



ST. JOSEPH

Catholic School

*I will try my best every day to LEARN, to LOVE others,
and to ACT like Jesus.*

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**Student & Family Handbook
2025-2026**

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Joseph Catholic School provides well-rounded Catholic education to the Northwest Arkansas community, forming students to be lights to the world. St. Joseph maintains the high standards of the Catholic educational tradition by meeting students at their individual academic and physical levels and leading them to higher achievement. Members of the St. Joseph family uphold the two-fold commandment of Jesus Christ to love God—through prayer and liturgy—and to love neighbor—through service and mutual respect—recognizing the dignity of all people made in the image and likeness of God.

SCHOOL MOTTO

I will try my best every day to learn, to love others, and to act like Jesus.

PHILOSOPHY

To seek spiritual growth of students by developing a high-quality Christian-based program that promotes academic achievement, service to the community and a respect for life.

GOALS

1. To build a faith-based community with strong Christian values.
2. To offer a rigorous curriculum to achieve academic excellence.
3. To recruit and retain faculty members with the highest professional qualifications and an enthusiasm to impart knowledge and Christian values to their students.
4. To encourage students, faculty members and staff to serve their community.

Accreditation and Memberships

St. Joseph Catholic School is fully accredited through the Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (ANSAA). St. Joseph Catholic School is a member of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and a school of the Diocese of Little Rock.

School Board

The St. Joseph School Board is an advisory board that assists the principal in various duties. New members are recommended by the board and appointed by the pastor. Individual board members exercise no official consultative role outside the board meeting. Members do not have the responsibility or authority to resolve school matters. If a board member is approached regarding a school issue, he/she will refer the aggrieved person to the complaint procedure outlined below.

Endowment

An educational trust fund for St. Joseph Catholic School was established to raise capital from which the interest can be used to support the work of the school and assist with long term financial needs of the school. This fund is overseen by a board of trustees independent of the school board. Gifts can be made to the endowment at any time.

In this handbook, wherever the term “parent(s)” is used, “parent(s) or guardian(s)” is implied.

ACADEMICS

Class Placement

The administration of St. Joseph School has sole responsibility for creating class lists. The goal of class placement is to create classes that are well-balanced by gender, demographics, behavioral needs, and academic ability to the greatest extent possible. Prior to the start of each school year, the administration and teachers discuss individual student needs and review standardized test scores. The administration then uses this information to create diverse yet balanced class lists. St. Joseph School does not accept parent requests for specific teachers as this hinders our ability to balance the classes as needed. If parents are aware of a specific need that their child has, they are encouraged to present that need to the administration so it can be considered in class placement.

Faith Life

Faith formation is reinforced through the students' participation in Mass celebrated each Tuesday and Friday as well as their participation in a morning prayer service, Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, religion classes and involvement in community services. Active participation is expected of all Catholic and non-Catholic students.

Federal Programs

Each year St. Joseph Catholic School students receive benefits from Title I and other programs through funding from the federal government. These funds are used to provide programs, teacher in-service and materials to address student improvement. Because much of this funding is based on the number of free or reduced students attending the school, we encourage everyone to apply.

Field Trips

Field trips are conducted on the basis of educational value. All off campus field trips must be approved by the principal and have relevance to the instructional curriculum. Before groups of students are taken off the school grounds, written permission must be obtained from the parent/guardian of each child. The principal may deny a student participation for disciplinary reasons. When private vehicles are used to transport students off campus, the following requirements are enforced:

- The driver must complete a Field Trip Driver Information Form. This form will be retained in the school office for the entire school year. All drivers must have completed the CMG Defensive Driving training online.
- The driver must be at least twenty-one (21) years old.
- The driver must have completed all safe environment program requirements. No felony convictions or convictions related to the sexual abuse of a child can be evident.
- If in-car video entertainment systems are used, any movies shown must be pre-approved by the principal.
- Students may not bring phones or other devices on field trips except for a specific purpose approved by the teacher. If approved, the teacher will set specific expectations for when and how phones will be used.
- The vehicle must be insured for the limits required by the school's insurance carriers.
- Students must wear seat belts at all times.
- Children under the state age and weight limit must use approved booster seats. Parents are to provide a booster seat for their child for trips, if necessary. Neither St. Joseph Catholic School employees nor volunteers will install five-point-harness car seats when students ride in a vehicle. If a child requires a five-point harness, that child's parent must drive.

Grade Reporting

Parents may view their child's grades at any time on FACTS Family Portal. Parents will also receive weekly email grade reports each Monday. Parents will be notified when the school reaches mid-quarter. Either and electronic or printed report cards will be sent home following each quarter.

Grading Scale

The following grading scale is used by St. Joseph Catholic School:

A+	100-98	B+	89-88	C+	79-78	D+	69-68	F	Below 60
A	97-92	B	87-82	C	77-72	D	67-62		
A-	91-90	B-	81-80	C-	71-70	D-	61-60		

Make-up Work

Students who are absent are responsible for inquiring about missed assignments and meeting established times for turning in the work. Assignments for students who are absent will be available in the school office at the end of the school day after the second consecutive day a student is absent, if requested by the parent. Assignments should not be picked up in the classroom.

Parents are requested to schedule family trips to coincide with days school is not in session, as extended absences can adversely affect a student's achievement. It is recommended that a discussion with your child's teacher be held before the absence. Students are responsible for making up all class work, home work, and tests missed during this time. If possible work may be sent with the student. However, parents and students should expect that most work will not be available until after they return.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences will be scheduled after the first and third quarters. Parents are also invited to request a teacher conference any time they feel it is needed. If there is a concern that cannot be resolved with the teacher, a conference should be arranged with the principal.

FACTS

FACTS is an online communications tool that is used extensively by the school to communicate information and grades with parents. The school will create a FACTS Family Portal account for all families. All families are required to provide the school with a valid email address at registration. Families who do not keep their FACTS information current will miss valuable communication from the school.

Student Contests

Student work may be assigned and selected for entry into various writing, poster or project-related contests sponsored by outside organizations. If a parent wishes that his or her child's work not be entered, he or she should notify the classroom teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Student Directory

Student directory information is available within the FACTS Family Portal. The Student Directory should only be used by school families to communicate with other families within our school community. These directories and the information contained in them should not be used or sold for other purposes. Please notify the school office of any information you wish to not be published in this directory.

Student Evaluations

Progress reports will be sent out mid-quarter to advise parents of student progress or impending academic trouble. Report cards will be issued quarterly. Progress reports and report cards must be signed and returned to the school within one week if requested by the teacher.

Some specials classes issue marks of Outstanding (O), Satisfactory (S), and Needs Improvement (N). A rubric of what is expected in order to earn each of these marks is available. It is expected that most students will earn S in most of these classes.

Online Interaction

Teachers and students will have online interaction/communication through official school channels only, such as school-assigned sjfay email accounts, Google Classroom, and online textbook resources. These official channels will be teachers' only online interaction with students. All communications are to be directly related to school activities and are to be professional in nature. Teachers will not "friend" or "follow" students in social media or other online forums.

Promotion & Retention

A student is promoted each year after evaluation by the teacher and the principal. When making an evaluation of the student's academic progress, the teacher will consider the social, emotional, physical, and moral development of the student, which at times may be given preference over academic performance. The principal will have the final say in promoting or retaining a child.

- Two failures (less than 70% for the year) in subjects other than art, music, health, physical education, technology, or Spanish constitute a grade failure unless made up in summer classes approved by the principal.
- Proof of attendance at summer school or approved tutoring and passing marks from the tutor, must be presented to the principal before the child is promoted.
- Accumulation of 17 days of absences during the school year may be grounds for retention.

When failure seems unavoidable, parents will be notified well in advance of the probable failure of the child. If a student is to be retained at any grade level, notice of retention and the reason for retention will be communicated promptly in a personal manner.

No child will be admitted to first grade unless he/she has attained the age of six (6) years on or before August 1 of such school year.

No child will be admitted to kindergarten unless he/she has attained the age of five (5) years on or before August 1 of such school year.

Students who attain the age of three (3) years on or before August 1 may enroll in Pre-K 3 and begin in August of such school year.

Students who turn 3 after August 1 but before January 1 may enroll in Pre-K after Christmas if space allows. Preschool students must be potty-trained before starting school. All children must be fully potty trained before attending.

Student Records

Student records are confidential and are available only to parents and authorized school personnel. A parent may submit a request to the principal to review his or her child's record at a mutually agreed upon time. St. Joseph Catholic School may occasionally release student names and grade levels to companies with which we do business (for example, the company selected for school pictures) and to announce awards and honors. When records are requested to be sent to another school, only the

permanent record card will be sent. Parents will be able to pick up other materials at the office and deliver them to the next school at their discretion.

Testing

Standardized testing will be administered annually to all students first grade and up. Test results will be provided to parents in a timely fashion.

Textbooks

This school will, whenever possible, utilize textbooks approved by the Diocesan Schools Office and the State Adoption List. Textbooks will be provided for the students. Books assigned to each student are the responsibility of that student. Care of the book is also the responsibility of that student. If a student loses or damages a book beyond the normal wear, the student will pay the replacement cost of the book.

ATTENDANCE

Absence/Tardiness

Parents are asked to call the school office prior to the beginning of each school day if their child will be absent or tardy that day. Parents must provide a written note each time a child is absent or tardy. Excessive absences or tardies will be handled on an individual basis by the principal. Students are considered tardy if they arrive after 8:15 a.m.

After-School Care

St. Joseph partners with the Duerr family to provide quality, affordable after-hours care. The Duerrs can be reached at (479) 386-7247 both during and outside of aftercare hours. Families can contact them directly for questions about the program.

After care is available daily (unless otherwise stated) from dismissal until 5:45 p.m. In order for the program to remain affordable, it is imperative that our after-care workers are able to clock-out on time. The late charge for after-school care is \$1 per minute after 5:45 p.m. If a student has an outstanding after-care balance greater than one month's fees, the student will not be permitted to attend after-care until the balance is paid down.

Athletic Participation

To participate in a game, a student-athlete must attend school for at least 4 hours that day. Absence from school on a Friday should not affect Saturday and Sunday participation in games if the student has recovered sufficiently to play and has been fever free for 24 hours. Student-athletes are allowed to practice with their teams regardless of school attendance if fever free for 24 hours.

Early Check-Out

Students may only be checked out early by their parent or other authorized person. Parents are to come to the office, not to the classroom, to sign out and meet their child. Students should only be dismissed before the scheduled end of the school day in the case of illness or a valid need. Appointments should be scheduled before or after school hours whenever possible.

Inclement Weather

In most cases, St. Joseph will follow the inclement weather decisions of Fayetteville Public Schools. However, there are some situations in which it may be deemed safe for St. Joseph students to return while FPS remains closed. Weather-closure decisions will be communicated to parents via text, email, social media posts, and local television stations. Parents are always free to decide not to travel if they believe traveling in their particular situation is unsafe. Such absences will be excused absences.

On weather-closure days, St. Joseph will utilize alternative methods of instruction (AMI) whenever possible. However, St. Joseph will have no more than two consecutive days of AMI without a return to school.

Non-custodial Parents

Non-custodial parents are not to use the school as a meeting place to visit with their child/children. In the case of divorce, it is the responsibility of the parents to provide the office with a copy of the divorce decree that includes the court order stating custody and visitation rights. The school will allow a non-custodial parent to take a child from school only as specified by court order unless other arrangements have been authorized by the custodial parent. If the court order is not on file in the office, it will be assumed that both parents have equal rights. Upon request, a copy of the child's report card will be provided to the non-custodial parent. No other records will be released to non-custodial parents without authorization from the custodial parent.

Employees of St. Joseph Catholic School are not able to provide statements for student custody proceedings unless a subpoena has been issued.

Custodial parents only may add or modify emergency contacts or pick-up lists for students. Custodial parents only may sign school forms such as permission slips and grade reports.

Pick-Up

Parents are able to list as many authorized pick-ups as they wish by adding the names to their registration form or to Family Portal. People on this list are authorized to freely pick-up the listed children as needed. If anyone who is not on a child's pick-up list is to pick him/her up, including another school family, the custodial parent must first contact the office to give approval. If your child will often ride with another school family, you are encouraged to add this family to your pick-up list.

Pre-Kindergarten

Children who are registered for Pre-K for less than five days per week must attend only on the days for which they are registered. If a sickness, holiday, snow day, etc. causes us to miss school on a day your child is scheduled to attend, it is not possible for your child to attend an unscheduled day as a "make up" day. Doing so would disrupt the schedule for the other group and could potentially cause us to be out of compliance with our mandated student/teacher ratio. If a field trip or class party is scheduled on a day other than your scheduled day, your child is welcome to attend these events.

If parents of part-time Pre-K students would like to add additional attendance days, they must first contact the teacher to ensure space is available on the requested day. A daily rate will be charged for added days.

BEHAVIOR

General Expectations

The ultimate goal of discipline at St. Joseph is to teach students to become effective modifiers of their own behavior. Good order and self-discipline is expected. The classroom teacher is responsible for developing age appropriate rules, rewards, and consequences, which are clearly conveyed to students verbally and in writing. Emphasis will be placed on positive values rather than negative. When violations do occur, each case will be dealt with patiently, with respect to the personal dignity of the student, teacher, and all who have been offended by the misconduct.

Serious and/or continuous disciplinary problems will be referred to the principal, and parents will be notified of the infractions and of the disciplinary action taken. The principal and pastor will make final decisions regarding disciplinary actions.

If a student cannot be helped through any of the above means, suspension or expulsion will be considered.

Bullying

St. Joseph Catholic School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Threatening or derogatory comments made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats, whether seriously or “just for fun,” at school, off campus, or through technology face serious consequences, possibly including suspension or expulsion.

Cheating

Cheating will not be tolerated. A student who cheats or plagiarizes will fail the assignment or test. Parents will be notified of the cheating and may be required to meet with the classroom teacher to discuss the behavior.

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software that is capable of independently creating student work presents a new and unique challenge regarding academic integrity. Because this situation is so new, the school has not developed a fully-formed plan to address it. The school reserves the right to apply the above cheating policy to any work that, in the best judgement of the faculty, was created by AI.

Discipline Board

For major or repeated infractions, the principal may convene a discipline board. The board will consist of five teachers spread across the grade levels. The faculty or staff member directly involved in the situation will not serve on the board, but may present information to the board. The student and parent(s) may also present information to the board. After hearing the information, the board will make a disciplinary recommendation to the principal. If the discipline board is convened, expulsion will be considered. The final decision will remain with the principal and pastor.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the permanent dismissal of a student from school. Expulsion from the school will be the decision of the principal in consultation with the pastor. Parents have the right to ask for a hearing to appeal an expulsion if they so wish.

Gum Chewing

Gum is not allowed on the school campus.

Human Sexuality

St. Joseph Catholic School has fully adopted the Diocese of Little Rock's *Human Sexuality* policy. The diocesan human sexuality policy is a part of the diocesan *Manual of Policies and Regulations* for Catholic schools, and is located in subsection 4.40 of the section titled "4.0 Students." It can be viewed on the Catholic Schools Office website at <http://www.dolr.org/schools/policy-manual>.

Major Offenses

Consequences for major offenses will be determined by the pastor and principal. In a spirit of fairness towards the dignity of all persons involved, each instance will be considered on an individual basis and all circumstances including the age of the students involved will be considered. Consequences may include suspension or expulsion. Diocesan policies will also be followed when applicable.

- Fighting.
- Defiance of school authority (principal, teachers, or other staff).
- Consistent lack of cooperation, both within and outside the class.
- Academic dishonesty
- Willful destruction of school property.
- Bringing or use of alcohol, tobacco in any form, and /or illegal drugs on the school grounds or at any parochial school function.
- Bringing any type of weapon to school or any school function. Weapons can be anything that could cause harm to an individual, such as, but not limited to knives, guns, and sharp objects.
- Use of classroom items or other objects in a way that endangers the safety of those in the room.
- Theft.
- Bullying, threatening, demeaning or hazing other students, either in person or through technology.
- Other such inappropriate behaviors.

Off-campus Actions

Each student is a St. Joseph student at all times and his or her behavior is a reflection on the school. A student who engages in conduct that is detrimental or defamatory towards the school, faculty, staff, or other students, whether inside or outside the school, may be disciplined by the school. This includes comments and actions online, in text messages, or through any means of communication.

Phones

Cell phones and smart devices are to be off and out of sight during the entire school day. They should not be used for any purpose without direct permission from the classroom teacher, the office staff, or an extracurricular activity supervisor. Students will be allowed to use the office telephone with permission. Only calls of an urgent nature will be forwarded to students during the school day.

A device is considered "smart" if it can send messages to another device. Devices that sync, such as fitness trackers, are allowed as long as it cannot communicate with other people's devices.

If a phone or smart device is used at school without permission, it will be confiscated and given to the principal, in addition to consequences enforced in the classroom. On the first offense, the student may

get the phone from the principal at the end of the day. After the first offense, the principal will call the parents to come pick up the device and may issue additional consequences as necessary.

Playground Behavior

Students are expected to behave on the playground in a way that does not endanger themselves or others. Minor playground misbehavior will be handled by the teacher(s) on duty. Serious or repetitive misbehavior will be referred to the principal.

Public Displays of Affection

The school is not an appropriate place for expressions of boy/girl relationships. Instances of public displays of affection will be addressed on an individual basis appropriate to the age of the students.

Recordings

Electronic devices are an important part of modern education. It is essential though that any such devices are used only in a manner that is supportive of the educational process and approved by the teacher. If a device is used to create a non-authorized video or audio recording, a copy of the recording will be made and saved by the principal, and the recording will be deleted from the device prior to the device being returned to the student. Any and all copies of non-authorized recordings will be permanently destroyed at the end of the school year in which they were made. More than one instance of violating this policy may result in confiscation of the device for an extended period of time and/or a revocation of the ability to use such devices to school.

School Property

Students are expected to be responsible for care of all school property. Any student damaging school property will be expected to pay to repair the damage. This includes school property that is taken home, even for an approved reason, such as Chromebooks that are checked out.

With reasonable cause, the school has the right to search or view any items brought on campus, including inside lockers.

Smart Watches

Please refer to the “Phones” policy above.

Suspension

Suspension is the temporary exclusion of a student from regular classroom activities for disciplinary reasons. Suspension will be assigned as either in-school or out-of-school. Suspension will be at the discretion of the principal in consultation with the pastor.

- Students may be suspended for a serious reason for a period of time, typically not exceeding 10 days.
- Students are suspended for conduct reasons, not academic reasons. Therefore, students will be able to complete work assigned during their suspension for credit.
- Students will serve assigned in-school suspension on the next school day(s) the student is in attendance. Absences will not be counted as “time served.”

UNIFORM POLICY

Students are expected to dress in a manner that demonstrates respect and modesty and does not distract from the learning environment. The school principal has final authority when determining what is or is not appropriate.

General Uniform Guidelines

- All logo shirts and logo sweaters must be purchased through The Toggery at toggerykids.com, PTO sales flyers, or used uniform sales at school.
- Tops must be red, short- or long-sleeved polo shirt with logo.
- Shirts must be tucked in.
- During cold weather non-uniform coats and sweatshirts may be worn outside the building. Official St. Joseph sweatshirts and fleeces with the school logo (SJ/Cross) are the only coats/sweatshirts that may be worn in the building and/or at Mass. Spirit wear and items with St. Joseph branding other than the SJ/Cross are not considered uniform.
- Belts must be solid brown, black, or navy with a simple buckle. Students in 5th-8th grades must wear a belt with any pants that have belt loops.
- Sock colors should be found in the school uniform (i.e. white, navy, red, grey, black). It is not necessary that socks be a solid color in these colors, but socks should not be “crazy socks.” Girls may wear navy tights or navy leggings.
- Shoes must be closed toe, closed heel, and rubber soled; No boots; No sandals; No slip-on shoes (Exception, flats for junior high girls at Friday Mass only.) No shoes with wheels, lights, or cleats.
- Girls’ hair must be of natural color and appearance. Hair must be neatly styled to show the full face.
- Girls’ hair accessories must be simple and not distracting. Hair accessories must be red, navy blue, black, white, and/or gray.
- Boys’ hair must be of natural color and appearance. Hair must be neat and no longer than the top of the eyebrow, the top of the collar of the polo shirt, and the top of the ear. No facial hair is allowed.
- Religious necklaces in modest size and number may be worn. Girls only may wear earrings no larger than the size of a dime.
- Shorts must be worn under skirts and jumpers but must not be visible below the bottom of the skirt.
- Tattoos may not be worn.
- Jumpers, skirts, skorts, and shorts may be no more than 3” above the knee. Be sure to keep in mind that your child may be several inches taller at the end of the year than he/she is at the beginning of the year. Please plan accordingly. Upon request, The Toggery can custom-make skirts to be any length.
- Pants and shorts must be dress style. No cargo style shorts or pants; all pockets must be on the inside of garment. No denim.
- Nail polish may only be worn by 7th and 8th grade students. Artificial nails are not permitted for any students.

Grades Pre-K – 4

Girls

- Plaid uniform skirt, skort, or short
- Solid navy pant, short, skirt, or skort
- Plaid uniform jumper (may wear white blouse with a Peter Pan collar instead of logo polo)

Boys

- Solid navy trouser style pant or short worn

Grades 5/6

Girls

- Solid khaki skirt
- Plaid skirt
- Solid khaki trouser style pant or short

Boys

- Solid khaki trouser style pant or short

Grades 7/8

Girls

- Solid khaki skirt or Plaid skirt
- Solid khaki trouser style pant or short
- Modest, tasteful makeup and nail polish may be worn
- **Friday Mass Uniform** – White logo blouse or oxford shirt, long-sleeve only

Boys

- Solid khaki trouser style pant or short
- **Friday Mass Uniform** – Uniform tie and white logo oxford, long-sleeve only

Spirit Wear

Spirit Wear t-shirts are those with our official Panther logo and may be worn on the last Wednesday of each month with uniform bottoms. Jackets and coats with the Panther logo are considered Spirit Wear and may only be worn inside the building on these spirit days. Only sweatshirts and fleeces with the SJ cross logo are considered uniform.

CEO Days

On the second Wednesday of each month students may be out of uniform for our CEO food collection. Students may wear appropriate non-uniform bottoms, and the length requirement of no more than 3 inches above the knee still applies. Shirts must completely cover the stomach, even with hands raised. Any logos or writing must be appropriate for a Catholic school. Shoes must still be school appropriate shoes as listed in General Uniform Guidelines above.

ADMISSIONS

Class Assignments

If there is more than one class at any grade level, the administration, in consultation with the faculty, will assign classes with parity being the highest priority. Every attempt will be made to balance the classes in both number and academic ability.

No child will be admitted to kindergarten unless he/she has attained the age of five (5) years on or before August 1 of such school year. No child will be admitted to first grade unless he/she has attained the age of six (6) years on or before August 1 of such school year.

The standard practice for Pre-K 4 will be to admit only students who have attained the age of four (4) years on or before August 1 of such school year. However, we do reserve the right to place students into

an older or a younger Pre-K class if we determine that the placement better fits the needs of the student and the class.

New Admissions

New students are accepted on the availability of class openings and the willingness and ability of the prospective parents and students to support the academic and behavioral philosophy and standards of the school. St. Joseph Catholic School will consider for acceptance new students who have accomplished/provided the following:

- An interview with the principal and/or pastor.
- Copies of the past or current year report card and previous standardized test scores.
- Academic records from previous year for all students entering 1st-8th grades.
- Copies of existing psychological and/or therapy reports and evaluations.
- Proof of good financial, academic, and behavioral standing from the previous school.

Students transferring are admitted on probation for nine weeks. At the end of the nine weeks, the principal, in consultation with the pastor, reserves the right to determine if the student is to remain at St. Joseph Catholic School.

In the event that there are more student applicants than classroom positions, classes will be filled in the following order:

1. St. Joseph parishioners with siblings already attending St. Joseph Catholic School
2. St. Joseph parishioners attending the school for the first time
3. Catholics registered with other parishes with siblings already attending St. Joseph Catholic School
4. Catholics registered with other parishes attending the school for the first time
5. Non-Catholic families with siblings already attending St. Joseph Catholic School
6. Non-Catholic families attending the school for the first time
7. Students enrolling in Pre-K for more days per week will be given priority over students enrolling for fewer days per week. Those who turn 3 before the August 1 cutoff will be given priority for enrollment over those who turn 3 during the first semester and wish to enroll in January.

Immunizations

Immunization records are required at registration time. Students must meet all State of Arkansas guidelines for immunization. An exemption to the immunization law may be made only by a certificate issued by the Director of the Arkansas Department of Health.

Non-discrimination

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

While the school does not discriminate against students with special needs, a full range of services may not be available to them. Decisions concerning the admission and continued enrollment of a student in

the school are based upon the student's emotional, academic, and physical abilities, and the resources available to the school in meeting the student's needs.

Potty Training

All preschool children must be potty trained prior to attending SJCS.

Registration and Re-Enrollment

Registration for the next school year is held in early February. A non-refundable fee of \$200 per family is required at the time of registration. A one-time per family Capital Improvement Fee of \$500 is required of all families upon being accepted to the school.

Re-enrollment at St. Joseph Catholic School is not guaranteed. At the end of the school year, the principal, in consultation with the pastor, reserves the right to determine if a student is to remain at St. Joseph Catholic School. If the principal and pastor determine that the parents and/or student is either unwilling or unable to support the academic and behavioral philosophy and standards of the school, the student may be asked to enroll at another school.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

St. Joseph Catholic School offers a variety of extra-curricular activities, such as Chess Club, Angel Choir, and sports programs.

Sports teams compete via local leagues through the Boys and Girls Club, Arkansas Athletes Outreach (AAO), and Arkansas Activities Association (AAA). These leagues have their own codes of conduct for players and coaches. Coaches, with the approval of the principal and athletic director, can assign additional requirements of conduct and academics for their players.

Athletics & Academics

All junior high students who participate in extra-curricular activities must maintain an average of 70% or higher each quarter, with no quarter grades below 60%, in all subjects that give a numeric grade. If a student does not meet this academic requirement, he or she will be temporarily suspended from extracurricular activities. If by mid-quarter the student has raised his/her average to 70% or higher with no single grade below a 60%, he/she may be reinstated to the team. Only end-of-quarter grades will be used to make a student ineligible.

Attendance requirements for participation in athletics are listed in the "Attendance" section above.

FINANCE

Catholic Tuition

Families who become Catholic will be switched to the Catholic tuition rate after Easter. If children are baptized prior to Easter, the family will be switched to the Catholic tuition rate following the baptism. All families paying the Catholic tuition rate must be registered with a parish and show regular Sunday Mass attendance. Families who are registered at a parish other than St. Joseph must complete a parish

affidavit to receive the Catholic tuition rate. Families moving to the area must provide an affidavit from their previous parish.

Payment Plan

Tuition payments are made to St. Joseph Catholic School through the FACTS financial system. The automatic draft will be drawn on the fifth (5) day of each month according to the schedule each family selects during registration. If the fifth (5) day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, the draft will be made on the first business day following the fifth of the month. Any requests for adjustments to a draft must be made to our business office at least three business days before the draft date.

Late Withdrawal

Families who withdraw after July 1 will be required to pay a \$250 withdrawal fee per student or the portion of tuition equal to the number of days attended, whichever is higher.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Bicycles

Students who ride bicycles to and from school do so at their own risk. Bicycles should be walked to the bike rack from the street and are not to be ridden in the school parking lot. The school is not responsible for loss of or damage to bicycles brought to school by students. Students riding home at the end of the day must have the proper signed permission form on file in the office and sign out in the office before leaving. Students will not be permitted to leave by bicycle without a helmet.

Confidentiality

Teachers are available to help students with a variety of concerns. Teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them as long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake. If teachers have concerns regarding student comments, they should immediately inform the principal and parents.

Documentation

The following documentation is required to be in the school office for all students:

- Birth certificate
- Baptismal certificate (if Catholic)
- Immunization records
- Documentation from previous schools including but not limited to report cards, standardized test results, special education plans, and psychological reports.

Drills

For the safety of our students, fire drills are conducted monthly. The exit route is posted in each classroom and students are to leave the building immediately at the sound of the alarm or other notification. Once outside, students are to report to the designated area and remain with their teacher. No one is to enter the building until instructed to do so by the principal, his or her designee, or a member of the fire department.

Tornado drills are held periodically throughout the school year. Teachers will immediately take students to the designated area.

Violent intruder drills may be conducted with students during the school year. Given the variety of responses needed for such a situation, these drills will take many forms. All will be conducted in an age appropriate way. Parents will be notified that intruder drills have taken place after they are completed.

Each classroom has an emergency evacuation plan that provides details about protocol to be followed in a variety of emergency events.

Health Screening

A health-care professional will periodically conduct vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening. Parents will be notified through the school newsletter when screening is to take place and parents will be informed promptly of any health concerns or issues.

Periodic screenings will take place for health issues such as lice. Parents will be notified if their child should be treated or evaluated by a health professional. St. Joseph follows the practices recommended by the Arkansas Health Department in treating lice.

Injuries

Injuries must be reported to the office. If there is any question on the severity of the injury, parents are immediately notified. Parents must keep the office informed of any changes in telephone numbers or emergency contacts. A written record will be maintained of all accidents that occur on school property and are reported to the office.

Lunch

Students may purchase lunch from the cafeteria or bring a cold lunch from home. St. Joseph does offer free and reduced lunches for families based on income. Lunch from home should meet generally acceptable dietary guidelines. No fast food or other such outside food may be consumed for lunch by students or family members who are visiting. If a student has an outstanding cafeteria balance greater than one month's cost, the student must bring lunch from home until the balance is paid down.

Medical Conditions

Parents are asked to notify the school of any special medical conditions, health needs, allergies, reactions to insect stings, etc. at the time of registration and to promptly notify the office of any changes during the year.

Medications

No medication may be given to a student without a written directive signed by the parent or guardian. The directive signed by the parent/guardian will include the time(s) the medication is to be administered to the student and the dosage. All medicine must be in the original container. Any medication brought to school will be stored in a designated place under control and supervision of appropriate school officials. Medication will be dispensed in the office and a written record of all medication dispensed will be maintained.

Students may not keep any medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, in their possession while at school except Epinephrine autoinjectors and asthma inhalers. A signed directive must still be on file in the office for these items.

Safe Environment Training

Every volunteer in the school is required by the Diocese of Little Rock to have completed safe environment training. Training can be completed online at <https://littlerock.cmgconnect.org>. It is encouraged that all parents complete this training in anticipation of volunteer roles.

Illness

Children must be free from fever, without taking a fever reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.

Valuables

Students are encouraged to leave items of any value at home. Students who lose items should check the Lost and Found. Parents are encouraged to label lunch boxes, backpacks, clothing, etc. The school is not responsible for loss of or damage to any other personal property brought to school by students.

Visitors to School

All visitors to the campus while children are present must enter through the main entrance and stop at the office. All visitors must present ID and be scanned by the Hall Pass system prior to entering any student area. On subsequent visits, visitors must still stop at the office for a badge, but a scan will not be required.

Walking Home

Students are allowed to walk or ride bicycles home only if they have the proper signed permission form on file in the office, and they have signed the sign out sheet in the office for the day.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Building Appearance

Students are responsible for helping to keep their rooms neat, clean, and orderly. They may be asked to assist with routine housekeeping tasks. Volunteers are responsible for cleanup after fund-raising and extracurricular activities.

Classroom Visits

Parents are welcome to visit the school and to become involved in school activities. Parents are asked to call to arrange convenient times for classroom visits. Messages, lunches, or other items for your child are to be left in the office and will be taken to the classroom by office staff.

Graduation

An 8th grade graduation ceremony will be held in May each year. It is the policy of the Diocese of Little Rock that schools may only conduct graduation ceremonies for their highest grade level. St. Joseph may not conduct graduation for Pre-K, Kindergarten, or any other grade level.

Invitations and Gifts

Parents who wish to distribute invitations in the school to birthday parties or other out-of-school private events may do so only if invitations are sent to all students in the classroom (or to all of the boys or all of the girls). Invitations should be given to classroom teachers for distribution to students. SJCS does not endorse nor have responsibility for the supervision or content of any such privately held event.

Students may not exchange individual gifts at school for birthdays, Christmas, Valentine's Day or other special events. Individual gift exchanges should take place off school property and outside of school hours. Parents should not send gifts, flowers, balloons, etc. to students at school. Parents may bring simple, individual-sized items such as cupcakes, cookies, or donuts that can be distributed to the entire class within the classroom to celebrate their child's birthday. Parents must communicate with the teacher prior to arriving with these items and should be aware of allergies and other food restrictions in the class.

Lockers

Each 5th-8th grade student is assigned a locker and given a lock. School assigned locks are the only locks allowed on the lockers. Each student is required to lock his/her locker at the end of each school day. St. Joseph Catholic Church and School are not responsible for items in lockers that are missing or damaged.

5th-8th grade students are permitted to decorate inside their lockers within reason. Teachers have the right to remove any locker decorations they determine to be inappropriate. No decorations are permitted on the outside of the lockers.

Logos

The school name and logos may not be used on any physical or electronic materials without the written permission of the principal.

Mass

Parents are encouraged to attend school masses on Tuesdays and Fridays at 8:20. Students are allowed to sit with their parents if they wish. We ask that parents sit away from the student body and that they take only their own children sit with them.

Parent Service Requirement

SJCS relies heavily on the use of volunteers for the success of our school. Please give of your time, talent and treasure.

Each family is required to perform twenty (20) hours of volunteer service to St. Joseph Catholic School per year. The yearly service hour requirement may be met in the following ways:

- Perform twenty (20) hours of service per school year
- Pay \$300 per year fee at the beginning of the school year to opt out of the service hour requirements
- Pay \$15 per hour for every hour of the required twenty (20) hours that is not met by the end of the school year

At the end of the school year, \$15 per uncompleted hour will be drafted from each family. This will be based on the number of hours logged in to Family Portal. It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure their hours are entered accurately.

Photos

St. Joseph reserves the right to use student photos and videos for school publications, website, and official social media pages, including publications for the diocese, ANSAA and other official organizations. All such photos and videos become the property of St. Joseph School for both current and

future use. If parents do not want their children to appear in school photos or videos, they must sign a waiver in the office.

Pre-K Licensing

Serious licensing violations shall be reported to the Licensing Unit. These include, but are not limited to, violations relating to transportation, inappropriate behavior guidance, leaving children unattended or unsupervised, staff/child ratio violation or any other violations that could imminently affect the health and safety of children. 1-800-582-4887 or <https://ardhslicensing.my.site.com>.

In accordance with licensing requirements, our facility maintains all required compliance forms, including licensing information, health and safety policies, and inspection reports. These documents are available for parent/guardian review upon request.

School Trademarks

The school name and/or logos may not be used on any physical or electronic materials without the written permission of the principal.

Student Interviews

Officials from DHS and some other agencies have the authority to come to school and interview students when necessary without parent permission. The principal will be present if allowed.

Tuition Assistance

Need based tuition assistance is available for some students and is based on the availability of funds. Financial need will be calculated by FACTS Tuition Management Company. Families apply online through the FACTS website. First priority for available funds is given to active St. Joseph parishioners. All families who receive financial assistance are required to apply for free and reduced lunches.

COMPLAINTS

Any person feeling aggrieved concerning any matter connected with the school will contact the individual involved before discussing with other patrons. Complaints should be handled in the following manner:

1. If a person has a complaint, the individual will go to the employee who is most directly involved in the situation to seek a solution to the problem.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily with the teacher or staff member, the person will contact the principal for an appointment.
3. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily with the principal, the person will contact the pastor to discuss the matter.
4. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily with the pastor, the matter will be referred to the superintendent.

It is not in the responsibility or authority of School Board members or PTO officers to resolve school matters. If board members or PTO officers are approached with complaints, they are to refer the aggrieved person to the above procedure.

CONSENTS

In addition to all terms in the handbook, by signing below parents agree to the following Terms and Conditions applicable to third-party services used by the school:

Google for Education

St. Joseph Catholic School uses Google for Education apps and services. I consent to allow my child to use Google Apps and Services that are approved for use by the school. I also give my consent for the school to approve my student's use of future Google updates and user agreements.

Hallow

By signing this handbook, I give permission for my child to have an account created for Hallow, an online Catholic prayer resource. The account is paid for and managed by St. Joseph Catholic School. I understand that my child's account will be specific to him/her, and I have read and understand Hallow Terms of Service and Privacy Policy, and I agree to them on my child's behalf.

RIGHT TO AMEND

In developing these rules and policies, the administration has tried to be as explicit as possible. Nevertheless, during the school year new and unusual situations will arise. Therefore, the pastor and principal will have the authority to use their discretion in whatever circumstances the handbook does not precisely apply. With just cause and in keeping with the spirit of the St. Joseph mission, the administration reserves the right to amend this handbook, which is not a contract. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents. Updates will also be posted to the online version of the handbook in **red font** and the publish date will be noted.

INTERNET, ELECTRONIC MAIL, AND SOCIAL NETWORKING USAGE POLICY FOR STUDENTS Student Agreement Parent Permission Letter

To gain access to e-mail and the Internet, all students must sign and return this form.

Access to e-mail and the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with internet users throughout the world. Families should be warned that material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. The intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed any disadvantages. But ultimately parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media information sources. The school supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for access.

School Internet and E-mail Rules

Students are responsible for behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school hallways.

The network is provided for students to conduct research and communication with others. Access to network services is given to student who agrees to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parent permission is required for students under the age of 18. Access is a privilege – not a right and entails responsibility.

Individual users of the school computer networks are responsible for their behavior and communication over the networks. It is presumed that users will comply with school standards and will honor the agreement that they have signed. Beyond the clarification of such standards, the school is not responsible for restricting, monitoring, or controlling the communications of individuals utilizing the network.

Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on school servers would always be private. There should be no expectations of privacy when using the school computers, computer network or computer system.

Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored. During school, teachers will guide students toward appropriate materials.

Computer Access

- The administration or teacher has the right to access information stored in any student file on any student screen, or student electronic mail.
- Hardware or software shall not be damaged, modified or abused.
- Intentionally altering the files, data or software on the school computers will be viewed as vandalism.
- Loading software on any computer without authorization of the technology coordinator is forbidden.
- Making copies of licensed or copyrighted software is illegal and therefore prohibited.
- Using of or sharing another's password is not allowed.

Internet Access

- Before accessing the Internet, each student will receive instruction in the proper use of the on-line tools.
- Students must notify teacher immediately of inappropriate material found.
- Use of Internet without the knowledge and permission of a teacher or administrator is prohibited.
- Students may not download programs.
- Use of the Internet without a clearly defined educational objective, understood by both student and teacher is not allowed.
- Students will use polite language; obscene languages, harassing, insulting, or attacking language will not be tolerated.
- Transmission or downloading materials in violation of copyright laws is prohibited.

The following are not permitted:

- Sending and displaying offensive messages or pictures.
- Damaging computer, computer system or computer networks
- Trespassing in another's folders or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Students are not to reveal any personal information

The use of personal electronic devices is subject to this policy.

Violation may result in loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal actions.

Student Code of Conduct for Google Apps for Education

Google Apps for Education (GAFE) is to be used for educational purposes. This agreement states you will not use Google Apps for personal emails or any social networking. (The email function is disabled.) Also, this agreement states that you will be polite and respectful of other students. You will respect students' privacy and security when using Google Apps. Student real names are NOT associated with this account. An example would be a student named Lady Porta. The first name is lp and the last name is sjs. The username is lp1sjs@sjfay.com

1. **Personal Responsibility:** I will accept personal responsibility for reporting any misuse of Google Apps to the school administration.
2. **Acceptable Use:** The use of my assigned account will be in support of education and research and will support the educational goals and objectives of St. Joseph Catholic School. I am personally responsible for this provision at all times when using Google Apps. In addition, I will abide by the following:
 - a. I will not use Google Apps to post any web pages for commercial activities, product advertisement, or political advocacy.
 - b. I will not use Google Apps to post any obscene, discriminatory or offensive material. All material posted will be in keeping with school assignments.
 - c. I understand that school administration has the right to monitor all postings including emails. *(The email function is disabled.)*
3. **Privileges:** I understand that the use of Google Apps is a privilege, not a right, and that inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The system administrator(s) may close an account at any time deemed necessary.
4. **Network Etiquette and Privacy:** I understand and will abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These rules include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - A) **BEING POLITE:** I will never send or encourage others to send abusive messages.
 - B) **USING APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE:** I understand that I am a representative of our school and district on the Internet and will use polite and appropriate language.
 - C) **PRIVACY:** I will not reveal my home address or personal phone number or the addresses and phone numbers of other students. While using Internet services through Google Apps, I will not reveal my e-mail address or the e-mail address of others. *(The email function is disabled.)*
 - D) **ELECTRONIC MAIL:** The gmail application **has been disabled**; however, I realize that I may not access my private email account(s) in school.
5. **Vandalism:** Any attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or student will result in the loss of all computer privileges and disciplinary action.



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Student & Parent Handbook Acceptance Form

The statement below must be signed and returned to the school office one week after the start of school.

My child/children and I have read the St. Joseph Catholic School Student & Parent Handbook, and although we may not agree with all the regulations, we understand that student(s) must adhere to them while enrolled at St. Joseph Catholic School. In the event that we are not entirely certain of some aspects of school policy, we will contact the principal for clarification within one week of receiving the policy.

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

As a student at St. Joseph Catholic School, I accept responsibility for my behavior and agree to follow all rules and regulations that are included in this policy manual.

*Student signature

Printed Name

Grade

Homeroom Teacher

*Please sign an individual sheet for each student. The student signature is not required for students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten.