



— The Roman Catholic Diocese of —  
**BATON ROUGE**  
SPECIAL EDUCATION

**Parent & Student Handbook  
2023-2024**

Diocese of Baton Rouge Department of Special Education  
Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program  
P.O. Box 2028, Baton Rouge, LA 70821  
Office Telephone: (225) 336-8735  
Office Fax: (225) 336-8711

**Program Administrator: Kristy Monsour**



## WELCOME

Parents and Students,

Welcome to the start of another school year! All of us with the Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program would like to thank you for choosing to enroll your child(ren) in our programming. We realize that in doing so, you are placing one of

God's greatest gifts in our care. We accept this responsibility with dedication and love and will work with you in developing each student to his or her fullest potential.

The rules, policies and directives in this handbook are designed to assist you in understanding the expectations for entrance and continued enrollment in the REACH Program. Please review the rules carefully with your son or daughter, stressing the importance of his or her cooperation. Please note that this handbook supersedes the host site handbook should the two ever be in conflict.

Thank you for entrusting your son or daughter to us and with your support, we will provide an atmosphere of Catholic values that foster individual growth within a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

Blessings,

Kristy Monsour, M. Ed.  
[kmonsour@csobr.org](mailto:kmonsour@csobr.org)



*When you REACH out in love, you extend the hand of God.*



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## PROGRAM HISTORY

In 1962, Bishop Tracy established special education services in schools. In 1981, the program was consolidated into a special school that was housed in the present-day Tracy Center on the grounds of the Catholic Life Center. In 1987, it was relocated to the school campus of St. Louis King of France so as to address "least restrictive environment" concerns. In 1988, the high school-aged students were moved to the campus of Redemptorist High School. In 1990, the remaining elementary students were moved to the campus of St. Gerard, which is now Redemptorist Elementary School. In 2010, the program was once again consolidated on one campus, that being Redemptorist High School. In 2014, a task force came together to revisit best practices of special education and in the fall of 2015, opened on 6 school sites with 30 students whose needs for services ranged from students on the spectrum to students needing lab services to remediate dyslexia. Currently, we have 5 schools with Special Education classrooms and 11 schools with a Dyslexia Lab and Instructional Support Services.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program in the Diocese of Baton Rouge is committed to providing measurably superior services that address the unique and diverse needs of all students. This commitment supports our belief that students have the right to an effective education. We believe that this focus on providing an effective education in an atmosphere of Catholic Faith Formation prepares students for their roles as Disciples of Christ and sets the stage for them to become lifelong independent learners and compassionate and contributing members of a diverse society.

### **Accreditation, Affiliations, and Accountability**

The Department of Special Education of the Diocese of Baton Rouge is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools through Cognia.

It is affiliated and a member of the National Catholic Educators Association (NCEA) and the Citizens for Educational Choice (CEC).



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# ADMISSIONS

## **Criteria for Acceptance**

The Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program admits students of any race, sex, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally afforded or made available to all program students if these rights, privileges, programs, and activities are within the abilities of the student.

A student's ability for success is assessed when they apply to the program. This assessment considers all other documentation such as, but not limited to: evaluation, therapy records, public IEPs, medical diagnoses, observations and the ability to blend and be successful within the current structure of the program as the main considerations for acceptance.

Considerations at time of application will be given to the following student characteristics and abilities:

- Ability to independently perform all activities of daily living such as personal grooming and hygiene, including toileting, dressing, and following basic directions.
- Demonstration of interest in the learning process, curiosity, and motivation.

## **Acceptance Priority:**

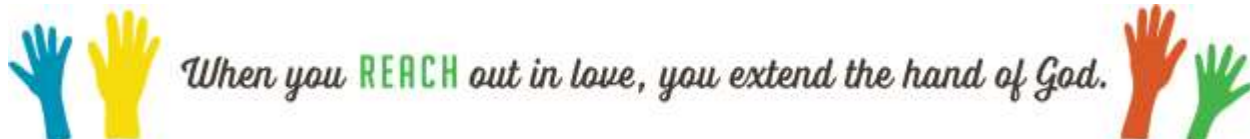
Students applying to the Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program will be accepted in the following priority:

- Currently enrolled students whose families practice their faith and are in good standing
- Siblings of currently enrolled Catholic school students
- Catholic students of the Diocese of Baton Rouge
- Students of families of other faiths

## **Other Considerations:**

- Student does not present a potential disruption to the classroom environment.
- Student does not require a disproportionate percent of staff time.
- Student does not pose a danger to her/himself or others.

Students are accepted to the administration of program educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, as well as the host site's



athletic programs and other activities administered by these schools.

All students who are enrolled must participate in the program's Christ-centered religion curriculum based on the Catholic faith. This includes living Christian values.

### **Admissions Documents**

The following documents must be provided for all new students seeking enrollment in the Blessed Margaret of Castello REACH Program's Program for Exceptional Students:

1. Copy(ies) of Religious Sacramental Certificates (Catholic students only)
2. Certified Copy of State Birth Certificate
3. Copy of Social Security Card
4. Current Immunization Certificate
5. Current/Previous Year School Records (report card indicating grade assignment/current performance)
6. Signed Authorization to Release Information Form(s) (to be sent to previous school system as well as to any therapist and/or physician involved with the student to obtain documentation of current therapy concerns/evaluation results and/or medical condition(s) and/or vision/hearing screening results)
7. Current evaluation or private evaluation documenting exceptionality

### **Student Withdrawals - Diocesan Policy**

Parent and student cooperation is necessary to insure the orderly functioning of the REACH Program as well as the furtherance of the student's education. If parental cooperation is not forthcoming, the student's continued enrollment in the REACH Program will be reviewed in order to ascertain if the student's presence in school serves the best interest of the school and the student. After opportunities have been provided for reasonable and fair dialogue among parents, administration and superintendent, and the superintendent and administration deem the parents no longer honor the expectations found in the school's contractual agreement, the parents shall be directed to withdraw their child/children from the school.

### **Student Transfers**

If a student is planning to withdraw from the program or transfer to another school, the student's legal guardian must contact the Program Administrator. All debts to the program and host-site school must be paid and any textbooks returned before the student can officially withdraw. The "drop form" will be



issued when these requirements are met. The student's records will be forwarded to the next school upon request from the new school. The parent may not take the cumulative folder to the new school.

### **Replacement**

The complete cost of replacement will be charged for lost and damaged books.

### **Dispute Policy**

Should a grievance occur the issue can be raised through the following channel. Any dispute which remains unresolved at the program level after consultation among the Teacher, program administrator and Pastor may be appealed to the Catholic Schools Office, whose decision shall be binding upon the parties.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **Payment Options**

Payment options for the Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program include: check, e-check, money order, cashier's check, or bank financing through Gulf Coast.

### **Refunds**

Students withdrawing before the school year ends will be eligible for a refund according to the chart below. Registration fees, school supplies and tech fees will not be refunded. All refunds are reviewed and finalized by the program administrator.

May 1 – May 31 (for upcoming year)	100%
June 1 – August 31	75%
September 1- December 31	50%
January 1 – March 31	25%
April 1 – May 31	No Refund

\*Prior to a refund, a signed and dated letter notifying the program administrator of withdrawal must be received.

### **Delinquent Financial Obligations**

With any financial obligation that is past due by 15 days or more, parents risk students being removed from the program until balances are brought current. If a family is experiencing difficulty with tuition payments, they must immediately contact the program administrator.



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## 2023-2024 SPECIAL EDUCATION TUITION & FEE SCHEDULE\*

<b>K-8 Fees and Tuition:</b>	<b>High School Fees and Tuition:</b>
Registration (non-refundable): \$300	Registration (non-refundable): \$300
Catholic: \$13,260 Non-Catholic: \$13,950	Catholic: \$15,340 Non-Catholic: \$16,200
Tech fee (Middle School at OLOM only): \$125	Lap-top Fee: \$650 In-school and take-home use

Any student whose indebtedness to the program (i.e., tuition, fees, and charges of any kind) becomes delinquent, will be declared ineligible to participate in any school activity (i.e., clubs, athletics, spirit groups, etc.) and may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

All parents are informed of tuition payments during admissions and registration.

In the event that the program must file a legal proceeding to collect any unpaid fees and expenses, the parents understand they will be charged, and they agree to pay attorney's fees for collection at a minimum of \$150 per hour plus costs and expenses, if the program obtains a judgment in its favor. Delinquent payments may result in being required to pay the following year's tuition in full prior to the start of the school year. In no instance will students be considered registered for the next school year without all previous years' tuition and fees being paid.

### **Outstanding Financial Obligations**

All Outstanding Financial Obligations must be paid (Zero Balance) by May 15<sup>th</sup> each school year. Failure to do so may result in a student being removed from the program.

Any past due fees owed per nine weeks must be paid for the student to participate in extra-curricular class functions, athletics, class trips, or to participate in promotional exercises.

The program administrator reviews fiscal matters needing attention. Past due



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payments, loans in arrears, loans in default, and other financial hardships are typically the purview of the program administrator. As always, the family is encouraged to contact the program administrator to make financial arrangements should difficulties arise in paying on time.

### **Non-Sufficient Fund Checks**

NSF CHECKS will carry a \$25.00 NSF fee.

**If a check comes back NSF, you may be asked to pay in cash or money order for the remainder of the school year**

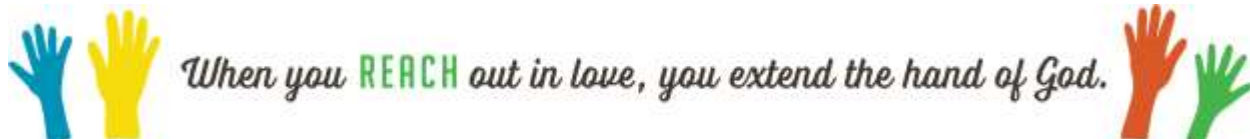
## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Classroom Visitation**

Without special permission from the administration (departmental and host-site), no one is allowed to visit classrooms or the campus during the school day. Parents/visitors are to report directly to the school office. No parent should pick up their child(ren) from the classroom/teacher. The office must call the classroom and the student will be dismissed through the office. Outsiders, including students from other schools, may not come on or near the playground or school premises to visit friends during school time without permission. Parents should not expect to go to the classroom to “observe” as this disrupts the learning and routines in the classroom.

### **Communication**

- The Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program communicates with parents in a variety of ways depending on urgency and the need for privacy. E-mail is preferred method of first communication. From there, phone calls and conferences can be scheduled.
- Written communication to the program administrator is required to share information about a student with someone other than the parent.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the program administrator to update address, email, telephone, emergency contact, and/or medical information. The program administrator will share that information with the teacher and applicable host-site personnel.
- For all matters related to the host-site school, visit their website and email communications. The host-site will post their school calendar, uniform information and school activities.



### **Custodial Rights**

In the case of divorce or separation of parents, the law holds that parents do not cease to be parents when they no longer have custody of their children. This school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide the school with an official, signed copy of the court order.

### **Office Hours**

The Catholic School's Office will be open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. as per the Diocese of Baton Rouge Calendar. Staff members assigned to specific campuses follow the designated hours of the host-site.

### **Parental Involvement and Expectations**

- Individuals wishing to volunteer, substitute or attend field trips in a supervisory role in must go through the Special Education office for documentation of background check, child protection webinar completion, etc. The host-site school is NOT responsible for this documentation as it applies to our students. For more information on how to complete child protection information, please visit <https://csobr.org/child-protection>.
- Catholic schools operate under contract law. The handbook is the printed contract between the parents of minor students and the department. It is required that parent/guardian and their child sign a statement that they and their child have read the handbook and have agreed to abide by the policies, rules, and regulations set forth therein. By signing this statement, parents and students agree to be governed by the rules and regulations stated in the handbook. Failure to abide by the regulations and policies of the handbook by either the student or his/her parent/guardian may result in the student's removal from the assigned program.

In developing the rules and policies, we have tried to anticipate as many circumstances and problems as possible. As new and unusual situations arise, the administration will have the authority to use their discretion in



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whatever circumstances the handbook rules do not precisely address. The program administrator reserves the right to amend the handbook during the school term, if necessary. Any changes will be communicated.

- Part of the educational philosophy of the Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program is the belief that school assists the parents in carrying out their primary responsibility of providing religious and secular education for their children. Hence, The Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program expects the parents to be involved as much as possible in the education of their children. This means not only supporting the school and teachers, but also providing instruction to and examples for their children both at home and in public. While we realize and recognize that there may be legitimate disputes concerning educational matters, The Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program is ultimately responsible for the orderly operation of the programs in the best interest of all of its students. Therefore, the Department of Special Education reserves the right to terminate its relationship with a student if the parents of the student fail to provide the support, assistance, and examples necessary to accomplish the program's role of providing the religious and secular education to which the child is entitled. Failure to abide by the regulations and policies of the handbook by either the student or his/her parent or guardian may result in the student's removal from the assigned program.

It is a privilege for our school to partner with parents in the educational process. We are fully committed to working together to form a strong relationship to meet the needs of our students and their families.

### **Teacher Communication**

Parents should be mindful of the teacher's time during school as they are working with the children and may not be able to respond to an email immediately. Please allow the teachers 24 hours to respond. The preferred way of contact is through email or apps such as SeeSaw, Class Dojo and Homeroom App. Should there be an emergency, please call the school so they can get the message to the teacher immediately.

If parents have concerns about their child or a situation at school, the first step to resolving issues goes to the teacher. If the issues persist, the program administrator will then be called for a conference.



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## ACADEMICS AND SERVICES OFFERED

### Exceptionalities Served

The Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program is designed to meet the needs of children with the following exceptionalities:

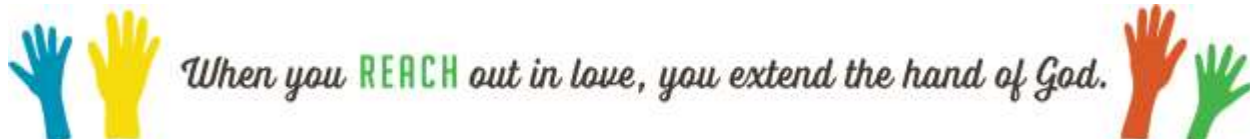
- Autism
- Hearing Impaired
- Intellectual Disability (Mildly or Moderately Impaired)
- Multiple Disabilities
- Down Syndrome
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury, but not wheelchair bound
- Orthopedic Impairment, but not wheelchair bound

Students are grouped in classes according to age and abilities. The program administrator is responsible for determining the appropriateness of placement for students both at a given host site as well as in any regular education class. Consideration is given to the student's ability level, age, exceptionality, and the current exceptionalities of other students in the program. The decision of placement rests with the program administrator and is final and binding.

For a special education student to be mainstreamed into a regular education class to be taken as a grade, the student must be able to attend the class independently and demonstrate progress without assistance. For a student to audit a course, he or she must benefit from the class. We do not place students in a class that will not help them grow. Students auditing may have the option of having a special education assistant in the class.

Related/Special Services such as Speech Pathology Services, Occupational Therapy, Adapted Physical Education, and Assistive Technology can be provided during the school day if the student is eligible to receive those services as articulated in the qualifying agency's (Pupil Appraisal) evaluation report. These services are not guaranteed and are provided according to the funding allowed by the state. Other therapies/services may be provided during the school day by private providers if space is available, has been approved by/coordinated with the program administrator and has completed required child protection paperwork.

Parentally placed children with disabilities do not have an individual



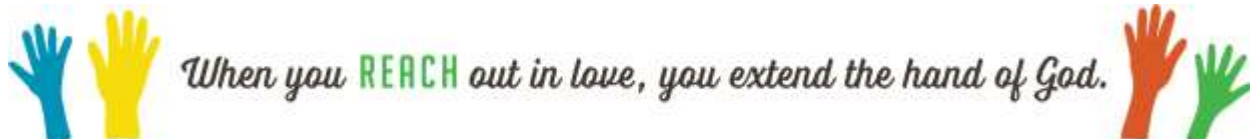
entitlement to services they would receive if they were enrolled in a public school. Instead, the LEA is required to spend a proportionate amount of IDEA federal funds to provide equitable services to this group of children. Therefore, it is possible that some parentally placed children with disabilities will not receive any services while others will. For those who receive services, the amount and type of services also may differ from the services the child would receive if placed in a public school by the parents or in a private school by a public agency.

Note: During the course of the school year, student progress in the assigned program is periodically reviewed to determine potential for success. If in the opinion of the program administrator a student is failing to meet basic expectations that would have otherwise significantly increased their potential for success, the student may be removed from the program. Additional testing may be required by administration at any time to assist in determining appropriate supports. That testing may be conducted in-house, coordinated through the Pupil Appraisal Services of the LEA, or required by administration to be conducted privately at parent/guardian's expense. As well, additional measures may be implemented to ensure a student's success in the program prior to removal. Those additional measures include (but are not limited to) a toileting plan or applicable behavior plans. (Please refer to Student Code of Conduct.) **Continued student enrollment in the program is ultimately at the sole discretion of the program administrator.**

### Grades

Students enrolled in the REACH Program participate in a non-traditional degree track based on individual needs which means that they will be socially promoted each school year regardless of whether grade-level curriculum has been mastered. The goal with all students will be to maximize success from year to year in the hopes of eventually reaching a point where curriculum commensurate with assigned grade-level is being taught. For those who transition to our program for high school students without this goal being within reach, course of study will be created to maximize independent living upon exiting high school.

If the program administrator and parents agree that the student will transition to the regular education classroom, a transition plan will be set in place with the host-site school. For a REACH student on the diploma path in high school, the student will transition to be a St. Michael student after one or two years in the REACH classroom. This is a 5-6 year path to a high school diploma. This path is contingent on successful mainstream classes taken for a grade in 5-8 grades.



If the decision (based on data) to place a student in a regular education class has been made, that student will be expected to perform all class requirements to receive credit for course completion.

Student performance in the Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program is tracked using the service plan progress report, as well as a subject/class-based host-site school report card. Letter grades given to students by program teacher in conjunction with the host-site report card does not in any way automatically mean that they are earning/receiving "credit" for those classes as they are not necessarily aligned with a student's assigned grade-level curriculum. Program subjects will appear on the host-site report card with a prefix of "ES" for Exceptional Students, i.e. ES Math. The high school special education courses are labeled "APP", i.e. APP Math.

All grades given from the REACH program are designated with an ES/APP in front of the course indicating that the course content has been edited to meet the child's learning level. If a student is taking a course in a mainstream classroom, there will not be the "ES" description. Report Cards are given at the end of each quarter.

### **Diocesan Grading Scale**

A 92.5 – 100

B 84.5 - 92.49

C 74.5 - 84.49

D 66.5 - 74.49

F Below 66.5

### **Books and Materials**

Every effort is made to extend their usability including adherence to the following regulations:

- All textbooks must be covered. If the school does not provide the student with book covers, it is the student's responsibility to obtain covers.
- Textbooks should be free of pencil, ink or crayon marks. If a book is lost or damaged, it will be replaced at the parent's expense, as determined by an administrator based upon replacement value of the item.
- Textbooks and materials issued to a student are ultimately the responsibility of that student.



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### **Field Trips**

Field trips within our city and to nearby points of interest may be scheduled by classroom (program and host-site) teachers throughout the school year. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the classroom curriculum and introduce students to the resources of the community. Parents will receive notices of field trips in advance of the scheduled trip date and will be asked to sign field trip permission forms. Sometimes a fee may be requested from each student to defray transportation or facility costs. If a child does not return a signed permission form, he/she will not be allowed to attend the field trip. Verbal permission over the phone is not acceptable. Payments made for field trips are generally remitted to a third party (museum, bus company, etc.), and are, therefore, non-refundable.

The appropriateness of a special education student to participate in any field trip will be determined by the special education teacher in collaboration with the program administrator. The availability of a teacher/parent/guardian to accompany a student is a standing requirement for participation in regular education field trips.

Note: In order to volunteer/serve as chaperone on any field trip, diocesan child protection documentation must already be on file with the department.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES**

### **Crisis Plan**

Please refer to your school host site information. Each host site uses a one-call system to share emergency information in real time.

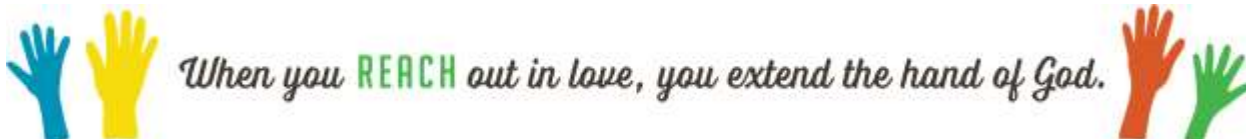
### **Medication Policy**

Only parents may bring medication, in its pharmacy container, to school. Students are not permitted to have medication of any kind in their possession.

Parental and doctor's permissions must be submitted to the office in order for children at school to receive prescription and/or non-prescription medication that must be taken on a continuing, daily basis.

### **Photo/Video Release Permission**

The Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program reserves the right to film or photograph students. As a parent of a student enrolled in the programing, you



understand that your son/daughter's image or name may be used to advertise the program or to highlight your son/daughter's accomplishments. I understand that this information may be published on the Internet and other electronic media, local media sources such as, but not limited to, the newspaper, television, radio, district/program/host site newsletters, websites, and/or publications, or used in training sessions. Under no circumstances will a student's home address or telephone number be published for public viewing.

Members of the news media must obtain permission from the program administrator (**and** principal as applicable) before interviewing, photographing, or filming students or personnel.

Outside the school day, if individuals are approached by the media, we ask that all comments stay positive and reflect the spirit of the Program's mission.

### **Facility Safety**

All visitors to campus must report to the office through that door for permission and identification to be on campus. The visitor must sign in and out on the list provided in the office.

### **Emergency Drills and Plans**

The school maintains crisis management plans for emergency situations that could arise during the school year. Faculty, staff and students are trained and practice regularly for such situations.

### **Security Cameras**

Please be aware that security cameras have been on installed campuses to help ensure student and staff safety.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Attendance Policy**

The Department of Special Education expects daily attendance of students. Students must be in attendance for 160 days to receive grades in their courses. Excessive tardies will be addressed by the program administrator and could result in withdrawal from the program. Tardies are a disruption to the school day and students often have a difficult time adjusting when coming in late.

All absences are considered unexcused except for the following reasons:



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- Illness or injury that prevents that student from being physically able to attend school. A doctor's note may be required and must be submitted on the first day the student returns to school. If a doctor's visit was not necessary, a note from a parent must be submitted to the program teacher or departmental office (not the host-site school).
- Isolation ordered by the parish health official or the State Board of Health.
- Death or serious illness of a member of the student's family (defined as parents, grandparents, brother, sister, including stepbrother and stepsister, aunt, uncle, cousin).
- Required appearance in court or an administrative tribunal.
- Observance of a religious event.
- Valid educational opportunities approved by the program administrator prior to the absence.

A parent or doctor note must be provided to the school for every absence.

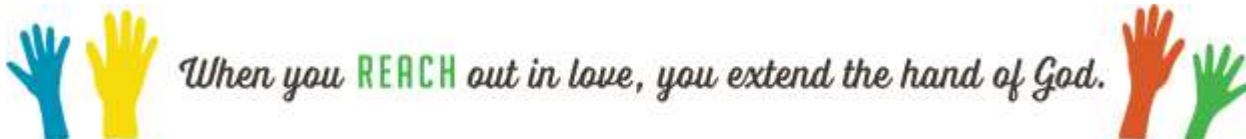
### **Louisiana Compulsory Attendance Law**

At the request of the Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program administration, **law enforcement officers shall be authorized to investigate all cases of nonattendance and unlawful absences of children.** Parents and students enrolled in private schools must follow the state compulsory attendance law as noted in 17.221:

*LA State Law 17.221. School attendance; compulsory ages; duty of parents; excessive absences...*

*A.(1) Every parent, tutor, or other person residing within the state of Louisiana having control or charge of any child from that child's seventh birthday until his eighteenth birthday shall send such child to a public or private day school, unless the child graduates from high school prior to his eighteenth birthday. Any child below the age of seven who legally enrolls in school shall also be subject to the provisions of this Subpart. Every parent, tutor, or other person responsible for sending a child to a public or private day school under provisions of this Subpart shall also assure the attendance of such child in regularly assigned classes during regular school hours established by the school board and shall assure that such child is not habitually tardy from school pursuant to the provisions of R.S. 17:233.*

*(2) Whoever violates the provisions of this Subsection or R.S. 17:234 shall be fined not more than two hundred and fifty dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days, or both. The court shall impose a minimum condition of*



*probation which may include that the parent, tutor, or other person having control or charge of the child participate in forty hours of school or community service activities, or a combination of forty hours of school or community service and attendance in parenting classes or family counseling sessions or programs approved by the court having jurisdiction, as applicable, or the suspension of any state-issued recreational license.*

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Discipline Philosophy**

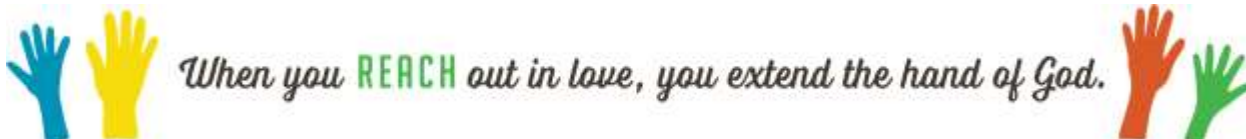
It is the philosophy of this program that every student has the right to receive an education in a climate conducive to learning. Each student is entitled to a safe and orderly learning atmosphere, both physical and emotional, and to a firm, fair treatment in relation to program life. The program and the home must share the responsibility in providing an environment for education growth. By following the rules and guidelines all students will have the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential. Unacceptable conduct distracts from the learning process. Since positive behavior is necessary before an instruction program can be fully effective, the discipline policy is grounded in respect for the dignity of all and serves the program community in addition to classroom rules. This philosophy of respect, stated in the program's mission statement, is meant to convey the expectation that all rules and guidelines will be followed, and acceptable daily use of social and life skills will be a top priority. Parents/Guardians are expected to support the program in helping the student understand and stop any offensive behavior.

### **General Courtesy Code**

- Students should display school spirit by taking pride in their appearance and by being courteous to teachers, staff, and one another.
- Students should always demonstrate good sportsmanship as a player or spectator at all school events.
- Students should always be polite and respectful toward their teachers.
- Students should honor their parents by exhibiting appropriate behavior.
- Students should respect their peers, treating them with dignity, courtesy, and friendship.
- Students should keep their hands to themselves and avoid inappropriate touching.

### **Disrespect**

Disrespect, insolence, insubordination, and/or vulgarity will not be tolerated.



Students are to display respect for self, fellow students, faculty, and staff always. The Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program and host-site's teachers are responsible for establishing what respect "looks like" as part of their overall classroom management and (as needed) student-specific behavior plans.

### **Inappropriate Academic Conduct**

Honesty, which is an expression of the moral character of an individual, is always expected. Inappropriate academic conduct (planned or incidental), which includes but is not limited to, unacceptable use of materials or devices, copying another student's work and/or sharing your work with another student when not otherwise permitted by the teacher, and/or plagiarizing, is punishable by the academic penalty of receiving a zero on the specific assignment. Equally responsible for blame is the student who allows another to copy his/her tests and/or original work. Conduct that calls into question the validity of graded work, including the appearance of inappropriate academic conduct, will receive the same penalty as that given for cheating – planned or incidental. The teacher will notify the parent of any incident and academic consequences of such. The program administrator will be informed of these incidents to determine what disciplinary action is appropriate. Should the incident be serious enough, said student(s) may be suspended or expelled.

### **Profanity and Obscenity**

Profanity, obscenity and/or vulgarity in any form are prohibited. This includes but is not limited to spoken profanity, gestures, writing vulgar and/or obscene notes or possession of objects with vulgar and/or suggestive markings or writing. Included here also is immorality in talk or action and conduct detrimental to the reputation of the department and/or the host-site school. Profanity and obscenity in social media is also cause for discipline. Students represent Catholic Schools. If a student on social media posts inappropriate comments or dresses inappropriately, he/she will be disciplined at school.

### **Positive Behavior Reinforcement**

Students will be recognized and rewarded for demonstrating good character and behavior. The school and departmental administration will work with teachers to determine how recognition and rewards will be given to each student.

### **Diocesan Policy Regarding Harassment/Bullying/Hazing**

"To reflect Gospel values and to ensure a positive and safe learning climate, the schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge do not condone harassment, hazing,



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or bullying of any kind. All school community members are to treat everyone with dignity and respect. In that spirit, the prohibition against acts of harassment, hazing, and bullying applies to all Catholic school students, both on and off campus. It is recognized that harassment, hazing, or bullying can involve verbal, physical, written, or electronic communication whether by means currently in use or by any new electronic devices that may be developed in the future." (4.9.2.7)

Reported incidents of bullying may result in an investigation by administration. Students who engaged in bullying behavior may receive consequences that include suspension and/or expulsion.

**Definitions:**

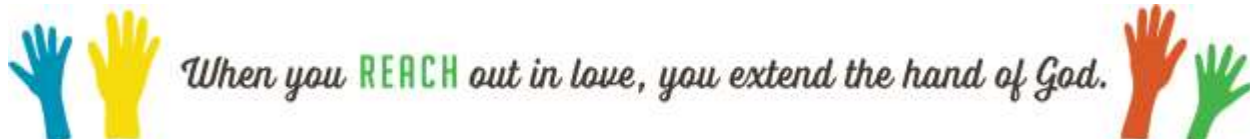
A. Harassment is annoying or unpleasant behavior toward someone including, but not limited to, threats, offensive remarks, or physical attacks. Verbal harassment shall include derogatory remarks, jokes, or slurs and can include belligerent or threatening words spoken to another. Physical harassment includes unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal school work or movement. Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

B. Hazing is a form of harassment that involves intentional, knowing or reckless acts that induce pain, embarrassment, humiliation, deprivation of rights, physical pain or mental discomfort. It is directed against a student for the purposes of being initiated into, affiliated with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization, club, athletic team or other group. Culpability includes hazing practices mandated or voluntarily entered into by any party.

C. Bullying behavior is the repeated harassment and targeting of another with the intent to cause emotional, physical, or psychological harm.

**Diocesan Policy Regarding Threats**

With recent events in our city and nation, families must be aware that school administrators respond to any and all incidents of a threatening nature. Even though statements are made in anger or in a joking manner, and usually prove to be frivolous, we must take aggressive action to protect all individuals involved. Safety to our school population is of utmost importance and our top priority.



Parents are urged to caution their children about making statements of a threatening nature. As stated above, such statements cannot and will not be taken lightly. Any student making a threatening statement may be removed from the school, until such time as a professional evaluation determines that the student is not a threat to himself/herself or to others. We are extremely sensitive to any threats to our students, teachers or parents, and take aggressive action to protect all individuals involved. We take threats of physical violence seriously and immediately contact proper authorities when necessary. We take whatever action is deemed necessary to ensure safety of all involved. As a matter of privacy, we are not at liberty to share or discuss internal matters.

### **Search and Seizure**

The legal relationship between the Catholic school and the student (or the student's parent/guardian) is one of contract law.

The school/parish is co-tenant of lockers and desks and reserves the right to search them at any time without notice. School officials may search student(s), his/her belongings, (i.e. including but not limited to locker, handbag, briefcase, book bag, cell phone), and his/her other possessions *if one or both of the following exist:*

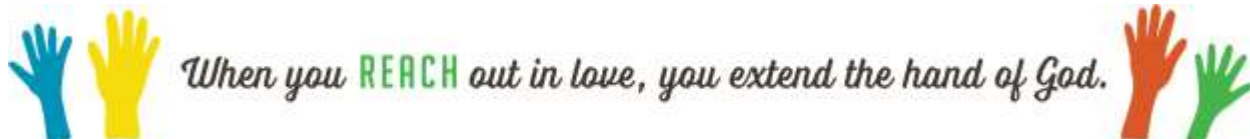
- The students are informed in writing (parent/student handbook) that searches may be conducted.
- The administrator has suspicion that contraband, illegal substances or objects or stolen property are being concealed or that a violation of a school rule related to the maintenance of discipline in the school has been committed.

The search of a student(s), his/her belongings, shall be conducted respectfully. The search shall be conducted with a minimum of embarrassment to the student(s), preferably in the privacy of an administrator's office. Strip searches **shall not** be conducted.

### **Diocesan Substance Abuse Policy**

Aware of the ever-present danger of the illegal use of chemicals/alcohol by students, the school strives to provide preventative education and a drug-free climate on campus, and at all school-related functions.

The use of all chemicals, including alcohol, tobacco and tobacco products is prohibited. This Diocesan Substance Abuse policy must be included in each school's handbook of policies and must be adhered to.

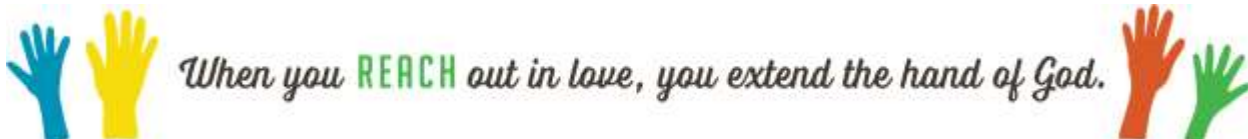


- Tobacco and Smokeless Tobacco - If a student is found to have in his/her possession any tobacco or tobacco product on school grounds or at any school-related function, appropriate action will be taken by the administration. Any tobacco product found in the student's possession shall be confiscated. Appropriate action may include but is not limited to suspension.
- Alcoholic Beverages - If a student is found to be in possession of or under the influence of alcohol on school grounds or at any school-related function, the alcohol will be confiscated and the parent/guardian will be called. Appropriate action will be taken by the administration. Appropriate action may include but is not limited to suspension or expulsion.
- Prescription or Over the Counter Drugs - If a student is found to be in possession of, to have provided or sold, a prescription or over the counter drug to another person on school grounds or at any school-related function, the item will be confiscated, and appropriate action will be taken by the administration. Appropriate action may include but is not limited to suspension or expulsion.
- Illegal Drugs - An illegal drug is any drug the possession of which is prohibited by federal, state, or local law. If a student is found to be in possession of, or under the influence of an illegal drug on school grounds or at any school-related function, the parent/guardian and civil authorities will be notified immediately, and appropriate action will be taken by the administration. Appropriate action will include but is not limited to suspension or expulsion. If a student is found to have provided or sold, an illegal drug to another person on school grounds or at any school-related function, the parent/guardian and civil authorities will be notified immediately, and the student will be expelled. If a drug/alcohol treatment program and/or testing is mandated, it is to be financed by the parent/guardian.

### **Leaving Campus during School Hours/Extracurricular Events**

Students must follow proper procedure of the host-site school when leaving campus. Once a student has arrived on campus or at an extracurricular event, that student should remain on campus under supervision of assigned faculty and staff until the proper authorized adult collects the student.

**If a student is at a school function, i.e. extended day, athletic team practice/game, Altar Servers, etc. he/she should remain under the supervision of the coach, teacher, or coordinator in charge of the event until the authorized**





**person picks him/her up.**

### **Weapons on Campus**

R.S. 14:95.2 as amended by the Louisiana Legislature through the Third Extraordinary Session of 1994 creates the crimes of carrying a dangerous weapon by a student or non-student on school property, on a school bus, at school-sponsored functions, or in other designated zones.

The law provides that a dangerous instrumentality includes but is not limited to a firearm or other object, any gas, liquid, or other substance, is calculated or likely to produce death or great bodily harm. A dangerous weapon includes a gun, knife, club, or similar device.

The law prohibits possession of such an instrumentality within 1,000 feet of the school's property, on a school bus, and at any school-sponsored function in a specific designated area including but not limited to athletic competitions, dances, parties, or any extracurricular activities.

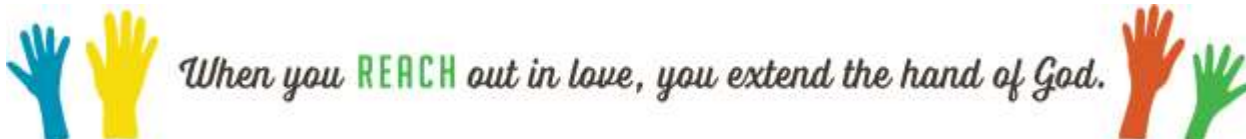
Whoever is convicted of the crime of carrying a dangerous instrumentality, whether a student or a non-student, is subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment at hard labor for not more than five (5) years.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Technology and Harassment**

The Technology Abuse policy exists to curtail any use of technology as a form of harassment, invasion of privacy, or as a means to view and/or distribute any material, including digital images or printed materials. It is clear that digital images and video may easily reach the Internet through the use of video devices and make their way to personal web pages or social networking websites. Therefore, the use of technology, which includes cellular phone digital photography, digital motion video, personal computer, or other digital video or photography equipment, to access, photograph, video, or re-distribute any inappropriate or illicit material is prohibited. No inappropriate digital images or video of any member of the department or host-site school community, including faculty, staff, students, or their families may be used with or without their consent. In addition, even appropriate digital images or video of any member of the faculty and staff cannot be used without their specific consent.

Any of these actions may be considered a violation of one's privacy and a



possible endangerment to one's safety.

### **Acceptable Use of the Internet Letter from the Administrator**

The Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program provides access to the Internet for all students. We believe the Internet offers valuable resources to both students and teachers. Our goal is providing this service is to provide opportunities for research, creativity, and communication.

With access to information from all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be appropriate for use in your son/daughter's assigned program environment.

The programming has instituted certain precautions through supervised access and in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CHIP). However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and a persistent student may discover controversial information. The program firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on this global network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with their educational goals.

For a student to use the Internet connection, the policy must also be signed by a parent/guardian. Only students with this contract on file will be allowed to utilize the Internet connection provided through the school.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR**

### **Parties**

Teachers and room parents plan class Christmas parties and end-of-year parties. The program administrator's and host-site principal's permission must be obtained for any other parties. Deliveries to students, including flowers and/or balloons, are not permitted.

Birthday parties in the classroom are not permitted. All requests for food in the classroom must be approved by the program administrator of the program.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities provide strong character building, leadership formation, and service opportunities. Information about specific clubs and sports is available on the school website.



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All students participating in extracurricular activities represent their host site on and off campus, and the school's expectations for appropriate behavior apply.

A student must be present at least one-half of the school day to participate in an extracurricular activity on that day.

### **Extracurricular Eligibility Policy**

In consultation with parents and teachers, the administrators may determine that continued participation in an extracurricular activity may not be in the best interest of the student.

Please note: Students must meet eligibility requirements to participate in extracurricular on the date tryouts begin to be eligible for that sport.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All school records are confidential and will be released only to authorized persons. This form enables the program to release confidential records. All official records (report cards, cum cards, and standardized test scores) pertaining to a child may be reviewed by parents/guardians in the office complex at any time. This is done by appointment.

## **RIGHT TO AMMEND**

The Department of Special Education reserves the right to make any and all amendments to the Parent-Student Handbook during the course of the school year and the right to make necessary decisions for the education climate for all students. Parents will be notified of any amendments made during the course of the school year.



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The Roman Catholic Diocese of  
**BATON ROUGE**  
SPECIAL EDUCATION

2023-2024

**Parent-Student Handbook Agreement Form**

As a member of the Diocesan Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program community, I promise to observe all policies, rules, procedures with full support. I have read the Parent-Student Handbook and am aware that the rules and policies are formed in the best interest of the students and will be administered fairly. Administration reserves the right to amend any part of this handbook from time to time throughout the school year in the best interest of the program.

I understand that parental cooperation is always required and that lack of parental cooperation will result in a review of my son/daughter's enrollment status to determine if enrollment will be allowed to continue.

I understand by sending my child to a nonpublic school he or she may not receive all accommodations listed on his or her IEP, only services funded through IDEA for 2023-2024 school year.

I understand that my child's photograph may be published on the Internet and other electronic media, local media sources such as, but not limited to, the newspaper, television, radio, district/program/host site newsletters, websites, and/or publications, or used in training sessions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_



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## **Acceptable Use of the Internet Contract**

**By signing off on this handbook, the student and parent(s) agree to the following:**

My child, \_\_\_\_\_, a student in the Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program, accept and agree to abide by the following rules.

I agree to abide by all rules, which are included in the Program's Acceptable Use Policy.

I realize that the use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right.

I realize that the primary purpose of the program's Internet connection is educational and that as such, educational purposes shall take precedence over all others.

I agree not to use the Internet connection unless given permission by a teacher or under acceptable supervision.

I agree not to participate in the transfer of inappropriate or illegal materials through the department's Internet connection nor engage in the posting of such regardless of the origination of the post.

I agree not to use the Internet for making threats of violence, slanderous or derogatory remarks. I understand that posting information or photographs in any format related to the Program, faculty/staff members, and/or students within the Diocese of Baton Rouge on any website, chat room, email or other messaging system is deemed threatening, harassing, or spreading false, defamatory or morally inappropriate material is strictly prohibitive.

I accept that inappropriate behaviors may lead to penalties including loss of privileges, disciplinary action, including expulsion, and/or legal action.

I release the Saint Margaret of Castello REACH Program and all other organizations related to the Program's Internet connection from any liability or damages that may result from the use of the Internet. In addition, I will accept full responsibility and liability for the results of my actions with regards to the use of the Internet. I release the Program and related organizations from any liability relating to consequences resulting from my use of the Internet.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent/guardian of the above, agree to accept all financial and legal liabilities, which may result from my son/daughter's use of the Program's Internet connection.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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