapons on school grounds
- Profanity, crude or vulgar language
- Stealing or borrowing without permission
- Threatening, fighting, intimidating or causing bodily harm to any person

- Vandalism of personal and /or school property

****This list is not inclusive.***

If a student, over the course of time, refuses to comply with school policies, further disciplinary action may result. The Pastor and the principal reserve the final authority in all matters of discipline.

Actions which may merit a detention or lunch detention if not improved:

- Cheating, lying
- Disrespectful and/or inappropriate behavior at Mass, functions, in class and on school grounds
- Refusal to follow directions of a member of the faculty, staff, or administration
- Repeated incomplete or missing assignments
- Use of inappropriate language
- Uniform infractions

CORI:

The Diocese of Fall River requires all employees and volunteers complete a safe environment training session. It is available online at <https://fallriver.cmgconnect.org/>. The volunteer must register as an individual (no group viewings are available) and complete the online Safe Environment Training. Massachusetts's law requires that the CORI form information be verified with a Photo-ID, (i.e., State License, Passport, Student ID) by a designated school official.

Curriculum:

Religion:

Preschool and prekindergarten learn their faith within the liturgical year. Grades Kindergarten through grade 1 use The Loyola Press *Christ Our Life* New Evangelization Edition (2016). Grade 2 uses Sadlier *Believe Celebrate Live Reconciliation* (2017) and *Believe Celebrate Live Eucharist* (2017) to prepare students in receiving these sacraments. Our middle school uses Sadlier *We Believe* (2015) and *We Live Our Faith* (2016). The Religious Education Program provides daily instruction in the Catholic faith with application to everyday life. Children attend Mass monthly, participate in Liturgical Celebrations, sacramental programs and prayer. Children develop an understanding of Scripture to learn God's faithfulness and love and understand the values inherent in the charism of the Sacred Hearts Congregation.

Reading/Language Arts:

The Scott Foresman *Reading Street* Program (2013) encourages independent reading and provides phonics and literature based instruction. Loyola Press *Voyages in English* (2018) provides a grammatical foundation and beginning writing skills in grades K through 2, Sadlier *Grammar Workshop* (2013) provides a grammatical foundation and beginning writing skills in grades 3 through 5 that are further developed through middle school. **The middle school uses a variety of anthologies, trade books and primary resources (i.e. speeches) to read, comprehend and analyze all literary genres. Sadlier *Grammar for Writing* (2014) is also incorporated in the middle school.**

Mathematics:

Kindergarten – grade 5 use *Eureka Math* which sets a new standard for rigor, coherence, and focus so students gain a deeper understanding of the why behind the numbers in developing critical thinking skills and problem solving strategies. *Zearn* is an online math learning platform which assists teachers in grades prekindergarten through grade 3 in differentiating math instruction. Middle School students are preparing for accelerated high school curricula with the use of an online

curriculum *Open-Up Resources*. This program elevates math practice and fosters mathematical literacy while providing students and their family online resources which reinforce classroom learning. *IXL Math* is the online reinforcement tool used in kindergarten – grade 8 to help students gain fluency and confidence in math.

Science:

Teachers in kindergarten – grade 5 use an online interactive science curricula *Mystery Science*. It provides open and-go lessons that inspire kids to love science. Teachers also have the Scott Foresman Hands on Science Kits for grades K-2 (2007) and Science Program (2009) for grades 3-5. The program includes four areas of study: Life, Physical, Earth, and Human Body Science. Middle School students prepare for advanced high school curricula with Science Explorer (2009) from Prentice Hall and will begin to explore a Project Based Learning format for learning science curriculum.

Social Studies:

Elementary students in Grades 2 and 4 learn about Community, Regions, and the United States using Scott Foresman Social Studies (2009). Third graders learn about the history and communities of Massachusetts using Gibbs Smith *The Massachusetts Story* (2014). Grade 5 (2008) and middle school students focus on World Geography (2011), World History(2012), and American History(2009) using Textbooks from Pearson Prentice Hall (2008-2012) as well as online and primary sources, videos and visuals, including maps.

Computer Literacy:

The school has 132 Chromebooks for students to use in their classes. Grade 2 through Middle school students have a 1 to 1 ratio of Chromebooks to students. Grades K and 1 share a Chromebook cart available for classes to sign out for technology integration. Interactive Smartboards or touch screen televisions are also located in most classrooms. Saint Joseph School is connected to the Internet and integrates technology throughout the day in all the classrooms. Middle School has a weekly library media class to assist them in obtaining skills related to research and presentation.

Handwriting:

Preschool students use Universal Publishing *Writing Our Faith* (2016) in order to begin developing this important skill. Kindergarten integrates handwriting within their language arts block by using Pearson *Reading Street* (2013). Grades 1 through 5 master the art of handwriting in both manuscript and cursive writing using Universal Publishing *Writing Our Faith* (2016). Research shows that handwriting instruction develops fine motor skills and a student's overall literacy development. As students' handwriting becomes more fluent and automatic, they can devote more attention to complex writing skills, and their written language improves (Christensen & Jones, 2013). Other research suggests that handwriting is significantly related to writing fluency and quality for both primary and intermediate elementary students (Graham, Berninger, Abbott, Abbott, & Whitaker, 1997).

Physical Education:

One is provided the opportunity to improve their motor skills, body coordination and learn to apply rules of good sportsmanship in Preschool through grade 8. Students in preschool through grade 8 participate weekly in physical education.

Art:

Students in grades Preschool through grade 8 participate weekly in creative and artistic experiences in a formal art class as well as integrated in other academic areas. These experiences are closely connected with the curriculum to expand the learning process. Students celebrate their works of art with an annual arts night to showcase their artwork.

Spanish:

Students in grades Kindergarten through grade 5 participate weekly (grades 6 through grade 8 participate biweekly) in foreign language education. Students are gradually introduced to the Spanish language and culture through hands on and online learning activities, stories, and curriculum. IXL Spanish is an online resource used in grades 2 – 8. (if a teacher is hired)

Music:

Students in grades Preschool through grade 5 participate weekly in music theory and movement. Grade 3 through Grade 5 use recorders in order to be introduced to playing a wind instrument and learn music notation. All elementary students and voluntary middle school students participate in the annual Christmas and spring concert to showcase their accomplishments.

Library:

All students visit the library to gather materials for research or discover authors. Students in grade 1 through 8 may check out a library book to bring home or have in class.

All teachers have copies of the Diocese of Fall River Learning Outcomes and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in order to work at integrating these standards in their teaching.

Detention:

Detentions are issued as needed and served in various assigned, supervised locations on Monday through Friday from **2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** after parental notification and return of a signed detention slip. Failure to return a detention slip on the following day will result in an added detention. Teachers may assign a one hour detention with approval from the principal.

Dismissal:

All students will exit the building from the Northeast playground door during a regular or early dismissal. Students will remain in their class line until school dismissal staff call for them to go to their waiting vehicle or parent.

Regular dismissal:

- Kindergarten class is dismissed at 2:00pm
- Grades 1-8 are dismissed by 2:30 (see page 23 for specific times)
- **Prekindergarten and Preschool classes are dismissed between 2:35 -2:45. We ask that you park and pick up your early learner at extended care (gym). You will not be charged the extended care rate unless your child has not been picked up by 2:45PM.**

Early dismissal: Kindly refer to the monthly school calendar for specific information on early release days.

- Kindergarten-grade 8 by 11:30 (see page 23 for specific times).
- Prekindergarten and Preschool by 11:45

When and if a child has to be dismissed during the school day, it is necessary that the parent or guardian pick up the student in the main office. No child will be allowed to leave on his/her own since the safety of the child is foremost. If your child will be walking home or going home with someone other than the parent/grandparent that usually picks him/her up, a written note or email must be sent to the school secretary.

Dress Code:

Students show pride in their appearance and in being a member of the student body at Saint Joseph School by following the regulations outlined for each grade. Their attire contributes greatly to their attitude in school and the respect they earn throughout the community. **Students must be in full uniform every day unless otherwise specified.** Dress uniform is required for certain special occasions that are announced in advance and on the school calendar (i.e. Mass days).

All students in grades Kindergarten through grade 8 are expected to wear the school uniform that can only be purchased from Donnelly's Uniform Company. *Shoes must be black or navy blue tie shoe or Mary Jane type (strap shoe) for girls and black or tan tie dress shoe (nubuck). Soles must be leather like, non-skid, and non-slip. No sneaker like bottoms.

** The only exception to the uniform shoe policy is a prescriptive note provided by a physician. Flip flops and **Crocs** are not allowed in any grade level due to safety issues including dress down days.*

The uniform is to be worn in a respectful manner and with a sense of pride and dignity.

General Guidelines:

- No oversized clothing – all items must fit properly
- No colors other than those specified
- Shirts are to be tucked in at all times
- Ties are to be tied for all dress uniform days
- No torn clothing
- **Shorts, Skirts and jumpers: no shorter than 2 inches above the knee at all times**

In the event of excessive heat, students may be allowed to remove sweater, vest or blazer at the discretion of the **principal**.

Non-Uniform Days are a privilege. Students are expected to wear appropriate attire, at the discretion of the Principal. No “hoodies” may be worn.

- Please refer to the Non-Uniform and Personal Items Policy on **page 18**
- No crop, backless, tank, spaghetti strings, halter, or revealing tops (midriff may not be exposed)
- No clothing with rips or holes
- No short shorts or miniskirts
- **Shorts and Skirts may not be shorter than 2 inches above the knee at all times.**
- No clothing displaying immoral and/or unchristian words, characters or logos
- No deviation from other aspects of uniform code (jewelry, makeup, hair, etc.)

Jewelry:

- **Students** with pierced ears may wear small earrings.
 - No large dangling earrings.
 - Hoop earrings are to be no larger than a nickel.
- No more than two earrings per ear with traditional placement on ear lobes only.
 - No ear cuffs.
 - Other types of “body piercing” are prohibited for all.
- No large jewelry (necklaces, rings or bracelets)
- No expensive jewelry should be worn. **The school is not responsible for lost personal items.**

Make-up:

- No make-up (cover up, mascara, eyeliner, eye shadow, blush, lipstick, lip gloss, glitter, etc.). **The student will need to remove any make-up.**

- No false eyelashes.
- Only light colored nail polish allowed. No black, dark or fluorescent colored nail polish.
- No false nails.
- No nail art, nail jewelry, nail decals or nail stickers.
- No permanent or temporary tattoos may be worn.

Cologne, perfume, lotions, hair products, etc.:

Are to be used in moderation, due to the potential allergic reactions of other students. Products may not be used in school or brought to school.

Hair:

Haircuts and hairstyles must be simple, combed, neat and away from the student's eyes. Boys are to keep hair trimmed (no longer than one's shirt collar). Any student whose hair is deemed inappropriate to the learning environment may be excluded from class and the student's parent will be notified. Three days will be given to rectify the problem. If not corrected during this time frame, the student will serve an hour long detention. Haircuts/styles deemed acceptable are at the discretion of the principal.

Non-uniform Items and Personal Items Policy:

Any items displaying immoral and /or unchristian words, characters or logos will not be allowed on school property or at any activity sponsored by Saint Joseph School. This includes clothing items, notebooks, book covers, backpacks, pencil cases, or any other personal items brought to school or to a school activity by the student.

NO personal toys, balls, collectible/playing cards or valuables are to be brought to school.

The administration reserves the right to determine what words and character logos are inappropriate for young people in our Catholic Christian environment. Any students not in full compliance may be excluded from class until an appropriate item from the uniform closet can be located or a parent has been able to provide such clothing.

Preschool and Prekindergarten Dress Code:

Preschool and Prekindergarten students are required to wear the gym uniform only on gym days and field trip days when requested by the teacher. Play clothes and sneakers are recommended for all other activities.

Dress Uniform:

Dress uniform days are identified for special occasions. Please check the school's monthly calendar for a listing of dates.

Gym Uniform:

All students are required to wear the following gym uniform, with the *Saint Joseph School* logo, and sneakers on gym days and some field trip days as requested by the teachers.

September-October and April - June: Navy blue gym shorts or jogging pants, t-shirts and/or sweatshirts (tshirt may be any tshirt with the school name - logo, club shirt, etc.). SJS hooded sweatshirts may not be worn in school- not even for gym.

November-March: Navy blue jogging pants, sweatshirt or t-shirt.

Kindergarten – Grade 5

Girls' Daily Uniform

- Uniform jumper
- Dusty tan bucks or black/navy Mary Jane shoes
- Navy blue knit shirt or turtleneck
- Navy blue/white knee socks **OR** tights **OR** navy blue, full length leggings
- Gray twill slacks (**Nov. 1-March 31**) optional
- Gray pleated twill shorts (**Apr. 1-Oct. 31**) optional
- **Black or Navy Blue tie shoe or Mary Jane style strap shoe**
- **Gray cardigan sweater (optional)**
If a child feels chilled, and wants to wear a sweater, it must be the Gray cardigan

Boys' Daily Uniform

- Dusty tan bucks or **black tie dress shoe**
- Navy blue knit shirt with school name/logo
- Gray twill pants (**Nov. 1-March 31**)
- Gray pleated twill shorts (**April 1 - Oct. 31**)
- Black or brown belt (**grades 2-5**)
- **Gray pull over sweater (optional), however, the only sweater allowed in classroom or church.**

Navy blue/white crew socks - No bright colored socks and No Logos

Kindergarten – Grade 5

Girls' Dress Uniform

- Uniform jumper
- Dusty tan bucks or black/navy Mary Jane shoes
- White blouse, round collar
- Navy blue crossover tie
- Navy blue/white knee socks **OR** tights **only**
- **Black or Navy Blue tie shoe or Mary Jane style strap shoe**
- **Gray cardigan sweater (optional)**
If a child feels chilled, and wants to wear a sweater, it must be the Gray cardigan

NO Shorts may be worn to Mass.

Boys' Dress Uniform

- Dusty tan bucks or **black tie dress shoe**
- white button down oxford shirt
- Gray twill pants
- Navy blue tie
- Black or brown belt (**grades 2-5**)
- **Gray pull over sweater (optional), however, the only sweater allowed in classroom or church.**

Navy blue/white crew socks - No bright colored socks and No Logos

Middle School: Grades 6 - 8

Girls' Daily Uniform

- **Dusty tan bucks or black/navy Mary Jane shoes**
- Uniform skirt
- white polo knit shirt
- Navy blue/white knee socks **OR** tights
- Gray twill slacks (**Nov. 1-March 31**) optional
- Gray pleated twill shorts (**Apr. 1-Oct. 31**) optional

Middle School: Grades 6 - 8

Girls' Dress Uniform

- **Dusty tan bucks or black/navy Mary Jane shoes**
- Uniform skirt
- white button down oxford shirt
- Navy blue cross tie
- Navy blue/white knee socks **OR** tights
- Blue sweater vest

Middle School: Grades 6-8
Boys' Daily Uniform

- **Dusty tan bucks or black dress tie shoes**
- Khaki slacks
- Black or brown belt
- White polo knit shirt
- Khaki pleated twill shorts (**Apr. -Oct. 31**)
- Navy blue/white crew socks

No bright colored socks and No Logos

Middle School: Grades 6-8
Boys' Dress Uniform

- **Dusty tan bucks or black dress tie shoes**
- Navy blue tie
- Khaki slacks
- White oxford button down shirt
- Black or brown belt
- **Navy blue sweater vest**
- Navy blue/white crew socks

No bright colored socks and No Logos

Please be sure your child dresses appropriately for the weather; especially during winter or he/she may not be eligible to go out for recess.

Early Childhood Program:

Saint Joseph School is dedicated to serving the best interests of the young child by understanding and supporting the developmental needs of each child and by modeling respect, kindness, and love. We strive to provide learning experiences that enhance a child's self discovery and the development of a positive self-esteem.

Extended Care:

A safe environment is provided for our students in Grades Preschool-8 who need to arrive at school before school hours and remain after the school day. Activities provided under the supervision of SJSF staff includes free, supervised play, snack, and homework time. Breakfast Program time will take place immediately after morning prayer in the gym to 8:30 a.m.

Morning and after school hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$3.00 per ½ hour \$6.00 per hour or any portion thereof. Extended Care is billed per blocks of ½ hour (7:00-7:30, 7:30-8:00, 2:30- 3:00, 3:00-3:30, 3:30-4:00, 4:00-4:30, 4:30-5:00, and 5:00-5:30). Full amount of \$3.00 will be charged if student is in Extended Care for at least 5 minutes within that block of time, less than 5 minutes will be no charge. A discount will be offered for families with two or more children using extended care **three or more days per week.**

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act:

Parents and legal guardians have the right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education record.
- Request the amendment of the record to ensure that it is not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights.
- Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's record.

This school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of the non-custodial parent. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic record and to other school related information regarding the child. **If there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial**

parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

Field Trips:

Students will be given a Diocesan “Parental/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver” for parents to sign that describe the purpose and destination of the field trip. Students who fail to return this written permission slip signed by the parent/guardian **will not** be allowed to participate. All students must ride the bus to and from all field trip destinations.

Field trips are privileges and student participation may be disallowed if the student does not meet academic and behavioral standards. For the safety of all, and in order that maximum benefits are received by each participant, any student whose conduct is contrary to school regulations or who creates an atmosphere disruptive to learning may also be denied permission to participate in a field trip by the principal. Suspensions and or detentions issued during the trimester in which the field trip occurs will be considered. Students excluded from field trips are to report to school at regular time in full uniform. Absences will be considered unexcused unless a doctor’s note is presented. Attendance on a field trip is a privilege.

Financial Aid:

It is the policy in the Diocese of Fall River that persons in good standing in their parish may receive a parish subsidy if they are faithful to weekly Mass attendance and contribute regularly to the parish using the budget envelopes. Parents with children in grades 1-8 must contact the pastor to apply for this subsidy. The Foundation to Advance Catholic Education provides financial assistance to families in need for grades K-8. Applications are completed online each year. Information on accessing the online application can be obtained in the school office.

Fire Drills:

Fire Drills are conducted periodically to ensure that the students are properly instructed as to the procedures to follow should an actual fire ever exist.

During a fire drill, children are to exit in a quiet, orderly fashion. To insure your child’s safety, running and talking are not allowed per order of the fire department. In the classroom, children are to follow their teacher through their assigned exit and line up outside the building in the assigned area. If the children are in the gym or cafeteria during a fire drill, they are to exit through the nearest door and line up outside the building.

Homework:

Homework assignments are important in the learning process since they provide an opportunity for students to reinforce skills that have been taught in class and for enrichment. Students will also develop skills in organization and personal responsibility.

Assignments are such that the student can complete them with only occasional help from parents. Completed homework is a class requirement and a student’s responsibility. All work is expected to be **dated**, done completely, neatly, and on time.

The recommended times for homework at each grade level are as follows:

Grades 1 and 2 20-30 minutes

Grades 3 and 4 30-60 minutes

Grades 5 and 6 45-60 minutes

Grades 7 and 8 60-90 minutes

All students in grades two through eight are required to use a provided school agenda for all subjects.

Parents are asked to ensure that all homework assignments are completed.

Missing or incomplete homework may result in a detention or loss of recess depending on the student's grade.

Honor Roll:

EXCELLENCE BEGINS WITH YOUR GOOD EFFORT!

Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8:

At the end of each marking period an honor roll based on the following criteria will be posted. An Honor Roll certificate will be issued at the end of the school year based on a student's year-end average. Principal's List 90 or above in each subject

A Honor Roll 90 or above overall average

B Honor Roll 80 to 89 overall average

Lunch and Breakfast:

For the 2023-2024 school year, students will again receive breakfast and hot lunch from the school cafeteria free of charge. During lunch, students may purchase snacks. School Bucks or cash may be used for this purpose.

Medical Rules:

Each year the school nurse reviews student records along with information provided by parents and will determine if a student requires an individualized health plan. Necessary staff members will be advised and trained on procedures.

It is crucial that parents keep the school updated concerning medical issues of students (allergies, injuries, etc.), which affect the safety, wellbeing, and/or performance of the student at school.

- Auditory Screenings are administered annually for students in Kindergarten through grade 3.
- Vision Screenings are done annually for children in Kindergarten - grade 5.
- Physical exams are required for students to enter grades Kindergarten, 4, and 7 as well as all new students.
- Scoliosis screenings are provided for students in grades 5 through 8.

If a student is ill and sent to the nurse/principal and it is deemed necessary to send the student home, a phone call by the nurse, principal or secretary will be made to the parent. The parent/guardian/caretaker is to report to the office to sign the child out.

Administration of Medication:

- Students requiring medication need to have a medication order filled out by their pediatrician and given to the school nurse.
- DUE TO MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC HEALTH LAWS, NO SCHOOL PERSONNEL

EXCEPT THE SCHOOL NURSE WILL ADMINISTER A PRESCRIPTION AS WELL AS OVER-THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS.

- **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD STUDENTS BE GIVEN ANY PRESCRIPTIVE OR OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION TO ADMINISTER THEMSELVES. ALL MEDICATIONS MUST BE TURNED IN TO THE SCHOOL NURSE. ANY MEDICATION PRESCRIBED TO BE GIVEN THREE (3) TIMES A DAY SHOULD NOT BE SENT TO SCHOOL. IT CAN BE GIVEN AT HOME BEFORE SCHOOL, AFTER SCHOOL AND AT BEDTIME, UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED BY THE PHYSICIAN IN WRITING.**
- **IF THE SCHOOL NURSE IS NOT AVAILABLE, EITHER A PARENT OR FAMILY MEMBER, WHO IS DESIGNATED IN WRITING, MUST COME TO SCHOOL TO ADMINISTER MEDICATIONS.**
- **STUDENTS WHO HAVE POTENTIALLY LIFE THREATENING CONDITIONS REQUIRING MEDICATIONS SUCH AS EPIPEN, INHALER, INSULIN – MAY SELF ADMINISTER, UPON SUCCESSFUL DEMONSTRATION OF THE ABILITY TO DO SO AND COMPLETION OF A PERMISSION FORM BY THE STUDENT’S PARENT. THESE MEDICATIONS MAY BE KEPT IN THE OFFICE, OR IN THE STUDENT’S CLASSROOM.**
- **YOUNGER STUDENTS AND THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE THE ABILITY TO SELF ADMINISTER WILL STILL REQUIRE A PARENT/FAMILY MEMBER TO COME TO SCHOOL TO ADMINISTER TIMED MEDICATIONS.**

Please note: In case of a life threatening allergic reaction, a trained staff member is able to administer an Epipen injection.

National Junior Honor Society:

Membership in the Sacred Hearts Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society is limited to students in grades 6, 7 and 8. Selection is both an honor and a responsibility. Students that are selected are expected to demonstrate the qualities of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship.

Parent-Administration Cooperation:

The education of a student is a partnership between the parent and the school. School Administration reserves the right to request the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines the partnership has been irrevocably broken and reserves the right to require the withdrawal of the student.

Parent Support:

The school will participate in a number of activities throughout the year to raise funds to defray the costs not met by tuition and subsidy. We ask that each family actively participate in these events that earn required funds to support our efforts for a quality education for all our students. Parents are also invited and encouraged to participate in a wide range of volunteer activities to support the educational experience provided to our students. Grandparents and other family members are also welcome to volunteer. All volunteers must participate in Safe Environment Training and complete a CORI (see “CORI” on *page 14*) for additional information). Every effort will be made to accommodate families who wish to volunteer as long as it doesn’t interfere with student learning.

Parent Support Group:

The mission of the Saint Joseph School PSG is to ensure effective communication between parents, teachers, and the administration and to participate in activities that support the education of all the children at Saint Joseph School. Meetings are held monthly. **All parents are encouraged to participate in these meetings and on the subcommittees that work on special projects throughout the year.**

Parent-Teacher Communication:

Saint Joseph School encourages communication between parents and teachers. Saint Joseph School is becoming a “Greener” school. As a means of maintaining positive communication with each family, all vital forms and information will be e-mailed and posted on the Saint Joseph School website at www.saintjosephschool.org. All students will also be provided with a “Take Home Tuesday Envelope” which will contain information that cannot be sent via email. We encourage each family to check their email on a regular basis and to ask your child for the Tuesday envelope and review any information that is contained therein. Other notices may also be sent whenever needed. Please verify that your contact information is accurate on the parent portal. This information can be changed at your convenience from the comfort of your home. Please refer to the school office if assistance is needed.

Parents are strongly urged to contact the teacher whenever the need arises. Your child’s teacher will provide his/her contact information. Parent-Teacher Conferences will be scheduled in the fall, but parents can schedule another conference by making a written request to your child’s classroom teacher or by calling the office and leaving a message. Please remember that your child’s teacher has limited access to email and the telephone while school is in session as they are working with students. Please allow the teacher 48 hours to respond.

Party Invitations / Class Birthday Celebrations:

Invitations for student parties may only be distributed in school if an entire class is invited, or all the girls or boys are invited. This is to avoid any hurt feelings. If you are unable to invite the entire class, or, all boys or all girls, invitations may not be distributed on school property. The teacher must distribute all invitations. **No classmate’s names or addresses will be given out at any time by anyone working at Saint Joseph School.**

Students celebrating a birthday may share a simple snack (cupcakes, brownies, cookies - please no cakes) with classmates. The sharing of the snack is done during lunch in the cafeteria of the person celebrating the birthday. **Please refrain from providing balloons, favors or trinkets.** Large displays and costumed characters are not appropriate.

Phone Calls:

Generally, students are not allowed to make or receive telephone calls during the day. Only emergency calls are allowed. Permission to go to a friend’s house is not an emergency; this message can be left with the school secretary.

Photo/Contact Release Waiver:

Photographs of Saint Joseph School students are taken throughout the year. On occasion, some photographs with accompanying names are used for publication on Facebook, newspapers, brochures and Internet etc. for both Saint Joseph School and Fall River Catholic School Alliance. A Contact and Photo Release waiver must be signed and returned.

President’s Education Award:

This award is presented to students in grades 1- 8 that meet the following criteria at year-end.

- Grade Point Average: 90 average: The overall average of 90 or above for the year
- Test Scores: Standardized achievement, test battery at 85th percentile. The battery must be from the current academic year and include both verbal and mathematical skills.

Progress Reports:

Students will receive a progress report identifying strengths and areas in need of improvement in his/her various subjects in the middle of each trimester. **Progress reports for students in Grades 1 - 8 are sent home in October, January, and April.** Progress reports for students in **Kindergarten will be sent home in November and March.** Progress reports for students in **Preschool and Prekindergarten will be sent home in November and June.** Parents are requested to sign the Progress Report envelope and return it promptly.

Appointments should be scheduled with the child's teacher first to discuss any questions or concerns and then with the administration.

Religious Activities:

Saint Joseph School offers liturgies, prayer experiences, Sacramental preparation, and instruction on the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary to foster each child's development of faith and Catholic values. Saint Joseph School provides religious instruction that is age appropriate for faith formation. Our program seeks to supplement the instruction that takes place in the homes and faith communities of the children.

Respect of Property:

Students are expected to be respectful of school property.

- Students may not write in textbooks
- Students writing on walls, desks or damaging property will be required to do cleanup work, **possibly after school hours.** Defacing walls, fixtures, desks or school property of any kind may also result in fines used to repair damage.
- Computers and other technology are to be used for the benefit of all students. Damage to a computer or software through improper use or vandalism will be subject to a fine for damage or replacement. Students are only permitted to access their own saved work on the computers – accessing, copying, tampering with or destroying another student's saved work is subject to detention or other disciplinary actions, including suspension of computer privileges.
- Students should keep their classrooms, desks, playground, bathrooms, and gym clean and orderly.
- Gum may not be chewed on school or church property or at any school activity.
- No food or candy is to be taken out into the playground.

Report Cards:

Report cards for students in **grades 1 – 8 are sent home in December, March, and June.** Report cards for students in **Kindergarten are sent home in January.** Parents are requested to sign the Report Card envelope and return these promptly.

Safety and Security:

Saint Joseph School will make every effort to keep children safe. We ask your cooperation with the following:

- All visitors **must** report to the **main entrance** for admittance into the building during the school day. Please ring the bell, identify yourself, and state the purpose of your visit.
- Once in the building all visitors will report to the main office, sign in on the daily log, and obtain a visitor's pass.

- No one is allowed to walk beyond the double doors in the main hallway without an escort.
- Parents are not allowed to interrupt a class while it is in session. Appointments for teacher conferences may be made through the office.
- Students shall not open any entrance for any visitor.
- **Parents employing extended care services should enter via the front doors of the main hallway.**
- **Students will participate in several drills throughout the school year, both fire drills and lockdown drills. Lockdown drills will be announced the day before the drill is conducted.**
- The school also has an **Emergency Safety Procedure Manual**, which is available in the office for parent review.

A registered sex offender who is the parent/guardian of a student may come onto his/her child's diocesan school campus in order to transport his/her own child to and/or from school; attend Open House Nights/Back to School Nights; attend Parent-Teacher Conferences; attend school sporting events; attend school performances (i.e., school drama or musical performances) or any other school events that are listed specifically on the school's calendar of events. If a registered sex offender who is the parent/guardian of a student receives a notification from a school teacher or school administrator to attend a meeting regarding his or her child, he/she must follow the protocol set forth in the next paragraph concerning, in general, the presence of registered sex offenders on a diocesan school campus.

In general, a registered sex offender who is the parent/guardian of a student is not allowed to come to campus for any other reason unless they have scheduled a specific appointment directly with the school's administrator/head of school. When an appointment is scheduled with and confirmed by the school's administrator, the parent/guardian must report directly to the Main Office of the school for that appointment and will be escorted by the administrator or his/her designee to the location of the meeting. The parent will be escorted back to the Main Office at the conclusion of the scheduled meeting and must leave the school premises immediately after the scheduled meeting.

School Cancellation:

Saint Joseph School follows the schedule for the Fairhaven Public Schools for all weather related school cancellations. Saint Joseph School subscribes to School Messenger, an automated phone messaging system, which will contact all families in the event of a cancellation of school. All school cancellations will also be placed on our Facebook page and website www.saintjosephschool.org. In the event that families do not have internet, NO SCHOOL announcements are made on the following televised networks: Channel 4, Channel 6, Channel 7, Channel 12 and Channel 56.

School Hours:

Saint Joseph School is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Parents are asked to bring their child/children to the school drop off zone as near as possible to the arrival time of 7:45 a.m. since there is no supervision of students provided before school unless they are in the breakfast program. The Northeast Homestead Street entrance is the only entrance students should be using during the hours of 7:45 - 8:00 a.m.

Search and Seizure:

When the administration has a reasonable suspicion to believe that a student possesses or is concealing any illegal or harmful item, or any item in violation of school policy, a search may be conducted. Parents shall be notified of all student searches. If any illegal or harmful material, or any item in violation of school policy, is found as a result of the search, it may be given to the police. The school hereby notifies parents/guardians and students that lockers and backpacks can be searched at any time by an administrator in the school. Police searches of student lockers and backpacks on school property may be permitted with an administrator present.

Sexting:

Sexting is defined by the State of Massachusetts as “sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photos, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital devices.” This can include sending intimate pictures or video via text message or through apps such as Snapchat and Instagram.

The electronic transmission or receipt from one minor to another of any photograph or video that depicts nudity may constitute illegal sexting. Students engaged in sexting will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences which may include expulsion from school. In addition, the school administration may report instances of sexting to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) or local law enforcement for appropriate investigation as to violations of law.

Smoking/Vaping:

Massachusetts State Law prohibits smoking or vaping in a school building and on school property. Smoking or vaping is prohibited at all times in the school building, in its parking lot, playing fields and other property. This prohibition applies to faculty, staff, parents, and all visitors to the school. Smoking or vaping on the sidewalk in front of the school building is not allowed. This policy includes cigarettes, cigars, pipe or any other matter or substance containing tobacco, as well as the use of electronic cigarettes (e cigarettes), personal vaporizers, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookah, vaping devices, mod systems, pod systems or any similar systems.

It is a violation of Massachusetts law for any minor to knowingly possess any tobacco product, nicotine product, or nicotine dispensing device. In addition, the use of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and vaping carry known health risks that can be very serious. The use of any tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and/or vaping in any form is prohibited on school property and at any school events. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary consequences which may include expulsion from school.

Standardized Testing:

- MAP Growth are assessments that are computer adaptive achievement tests. The program adjusts the difficulty of the questions so that each student takes a unique test. The difficulty of each question is based on how well the student has answered previous questions. The implementation of the Map Suite Assessments is part of a larger Diocesan-wide initiative on Data Driven Instruction designed to gain a deeper understanding of our students’ learning needs. The data derived from these assessments allow administrators and teachers to measure student growth and proficiency, identify strengths and weaknesses at the school, class and individual student levels, target instruction, and personalize learning. Data driven instruction provides school leaders and teachers with the information needed to make strategic and intentional decisions in real time about teaching and learning so that all children can succeed. Here at Saint Joseph School students in grades 2 - 8 participate in reading, math and language MAP for Growth tests during fall, winter and spring.
- IFG ACRE or ARC religion assessment is administered once a year in grades 5 and 8.

Student Learning Expectations:

Our students will:

- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of Catholic Church teachings and practice.
- Be committed and responsible Christians that make Christ-like decisions.
- Foster a sense of belonging to the Catholic Community by taking part in Liturgical celebration, sacramental programs, prayer and understanding of Scripture and God’s faithfulness and love.
- Demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of diversity.
- Become responsible and committed learners, effective communicators and presenters, and creative thinkers and critical problem solvers.

- Seek academic and aesthetic excellence by demonstrating confidence, self-motivation, and perseverance.
- Develop their individual talents and a desire for lifelong learning.
- Demonstrate mastery and application of knowledge and skills gained.
- Develop cooperative and collaborative skills in learning and in resolving conflicts.
- Demonstrate respect for God, Church, authority, self, others and property.
- Participate in service learning activities that support the common good.

Telephone Numbers:

School: Tele: 508-996-1983
Fax: 508-996-1998

Saint Joseph School Academic Year Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

Threats of Violence:

Any threat of violence to students, faculty/staff, or the school in general (i.e. bomb threat), will be cause for expulsion from SJSF.

Traffic Policy:

The safety of our children at arrival and dismissal is paramount. We would like to thank you in advance for following the School's traffic policy as stated below. Please share this information with anyone who will be dropping off or picking up your child.

MORNING DROP OFF

- **7:45 – 8:00 AM** School Safety Zones
- All students will enter the school by the Northeast playground door on Homestead Avenue.
- **Any student that arrives after 8:00AM must enter by the main entrance on Spring Street and report to the office before joining the school in communal prayer.**

Parents **may not** park in the Drop Off Only Zone. This area is for drop off only. **Staff members will assist your child from the car to the building. Please remain in your vehicle.**

CROSSWALK ON HOMESTEAD

Parents are requested never to block the street, crosswalk, or neighbors' driveways. The crosswalk is for student use only.

- Homestead is a one-way (going north) from 8:00-9:00 a.m. (please head North when dropping student/students off between 7:45 = 8:00AM and 2:00-3:00 p.m. **ONLY**
- Handicapped Parking is available in the driveway west of the school on Spring Street.
- Please be respectful of our neighbors on Spring Street and Homestead Ave. by not parking or obstructing other private driveways. We also ask caution with proceeding out of the drop off zone and while proceeding down Homestead Ave. During our arrival and dismissal times the neighborhood children are often walking to and from their prospective schools.

Afternoon Pick-Up:

Parents are encouraged to remain outdoors and in their cars at time of dismissal. **All students K through 8 will exit the building from the Northeast playground door.**

Dismissal times are as follow:

- K Dismissed 2:00

- Grade 1 Dismissed 2:05
- Grade 2 Dismissed 2:10
- Grade 3 Dismissed 2:15

- Grade 4 Dismissed 2:20
- Grade 5 Dismissed 2:25
- Grades 6, 7, 8 Dismissed 2:30

• **Pre-School & Pre-K Dismissed 2:30 from the gym (Please park and come in for you preschool or pre-k learner).**

****PLEASE PLAN TO ARRIVE AT YOUR OLDEST CHILD'S DISMISSAL.**

YOUNGER SIBLINGS OR CARPOOL STUDENTS WILL REMAIN IN THEIR CLASSROOM OR WITH THEIR TEACHER UNTIL THE OLDEST SIBLING IS DISMISSED.

See Appendix A for Traffic Pattern Diagram

Tuition:

The tuition, related fees, and fund raising assessments are determined yearly by the Principal and Pastor and are based on the per pupil cost of maintaining the school and providing a quality education. The parent/guardian is responsible for the full payment of tuition, fundraising assessment, and all fees. There is a \$25.00 charge for returned checks.

Weapons:

Per Massachusetts Law, no weapons of any kind may be brought into SJSF, or on its property. Weapons include, but are not limited to, any type of knife, razor, taser, or gun. Any student found with a weapon, will face disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, a phone call to his/her parent/s and the incident will be reported to the police. (only law enforcement will be exempt)

**THE ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT
TO MAKE NEW POLICIES WHEN NECESSARY**

APPENDIX A

Saint Joseph School Middle School Behavior Policy Middle School Behavior Policy

Saint Joseph School, like all schools, has rules that members must abide by to ensure the institution's ability to succeed in its mission. The rules exist for the common good of all Saint Joseph School students and staff. Saint Joseph School is a Catholic school and as such is committed to the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical, cultural, ethical, and social growth of each student. The rules of the school have been designed to create a school climate in which this growth is possible. The underlying foundation of such an atmosphere is a mutual respect between students and staff and between the students themselves. A model of respect and empathy for the needs and rights of others ensures a learning environment and social support structure required for each individual to put forth his/her very best effort.

In addition to the need for regulations and policies, every successful institution has benefits for those who fulfill the requirements that have been put forth. In this fashion the Saint Joseph School Middle School Behavior Policy works on two levels. First and foremost, it is the intention of this policy to show appreciation for good behavior through acknowledgement, praise, and merit based incentives. It is our belief that the optimal way to encourage students in good behavior is to make it known immediately when praiseworthy behavior is seen. Therefore, in addition to the necessary list of regulations and consequences, the following pages contain the outline of a policy of positive reinforcement that will be in place in the St. Joseph Middle School.

This Middle School discipline policy should be reviewed as a supplement to the school handbook and the policies herein do not supersede any policy found in the handbook. This policy's purpose then is to provide information specific to the Middle School's implementation of the policies provided in the school handbook. It should also be understood that the school rules found both here and in the school handbook are not all encompassing and situations may arise that require disciplinary actions as determined by the administration.

Positive Reinforcement

A school by its very nature as an instructional institution is set up to help students learn to behave and perform in ways that are beneficial to themselves and the world around them. When students are able to see the merits of their positive actions, they are more likely to repeat those actions and foster a positive self-image. The school, by necessity, must correct inappropriate behavior, but ultimately, it's the school's goal to cultivate and reward positive behaviors. If students feel that their efforts are appreciated, they are more likely to enjoy their learning experience. Students should be aware of the school's expectations and should be made aware when they have reached those expectations. In this way, students can proceed forward in their social lives and academic pursuits with dignity and assurance. The following is a list of incentives that will occur as a result of positive action from students.

1. Students will have the opportunity **to earn special privileges**, for demonstrating good citizenship, and positive behavior as well as completing all work assignments and academic obligations. Students not meeting these expectations **may be required to stay after school or be excluded from a "special" for completion of assignments.**
2. Teachers may send home notices of students' performance academically or socially from time to

time. A phone call home or email to inform parents that a student is doing well is another way the teachers can reward good performance. It is important to have feedback from teachers on positive occasions so that parents as well as students realize when the students are meeting a teacher's expectations.

3. Each teacher will have his or her own system in place to show appreciation for a student's hard work. In this way, homework will not only have a positive impact on a student's grades and in class understanding, but it will also help students to understand how much their teachers appreciate their hard work and dedication.
4. When students behave in such a manner that it is clear to their teachers they respect their fellow classmates, it allows teachers the opportunity to make instruction more creative. Group projects can make it more exciting for students to learn in all subject areas. The Middle School teachers have already discussed several such options and if the Middle School climate permits, there will be opportunities for students to work in an environment that they will most likely find stimulating and rewarding.

Consequences for Negative Actions

- I. **Verbal Request:** A verbal request to change a behavior will be made in the case of any behavior problem in or out of class that is not an immediate threat to the well being of others or the teacher's ability to instruct. Most student behavior problems can be solved reasonably at this level.
- II. **Discussion Outside/After Class:** If a student fails to respond to verbal request(s), the teacher may choose to discuss the problem with the student individually. The purpose of this type of discussion is for the teacher and a student to come to an agreement on why a certain behavior has been a problem and what must be done to avoid future consequences.
- III. **Personal Detention:** Personal detentions are issued by individual teachers to correct behavior, which cannot be modified by a simple warning or discussion. This will include disrespect and missing assignments. Detentions will be 30 to 60 minutes in length and will be served after school on the date that is on the detention slip. Detention slips will be signed by the teacher and must also be signed by the parent(s) before the detention is served. These detentions will not be recorded on the report card. They are to be served for the teacher who issued them and that teacher will keep the signed detention slip for their records and reference. With the 4th personal detention an office referral to the Principal will be made.
- IV. **Contact Parent/Reflective Essay:** If a student's behavior requires immediate discussion with parents or if behavior(s) that resulted in personal detention have not changed, the teacher will contact the parents either by phone call or in a letter sent home. The teacher and the parents may then decide that a conference is necessary and a date will be set to meet at mutual convenience before or after school.
At this time it is also important that the student be aware of the need for improved behavior and they will therefore be given a written assignment. The student must write a five paragraph essay detailing the reason(s) why their behavior was detrimental to the learning environment and/or school climate and how a shift in behavior could better benefit themselves and the rest of the school. **The format of this essay is attached (Appendix C). The essay will be read by the teacher who makes the assignment and the principal. When it is completed satisfactorily it will be kept with the teacher's records.**

V. Office Referral: In some instances it may be necessary to send a student out of the classroom to prevent further disruption. This can happen in incidents where a student continues to disrupt the class despite other forms of teacher intervention. Office referrals can also occur if a student's initial negative behavior is of a serious enough nature to warrant removal from the classroom. It is the goal of Administration to not have students removed from class for longer **than 15 minutes**. These minutes are sufficient time for students to discuss their point of view and determine student and learning environment needs. Administrative detention or other disciplinary action may result from an office referral.

VI. Administrative Detention: These detentions are for more serious infractions or for behaviors that occur outside of the classroom while in the care of a faculty or staff member that is not a Middle School teacher or substitute teacher. Administrative detentions may also be issued for less serious offenses that have persisted despite attempts to modify student behavior with warnings, personal detentions, or parent contact. The administrative detention will be one hour long after school on the date provided on the detention slip. However, unlike personal detentions will be recorded on the student's report card and a copy of the detention notice will be kept in the office file. At this point, the principal may have discussed the behavior with the student and may choose to call a parent conference to discuss student behavior and future consequences if the behavior persists. Administrative detentions are to be signed by the principal, the parent(s) and teacher in instances of teacher referral.

VII. Contract, Suspension, and Expulsion: If a student over the course of time refuses to comply with school standards and policies, further disciplinary action may result. The principal reserves the right to make decisions on suspension, contractual agreements, and expulsion. Any of these three options may be chosen by the principal if a student's behavior is persistent or in any way damaging to the school's mission or climate. The pastor and the principal reserve the final authority in all matters of discipline.

The following is a list (not all inclusive) of possible actions the principal may take:

- **Contract:** A behavior contract is a final attempt to modify the behavior of a student. The contract will be signed by the parents, the student, and the principal. Contracts are approved by the Pastor and Diocese of Fall River Catholic Schools Office. The contract will specify the school's expectations and the exact consequence that will occur if those expectations are not met.
- **Suspension:** The principal may choose to suspend a student's attendance in class if she sees fit. Suspensions will be held either in school or out of school based upon the principal's decision. A student is responsible for completing all work missed during a suspension.
- **Expulsion:** If a student's behavior is deemed dangerous to the school, any of its members, or the ability of the school to function effectively in its mission, a student may be asked to leave the school.

APPENDIX B

Reflective Essay Format

Please answer the questions below using the format for a five-paragraph essay that applies to all school assignments. Why was your behavior inappropriate and what can you do to prevent yourself from repeating this behavior? You **must** provide a specific example from the Bible that is relevant to your writing.

Some areas to reflect upon that will provide you with adequate material for writing are: (these questions are not mandatory but rather are meant to help you format your essay.)

1. How did my behavior affect other students and the learning environment? (their feelings? ability to learn?)
2. How did my behavior affect my teacher or principal? (their feelings? their ability to teach/protect the rights of others?)
3. What is the purpose of the rule that I broke? What would happen if everyone were to disregard that rule?
4. What long-term consequences can I expect if I continue this behavior? (academically? disciplinary? socially?)
5. In what ways would I improve myself as a person by preventing this behavior from occurring in the future?

**THE ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT
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Saint Joseph School 2023 - 2024

Student Handbook Contract Signature Page

I have read and reviewed the contents of the St. Joseph School Handbook with my child/children. We understand the policies and philosophy of the school and will abide by them. Your acknowledgement and signature will be kept on file for 2023-2024 school year. This document should be retained for ongoing review with your child/children.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____
Please Print

Student Signature: _____
Please have your child sign form if they are in grades 3-8.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____
Please Print

Student Signature: _____
Please have your child sign form if they are in grades 3-8.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____
Please Print

Student Signature: _____
Please have your child sign form if they are in grades 3-8.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____
Please Print

Student Signature: _____
Please have your child sign form if they are in grades 3-8.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____
Please Print

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Please View Chart below.

