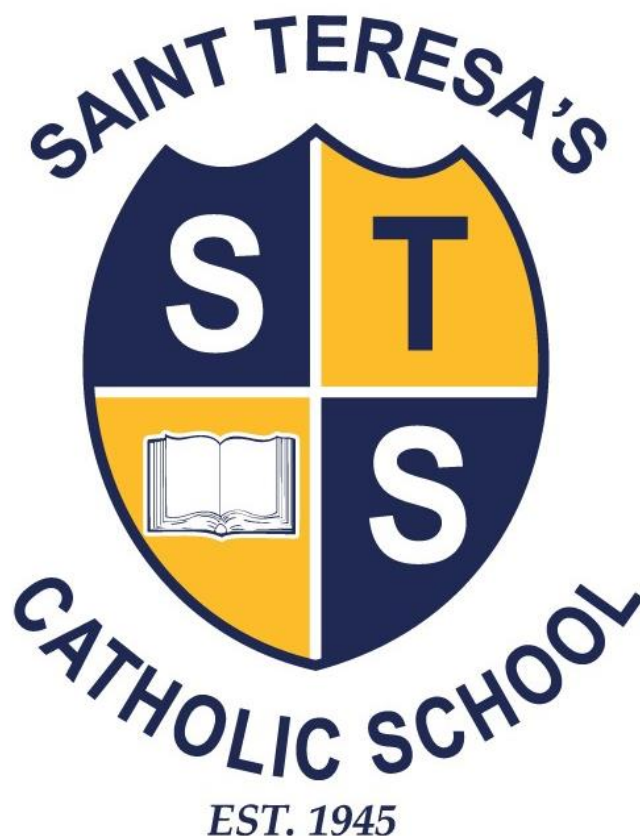


# St. Teresa's Catholic School

## Student & Parent Handbook



417 Edgewood Lane  
Albany, GA 31707  
229-436-0134  
[www.stteresas.org](http://www.stteresas.org)

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to St. Teresa's Catholic School! On Sept. 5, 1945, St. Teresa's Catholic School opened its doors with 33 students from kindergarten through sixth grade. It was staffed by four Adorers of the Blood of Christ, Sisters from Columbia, Pennsylvania. Our school currently is staffed by lay teachers and employees.

In choosing St. Teresa's Catholic School, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education. We appreciate the opportunity to work as partners with you as parents, the primary educators, for the academic, spiritual, and moral growth of your child.

If at any time you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school office. We are delighted to have you as members of our school family. Outstanding communication is a goal of every school because it maximizes the educational benefits for its students. If we work together as partners, we will empower our children to reach their highest potential and take responsibility for their behavior and learning.

The students and staff at St. Teresa's Catholic School recognize the need for order and discipline in the formation of responsible Christians; therefore, policies and rules have been established to create an atmosphere of respect for all members of the STS community.

This handbook is a reference, covering many of the philosophies, policies, and procedures of St. Teresa's Catholic School. Please read it and discuss the contents with your children. Your familiarity with this handbook greatly improves communication between the school and your family. Students and parents sign an acknowledgment form at registration that states they have read the handbook and follow the rules and policies.

A high value is placed on self-direction, personal responsibility and self-discipline as a means for developing the self. All members of the St. Teresa's Catholic School community are expected to reflect the ideals and standards of the school, both on and off campus.

Also, please keep in mind that this is a living document. The school reserves the right to change content procedures and policies in order to better serve the needs of our community.

In Christ,

Susie Hatcher  
Principal

O Christ, our Teacher,

You invite Your faithful people to make disciples in Your name and to announce good news to the poor. We thank You for the gift of Catholic schools, where

The message of Your life, death, and resurrection is proclaimed,  
Christian community is experienced,  
Service to our brothers and sisters is modeled,  
And worship of You is cultivated.

Increase our zeal for ensuring that all children and families can benefit from a high quality Catholic education, and that Catholic schools grow in their ability to nurture the soul of our nation.

We ask this through the intercession of Our Lady, Mother of Catholic Schools. Amen.

Alliance for Catholic Education  
University of Notre Dame

## Table of Contents

Philosophy and Goals of Catholic Education	Page 5
Mission of St. Teresa's Catholic School	Pages 5 – 6
History of St. Teresa's Catholic School	Page 6
Parents' Role in Education/Parents as Partners	Page 6
Accreditation	Page 7
Administration and Faculty Information	Pages 7 – 9
Admissions Policies - Statement of Assurance	Page 9
Financial/Tuition Policy	Pages 9 – 11
Academic Policies	Pages 11 – 21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum</li> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Grading</li> <li>• Promotion/Retention/Transfer</li> <li>• Academic Probation</li> </ul>	
Sacramental Preparation/Celebrations of Faith/Expectations of Participation	Pages 21 -22
Extracurricular Activities	Pages 22 – 23
Attendance	Page 23 – 25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tardy Policy</li> <li>• Absence due to vacations</li> </ul>	
Calendar	Pages 25 – 28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Hours</li> </ul>	
Communication -procedures of communication between parents, teachers and/or administration	Pages 28 – 29
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency School Closing - Inclement Weather</li> </ul>	
Confidentiality	Pages 29 – 33
Cell Phones	Page 33
Health	Pages 33 – 34
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immunizations</li> </ul>	
Medication Administration	Page 34
Child Abuse Laws	Pages 35 – 36
Sexual Harassment	Pages 36 – 38
Custody Policies	Page 38
Code of Conduct and Discipline	Page 38 – 46
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detention</li> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Expulsion</li> </ul>	
Field Trip Policies and Forms	Pages 46 – 49
Dress Code and Uniform Policy	Pages 49 – 52
Emergency Management and Safety Protocols	Pages 52 – 54
Drug and Tobacco Free Environment	Pages 54 – 55
Pregnant Students	Page 55
Lockers	Pages 55 – 56
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search and Seizure</li> </ul>	
Weapons Policy	Page 56
Student/Family Directory	Page 56
Parent Organization and Volunteerism	Pages 56 – 57
Photo/Media Consent	Pages 57 – 58
Acceptable Use Policy for Technology and Internet	Pages 58 – 60
Social Media Policy	Pages 60 – 62
Early Learning Program Policies	Pages 62 – 63
School's Right to Amend	Page 63

## **Philosophy and Goals of Catholic Education**

St. Teresa's Catholic School is a Catholic-Christian educational community. Our primary goal is to prepare our students spiritually, academically, physically, and socially for their mission in this complex world. As we achieve our educational goals, students will be primed for a kind of success that transcends this life, reaching even to that life of eternal happiness in heaven. At the same time, we strive to instill in all students a positive attitude toward learning, something which enables those students to strive for the excellence that is within their reach.

### **Belief Statements-**

- We believe in *Self-Discovery and Personal Growth* in a vibrant environment promoting life-long learning.
- We believe in *Stewardship* by sharing God given gifts to positively influence an ever-changing world.
- We believe in *Diversity* where we welcome students, families, faiths, and backgrounds in a supportive and safe community.
- We believe in *Academic Excellence* through dedicated teachers, smaller class sizes, and differentiated instruction, and a whole child approach.
- We believe in *Faith and Moral Values* integrated into curriculum and school life to serve others with compassion and integrity.

As Catholic-Christian educators, both the principal and the faculty have committed themselves to Catholic-Christian values, which include the following:

- making sure that prayer is a part of the total school program.
- establishing a community of faith in the school.
- creating an atmosphere enlivened by the spirit of freedom, justice, and charity.
- leading students through a caring, loving discipline to the discipleship of Christ.
- supporting parents in their efforts to guide their children to a mature faith.

St. Teresa's Catholic School places an emphasis on nurturing the Catholic-Christian faith, and it prepares its students for an ever-changing 21<sup>st</sup>-century society.

## **Mission of St. Teresa's Catholic School**

***The community of St. Teresa's Catholic School prepares all learners to be disciples of Christ while pursuing academic excellence and moral development.***

Vision Statement- St. Teresa's School strives to become a nationally recognized Catholic School where each student is valued as a unique child of God and supported in reaching their spiritual, academic, and moral potential within a safe and nurturing environment.

Motto- Learning and Serving within the Catholic Tradition

Taglines- #CrusadersforChrist. #AllInForChrist #CrusaderPride

At St. Teresa's Catholic School, we accomplish the vision and mission through dedicated teachers, smaller class sizes, differentiated instruction, and a whole child approach. At St. Teresa's, we welcome and respect all students, families, faiths, and backgrounds in a supportive and safe environment.

The vision and mission statements are the driving force behind St. Teresa's Catholic School. Because of the unique perspective, we can meet the needs of each child in a special and personal way. The mission of St. Teresa's Catholic School is to educate all students in a Catholic-Christian environment. We promote the value of the individual as we encourage mutual respect through our Catholic Faith and Traditions. Through active learning techniques that include critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making skills, our students are prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing multicultural society in the light of Christ's teachings.

## **History of St. Teresa's Catholic School**

St. Teresa's Catholic School opened its doors on September 5, 1945, at Residence Avenue with 33 students from kindergarten through grade six. Within a few years, seventh and eighth-grade classes were added. By 1952, the school had outgrown its original home, and the present facility at Edgewood and Maryland was constructed to house 150 students.

Continuing growth over the years necessitated two additions, one that was completed in 1957 and the other in 1965. In 2016, the need to add high school courses came to fruition. Over the next three years, high school grades 9-12 were added. Today, St. Teresa's Catholic School consists of grades Pre-K3 through 12 with twenty-one classrooms, a technology lab, a science lab, a media center, a cafeteria, and a gymnasium.

St. Teresa's Catholic School is staffed by credentialed, committed professionals who are qualified to teach in the state of Georgia and dedicated to the ideals of Catholic education. As the only Catholic school in the area, St. Teresa's Catholic School maintains strong relationships with the broader community by offering educational programs that connect students with people in the city and even throughout the nation.

## **Parents' Role in Education/Parents as Partners**

### **Staff-Parent Relationships**

Parents have the primary responsibility and obligation for educating their children. St. Teresa's Catholic School exists to help parents with this responsibility. For this reason, there must be a close, cooperative relationship between parent and teacher. In each family, children learn from their earliest years to develop a knowledge of God, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor according to the faith received in Baptism. Parents are to be commended for the sacrifices that they make to ensure that their children receive a quality Catholic education. Good relationships are to be fostered by speaking well of parents, speaking kindly to parents, sharing educational information with parents, sharing insights about children in a professional way, and manifesting a real interest in—and love for—each child. When staff and parents communicate, on or off campus, there should be no criticism of our administrators, faculty members, parents, or students. Discussions between staff and parents must focus only on their child. Discussions regarding the behavior and attitude of every child should be objective and framed in positive language.

The goal of St. Teresa's Catholic School is to cooperate with its Church community and its students' parents in guiding the development of God-given talents and Christian ideals. To understand the Catholic philosophy of education is to understand the Catholic philosophy of life. St. Teresa's Catholic School serves the family, the Church, the parish, and the state by helping its students realize their religious and educational potentials.

## **Accreditation**

All educational programs under the purview of the Office of Catholic Schools are accredited as a district by Cognia and must maintain that status by complying with policies, standards, and operational guidelines as set forth by the accrediting body and the Office of Catholic Schools.

As such, St. Teresa's Catholic School is fully accredited by Cognia, the parent company of the AdvanEd and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The school is also a member of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

Early Learning Programs in the Diocese of Savannah must initially certify with Bright from the Start and will be considered a regular part of the school system's accreditation. In accordance with Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (Bright from the Start) regulations, St. Teresa's Catholic School, as a religious institution and an accredited facility, is EXEMPT from Bright from the Start licensing requirements.

District-wide accreditation will be maintained. Each school is required to maintain compliance with all standards and indicators of the accrediting body and the Diocese of Savannah. The district accreditation is renewed on a 5-year cycle.

The Office of Catholic Schools conducts interim Quality Assurance Visits to verify ongoing compliance.

## **Administration and Faculty Information**

Good interpersonal relationships are essential for the proper operation of the school. As a faith community, we understand and value the concept of mutual respect and firmly believe in the message of Luke 6:31, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you".

### *Pastor*

The pastor is the spiritual leader of the school. As such, he offers counsel and leadership in the area of religious instruction. Importantly, he provides the opportunity for students to receive the sacraments along with his spiritual care on a regular basis. In consultation with the principal and other members of the school community, he works to promote a Catholic-Christian atmosphere and assists in carrying out the school's fundamental mission.

### *Principal*

The principal, as the administrator of the school, provides the professional leadership necessary to develop, maintain, and support the academic excellence and Catholic-Christian atmosphere for which the Catholic school exists. The principal, in exercising her duties, is aware that the administration of the school depends upon the cooperation of the teachers, parents, students, and the community at large.

### *Teacher*

The effectiveness of a school depends largely upon the dedication and professional expertise of its teaching staff. Every teacher must be certified or working towards certification in the state of Georgia to teach in each specific academic subject. The Diocese of Savannah must approve each

teacher of Religion. Above all, each teacher's primary responsibility lies in establishing a faith community where every child can achieve his or her academic and spiritual potential.

### *Staff-Principal Relationships*

The principal's task is to execute the policies of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Savannah. The principal supervises the operation of the entire school. Staff-Principal relationships should be based on the understanding that the welfare of the children is paramount and is in the common interest of both parties. Each should have faith in, and respect for, the other's ethical standards, personal integrity, and professional competence. Loyalty and support between the principal and the staff are required for a good working relationship. Communication must be honest and direct. The staff must support the decisions of the principal and refrain from discussing professional differences with students, parents, or other employees. Any breach of professional confidence may be cause for termination of employment.

### *Staff-Staff Relationships*

All staff members must realize that their peers are much more than fellow employees. The St. Teresa's Catholic School team (teachers, support personnel, and administrators) is a Catholic-Christian community and a living witness to the faith we are striving to impart on our students. The ministry of teaching thrives in an atmosphere of candidness, honesty, and mutual charity. Staff members should have faith in, and respect for, each other. The actions or teaching abilities of faculty members shall be discussed only in a professional manner. All faculty members should be considered as equally important members of our team. Interactions with colleagues should be honest, and when differences occur, both parties should work toward a mutually satisfactory resolution.

### *Staff-Student Relationships*

"Teacher" is one of the most honored roles in the development of students. Staff members must have the deepest regard for the dignity of each child and offer opportunities for each child to develop his/her unique talents to the maximum capacity. Academic and personal student issues must be discussed only with the immediate staff on professional terms. When a problem arises, the principal must be advised immediately, and the situation resolved.

### *School Advisory Board*

The School Advisory Board of St. Teresa's Catholic School is dedicated to assuring that the teachings and values of the Catholic Church are reflected in all aspects of school life. The goal is to help shape the school community, providing the necessary resources to ensure a nurturing, safe, Christ-centered environment, and supporting and furthering the mission of the school.

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to:

- Support effective administration, operation, and maintenance of the school.
- Provide a means of communication with the school community.
- Review and discuss programs in light of the administrative vision for the school.
- Develop and strengthen the financial functioning and viability of the school.
- Assist the administration in the implementation of the policies of the Diocese of Savannah.
- Assist in the development of school policies and help assess their effectiveness.
- Develop and assess the effectiveness of a long-term strategic plan.

The board is an advisory, not policymaking, body; therefore, this council does not determine the school's approach to discipline, educational curriculum, or personnel.

## **Admissions Policies – Statement of Assurance**

### *Admissions Policy*

Students entering St. Teresa's Catholic School must meet certain minimum scholastic requirements, which are established by the school's administration. They must have an acceptable character, a recommendation from their previous school (when applicable), and a willingness to conform to St. Teresa's philosophy of education.

New students registering in grades 1-12 must present recent grades, test scores, and discipline records from their previous school before they are accepted. We will accept fax copies of records until permanent records are received.

Students requesting admission into PreK3 must be three years old and toilet trained by September 1st of the year they begin. Age requirements progress accordingly, such that those entering PreK4 and those entering Kindergarten must be four and five, respectively.

Each new student must present a baptismal certificate, if Catholic, along with a birth certificate, social security card, immunization certificate (GA State form #3231) and an eye, ear and dental certificate (GA State form #3300). These documents become a part of the student's permanent record.

The order of admissions to St. Teresa's Catholic School is as follows:

1. Catholics
2. Non-Catholics

Students are admitted in order of registration within each of the above categories. Those families with other children in the school are given first preference.

### *Statement of Assurance*

Schools in the Diocese of Savannah admit students regardless of sex (unless traditionally single sex school), national origin, or disability, if with reasonable accommodation on part of the school, the disabled person could be accommodated. In admitting students, Catholic schools give preferences to Catholic students whose family is registered at the sponsoring parish; secondly, to the Catholic students whose family is registered in a parish other than the sponsoring parish; finally, to non-Catholic students.

## **Financial/Tuition Policy**

### *Registration Procedure*

Students presently attending St. Teresa's Catholic School will re-register online through FACTS during the school year. Registrants will be required to pay a non-refundable registration fee at that time. If this fee is not paid by the deadline placement in the class will be lost if there is a waiting list.

New students (PreK3-12) will register online through FACTS beginning in January. Registrants will be required to pay a non-refundable registration fee at that time. Class openings will be filled

at registration time on a first come and first serve basis. All registered students will have a space in the school if they meet the academic and discipline requirements and adhere to the school philosophy and policies stated in the handbook. When classes are filled, additional students will be placed on a waiting list. Openings in classes will be filled from the waiting list according to the order of registration.

The school, through its administration, reserves the right to request that a student or parent who finds the philosophy and policies of the school unacceptable pursue their educational needs elsewhere.

### *Tuition Payment Options*

#### Option #1 – 100% Prepayment by July 1st

Option #2 – 50/50 Prepayment- Two payments of 50% of the total tuition amount. Payments due July 1st and January 1st.

Option #3 – Monthly payment (FACTS Program)- Monthly tuition payments will be automatically drafted from your checking or savings account (your choice) beginning July through April (10 months) or July through June (12 months). There is a \$50 processing fee per family each year to enroll in this program. You must complete the FACTS enrollment form online yearly.,

### *Enrollment Fees*

All students in Grades PreK3-12 pay a specified enrollment fee. The enrollment fee is due on or before a specified date to obtain the reduced rate.

### *Entering or Withdrawing During the School Year*

Students entering school after classes begin will be charged the enrollment fee and the tuition for the remaining months of the school year.

Students withdrawing early from school will be responsible for paying the entire remaining balance of the annual tuition. Any student asked to leave or is expelled will also be responsible for paying the annual tuition in-full. If families are transferred due to job relocation or transferred with the military, they will not be responsible for any remaining tuition balance (with proper documentation). However, they will be charged tuition through the month in which they withdraw. Students who withdraw with relocation or military transfer and who have paid full or half-tuition will be refunded a pro-rated amount for the months remaining in the school year or half year, whichever applies. Students records and transcripts will be released when all accounts (tuition, lunch, extended day, etc.) are paid in full.

### *Delinquency Procedure*

If all fees/tuition payments are not paid in full, records will be withheld. This applies to both transferring and withdrawing students. All tuition/fees must be paid to receive a student's report card and progress report each marking period.

## Scholarships

Parish- There are scholarships monies available for families who have demonstrated a need for financial help with preference given to parish families. Families must apply through FACTS online and then meet with the pastor and principal. Scholarships are not automatically renewed from year to year. They must be applied for annually. The deadline to apply for a scholarship is April 1 for the upcoming school year.

Diocesan- Financial aid is available through the Diocesan scholarships. Financial assistance is for eligible African American and American Indian students (Catholic or non-Catholic), Hispanic students (Catholic or non-Catholic), Catholic students of all races/ethnicities, and non-Catholic students of all races/ethnicities. Families must apply through FACTS online and then meet with the pastor and principal. Scholarships are not automatically renewed from year to year. They must be applied for annually. The deadline to apply for a scholarship is April 1 for the upcoming school year.

GRACE Scholars- Applications are available in the school office for obtaining a GRACE Scholarship. The state of Georgia allows Georgia taxpayers to give a portion of their GA tax dollars to the private school of their choice. Funds are dependent upon the number of people/amounts of money donated each year. Scholarship money is available for new families coming from public schools or entering school for the first time. To apply for this scholarship an application must be completed before March 1<sup>st</sup> with both a GRACE application and through FACTS. Families must also meet with the pastor and principal.

## **Academic Policy**

### *Curriculum*

#### Religion

The first and most important function of a Catholic education is to develop the child's relationship with God. Religion, as taught in school, is a way of life, not merely another subject. The religion class lays the foundation for the formation of attitudes and the building of principles upon which the child will base his/her life. This way of life must be supplemented in the home. If the child's actual living world at home is in contradiction with what is taught at school, the child will never be able to correlate the two.

Each elementary school shall offer a full year of religious education for every grade level in the school. All students shall attend religion classes, including those who are not of the Catholic faith.

For high school religion courses, all students are required to complete 120 clock hours of classroom instruction per year, (i.e., one Carnegie unit). Students shall take part in a religion course each semester, unless otherwise approved by the Office of Catholic Schools. Core religion courses must be taken on the campus of the high school.

#### Participation in Religious Education Programs

In all Catholic schools, every student shall participate in the formal Catholic religious education program regardless of the faith identity of the student.

## Teaching the Faith

All Catholic schools shall adhere to all Diocesan policies regarding religious education to ensure that the faith is effectively and authentically taught in the school.

### Oversight of the Bishop

All Catholic schools shall conform in all matters of religious education to the oversight of the Bishop.

### Teaching of Religion

The teaching of religion in all Catholic schools shall be subject to the same standards of professionalism and excellence as all subjects in the school to include, but not be restricted to, allocation of resources, teacher professional development, evaluation, assessment, and hours of instruction.

### Religious Education Foundation

The religious education program of all Catholic schools shall have as its foundation the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, the *General Directory of Catechesis* and the *National Directory of Catechesis*, and also follow national and Diocesan directives. These programs shall conform to all academic excellence policies.

### Religion Teachers

All religion teachers shall be practicing Catholics, qualified and certified to teach religion by the Diocese and have a deep knowledge of doctrine and live as an authentic witness of the faith.

Catholic parents are expected to see that their children (PreK-12) attend Sunday Mass regularly. Students who have received the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation are encouraged to participate in the Mass.

The Family Life Program is taught in Grades PreK-8 during the second semester each year. This program teaches the skills and knowledge of family living and helps students to develop respect for all life, especially human life. With this program, the students are helped to form specific values toward which the Catholic person strives.

All students shall be required to participate in a safe environment program approved by the Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection.

## Academic

Our academic program places an emphasis on mathematics and language arts (which includes reading, phonics, grammar, spelling, handwriting, and composition skills). A solid curriculum in religion, science, social studies, Spanish, technology, physical education, fine arts, and media are also part of the school program.

Twenty-four units shall be required for graduation from a secondary school. These units shall include:

- 4 in religious education
- 4 in mathematics
- 4 in science
- 4 in English
- 3 in social studies
- 2 in foreign language
- 1 in fine arts
- 1 in physical education/health
- 1 in electives

Technology – Internet use agreement for students, Diocese of Savannah School System, will be sent home to be signed and returned before the student may use the school computers.

The Media Center is an important part of our school. The Open Media concept enables students to come to the library to work on reports, research, and computers. Students are asked to observe the following rules:

Students may check out one book at each visit.

- Books may be kept for two weeks and then renewed.
- The fine for any overdue book is \$.05 per school day. Fines are not charged for days students are absent.
- Students may not check out another book if they owe a fine or have an overdue book.
- All books are to be returned prior to Christmas vacation. All books are returned at the end of the school year before report cards are issued.
- Torn books are not repaired by the student or parents but are repaired by the librarian.
- Any damaged or lost books will be charged to the student.
- Report cards may be withheld until all books are returned and all fines are paid.
- Students are expected to behave in a quiet, mannerly way at all times in the library.
- The Media Center is fully automated.

## Homework

Homework is an integral part of the school program, and every teacher is at liberty to give homework to aid the students in advancing their studies. Homework should be meaningful and developmentally appropriate. With departmentalization, the subject area teachers shall coordinate the amount of homework assigned.

Since individual differences cause children to vary greatly, it is impossible to set strict time limits on the amount of homework given. If a child, working steadily, cannot complete the work in a reasonable amount of time, the parent and the teacher should meet to discuss the problem.

Parents are encouraged to take an interest in homework assignments to detect problems in understanding. Homework should be checked by parents for neatness and accuracy and a student should never be allowed to turn in homework that is incomplete or slovenly. Parents must refrain from excusing the child from homework in order that he/she may attend a party, a ballgame, or any other social events. Homework is given for drill and practice, for remedial activity, and for special projects. Parents should not do homework for their children.

## Grading System

Report cards are distributed quarterly (9 weeks). Report card conferences will be held after the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> nine-week periods. Parents will receive report cards at the conferences or copies will be sent home in the event of a phone conference. Parents must return reservation forms for conference times. Report cards are a means of informing parents of the student's progress. Report cards will be sent home after the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks. Parents are also able to check grades on FACTS SIS on a weekly basis.

Assessment may be accomplished through written test, oral quizzes, and written reports, and discussion. Each teacher shall provide ongoing assessment of the student's educational progress and communicate progress to parents. Grades should reflect mastery of skills.

### Standards Based Grading - PreK4 through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

A standards-based grading system measures a student's mastery of grade-level standards by prioritizing the most recent, consistent level of performance. A student who may have struggled at the beginning of a content or course when first learning new material, may still be able to demonstrate mastery of key content/concepts by the end of a grading period. In traditional grading systems, a student's performance for an entire quarter is averaged together. Early quiz scores that were low would be averaged together with more proficient performance later in the course, resulting in a lower overall grade than current performance indicates.

Standards-based report cards also separate academic performance from work habits/behavior in order to provide parents a more accurate view of a student's progress in both areas. Effort, participation, cooperation, and attendance are reported separately, not as a part of academic performance.

A student's performance on a series of assessments will be used to determine overall mastery, much as it has in the past. The difference will be reporting of mastery levels instead of numbers of letters ("Developing / Approaching Mastery" instead of "B"). Levels of achievement will be clearly defined. Practice assignments and homework will serve primarily as a source of feedback and instructional support for both students and teachers.

The report card will seek to provide meaningful feedback so both students and parents can track progress toward mastery of key academic concepts, as well as reflect upon strengths and weaknesses. In a standards-based approach, parents and students will see consistent grading practices throughout each school—and throughout the diocese. Teachers will grade based on what each student has learned and how that student meets the standards. In no way does a 4, 3, 2, 1 relate to A, B, C, D letter grades.

A score of (4) would indicate that a student exceeds grade level standards at this time by consistently demonstrating an advanced level of understanding and/or the ability to apply their knowledge at a higher level.

A score of (3) would indicate that a student has met the level of standard at this time by independently achieving the standard. The student demonstrates mastery of the standard.

A score of (2) would indicate that a student is progressing toward grade level standards at this time by developing an understanding of a standard. Additional instruction and/or support is still needed.

A score of (1) would indicate that a student does not meet the grade level standard at this time. The student has minimal understanding of a standard. The student shows limited evidence of understanding the standard.

A score of (N/A) would indicate that the standard is not being assessed during this marking period.

#### Numerical Grading – 3<sup>rd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Numerical grades are used for all subjects in Grades 3-12. Student grades in third through twelfth grade are determined by class work, classroom performance, projects, long-and short-term assignments, as well as formative and summative assessments. At the halfway mark for each quarter, progress reports are available for parents to view on FACTS SIS.

Students are graded on the following scale in grades 3-8:

<b>A</b>	<b>94 – 100</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>86 – 93</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>77 – 85</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>70 – 76</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Below 70</b>

Diocesan schools are to utilize this scale for reporting effort and conduct for students in grades PreK – 8. This scale may also be utilized for reporting grades for classes in the *Fine Arts* (Music, Art, Performing Arts – dance, etc.), *Foreign Languages* (Spanish, Latin, French, etc.), *Physical Education* and other course electives (Speech or Debate Classes, Personal Finance, Home Economics classes, etc.).

<b>E = Excellent</b>	<b>94 – 100</b>
<b>S = Satisfactory</b>	<b>86 – 93</b>
<b>N = Needs Improvement</b>	<b>70 – 85</b>
<b>U = Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>69 and below</b>

#### Ninth through Twelfth Grade:

St. Teresa’s School uses a weighted grade point system to determine class rank for high school students at the conclusion of a semester.

Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	CP Course Points	Honors Course Points	AP/DE Course Points
A	100 - 90	4.0	4.5	5.0
B	89 – 80	3.0	3.5	4.0
C	79 -70	2.0	2.5	3.0
F	69 – 0	0.0	0.0	0.0
INC	Incomplete			

#### Notes:

1. St. Teresa’s utilizes a 4.0 grading scale with additional weights for Honors (.5), and Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment (1.0) when the grade point average (GPA) is calculated.
2. Parents and students need to be aware that colleges, universities, and scholarship boards may require the transcripts submitted to be converted to a “true 4.0” or other scale.

3. Eighth grade coursework is listed on the St. Teresa's high school transcript and will count toward high school graduation requirements but not towards the GPA. Students who have accelerated work from the eighth grade may be placed in advanced high school classes.
4. Honors, AP, and Dual Enrollment courses are weighted. For honors courses, the final grade has five additional points added to the earned grade. For AP and Dual Enrollment courses, the semester grade has one full point added to the final grade. However, no weight can change a failing grade to passing, and no weight will be added to a failing grade.

### Final Course Grades

Semester grades are calculated using the following weights:

Quarter 1 – 40%  
Quarter 2 – 40%  
Semester Exam 20%

Credit in a full year course is awarded based on the average of both semesters. Students who earn a failing grade for one semester can still earn full credit for the course with a combined semester average of at least 70. Grades earned from other schools are not averaged with St. Teresa's grades to meet the 70 average for credit in a full year course. Credit earned in summer school is listed in addition to, but not in place of, regular coursework.

### Semester Exam Exemptions

Semester exam exemptions are offered to at the end of school year based on the following criteria:

- With an "A" average in a class at the end of the semester, a student can exempt the exam with 5 or less absences in that class.
- With an "B" average in a class at the end of the semester, a student can exempt the exam with 3 or less absences in that class.
- 3 tardies in any class is equal to one absence.
- Grades of a C or less in a class will require the student to take the semester exam.

There is no limit to the number of exams a senior can exempt per semester. All students enrolled in an AP will be required to take the AP exam.

### Incomplete Grades

A grade of Incomplete (INC) may be given in cases where the teacher, in consultation with the assistant principal, determines it is appropriate. Normally, without appropriate medical documentation, students who receive incompletes have two weeks to complete the required work. If the work is not completed by the end of the two weeks, grades will be calculated by including zeros for all missing work.

Parent communication regarding grades is as follows:

PreK3 – Grade 2 - Daily folders will be sent home with each student. These will contain papers (tests or other) and a form to be signed by the parent and returned the following day. This procedure will enable the parents to be aware of their child's progress in academics and behavior. Please be aware that the papers included in the folders will not indicate the *exact* grade your son/daughter is earning in a subject.

Grades 3 – 8 - Tuesday Folders will be sent home with each student every Tuesday. These will contain papers (tests or other) and a form to be signed by the parent and returned the following day. This procedure will enable the parents to be aware of their child's progress in academics and behavior. Please be aware that the papers included in the folders will not indicate the *exact* grade your son/daughter is earning in a subject. Grades may be viewed by parents on FACTS SIS.

Grades 9 – 12 - no folders will be sent home with high school students. Students will be given back graded work and should share this with their parents. Please check FACTS SIS to obtain *exact* grades your son/daughter is earning in a subject.

Open House, classroom visitations, and parent/teacher/student conferences are held during the year to provide parents with the opportunity to discuss student progress. Parents or teachers may make an appointment for a conference at any time during the year.

### Honor Roll

St. Teresa's Catholic School has an Honor Roll for Grades 3-12.

Honor Roll for Grades 3-11 is as follows:

- Distinguished-A's in all subjects;

- Honor Roll-A's and B's in all subjects;

- Commended-A's and B's and not more than one C in all subjects.

Students must maintain a Satisfactory grade (S) in all subjects (except handwriting) in which grades of S, NI, or U are given. Beta Club requirements will adhere to this policy.

Students must maintain a Satisfactory in Conduct for Grades 3-12.

### Valedictorian

The Valedictorian is the senior with the highest cumulative grade point average at the conclusion of 15 quarters of high school. In addition, the Valedictorian must have attended St. Teresa's for three years. The student should complete two honors or AP courses each year of high school.

### Salutatorian

The Salutatorian is the senior with the second highest cumulative grade point average at the conclusion of 15 quarters of high school. In addition, the Salutatorian must have attended St. Teresa's for three years. The student should complete two honors or AP courses each year of high school.

### HOPE Scholarship Program

HOPE is Georgia's unique scholarship program that rewards students' hard work with financial assistance in degree, diploma, and certificate programs at any eligible Georgia public or private college or university, or public technical college or institute.

HOPE requirements for students attending a Georgia post-secondary institution are:

- meet HOPE's Georgia residency requirement;
- be a US citizen or Permanent Resident Alien;
- meet the Selective Service registration requirement; and
- earn a 3.0 GPA in all core curriculum attempted courses.
- take a high school curriculum of academic rigor (all St. Teresa's students exceed this standard with our basic requirements for graduation)

The core curriculum is defined as: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language. HOPE is a renewable scholarship from year to year as long as the student maintains a 3.0 GPA in his/her college course work.

### Standardized Testing Program

A variety of assessments are used throughout the school year to ensure that students are making adequate academic progress.

- Grades K-11: NWEA MAP is administered in Fall, Winter, and Spring of each year.
- Grades 2-12: ARK (Assessment of Religious Knowledge) is administered in the Spring each year.
- Grades K-1: Diocesan Religion Benchmark Assessment is administered in Fall, Winter, and Spring of each year.
- High School: 9 and 10 – PSAT/PLAN, 11 and 12 – SAT/ACT.
- Classroom tests: Periodic classroom tests are used to assess subject mastery. The purpose of these tests is to provide a measure of progress toward objectives and to allow the teacher to gauge the success of classroom instruction.
- Formative assessment is to be ongoing.
- Individual test results shall be considered confidential.
- Results of these tests are given to the parents.
- Aggregate test results are to be used for planning and curricular improvement.

### *Promotion/Retention/Transfer*

#### Promotion

Promotion, retention, and summer school policies are determined by the Diocese of Savannah. A student shall be considered for promotion if the following standards are met (Policy 6130-Diocesan Handbook):

#### Kindergarten

- Mastery of reading readiness skills and math skills.
- Regular attendance/less than fifteen absences per year.

#### Primary (1-3)

- Mastery of reading and math skills at the assigned grade level.
- Regular attendance/less than fifteen absences per year.

#### Intermediate/Middle (4-8)

- A passing final grade in all major subjects.
- Regular attendance/less than fifteen absences per year.

## Secondary (9-12)

- To advance to the next grade level, a student must have earned:

Freshman	6 credits
Sophomore	12 credits
Junior	18 credits
Senior	24 credits (for graduation)
- Regular attendance/less than fifteen absences per year.

## Course Failure (9-12)

A senior must complete 24 credit hours, pass all required senior courses, fulfill service hour obligations, and be in good standing to participate in commencement exercises and receive a diploma.

A student with a final course average of less than 70 must successfully complete the course in an approved summer school and earn the minimum number of credits for promotion.

## Retention

Retention may only occur when it is in the best interest of the student and documentation supports retention as the only option. If a parent disagrees with a recommendation to retain, a signed waiver must be on file.

A student may be retained once in kindergarten through third grade and once in fourth through eighth grade. No child should be retained more than once in the same Catholic school.

For medical reasons, an attendance waiver by a doctor beyond fifteen days for the year shall be reviewed by the principal.

The principal, teacher, and parent(s) may agree to retain a student for maturational needs.

Major subjects include Religion, Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies.

## Placement

The principal, after consultation with the parents and teacher(s), will be responsible for making the final decision on the placement of a student.

Secondary schools will develop and publish written policies and regulations for student placement, course credits, and graduation requirements. Students and parents should be made aware of and understand both policies and regulations.

Each school will maintain appropriate instruments for evaluation in order to provide sufficient information regarding the placement of students. A decision concerning placement, promotion, retention, or withdrawal of a student will be based upon such data and made only after extensive consultation with appropriate staff, parents, and students.

## Summer School

If a student fails two major subjects (math, language arts, science, and social studies) and wishes to be promoted to the next grade level, successful completion of an approved summer school

program, which includes sixty (60) hours of instruction per subject, shall be required. Documentation of successful completion must be given to the school prior to the start of the next school year. A placement or benchmark test may also be required to determine mastery of promotion following the summer school completion.

### Transfer Students

The school office handles all withdrawals from the school. Parents must inform the office in writing of their child's withdrawal from school. A five-day notice must be given to complete records. No transfers or records will be given or released until all textbooks and library books are returned to the school and all financial obligations are met. Permanent transcripts are sent directly to the child's new school by mail.

Students transferring to St. Teresa's Catholic School from other secondary schools are obligated to fulfill the St. Teresa's graduation requirements. Annual religion credits are required from the point of transfer through graduation. All decisions concerning discrepancies between the different schools' course offerings, requirements, or grading scales will be made by the St. Teresa's administration. In general, membership in Beta Club and years of participation in sports or clubs are not recognized. To be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian awards, students must attend St. Teresa's for at least three full years.

### FACTS SIS

FACTS SIS is the online platform used at St. Teresa's Catholic School for attendance, grades, homework listings, calendar of classroom projects and events. Each teacher uses FACTS SIS to communicate with parents. Homework is posted on FACTS SIS as a back up to the student agenda. Parents and students can check homework and grades from their computer at home or at work, but please see the student agenda for recent changes.

### Plagiarism

Students are expected to give credit for all work directly copied from any source. Failure to do so will result in a zero for work turn in that is not cited.

### Classroom Observations

Parents are welcome to visit our classrooms. To minimize disruption, these observations must be planned in advance, and they shall not last more than 30 minutes.

### *Academic Probation*

A student failing two or more subjects at any official school grade check (progress reports) or the end of the marking period is given a warning of academic probation. A student failing two or more subjects for the quarter is placed on academic probation until the next grade check. On Academic Probation, a student is eligible to practice for a sport or a competitive event; however, they are not eligible to play, compete, or represent St. Teresa's School in any extracurricular activity. A student with a final grade under 70 must repeat the course in an approved summer school. If the course is not available in an approved summer school, the student must repeat the course the following year. Before school opens in the fall, the administration will determine whether academic probation should be lifted. If probation is lifted, the student begins the year with a clean slate. If the student continues on academic probation, two or more failures at the end of the first quarter jeopardizes the student's continuation as a student at St. Teresa's School.

## Athletic Eligibility

All St. Teresa's athletes must meet the eligibility requirements as described by the Georgia Association of Private and Parochial Schools (GAPPS) to participate in sports. Eligibility is determined at the conclusion of each semester. An ineligible student may not participate or be identified as a member of a team during the period of ineligibility, including practices, scrimmages, conditioning sessions, and off-season workouts. Administration and coaching staff reserve the right to bench students who are not performing adequately at the end of a quarter.

## School Supplies

Over the summertime, supply lists for grades PK-3 through 8<sup>th</sup> will be available on the school's website. Students are expected to have these supplies on hand throughout the year. Parents should check with their child/children to see that they have all the supplies they need for the school day.

Textbooks are the property of the school. Students are cautioned to take good care of all textbooks. The students are permitted to take textbooks home for study with the exception of the basic readers. All books must be covered and carried in book bags. Every student is required to have a book bag. Lost hardback textbooks must be paid for before any grades are given.

## **Sacramental Preparation/Celebrations of Faith**

The parish provides classes for Catholic students in grades PK - 6 on scheduled Sundays of the month in addition to Sacramental classes for students throughout the school year.

### *Religious and Patriotic Observances*

Personnel in the diocesan schools are urged to recognize, in their programs, those religious and patriotic/civic observances regarded as significant by the Church and local community. The United States shall be displayed outside of the school during school hours.

Schools should have religious displays throughout the building, including, but not limited to, symbols, icons, flags, pictures of the Pope and Diocesan Bishop, statues, and crucifixes.

### *Celebration of Sacramental Life*

St. Teresa's Catholic School adheres to all Diocesan sacramental norms and policies to ensure the development of an authentic spiritual and sacramental life for students.

### *Spiritual Formation*

St. Teresa's Catholic School provides appropriate and regular occasions for prayers, liturgical worship and celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Eucharist and Confirmation to ensure religious instruction and spiritual formation of students.

### *Religious Instructions and Worship Attendance*

St. Teresa's Catholic School is a place of faith formation and all students, regardless of religious background, shall attend school prayer and worship services and fully participate in religious instruction. All Catholic students are expected to attend regular Sunday liturgies at their home

parish and to receive frequently the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, once they are eligible.

### *Sacramental Norms*

St. Teresa's Catholic School adheres to the sacramental norms and policies of the Diocese, and respect local parishes as the sacramental home for parents, students, and all parishioners.

### *Sacramental Space*

The celebration of the sacraments at St. Teresa's Catholic School occurs in appropriate spaces that are respectful and well-suited to authentic worship.

### *Sacramental Preparation*

The pastor is responsible for the sacramental preparation of their parishioners. St. Teresa's Catholic School collaborates with the pastor of the students to ensure any school instruction for sacramental preparation is fully integrated with and supportive of the student's primary parish sacramental preparation program.

### *Sacramental Celebration*

First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation shall be celebrated in the parish that the student's family attends. Pastors may allow exemptions to this policy.

### *Prayer Life*

Regular prayer and devotions are standard practice at St. Teresa's Catholic School. The school day begins and ends with prayer and all meals are blessed.

## **Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities afford students the opportunity to develop interests, to enhance socialization and to provide activities for enrichment. Where feasible, a variety of extracurricular activities, suitable to the age and needs of the students, will be offered.

Teachers or volunteers who oversee an approved activity are accountable to the school administrator.

Each school shall provide an athletic program that meets the needs, interests, and abilities of the students. If an athletic program is not deemed co-educational, students shall participate in the program(s) designated for the student's God given biological sex bestowed at birth.

The scheduling of all athletic events shall be subject to the approval of the school administrator.

Each school shall have written guidelines regarding philosophy, eligibility of players, responsibilities of coaches, players, parents, and expectations regarding discipline and safety.

Coaches, volunteers, and non-school personnel involved in approved activities shall be VIRTUS trained, complete a background check as required by the Diocese of Savannah, and be CPR/First Aid certified.

School-sponsored social, athletic, and other extracurricular activities may be provided for various age groups. Students participating in extracurricular activities are covered under the diocesan student insurance policy during the activities.

The St. Teresa's Athletic Program is an extracurricular activity. When properly used as a teaching tool, the sports program will add to the education of a child. When a student is suspended he/she will not be able to participate in any activities. He/she must also maintain a passing grade in all major subjects. Parents who serve as coaches must complete the Virtus training "Protecting God's Children" program and complete a background check prior to coaching.

If school transportation is not provided, parents are responsible for providing transportation for their children. The student code of conduct includes expectations for all school-sponsored activities.

#### School Activities and Clubs

Beta Club (6-12)	Safety Patrols (5-8)
Altar Servers (4-12)	Student Council (4-12)
Kiwanis Art Fair	Science Club
Drama Club	Art Club
STEM Club	Basketball (6-12)
Cheerleading (6-12)	Soccer (6-12)
Archery (6-12)	

#### Scouts

Boy Scout, Cub Scout, Brownie, and Girl Scout troops are available for after school participation.

### **Attendance**

Schools in the Diocese of Savannah must comply with attendance requirements established by the Office of Catholic Schools.

School hours for all grades (PreK3-12) are 7:55 A.M. to 3:15 P.M.

Accurate daily attendance records are kept and filed. Anytime a student is not in school he/she is designated absent. Yearly attendance is recorded on the permanent record card.

A parent/guardian must call the school office to report a child absent on each day of the absence. When a call is not received from a parent/guardian, the school must contact the parent/guardian to verify the absence.

#### *Tardy Policy*

Students are considered tardy if they are not in the cafeteria by **7:55 A.M.** If a student arrives after 7:55 A.M. he/she must enter the building through the main entrance, report to the office, and sign in. A student who arrives at least 3 hours late during one marking period will be marked absent one-half day and is not eligible for a perfect attendance certificate. A student receiving 5 tardies in any one marking period will not receive perfect attendance for that period. Students in Grades 6-8 who come in late, must report to the homeroom teacher before going to their assigned class.

Habitual tardiness disturbs the daily routine of the school and must be corrected by the parents. This does not include doctor or dentist appointments with an official form from the doctor or dentist office. All time missed in school due to tardies will be accumulated and counted towards

absences. After 5 tardies within a marking period, a parent-student conference with the administration and teachers will be required. This policy will start over with each new marking period. Habitual tardiness will result in a letter sent home and possible loss of scholarship/financial aid and in extreme cases retention in current grade level or loss of course credit in high school.

Students may enter the cafeteria at 7:45. Classes begin promptly after prayer at 8:00. It is difficult for students to catch up with the class or receive missed instruction if they are late to school.

## Absences

If a child is absent, the parent or guardian must report the absence by calling the school office before 10:00 A.M. Written excuses are required from parents on the day the student returns to class. Written excuses are kept on file by the classroom teacher for the remainder of the school year.

Excused absences are the result of a student's illness, illness in the family, or a death in the family. All other absences are considered unexcused. It is the child's responsibility to find out what work was missed and make it up within 3 school days.

A child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. We discourage a child being brought to school who has had active nausea or diarrhea the night before or the morning of a school day.

A student absent on the day of a school dance, sports activity, or general school function, or who goes home early that day due to illness, will not be allowed to attend that evening's activity.

Chronic illness and/or extended absence will require a note from a physician affirming the need to miss school. For medical reasons, an attendance waiver beyond fifteen days shall be reviewed by the principal.

Dental and doctor appointments during class hours are discouraged. If an appointment can only be made during school hours, a written note signed by the parent is necessary. The note must be submitted one day prior to the appointment and the child must be called for at the office and signed out. Parents may not go to the classroom for the child. All students with doctor appointments near the end of the school day need to be picked up 30 minutes prior to dismissal.

Compulsory attendance policies apply to students ages 6-16 or graduation from high school, whichever comes first.

Compulsory attendance (for Catholic Schools): attendance at a school operated by a church or other religious body which provides a minimum of 180 days of instruction and 990 hours of instruction per year for Kindergarten, 1080 hours for grades 1-4, and 1125 hours of instruction per year in grades 5-12.

Cumulative lawful absences: a maximum of fifteen days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification are permitted during a school year.

Students shall be permitted to leave school prior to dismissal time with written permission from a parent or guardian.

For students not driving, parents or guardians shall be required to sign students out through the school office.

Written permission from parents or guardians shall be retained for one school year.

### *Absence due to vacations*

Vacations taken during the school year are discouraged. If an emergency trip becomes necessary, a child may be taken from school provided work is made up after the student returns to school. No textbooks may be taken on trips. Upon returning to school, it is the child's responsibility to find out what work has been missed. The student must make arrangements with all teachers for the completion of missed assignments and tests.

### College visits

Seniors are permitted two college visits during the school year. Juniors are permitted two days for college visitation. When a student visits a college, the parent must call the school prior to the day of the visit. Students should notify the teachers and collect any work that they may need to complete. The student must also bring back written verification from the college admissions office upon returning to the school. Days missed due to verified college visits are not recorded as absences.

### Driver's License

In order to obtain a driver's license or a learner's permit, each student must have a Certificate of Attendance from high school. The Certificate of Attendance certifies the student has been in school the required number of days. Students who miss more than 10 days per semester or 20 days of school per school year risk losing their driving privileges, as the school is required to report this information to the DMV. In addition, each student seeking a driver's license must have proof they have completed an Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program (ADAP). If a student has completed this program at St. Anne-Pacelli, the Office will provide this proof with the Certificate of Attendance. The Office fulfills this request within 24 hours. The Certificate of Attendance expires in 30 days.

### Vehicle Registration and Parking for Students

All vehicles operated on the school grounds must have liability insurance, and all students who drive to and from school must have a valid driver's license. A student operating an automobile on St. Teresa's grounds must submit proof of liability insurance and a valid driver's license. Copies of these proofs will be kept in a special file in the front office. Holders of a Learner's Permit must be accompanied by a licensed driver at least 21 years of age. All students planning to drive to campus must register their vehicle. The students are to park across the street in the church side parking lot. Seniors may park down past the high school gym entrance. Parking illegally can result in losing the privilege to park on campus. Students are not allowed to access cars during the school day. Students are also urged to lock their vehicles. The school is not responsible for any losses. The administration reserves the right to have any illegally parked vehicle towed away at the owner's expense, to revoke parking and driving on campus privileges. The promulgation of this right in this handbook constitutes the only warning that will be given. Courtesy and good judgment are required of all students driving on school grounds. Reckless driving on school grounds will cause the loss of on-campus parking privileges.

## **Calendar**

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Savannah are permitted to begin the first day of instruction on or following the second Monday of August.

A calendar should not be published until approved by the Superintendent.

The minimum length of the school year shall be 190 days. Of these, 180 days must be instructional days. The remaining ten (10) days will be dedicated to professional and spiritual development of the staff, which shall include one deanery/area retreat day.

A principal may use discretion with regard to use of an emergency day. If emergency days need to be taken, the Superintendent of the Catholic Schools will determine if it is necessary to make up this time. Schools should notify the Office of Catholic Schools within 24 hours of an emergency closing.

There shall be no more than five (5) half-days throughout the year. Three of the allowed half-days shall include professional development for faculty and staff. All remaining instructional days will be full days.

Spring Break scheduling shall be a consensus amongst schools in the same deanery and include a conversation with independent schools. The week following Easter is preferable.

Schools must observe Good Friday and Easter Monday as holidays.

There should be a minimum of two days for Parent/Teacher conferences.

#### Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Please do not use cell phones during arrival and dismissal. This is imperative for the safety of our students.

#### Arrival

All parking on the school side of Edgewood Lane will be prohibited between 7:00 AM and 8:15 AM on school mornings. All drivers dropping students at St. Teresa's Catholic School will approach the school by way of Gillionville Road and proceed north on Edgewood Lane. They will enter the drop-off lane (the parking area in front of the school) and proceed as far as possible before stopping to unload students. All students should exit the vehicle only on the school (right) side as quickly and orderly as possible to prevent delays. Drivers will proceed to the corner of Edgewood Lane and Maryland Drive and resume normal traffic procedures. U-turns on Edgewood Lane are prohibited. Students from grades PK3–12<sup>th</sup> grade are to be unloaded by the main entrance of the school. All parents will be directed by the designated school patrols and teachers.

After 7:55 AM all latecomers are to be dropped off at the main entrance only and must sign in at the school office. Any driver with business in the school building must first drop off student passengers in the drop-off lane. Please then park on Maryland Drive and come into the school to transact their business.

In the morning, the north side parking lot entrance will be reserved for teachers and staff. Parents may not park in this lot in the mornings, including conference days, please park across the street in front of the church. Drivers should yield the right of way to the faculty/staff vehicles entering the parking lot area. The north side parking lot is reserved for faculty and staff parking only. Students are not permitted to walk through the Teachers' Parking Lot at any time.

On mornings when it is raining heavily, drivers should continue through the drop off zone turning into the teachers' parking lot and stop at the side entrance to let children off under the covered walkway. Student patrols and teachers will direct parents.

## Dismissal

Students may not be picked up between the hours of 3:00 PM and 3:45 PM. If your child has a doctor's appointment, please pick them up before 2:15 PM. Many parents try to beat the rush and create a disturbance in the office (and the school) by picking up five or ten minutes before dismissal. This is not allowed.

All parking on the school side of Edgewood Lane is prohibited between 2:45 and 3:45 PM on school days. All drivers picking up students at St. Teresa's Catholic School will approach the school by way of Gillionville Road or Parker Ave and proceed north on Edgewood Lane. They will enter the drop-off lane (the parking area in front of the school), turn right into the north side parking lot, and proceed as far as possible before they stop to receive students.

All parents must pick up their child or children in the afternoon using the car dismissal lines unless your child attends extended day. Parents may not walk up to the cafeteria door to pick up their children unless there is a special need that has been approved by the principal. If your child is being picked up by someone different than usual, please send a note to the teacher or call the front office. Also, parents may no longer enter the dismissal line from Maryland Ave. Please enter Edgewood Lane from Gillionville Rd. or Parker Ave. only. This policy is in effect for the safety of your children.

Students will be dismissed from the cafeteria exit on the north side of the school. The person picking up the student(s) will follow the directions of the teachers, assistants, and school patrols that supervise the pick-up process. Students should enter the vehicles on the school (right) side as quickly and orderly as possible to prevent delays. When all students are seated with seatbelts fastened and the doors closed, the driver will exit the parking lot onto Maryland Drive and resume normal traffic procedures.

Please allow sufficient time for this dismissal process to take place safely. It is the responsibility of the parents to notify caretakers of early dismissals.

The safety of children is our main priority. All students must be off the school grounds by 3:45 PM unless they are involved in a club, academic function, or extended day. Students not picked up by 3:45 PM will be sent to extended day. Parents will be charged a fee for extended day. A delayed pickup will be honored only if there is an emergency, and the school office is notified to that effect prior to regular dismissal time.

Students may not return to the school after 3:45 PM unless it is for an evening function.

At the end of the last class of the day, the teacher is responsible for the physical condition of his or her classroom. Students must remove all trash from desks and the floor. Students may not be left unsupervised in the foyer or in classrooms at dismissal.

## Extended Day Program

Before and after school care is provided for working parents. Early morning care is from 6:30 A.M. until 7:30 A.M. on school days. After school care is from dismissal until 6:00 P.M. every day

school is open. Extended Day program does include additional charges, please contact the school office for more information.

## **Communication**

### **Communication with Parents/Guardians**

Contact with parents should be frequent. Use of phone calls, written notes, e-mails, weekly progress reports, and/or newsletters are encouraged. Parents should be notified of missing work daily. All communication regarding student work should be academically focused, ensuring that the student's dignity remains intact.

Academic progress should be reported to parents on a regular basis. Sample means of academic reporting include:

- Informal (see above)
- Parent/Teacher/Student conferences
- Report cards, online grades, and progress reports
- Results of standardized tests and exams

Grades of "D" or "F" must be reported to parents prior to a formal report card grade. A significant drop in a student's grade would also be an occasion to make parental contact. Administration should be notified as well. Any formal, written communication with parents must be approved by the principal or his designee prior to being sent home. A copy of all such communication will be retained in the office. This does not apply to regular, informal daily communication. Written documentation of calls to parents should be kept on file with the teacher. The documentation should include, at a minimum, date, and purpose of the call, and a summary of the conversation.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled at the end of the first and third quarters. The teacher is responsible to organize and facilitate the discussion at these conferences. Additional conferences are scheduled throughout the year at either the teacher's or parent's request. A conference must be scheduled no later than the end of April for students who are in danger of being retained. The principal must be a part of that conference. Parental communications should be responded to within 24 hours.

### **Communication with the Community**

The school promotes positive working relationships with the community including civic, social, and cultural agencies, as well as other educational systems.

The broader community plays a very significant role in the educational process. Engaging local civic leaders, developing business partnerships, and collaborating with the local public school district enhance continued support for the work of the school.

### **Communication with the Parish/School Community**

The school keeps the community and the parish informed.

The Catholic School is an integral part of the educational mission of the church. As such the school community relates closely to the parish(es), deanery and diocese. It is conscious of the role that parents play in the education of their children and recognizes that parents and the school are partners in education.

All means of communication are used as a method of establishing increased understanding, confidence and creditability between school and their public counterparts. Examples of communication include, but are not limited to: letters to parents, newsletters, parish bulletins, open houses, parent/teacher conferences, student performances, family/school activities, etc.

### Media Communication

Every Catholic school in the Diocese of Savannah will strive to communicate their mission and vision to stakeholders within the community.

The contributions made by students, parents/guardians and members of the school community are communicated and celebrated through print, media, radio, television, internet, and other social media sources.

### *Emergency School Closing*

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency, St. Teresa's Catholic School does not necessarily follow Dougherty or Lee County regarding school closing or reopening. If a situation arises that creates the need to cancel school or adjust the schedule in any way, notification will be made in a timely fashion through as many means of communication as possible including, but not limited to, local TV stations, the school website, e-mail, and social media. The basic premise to be observed is that school IS open and WILL remain open unless it is specifically announced otherwise. Time missed for emergency closing may need to be made up.

If an emergency arises during the school day, school personnel will make every attempt to contact each family to relay the information regarding the conditions at school. Parents are asked not to call the school during an emergency.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality must be maintained by all school employees. Sensitive matters may be discussed with supervisor, principal, pastor, or other persons as defined by law.

## **Code of Ethics (Diocese of Savannah and Georgia Professional Standards Commission) and Confidentiality (FERPA)**

### *Code of Ethics for Catholic School Professional Educators*

Christ's charge to His disciples: "Go. Teach." Since the beginning of Christianity, education has been one of the most important missions of the Church. Its success depends upon the professional competence, quality, and above all, the commitment of the teacher to Christ.

This **Code of Ethics for the Catholic School Professional Educator** offers a description of the person who is a life-long learner in their profession and who continues to grow in faith, hope and love of Christ. These anchors describe the attitude and the practice of the Catholic school professional educator in relation to the student, the parent, the community, and to the profession. This code offers a guide by which to live, a goal toward which to strive and a promise of lasting success.

## **Anchor I: Commitment to Students**

The Catholic School Professional Educator believes that students, like ourselves, are pilgrim people, making their journey through this life with a constant focus on the next life. As Catholic educators, we strive to create a learning environment that nurtures the potential of all students. We are obligated to foster the virtues of integrity, humility, diligence, responsibility, cooperation, charity, purity, loyalty, fidelity, and respect for the law, for human life, for others, and for self.

The professional educator, in accepting this position of trust, measures success not only by the progress of each student toward the realization of his/her personal potential in becoming a disciple of Christ, a citizen of the local society and the global community, but also by the acquisition of knowledge and depth of understanding, the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals and a demonstrated increased spirit of inquisitiveness.

The Catholic School Professional Educator makes the well-being of students the foundation of all decisions and actions, and therefore

- Provides educational assistance with respect and reverence for each student.
- Preserves the student's right to privacy by judiciously protecting information that is confidential.
- Protects students when their well-being is threatened by unsafe, incompetent, unethical, or illegal actions of any person – student or adult.

In fulfilling our obligation to students, we are called to:

1. Help students understand the importance of our Catholic Christian values in making choices in their daily lives.
2. Model Catholic Christian care and concern about the joys and problems of each student.
3. Speak with charity and justice about students even when called upon to discuss sensitive matters.
4. Respect confidential information concerning students and their families.
5. Plan appropriate service projects for students that will develop their sense of responsibility to the community.
6. Enable students to grow in a sense of self-worth and accountability by selecting activities which promote the positive self-concept in becoming mature Catholic Christians.

## **Anchor II: Commitment to Parents**

As Catholic School Professional Educators, we believe children are influenced by home, community, and a society in which attitudes toward Catholic Christian values are often challenged. Parents have the primary moral responsibility of educating children to adulthood. The vast majority of parents share their educational responsibilities with others, primarily schools. We are an extension of parental education. Parents entrust their children to the Catholic school to instruct, complement and intensify the education and formation begun in the home. We are called to assist parents in fulfilling their obligation for the Catholic Christian formation and education of their

child. The principle of subsidiarity must always govern relations among families, educators and the Church.

We pledge to...

1. Protect parents' fundamental right to understand and to share in decisions that affect the education of their child.
2. Develop educational programs and activities to enhance family life, as well as the home-school relationship.
3. Respect any confidential information which students and parents share.
4. Understand and respect the values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in our community and their child's classroom.
5. Report to parents their child's progress regularly and as needed, in a spirit of charity, with professional accuracy and honesty.
6. Manifest a positive and active role in school/community relations.

### **Anchor III: Commitment to the Community**

The Catholic School Professional Educator believes the Catholic school community is both an agent of appropriate change and a preserver of basic tradition. We consider the school community an integral part of the parish whose people it serves, and a vital force for preparing future civic and Church leaders.

In fulfilling our obligation to our apostolic profession, we are called to:

Promote the peace of Christ in the world by:

- modeling peaceful solutions to community conflicts.
- encouraging a spirit of cooperation.
- developing skills which will enable students to interact with society for a better world.

Cooperate wholeheartedly in the continued building of the parish and the Kingdom of God by:

- emphasizing the integral nature of the Catholic school within the parish and community.
- assisting communication concerning parish resources, needs and events.
- modeling active participation in one's own parish.

Develop student potential for constructive Catholic Christian leadership within the American democracy by:

- ensuring an adequate understanding of history and its lessons.
- providing opportunities for taking responsible moral positions on current issues.
- offering instruction and practice in leadership skills.

Contribute to the well-being of the area in which the school is located by:

- reflecting the mission and philosophy of the school in one's attitudes and actions.

- manifesting respect and appreciation for the work of educators in other schools and systems.
- encouraging in students a respect for the person and property of their neighbors.
- avoiding inappropriate school activities that disturb the peace and order of the community.

#### **Anchor IV: Commitment to the Profession**

As Catholic School Professional Educators, we believe that professional excellence in Catholic schools directly influences our Church, our country and the world. The professional educator assumes responsibility and accountability for his/her credentials and performance, and continually strives to demonstrate competence. The professional educator endeavors to maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law and by demonstrating personal integrity.

In fulfilling our responsibilities as Catholic School Professional Educators, we are called to:

Maintain professional standards by:

- preserving the reputations of colleagues, administrators, and students.
- safeguarding the exchange of confidential information.
- refusing to use the classroom to further personal ends through the sale of any goods, products, or publications.
- refraining from using the school as a platform for one's own beliefs which are not in accord with the school's mission or Church teaching.
- overseeing the duties of non-professionals, making sure they assume only those responsibilities appropriate to their role.
- assisting in the orientation of educators new to a position and/or school.
- considering the obligations of the teaching contract as binding in a most serious manner, conscientiously fulfilling the contract.
- upholding the authority of the school when communicating with parents, students, and civic community.
- presenting honest, accurate professional qualifications of self and colleagues when required for professional reasons.
- avoiding the use of institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Seek and encourage persons who live a life consonant with Gospel values and Catholic Church teachings to pursue the apostolate of teaching by:

- modeling the faith life and witnessing to the Faith Community on the parish, diocesan, national and world levels.
- exemplifying the teachings of Jesus Christ by dealing with children and adults in love and justice.
- exhibiting knowledge of the Church documents, especially "To Teach as Jesus Did," "Sharing the Light of Faith," and "The Catholic School."

#### **Called to Serve in the Mission of the Church**

Catholic education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Church He founded. Through education, the Church seeks to prepare its members to proclaim the Good News and to translate this proclamation into action. The call to serve in the mission of the Church in a Catholic school is a vocation that is populated by dedicated professional people. The professional conduct of every educator affects attitudes about the teaching profession and Catholic education. Aware of

the importance of maintaining confidence of students, parents, colleagues, and the Church community, Catholic School Professional Educators strive to sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

### *Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – The Buckley Amendment*

St. Teresa's Catholic School adheres to the Buckley Amendment regarding access to student records and academic confidentiality. In accordance with the requirements of this law, students may not grade the work of other students. Children of teachers may not grade the work of students enrolled at STS. Graded student work may not be displayed in the halls, however ungraded work, or work where the grade is not visible may be displayed. A student should never be asked to state his/her grade aloud. Parent volunteers may not grade student work.

## **Cell Phones/Office Phone**

A student may be permitted to use the phone with a note from the teacher and approval of the administration. Students are not permitted to call home to have forgotten homework delivered.

Students may not use cell phones or electronic equipment during school hours school. If these items are seen by teachers or staff, they will be placed in the principal's office until a parent comes in to retrieve them. Repeated violations will result in the electronic items being held in the vault until the end of the marking period. Electronics used for learning in the classroom must be approved by the teacher.

Students may use the school office telephone with permission from a school staff member. Students will be called out of class to the phone only for emergency calls from parents. The school office will make every effort to cooperate in getting messages to the students. Requests for such messages should be kept to essential or unusual circumstances, and sufficient time should be given to get the message to the students. Such calls from parents should be received before 2:00 P.M. All necessary arrangements with your child/children should be made at home before school to help limit the number of calls and the number of messages coming into the school office.

## **Health**

### *Immunizations and Physical Examinations*

All students are to submit to physical exam and other health requirements prescribed by the State of Georgia and the Diocese of Savannah.

All students are to submit to the school a record of a 4-point screen Georgia form 3300, immunization record Georgia form 3231 and other health information as required by state law.

If a certificate of immunization is not presented to the school within thirty (30) days of the first official day of the school year, the student may not be admitted to school.

Medical and dental report forms and immunization certificates should be kept in the student's health record. These forms are intended for confidential use only and should be handled by professional and secretarial staff. At no time are records to be available to volunteers, students, or other unauthorized persons.

Health Screenings are required in specific grades (see chart below). However, vision and hearing screenings are recommended in all grades, and scoliosis screenings are recommended in grades 6-8.

Students actively engaged in athletic programs must submit a record of physical examination each year.

#### REQUIRED SCREENINGS

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Vision</b>		X	X		X		X		
<b>Hearing</b>		X	X		X		X		
<b>Scoliosis</b>						X		X	

#### Student Illness

If a child becomes ill in the classroom, he/she is to be sent to the office. Please use good judgment in determining if the child's complaint warrants a visit to the office. The office staff will inform the teacher and parents if the child needs to be sent home. If the child goes home, the office staff will ensure that an authorized person signs him/her out.

#### Health Insurance and Safety

Parents will be notified when their child becomes ill at school, and it may be necessary for the parent to take the child home. At the beginning of each school year or when child/children enter St. Teresa's Catholic School, parents are asked to fill out an emergency health form and return it to the school immediately.

Each student is covered by accident insurance that is included in the enrollment fee. In case of an accident requiring medical attention, an accident form must be filled out and filed within 60 days.

No medication of any kind will be dispensed at school without a medication form (available in the school office) filled out by the parent or guardian. When requested in writing by parents to dispense medicine to a student, the medication must be sent to the school in the prescription safety bottle clearly marked and identified, non-prescription medication must be sent in a safety container.

The safety of each child is the utmost concern to the school. Supervision will be provided between the hours of 7:30 A.M. and 3:15 P.M. Students arriving before 7:30 A.M. must enroll in Before School Care. Teachers should be notified in writing if the child does not ride home with his/her parents. Students remaining in the cafeteria after 3:15 P.M. will be sent to Extended Day and parents will be charged the drop-in rate of \$15 per child per day.

Parents who come for their child/children during school hours must pick them up and sign them out at the school office. No student may leave the grounds during school, school activities, or Extended Day without permission from the school administration. Any child who does so will be suspended until the parent/administration conference is held.

Periodic fire drills, tornado drills, and lock-down are conducted during the school year to acquaint the students with the proper emergency procedures. After the emergency signal is sounded, the students are to leave all classrooms and proceed to designated areas immediately without running, shoving, or talking to insure an orderly and safe evacuation.

## Cafeteria

Students may purchase a hot lunch at school or bring their own lunch and buy milk. **NO CHARGED LUNCHES ARE ALLOWED.** Lunches are to be prepaid online using FACTS.

Our School Food Service program at St. Teresa's serves nutritious meals that meet at least one-third the student dietary allowances recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) school lunch program. We also strive to keep the price of meals as low as possible. Reduced-price meals are available for families who qualify.

Students bringing their own lunches may bring their own drink or buy milk. No pop-top cans or glass containers are permitted. No soft drinks are permitted. Children are encouraged to eat nutritionally balanced meals. Do not bring in food from the outside (fast food). When parents want to eat lunch with their children, they are always welcome to do so. If your child has an allergy to milk or other foods, a doctor's note must be sent to the school office. This must be renewed annually.

## Medical Administration

Medications, including over the counter, may be dispensed at school with written permission from the parent or guardian. Students who must have medications at school or at any school-sponsored activity shall file a form with the school signed by the prescribing physician and parents or guardians.

Medication must be sent to the school in the original packaged bottle, clearly marked and identified with student name and dosage. Medication is kept secure in the school office (unless refrigeration is required) and dispensed only from the school office by a responsible adult. A record of all medication dispensed is maintained in the school office. This record will include the signature of the student or office/health room personnel.

Inhalers and/or Epi-pens, in their prescribed containers, are permitted to be carried by students on their person.

Non-Emergency injections shall only be administered by appropriately licensed persons unless the parent and physician of the child sign a written authorization for the child to self-administer the injection.

## Child Abuse Laws

All teaching and support staff are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

The educator's role is not to investigate or verify the situation but to report the suspected abuse, setting in motion the process of getting help for the child. An employee's responsibility to report suspected abuse or neglect cannot be waived by administrative veto.

Reporting anonymously does not meet the mandatory reporting obligations of an educator. Reports of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) must be reported at the time of suspicion.

Each incident of possible abuse should be considered and reported as a separate referral. This policy must, also, be followed if the alleged abuser is a school or parish employee or volunteer.

The laws of the State of Georgia mandate that school personnel promptly report alleged or suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Family and Children Services.

### *Child Abuse Laws*

The State of Georgia requires by law that any principal, teacher, counselor, or other school employee report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect of children under eighteen years of age. In addition, volunteers working at the school or at school-sponsored events are also considered mandatory reporters under this law. Georgia Law, Code Section 19-7-5, requires the reporting of injuries or neglect of minors, provides immunity for those reporting in good faith, and provides for a penalty for violation of the law. An allegation of child abuse must be immediately reported by telephone, within 24 hours of the time of the suspected abuse, to the Department of Family Child Services (DFCS) by the person who witnessed or first became aware of the suspected abuse or neglect. This report should be made in the presence of the principal. If the principal is not present, every effort should be made to notify him, however the report should still be made within the guidelines of the law if the principal cannot be reached. The Safe Environment Office for the Diocese of Savannah must also be informed within 24 hours. Law enforcement and DFCS requests to interview students at the school who are suspected victims of abuse or neglect must be honored. The school will make every effort possible to have a staff member present during the interview. It is NOT school policy to contact the child's family prior to filing a report.

## **Sexual Harassment**

### *Sexual Harassment Prohibited*

Sexual Harassment is a form of sex-discrimination that is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Any harassment of a person by another person working in or attending a Catholic School is prohibited. Prohibition of sexual harassment applies to any regular, temporary, part-time, full-time student, employee or volunteer, consultant and/or any other person who provides services on a contractual basis. For more information concerning the procedure for filing and pursuing a claim of discrimination as well as examples of sexual harassment please contact the diocesan office.

If it is determined that harassment or any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability has occurred, those responsible will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment, depending upon the severity of the situation involved. Prevention is the best tool to eliminate sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination in the workplace. Each school is encouraged to take steps necessary to prevent all forms of harassment and discrimination from occurring. Schools should clearly communicate to employees that discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated.

Maintaining an educational environment that encourages optimum human growth and development is imperative. Respect for the dignity of each person is essential to Catholic tradition. It is vital that each school and religious education program maintain a learning and working environment free of any form of harassment or intimidation toward students or staff.

Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment that is hostile or intimidating because of the individual's perceived differences including but not limited to race, creed, color,

national origin, physical disability, or sex. Harassment can occur any time during school or during school-related activities. It includes, but is not limited to, any or all of the following:

- Verbal Harassment: Derogatory comments and jokes, threatening words spoken to another person.
- Physical Harassment: Unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement.
- Visual Harassment: Derogatory, demeaning, or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings, gestures.
- Sexual Harassment: Unwanted and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment when:
  1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term of condition of a persons' educational development.
  2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for education decisions affecting such individual.
  3. Such conduct had the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Sexual harassment is defined as “unwanted and unwelcomed behavior of a sexual nature which interferes with a student’s right to learn, study, work, and to achieve or participate in school activities in a comfortable and supportive atmosphere.”

*Sexual harassment as defined above may include but is not limited to:*

1. Sex-oriented verbal “kidding,” abuse, or harassment;
2. Pressure for sexual activity;
3. Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications;
4. Unwelcome touching such as patting, pinching, or constant brushing against another’s body;
5. Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one’s grades or similar personal concerns.

This behavior as defined above is forbidden in schools sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Savannah. All allegations of sexual harassment must be reported to the principal and pastor who will review the matter in accordance with diocesan guidelines.

Allegations of sexual harassment included, but not limited to: student-to-student or student-to-adult. The principal/appropriate party will thoroughly investigate the accusation and document the complaint. All reports shall be handled with discretion and concern for all of the individuals involved in the complaint. In the most serious cases, the principal/appropriate party will consult with the Pastor and the Superintendent of Schools before a disciplinary action is taken in the matter. Retaliation against anyone for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation is prohibited.

Examples of behavior that may be considered sexual harassment include:

- Staring or leering at parts of someone else’s body
- Comments, gestures, or jokes of a sexual nature
- Displaying of sexual pictures or objects
- Spreading sexual rumors or commenting about sexual behavior

- Repeated pressuring for dates or unwanted sexual activity
- Touching, grabbing, pinching
- Asking for sexual favors in exchange for grades, promotions, or participation in school activities.
- Any shared communication of a sexual nature

## **Custody Policies**

Parents are required to provide the school with a certified copy of all custody agreements. Teachers will be informed if there are custody agreements on file for students in their classroom. The school will abide by the terms of the custody agreement on file.

## **Code of Conduct and Discipline**

### **Rationale for Discipline in Catholic Schools**

The purpose of discipline in a Catholic school is to bring about the self-discipline of each student and of the school community as a whole in order to promote the Christian development of each member and thereby enhance the community as the People of God.

The terms of punishment and discipline are often used interchangeably and therefore incorrectly. Punishment is an attempt to control by reprisal, whereas discipline aims to help students determine appropriate standards of behavior. In a Catholic educational community discipline is part of the teaching/learning process. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Catholic schools to attempt to provide each individual student with moral guidelines and leadership.

Actions by an individual that deter Christian development are injurious to the well-being of both the individual and the community. Both our faith and our knowledge compel us to view such individuals as needing assistance. Thus, our immediate reaction should be to view an opportunity to deal with such an individual as an educational opportunity, a counseling opportunity, and a chance to help.

In addition, the school must minimize the threat such actions present to the community and, when feasible, attempt to educate the school community at large. Having begun to take the proper individual remedial action, it may be appropriate to take public action that may be necessary for the good of the community and should be mutually reinforcing. Disciplinary actions should reflect the welfare of the individual and that of the community. One's individual behavior should not infringe on the rights of another in a Catholic school community.

In administering a program of discipline, the school should reflect the Christian ideals it desires to instill in the students. It should demonstrate its acceptance of the dignity of each person by according each student fair treatment, consideration and respect. In this way, the school will attempt to foster the student's self-respect and that of other members of the school community.

Discipline should be primarily diagnostic and remedial rather than punitive. It should be a constructive process to guide and develop the attitudes of students so that they may achieve the highest possible standards of Christian behavior. Disciplinary rule and their enforcement must be reasonable and consistent with Christian values. Applications of rules must assure fairness through clear definition of rule violation, a specific statement of charges, a fair hearing for the accused, and

remedial action that promotes the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional good of the student and community.

In the event of serious behavioral problems, cooperative efforts between the home and the school are essential in order to achieve a resolution of the conflict. If parents are not supportive of the basic value system of the school or even antagonistic, it should be apparent that the school will usually have little effect, however talented or well-intended the personnel involved. In the presence of supportive parents, however, the chances of successful resolution of the student's behavioral problems are good.

Whatever the situation, parents have the moral and legal responsibility for their children and should be involved in cases of serious behavioral problems.

We recognize that discipline is not an easy area to deal with and that no clear-cut formula for success exists. As Catholic schools, however, we do have a source of guidance. In our handling of student behavioral problems, our goal is that one will be able to discern the reflection of our Christian ideals and principles and our concern for carrying out the Gospel message and the mission of the Catholic Church.

Each school is encouraged to work with parents, teachers, and administrators to develop its own policies and procedures concerning disciplinary action. These policies should be consonant with the over-all philosophy and goals of the school serving the Christian community and should stem from a loving, accepting attitude toward the student as a person of dignity.

*"Part of living involves following rules and regulations. Discipline continues to be a strength of Catholic Schools. Discipline that has self-control, harmony, order, and a sense of purpose as goals for acceptable behavior describe the code of conduct for all Catholic Schools" (Sparks, 1988)*

### General Statement

St. Teresa's Catholic School expects all students and parents to conduct themselves according to standards reflected in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Consequently, it is expected that all students and parents exhibit good taste and manners in their relations with other members of the St. Teresa's Catholic School community and St. Teresa's guests. All students and parents must respect the rights and possessions of other people. Students and parents are expected to maintain personal integrity and a high standard of honor. They are expected to know the regulations of the school.

St. Teresa's students should realize that their behavior has consequences and that they must accept responsibility for that behavior. Discipline is taught in the home and carried over into the school. Without discipline, learning cannot take place. Therefore, it is important for children to know that parental authority and school authority are one. They must respect their teachers as they respect their parents and realize the essence of Catholic discipline is self-discipline.

Discipline problems can be solved through proper communication between parents and teachers. Disapproval of the child's actions is not the absence of love: it is the strengthening of love. School discipline can be undermined when parents criticize school authority. Therefore, parents are asked to consult the teacher about all the facts before making any hasty decisions or commenting on a discipline problem in the presence of their children.

*Verbal abuse or harassment of any school employee, on or off school property, will not be tolerated. Failure of parents to cooperate with this regulation is grounds for a student's dismissal from school.*

## Due Process

All matters must be discussed in the following order:

1. Communicate with your child's teacher through notes and conferences.
2. If the concern remains unresolved, talk with the principal.
3. If the concern is still unresolved, talk to the Pastor.

## Regulations and Disciplinary Actions

It is necessary that administrators, teachers, students, and parents understand, accept, and support the discipline policies of the school. To further this four-way communication, the following regulations define and clarify the students' responsibilities:

### In the Classroom, students will:

- stand and greet visitors who come into the classroom
- be recognized before speaking
- remain at their desks during instruction
- work quietly with a group or by themselves, as the teacher requests
- speak courteously to others
- bring necessary materials to class and respect the property of others
- assume individual responsibility for personal and school property
- concentrate on class activities
- stay in the room unless permission is given to leave
- refrain from chewing gum or eating candy or snacks unless given permission by the teacher.

### In the Restroom, students will:

- practice safety and good hygiene habits/flush toilets/urinals, wash hands
- keep the restroom clean and respect school property
- be quiet and orderly in the restroom and in the school hallways

### In the Lunchroom, students will:

- enter and leave quietly and in single file
- practice courtesy and good manners while eating
- remain seated until dismissed
- help keep the lunchroom neat and clean
- observe the first 10 minutes in silence to concentrate on eating lunch
- talk softly for the remaining minutes of lunch

### In the Hallways, students will:

- walk in single file lines
- be quiet and orderly
- keep to the right
- respect all school property and help keep it free of trash

During Physical Education and Recess, students will:

- dress according to PE requirements for physical education activities
- practice good sportsmanship
- practice safety
- remain in the area designated for play
- follow the instructions of the teacher
- participate in all PE activities unless excused by a physician or a note from home
- provide a physician's statement for prolonged absence from PE activities (2 or more weeks)

During Assembly, students will:

- walk to their seats quietly and quickly with their teacher
- listen attentively
- show proper respect and appreciation for the persons providing the program
- refrain from any talking during the program

At Dismissal, students will:

- follow the procedure set by the classroom teacher
- walk out of the building quietly and in an orderly manner
- leave the school grounds as soon as possible
- not return to the classroom

## Methods of Discipline

### St. Teresa's Catholic School Responsible Behavior Policy

St. Teresa's Catholic School is dedicated to the spiritual formation of each student. Therefore, in the spirit of Jesus, St. Teresa's Catholic School will provide a safe, supportive learning environment for each individual student that is free from all forms of intimidation and harassment.

### Possible Consequences

- Counseled by teacher or faculty member and notification to parent with explanation of offenses.
- Counseled by the school counselor and phone call to parent with explanation of offenses.
- Student, Parents, and Teachers will write a corrective plan.

*\*The possible consequences are at the discretion of the administration and faculty of St. Teresa's Catholic School based on the circumstances of each situation.*

PreK3 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade - Students in Grades PK - 2 will continue to use a leveled consequence system. Children are exposed to the rules of the classroom on a regular basis to familiarize them with what is expected of them. The consequences are at the discretion of the teacher, depending on the severity of the infraction. Parents may be notified immediately in the instance of a severe behavior problem. A note is sent home to alert parents to the fact that the child is having difficulty that day. Repeated offenses will require a parent-teacher conference.

Grades 3-8 - Students in Grades 3 - 8 will use a Behavior Log. Marks can be issued by any staff member.

A Behavior Log will be kept daily for students in grades 3-8. Marks are earned for minor infractions noted in the class behavior log with details on the infraction. Teachers write comments on infractions and keep track of marks for conduct grades on report cards. Weekly conduct grades are shared with parents in Tuesday folders.

A student who earns three marks in one day or 5 marks per week for behavior infractions will earn one demerit. Demerit notices will be sent home from the homeroom teacher unless it is a major behavior infraction. Detention notifications will be included on the demerit notices sent home. Parents will be expected to sign demerit notices and to pick up their child from detention promptly at 4:30 at the front door of the school.

<b><u># of Demerits</u></b>	<b><u>Consequences</u></b>
1	Lunch detention
2	Detention after school until 4:30 PM
3	Detention after school until 4:30 PM, first parent meeting required
4	Detention after school until 4:30 PM
5	In-school suspension, second parent meeting required
6	In-school suspension
7	Out-of-school suspension, third parent meeting required

\*Expulsion may be considered if student chooses to earn further demerits.

Demerits may be issued immediately for major infractions including, but not limited to, the following:

- Disrespect to God, staff member, student, or school property
- Profanity
- Fighting
- Harm to student, staff, or self
- Stealing
- Cheating

Major behavior infractions could result in suspension or expulsion. Such infractions will be reported immediately to school administration and parents.

Grades 9-12 - Students in Grades 9 - 12 will use a demerit-based system. Demerits can be issued by any staff member.

A demerit is a consequence for a more serious infraction of discipline rules. A student who receives a demerit must serve two sessions of detention. The assistant principal will notify parents via phone call or email. If a student accumulates two demerits throughout the school year, the student will be placed on disciplinary probation. Demerits accrue through four years of high school.

The following infractions typically result in a demerit:

- Cutting class
- Defiance
- Destruction of property
- Cheating (*Students caught cheating on an assignment will receive a zero for that assignment.*)
- The following behaviors are examples of cheating:
  - Plagiarism
  - Copying from another's work or allowing another to copy your work

- Using books, notes, phones, etc. during a test, quiz, etc.
- Exchanging information about the contents of a test given to another class or missed when absent
- Asking another for or giving help on homework when prohibited by the teacher
- Use of school facilities/grounds without permission

Detentions are accumulated through a semester and will be handled as follows:

Two detentions - Conference with the student

Four detentions - Will result in one day suspension.

The following infractions typically result in a detention:

- Misconduct, disrespect, profanity
- Dress code violation
- Cell phone use
- More than three morning tardies
- Littering on campus - parking lot, patio, etc.
- Failure to clean up the lunch table, etc.
- Loitering or hanging out in the bathrooms
- Food or drink in the media center or computer lab; food or drink other than water in class
- Going to the parking lot without permission from the office
- Coming to class without appropriate supplies, i.e. textbook, notebook, calculator

### Disciplinary Probation

At the discretion of the administration, a student may be placed on disciplinary probation after the accumulation of two demerits, for a single serious incident, or following a pattern of negative or disruptive behavior. Once the student has been placed on disciplinary probation, a violation of school rules may result in dismissal.

A student on disciplinary probation may not represent the school in any home or away athletic contests, nor in any drama performance, literary or academic competition, or similar activities. Seniors on disciplinary probation may be barred from participating in the Senior trip or any graduation activities.

### *Detention*

Detention outside of regular school hours as a disciplinary measure should be utilized only after careful consideration of these factors: age of the student, transportation arrangements, provision for adequate supervision of students kept before or after school and prior consultation with parents.

Whatever disciplinary action is taken must be deserved and fit the offense. Disciplinary measures must not inflict bodily harm, subject the student to ridicule (e.g., sarcasm) or use punishment for punishment's sake. The following actions are forbidden:

- A. Corporal Punishment: Even in the event parents give permission for such action, it shall not be permitted under any circumstance. Corporal punishment shall be defined as any punishment that intentionally physically or mentally abuses a child.

Within, however, the scope of a person's employment, one may use or apply such amount of force as is reasonable and necessary:

- to quell a disturbance, threatening physical injury to others;

- to obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous objects upon the person or within the control of a student;
  - for the purpose of self-defense;
  - for the protection of persons or property.
- B. Sending a student outside of the classroom where the student will not be supervised.
- C. Sending the student home without the knowledge of the parents or sending the student home unaccompanied by a parent/guardian or parental representative.

### *Suspension*

In serious cases of violation of school rules and regulations, when all other normal disciplinary procedures have been followed, it may be necessary to consider temporary in-school or out-of school suspension.

### *Expulsion*

Expulsion is viewed as a radical action at which point the school is saying that the student's interests would be better served in another environment, or that the student's violation of the code of conduct is so egregious that it poses a serious threat to the school, community or both. In the extreme case of irrevocable expulsion, the primary goal is neither punitive nor deterrent in the criminal sense (although it may be), but rather the determination is that it is counterproductive for the student to continue as a member of that community.

The administrator of the school must have the approval of the pastor and Superintendent before any action regarding expulsion takes place. A student may be expelled for repetitive behaviors resulting in disciplinary action. A student may be expelled for a one-time violation. The principal may request a conference with teachers, parents, and other staff to determine if expulsion is necessary. If expulsion is deemed appropriate, the principal, with the pastor and Superintendent's approval, notifies the family in writing of the school's decision to expel.

Situations will arise in which expulsion may be merited. While it is not possible to enumerate all cases that could arise, several categories are listed for guidance. Other problems of equal seriousness may arise and should be treated similarly. The following examples may be used as a guide:

- Arson
- Continued and willful, defiance/disobedience of authority
- Criminal activity
- Extortion
- Grave defacement or destruction of school property
- Gross disorder (inciting mob action)
- Physical assault
- Possess and/or use of a weapon
- Serious theft
- Trafficking in pornographic materials
- Trafficking of alcohol and other drugs as stipulated
- Violent threats

**St. Teresa's Catholic School**  
**Diocese of Savannah**  
**Policy on Bullying**

**What is bullying?**

Bullying is comprised of direct behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim. Bullying may also be more indirect by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. While boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are more apt to utilize these more subtle indirect strategies, such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation. The key component of bullying is that the physical or psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse.

Bullying usually has three common features:

- It is deliberate, hurtful behavior
- It is repeated often over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

Bullying can mean many different things. Some ways children and young people have described bullying:

- Being called names
- Being teased
- Being pushed or pulled about
- Being hit or attacked
- Having your book bag, lunch bag, and/or other possession taken and thrown around
- Having rumors spread about you
- Being ignored and left out
- Being forced to hand over money or possessions
- Taking possessions when others are not looking

Children get bullied in a variety of places – on the playground, in the lunchroom, in the classroom, in the restroom, and over the internet.

A study in the Journal of American Medical Association reported that 29.9% of students self-reported frequent involvement in bullying at school, with 13% participating as a bully, 10.9% as a victim, and 6% as both.

**Research Data**

- Students bully to gain status or power within a group.
- Bullies often have high self-images and believe that their peer group finds their behavior attractive and exciting.
- They minimize the impact of their behavior on others, or refuse to take the feelings of others into account.
- The active collusion of a minority and the silent acquiescence of others reinforce the experience that bullying behavior is a useful strategy to maintain power and influence.
- The bully may interpret teacher intervention as a direct challenge to their status. They may seek to reassert their power by seeking retribution on their victims.
- Victims of bullying are often very confused by the attentions of the bully.
- Victims will initially keep a low profile in a hope the abuse will stop.

- The lack of support from classmates is interpreted as hostility.
- The inability to stand up for themselves can lead to feelings of helplessness, self-doubt, and self-blame.
- Long term victims of bullying may become confrontational victims, acting out as a defense mechanism, and thereby alienating themselves even further.
- Victims often have low status within the group and are often perceived as not helping themselves.

### Peer Acceptance and Status

An interesting note is the role that peers play in promoting bullying and victimization by either reinforcing the aggressor, failing to intervene to stop the victimization, or affiliating with students who bully. During early adolescence, the function and importance of the peer group change dramatically. Adolescents, seeking independence from their parents, turn to their peers to discuss problems, feelings, fears, and doubts, thereby increasing the time spent with friends. However, this reliance on peers for social support is coupled with increasing pressures to attain social status. It is during adolescence that peer groups become stratified and issues of acceptance and popularity become increasingly important. Research indicates that toughness and aggressiveness are important status considerations for boys, while appearance is a central determinant of social status among girls. Some believe that the pressure to gain peer acceptance and status may be related to an increase in teasing and bullying.

### What does it feel like to be bullied?

Bullying hurts. It makes you scared and upset. It can make you so worried that you can't work well in school. Some children skip school to get away from it. It can make you feel that you are not good, that there is something wrong with you. Bullies can make you feel that it's your fault.

### Why do bullies do it?

- They have their own problems – they may feel upset or angry or feel that they don't fit in – perhaps they have a problem at home.
- Maybe they get bullied themselves, perhaps by someone in their own family or other adults.
- They're scared of getting picked on so they do it first.
- They want to show off, seem tough, and get attention.
- Many don't like themselves and so take it out on someone else.

### St. Teresa's Catholic School Student Expectations

My behavior towards others will reflect the Gospel values that I am being taught as a student at St. Teresa's School. Therefore,

- I will not interfere with the learning of others.
- I will not harm others physically, verbally, or emotionally.
- I will not interfere with other students' possessions.
- I will care for my school and its environment.
- I will follow school policies and procedures.

## **Field Trips Policies and Forms**

Any adult wishing to supervise children both in school and on field trips must complete the Virtus "Protecting God's Children" class before volunteering. These classes are offered multiple times throughout the year. The purpose of this is to ensure the safety of our students and is a requirement of the Diocese of Savannah.

Field trips are planned throughout the year by various classes to complement or reinforce learning activities. Permission slips will be sent home to inform parents of the nature of the trip. Permission slips must be signed and returned to the school. Permission cannot be granted by means of the telephone.

A field trip is an educational opportunity whereby students leave school property under the direction, guidance and/or authority of the school, or authorized school representative. Field trips are recognized as useful in contributing to and enhancing students' practical understanding of academic subjects. The purpose, organization, and implementation of field trips must follow regulations established by the Office of Catholic Schools.

Field trips can enrich the instructional program if they are linked to a specified objective and are carefully planned. **Field trips may only be taken if they have a direct correlation to the curriculum.** They should be well-planned, and students should view them as class outside the classroom, not as a day of play. The homeroom teacher or the subject area teacher will accompany their class on the field trip. Teachers, at their discretion, may invite parents to accompany the class on the trip. Due to liability and supervision issues, siblings in other grade levels or children not enrolled at STS, especially toddlers and infants, may not attend field trips even if the parent is a chaperone.

No overnight trips are allowed at the elementary level (ELP or K through 8). Prolonged and expensive eighth grade and senior trips are not to be sponsored by the school. International trips **MUST** be approved by the Office of Catholic Schools.

Field trips are a privilege, not a right. Students not participating in the field trip are required to come to school and will be assigned work to be completed under the supervision of a teacher or administrator.

Teachers are to perform a head count at all major transitions including loading and unloading of the bus, before and after bathroom breaks, and after leaving a building. All students attending the field trip must report to school in the morning and must return to school from the field trip site. All students must use school-approved transportation.

Field trips are educational. All students will wear their school uniforms on field trips unless the administration grants permission to do otherwise.

Teachers will assign transportation for students using parent volunteers. Parents who are not drivers cannot take their child unless prearranged with teachers ahead of time. If the field trip is first thing in the morning, parents should park across the street until 8:00am so that teachers may park in the parking lot.

#### Transportation Guidelines

1. Methods of transportation of students must be approved by the principal in advance and evidence of adequate insurance coverage of transportation vehicles must be obtained.
2. The use of 10-15 passenger vans is prohibited by federal law for transporting persons high school age or younger.
3. If using a bus with media systems for transportation, all media/video/DVD material must be reviewed by the leader before using them publicly. "R" rated and adult material is strictly prohibited. PG-13 rated materials must be screened by the leader and parents/guardians must be notified in writing.

4. The use of personally owned passenger vehicles is discouraged and should be avoided if possible. If a personally owned vehicle must be used, then the following information must be supplied prior to serving as a driver and this information must be certified by the driver in question:
  - a. Driver Information Form
  - b. Copy of valid, non-probationary driver's license
  - c. Copy of the driver's insurance declaration page indicating adequate coverage
  - d. The driver must be 21 years of age or older; 25 years of age is traveling out of state.
  - e. The drivers must have no physical disability that could in any way impair his/her ability to drive the vehicle safely.
  - f. One adult cannot be alone with a single youth in a vehicle.
  - g. No other stops may be made while going to or returning from the field trip.
  - h. The vehicle must:
    - i. Have a valid and current registration and valid and current license plates.
    - ii. Be insured for the following minimum limits: \$100,000 per person; \$300,000 per occurrence
    - iii. Must be driven by its owner.
  - i. Child seats as required by law.
  - j. Travel in personally owned vehicles shall be limited to one-hour of travel in each direction.

#### Chaperone Guidelines

1. A chaperone must be 21 years of age or older.
2. Under no circumstances shall a field trip be only a single chaperone and a single student
3. Each employee and volunteer must have the following information on file with the school office:
  - a. VIRTUS training date (completed)
  - b. Signed Code of Conduct (signed annually)
  - c. Background Check
4. Chaperones are to be alcohol- and drug-free. Absolutely no alcohol is allowed at events with minors (less than 21 years of age)
5. There must be at least two (2) chaperones at an event.
6. A 1:10 adult/youth ratio is required for all day trips.
7. For high school ONLY: A 1:7 adult/youth ratio is required for any overnight activities accounting for male/female chaperones according to the number of male/female youth.

Chaperones are required to drive directly to and from the location. No side trips or stops at stores or fast food are allowed. Please do not give gum, candy, or food to the children riding in your vehicle (food allergies may be involved). Students will remain with their drivers and chaperones at all times. Please chaperone the children riding in your vehicle. Drivers will park and line up in the teacher's parking lot. When we return to the teachers' parking lot, keep the students in your vehicle until the teachers are present to direct the students. All children under the age of eight are required to be properly restrained in an appropriate child passenger safety seat or booster seat.

#### Housing Guidelines (for high school overnight trips approved by the Office of Catholic Schools).

1. Room accommodations for youth events are gender specific. Males are never allowed in female-assigned rooms and females are never allowed in male-assigned rooms.
2. Chaperones must be in rooms separate from the youth.

3. Parents and children may share a room. No other combination of relatives is allowed (e.g., aunt/niece; grandpa/grandson, etc.)
4. No unrelated minor may share a room with an adult.
5. High school seniors who are 18 may share a room with their peers; however, this exception ends with graduation.
6. Adults must never be in a room alone with a youth.
7. Bag searches must be conducted with a parent present before departure.
8. Additional bag searches may be conducted at destination as needed (2 adults are required per bag search).

NOTE: If a private home is used for off-site activities, the homeowner should be aware of the increased liability risk they incur. They should check with the homeowner's insurance agent to see if they are protected for Church group activities. Some policies cover such activities while others require an additional rider.

Field Trip Forms and Driver Information Forms are available in the front office of the school.

## **Dress Code and Uniform Policy**

Research has indicated that there is a distinct relationship between the student's attire and his/her classroom behavior, attitude, and achievement. Uniforms are worn at St. Teresa's Catholic School to create an atmosphere conducive to learning; one in which students are viewed as equals and treated fairly. St. Teresa's Catholic School seeks to avoid the pressures of peer groups to conform to the latest fads. Each student should take pride in his/her personal appearance. Students are expected to arrive at school neat, presentable and in uniform. Students should dress in a manner consistent with accepted Catholic moral standards of good taste and modesty. Students shall wear the uniform designated for the God given biological sex bestowed at birth.

### *Uniforms*

#### *Grades PreK-5*

Girls: Plaid jumper with white blouse (school logo on left side of jumper)  
 Plaid or navy shorts with white knit shirt  
 Navy slacks with white knit shirt  
 Navy or brown belt  
 White, navy, gray, or black socks  
 Navy cardigan sweater, fleece, sweatshirt, or jacket with logo

Boys: Navy blue pants with light blue knit shirt  
 Navy blue shorts with light blue knit shirt  
 Navy or brown belt  
 White, navy, gray, or black socks  
 Navy cardigan sweater, fleece, sweatshirt, or jacket with logo

#### *Grade 6-8*

Girls: *Full Dress Uniform for Girls* (required on Mass days and some field trips)  
 Plaid skirt with white oxford blouse, navy vest, or cardigan (with school logo), & plaid tie.  
*Uniform for all other days*  
 Plaid or Khaki shorts with navy knit shirt

Khaki slacks with navy knit shirt  
Khaki or brown belt  
White, navy, gray, or black socks  
Navy cardigan sweater, fleece, sweatshirt, or jacket with logo

Boys: *Full Dress Uniform Boys* (required on Mass days and some field trips)  
Khaki pants with white oxford shirt, navy vest (with school logo) or blazer, & striped tie  
*Uniform for all other days*  
Khaki shorts with navy knit shirt  
Khaki or brown belt  
White, navy, gray, or black socks  
Navy cardigan sweater, fleece, sweatshirt, or jacket with logo

#### *Grade 9-12*

Girls: *Full Dress Uniform for Girls* (required on Mass days and some field trips)  
Plaid skirt with white oxford blouse, navy vest, or cardigan (with school logo), & plaid tie.  
*Uniform for all other days*  
Plaid or Khaki shorts with navy, hunter green, or red knit shirt  
Khaki slacks with navy, hunter green, or red knit shirt  
Khaki or brown belt

Boys: *Full Dress Uniform Boys* (required on Mass days and some field trips)  
Khaki pants with white oxford shirt, navy vest (with school logo) or blazer, & striped tie  
*Uniform for all other days*  
Khaki shorts with navy, hunter green, or red knit shirt  
Khaki slacks with navy, hunter green, or red knit shirt  
Khaki or brown belt

*In cool weather-* Girls and boys may wear a plain white T-shirt under uniform shirts. T-shirt sleeve must NOT be longer than uniform sleeve. All girls must wear shorts under their uniforms.

ALL UNIFORMS MUST HAVE THE CHILD'S NAME MARKED WITH AN INDELIBLE BLACK MARKER.

NOTE: Uniforms may be ordered from Land's End or can be purchased locally.

Shoes - Boys and girls in all grades may wear full tennis shoes/sneakers in any color – no sling backs or slide tennis shoes. Leather oxfords or loafers (dress shoes) are required on Mass days. The following shoes are NOT permitted: wheeled shoes, sandals, boots, crocs, or light up shoes.

Physical Education Uniforms - P.E. Uniforms are required for all students in grades 4-9. This uniform consists of navy, black, or gray shorts and an STS T-shirt. Girls in grades PK-5 will wear shorts under their jumpers. Tennis shoes must be worn by all grades. P.E. Uniforms must have the child's name on both pieces marked with an indelible black marker.

Grooming - Neatness and cleanliness are encouraged and always expected. Each student should take pride in his/her personal appearance. Students are expected to wear traditional hairstyles:

Girls' hair should be clean and neatly trimmed. Bangs should not come below the eyebrows. Small barrettes, ponytail bands, or bows may be worn to hold the hair back and away from the

face. However, large bows and hair accessories that are worn for decorative purposes are a distraction and may not be worn to school. All girls' hair, regardless of style, should not be colored unnaturally.

No tattoos or body paint of any kind.

Boy's hair should be clean and neatly trimmed. All boys' hair, regardless of style, should not be colored unnaturally.

Accessories-The only accessories permitted with the uniform are:

1. one ring
2. one pair of earrings- Girls' only (small stud type – NO HOOP earrings)
3. a watch
4. a thin chain with a small Christian symbol for religious significance and not as a decoration is permitted. Bracelets and other necklaces are not allowed.

Uniform Fit- The uniform should fit the child properly. It must be clean, neat and in good condition. Missing buttons, torn hems, and zippers should be repaired or replaced promptly. Girls' skirts and jumpers must be just above knee length. Parents are asked to check periodically for needed adjustments. Girls in grades 6-12 may not roll their skirts. Long sleeve shirts and blouses are not to be rolled up. For grades PK-8, uniform outerwear are permitted in the classroom but non-uniform jackets must be removed during homeroom. Uniform outerwear may not be worn around the waist. Please note boys' and girls' shirts are to be tucked in at all times. We do have a girl's hemmed shirt that may be worn untucked. This is the only exception. Please send your gently used clothing to our uniform closet.

### *Special Occasions*

Free Dress - Some days in the year are declared Free Dress Days. On these occasions the students are expected to dress neatly and in good taste. The following may not be worn:

- Ragged, worn, ripped, or tight jeans
- Sweatpants or athletic shorts
- Shirts with writing or pictures related to alcohol, drugs, gangs, weapons, or inappropriate language (may be left to discretion of staff)
- Flip flops, crocs, or any open toed shoes
- Tank tops
- Low cut blouses
- Halters or cut-off tops
- Riding pants, leggings, sweats, or pajama bottoms
- Inappropriately short clothing (shorts must be to the knee)
- Short skirt/dress (must be to the knee)
- Students may not wear any outfits that show skin around the middle or back, this includes shirts that show middle when arms are raised.

School Dances/Events – The students are to dress for the occasion of the dance/event. Directions dress code for each dance/event will be provided.

Field Day - Field Day is an outdoor fun day for all students. The non-uniform dress code is in effect except for the following changes:

- Athletic Shorts may be worn but they should be long
- No cut-offs

- STS-shirts may be worn (no tanks)
- Socks and sneakers must be worn at all times (no bare feet) for safety reasons. NO crocs or flip flops
- Students are not permitted to write on or cut their Field Day shirts

## **Emergency Management and Safety Procedures**

Each school in the Diocese of Savannah is required to have a comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, developed in consultation with local authorities that addresses fire, safety, and health. Schools in the Diocese of Savannah will adhere to guidelines issued by appropriate federal, state, and local authorities.

Emergency procedures should be posted in a conspicuous place. Principal should designate a person to act “in the name of the principal” when not on school grounds. Plans must apply to all children in care and will include specific accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions.

Pupil emergency information should be updated regularly to include pertinent information such as emergency contact information, family doctor and medical concerns.

### *Health Insurance and Safety*

The school should cooperate with the Department of Health or similar agencies in the community, which is charged with the medical supervision of school children and the control of communicable diseases.

If the situation warrants, the parent or guardian is notified when their child becomes ill at school, and it may be necessary for the parent to take the child home. If no one can be reached, the principal is responsible for taking the necessary action in the situation. A student who is ill will be released from school in the custody of or permission of their parent/guardian.

At the beginning of each school year or when child/children enter St. Teresa’s Catholic School, parents are asked to fill out an emergency health form and return it to the school immediately.

Each student is covered by accident insurance that is included in the enrollment fee. In case of an accident requiring medical attention, an accident form must be filled out and filed within 60 days.

The safety of each child is the utmost concern to the school. Supervision will be provided between the hours of 7:30 AM and 3:15 PM. Students arriving before 7:30 AM must enroll in Before School Care. Teachers should be notified in writing if the child does not ride home with his/her parents. Students remaining in the cafeteria after 3:15 PM will be sent to Extended Day and parents will be charged the drop-in rate per day.

Parents who come for their child/children during school hours must pick them up and sign them out at the school office. No student may leave the grounds during school, school activities, or Extended Day without permission from the school administration. Any child who does so will be suspended until the parent/administration conference is held.

Compliance with the local Health Department guidelines for sanitary conditions of the school is required which includes cleanliness of lavatories, drinking fountains, lunchrooms, classrooms,

corridors, and grounds. Each school will have sufficient maintenance personnel to provide the clean, safe environment conducive to learning and healthy living.

Periodic fire drills, tornado drills, and lock-down are conducted during the school year to acquaint the students with the proper emergency procedures. After the emergency signal is sounded, the students are to leave all classrooms and proceed to designated areas immediately without running, shoving, or talking to insure an orderly and safe evacuation.

### *Communicable Diseases*

The principal or designated person-in-charge shall report or cause to be reported any cases or suspected cases of notifiable communicable diseases to the local County Health Department as required by the rules of the Georgia Department of Public Health, Rule 511-2-1, Notification of Disease.

The Department's current communicable disease chart of recommendations for exclusion of sick children from the school and their readmission shall be followed. Parents of all children enrolled shall be notified in writing of the occurrence of any of the illnesses on the communicable disease chart, as provided by the Department, within twenty-four (24) hours after the school becomes aware of the illness or the next working day.

### *Fire Drills*

Fire drills and preventive measures are necessary for the safety of the school and of all concerned. Fire drills are required monthly. Inspection of fire prevention apparatus must be made periodically. Directions for fire and other safety evacuations should be clearly posted. Written records of drills should be maintained for two years as a record of satisfactory performance.

Each school in the Diocese of Savannah must have an operating fire alarm system, distinct from the usual bell and accessible at all times. The location of the alarms should be clearly marked, and its operation understood by all.

Doors leading from classrooms and corridors should open outwards. All exit doors should be plainly marked. Nothing should block fire exits or doors. Panic hardware should be used on all outside exits.

Janitorial equipment and hazardous supplies must be stored in fire resistant rooms. The accumulation of scrap paper and other combustible waste material in any part of the school building, particularly in the boiler room, is prohibited.

Regular checks for fire hazards should be made and the dangers removed. Each school should have regular safety inspections of the buildings and grounds; teachers and personnel should be trained in safety procedures and written fire emergency procedures should be on file in the principal's office.

Fire drills are held on a monthly basis. During a fire drill or actual fire emergency, please follow the guidelines below:

- a. Close classroom doors, outside doors, and any fire doors that may be open.
- b. Do not close any windows that may be open.
- c. Ensure that students walk silently in an orderly single line.
- d. Exit following directions posted in the classroom.
- e. Once outside, take attendance and report any missing students.

- f. Stay in designated spot in silence until signaled to return to building.

### *Tornado/Disaster Drill*

The school follows all the regulations issued by the local G.E.M.A. for tornadoes, hurricanes, and other disasters. Monthly tornado drills shall be conducted throughout tornado season.

In the case of an emergency, schools should consult with the local districts and administrative team in determining closure. Each school shall have an emergency broadcast radio.

Tornado drills are usually conducted twice a year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring. During a tornado drill or actual tornado emergency, please follow the guidelines below:

- a. Ensure that students walk silently in an orderly single line.
- b. Exit following directions posted in classroom for tornado/disaster drills.
- c. Take attendance and report any missing students.
- d. Have students sit in assigned areas until a signal is given for release.
- e. Return to classroom quietly.

### *Lockdown*

As a part of a comprehensive emergency management plan, schools will have specific guidelines and instructions for handling lockdown/shelter in place situations. These procedures are to be practiced at least twice a year – August/September (within the first 10 attendance days) and January. Drills should be reported on the Safety Drills Report.

During a lockdown drill or an actual lockdown emergency, please follow the guidelines below:

- a. Close and lock all classroom doors.
- c. Remain in the classroom until otherwise notified.
- d. Do not let any student leave or enter the room.

### *Evacuation*

Should it become necessary to evacuate the school campus, the emergency off campus evacuation site will be St. Teresa's Catholic Church. Teachers will remain with their students in their usual Mass seating locations. Instructions will be given as to how to dismiss students to their parents should that become necessary. Students should not be dismissed until authorization has been given by the principal, his designee, or first responders.

### *Bomb Threat*

Each principal should familiarize himself/herself with procedures to follow in case of a bomb threat. Immediately contact the police department and follow their directions which may include evacuation of the building and prohibiting the use of cell phones.

## **Drug and Tobacco Free Environment**

In keeping with Diocesan policy, St. Teresa's Catholic School maintains a drug-free and tobacco-free environment. All schools shall prohibit smoking and the consumption of alcohol on school premises during the regular school day. Signs indicating the prohibition shall be posted on campus.

A student may not carry, consume, or have in his/her possession on the school grounds, before, during, or after school hours, any drugs or alcohol, including but not limited to, tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or federally controlled contraband.

Violating this policy may result in suspension and/or expulsion. Trafficking of drugs on school premises requires the school authorities to inform the police. Schools may consult with respective public-school officials for alcohol and drug regulations.

A comprehensive up-to-date program (K-12) of drug education appropriate to the age of the students should be provided that will make students aware of the personal danger involved in drug abuse and of each student's responsibility to contribute positively to the society in which each lives. Drug education on an annual basis aimed at the faculty and parents that provides information and assistance is a vital corollary to a program aimed at students.

Students who exhibit behaviors consistent with drug or alcohol abuse should be reported to the school principal.

Types of Violations - These violations will be reported to authorities.

Possession - Students may not have in their possession at school or at any school-sponsored activity alcoholic beverages, opiates (heroin, morphine, codeine, etc.) barbiturates, amphetamines, or hallucinogens (marijuana, LSD, any unauthorized paraphernalia, tobacco, etc.).

Use - Any student whose appearance or behavior indicates the possibility of drug misuse shall be referred to the principal by the teacher or counselor.

Trafficking - If it becomes evident that a student is a distributor, one selling or giving drugs or recruiting for drug abuse, the student is guilty of a crime.

## **Pregnant Students**

In the case of pregnancy, the decision for the student to continue in regular classes shall be made in consultation with the students, their parents, the school administration, and if appropriate, the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools. Student pregnancy may be grounds for expulsion.

## **Lockers**

Only high school students have lockers. Locker use is a privilege. Lockers are issued at the beginning of the school year. The students may use only the locker assigned and may not change without permission. All lockers are subject to search by school officials at any time. The school is not responsible for personal property stolen from or damaged in the student's locker. If a student chooses to bring any valuable personal belongings to school, including cell phones, AirPods, other electronic equipment, jewelry, and clothing, the student must accept personal responsibility for loss or damage. Damage to a locker will result in a fine. Students are permitted to go to their lockers between class periods, but it is suggested that these visits be limited to before first period, after lunch, and after last period. Students who have permission to go to their lockers during class time must not disturb classes that are in session.

### *Search and Seizure*

School officials may at any time conduct such searches as are essential to the safety, health, and well-being of the students, and to secure discipline and sound administration of the school.

Police Officers, upon the authority of a search warrant, may make a search of that part of the school premises described in the search warrant, and school officials should cooperate in performing such a service.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Savannah will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Final Rule on Educational Records, Public Law 93-308 as modified by SB 105, Article 5, Privacy of Pupil Records, which reads: Every effort shall be made to conduct searches in a manner that will minimize disruption of the normal school routine and minimize embarrassment to the pupil(s) involved.

## **Weapons Policy**

In keeping with Diocesan policy, St. Teresa's Catholic School prohibits the use, possession, or sale of any weapon or instrument used as a weapon to inflict serious harm.

A student may not bring to school or have in his/her possession on the school grounds, before, during, or after school hours, any weapon or instrument that might be used as a weapon to inflict serious harm on oneself or another person. Violating this policy may result in suspension and/or expulsion.

## **Student/Family Directory**

A directory with student and family information is available in FACTS SIS for teachers to access. Parents may choose to have their contact information blocked in this directory only for other parents to view but not faculty and staff.

## **Parent Organizations and Volunteerism**

The Parent/Teacher Organization serves at the discretion of the Pastor and/or Principal to:

- be of service to parents and the school;
- serve as a means of communication between parents and the school;
- provide opportunities for education of parents regarding educational trends, curriculum design, school procedures and learning support, etc.; and
- serve as the primary fundraising entity of the school.

St. Teresa's Parent/Teacher Organization promotes a close working relationship among parents, teachers, the principal, and the pastor. The P.T.O. provides opportunities for parent and teacher enrichment at the regular meetings. There is a planned program for meetings and there are opportunities for the free exchange of ideas concerning St. Teresa's Catholic School programs.

The P.T.O. further supports the school by planning and conducting events to raise funds for school related projects and encourages parents to voluntarily assist the school in a variety of capacities.

The school uses parents to volunteer in assisting with its various programs. Parents are asked to support all school fundraisers and to volunteer their services for the special events.

Fundraisers – students are encouraged to ask family and friends to help with fundraisers, going door to door is not recommended.

Service Hours – Parental involvement is a key component of student success. Many Catholic schools in our diocese and across the country are implementing a parent involvement program to promote student and school growth. At the time of registration, each family agrees to contribute a minimum of 20 hours of service by the end of the school year. Hours served on PTO, school, and athletic boards will apply towards the service requirement. A list of service hour activities will be distributed at the time of orientation. During the month of May, families who have not fulfilled the parental involvement requirement will be notified. Families will be assessed at a rate of \$20.00 per hour for any service hours not completed by the end of the school year.

### Virtus Training

VIRTUS training outlines appropriate behavior when dealing with children, and is for the protection of both the adult volunteer and our students. VIRTUS training is required for all parents who wish to volunteer at St. Teresa's Catholic School. Examples of volunteering include: serving as a room parent; working a concession stand; assisting with a sport or club; chaperoning a field trip or dance; and working at school events. If you plan to volunteer at St. Teresa's School, you will need to attend a VIRTUS training session.

### How To Register for VIRTUS Training Sessions

You must pre-register online to attend VIRTUS Training Sessions. To register, visit [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org), click the "First Time Registrant" button on the left side of the webpage, and choose Savannah, GA (Diocese) from the pull-down menu. You'll be able to view and select upcoming VIRTUS training sessions that have been scheduled in our area. Please follow the directions to register.

### School Parties

Birthday parties are not permitted during school hours; however, parents may send a simple treat for their child's class on his/her birthday. Individually wrapped treats are acceptable. Parents should consult with the teacher in advance. No party invitations may be given during class time or on the school premises unless everyone in the class is invited. Flowers, balloons, etc. cannot be accepted at school for delivery to students.

Gifts may not be exchanged at school in any grade.

## **Photo/Media Consent**

Below is the information included in the media consent form provided to students and families to sign at the beginning of each school year.

As a school community, St. Teresa's Catholic School records, promotes and celebrates student work, special events, activities, athletics, field trips, etc., through the use of photos, videos, and digital media. These are used in many ways, including but not limited to, school and parish websites, social media, school and parish publications, and press releases to media. Videos may be published to members of your child's class and others for distance learning purposes through the use of Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or other similar technology.

This form must be signed for each student and returned to St. Teresa's Catholic School.

I hereby consent to the participation in interviews, taking of photographs, movies and videos of the student named below. I also grant St. Teresa's Catholic School the right to edit, use, and re-use said products for non-profit purposes, including print, Internet, and all other forms of media. During this usage, the student may be identified by first and last name. I also consent to the use of video taken of my child's classroom learning, in which my child's likeness may appear, so that such video may be used and published for distance learning purposes.

I also hereby release the Diocese of Savannah, St. Teresa's Catholic School, the parish and its agents and employees from all claims, demands, and liabilities whatsoever in connection with the above.

**OR**

I object to the release or use of the below-named student's likeness in any interview, photograph, movie, or videotape that will be produced, used, or distributed by St. Teresa's Catholic School for school or parish purposes.

### **Acceptable Use Policy for Technology and Internet**

The use of computers, indeed the use of any form of technology, is a means, not an end to education. Teachers and students have a responsibility to use the tools at hand to enhance education. We believe the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions to individual subscribers. With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the school setting. The Diocese of Savannah has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials, and an industrious user may discover controversial information. We firmly believe that the valuable information and interaction available on the worldwide network far outweigh the possibility that users may obtain material that is not consistent with the educational and moral goals of the Diocese.

#### **EDUCATION GOALS**

- To provide a variety of information to enhance the curricula areas.
- To help students work effectively with various forms of telecommunication tools.
- To prepare students to become critical thinkers and problem solvers.
- To teach skills needed in the electronic and global fields.

#### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies, regional and state networks. The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. These guidelines are provided so that you are aware of the responsibilities you are about to acquire. In general, this requires efficient, ethical, and legal use of the network resources. If a Diocese of Savannah user violates any of these provisions, his or her privileges will be terminated, and future access could be denied. Violation of this agreement will be referred to appropriate school officials for disciplinary action. Violations of state or federal law will be referred to their appropriate law enforcement agency. The signatures at the end of this document are legally binding and indicate the parties who signed have read the terms and conditions carefully and understand their significance.

**PARENTS:** It is important that you and your child read this agreement and discuss it together. When your child is allowed to use the technology in our school, it is extremely important that the rules are followed. As a parent, you are legally responsible for your child's actions. You are responsible for supervision of your child's Internet use when not in a school setting.

### Acceptable Use

The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of the Dioceses of Savannah. Use of other organizations; network or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulations is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to: copyrighted material or material protected by trade secret.

### Privileges

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of those privileges. (Each student who accesses the Internet will be part of a discussion with a Diocese of Savannah faculty member about the proper use of the network.) Diocese of Savannah officials will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decision is final. Also, Diocese of Savannah officials may request that the school deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges. The Diocese of Savannah expects the co-signing teacher to monitor the student's access for which he or she is responsible. Random checks of Internet history and monitoring of faculty, staff and student access may be conducted to determine whether the accounts are being used in a manner that is consistent with this agreement. Faculty, staff and students agreeing to the Diocese of Savannah Access to the Internet will consent to such monitoring.

### Responsibilities

All persons accessing the Internet from the school/parish locations must accept the responsibility of using the internet wisely and correctly. A faculty member will monitor access to the internet by students at all times. Everyone is expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network use. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- There must be a clear academic purpose for accessing the internet at the school location.
- Do not use the network for any illegal activity (e.g. violating copyright or other contracts, gaining illegal access or entry into other computers.)
- Do not use the network for financial or commercial gain.
- Do not interfere with the proper operation of school system and networks accessible through the Internet.
- Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the facilities by other users.
- Do not use school computing and network resources in a wasteful or frivolous manner (e.g. tying up resources with computer-based game playing, sending trivial or excessive messages, downloading excessively large files).
- Do not reveal your personal address/phone number or the personal address/phone number of another student.
- Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, internet, or any of the above listed agencies or other networks that are connected to the internet backbone. This

includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses, moving and/or deleting files not belonging to you.

- If you feel you can identify a security problem on the internet, you must notify a teacher or system administrator. **Do not demonstrate the problem to other users.**
- Respect the privacy of others.
- Files/data belonging to others are to be considered private property unless the owner of the files gives explicit authorization.
- Be polite. Do not be abusive in your messages to others. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.

The Diocese of Savannah makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the service that is provided. The Diocese of Savannah will not be responsible for any damage you suffer. This includes loss of data resulting from delays or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or your errors of omissions. Use of any information obtained via the internet is at your own risk. No guarantee of complete privacy is made. The Diocese of Savannah specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the access of their network facilities.

## Social Media Policy

*"Communication is a means of expressing the missionary vocation of the entire Church; today, the social networks are one way to experience this call to discover the beauty of faith, the beauty of encountering Christ."* (Pope Francis' Message for the 48th World Communications Day [WCD], 2014.)

Excellence in the Christian education and formation of our students demands a Christian spirit of collaboration between parents and school staff. This social media policy serves to protect the Christian dignity of every student and teacher from the damaging effects of negative social media post by ensuring that electronic communication on the Internet is appropriate, reflective of our Catholic values, and consistent with the rules and values of our school.

Social media is defined as any web-based and mobile technologies which are designed to turn communication into interactive dialogue. This includes but is not limited to the use of blogs/wikis, message boards/forums, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Google, Pinterest, Vimeo, Edmodo, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and any derivative applications.

The school considers the following examples to be inappropriate social media conduct/content. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Inappropriate language
- Discriminatory, defamatory, proprietary or slanderous remarks/images or allegations about the Diocese, its entities, employees or students
- Cyber-bullying, harassment or threats of violence
- Complaints about the Diocese, its entities, employees or students
- Links to sites that contain offensive content

Inappropriate content posted to official school social networking sites/pages shall be removed by the school-related administrators designated to maintain the social media presence.

Employees, parents, students, and volunteers must be cognizant that any use of social media is a reflection of our school and the Diocese of Savannah, its mission statement, and values. More

importantly, we must set an example for our children about being responsible for what we choose to share online.

Each school shall maintain on file for every student official Diocesan Media Consent Form indicating parent/guardian permission for the sharing of a student's name, image and likeness.

Social media is a great way to promote our school. We have so many wonderful things we do that we need to celebrate and promote. All content which is published on the school website and social media sites can be shared on your own social media accounts. This provides our school with a tremendous amount of exposure and goodwill. We encourage parents and volunteers to engage in the following:

- Participate in and promote official school events, activities, and programs.
- Distribute advance notices of school events and programs.
- Encourage participation in fundraisers, food/clothing drives, and other events and initiatives.
- Inform school families, friends, alumni, and supporters about news, events or programs.
- Recognize special achievements or accomplishments of students, families and employees.

We respectfully ask that parents/guardians and students do not engage in the following when using personal social media sites:

- Conversations about school business or private discussions in a negative manner.
- Airing grievances with fellow volunteers, school administrators, teachers, parents, students or other individuals.

## GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

Students must learn how to use social media responsibly and effectively.

- Respect the privacy of others by not sharing personal information or hurtful comments about classmates via social media including e-mail and texting.
- Personal videos and photos of individual class activities, concerts, sports, drama productions, class trips extracurricular activities, etc. which are shared social media sites must be appropriate and not libelous.

## GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

- Parents/guardians shall make complaints through official school channels rather than posting complaints on social networking sites.
- Parents /guardians shall immediately bring any social media policy violations or concerns to school officials. Responding in kind to uncharitable communications through social media merely perpetuates divisiveness.
- School officials will not mediate social media issues between students or parents unless it directly affects the school.
- Parents/guardians shall monitor their children's online activity, including their use of social media.
- Parents/guardians shall explain to their children what is acceptable to post online.

*For more, see:*

- [USCCB Social Media Guidelines](#)

- [“Towards Full Presence. A Pastoral Reflection on Engagement with Social Media”](#)  
by the Vatican Dicastery for Communication.

## **Early Learning Program Policies**

Early Learning Programs (ELPs) shall be considered part of the regular school community and fall under the purview of the school’s administration and the authority of the Bishop and Office of Catholic Schools. All ELPs are designed to serve as learning and social environments with specific goals; programs are NOT to function as childcare centers.

Early Learning Programs in the Diocese of Savannah must initially certify with Bright from the Start and will be considered a regular part of the school system’s accreditation.

Early Learning Programs in the Diocese of Savannah will comply with the minimum curriculum standards established by the Office of Catholic Schools. Teachers shall gather assessment documentation (to include checklists, milestones, etc.) on children through observational notes, work samples, matrices, and photos. Each teacher shall provide ongoing assessment of the student’s progress and engage in ongoing communication with parents. Early Learning Programs shall use report cards approved by the Office of Catholic Schools.

ELPs shall provide a daily planned program of varied and developmentally appropriate activities. Staff shall use a variety of teaching methods to accommodate the developmental needs of the children's different learning styles. Sufficient and varied play and learning equipment and materials shall be provided to support the curriculum in all developmental areas. Opportunities for each child to make choices in a variety of activities shall be offered.

Personnel shall provide individual attention to each child. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Responding promptly to the child's distress signals and need for comfort;
- Playing with and talking to the children; and
- Providing and assisting the child with personal care in a manner appropriate to the child's age level, i.e., providing the child privacy in dressing, diapering and toileting functions as the developmental age of the child dictates.

Staff shall not engage in, or allow children or other adults to engage in, activities that could be detrimental to a child's health or well-being, such as but not limited to, horse play, rough play, wrestling, and picking up a child in a manner that could cause injury.

Personnel shall provide routines for toileting, eating, resting, napping, and intervals between activities. Staff shall assist and encourage each child to become independent in the development of self-help skills, such as washing hands and face, dressing, eating and toileting. Children shall be allowed to go to the toilet and get a drink of water as they feel the need.

A daily schedule for each group shall be developed to reflect routines and activities. Schedules shall be flexible but routinely followed to provide structure. The schedule must be posted in each group's room or area and made available to parent(s) upon request.

The use of entertainment media, such as television, videotaped programs or movies and video or computer games shall be limited to no more than two (2) hours daily per child or group and shall be provided only at times when alternative activities are available for children who choose not to

participate. Entertainment media shall be age-appropriate in accordance with the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).

The ELP is responsible for the child from the time the child arrives until the child is picked up by his or her parent(s) or the responsible person designated by his or her parent(s). Regardless of the number of children in attendance, two adults (lead teacher, classroom aide, and/or substitute) must be present and actively involved with children during the entire instructional day for each day of operation, with the exception of the one-half to one-hour rest time.

### **School's Right to Amend**

*St. Teresa's Catholic School is part of the Diocesan Family of Schools. We reserve the right to change or alter any current rules or to make additional rules when it is to conform to Diocesan rules and guidelines. Notice of Amendments will be placed in teacher mailboxes and/or distributed electronically.*