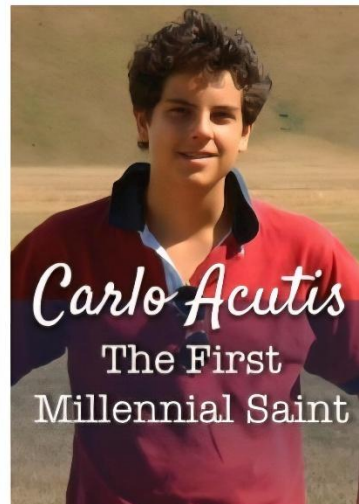
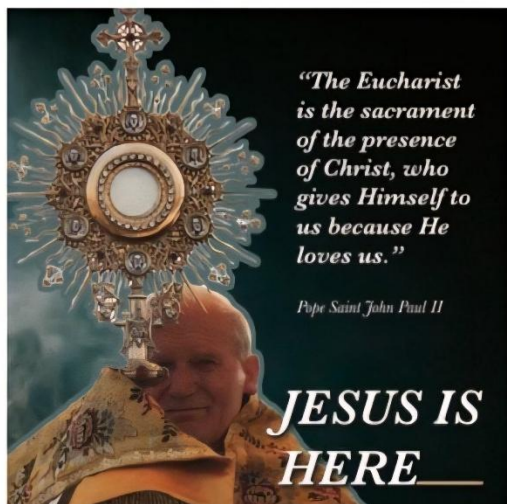
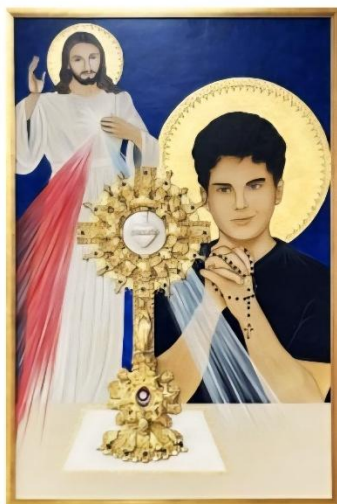


SAINT EPHREM CATHOLIC SCHOOL

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2025-2026



"In order to see Jesus, we first need to let Him look at us!"

St. Carlo Acutis and Saint John Paul II, pray for us!

Saint Ephrem Catholic School

5340 Hulmeville Road Bensalem, PA 19020

School: 215-639-9488 Fax: 215-639-0206

www.saintephremschool.com

Revised July 2025

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STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK:

This handbook has been compiled to develop an awareness of the expectations the school has of our students and parents. Please familiarize yourself with its contents so that together, we can ***develop the potential of our students and form future Catholic leaders.***

St. Ephrem School reserves the right at any time to amend or add to the policies, rules, and regulations contained in this handbook. Such changes apply to all students enrolled in the school and their families. SEC may change any of its policies and procedures and apply them as circumstances dictate. If you have a question about a particular policy or procedure, please contact the Principal.

STUDENTS AND PARENTS MUST ACCEPT AND ABIDE BY SAINT EPHREM SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN ORDER FOR THE STUDENT TO ATTEND SAINT EPHREM SCHOOL.

SCHOOL INFORMATION:

Pastor	Father Michael Speziale
Principal	Sister Shaun Thomas IHM
Secretarial Staff	Mrs. Karen Rose and Mrs. Maureen Rocks
Advancement Director	Mrs. Lisa Riccio
School Office	215-639-9488
Rectory	215-245-1698
CARES	215-639-3195
PREP	215-639-4895
Catapult	215-638-5854
Nurse's Office	215-447-0021
Bensalem Bus Garage	215-750-2800, Ext 4400
Website	www.saintephremschool.com
Facebook	Saint Ephrem Catholic School, Bensalem
Instagram	@saintephremschool

MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS:

Saint Ephrem School is a full and official member in the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The Commission on Elementary Schools reaccredited Saint Ephrem School in 2023.

Regional Accreditation is a landmark event in the history of any institution.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Rooted in the Gospel message of Jesus, SEC equips students for spiritual and moral development, empowers their desire for academic excellence, and energizes their spirit of leadership to the community around and beyond them.

BELIEF STATEMENTS:

We give witness to the Gospel values through the hearing of Scriptures, through prayer and worship, and through acts of loving service within our school and throughout the surrounding community.

We experience the saving power of Christ in our lives through a faith-filled environment rich in the celebration of the sacraments.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the ever present Teacher in every classroom, the Model for our faculty, and the Inspiration for our students.

We recognize that each student brings a unique perspective and a variety of talents to the classroom where active participation in student-centered learning is nurtured and enhanced.

We are a community of learners always open to change and looking for ways to promote continuous growth at all levels among the staff, the student body, and their families.

We support our parents and guardians in their role as the first educators of their children through shared responsibility, resources, and open dialogue.

PROFILE OF A GRADUATE:

Intellectual

Upon graduation from 8th grade, our students...

- Have mastered the fundamentals of all content and co-curricular areas to the fullest extent of their abilities.
- Communicate effectively and efficiently through spoken and written word.
- Possess the ability to use critical thinking skills to the fullest extent of their abilities.
- Effectively utilize problem solving skills in real world situations.
- Use technology purposefully and proficiently to identify, analyze, and evaluate information.
- Are self-motivated lifelong learners who strive for their personal best.

Spiritual

Upon graduation from 8th grade, our students...

- Have developed a strong commitment to Christian values through celebration of the sacraments.
- Embrace Gospel values and Catholic social teachings during the decision making process.
- Have built a personal relationship with Christ through regular practice of prayer and the Eucharist.
- Possess the spiritual maturity to participate in acts of Christian service to others.

Moral

Upon graduation from 8th grade, our students will...

- Evaluate moral teachings within the context of their faith.
- Act honestly, ethically, and responsibly.
- Respect the dignity, diversity, and opinions of others.
- Recognize the effect of their choices and actions on the human community.
- Understand that they have a civic responsibility to engage and collaborate with others, and to be a part of something larger than themselves.
- Set a positive example for others through their words and actions.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE HOME AND SCHOOL:

The administration and faculty of Saint Ephrem School recognize and respect the uniqueness of each child and family who choose this school. The key to a successful educational experience for all stakeholders is grounded in and built on a healthy partnership between the home and the school.

Recognizing that our parents/guardians "are the natural and irreplaceable agents in the education of their children" (***The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, Vatican Document***), each member of the school staff extends respect to and deserves respect from the families who make up our faith community.

Therefore, it must be noted that in the rare case when this partnership is irretrievably broken and after careful review by both the pastor and principal, the school reserves the right to require the parent/guardian to withdraw his or her child.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE HOME AND SCHOOL:

Effective communication is the single, most important factor that assures a positive relationship between the home and school. Several modes of communication exist at our school to help keep parents informed of policies, activities, upcoming events, and student progress.

Regular forms of communication include but are not limited to: this handbook, the school website, yearly calendar, monthly calendar of events, frequent online communication from the principal, parent-teacher conferences, weekly behavior calendars or charts, and report cards.

ADMINISTRATION:

The responsibility for the administration of all parish organizations rests with the pastor. The principal of the school, in cooperation with the pastor, is the chief administrator of all functions that have anything to do with the school. The principal initiates programs, directs and supports the faculty, and is an integral part of all decisions that affect the children of SEC.

ADMISSIONS:

Our school admits students of any race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin to all of the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to its students. Saint Ephrem School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, its admission policy, or in any school-administered program.

Our school endeavors to accommodate students with special needs as the school's resources and capabilities reasonably permit. Saint Ephrem School reserves the right to decline admission or to impose reasonable conditions of attendance where circumstances warrant such action.

School Age Requirements:

To enter Saint Ephrem's academic programs, a child must be the following ages:

PreK Program - Either three (3) or four (4) years old by August 31st.

Kindergarten - Five (5) years old by August 31st.

First Grade - Six (6) years old by August 31st.

The following is required for registration:

Student Application with \$150 registration fee

Birth certificate

Baptismal certificate (unless non-Catholic)

Medical records/forms – Immunization is required as a condition of attendance at any public or parochial school. The required immunizations must be on file no later than October 1st for a student to be present in the school.

Transfer slip from any previous school the student may have attended.

Bus Requirement - bus request form, accompanied with proof of residency

Registration and Enrollment

Current families registered in our school are requested to register annually. Registration information for the following year is forwarded to each family through the school communication channels in February prior to the next school year. Tuition fees and non-refundable registration fees are published by mid-February. All financial obligations must be current before a student may begin the next school year.

The Enrollment process (for students NEW to SEC) is ongoing throughout the school year. The process begins by communicating with our Advancement Director, Mrs. Lisa Riccio. Upon review of a diocesan report card or standardized test results from public school and necessary paperwork, the family will be contacted as to whether or not the available space and appropriate academic setting is available for the child(ren).

Catholic Education

The primary purpose of a Catholic School is to impart the teachings of our faith. *Religion is not just another subject taught in our school; **the Catholic religion is a way of life.***

It is essential, therefore, that this way of life be **supported and supplemented in the home.**

- It is our expectation that parents and guardians take the primary lead in developing their child's relationship with God by witnessing to the values taught in school and by fostering a personal prayer life within the family.
- Participation in Sunday Liturgy as well as the frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist are fundamental to the growth of a Catholic child's faith life.
- **All students, regardless of their religious background, participate fully** in both daily Religion classes as well as all liturgical services held throughout the school year.

The normal practice for the **reception of the Sacraments** is as follows:

- **First Penance** is received in **second grade**.
- **First Eucharist** is received in **third grade**.
- **Confirmation** is received in **seventh grade**.

Please note: Individual decisions will be made for students new to the school who have not participated in daily religious instruction and/or have not received the Sacraments as listed above. Generally, a student should be in their second year at SEC to receive Sacraments.

CURRICULUM:

The goal of the educational program at Saint Ephrem School is to meet the needs of each individual learner. Classroom teachers incorporate technology throughout the curriculum, differentiate instruction, use small and whole group instruction, and guide independent working groups within the rooms.

A modified or adapted curriculum will be developed for any student whose needs warrant such an action. Upon reception of the necessary evaluative information, a meeting is set-up among the school psychologist, school counselor, principal, teacher, and parents/guardian.

A plan, making necessary adaptations in the curriculum and provisions for grading, is then reviewed with the parent(s), teacher, and school principal, resulting in an individual learning plan for the student.

HOMEWORK:

Homework refers to an assignment given by a teacher that will positively reinforce a concept presented in class and includes both written and study assignments. Assignments are issued in order to ensure independent mastery of subject matter taught in class and to provide enrichment. ***Homework is a vital part of the learning process.***

- Students must assume responsibility for their homework just as they will assume job responsibility in the future.
- Parental guidance and participation in home study, especially in the primary grades, is essential for the development of good and lasting study habits.
- Parental care, interest, and supervision are of prime important for all grades.
- We depend on the family notifying the teacher when a child spends inordinate time on home assignments.
- Teachers post homework and all related work daily in Google Classroom.
- In all grades, parents are asked to check written work for completeness and neatness.
- Any **extreme home concern or problem** which affects homework completion should be brought to the **teacher's attention** through an email or note from a parent/guardian.

We believe that the diocesan time frames printed below are reasonable and are **open to discussion when a student exceeds the suggested time.**

The Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education (Policy CIA 615) recommends time allotments for written and studied assignments.

Please be aware that if your child seemingly doesn't have any homework or if he, she is spending more than these suggested times, you are encouraged to communicate with the teacher(s) involved.

Grades 1 and 2 – 30 minutes

Grades 3 and 4 – 60 minutes

Grades 5 and 6 – 90 minutes

Grades 7 and 8 – 120 minutes

REPORT CARDS:

In order to enable students and parents to assess progress during the school year, report cards are *issued electronically* three times a year – **December, March, and June.**

- Parent conferences take place at the end of the first trimester
- Parent/teacher conferences can also be scheduled at any time during the year at the request of either party.

A report card is never simply the average of major tests. **Marks** are determined by:

- Test marks, varying forms of assessments, class work, class participation, and projects. Each area of assessment is weighted by classroom teachers.

Parents are asked and expected to keep abreast of grades by ***signing tests, examining copybooks and workbooks, etc***

- In addition, parents/guardians are expected to ***systematically check the online grade book*** and *interact with the teacher* by email, note, or conference ***if/when the need arises.***
- Parents/guardians wishing to discuss their child or some aspect of his/her education or discipline are asked to **first** address their interest to the homeroom teacher.
 - The parent may **then** opt to schedule a conference with the principal to further discuss the matter; *the principal is not/should not be the first line of communication.*
 - **Conferences** with teachers are done by appointment.
 - Conference requests will be arranged by emailing the teacher, sending a note, or calling the school office to request a meeting with the teacher.

Honors Criteria in Grades 5-8

The **criteria for First Honors** are: 92 or above in every subject and 3 or above in Personal & Social Growth and Effort and Study Skills.

The **criteria for Second Honors** are: 85 or above in every subject and 3 or above in Personal & Social Growth and Effort and Study Skills.

Please note: the **Effort grade** is determined by the ***AVERAGE of the grading from the specialty and classroom teachers in departmental grades.***

Recognition of Personal Achievements

- **Copybook Awards** in grades 1-2, **Good Writers Awards** in grades 3-8, **Christian Virtue Awards in K-8**, are distributed at our School Masses, ***beginning in November.***
- Other awards for contests, scholarships, extra-curricular achievements, etc. are recognized after Mass in the months in which they occur.
- Teachers also have various ways of recognizing student achievements in the classroom in various ways throughout the course of the year.

ACADEMIC PROMOTION/RETENTION:

Education is a cumulative process that builds on learning already achieved. To provide the strongest possible foundation for future learning, Saint Ephrem School reserves the right to recommend the retention of any student who has not met the specific requirements of his/her grade, or who has demonstrated, through both objective evaluation and teacher judgement, not to be working to his/her potential.

Promotion is at the discretion of the Principal. After consultation with the family, a student is promoted when he/she adequately demonstrates mastery of the material required in the given grade.

Graduation (Grade 8) and Closing Exercises (Pre-K and K)

Eighth grade students who have completed the prescribed course of study and have maintained a suitable discipline record are eligible for graduation. Procedures for graduation are determined by the administration and the eighth grade teachers.

- Participation in the class trip, the graduation dance and closing exercises are **privileges and not rights** owed to a student when a student's conduct, academic, or disciplinary record indicate that the privilege should not be extended.
- In addition, the school has the right to deny any student from participating in the closing exercises of PreK, Kindergarten, and Eighth grade when all **financial obligations** have not been met.

Academic Failures

Attendance at a summer school or a tutoring program is at the discretion of the principal and classroom teacher if a student has one or more failures for the year and wishes to return to Saint Ephrem School for the next year.

CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE:

"Effective discipline has as its end the development of students who respect themselves, other persons, and those in authority." (*Policies and Procedures – Archdiocese of Philadelphia, S319*)

Personal Growth and Development

To maintain a Christ-like atmosphere in Saint Ephrem School, we expect that students, faculty, staff, parents and guardians will "***treat others as you, yourself wish to be treated***". The goal of our code of conduct is to guide our students to ***respect themselves and others*** as they grow in self-discipline and responsibility.

Our expectations for student success include but are not limited to:

1. Putting forth one's best efforts
2. Demonstrating consistent self-regulation of personal conduct both in and out of the classroom.
3. Active class participation
4. A habit of daily study
5. Completing written homework
6. Handing work in on time
7. Returning test papers signed by a parent/guardian when required by each teacher
8. Making up absence work within a reasonable amount of time
9. Compliance with SEC Dress Code

Accountability

A student's personal development and character formation are priorities of our teachers. Therefore, before the issuance of a conduct check, the teacher has given:

- Verbal warnings
- Corrections
- Other interventions to assist the student in self-correcting their own behavior

If or when a check is finally given to a student in grades 5-8, it is because the above interventions have not achieved the desired outcomes. They are and will be given for inappropriate action and/or behavior.

Disciplinary Procedures

Detentions will be held after the accumulation of four (4) checks or as warranted by student behavior. They will be held during a lunch period. When warranted, an afternoon detention will be scheduled. Written notification will be sent home for parents. It is our hope that this will not be a frequent event!

A mandated meeting with the student, family members, teacher, and principal will be held if or when a situation warrants more serious action.

Participation in any school or parish-related activity (CYO, Youth Ministry, etc.) will be evaluated if or when a student falls below a 3 on the left side of the report card, incurs a major infraction, and/or has failing or missing work affecting his, her grade.

We will do our best from school and we count on you doing the same from your home to lead our students to make good choices! Together, we can and will achieve positive outcomes!

Proper Care of School / Vandalism

The physical appearance and cleanliness of our school is a source of great pride. Every child is responsible to maintain this cleanliness at all times. This responsibility extends to school books, desks, interior of classrooms, halls, lavatories, and the schoolyard. **Any intentional damage will necessitate compensation by the student and/or parent.**

Suspension/Expulsion

Policies for Suspension and Dismissal follow the guidelines (**S 319.2**) of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

In-School Suspension is used at the **discretion of the principal** when the student's actions warrant immediate removal from the classroom but not necessarily from the school.

Parents/guardians will be notified, either by **email or a call**.

Formal Suspension is a serious disciplinary action taken by school authorities against a student whose actions constitute a major disciplinary infraction and are contrary to the good order of the entire school community.

- Formal suspension is a suspension that warrants the student's removal from the school community for a period of time.
- Suspension is a major step toward possible dismissal.
- The student must be accompanied by a parent for re-admission to the school at the end of the specified suspension.
 - Documentation of such will be kept **on file during the current** school year.

Please note: A suspension automatically lowers a student's behavior grade by one point (or more in a serious situation).

Following diocesan guidelines, major disciplinary infractions that will incur such serious consequences include, but are not limited to:

- Violation of the Criminal of Pennsylvania (an offense involving police)
- Gross defiance – failure to follow any reasonable request or directive
- Unauthorized leaving of school grounds or school events
- Truancy
- Verbal, physical, sexual harassment, confirmed bullying
- Destruction of school property or vandalism
- Alcohol, Smoking, Vaping
- Drugs
- Intentional physical fighting on school premises or in school uniform
- Physical/verbal threats against the faculty, staff, volunteers, students, or administration
- Immoral or indecent behavior
- Non-compliance with a probationary contract set up by the school
- Violation of the Archdiocese's Responsible Use Policy for Technology
- Misuse of communication devices in school, at home, or off premises that target any student, teacher, or staff member.
- Possession of materials or a display of actions deemed immoral by the Archdiocese and Administration
- Disrespectful behavior of any kind toward or about any staff member, student, volunteer, or parents
- Insubordination
- Bomb scares or triggering other false alarms
- Cheating; presenting someone else's work as their own
- Plagiarism
- Use or possession of drugs and alcohol
- Intimidation, harassment, threats of any kind
- Stealing

Please note: The student's conduct grade will drop by one if not more point. ***In all cases, the student's privileges like CYO, Youth Ministry, extra-curricular activities, etc. may be denied depending on the nature of the report.***

Search Policy

The school administration reserves the right to search anything brought onto school property by its students. At any time, the administration has the right and authority to impose consequences in keeping with the mission and philosophy of the school in order to protect and preserve the well-being and safety of the school community.

Anti-Bullying / Harassment Policy

Saint Ephrem School follows the **Archdiocesan Policy** prohibiting bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment.

It is the intent of the school to provide an educational environment free from all forms of improper threats, intimidation, hostility and offensive and inappropriate behavior.

- Such improper conduct may take the form of unwanted verbal or physical conduct, verbal or written derogatory or discriminatory behavior contrary to the educational and religious mission of the school.
- Any student or parent/guardian or staff member who is determined to have violated this policy will be subject to **appropriate disciplinary action**.
- In determining what disciplinary action to impose, the severity of the offense will be taken into account.
- Suspension and even expulsion are possibilities depending upon the incident.
- In the case of threats of violence or harassment, in any form, including oral, written or electronic, by a student against any member of the school community, the student, if suspended but not dismissed, may be required to have psychological or psychiatric clearance before returning to school.

The usual procedures to be followed are:

Any student who feels he or she is being bullied, harassed or discriminated against or who is aware of bullying, harassment or discrimination, should:

- report it immediately to the principal, the counselor, or a teacher
- **If the report is verified**, the student will meet with the Principal and the School Counselor and a written summary of events will be made.
- Notification via email will be sent to the family of the student.

Upon a second incident, the parents of the student must meet with the principal and the student will be put on immediate probation.

Upon a third report, the student may be dismissed from school if circumstances warrant such action.

In Conclusion:

It is our expectation and requirement that students always aspire to exhibit behaviors which represent ***a “disciple” of Jesus Christ, in words and actions!***

Therefore, this code applies to each member of the student body **when in school, on school property, in school uniform on or off the campus, and at school/parish-sponsored events.**

In addition, the discipline code ***extends to the use of social media*** and any behavior contrary to what is clearly spelled out in the Diocesan ***“Responsible User Policy”*** which is included in the handbook.

Students will be disciplined for conduct, **whether inside or outside the school**, that is detrimental to a student, the reputation of the school and/or the parish, and comes to the attention of the principal and staff.

Conduct by ***students or parents/guardians, or anyone acting on their behalf***, incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the school, regardless of the day or time, may also be grounds for disciplinary action, including, but not limited to the immediate dismissal of the student, as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate.

Adherence to the stated behavior code earns the student the ability to participate in any and all school activities, CYO, and Youth Ministry activities since it is a privilege not a right to do so!

DRESS CODE for 2025-2026

THE SAINT EPHREM SCHOOL UNIFORM IS WORN BY EVERY STUDENT IN GRADES PREK TO 8 AND SHOULD BE WORN WITH A SENSE OF DIGNITY. Recognizing the relationship between personal dress, personal attitude, and the living out of our faith, we encourage our students to dress so as to demonstrate pride in themselves, in their school, and in their God.

Please Note:

- Compliance with the Dress Code contributes to student success as cited on page 13. It also reflects the partnership needed between your home and our school.
- Unannounced “dress code days” are conducted periodically.
- A student’s **conduct grade will be affected for overt and repeated non-compliance** with any part of the **SEC dress code**.
- Specific areas where compliance will avoid all, any disciplinary measures:
 - Length of uniform and skirts (page 20)
 - Length of hair, etc (pages 21-22)
 - Length of gym shorts (page 21)
 - Proper footwear (pages 18-21)
- Disciplinary action will be taken only after verbal and then written reminders to parents/guardians have not affected necessary adjustments.
- Students consistently in compliance with the dress code will be acknowledged.

SUMMER UNIFORM:

PreK and Kindergarten

SEC logo navy blue shorts and SEC logo light blue t-shirt, sneakers with Velcro, and white ankle socks.

Boys Grades 1-8

- Navy blue walking shorts or pants
- Yellow polo shirt with SEC logo and banded bottom

- Navy blue socks if worn with school shoes
- Sneakers may be worn with the summer uniform.
- White socks (above the ankle) are a MUST if sneakers are worn.

Girls Grades 1-8

- Regular uniform or navy blue walking shorts
- Yellow polo shirt with SEC logo and banded bottom
- Navy blue socks if worn with school shoes
- Sneakers may be worn with the summer uniform.
- White socks (above the ankle) are a MUST if sneakers are worn.

WINTER UNIFORM:

PreK and Kindergarten

- SEC logo light blue t-shirt
- SEC logo navy blue sweatpants
- SEC logo navy blue sweatshirt
- Sneakers with Velcro, and white ankle socks.

Boys Grades 1-8

- Navy blue dress pants **(no cargo/performance style). Please respect this request.**
- Long-sleeved yellow polo shirt and/or short-sleeved polo shirt with **SEC logo**
- Navy blue **sweater or sweater vest** with the **SEC logo** is a **mandatory** part of the uniform in **grades 7 and 8.**
- Navy blue or black socks
- Regulation **black shoes** can be purchased at Flynn and O'Hara. Regardless, we request a non-marking rubber sole.
 - **Black sneakers are not permissible to be worn as a school shoe.** When there is a need to consider such, a family must communicate with Sister Shaun.

- A student will be out of uniform and subject to consequences until the correct shoe is worn.
- During the 3rd trimester, exceptions can be made upon approval from the principal.
- **Optional in Grades K to 6: SEC logo** sweaters, vests in colder weather

Girls Grades 1-6

- Uniform jumper with **SEC emblem** (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee throughout the year) otherwise, student is non-compliant with dress code
- Yellow blouse under jumper
- Navy blue knee socks or tights
- Regulation **navy blue shoes** can be purchased at Flynn and O'Hara. Regardless, we request a non-marking rubber sole.
 - Black/navy sneakers are not permissible.
 - A student will be out of uniform and subject to consequences until the correct shoe is worn.
 - During the 3rd trimester, exceptions can be made upon approval from the principal.
- **Optional in Grades 1 to 6: SEC logo** sweater in colder weather

Girls Grades 7 and 8

- **Uniform skirt needs to be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee** throughout the year.
 - Please be sure there is enough material to alter the length of the skirt, otherwise a new skirt is mandatory.
 - Tights from March to year's end must be worn by Junior High students whose skirt is too short.
- Yellow polo shirt with **SEC logo**
- Navy blue **sweater or sweater vest** with the **SEC logo** is a **mandatory** part of the uniform in **grades 7 and 8**
- Navy blue **knee socks or tights**

- Regulation **navy blue shoes** can be purchased at Flynn and O'Hara. Regardless, we request a non-marking rubber sole.
 - **Black/navy sneakers** are not permissible.
 - A student will be out of uniform and subject to consequences until the correct shoe is worn.
 - During the 3rd trimester, exceptions can be made upon approval from the principal.

GYM UNIFORM:

Boys and Girls - Grades 1-8

Gym Uniforms are worn to school on the **appointed day**. No substitutions are to be made for the required uniform as described below. **That includes any other shirt**, including those with the Saint Ephrem name on them.

- **SEC logo** light blue t-shirt
- **SEC logo navy micro-mesh** blue shorts – **no shorter than 4 inches above the knee**
- **Visible undergarments, compression shorts may not be worn beneath boys' gym shorts.**
- **SEC logo** sweatpants and sweatshirts are worn as part of the winter uniform.
- Tie **sneakers** must be worn, laced completely, and tied at the top.
 - It is strongly recommended that the **color of the shoe be as basic as possible**.
 - Predominately **WHITE, BLACK, OR GRAY** or muted color sneakers are expected and appreciated!
 - Thank you for doing your best to **avoid the use of very expensive or very colorful** sneakers.
 - **No flashing lights**, skateboard, wheelies, or other styles are permissible in any grade, from **Kindergarten to Grade 8**.
- White ankle socks are worn with sneakers.
- For the safety and security of the student, **jewelry (including religious medals) is NOT to be worn on gym class days**.
 - Post earrings – **girls only** – are the only exception to the rule.
 - All other jewelry must be **removed before a student takes part** in class.

ADDITIONAL DRESS CODE POLICY POINTS:

Hair

1. **Standard hair cuts** are expected and requested of both boys and girls
2. Hair is expected to be kept clean, neat, and properly groomed.
3. **Boys' hair must be trimmed above the collar.**
4. **Facial hair is not acceptable.**
5. **Boys' and girls' hair** is to be trimmed above the eyebrows.
6. **Extreme hairstyles, haircuts, alteration of hair color are not permissible and may result in disciplinary measures.**
7. Hair bands must be plain and simple. Simple hair accessories that match the uniform are acceptable.

Jewelry/Makeup

- Boys may not wear earrings.
- Girls with pierced ears may wear **small and school-appropriate** earrings. Only **ONE** earring per ear (**in the lobe**) is acceptable; large dangling earrings are not permitted.
- Bracelets, both ankle and wrist, pins and buttons are NOT part of the school uniform; a student may be asked to remove them during the school day. These include all rope, yarn, and beaded neck, wrist, and ankle bands.
- A religious medal or crucifix/cross is encouraged and permissible.
- **Make-up, of all sorts, is not acceptable!** A student will be given 24 hours to correct this type of situation before being subject to disciplinary measures.
- **Colored nail polish** is not part of the uniform. Students may be asked to remove it with polish remover during the school day.
- French nails, artificial nails, or any nail decorations are strongly discouraged. After a **stated amount of time, disciplinary action will result** if the nails are not returned to a natural color.

Please note the following:

- All items of clothing *should be marked* with the student's name. **Unclaimed** uniform articles will be donated to the **Uniform Exchange**.
- The **summer uniform**, which is optional in all grades, may be worn from **September 3rd to October 30th**.
- As of **Monday, May 4th**, the summer uniform may be worn again.
- **The gym uniform is acceptable dress code when the SCHOOL makes the decision. Our AC'ed school is a game changer for everyone! Remember, "Our school is cool!"**
- Girls are welcome to wear the **long gym pants under their uniform** on **any inclement weather day** as warranted by a **family decision**.
- Sweatshirts, hoodies, etc, may not be worn with the school uniform once the day begins. They are permissible for outside use, only.

It is our combined expectation that Saint Ephrem students, will be *"handsome and beautiful"* *ambassadors of this school and our Church* and its values!

SPECIAL "DRESS OUT OF UNIFORM" DAYS:

Spirit Friday

Once a month, SEC celebrates Spirit Friday!

- On these days, every student is welcome to wear a t-shirt with ANY **SEC logo** on it... to enhance **SCHOOL SPIRIT!**
- **Gym pants or uniform pants** are to be worn with the t-shirt by any student who wishes to participate. **NO other pants are acceptable.**
- Remember, the gym uniform shirt or sweatshirt has the SEC logo as do our CYO and Spirit Week shirts. No family needs to buy an extra shirt to be worn on Spirit Days!

Dress Down Days

As a classroom incentive or on special occasions, students will be given this opportunity for the day.

- The following information illustrates **acceptable and unacceptable Dress Down Day clothing**.
- These directives are meant to give a clear picture of how to enjoy – and preserve – a “dress down” day!
- If or when a student does not follow these requests, that student may lose the privilege of “dressing down”.

Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Sneakers, Boots, School/closed toe shoes	Slippers, moccasins, flip flops, slide sandals, Heels over 1"
Denim jeans, slacks, Proper fitting pants	Tight fitting leggings; Flannel pants Jeans with rips, tears, or holes
Capris Gym Shorts (no shorter than 4” above knee!)	Athletic-style shorts or any gym shorts not in compliance with dress code. Boys may not wear shorts that resemble boxer shorts or undergarments in style or fit.
T-shirts, Proper fitting blouses, SEC shirts	Spaghetti straps or sleeveless "muscle/tank top" shirts; Sleeves with shoulder cut-outs; Off the shoulder shirts; Midriff blouses; Open-back shirts

We depend on YOUR cooperation so that appearance bespeaks the pride we have in our students and the school they represent. We want our students to enjoy special days so thank you for overseeing their attire before they leave the house!

No one needs to lose the privilege of dressing out of uniform so...thank you!

DAILY SCHEDULE:

PreK

- The PreK program day is 7:40 AM - 2:15 PM
- For morning arrival, PreK drivers are asked to pull into the Church parking lot, park the car, and escort the PreK children to the front door of the Marian Center.
 - PreK students will be met by their teachers at the front doors of the Marian Center
 - Siblings of those children are welcome to proceed into the school building.
- PreK Dismissal is 2:15 PM Sharp!
 - **Families with siblings** are expected to park in the back parking lot to wait for the 2:45 PM dismissal. You are asked NOT to park out in front of or on the side of school. It is a safety issue!
 - **Families with PreK students only** are to park in the front of the school, in the area closest to the PreK classrooms. The driver is asked to walk around to the PreK door to meet the child.
 - Each child will be dismissed to each driver upon recognition by the PreK teachers.
 - Further dismissal policies for PreK students are discussed in person at the initial meeting before the school year begins.
- We depend on each family to instruct any authorized driver other than the normal arrival/dismissal driver as to the authorized procedures.

Grades K-8

*** Please note Time Adjustments for the 2025-2026 school year!**

Morning Car Arrival – 7:35 to 7:50 AM Sharp!

- The back door of the school will **open at 7:35 AM** for the students coming by car. The arrival of our teachers and the timing of the buses dictate that opening the doors earlier does not guarantee supervised safety of our students.
 - Students go directly to the classrooms upon entering the building.

- The back door will **close at 7:50 AM** since prayers start at that time. Last minute and late arrivals may find a closed door.
- Exceptions to these times will be made on inclement weather days or when necessary.
- A student **arriving at the Main Office or not in Homeroom for Prayers after the 7:55 bell** will be considered **LATE**.

Afternoon Dismissal:

We need EVERYONE to be courteous, careful, and compliant with the following NEEDS for the safety of everyone! PLEASE and THANKS!

- If you are picking up a student in Grades K-8:
 - **No car is welcome to be "in line" within the schoolyard before 2:00 pm, at the earliest. Dismissal doesn't begin until 2:45!**
 - **No car (K-8) is to park out front of school without permission from Sister Shaun. It is a safety issue with our buses!**
- **Car and walker lines** will dismiss at **2:45 PM** from the back school parking lot.
- **Busses** leave the property at 2:50 PM **or** when **all busses** are present.
- **Cars for K-8 parked on the front side of school who do not obey the above request, jeopardize safety. The front of school is and must be reserved for BUS TRAFFIC only.**

ATTENDANCE:

1. **Regular school attendance** has a positive and essential impact on a child's academic development.
2. A student who has been absent from school, **for three or more days**, is required to present a doctor's note. This warrants the absence to be marked "EXCUSED".
3. Consistent or unexcused absences will necessitate a conversation between the principal and parent/guardian each trimester if/when absences accumulate.
4. **In the case of illness at school**, our nurse or school secretary will contact the parents or adult whose name has been submitted to the office as an emergency phone number.

In order to arrange for **assignments of children who are absent** due to illness, you are asked to call the school office **no later than 11:30 am** so that the teacher has time to honor such a request.

- There is **no guarantee** that work will be provided if the request comes into the office **after the lunch period**.
- This work can be picked up on the **shelf outside of the Church** any time after the school day is ended.
- It is the **responsibility of the family** to be sure to pick up assignments and books which may be needed for homework completion.
- It is permissible for another student to bring home the work upon arrangements made between families.

LATENESS:

A student must be in the building no later than 8:00 am or they will be counted as late.

- Our day officially begins with Morning Prayers at 7:55 am!
- First Period starts at 8:05 am in grades 4 to 8.
- Time adjustments are made on inclement weather days or as circumstances warrant.
- **Consistent** and/or **unexcused** lateness (**no parent involvement** via a note to school or call) will necessitate a conversation between the principal and the parent/guardian if/when the number of trimester latenesses accumulate.

PLEASE NOTE:

Our overall goal is to form healthy, life-long habits of punctuality. A student with 25 or more unexcused absences or latenesses will need to complete a summer program to be eligible to return to SEC.

VACATION POLICY:

Vacations taken during the school year are **strongly discouraged**. They are disruptive, not only to your child, but they affect the teacher and other classmates.

- All make-up work is the responsibility of the student/family.
- If an **extraordinary reason** exists for such an **extended absence**, a **parent or guardian must notify** the Main Office with the dates and place of the trip.
- If a family vacation occurs at the **end of the school** year, all assignments and tests must be completed before the final report card will be issued.

Early Dismissal During the School Day

- The parent or the person sent to pick up the student **must sign the student out** in the front office.
 - If the **parent/guardian will not be the person** picking up the student, please include in your **written note**, the **name of the person** who will be picking up the student.

Unexpected Early Dismissals

- Bensalem Township informs us of any change to the time of dismissal due to inclement weather conditions. Most of the other districts follow the same pattern.
 - We do not receive much notice; therefore, it is necessary that the students have a place to go in case of an emergency dismissal.
- A **text, email, and/or a phone** message will be sent to every family **through Option C**.
- The Township School Cable Channel will announce early dismissal information. The **time listed for the Bensalem Middle Schools is the time Saint Ephrem will dismiss**.
- ***What is imperative is that every family and every child develops and knows an emergency plan in case of unexpected closure.***

Please Note:

- A **Special Request** from our Office Staff is that **NO ONE** calls school when snow begins! Please wait to receive the alert through Option C. It is virtually impossible for us to speak with people individually.
- **CARES** services are also provided for those families who **already planned** for a student to remain or **if an emergency request is made** because of the unplanned nature of such a day.

Emergency Contact Forms

The school requires the parents/guardians of each student to complete an emergency contact form provided by the school.

- It is **vitaly important** that the information on this form is **accurate and updated** so that the school can contact the parents/guardians in the **event of an emergency**.
- **Any changes in emergency information**, especially telephone numbers, must always be reported to school immediately, throughout the course of the year.
 - It is **imperative that we have your latest emergency numbers** to send you alerts through Option C.

STANDARDIZED TEST DATES

Students in **Grades 2 to 7** will be taking standardized testing from
Wednesday, March 18th through Wednesday, March 25th 2025.

- If a student misses more than one full day of testing, there is no guarantee that the students will be able to complete the missed sections. We will do our best to catch up any student when possible.
- **We ask that you make NO DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS, at the least, in the MORNING SESSION between March 18th and March 25th 2026. Again, we may not be able to retest a student.**

- Standardized results are used on a diocesan level for curriculum planning, grant writing, etc. The results are helpful guides for SEC teachers when planning how to meet the needs of the students.
- **Standardized results do not reflect the educational programs and achieved results on the local level at SEC.** They are, by description, standardized.
- Any family member is welcome to inquire about a child's performance. Typically, the Spring results don't reach the school until the end of the school year. **They will be distributed at Back-to-School meetings in September.**

LUNCH PERIODS:

Grades K-3 11:20 am – 12:00 pm

Grades 4-8 12:00 pm – 12:40 pm

- We will provide hot lunch offerings three days a week, beginning in October.
 - Details will be sent home by the end of September.
 - Please **do not allow students to bring anything in a glass container; soda of any kind is not permissible.**
 - Please limit the number of sugary or candy snacks.

CARES (Children are Receiving Extended Services) Program

Before and after school care for students attending St. Ephrem School is available.

- The goal is to provide a **safe and happy environment** for students of working parents and at the same time, instill Christian values through meaningful interaction with other children.
- **Before School CARES** begins as early as **6:30 am**; after school CARES runs **until 5:30pm**.
- CARES is **not** available on days with **delayed openings**!
- For more information on our **CARES** Program/registration forms, please visit our **school website**.

Birthday Celebrations

Following our **SEC policy**, we highly discourage **cupcakes or food of any kind** to be sent in to school. Please honor this request!

- In light of food allergies and the like, we ask that you consider celebrating such days outside of the school day.
- Please know that each student's birthday is acknowledged with a school-wide announcement and a token gift.
- **Party invitations may never be sent into school for distribution unless every member of the class is to receive one!**

TELEPHONE – SCHOOL OFFICE

The telephone in the school office is for **business only**.

- A student may use the phone only in the case of an emergency with the permission of the principal.
- Please do not request that a student phone home during the day or after school for any reason.
- **NO STUDENT is authorized to make a call directly from a personal cell phone. Disciplinary action will be necessary if this policy is violated.**
- If a student is detained at school for any reason without prior notification, permission will be granted to use the phone. **Urgent messages for students will be relayed to them from the school office.** During class time, neither student nor teacher may be called to the phone.
- **Emergency messages** can be given to the school secretary when necessary and they will be given to the appropriate teacher.
 - **Please note** that if the call comes in too late for delivery, the school **cannot take responsibility if undeliverable.**

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Extracurricular activities are sponsored for the enrichment and enjoyment of our students. Most activities take place after school or on weekends. Other activities will be added when or if available to our students.

The following activities are available:

- CYO Sports, Altar Serving, Private Voice and Piano Lessons, Group Instrument/Band Lessons, Irish Dance, Scouting Programs, SeaPerch Robotics, Crochet Club, Academic Tutoring, and an after-school club offered for students in Grades 5-8.
- We are always open and interested in any independently run after-school activity.

TUITION

Our school provides quality, Catholic education through the efforts of **our entire staff** and **parish community**, and through the **many sacrifices made by you**, our families!

Tuition is determined in February for the following school year. The school may impose additional fees for other items, such as registration, field trips, and art/activities fees.

In justice to all parents and the parish community, parents are expected to keep tuition payments up to date. The letter of agreement is included in your **FACTS Tuition Account**.

The **Pastor and Administration** reserve the right for further and more serious action if tuition payments are not paid in a timely manner.

Parents/guardians experiencing financial difficulties and/or falling behind in payments are asked to contact Sister Shaun. Your information is **kept in confidence** so PLEASE reach out to us in such circumstances!

In regards to withdrawing a student, no student records will be released until all tuition has been paid up-to-date.

LEGAL CUSTODY

Please note: If paperwork is not on file at school, school personnel will not honor individual requests for information about a student.

- Please **submit any paperwork you may have** as a safety for all involved!
 - This is treated as **CONFIDENTIAL information** but is **imperative for us to have** this information.
 - It is important for the school to have a **copy of a custody decree**. This will help school personnel to make effective decisions when the need arises.
 - **Custodial parents** are likewise asked to supply the school with copies of **restraining orders** if the need arises.
- Parents are asked to **inform school personal when legal custody of the child(ren) resides with one parent**.
 - Those individuals who **have legal custody** of the student may attend school meetings, participate in educational decisions and review educational records regarding that student.
 - Persons who **do not have legal custody** (including those with visitation rights, but not legal custody) have no such educational rights and may not participate in these matters.
 - Absent a subpoena or court order, school records of the child(ren) may be disclosed only upon written consent of the parent/guardian with legal custody.
- The school may require parents/guardians to sign an agreement regarding the administration of parental participation issues and payment of tuition. A copy of this agreement will be kept on file in the school office.
- A child will not be released to a parent/guardian who does not have physical custody, without the written consent of the custodial parent/guardian.

Therefore, for the safety and welfare of the child, all **separated or divorced** parents of children enrolled in our school are **asked to provide the school with a copy of the court order or custodial agreement adjudicating that determination of custody**. This agreement is placed in a confidential file. **Thank you for your complete cooperation in these matters. We want to guarantee the safety of your child while he or she is on school property.**

GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Act 195 provides limited funding for the purchase of textbooks, and Act 90 provides funding for various instructional materials.

CATAPULT

The Bucks County Intermediate Unit and Catapult provide services including counseling, psychological testing, speech remediation, and remediation in the areas of reading and mathematics.

BUSSING

Act 372 allows busing of non-public school children by the school district in which the child resides.

Bus transportation is provided by **Bensalem, Bristol, Neshaminy, and Pennsbury** school districts. Other districts will provide busing if **SEC** is within their **ten-mile radius**.

- All rules and regulations pertaining to public school students shall apply to SEC students. Misbehavior or violation of regulations will not be tolerated.
 - **Repeated offenses may result in suspension or loss of bus privileges.**
- Students cannot change their bus without the permission of the resident school district nor may they ride a school bus from any district other than their resident district.
 - A **written parent/guardian note** requesting a child to go home on a friend's Bensalem bus must be approved by the Office Staff to be honored by the **Bensalem School District's Transportation Department**.

HEALTH SERVICES:

The Bensalem School District provides health services to Saint Ephrem School. Emergency care will be offered to student for an accident or illness occurring during school hours. Prolonged illnesses or injuries, which occur outside of school, are parents' responsibility. School nurses are prohibited by law to diagnose injuries or illnesses.

A health screening is held each year with your child. During the conference, the child is weighed and measured, and his/her vision and hearing are tested. Pennsylvania State law requires that students have a physical examination prior to entry to school, and again in grade six by their private physical or school arranged doctor. A dental examination is required prior to entry to school, and in grades three and seven, either by the family or school arranged dentist. The parent is notified in writing of any deviations found in the screening or examination process.

In order to administer effectively our health-related programs, your assistance is vital in the following areas:

- Emergency cards, forms, questionnaires, etc. need to be completed and returned promptly.
- Changes in a telephone number, address, emergency contact, employment, etc. should be reported to the school nurse and the school office.
- Information on new immunizations, surgery, accidents, communicable diseases, or special medical conditions should be reported in writing to the school nurse.
- Students are to remain at home – for at least one day – if they experience a temperature above 100 degrees, or any vomiting or diarrhea with the twenty-four-hour period before the start of the school day.

Administration of Medication

- The **School Nurse** will administer prescription and non-prescription medications during the school day according to the following regulations:
 - Medication must be in the original container and delivered at the beginning of the school day to the school nurse or principal.
 - Parent must complete a Medication Form or send a note including the following: student's name, name of medication, dosage, time and date of administration,

reason for administration, possible side effects, other medications student is taking, name of prescribing physician, and physician's phone number.

- Prescription drugs require a note from a physician including the information above.
- Parent/guardian may give written permission to the nurse to administer any non-prescription drug.
 - A parent may come to school to administer medications, but must report to the school nurse or principal before dispensing medication to student.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia requires that all students be vaccinated. Therefore, the mandatory requirements for all students at SEC are:

Hepatitis B – 3 doses

Diphtheria and Tetanus – 4 doses, one dose administered after the fourth birthday

Poliomyelitis – 3 doses

Measles, Mumps, Rubella – 2 doses

Varicella (Chicken Pox) – 2 doses or written verification of occurrence of Chicken Pox

7th grade students only: Meningococcal Conjugate (MCV) & Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) – 1 dose

FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS

The safety of your child is one of our greatest concerns. Fire or emergency drills are held throughout the year to teach pupils to respond calmly in the event of an emergency. Drill directions are posted in each classroom.

TECHNOLOGY AT SEC:

We expect our students to utilize technology to think more critically, to communicate effectively, to express their creativity, and to conduct research. Our teachers have access to updated technology in their classrooms to engage our students and challenge them to learn in ways not previously imaginable. We empower students with the technical skills necessary to participate in a culture that is increasingly dependent upon technology, while also challenging them to be digital ambassadors spreading the Good News!

We greatly value technology in our schools. What makes technology most powerful is when it serves to make our students better people!

**Please read the Responsible Use Policy (RUP) for Technology - Appendix A.
Sign and return required forms to the Main Office by September 2025.**

SAINT EPHREM SCHOOL POLICIES:

Violation of these policies and as written in the RUP of the Archdiocese will be dealt with by the administration of the school. Violation of these rules may result in any or all of the following:

- A \$50 fee may be applied to any student/family for damaged equipment which was preventable by the student.
- Temporary or Permanent Loss of use of the school network, computers and software, including Internet access may be the result of improper usage of social media.
- Disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the incident, will be applied by the Principal in consultation with the Pastor and the Archdiocesan Assistant Superintendent for Bucks County.
- Saint Ephrem School students or parents are not permitted to post any pictures of school events in non-school publications or media without the expressed written consent of the school.
- Chromebooks are used only with the teachers' permission.
- Chromebooks may not be used during snack and lunch/recess.
- Students can only use teacher approved websites.
- No wearable technology may be worn or brought to school (Apple, Fitbit, etc.)
- Cell phones are highly discouraged and should only accompany a student upon parent request. They cause distraction on school busses, etc.

- Any phone brought to school must be collected by the teacher in the morning, and will be returned at the end of the day. Violation of this policy will result in an immediate disciplinary action if a phone is observed in use during the day.
- Cell phones **may not be in use** on the school bus; emergencies excluded. When mis-use is reported to the principal, disciplinary action will be taken. Please note: The school cannot be responsible or accountable if a personal device, kept in a student's possession, is damaged or lost.
- Students may not email outside of St. Ephrem's domain.
- Parents may not email students, and students may not email parents or students during the school day.
- Students may not record or take pictures of themselves or others in school.
- Posting a picture or making comments about another student without their permission will result in serious disciplinary action.
- Concerning AI - the use of "Artificial Intelligence" - and ChatGPT: No students under the age of 13 may create an account on the above, as stated on the RUP of the Archdiocese. Any use of AI in Junior High may be used only in teacher directed activities or assignments.
- Students and their parents/guardians must agree to follow all these rules by signing the technology agreement.

Care of School Property:

Students are to carry their books to and from school in a suitable and WATERPROOF book bag. Bags on wheels are NOT permitted for space as well as safety issues.

Students are expected to take care of their personal belongings, their books, and their clothing. They are also asked to help care for the school buildings and adjoining property. Any malicious damage to school property will necessitate compensation.

VOLUNTEERS:

The assistance of parent volunteers is greatly appreciated and encouraged. We recognize the invaluable assistance given by our students' families, which helps in building a strong learning community.

Volunteers can assist in some of the following ways:

- Fund Raisers
- Office Aides
- Home & School Events
- Hot Lunch Days
- Class Trips
- Library - Our library operates every Thursday and Friday for students in PreK through Grade 6 because of very talented and extremely generous volunteers. Mrs. Vicki Cacchio is our head librarian. Parent volunteers are needed and much appreciated!

WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS, SO PLEASE INQUIRE!

CLEARANCES:

All volunteers must have their clearances on file and up to date. A volunteer may not work in school until this diocesan and state mandate is honored. **Please call Mrs. Rocks in the Main Office** and inquire either about your status or what you need to volunteer.

Volunteers must have three clearances to begin volunteering at SEC. These clearances must be renewed every five (5) years:

- PA State Police Criminal Background Check
- PA State Child Abuse Check
- Volunteer Disclosure Statement (for PA residents of 10 years+) or FBI Fingerprint Background Check

Please note: For any volunteer having **REGULAR (weekly or more frequent) contact** with children, you will also need to participate in a **"Safe Environment" class** as provided by the Archdiocese. There is also a **Mandated Reporter online training** that will need to be completed.

Home and School Organization

The Home and School plays an important role in bringing parents and families together. By attending meetings and participating in various functions throughout the year, parents keep informed about upcoming events and support the school.

Youth Ministry

The purpose of this ministry is to foster continuing connections among our young men and women in grades six through eight and to encourage a lived faith outside of the school day. Members of this group will be offered seasonal activities, youth dances, and fun activities in addition to gaining service hours, as required for students in the Middle School and Junior High.

CYO

Our parish offers many athletic opportunities for our students of all ages and interests. Seasonal sports information will be posted on the school website.

Saint Ephrem Catholic Elementary School
Memorandum of Understanding
School Year 2025-2026

Every Catholic school student has the right to be treated as a child of God, with the love and respect that implies, regardless of family circumstances. In like manner, the believing community has the right to an education guided by Catholic teaching and identity, unimpeded by pressures contrary to Church teaching.

As parent/guardian of a student in a Catholic school, I understand, affirm, and support the following:

1. The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is two-fold: to strengthen the Catholic community in its faith, and to form students in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.
2. Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church. They are not simply private schools offering a positive moral code. Rather, they exist to advance the faith mission of the Catholic parish who sponsors the school.
3. While Catholic education places a high value on academic excellence and extracurricular achievement, its fundamental priority is fidelity to Catholic teaching and identity.
4. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic teaching and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity and that the school is able to function as a community of faith.
5. In all questions that involve Catholic teaching, morals, and Church law, the final determination rests with the Archbishop. Most recently, it is the position of the Archdiocese that enrolled students must be immunized unless there is a medical exemption.

As a parent/guardian desiring to enroll my child in a Catholic school, I accept this memorandum of understanding.

I pledge support for the Catholic identity and mission of this school and by enrolling my child I commit myself to uphold all principles and policies that govern this Catholic School.

Family Handbook Enrollment Agreement - School Year 2025-2026

Please check off each of the following statements to confirm your compliance with the policies and procedures of Saint Ephrem School. **You must submit and sign a separate sheet for each child in your family.** Thank you for your prompt response in returning one form for each child in your family to the Main Office as soon as possible!

_____ 1. I [We] understand that enrollment of a student at Saint Ephrem School is built on a partnership between parents and the school. To that end, we agree to abide by the policies and procedures of the school.

_____ 2. I [We] have read the Family Handbook and will work with the school staff to insure a successful school year.

_____ 3. I [We] will do our best to honor the request not to take vacations or trips during the school year. We understand that all work missed is the responsibility of the child and family.

_____ 4. I [We] have read and will honor the "Responsible Use Policy" for technology use and understand the consequences of non-compliance. (See separate attachment to handbook)

_____ 5. I [We] have read the Dress Code, Gym Uniform Code, and Dress-Down Code and will comply with the directives.

_____ 6. I [We] have read and will honor the "Memorandum of Understanding", a document from the Office of Catholic Education.

_____ 7. I [We] have read and agree to abide by the Saint Ephrem Tuition Policy. I understand that I am responsible to make monthly payments on time and that if I fail to comply with any of my obligations, enrollment of my child will be jeopardized if not terminated.

_____ 8. I [We] give permission for my child's picture to be used for school events, on the website, and on the school Facebook/Instagram pages.

_____ 9. I [We] hereby request the loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment in accordance with the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 for my child(ren) attending Saint Ephrem School.

N.B. The school reserves the right to amend the Handbook during the school year and will inform families of such immediately.

Student Name: _____ **Grade:** _____

SIGNATURES of Parents/Guardians: _____