



81 Throckmorton Lane, Old Bridge, NJ 08857
Tel: 732-679-4700
www.stambroseschool.net

Mission Statement

The mission of St. Ambrose is to cultivate confident and reflective life-long learners, whose personal goals and achievements are rooted in a foundation of Catholic doctrine, social self-awareness, and engaging academic experiences. The students of St. Ambrose are inspired to be dynamic members of our community; supporting each other while embracing the challenges of today with a positive and assured mindset.

The nurturing and accredited educators of St. Ambrose ignite a passion for learning with innovative, differentiated instructional strategies and encourage opportunities for meaningful peer collaboration. Our teachers foster a supportive, faith-based, environment built upon the principles of social-emotional learning and a “growth mindset” approach. Our curriculum is designed to incorporate technology-infused applications and project-based learning that align with our data-driven standards of excellence for academic achievement. We rank in the top 15th percent nationally in Mathematics and Language Arts.

Administration

Pastor:Very Reverend Jack Grimes
Principal.....Mrs. Kate Jones
Business Manager:Mrs. Lee Ann Bocanegra
Parish Catechetical Leader: Mrs. Lisa O’Keefe

Departments of Service/Operation

School Office:.....732-679-4700
Mrs. Danielle D’Alessandro.....Ext: 1012
Mrs. Lee Ann Bocanegra.....Ext:1010
School Nurse.....Ext: 1013
Mrs. Lisa O’Keefe.....Ext: 1022

Purpose and Use of Handbook

This handbook exists to foster the efficient operations of St. Ambrose School. To meet this objective, school administration is given flexibility and the ability to exercise discretion. In appropriate circumstances, the principal has the discretion to take actions other than those specified in the handbook. This handbook is not intended and should not be considered to create any additional rights for students or parents/guardians.

The contents of this handbook and policy guide are a legally binding contract between the parent/guardian and the school. The handbook represents the rules, policies, and procedures of St. Ambrose School, which must be always followed and adhered to by the student and parent/guardian.

This handbook is subject to change at any time when determined necessary by the school administration. If changes are made to the handbook, parents/guardians will be notified promptly.

Admissions Policy

Admission to St. Ambrose School is open to members of the parish, in addition to Catholic and non-Catholic families as space permits. The school reserves the right to determine the maximum class size in each grade level to align with quality educational standards.

Priority of admissions and enrollment are as follows:

Currently enrolled students

New Families who are active members of the parish

Students transferring from another Catholic School/Public School

Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Ambrose School admits students of any race, color national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. St. Ambrose School does not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. In accepting new students to St. Ambrose, preference will be given to siblings of those currently attending St. Ambrose, and to those genuinely committed to Catholic School Education.

St. Ambrose School adheres to the cut-off dates established by Old Bridge Township, the cut-off date is October 1st.

Children must be 3 years old by October 1 to be admitted to Pre-K 3.
Children must be 4 years old by October 1st to be admitted to Pre-K 4
Children must be 5 years old by October 1st to be admitted to kindergarten

A baseline assessment will be administered prior to admission for all grades 1-8.
Assessments may be administered for entering Kindergarten under certain circumstances.

Students who do not adhere to our code of conduct and policies within the handbook may not be re-enrolled.

All Pre-K students are expected to be potty trained and bathroom independent. Those not exhibiting readiness will be unenrolled until such time they are able to successfully reenter the classroom environment.

Students transferring to St. Ambrose in grades 1-8 may be required to meet with the principal and/or teachers to assess the student's academic and social readiness. Baseline assessments, and the interview will be assessed prior to registration. Additionally, all I.E.P. or 504 Service Plans must be sent to the school prior to registration to determine eligibility.

The following certificates must be presented for final admission to St. Ambrose:

Birth Certificate

Sacramental Certificates (for Catholic Students)

Immunization Record

Universal Health Record

Immunization Requirements:

Students entering Pre-K3 and Pre-K4

DTap	4 Doses
Polio (IPV)	3 Doses
MMR	1 Dose
Varicella	1 Dose
HIB	2 Doses (1 given after 1 st birthday)
Pneumococcal	2 Doses (1 given after 1 st birthday)
Hepatitis B	3 Doses

Students entering Kindergarten

Dtap	5 doses
Polio (IPV)	4 doses
MMR	2 doses
Varicella	1 dose
HIB	2 doses (1 given after 1 st birthday)
Pneumococcal	2 doses (1 given after 1 st birthday)
Hepatitis B	3 Doses

Students entering 6th Grade

Meningococcal and Tdap 1 Dose (after 11th birthday)

Students transferring into St. Ambrose must present a transfer card, most recent report card, and standardized test scores. Children who have been evaluated by a child-study team should present the team's most recent evaluation, I.E.P. or S.P. Acceptance will be contingent upon fulfillment of these requirements.

If a child is transferring from a Catholic school within the diocese, a public school, or private school, the principal/administration of the last school may be contacted for an evaluation of the student.

Students who do not comply with our code of conduct may be disenrolled.

Tuition Policy

Parents, families, or responsible parties are expected to pay tuition in a timely manner. All families are required establish and maintain a valid FACTS Management tuition agreement for payment of tuition, fees, and incidental charges regardless of the payment plan selected. Late fees apply for any tuition account that is more than 15 days in arrears. If a family neglects to pay school tuition or fees, a student may be dismissed from the school prior to the end of the 3rd marking period with a formal written notice. If a student is dismissed, he or she will receive a grade of "incomplete" for all their classes.

Families of 8th grade students must have all financial, service, and fundraising obligations completed before the commencement of final exams. Failure to comply at that time will result in your child not being able to participate in year-end 8th grade activities or sit for final exams, and therefore a grade of "incomplete" will be forwarded to the receiving high school.

Families of Pre-K and kindergarten students must have all tuition obligations satisfied no later than May 31st for their student to participate in graduation or moving up ceremonies. Students whose tuition balance and/or school fees and first tuition payment are not remitted by August 25th cannot begin school on the first day.

St. Ambrose School is not required to re-register a student for the next academic year if a family owes the school money for tuition and/or other related fees from the prior year. The school will make 2 reasonable attempts to allow families to satisfy payment delinquencies. The school also reserves the right to discontinue enrollment of any student, at any time during the school year, whose family fails to meet tuition payments to the school as outlined in the Family Tuition Agreement or whose account is more than 60 days in arrears. Unresolved payments must be made whole within five business days for continued

enrollment. If a family finds it necessary to withdraw their student from the school for any reason, 60 days written notice is required, and tuition payments are to be made up until the conclusion of the 60-day period, even if the student is not in attendance during this time.

Any student whose tuition is delinquent beyond June 30th will be assessed a late fee of 5% each month.

Active Parishioner Status:

Active parishioner status is determined by faithful attendance at Mass each Sunday. The student's Baptismal certificate must be submitted to be registered at the prevailing Catholic family rate. Additionally, to be considered an active parishioner, the envelope system must be used each time you attend Mass at St. Ambrose. Please note, that there is no minimum dollar amount that needs to be contributed via the church collection. Please be as generous as your means allow. You must note your envelope number on your registration form. Out of parish Catholics will be given the in-parish rate once your faithful participation is verified with the pastor or your parish. Non-Catholics will receive the out-of-parish tuition rate.

Eight Grade Fee:

Specific expenses related to 8th grade activities and graduation are not included in tuition. This fee is added to your existing FACTS account and is processed on January 15th. This fee includes items such as diploma, cap and gown, yearbook, teen outreach, etc.

Re-enrollment:

St. Ambrose School is not required to re-register a student for the next academic year if a family owes the school money for tuition and/or other related fees from the prior year.

Late Payments:

It is the responsibility of each family to keep the Business Manager informed of any need to make changes to their selected tuition plan or adjustments in the amount paid. Payment dates can be modified on FACTS, but tuition and fees must be collected in the current month. Late fees apply for any tuition account that is more than 15 days in arrears. If a family neglects to pay school tuition or fees, a student may be dismissed from the school prior to the end of the 3rd marking period with a formal written notice.

Tuition Assistance:

Tuition assistance is available through the Diocese of Metuchen. Families will need to fill out an application available on FACTS before any Diocesan consideration may be made.

Service Requirements

St. Ambrose School does require parents/guardians to do service hours. The service hours help raise funds for the school and help to subsidize the cost of tuition to all families. Our weekly bingos and other fundraising efforts have historically grossed approximately \$350,000 per year. This represents an approximate subsidy of \$2,500.00 for each child enrolled in grades K-8. The success of our weekly bingos and other fundraising efforts relies on the help of our parents. Adequate staffing plays a large role in the success of our bingo program.

Each family registered at St. Ambrose School is responsible for completing service hours during the year as follows:

Bingo- minimum 10 bingos completed between July 1 and June 30

Fundraiser- minimum 1 shift at another major fundraiser such as Pocketbook Bingo, Gift Auction, Elf Shoppe, Carnival, etc.

Failure to comply with the service hour requirements will result in a tuition assessment of \$250 per incomplete event. Families that are participating in the service option must complete a bingo service form as part of their registration paperwork. It will be assumed that families not submitting a bingo sign up form with the registration paperwork have opted to buy out of their service obligation, and their tuition agreement will be assessed accordingly. You may also opt to “buy out” of your service obligation by adding \$1,100.00 to your family tuition agreement. Families completing the bingo agreement are expected to adhere to the bingo schedule. If it becomes necessary to reschedule a bingo for which you have been assigned, you must give the bingo coordinator at least 48 hours’ notice to request a change. A maximum of two schedule changes will be honored for each family. If you require additional changes, those will only be honored at the discretion of the bingo coordinator according to need. Please be aware a \$250.00 assessment will be applied to your FACTS agreement for any bingo for which you are scheduled and did not complete or give notice. Should a family miss two bingos without notice, a buyout equal to the number of remaining bingos will be applied to the tuition agreement. Families of 8th grade students and families not returning in September must have their service completed by May 31st or their child may not be permitted to participate in year-end activities including graduation ceremonies. Monthly reports are distributed so that families may plan and complete service hours before the end of the school year.

Continuous Enrollment

The re-registration process for enrolled families begins in January each year. Registration forms will be sent home with your child. Currently enrolled students will be automatically registered for the upcoming school year. If your child will not be returning to St. Ambrose in September, you must notify the school in writing by January 15th. Registration fees for the

upcoming school year will be processed through your FACTS tuition agreement on February 5th. Be aware that the registration fee is non-refundable. Tuition agreements will be finalized by the end of February.

Attendance Policy

Prompt, regular attendance is essential to academic success. Parents/guardians are expected to foster these good habits for the benefit of their child's achievement.

School Hours:

St. Ambrose School hours are 7:30am to 2:10pm.

St. Ambrose School opens doors at 7:30 for student arrival. All students are expected to be in no later than 7:50am. Students in grades K-8 should use Door #13 (the gym) for entrance.

Students in grades K-8 are not permitted to enter the building through door #4. This is a Pre-k only entrance.

Doors will close at 7:50am. Do not ring the main entrance bell between 7:50am and 8:00am as it interrupts prayers and announcements.

Pre-K students will be entering through Door 4 (PSR) only. The doors will open at 8:00am and close at 8:10am. Teachers will be at the doors to help the children and escort them to their homerooms.

Lateness Policy:

- **All students arriving late to school must enter the building through door #1. A parent or guardian must sign their student in late. Do not drop your student at the door and drive off.**
- **Please note that you are asked not to ring the bell until 8:00am as announcements are going on during that time. Please wait at the door. You may ring the bell after 8:00AM when he has moved on to the Pre-K door.**
- **3 lates- ineligibility for that quarter's honorifics (see below for more detail)**
- **8 lates- student/parent/guardian notification and student lunch Reflection**
- **12 lates- student/parent/guardian notification and administrative review.**

A doctor's note for lateness presented that day upon arrival or bus lateness will be the only excused lateness's towards the discipline policy. This lateness will still be recorded for attendance purposes.

Regular, on-time attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring the understanding of each concept in the order of its

presentation. Being late to school or an individual class interrupts learning and reflects poor time management skills.

Additionally, Middle School students can be adversely affected by excessive absences and/or tardiness. Not only do high schools review these records for admission purposes, but participation in Student Council, School Ambassadors and other activities may be denied.

Students exhibiting chronic lateness that are under administrative review will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities (i.e., after school clubs and activities) Students exhibiting chronic lateness that are under administrative review, will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities (i.e., after school clubs and activities) and will not be eligible for Student of the Month, National Junior Honor Society, or any other community honorific until such time that the lateness has improved.

Incentives

Students with zero tardies will be acknowledged monthly.

The class/classes with the least amount of tardies for the month will be given an incentive. The incentive will change monthly. It could be a snack ticket, an ice cream party, etc.

Families with children that have no tardies for two months will be added into a raffle for \$500 off their next month's tuition. This will repeat every two months until such time that the lateness has improved.

Absences:

Parents must contact the school prior to 7:45 and leave a message with the school nurse when a student will be absent for the day.

A note must be presented upon the students' return to school. In the event of a prolonged illness (3 days or more), please contact the Nurse's office and provide a doctor's note upon your child's return. All absences are defined as unexcused except for the following:

- High School visits (two for 8th grade students)
- Take your Child to Work Day (written notice must be submitted to the student's teacher/office prior to the absence, and a written statement from the employer must be given upon the student's return to school.)
- Funeral for immediate family members
- Documented court appearance

If a student is taken out of school for any reason other than illness or bereavement while school is in session, the parent assumes responsibility for the work missed. The teacher is NOT required to provide work prior to the student's departure. All make-up work is to be done

at home and turned into their respective teacher within 2 days of their return to school. Any missed exams must be made up within 2 days of return to school at the teacher's discretion.

Absence policy:

- 10 absences without administrator authorization will receive a letter of warning mailed and emailed that they are approaching attendance probation.
- 15 or more absences will require a meeting with administration.
- 20 or more absences will place students on attendance probation and academic review.
- 8th graders with 20 or more absences may be required to complete credit recovery to be eligible for graduation and additional 8th grade activities.

All absences are part of the student's permanent record regardless of the reason for absence.

For students who are sick, parents/guardians may pick up work in the main office between 2:15 and 3:00pm. Work will only be in the office if the parent/guardian emails the school secretary and teacher. Students who are sick will have two days each day out to complete their missed work.

Any student absent from school **may not participate** in any after-school activity (including sports practices or games on that day.) Any special circumstance requires an Administrator authorization. Please note: a student that is in school for less than four hours will be issued an unexcused absence.

In New Jersey, a student between the ages of six and sixteen is considered truant after accumulating ten or more unexcused absences. For these absences, parents or guardians can be referred to municipal court. St. Ambrose School is required to make efforts to address the underlying causes of truancy and offer support to students and families before resorting to court referrals.

While doctors' notes do not excuse absence's, they do sometimes provide context. If your child is out for an extended illness, please keep the doctor's note in the event that the student is marked absent more than 20 times.

Early Pick-Up:

Children who must be excused from school early must bring a note from their parents stating the time to be excused and the reason for leaving early. To minimize the interruption of the school day, a note should be sent to the office in the morning and a copy will be given to his/her teacher. At the appropriate time, the student will be dismissed from class and sent to the nurse's office. **Students will not be called from class after 1:45pm unless it is an emergency.** This creates confusion and disruption at the end of day and in class dismissal

procedures. No parent is allowed to go to the classroom, and they will wait in the vestibule for someone to bring their child to them and sign out.

All students are required to make up any missed classwork due to lateness, early dismissal or absence in a timely manner. **Failure to complete work may result in an unsatisfactory/failing grade for homework and or class participation at the discretion of the teacher.**

If someone other than a parent or authorized person will be picking up the child, a note giving permission is necessary. Please fill out the pick-up authorization form in your registration packet. If the pick-up person is not on our initial form an email must be sent to the office and teacher, and the person picking up must show a valid I.D. at the door.

Students may not make their own plans during the day. Any change in dismissal must be presented to the office and teacher at the beginning of the day.

These requirements are for the safety of your children.

Transportation

School bus transportation is provided to students as determined by the Old Bridge Board of Education Transportation Department. All students are required to fill out a BT-6 Bus Transportation form (included in your registration paperwork) even if you may not qualify for, or do not plan on using the bus. Bus transportation is available for students that will be 5 years old by October 1st of the current school year.

Students who do not adhere to bus rules will be excluded from bus service. It will then be the responsibility of the parent to transport the child to and from school. Students cannot switch buses to ride home with a friend. No arrangements may be made with the bus driver for special drop-offs. If you have questions or concerns regarding transportation, you must call Old Bridge Transportation directly at 732-360-4502.

Bus Behavior:

The following rules have been established to ensure the safety of all students who ride the bus:

- Use only the bus and bus stops assigned
- Orderly behavior is required at the bus stop
- Remain seated and facing front when the bus is in motion with seatbelt secured
- Always speak quietly and respectfully
- Do not speak to the driver unless it is necessary
- Keep head and arms inside the bus
- No eating or drinking on the bus

Parent Drop Off/Pick-Up:

Students transported by car are to follow the traffic lines around the sides of the school to their grade level entrance. Parents are not permitted into the building for morning drop off or afternoon pick-up.

Written notification must be submitted to the office/homeroom teacher to inform them of any changes in the end of the day plan. Dismissal plans must be in writing and the form can be found on the school website. Please refrain from last-minute changes to your child's dismissal procedure, unless there is an emergency. Every effort will be made to deliver these messages to teachers, however any other form of communication regarding transportation changes may not be timely communicated to the necessary parties.

Chain of Communication Policy

At St. Ambrose School, adherence to the chain of communication is essential for maintaining a positive, respectful, and effective learning environment. Open and direct communication supports mutual understanding, accountability, and collaboration within our school community.

When a concern arises, it should first be addressed with the individual or individuals most directly involved in the situation. This may include a teacher, staff member, or coach. If the concern remains unresolved after this initial conversation, it may then be brought forward to the next appropriate level, such as the administration. Parents and guardians are encouraged to follow this same process when seeking clarification or resolution.

By engaging in communication at the appropriate level, we ensure that all parties are heard and that matters are addressed in a timely and constructive manner. This process promotes trust, respect, and cooperation among students, families, faculty, and staff.

Following the chain of communication reflects St. Ambrose School's commitment to fostering a faith-centered community where challenges are approached with integrity, understanding, and a shared dedication to the growth and well-being of all.

Chain of Command

When an issue arises, individuals should follow the steps outlined below:

For Academic or Classroom Concerns

1. **Classroom Teacher** – Begin by discussing the concern directly with the teacher involved.
2. **Principal** – If further clarification or resolution is needed, bring the matter to the Principal.
3. **Pastor** – For unresolved matters involving school-wide policy or major concerns, the issue may be referred to the Pastor, who, as pastoral operation manager, controls all ministries related to the school and church.

For Behavioral or Disciplinary Concerns

1. **Classroom Teacher or Supervising Staff Member** – Address the issue directly with the staff member who observed or managed the behavior.
2. **Mrs. O’Keefe/ Mrs. Jones** The principal handles most advanced or repeated disciplinary concerns. In the event that the principal is not present or tied up with another issue, Mrs. O’Keefe will handle the concerns. If the concern persists or if additional support or review is needed, contact the Principal for further assistance.

For Extracurricular, Athletic, or Activity Concerns

1. **Coach or Club Moderator** – Speak directly with the coach or activity moderator.
2. **Activity Coordinator/ Main Office** – If necessary, contact the program director or the main office to leave a message.
3. **Principal** – If the matter remains unresolved, bring it to the Principal.

For General or Administrative Concerns

1. **Main Office**
2. **Principal** – If needed, contact the Principal for further review or resolution.

For H.S.A. or Fundraising Concerns (existing events, etc):

Chairperson – Begin by discussing the concern directly with the chairperson involved.

1. **H.S.A. President** – If further clarification or resolution is needed, bring the matter to the H.S.A. President.
2. **Principal** – For unresolved matters or major concerns, the issue may be referred to the Principal.

For H.S.A. or Fundraising Concerns (new ideas, suggestions, etc):

1. **H.S.A. President and Board Members** – Begin by suggesting the idea and details to the H.S.A. President and H.S.A. Board Members and allow adequate time for follow-up and response.
2. **Principal** – After an adequate amount of time, unaddressed or unresolved matters/suggestions may be referred to the Principal.

For Health Concerns

Communication between the school nurse and families are crucial for students with healthcare needs in the school environment. If any issues arise contact your school nurse first.

1. **School nurse** - Begin by communicating with your school nurse to solve any issues related to health care concerns.
2. **Principal** - If the concern remains unresolved, information sharing with student/family consent can be discussed with the principal.
3. **Diocese/Educational Services Commission of New Jersey** - For unresolved issues, the matter may be brought to the attention of the Diocese/ESCNJ for further evaluation.

Guiding Principles

- Concerns should always be communicated respectfully and at the appropriate level.
- All discussions should seek understanding and cooperation consistent with the mission and values of St. Ambrose School.
- Bypassing levels of the chain of command may delay or complicate the resolution process.
- The goal of every communication should be to build unity, trust, and mutual respect within our school community.

Communication with School Personnel

Parents may communicate with their child's teacher using the email addresses listed on the school website. Some teachers also use Class dojo as a form of communication, but it is up to the discretion of the teacher. Parents wishing to speak with the principal, Business Manager, or other administrator must contact the school office or may email directly using the email addresses listed on the school website.

Court Orders:

If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. The custodial parent shall supply the principal with the “custody section” of the divorce decree if it contains information which may be useful to the school in fulfilling its obligations.

Cell Phones:

Cell phones and SMART watches must be turned off and stored in lockers during the school day. Students are not permitted to use these devices during the day. Necessary phone communication to and from parents will be communicated through the school office only. Parents wishing to deliver a message to their child during the school day must do so by contacting the office. Students may not be called to the office to answer parental phone calls. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in confiscation of the cell phone followed by parent contact for retrieval.

Students who use SMART devices for medical reasons must have a doctor’s note explaining the usage. Even in this situation, communication abilities should be turned off.

Visits to the School during School Hours

For the safety and integrity of the school, visitors will not be permitted into the school without having a scheduled appointment. Class parents and lunch parents will be admitted during school at scheduled times to participate in events/service. Parents/guardians working bingo may not enter the school during the school day. As previously noted, only those parents/guardians that have been vetted may be allowed in the classroom for special activities.

Parents/guardians requesting a conference must contact the teacher and/or school office to make an appointment. Parents may meet with the teachers by appointment only. Children are permitted to remain in the building for extended care, tutoring, or other prearranged events, but must remain with the adult in charge.

Students/parents/guardians in extended care or any other student involved in after school activities are not permitted back into their classrooms after dismissal to retrieve forgotten items.

Students Bringing Money to School:

Money that is sent to school for a specific event or purpose should be placed in a sealed envelope and identified with the child's name and grade, amount enclosed, and purpose. Any change will be sent home in the same way to avoid any loss of property or confusion.

Home School Association

St. Ambrose School is blessed to have a very active H.S.A. The H.S.A. is involved in many fund-raising events as well as organizing class parents, special events for the students and staff. The H.S.A. holds meetings every other month, and all parents/guardians are encouraged to attend. These meetings allow parents/guardians to find out what is happening in our school and various ways our talents can be used to continue to make St. Ambrose a thriving, dynamic environment for our children and families.

Parents play a vital role in the day-to-day implementation of school services and special events through volunteer efforts. For the safety of our students, all volunteers working with children must complete a background check as prescribed by the Diocese of Metuchen. If a parent is interested in volunteering, please refer to the volunteer section of the school website and/or contact the business manager.

Academic Policies

One of the central goals of St. Ambrose School is to strive to academic excellence in every student. St. Ambrose School makes every effort to maintain academic integrity where grades are concerned. Tests and reports will be returned in a timely manner, and beginning in grade three, students should keep an accurate record of their assignments and grades. Planning and record keeping is a life skill and should be encouraged by both parents/guardians and teachers. If a mistake or miscommunication is made, the student is encouraged to address the issue with the teacher. Parents are always welcome to address academic issues with their child's teacher via the appropriate means of communication. If an issue is not satisfactorily resolved, the administration may become involved. The administration reserves the right to review, edit, and uphold all grades.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity not only applies to all aspects of teaching and learning, both in the classroom and remotely. Class assignments and tests are tools to help students learn; grades show if and how students achieve learning goals. Therefore, all work for which

students receive grades should result from the student's own effort and understanding. Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to, the following:

- Cheating during a test
- Helping others to cheat
- Using unauthorized materials for an assignment, including anything AI generated
- Receiving information about a test from someone who had taken it earlier
- Copying something from the Internet without acknowledgement
- Copying of another student's work
- Summarizing someone else's ideas without revealing the source
- Collaboration of information when instructions require independent work

Homework:

Homework assignments are part of the general schooling process. They provide an opportunity for the student to:

1. Reinforce a lesson or concept.
2. Perform on an individualized basis.
3. Establish and develop solid work habits.

It is recommended that parents:

1. Encourage the student to put forth his/her best effort.
2. Help the student budget his/her time in relation to other student and/or family activities.
3. Be aware of any difficulties that should be brought to the attention of the teacher.

In general, overnight assignments will vary in length of time according to the subject and grade level of the individual student. Long-term individualized assignments and book reports will give students the opportunity to manage their time in relation to their routine assignments and activities. Homework is expected to be turned in on the day it is due. Parents will be notified if a child consistently fails to accomplish homework assignments. Homework requests due to absence should be made only for students who are absent more than one day due to illness. Homework requests should be made before 9:00 AM. Call the school office with these requests. Books should be picked up in the school office between 2:15pm – 3:00 pm. Students absent due to illness will have 1 day for each day absent to make up any missed work.

All homework assignments may be found for grades 3 to 8 on the teachers' homework pages on the school website and/or Google Classroom. Homework assignments for grades K-2 are sent home weekly in the students' folder.

Grading:

Kindergarten

*Subject Area Grading Indicators

E - Exceeding Expectations

M - Meeting Expectations

G - Growing Proficiency

Grades K-2

*Subject Area Grading Indicators

E - Exceeding Expectations

M - Meeting Expectations

G - Growing Proficiency

L - Limited Proficiency

Grades 3-8

97-100 = A+

93-96 = A

89-92 = B+

85-88 =

B 81-84 =

C+ 77-80 =

C 73-76 =

D+ 70-72 = D

Below 70 = F

Failing two major subjects on the final average grade, may result in retention. If summer tutoring is required, certification from the tutor of the child's satisfactory progress must be presented to the school. Tutoring must come from either a certified teacher or recognized tutoring program. An evaluation may be made by current and former teachers to see if promotion will occur in September after the summer tutoring has occurred.

Power School:

All student attendance records, grades, test scores, and project work shall be recorded on PowerSchool. Parents may access this information via the internet at any time. PowerSchool is administered by the Diocese of Metuchen.

Parents are responsible for keeping track of passwords and usernames for their accounts and are responsible for keeping abreast of their child's academic progress.

Report cards will be distributed in hard copy only at the end of the school year.

Records and Transcripts:

A parent/guardian has the right to review his/her student's a) academic record, b) academic standardized test results, c) health records, and d) emergency sheet (emergency phone

numbers, etc.). These records can be made available upon request. Official transcripts of academic and health records may not be given directly to the parent/guardian in the event of a transfer. A request for transfer must be made in writing. Official transcripts will be delivered directly to the receiving school.

Parental Rights to School Records:

Saint Ambrose School abides by the provisions of applicable law with respect to the rights of non- custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, and upon request, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the student's essential academic records.

Religious Education

The formation of children as disciples of Jesus Christ is the first purpose of Catholic Education. Educating our students within the tenants of the Catholic Catechism is central to our school mission. All other academics, athletic, and social experiences in our Catholic school have meaning and value only because they are grounded in the teachings of our Lord, Jesus Christ. As parents/guardians, you are the first teachers of faith for your children. St Ambrose will tend to and cultivate the seeds of your teachings, and our goal is for the students to have a deep and meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ, and in their faith that they will carry with them throughout the rest of their lives.

In addition to our daily religious curriculum, St. Ambrose School works in conjunction with our Parish School of Religion to further prepare students to receive the sacraments, such as Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Students preparing for sacraments will be required to attend additional events outside of school such as retreats, practices and special events, along with our public-school participants, to complete the faith formation process. These dates and times will be published at the beginning of the school year from our PSR office and are mandatory to complete your sacramental requirements. There will be additional sacramental fees associated with First Holy Communion and Confirmation that will be paid directly to the PSR office.

While we are happy to accept students of other faiths and religions, please note that ALL students enrolled in St. Ambrose School must participate in daily religion classes and attend weekly liturgical services throughout the school year. The non-Catholic student is expected to understand and agree that the school exists to educate in the framework of Catholic values.

Field Trips

On occasion, St. Ambrose School will sponsor and conduct field trips for the educational enrichment of the students. Participation in field trips is a privilege. No student may

participate in a field trip unless a signed parent/guardian permission slip for the specific event is submitted to the school. The school will provide a permission slip. Since responsible behavior is expected on field trips, student behavior in school can become a factor in denial of field trip privileges. If a student is deemed ineligible to attend a certain field trip, parents will be notified.

Class parents may be asked to accompany the class, along with the teachers, on field trips. Only parents that are fully vetted may be allowed on field trips. The nurse will provide a list of any student allergies and EPI pens if needed to the teacher in charge.

Birthday Celebrations

Saint Ambrose School strongly supports and encourages the recognition of a child's birthday during the school day. It is an annual milestone in every child's life that should be celebrated not just at home, but in school as well, where children spend one-third of their day with teachers, classmates, and peers. Each teacher may decide whether or not food celebrations will take place in their room based on allergies and sensitivities that may be present in their classroom community. We ask that you be respectful of the teacher's wishes. If food is allowed, we ask that it be school safe, store bought, pre-packaged, or approved by the nurse as safe for all to eat. Also, in the spirit of equity, we ask that celebrations remain simple, inclusive, and mindful of all students, avoiding elaborate items or activities that may create inequity among classmates.

We encourage you to choose to send in non-food items, such as a favorite book to share with the class, pencils, erasers, bookmarks, small goodie bag, etc. Teachers will be making an increased effort to explore unique ways to make classroom celebrations special for your child.

Saint Ambrose Disciplinary System

A spirit of Christ-like charity, respect for authority, and cooperative interactions are expected throughout the learning environment of St. Ambrose School. Students are expected to act with courtesy and respect toward one another and toward all members of the staff. Home and school will work together to assist in exemplifying qualities of responsible conduct and the elements of good citizenship. We invite parents to work in partnership with us in guiding and directing students toward standards of good conduct. It is therefore expected that parents/guardians support and work with the school in preventative and corrective disciplinary measures regarding their children.

St. Ambrose School is dedicated to establishing the best possible environment for teaching and learning. Conduct expected of a student at St. Ambrose includes respect for others and of property, obedience to authority, cooperation with others, and behavior reflective of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Failure to meet these standards of conduct shall result in a meeting with either the teacher(s) and/or the principal to discuss a corrective action plan. **It is essential for the school and the parents to work together for the benefit of the child.** Please note that all conduct referrals are cumulative for the academic year. In special cases, at the 's discretion, a history of prior referrals from other academic years may be considered when implementing appropriate discipline policy. Also note that the existence of any Service Plan, or IEP does not permit or excuse any form of misbehavior that may occur in school.

All infractions apply to school, parish, and grounds at all times.

Infractions may also include any social media posts that disrespect St. Ambrose School and/or Parish. This may include behavior and language that is not congruent with our code of conduct while wearing a St. Ambrose uniform.

Actions that violate the law, threaten or cause harm to other students or staff members, disrupt or impede the welfare and progress of the school community, or bring discredit to the school will not be tolerated. Such actions or other severe violations of school rules may result in immediate expulsion. If a student persists in violating the basic obligations of courtesy, consideration, respect, cooperation or safety, a teacher/parent/student/conference will be scheduled. All subsequent discipline, counseling, consultation, and corrective action plans will be viewed as positive home-school efforts to help the student improve behavior. If these cooperative efforts of parents and school staff prove ineffective, the student will be subject to expulsion or may be denied re-admittance to the school.

Code of Student Conduct

St. Ambrose School expects students to conduct themselves in a manner keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and capabilities, with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

It is our expectation at St. Ambrose School that every student will:

- Demonstrate respect for self and others
- Respect school property and the property of others
- Avoid disruptive behavior and obey school and classroom rules
- Obey all adult authority
- Be prepared and punctual for class

- Observe uniform policy

Cafeteria Behavior

- Students are to proceed and remain in areas designated for their class
- Students will be called for their lunch and snack
- Appropriate table manners and transitions are to be observed at all times
- Tables must be cleaned before dismissal

Outdoor Recess

- Recess shall be held every day when the weather permits
- Students are to remain in assigned play areas
- Roughhousing and running on the blacktop is never permitted
- When the bell rings children are to walk to their lines
- Parents must have a doctor's note excusing students from recess for a valid reason

St. Ambrose School has an obligation to teach responsible and cooperative behavior that considers the rights of others and develops self-discipline. If used in an effective manner, it assists children with developing productive behavior patterns, emotional growth, and a positive self-image. We also want to preserve a positive self-image in the process by letting our students know that making mistakes is normal and acceptable, and we think they are capable of learning and making use of these opportunities to develop acceptable social behaviors. Caring for the emotional and physical well-being of our students means using discipline as one tool to create a safe, structured, and predictable learning environment so they may feel cared for, capable, and connected. It is important that a child sees school and home as a team, working in his/her best interest.

Lunch Reflection:

Lunch Reflection will be issued to students who do not follow the school Code of Conduct or classroom behavior policies. Reflection will be at the discretion of the teacher and/or administrator.

Students receiving Lunch Reflection will be sent to the Parish Meeting Room for a supervised reflection period. The students will receive a Lunch Reflection period in which he/she will discuss the infraction and work to resolve the situation in an appropriate and respectful manner. Parents/guardians will receive an email explaining the infraction and the resolution. If a student receives multiple referrals a meeting with the principal and the parent/guardian will be requested. The principal and parent/guardian will work together to better understand the needs of the student and work to change the behavior to align with our code of conduct.

It is important for children to understand actions have consequences.

Conduct Referrals:

St. Ambrose School uses Conduct Referral notices for serious discipline problems including, but not restricted to:

disrespect, disruption of class, fighting, cheating on a test, cutting class, harassment, intimidation, bullying, continued disobedience, use of profanity, destruction of property, and bringing disgrace or embarrassment upon the reputation of St. Ambrose School.

Conduct Referral Forms will be forwarded to the principal. Discipline issues will be addressed by the administration. Detentions and/or suspensions will be issued in accordance with the severity of the offense. The student's parents/guardians will be notified by either electronic notification or phone call by the appropriate administration.

Grounds for Dismissal:

Serious offenses such as, but not limited to, theft, assault, cheating, continued violations of St. Ambrose School policies, continued disrespect of school personnel, harassment, intimidation, bullying, setting off a fire alarm, or willful destruction of property may be grounds for dismissal. Any student found in possession of or using alcohol, drugs, or vaping on school grounds, on a school sponsored activity, or while in their school uniform off school grounds may be subject to expulsion. The administration reserves the right to review all incidents on a case-by-case basis. If a student is found in possession of a weapon, or drugs or any drug paraphernalia, legal authorities will be called, and the student will be subject to immediate expulsion.

Withdrawal of a student:

The Catholic Church and this Catholic school recognize parents as the primary educators of their children. The education of students at our school is a partnership between parents and the school. If, in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the parent to withdraw his or her child. This is a very serious decision that is not made lightly.

Right to Waive/Deviate from Disciplinary Regulations:

The administrator reserves the right to waive and/or deviate from, all disciplinary regulations for just cause at his or her discretion.

Uniforms

PreK-3 & PreK-4 (boys & girls)

- Navy blue gym shorts or gym pants with logo
- Gold T-shirt with logo
- Navy blue sweatshirt with logo

- White socks
- Sneakers must be fastened securely

School Uniforms – Girls K-3

- Flynn O'Hara Blue plaid jumper (skirts should come to the top of the knee) or navy-blue uniform slacks w/belt
- Light blue Peter Pan collar blouse
- Flynn O'Hara navy blue cardigan with school logo
- Navy blue tights or knee-high socks
- Navy blue, or black, lace up, or buckle shoes (no ballet flats) with rubber soles, no heel
- Flynn O'Hara navy blue shorts or skort for spring (no more than 2 inches above the knee)
- Flynn O'Hara Light blue polo shirt for spring
- Simple hair accessory (no large bows, flowers, etc.)

Girls 4th – 8th

- Flynn O'Hara Blue plaid kilt – (skirts should come to the top of the knee) or navy blue uniform slacks w/ belt 4th Grade may continue to wear the jumper with Peter Pan blouse
- Light blue polo shirt
- Flynn O'Hara Navy blue V-neck pull over sweater or navy-blue vest – with school logo
- Flynn O'Hara Navy blue pants (purchased from Flynn and O'Hara only) may be worn for a winter uniform
- Flynn O'Hara Light blue polo shirt for spring
- Flynn O'Hara Navy blue shorts or skort for spring (no more than 2 inches above the knee)
- Navy blue tights or knee-high socks
- Navy blue or black lace up or buckle shoes with heels no higher than one inch. (NO BALLET FLATS OR SLIP-ON SHOES)

Blouses are to be tucked in at the waist. Rolling or blousing at the waist is not permitted.

School Uniforms - Boys K-4

- Navy blue pants – properly fitting
- Navy blue shorts for spring
- Light blue polo (long or short sleeve)
- Navy blue or black crew socks
- Navy blue cardigan with school logo
- Navy blue or black socks
- Black rubber sole lace up or Velcro close shoes

Boys 4-8

- Navy blue pants – properly fitting
- Navy blue shorts for spring
- Light blue polo/golf shirt (long or short sleeve)
- Navy blue vest or pull over v-neck sweater with logo (4th grade boys may continue to wear the cardigan sweater)
- 4-8 black rubber sole lace up shoes – NO LOAFERS OR SLIP-ON SHOES
- Navy blue or black socks

Baggy pants are not permitted. Pants are to be worn on the waist, properly fitted, with the pant legs meeting the shoes. A black or navy belt is to be always worn. The belt is to be the proper length, threaded through the riders. The strap end is not to hang down the front of the pants. Shirts are to be tucked in.

The spring uniform may be worn on the first day of school until October 15th, and from April 15th till the last day of school. Since the weather is hard to predict, the school office will announce if the day to switch uniforms will be changed. The spring uniform consists of walking/shorts or skort with the light blue polo shirt with the school logo.

Physical Education Uniforms – Boys and Girls – All Grades

- Navy blue shorts with logo – (no more than two (2) inches above the knee) • Navy blue sweatshirt with logo
- Navy blue sweatpants with logo
- Gold t-shirt with logo
- Sneakers must be tied or fastened securely
- WHITE athletic socks
- No team shirts, including St. Ambrose teams, may be worn for gym classes. St. Ambrose gym uniforms are mandatory. The students are allowed to wear this uniform on their designated gym day only. Sweatpant legs must be pulled down below the ankle.

Miscellaneous Uniform Items

- Girls may wear only one pair of stud earrings at a time. Hoops and dangling earrings are not permitted. The only necklace permitted are religious medals that must hang inside the shirt and cannot be seen. A simple wristwatch may be worn. SMART watches are not permitted. Rings, bracelets and other jewelry are not permitted. School is not responsible for lost/misplaced items.
- Make-up and nail polish are not permitted. Only natural hair color is permitted.
- Hair must be neatly groomed and out of the eyes. Boy's hair must be above the collar.
- Hats, bandanas, or any other form of headgear may not be worn in the building.
- "Hoodie" tops and sweatshirts may be worn to school but must be removed in homeroom.
- Any form of body piercing, modification, or tattoos (temporary or otherwise) are not permitted on any part of the body.

Dress Down/Spirit Wear Days

Dress Down or Spirit wear days will be specified as they arise. However, the following items are **NEVER** permitted:

- Tank tops
- Ripped Jeans
- Bike Shorts
- Midriffs or halters
- Make-up and nail polish (exception is for 8th grade school picture day)
- Open toed shoes
- Shorts/skirts more than 2 inches above the knee
- Pajamas (unless specified pajama day)

Violation of Dress Code Failure to comply with the uniform policy may result in your child providing appropriate clothing from our uniform thrift, for the school day. Parents may also be notified to bring appropriate clothing to school.

Students may be called to the nurse's office to remove make-up and other non-compliant items.

Students will be given one warning for dress code violations. After that, a Dress Code Violation form will be sent home for each uniform infraction. This form is to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school the next day. More than three violations will result in a lunch reflection period.

Medication

Policy on Administration of Medication

If it is essential that a student receive medication while under school supervision, the following procedures apply:

A. A parent/guardian should come to the school and personally administer the medication

B. If this arrangement is not possible, the school nurse will administer the medication under the following conditions:

- The medication must be given to the school nurse by the parent/guardian
- The medication must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container
- The parent/guardian and the student's physician must complete and sign an "Authorization to Administer Medication in School" form. This form is available from the school nurse.
- All the above requirements apply to prescription as well as nonprescription medication
- **No child may carry medications to or from school.**

Students will be permitted to self-administer medication only for life-threatening illnesses or conditions. The parent/guardian must schedule a conference with the school nurse to discuss in detail the need for the medication. The parent/guardian and the student's physician must complete and sign an "Authorization for Self-Administration of Medication in School" form. This form is available from the school nurse.

The school nurse is available to us from 7:30am-dismissal. State law forbids staff to dispense any kind of medication to any student in her absence unless a substitute nurse has been provided. First aid may be given, but in a serious matter, a parent will be notified immediately.

Health and Safety

Parents/Guardians of children in grades K-8 are required to call school by 8:00am on any day when a child is absent. **A note explaining the absence and specifying the exact dates of the absence is required on the day the student returns to school. An absence of three days or longer requires a doctor's note upon the child's return to school.**

Please do not send children to school when they have symptoms of an illness, or if they are not fully recovered from an illness. Also, students must be free of an elevated temperature without medication for at least 24 hours. Parents are asked to keep their children home when they exhibit severe cold symptoms, e.g. Runny nose, persistent cough, heavy congestion, and sore throat. The nurse may send children with such symptoms home after evaluation.

Any child with a temperature of 100 degrees or more will be sent home and may not return to school until 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided without medication.

Any child with a skin rash may not come to school without a physician's note of explanation. Children with any undiagnosed skin rash will be sent home.

All athletes in all grades 6 through 8 are required to have an up-to-date sports physical on file prior to participating in any sports. This includes, interscholastic, intramural, and club sports.

Nutrition

- Each child is to be provided with a nourishing breakfast before leaving home each morning
- Children are to eat an adequate lunch every day. Carbonated beverages are not permitted in school.
- Children are not permitted to use the drink or snack machines between the hours of 7:30am- 2:15pm. They may use these machines during extended care and after school activities.

- Lunches from fast food establishments are not permitted.
- If a child forgets lunch, it will be provided to them.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

New Jersey State law requires that any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child may have been subjected to abuse or neglect, must make a report to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF).

The school follows a policy of early detection when any form of abuse is suspected.

Memorandum of Agreement

St. Ambrose School is legally required to follow the rules, policies, and procedures as determined by the Memorandum of Agreement made with the local law enforcement agencies. The school will comply with any requests made by an appropriate legal law enforcement agency.

Asbestos Management Plan

In accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) and Federal Regulation 40 CFR Part 763, we are required to notify you that an Asbestos Management Plan (APM) is currently in place. The APM file contains all necessary documents ensuring compliance, covering activities such as, periodic surveillance and 3-year re-inspections. The APM file is available for your review at any time. It is in the school office.

Miscellaneous Regulations

Care of Books

Textbooks are on loan to the children. All children are responsible for the proper care of them throughout the school year.

- All books must be always covered.
- No writing or drawing is permitted in books, on book covers, and on notebooks
- If a book is lost or destroyed, payment for it must be made to cover the cost of the replacement. Report cards will not be given unless the book has been paid for.
- All workbooks are to be cared for in the same way
- All students must have a book bag to carry books back and forth to school

Care of School Property

Children are responsible for the proper care of their desks and all school property. There is to be no writing on student desks or chairs. Any child who defaces school property will be

responsible for cleaning that item. In the event of physical damage to school facilities, the child's family will be responsible for the cost of all repairs.

In the event of such damage, loss of privileges may occur.

Teams/School Clubs and Good Sportsmanship – Student and Parents

Eligibility & Standing

Participation in school athletics & activities is a privilege that goes hand-in-hand with academic and behavioral effort. To be eligible for any team or activity, students must maintain "Good Standing." This means:

- Academics: Staying up to date with assignments and meeting classroom expectations.
- Behavior: Following school rules and showing respect to teachers, coaches, and teammates.

Warnings and Improvement

- One official warning will be provided to the student and their family if academic or behavioral expectations are not being met.
- Removal: If the necessary improvements are not made following the warning, the student will be removed from the team or activity to focus on their primary school responsibilities. If a student is removed from a sport or activity due to academic or behavioral issues, no refunds will be provided.

Students that have an unexcused absence during the school day may not participate in a team/school clubs that day. Joining any school club, team, or activity is a privilege that can be revoked at any time for reasons relating to poor academic performance, the existence Conduct Referrals, or issues of poor sportsmanship.

In the event of poor student sportsmanship, the coach or may remove a student from any team sport if it is deemed that a student is acting in a manner not appropriate or sportsmanlike.

Parental attendance at sports or any school event may be limited or restricted if a parent conducts improper unsportsmanlike behavior at school events. All students are supervised by adults under the direction of the coach, and parental coaching at sporting events is not required unless specifically noted or requested by the administration. Parents and students learn a great deal of their behavior at home. Please always model good behavior.

Change of Address or Phone Number

Every change of address or phone number must be reported to the school office immediately. Current records are essential in handling emergency situations.

Crisis Management Preparedness and Response

St. Ambrose School works to prepare students for any emergency or crisis that may occur. On a monthly basis, our school practices various crisis drills. In the event of a lock-down, no parents shall be allowed into the school building. In the event of any other emergency, the local police or similar agency will notify you of the next steps. Until local authorities arrive, the school will practice the policies designed to help maximize student safety.

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy

Conflict vs. Bullying

Not all disagreements and arguments are bullying. Conflict is a normal part of human interaction and learning how to deal with and respond appropriately to conflict is part of maturing. Recognizing the difference between conflict and bullying will help students, parents, and teachers know how to respond.

Conflict is:

- A disagreement; an argument
- All parties have equal power to solve the problem
- All parties have an equal interest in the outcome and are equally involved
- All parties are of relatively equal size, age, or status
- A conflict can be resolved by talking or working things out together or with help from an adult.

Bullying is:

- A repeated form of mistreatment where the victim cannot defend him/herself
- An imbalance of power in size or status, and uses this power against the victimized child
- Usually involves repeated acts of harassment, harm, or humiliation
- Causes a change in the school climate for the student who is the victim

Differences in Addressing Conflict and Bullying

Conflict is a part of growing up, but bullying is not. Conflict teaches children compromise, how to come to an agreement and how to solve problems. When it comes to encounters of

differing opinions, children need to learn resolution and resiliency skills. These skills promote listening and cooperation to reach an agreement and plan to move forward.

Bullying is different. Those who bully make a choice to intentionally hurt another person with the goal of exercising power over them. When bullying occurs, the bully is fully responsible for the situation. And the bully bears all the responsibility for change. Bullies usually do not negotiate with others. They want power and they blame others for their actions. Even if an adult can get them to apologize, bullies will often retaliate when no one else is around. As a result, it is crucial to recognize the difference between conflict and bullying.

The most common form of student incidents is identified as teasing. Teasing may begin as playful but can turn into verbal bullying or taunting. This behavior is intended to distract, disturb, offend, sadden, anger, bother, irritate, or annoy the recipient. Because it is hurtful, it is different from joking and is generally accompanied by some degree of social rejection. This behavior will be addressed under the same guidelines as bullying.

The school prohibits any act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student or staff member. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like any other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate students in a safe environment.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means any gesture, written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication that:

- Can be reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or mental, physical, or sensory disability; or
- Takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, social media or on a school bus that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or rights of other students; and
- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group of students; or
- Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with the student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Reporting

All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be reported verbally or in writing, first to the classroom teacher, as soon as possible. The teacher will then report the incident to the designee as soon as is practicable from when the school employee, vendor, student or volunteer witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. The school or designee shall immediately initiate an investigation.

A school employee who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, to the appropriate school official designated by the school's policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from the reporting of the incident or any failure to remedy the reported incident. The school's employees, students or volunteers are prohibited from engaging in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness, and one with reliable information or any other person who has reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying or who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation shall be determined by the after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

Investigation

The principal or designee will interview the students who made the accusation and the student who is accused of committing the act(s) as soon as the report is received. Additionally, the designee will interview any adult who was or may have been present when the act(s) took place. The designee, as part of the interviews, will inquire as to the names of any witnesses to act(s) and interview them. If there is any documentary evidence (i.e., text messages, social media, photos) the designee will request copies. The designee will keep written notes of the interviews.

Confidentiality for all students involved will be maintained to the extent possible. The students involved or staff involved will be instructed not to discuss the incident to preserve the integrity of the investigation. The parents, police and any other appropriate agency shall be informed by the administration if the accusation meets the criteria for reporting to law enforcement and deemed exclusive of pastoral discretion.

Parents shall be notified verbally or in writing within 24 hours of the start of an investigation. The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but no later than 10 school days from the date of the report of the incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Upon completion of the investigation, the principal or designee will determine the consequences of the incident report.

The parents will be advised verbally and in writing of the completion of the investigation and the conclusion reached. No parent will be advised as to the discipline of any child other than their own. The school's decision is binding.

Addressing Disputes with the School (as per the Diocese of Metuchen)

The school and parents should strive to communicate with one another in an open and collaborative manner. It is the goal of the school to address parents' concerns regarding their child's experience in the school. In turn, there may be times the school must raise issues pertaining to a student that are related to disciplinary, educational or social issues.

Recognizing that students are best served when families and the school can find mutually agreeable solutions to resolve differences or problems, it may sometimes not be possible to find a solution or compromise to accommodate the needs of the school and the student or their family. It is agreed by the school and the family that it is not an effective manner of communication to bring third parties into the conversation as it impedes collaboration and creates an adversarial relationship.

It is the policy of the School and the Diocese of Metuchen that in the event a family engages an attorney, the student cannot remain in the school as it represents a complete and irrevocable breakdown of the relationship between the school, the student and the family. Accordingly, the student must immediately withdraw from the school. The student is not eligible to be re-enrolled at a later time.

Student Support

The administration and faculty will provide ongoing support for students who are subject to harassment, intimidation, and bullying, including some or all of the following:

1. The student(s) will meet with the principal to discuss the incident and explore conflict/resolution strategies.
2. Grade and homeroom teachers will closely monitor the student and provide support as needed.
3. The school environment will be altered as needed, such as changing seats or assigning cafeteria seats.
4. The administration will encourage positive peer relationships and support.

If the principal, or other designee, determines that Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying or Retaliation has occurred, he/she shall:

- Notify the local law enforcement agency if called for by the Memorandum of Agreement with Law Enforcement;
- Notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor; and
- Notify the parents or guardians of the target.

The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the aggressor will not be disclosed to the parents or guardians of the target.

Disciplinary Action

Once the investigation is complete, the principal, or his or her designee, shall determine the consequences for the aggressor(s) on a case-by-case, age-appropriate basis. Harassment, intimidation or bullying can take many forms and can vary dramatically in severity and impact on others. While conduct that rises to the level of a violation of this policy will generally warrant disciplinary action against the students responsible, whether to impose disciplinary sanctions and what sanctions to impose in a particular case are matters within the professional discretion of the principal, or his or her designee. It is the goal of the school to have students partake in the reflection and remediation process. If the principal, or his/her designee, deems that expulsion is the appropriate consequence, the principal must first contact the Office of Schools.

Consequences

The following list of consequences and remedial actions is provided as a guide and by no means limits the school from implementing other additional consequences and remedial actions consistent with the requirements of this Policy.

Student Consequences may be one or more of the following:

- Loss of a privilege
- Reflection period(s)
- Reparation to target in the form of payment for, or repair of damage to possessions
- Reassignment of seats in class, cafeteria or bus, or removal from the bus or extended care
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Extended suspension
- Expulsion

Remedial Actions:

- Recess or after-school reflection period
- Parent/Student Conference.
- Counseling with licensed counselor or psychologist at the parents' expense;
- Education about the effects of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying;
- Behavioral agreement
- Cooperation with a behavioral management program developed in consultation with a mental health professional and the principal.

St. Ambrose School

Technology Acceptable Use and Responsibility Agreement

St. Ambrose School is committed to the use of technology as part of our mission to cultivate confident and reflective life-long learners. We recognize the educational value of electronics-based information technology, both as a means of access to enriching information and as a tool to develop skills that students need. St. Ambrose's goal in providing technology tools and opportunities is to promote educational excellence in our students and integrate 21st century digital learning skills into our classrooms.

All St. Ambrose students and well as all parents/guardians are responsible for knowing, understanding, and acknowledging the policies and regulations for the use of all devices and technology at St. Ambrose School.

Chromebooks and other St. Ambrose issued devices:

- Access to devices, internet, and other resources will only be available with a signed User Agreement.
- Devices are the property of St. Ambrose School or the Old Bridge School District.
- Devices and other resources should be used only with permission and direction from St. Ambrose staff members.
- Loss, damage, or technical problems with school issued devices should be reported immediately. Students and/or parents/guardians may be responsible for any damage or replacement of devices.
- No stickers, labels, or writing of any kind are permitted on St. Ambrose devices.
- No attempts to disassemble (remove keys, etc.) or repair St. Ambrose devices should be made.
- All St. Ambrose devices will be returned in good working order at the end of the school year or upon request.

Internet and application usage:

- Students in grade K-8 are assigned Google for Education Accounts.
- St. Ambrose Google accounts are provided, monitored, and controlled by St. Ambrose School.
- Students should be always signed into devices with their St. Ambrose Google accounts when using devices during school hours.
- St. Ambrose reserves the right to monitor all student internet activity on the school network and/or on all school devices. St. Ambrose utilizes a variety of resources to filter and monitor internet activity, including Cipafilter and Net-Ref.
- While St. Ambrose does use aggressive internet monitoring and filtering systems, no system is 100% effective. Students are responsible for their internet usage and should not attempt to visit inappropriate or unauthorized sites under any circumstances.
- Students should not add or remove any programs, apps, or extensions without permission.

- Students should not log in to another student's device or attempt to access anyone else's accounts.

Plagiarism, which involves using someone else's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment, and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to complete assignments are strictly prohibited at our school. Any student found engaging in plagiarism or utilizing AI to complete their work will receive a grade of 0 on the assignment. Academic integrity is paramount in our educational community, and all students are expected to uphold ethical standards in their academic endeavors while creating original work.

Explanation of Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, typically computer systems. These processes include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, speech recognition, and decision-making. AI tools can assist in various tasks, including generating text, analyzing data, and automating processes. However, when used in an academic setting to complete assignments meant to demonstrate a student's knowledge and skills, it undermines the integrity of the learning process and is considered unethical.

What is Generative AI?

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools are becoming increasingly common and accessible. Like other tools, GenAI programs can be used appropriately to support learning and teaching, or they can be abused in ways that lead to cheating or plagiarism. This policy provides guidance for safe, ethical, and effective use of GenAI by students, staff, and the school community.

1. Generative AI definition: Technology that can create content such as text, images, audio, video, or code in response to user prompts. These tools include (but are not limited to) chatbots, image generators, and writing assistants. GenAI tools may be stand-alone programs or integrated into larger applications.

Examples: ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, Claude

2. Purpose and scope: When used responsibly and ethically, GenAI tools can support and enhance the teaching and learning processes in schools. However, these tools also present the opportunity for abuse and are not appropriate in every situation. To provide guidance to our students, teachers, school staff, and families, this policy details appropriate, ethical use of GenAI tools for teaching and learning. It also includes consequences for uses deemed to be inappropriate or unethical.

3. Guiding principles for GenAI use:

Supportive: Use tools for guidance, not to replace critical thinking, creativity, and meaningful learning.

Ethical: Thoughtful use ensures academic integrity and avoids plagiarism or intellectual property theft.

Safe: Always protect personal privacy and student data, following all applicable laws and rules.

Equitable: All students and staff shall have fair access and opportunity to allowable GenAI tools.

Transparent: Students must disclose use of GenAI tools as required by school or classroom policy.

4. Approved GenAI tools: Our school has approved specific GenAI tools for use by students and staff. Teachers may permit additional tools for their classrooms or individual assignments or students. Other tools may be used with prior permission from teachers or school staff.

St. Ambrose remains committed to FERPA and COPPA compliance. Data privacy is our right that protects personal information from unauthorized access.

- No personally identifiable info (PII) is shared with open AI models.
- Approved tools are vetted for data security standards.
- Teacher monitoring is central to all AI classroom activities.

Approved:

[SchoolAI](#)

[NotebookLM](#) (Google)

[Gemini](#) (Google)

[MagicSchool](#)

5. Permitted student uses for GenAI tools: Students may generally use GenAI tools for the reasons listed below, unless told otherwise by teachers or school staff. Teachers have the right to create specific GenAI instructions or restrictions for their classrooms or for individual assignments or students, which may or may not include the uses listed below.

Understanding a concept

Brainstorming ideas

Checking your work

Editing writing

Studying and reviewing

Problem-solving hints or strategies

Obtaining reliably sourced, verifiable information

Debate or conversation to expand critical thinking

6. Prohibited student uses for GenAI tools: Students may NOT use GenAI tools for any of the reasons listed below, unless specifically granted permission by teachers or school staff. Teachers have the right to permit GenAI uses from the prohibited list for individual assignments or students if deemed educationally necessary.

Submitting AI-generated work as your own

Completing assignments without personal effort or thinking

Text that is copied and pasted without revision or attribution

Providing answers to homework or test questions

Using AI to bypass learning expectations

7. GenAI policy expectations and exceptions: Expectations for GenAI use may vary by grade level. Younger students may have more restricted access, while older students may be given increased responsibility and independence. Teachers or staff may create specific GenAI policy exceptions and expectations for their classrooms, assignments, or individual students if deemed educationally necessary. These exceptions and expectations may be more or less restrictive than the general school policy. AI policy exceptions must be clearly stated in writing as part of the classroom rules, assignment instructions, or other written communication methods.

8. GenAI usage disclosure: When required by the teacher or assignment, GenAI use must be disclosed or cited per accepted guidelines. Students are responsible for gathering screenshots or other materials to support their required disclosures.

9. GenAI and academic integrity infractions: Misuse or abuse of GenAI tools may be considered plagiarism or cheating under our school's Academic Integrity Code. Consequences may vary based on the severity and intent of the misuse. See the Academic Integrity Code for possible consequences of cheating or plagiarism. School administration is responsible for interpreting and enforcing this policy.

10. Staff use of GenAI tools: Teachers and school staff may use GenAI tools in accordance with school ethics and privacy standards. Users must review and verify all AI-generated content for accuracy and potential bias, and avoid over-reliance on GenAI tools for grading, evaluation, or decision-making. Acceptable GenAI uses by staff may include but are not limited to:

Lesson planning and differentiation

Creation of instructional materials

Drafting communications****

Analyzing data (in compliance with privacy guidelines)

11. Privacy and data protection: All GenAI use must comply with school privacy and data protection guidelines, as well as local, state, and federal laws. At no time may users enter personally identifiable private student information into GenAI tools or share confidential or sensitive school data.

12. GenAI equity and access: All students and staff shall have fair and equitable access to approved GenAI tools as deemed educationally necessary. Diverse learners may be permitted additional use of GenAI tools to provide needed accommodations or modifications as aligned with IEPs, 504 plans, or other documented supports when applicable.

13. GenAI accuracy and bias: All GenAI users must recognize that these tools can and do sometimes provide inaccurate and biased information. Users are expected to verify information using reliable primary sources, use critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate information provided by GenAI, and report concerns about harmful or biased content to school staff or administration.

14. Intellectual property and copyright ownership: All GenAI users must recognize that AI-generated content may raise questions about copyright or intellectual property ownership. Users may not submit or share content that infringes on copyrighted material or intellectual property rights and must provide proper attribution when required. Users should not use AI tools that are known to violate copyright or intellectual property protections.

15. GenAI training and communication: Our school is committed to helping students and staff use GenAI tools responsibly, ethically, and effectively. When possible, we will provide training and instruction on such use to both students and staff. Families are encouraged to support responsible AI use at home and to communicate with the school about questions or concerns.

16. GenAI policy review and feedback: This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by school administration. Additionally, our policy may be updated midyear as needed to reflect new GenAI tools and uses, with changes communicated promptly and clearly to staff, students, and families. Staff, students, and families may offer feedback or report concerns by contacting school administration in writing at any time.