



Student & Family Handbook

2023-2024

Santa Cruz Catholic School

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This handbook is in effect for the 2023-2024 school year. The principal reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time for any reason.

All families must sign an agreement each year to uphold and cooperate with the policies and procedures in this handbook.

Santa Cruz Catholic School complies with all applicable state and federal laws regarding nondiscrimination. Our doors are open to children of all faiths.



HANDBOOK AGREEMENT FORM

The Santa Cruz Catholic School Family Handbook is designed to answer questions about your child's school life and to act as a guideline for a successful school experience. Childhood education is a cooperative responsibility of all involved. Your child's admission into Santa Cruz Catholic School is complete when parents/guardians and students have read this handbook together and returned this form to the school office ***on or before*** the first day of school.

I acknowledge that Santa Cruz Catholic School shall have complete discretion in all educational matters including, but not limited to, curriculum offerings, class and teacher assignments, and the assessment of student performance, and the assessment of teacher performance.

I acknowledge that Santa Cruz Catholic School shall have the right to decline enrollment or reenrollment of any student or to suspend or dismiss any student at its discretion, and for any cause deemed sufficient by Santa Cruz Catholic School. A positive and constructive working relationship between Santa Cruz Catholic School and a student's parents/guardian is essential to the fulfillment of Santa Cruz Catholic School's educational purpose. Thus, Santa Cruz Catholic School reserves the right not to extend the privilege of re-enrollment to a student if Santa Cruz Catholic School reasonably concludes the actions of a parent(s)/guardian(s) make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible or otherwise seriously interfere with the Santa Cruz Catholic School's accomplishment of its educational purpose.

I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of Santa Cruz Catholic School, and I understand that serious or repeated breaches of Santa Cruz Catholic School's rules and regulations by me or my child may, at the sole discretion of Santa Cruz Catholic School, result in the suspension or dismissal of my child.

Santa Cruz Catholic School may require the written acknowledgement of its' rules, values, and regulations by a family or student. I acknowledge that failure to sign such an acknowledgement will be considered a breach of this contract and may result in dismissal from Santa Cruz Catholic School.

We have read the Family Handbook and we agree to abide by the rules, regulations and guidelines set forth within these publications.

Print Family Name

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Child

Child

Child

SERVICE, COMPASSION, COURAGE, AND SPIRIT

Dear Parents and Students of Santa Cruz Catholic School,

My goal for Catholic education at Santa Cruz is that your child will be open to the vision and hope of the eternal. Focusing on things that are eternal opens us up to what is true, good, and beautiful.

Students explore in the classroom how the interaction of the truths of science, history, and math unite us in a shared history and language. The sciences connect us to our world and unite us across countries and cultures. They not only allow our students to interact with the modern world but direct this world to the noble purpose for which it is called.

Our literature, music, and creative arts programs instruct students in aesthetical beauty that draws the soul upward. It goes beyond mere consumerism that attributes value to what can be marketed. Rather, it sees in good music, literature, and art an exercise of virtue and a reason for hope.

Faith is the essential element of our school; in particular, an uncompromising Catholic faith that points to the goodness of human dignity. It calls us to transcend selfishness by seeing in our neighbor the intrinsic value and worth instilled in them by our creator. From this essential level we approach each other as fellow pilgrims on the eternal journey.

This vision liberates us from the darkness of error, selfishness and what is vulgar so that we are able to see a glimpse of God. When we are able to see a glimpse of God then we are compelled to follow him. Forming students that are open to what is true, good, and beautiful can transform our homes and our world. More importantly, it can transform the soul of each student.

To do all of this, Catholic education at Santa Cruz is a partnership among administrators, teachers, parents and students. Thank you for your kind attention to the policies and protocols set forth in this handbook.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fr. Jesse P. Martinez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "F" and "M".

Rev. Jesse P. Martinez
Pastor

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MISSION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF TEXAS

The ministry of Catholic education in general is the fulfillment of the education mission of the Catholic Church and has as its primary goal the continuous formation of the Christian person.

As a pastoral instrument of the Church, the strength of the Catholic school is its ability to respond to the needs of the whole person with a global perspective for a peaceful and sustainable future.

The Catholic school is a unique environment in which students can experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. Its focus is on the individual student's spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, cultural, emotional, and physical development. In the Catholic school, students and teachers are drawn to proclaim the Gospel message, to unite in worship, to respond to the needs of the community through fellowship and social justice, and to serve all people through the sharing of their spiritual gifts and temporal goods.

Intellectually, students are challenged to work to the best of their abilities. In a world of diversity and absolutes, students need to be free to appreciate and understand the living organism called Earth, the peoples and cultures that inhabit it, and to develop global perspectives by which to form their lives and consciences. Students are provided opportunities to develop basic academic and physical skills, pursue knowledge, and critically study and analyze the world in which they live.

The effective Catholic school must call its students to the conviction that people are more important than material gain, justice is more important than success, love is more important than esteem, and collaboration unites while competition divides. The truly successful Catholic school student is not necessarily one who is successful in every endeavor, but one who accepts Christian responsibility for fulfillment of personal potential and shares these gifts with others.

SANTA CRUZ CATHOLIC SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Santa Cruz Catholic School is to educate our students to be lifelong learners and the next generation of Catholic leaders following Christ's message of service, compassion, courage, and Spirit.

Development of Philosophy

Santa Cruz Catholic School shares in the Church's mission of spreading the Good News to everyone. Christ's instruction to His apostles, "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations," has the same profound meaning for all who are a part of Santa Cruz Catholic School. Santa Cruz Catholic School acquaints the students with the full scope of Catholic doctrine, spirit and tradition. Santa Cruz Catholic School prepares students to proclaim the Lord's message and to translate this proclamation into action in their daily lives.

Santa Cruz Catholic School provides space, time, materials, and direction to allow students to explore and deepen their understanding of the basic concepts, beliefs, and values underlying their faith and culture. Together with parents, the faculty at Santa Cruz Catholic School guide the students in all ways of growth: academic, physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and moral. Sensitive to the learning styles and capabilities of each student, we place each student in an atmosphere of Christian freedom and charity that allows them to develop a pattern of learning and growth helping them to recognize and develop their own talents. Santa Cruz

Catholic School strives to instill in its students a joy of learning and positive sense of self-worth.

PHILOSOPHY

Santa Cruz Catholic School, as an integral ministry of Santa Cruz Catholic Church and its commitment to Catholic education, is founded upon the teachings of the Catholic faith and the four-fold mission of the Catholic Church — **service, message, worship, and community**. As Christ beckons each of his followers to teach the tenets of the Faith, formally and informally, the school passes the Catholic faith to our children in their daily academic environment. Santa Cruz Catholic School provides a formal Catholic education to support parents as primary educators of their children. By integrating our Catholic faith into the daily learning process, the school builds the foundation for life-long learning and Christian service. Santa Cruz Catholic School is the visible reality of a parish community committed to a Catholic education for each child that involves the home, school, parish, and civic community.

Santa Cruz Catholic School exists to teach children to live the Catholic faith and to make good moral decisions based on Christ's teachings. Faculty and staff strive to live as models of the Word of God present among us and nurture each child's unique, God-given gifts. To develop a way of life that follows in Jesus' footsteps, students participate in projects of Christian service and endeavor to give the best of themselves to their families, their school and their community.

Santa Cruz Catholic School develops the full person and teaches the relationship between God and creation. Santa Cruz strives to supplement and refine influences of the home and community environment to develop the whole person spiritually, intellectually, socially, morally, emotionally, and physically. **Spiritually**, students learn of God's love for them and to love God and neighbor. **Intellectually**, students acquire sound knowledge of the core curriculum. **Socially**, students recognize their role in creating a just society. **Morally**, students find the Gospel values as a foundation and Christ as the model for decision-making. **Emotionally**, students as children of God, learn to act with self-control. **Physically**, students learn to maintain their fitness and health. Santa Cruz Catholic School recognizes each child is unique in God's plan, possessing individual gifts and talents. It is our plan to respect and nurture individual differences while developing each student to his or her fullest potential.

Statement of Goals

1. **To build personal relationships** allowing each to grow in terms of self-knowledge and self-respect and to gain a better understanding of Christian responsibility and freedom.
2. **To build a dynamic faith community** by focusing upon the uniqueness and strengths of the faculty, students, and parents, thereby enabling them to reach their full potential as individuals.
3. **To enable the students to grow** in knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, so His message and truth, which is proclaimed in the school, will become a living reality.
4. **To develop a climate** of teaching as ministry in which the faculty move beyond the transference of knowledge sharing their life experiences with their students.

5. **To develop proficiency** in students' written and oral communication, value clarification, decision-making, aesthetic sensitivity, and creativity.

VISION STATEMENT

Santa Cruz Catholic School will provide a parish-based Catholic elementary educational environment to lift children up through formation and education. We will provide each student with the moral and spiritual values of the Catholic faith along with a challenging academic program within the Diocese of Austin. In all we do, we will celebrate each child as a unique gift from God, entrusted to our care to teach and to develop emotionally, socially, and physically. Our students will understand Catholic principles that will enable them to value and live their faith when making moral and intellectual decisions in their service to God and neighbor.

PARENTAL WITNESS STATEMENT INTRODUCTION

We, at Santa Cruz Catholic School, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life—physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of Santa Cruz Catholic School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in their life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school will not take hold in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic morality and an honest personal relationship with God in family life.

Once you enter into a partnership with Santa Cruz Catholic School we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to Eighth Grade), your child needs constant support from parents and faculty to develop their moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical gifts. Parents and teachers cannot afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partners in the quest of challenging each student to reach their potential. To divide authority between school and home or within the home teaches disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation for the complete story as your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers models good mature behavior and relationships.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. Sometimes in the process of maturation, new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, boundaries and limits provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for the grades they earned. Students should be held accountable for attendance, homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments.

Let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to grow and learn.

PARENTAL WITNESS STATEMENT

By enrolling my child in Santa Cruz Catholic School, I acknowledge and accept my privilege and responsibility to be the primary religious educator of my child(ren). I understand Santa Cruz Catholic School is a means by which my Church seeks to share and assist me in my vocation. I know that no matter how clearly and effectively Santa Cruz Catholic School communicates the truths of our faith, unless my children see these truths active in our family, there is little hope the Catholic faith will take root in their hearts. I believe Santa Cruz Catholic School can deepen, enrich, and reinforce a faith my children experience in their home. I understand my own witness is essential to the religious development and growth of my child(ren).

Aware of the dignity of my call from God and with a reverent awe for my responsibility I commit myself to be the first teacher of my children. I understand this means I need:

1. to participate consistently and actively in the Sunday Eucharist.
2. to speak to my children about God, and to make prayer an integral and important part of the environment of our home.
3. to participate and cooperate, as Santa Cruz Catholic School requests, in the religious education and the sacramental preparation of my child(ren).
4. to accept my responsibility to support the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and not contradict in my home what is proclaimed in the school.
5. to teach my child(ren), by word and example, a love and concern for the needs of others, especially the poor.
6. to do my fair share in supporting the Catholic School financially and spiritually.
7. to volunteer my time, talent, and expertise.

My parental responsibilities are:

1. to encourage my child to obey the regulations and principles of good behavior.
2. to provide adequate time and place for study and to encourage completion of assignments as required for successful learning.
3. to encourage the development of my child's individual talents and interests, seeking help for those areas needing special attention with the advice of the school.
4. to keep the school informed of special needs of my child.
5. to read all communications sent to the home or emailed by the school.
6. to attend parent-teacher conferences or request additional meetings as needed. I understand consultation and communication are the co-responsibility of parents and Santa Cruz Catholic School.
7. to support the school community, the staff, parents, administration, and students in a loyal and uplifting manner.
8. to abide by the regulations in this handbook even though I may be personally opposed to recommendations and decisions.
8. to comply with all policies, especially those dealing with attendance, uniforms, homework, and communications.

ADMINISTRATION

The Pastor is the spiritual leader and the chief administrator of Santa Cruz Parish. He is ultimately responsible for the educational apostolate of Santa Cruz Catholic School.

Santa Cruz School Advisory Board, (SAB), acts in an advisory capacity to the Pastor. It formulates and evaluates policies for the school. The SAB's work enables the school to reach its goals.

The Principal administers the school according to the general policies of the Diocese of Austin. The Principal is responsible for the spiritual, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, social, and physical needs of the children of Santa Cruz Catholic School. The Principal works with the Pastor, SAB, and faculty to create a school that fosters Christian growth and formation.

ACCREDITATION

Santa Cruz Catholic School is accredited through the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED), which is recognized by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission with the approval of the Texas Education Agency. Santa Cruz Catholic School will maintain its accreditation status through TCCB ED in compliance with their scheduled accreditation cycle and requirements.

ADMISSION

1. Age Requirements

- a. Students entering Pre-Kindergarten 3 must be 3 years old by September 1. Three-year-old students must be fully toilet trained.
- b. Students entering Pre-Kindergarten must be 4 years old by September 1.
- c. Students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years old by September 1.
- d. Students entering Grade One must be 6 years old by September 1.

2. Admission Documents

- a. The following documents are required for a permanent record folder:
 - i. Birth Certificate
 - ii. Immunization Records
 - iii. Baptismal Certificate, if Catholic
 - iv. Previous Report Cards
 - v. Teacher recommendation
 - vi. Standardized/Admission Test Results
 - vii. Enrollment Contract
- b. Admission of a new student is pending until all documents are received. Students applying for Admission in Grades 1-8 must present a copy of the current report card and standardized test results. These will be reviewed to determine whether the program at Santa Cruz Catholic School will meet the educational needs of the student.
- c. An entrance test will be administered to all incoming students to assess their readiness for the class they wish to join.
- d. Middle school students may also be interviewed as part of the admission process.

3. Health Records

- a. All students must be immunized against diseases as required by the State of Texas and the Diocese of Austin.
- b. All students wishing to participate in athletics must have a physical examination.

4. Admission Policies

- a. Santa Cruz Catholic School does not discriminate on basis of race, sex, national origin, age (must meet legal requirements) or disability (if disabled person can function in the school environment).
- b. Student admission will be offered in the following order pending fulfillment of other admission requirements:
 - i. Currently enrolled students in good standing
 - ii. Siblings of currently enrolled students in good standing
 - iii. Children of teachers and staff
 - iv. Catholic Students
 - v. Non-Catholic Students
- c. The term "Catholic" refers to Catholic families officially registered and active in a Parish in the Diocese of Austin.
- d. Parents must agree to accept the decision of the Principal concerning the placement of their child in a class.
 - i. New primary and transfer students from other schools may be required to take tests to assist in determining appropriate class placement.
 - ii. If the student has had previous placement in a learning center or another kind of special education setting, the route for placement into Santa Cruz Catholic School will first be through assessment by the Santa Cruz child study team.

- iii. Final acceptance and placement is made contingent upon receipt of full academic records.
- e. Santa Cruz Catholic School is equipped to provide some accommodations for students who demonstrate academic deficiencies and/or behavioral problems that need specific instruction.
- f. Acceptance of students needing learning accommodations is at the discretion of the Principal.
- g. All new students are accepted on a probationary status for 30 days. At the end of this time the student's behavior, attitude, performance, and potential will be evaluated by teachers and the Principal to determine whether Santa Cruz Catholic School is the best environment for the child's learning needs. During and after this probationary period, parents may be asked to withdraw their child from Santa Cruz Catholic School.
- h. All families enrolled in the school are required to give twenty-five (25) hours of service to the school.
 - i. Five (5) hours may be used for Parish Events.
 - ii. Service hours must be recorded in FACTS.
 - iii. Unfulfilled service hours will be charged \$30 per hour in May.
 - iv. In lieu of earning service hours, families may choose a financial donation option of
 - 1. \$30 per hour, or
 - 2. \$750 per family, which
 - 3. must be paid no later than April 15 of the current year.
 - 4. Single-parent families should contact the school office for options.
- i. All enrolled families are expected to support the main fundraisers for the school.
- j. Students must agree to comply with all school regulations and to conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to learning and Catholic doctrine.
- k. Parents and students must also understand and be open to the purpose of Catholic schools and participate in all its activities. While academic excellence and a disciplined formation will always be desired goals, the understanding of Catholic tradition and growth of faith are central to Santa Cruz Catholic School.
- l. Parents and students will sign a *Handbook Agreement Form* due the first day of school each year indicating that they have read and agree to be governed by all the policies stated in this Handbook.
- m. The school administration reserves the right to require withdrawal of a student if the administration determines the partnership is irretrievably broken.
- n. The principal can, at any time, recommend withdrawal when such is in the best interest of Santa Cruz Catholic School and/or the student.

5. Annual Continuous Enrollment Procedure

- a. Re-enrollment for the new school year is held each year beginning in February. All children will automatically be re-enrolled unless the parents opt out by February 1st.
- b. At the time of re-enrollment, all tuition and fees must be current and verification of active parish affiliation/stewardship will be determined from use of weekly envelopes or EFT.
- c. For their part, students must have displayed successful academic growth and appropriate behavior to be re-enrolled. Summer school, tutorial programs, or specific behavioral modification procedures may be stipulated and re-registration will be contingent upon this agreement.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

To ensure the safety of all concerned, we will release your child(ren) **ONLY** to those persons listed on your family emergency release form or with a notification/authorization from you designating the driver's name and driver's license number.

All students being picked-up must be signed out in the office.

Unsupervised students are not allowed to remain on campus after 3:30 p.m. Any students remaining on campus after 3:30 p.m. will be placed in After School Care. Families that are not pre registered for After School Care will be assessed \$15 per day per child.

Arrival and Dismissal will be shared at the beginning of the year. Traffic patterns may change each year.

ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

Students who participate in athletic activities must attend all practices and competitions or meets while maintaining conduct becoming a Catholic student athlete. Students must be passing core classes to participate in athletic programs. Participation fees will be assessed for athletic activities. See the *Athletic Handbook* for more information.

ATTENDANCE

Santa Cruz Catholic School follows the laws governing the compulsory attendance in Texas schools.

Regular attendance at school is required. A student should not be absent or tardy except for illness or another grave reason.

Official notice to the child and person(s) standing in parental relation to the child:

Texas requires a child who is at least 6 years of age, or who is younger than 6 years of age and has previously enrolled in first grade, and ***who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday*** to attend school unless exempt by Sec. 25.086. Students enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten shall attend school. (*Education Code 25.085*)

Except as provided by Texas Education Code 25.092, a student may not be given credit for a class, unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days class is offered (*Education Code 25.092*). A student missing 18 days or more may be prevented from being promoted.

A **parent/guardian commits an offense** of thwarting compulsory attendance under Education Code Sec. 25.093. if, after having been warned in writing, a child has unexcused voluntary absences on 10 or more days or parts of days within a 6-month period or 3 or more days or parts of days within a 4-week period from school (**tardies are considered parts of days**). An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500 (*Education Code 25.093/Family Code 51.03(b)(2)/Penal Code 12.23*). **Five tardies after 7:50 a.m., regardless of reasons, will count as one day of absence.**

A parent/guardian of a school age child has the responsibility to require that their child attend school regularly. When sickness or higher obligation necessitates an absence, **a note signed by the parent/guardian** explaining the reason for the absence **is required** the day the student returns to school. If a student fails to submit a note, the absence will be considered unexcused. The student will be allowed **three (3) days to submit a written** note excusing the absence.

A child not exempt from compulsory attendance laws **may be excused for temporary absence**, resulting from any unusual cause acceptable to the Superintendent, the Principal or the Teacher of the school in which the student is enrolled. The temporary absence may be the result of, but not limited to,: 1) personal sickness; 2) family emergency; 3) religious holy day; 4) documented juvenile court proceeding (*Education Code 25.087*).

When a student's absence for personal illness exceeds seven (7) cumulative days, the Principal may require a statement from a physician or health clinic verifying the illness or other condition requiring the student's extended absence from school. If the student has established a questionable pattern of absences, the Principal may also require a physician's or clinic's statement

of illness after a single day's absence as a condition of classifying the absence as one with extenuating circumstances.

Unless specifically exempt, an enrolled student identified as likely not to be promoted to the next grade level, must attend an extended year program or required tutorial classes approved by the Principal.

Absences such as vacations and trips (except those excused by the Principal for unusual circumstances), babysitting, working (including modeling), and non-school sponsored athletic events and programs **are unexcused**.

When a student is absent the parent must inform the school office by telephone or email before 8 a.m. on each day of the absence. The parent must state the reason for the absence. This notification is the parent/guardian's responsibility. Calls made by students are not accepted. Please see the Homework section of this handbook for the make-up work policy.

Students who arrive after 10 a.m. or leave before 1 p.m. (without returning to school) are considered absent for one-half (.5) day.

Excessive absences or tardiness by students will result in a letter to the parents requiring a conference to address the action to be taken to correct the problem.

Doctor/Dental Appointments: Parents should try to arrange all appointments on free days or after dismissal so students will not miss classes. Medical and dental appointments are excused absences. A parental note stating the reason for early dismissal or late arrival is required for excused absences. The student must be signed in and out of the school office by a parent/guardian.

Tardies: School start time is 7:45 a.m. Any student arriving after 7:50 a.m. is considered tardy. A student arriving after 7:45 a.m. should report and sign-in at the school office.

BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

All students must respect and abide by principles of good, Catholic, moral conduct. Santa Cruz Catholic School teaches students bullying others, including teachers and personnel, is not tolerated. Parents/legal guardians are expected to reinforce these standards at home.

For the purpose of this policy, “bullying” means:

- an expression of any kind, whether written, oral, or physical conduct, determined to have the effect of physically harming another, damaging another’s property, or placing another in reasonable fear of harm to another’s person or property; or
- any conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for another; or
- any conduct designed or likely to result in causing physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following types of conduct:

- physical assault against a person or group of people because of a perceived physical, economic, intellectual, cultural or racial difference;
- derogatory name calling of an insulting or personal nature intended to offend another;
- verbal abuse;
- threats intended to intimidate another;
- demanding money, material goods or favors by means of threat or force;
- ridiculing an individual because of physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural, or racial difference;
- graffiti designed to intimidate or embarrass;
- inciting others to commit acts of bullying;
- the use of images, pictures, memes to insult, intimidate, threaten, or ridicule constitute bullying,
- using language intended to insult or discriminate against another based on a protected class; or
- deliberate exclusion or isolation of an individual or group by other students.
- “Cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of any electronic medium, including but not limited to, the internet, text messages, e-mail, social media, or other digital communications. (See *Technology Acceptable Use Policy*.)
- Cyberbullying is a form of bullying.

Students, faculty, and staff are to report all allegations or believed cases of bullying, of any kind, to the Principal. All allegations will be promptly investigated. Persons who allege bullying by others should, to the extent possible, maintain evidence of the alleged bullying (for example, copies of cyberbullying, etc.).

Students making such threats whether on or off campus and whether in sincerity, jest or online face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. The proper disciplinary action against any person found to be in violation of this policy will be determined by the Principal.

In addition, verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are not tolerated.

CELL PHONES, SMART WATCHES, AND TEXTING

Students' cell phones and smart watches will be picked up by the homeroom teacher at the beginning of the day and returned at the end of the day when the child is called at dismissal time. Parents needing to communicate with their child(ren) should contact the school office.

Santa Cruz Catholic School, its faculty and representatives are not responsible for student cell phones or smart watches that are damaged, broken, or lost at school. Families who choose to allow students to bring such devices to school do so at their own and sole risk.

Students are not allowed to text during the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, texting or messaging from a phone, smart watch, computer application (such as Google Chat) or social media platform.

Students involved in the possession or transmission of inappropriate texts, memes, files, videos, images, or photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion. Inappropriate means messages of a sexual or explicit nature or messages that promote violence, hatred or discrimination, or anything causing the sin of scandal.

COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication is essential in establishing and maintaining a partner relationship in the educational process. While we encourage and promote open communications, please understand that a staff member's primary on-duty responsibility is to be responsive to the students. Santa Cruz Catholic School offers the following methods to support ongoing communication with our families.

Email: Each staff member of Santa Cruz Catholic School has an assigned email address. Staff members check emails at least twice during the school day. We encourage families to utilize email for general communications or inquiries. There will not be time during school hours to reply to the email, but staff will attempt to reply at the earliest opportunity within 24 business hours. This is the preferred method of communication with teachers.

Students are issued an email account by Santa Cruz Catholic School. Parents and students should review the *Technology Acceptable Use Policy* closely. The email account is monitored by the school. Any violation of the *Technology Acceptable Use Policy* may result in suspension of the student's email account. Parents should not email students throughout the day. Any messages for students should go through the front office.

Parent Alert: Santa Cruz Catholic School utilizes a phone notification system to deliver personalized phone or text messages to parents, staff, or select groups. Parents will receive an automated phone call with reminders about Mass, meetings or alerts about situations requiring immediate attention.

Telephone calls: If you wish to contact a staff member, you may leave a message with the front office.

Website: Santa Cruz Catholic School maintains a school website. Our website contains information about Santa Cruz Catholic School programs, including student activities, lunch calendar, and athletic events. The use of a student's image or likeness in photographs or videos is subject to and governed by a parent/guardian's release. The school website is located at <http://sccstx.org>.

FACTS SIS: Progress, report cards, and other messages will be sent to parents through FACTS SIS. Parents will receive automated messages through FACTS SIS informing them of any grade of 75 or below, any zeros, and attendance notifications if a student is tardy or absent. These automated messages assist teachers in alerting parents to missing work and attendance issues. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their correct email is on file with the office. It is the parent's responsibility to check their email regularly for notices from FACTS SIS.

Classroom Communication: Elementary classrooms may use an app such as Class Tag to share pictures and information with parents. Middle school teachers will communicate with parents through email and FACTS SIS. They may use apps such as Class Tag at their discretion. Parents should not use these apps to discuss attendance or grades.

COMPLAINTS AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY

Issues/Concerns: In keeping with Catholic Church's principles of subsidiarity, problems should be solved at the lowest level whenever possible. If you have a concern or issue, we encourage you to go directly to the person/staff member related to the concern for discussion. Only after such attempts have failed, should the Principal be contacted. Please do not call the Principal until you have spoken with a teacher regarding your concern. All discussions of a concern or issue should be done through scheduled appointments. Students should work together to solve individual differences.

Since our focus is on the students during the school day, please do not try to conference with teachers or administrators during drop-off/pick-up times and before or after school. Conferences should be held by making an appointment.

Grievance Procedures

Diocesan policy states these steps for resolution of parent/guardian grievance:

Disputes or conflicts can arise in an educational setting. It is important that such matters be resolved as quickly as possible. Students, parents, and/or guardians who feel that they have a legitimate grievance related to school practices, policies or relationships shall be expected to adhere to the following procedures. The purpose of this procedure is to produce, at the lowest possible level, equitable solutions to grievances in a spirit of justice and charity.

1) Discussion with concerned parties: Discuss the grievance complaint with the parties concerned at an informal meeting as soon as possible after the incident. If this must be done during school hours, an appointment may be made through the office for a time that will not interfere with the normal school routine.

2) Administrative Meeting: If the matter cannot be settled informally by the parties concerned, they must request a meeting with the principal. The principal will assess the issues and make a final decision. If the problem is not resolved satisfactorily, the parent/guardian or the principal may then request a meeting with the superintendent.

If the dispute or conflict is with the principal, the first step for parents/guardians is discussion of the problem with the principal. If the problem is not resolved satisfactorily, the parent/guardian or the principal may then request a meeting with the superintendent.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

The Counselor and teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them as long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake. If serious concerns exist, parents will be promptly notified.

CURRICULUM

Santa Cruz Catholic School's academic program is aligned with the requirements of the Texas State Board of Education and Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department. Textbooks follow the state adoption guidelines in core content areas. Religion materials follow the Diocese of Austin approved list.

CUSTODY

Santa Cruz Catholic 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 academic records and other school information regarding their child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a court-certified copy of the court order.

All divorced and never married parents must provide custody documents for the student's file.

DISCIPLINE

Our Goal

Santa Cruz Catholic School seeks to establish a school climate that flows from the school philosophy. **Socially**, students recognize their role in creating a just society. **Morally**, students find the Gospel values as a foundation and Christ as the model for decision-making. **Emotionally**, students as children of God, learn to act with self-control. All members of the community are called to show unity of purpose as well as mirror life through trust, spirituality, closeness, collaboration, and responsibility where faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony.

The student is a Santa Cruz Catholic School at all times. A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the school, which is detrimental to the reputation of the school, may be disciplined by school officials.

Children are expected to obey school and classroom rules, to respect faculty, staff, and classmates, and to cooperate in maintaining a positive learning atmosphere.

Standards of Behavior for Students

Santa Cruz Catholic School uses Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports, PBIS, to define, teach, and acknowledge appropriate behavior and redirect and correct inappropriate behavior.

The purpose of discipline is to enable students to move from externally imposed discipline to self-discipline, which is an indication that one is capable of accepting responsibilities and privileges.

All students, at their appropriate developmental level, should:

- Be polite and kind to others, both adults and students, in speech, action and manner
- Display respect and prayerful participation during worship times
- Work in cooperation with others
- Obey all school and classroom rules and procedures
- Respect school and personal property
- Include and help others whenever possible
- Be prepared for class with materials and assignments
- Work conscientiously and use time wisely
- Display good hygiene and grooming

Standards of Behavior for Adults

Staff, parents, and other members of the school community are called upon to model good standards of behavior. Adults in the Catholic community should be good listeners, remain mutually supportive and inclusive of one another, maintain appropriate confidentiality, and handle disagreements in a spirit of conciliation.

School Volunteers are to keep conversation positive and limited to appropriate topics.

A Climate of Inclusiveness

Most of the offenses listed below under “regulations” will rarely occur in our school. They are listed here for the purpose of outlining examples of unacceptable behavior. However, a special word is needed about the goal of inclusiveness, since this principle is frequently violated among children and in schools. Students of all ages will be taught that name-calling, bullying, ridiculing, teasing, and excluding have no place at school and are not only unnecessary, but also intolerable. Parents are encouraged to reinforce these ideas at home.

Regulations

Behaviors including but not limited to the following may result in disciplinary actions:

- Disrespectful word or action toward an adult
- Fighting or physically harming another
- Any kind of threat or harassment
- Defacing property
- Misbehavior during worship, emergency drills, field trips or other situations that call for a greater sense of cooperation
- Leaving the campus without permission or failing to go where directed
- Dishonesty
- Cheating
- Stealing
- Disruptive behavior
- Use of obscene or profane language or hand gestures
- Bringing illegal or dangerous items to school, or being in possession of such items including weapons; drug-related products including alcohol and tobacco; other dangerous objects, such as matches; items associated with gangs; or any replica of these items
- Behavior that places repeated demands of supervision on the staff
- Behavior at school or a school event or away from school (outside school supervision) that is contrary to the mission and dignity of the school, including electronic communication
- Toys, stuffed animals, and electronic games are not allowed at school. They will be taken up and held for the parents. Unclaimed items will be given to charity.
- Cell phones, smart watches, cameras, and other electronic devices are not permitted to be used on campus by students at any time.
- Gum is not permitted on the campus.
- Selling items on campus, which are not part of a Santa Cruz Catholic School fundraiser, is not allowed.
- The distribution of party invitations of any kind on the campus is not allowed, unless all students in the class are invited.

Special note: Students in Pre-K and Kindergarten may bring nap items, such as a small stuffed animal, blanket and/or travel pillow. These items should all be small enough to fit inside the backpack.

Discipline Procedures

At Santa Cruz Catholic School, uniformity of consequences is not a goal; rather the staff seeks to use a variety of discipline strategies to meet the needs of the individual child.

When there is a problem, the teacher tries to handle discipline within the classroom through verbal correction, redirection, counseling, and natural and logical consequences. When informal strategies are unsuccessful, the teacher may use several more formal methods, which may include notifying the parents.

Behavior referred to the Principal's office will be documented as part of the student's permanent record.

The Principal may use strategies, such as a required parent conference, in-school suspension, assignment of school service, out-of-school suspension, scheduling a discipline review board, and expulsion.

Out of School Suspension and Expulsion

When disciplinary measures have failed to bring about desirable behavior, or when the offense is extremely serious, the student may be suspended for up to three (3) days following a parent/Principal conference. The student may complete make-up work for credit.

The expulsion of a student is a last resort. Expulsion is for the remainder of the school year.

Appeals

The Principal has the right to waive any or all disciplinary rules or procedures at their discretion. The Principal is the final authority on disciplinary matters and actions with the exception of expulsion. Expulsion may be appealed to the Superintendent in writing, care of the diocesan Catholic Schools Office.

Search and Seizure

Cubbies, desks, and other storage spaces are school property. The school reserves the right to search possessions at any time. The school may confiscate any articles seen as inappropriate, including those items which violate school rules.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

In the lower grades cheating is handled through the classroom management plan and consequences are handled with the teacher.

In the upper elementary and middle school grades, cheating is considered a serious offense.

Each incident will result in a zero for any student involved in cheating.

Teachers will assign additional disciplinary actions. If the cheating continues, the infraction can be escalated to the Principal.

Using another's work as your own is plagiarism, a form of academic dishonesty. Turning in work copied from the internet and sites such as Wikipedia without a proper citation is

plagiarism. Plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero. If plagiarism continues, the infraction can be escalated to the Principal.

ELECTIVE/ENRICHMENT CLASSES

Art: Instruction in visual arts is provided to students. Our visual arts curriculum focuses on creative exploration/expression using various art elements and mediums. The art program also fosters an appreciation of both Master artists and peer student artwork.

Music: Students will experience a variety of music from religious to secular. All students will participate in music performance, especially during liturgy.

Physical Education and Health: The PE program includes general fitness instruction, sports with skill development, lead-up games and rules, strategies and good sportsmanship.

The Health program includes vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening, and dental education.

Foreign Language: Students receive formal and informal foreign language instruction.

Other electives and enrichment classes may be offered as the schedule, student interest, and staff availability allow.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Inclement Weather: In accordance with diocesan policy, Santa Cruz Catholic School follows the bad weather school closing or bad weather early release decisions of the Hays Consolidated Independent School District (HCISD). Check local media for announcements of changes to the HCISD schedule. It is not necessary to call the school to confirm this information; we request that the telephone line not be tied up this way when it is important for us to attend to unusual conditions.

Changes to the Santa Cruz Catholic School schedule may also be posted on the website and the official school social media accounts.

Emergency/Disaster: In the event of a disaster or emergency that requires the school to close during normal operation hours, follow these procedures:

1. Do not call the school. There may not be anyone in the building.
2. Check local media for announcements.
3. Check your email and your texts for updates.
4. When notified, report to the student pick-up area (look for signs and instructions, procedures will likely be different than regular pick up).
5. If you are able, volunteer to assist school officials.
6. Complete the student sign-out log before taking your child from the school.

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY (EIM)

It is diocesan policy that anyone who serves in ministry to minors or vulnerable adults must complete a criminal record check and attend an Ethics and Integrity in Ministry workshop.

The directive from Bishop Vásquez mentions many categories of volunteers affected by the policy, including youth ministry volunteers, classroom volunteers, anyone serving in a program for minors that is hosted on school property, anyone transporting minors in vehicles, and anyone who fills a one-time need in ministry to minors or vulnerable adults.

At Santa Cruz Catholic School this policy is interpreted to mean all persons who volunteer at school in any capacity must be EIM certified **before** volunteering. Information on the workshops may be found at www.austindiocese.org. Each volunteer must renew their certification every three (3) years.

All adults in the school community are encouraged to complete their EIM certification promptly to volunteer and participate fully in the life of the school.

EVALUATION/REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS

Diocesan Grading Scale

Pre-K & Kindergarten

M = Meets objective
P = Progressing
I = Improvement needed

Kindergarten Skills

+ = Always
P = Progressing

Grades 1-8 (Reported in a percentage numerical value)

90 - 100	A
80 - 89	B
70-79	C
69 and below	F
Incomplete	I

A grade of I (incomplete) on the report card indicates that the student's work for the course is incomplete and has not yet received any credit for the course. All missing work must be made up within two (2) weeks from the end of the quarter in which the I was received. If the work is not completed within this time, a failing grade will have been earned.

Conduct/Character Development Grades: Conduct grades reflect a child's behavior during class, during class changes, in the halls, and indicate his/her general attitude toward the maintenance of an orderly learning environment and respect for himself/herself and the rights of others. If a child requires a more than average amount of correction during a grading period, the conduct mark will express this fact. This grade indicates the level of effort, behavior, character and courtesy that the student displays.

<u>Marking</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Comment</u>
E	94	Excellent
S	85	Satisfactory
N	76	Needs Improvement
U	69	Unsatisfactory

Conduct/Character Development Grade descriptions:

Excellent

1. Obeys all rules (e.g.: prompt, well groomed, proper uniform)

2. Exhibits an exemplary level of behavior (e.g.: shows an interest in learning, is respectful of others, listens attentively, shows a high level of consideration and courtesy towards others, shows a drive to excel in studies.)
3. Goes above and beyond normal expectations (e.g.: volunteers to help the teacher and other classmates, contributes to the learning process)

Satisfactory

Follows all school policies and obeys all handbook rules

Need Improvement

Does not consistently follow school policies and rules

Unsatisfactory

Frequent disregard for school policies and rules with no remorse.

Progress Reports: Parents are encouraged to check grades regularly in FACTS SIS.

Credit/Course Recovery: Students who fail to submit work on time will be subject to the late and missing assignment policy. We recognize that there are cases where extenuating circumstances for a student make it impossible for him or her to fully discharge his or her academic duties. Petitions for course and/or credit recovery must outline what the life crisis was that took the child off course academically, when the extenuating circumstance began, and what is now different in the student's life that suggests that he or she can now prevail over the dilemma or challenge. In any case where the Principal approves a petition for course or credit recovery, he/she will assemble a faculty and administrative team to assess the best support options, and then meet with the family to outline a program and timeline to be followed and the expectations for remediating the learning gap that the student must address. Because circumstances will vary in these situations, each is handled on a case-by-case basis.

FAMILY AND SCHOOL ALLIANCE

The Cardinal Family and School Alliance was formed in 2022. The objectives of the Organization shall be:

- To support parents and teachers in promoting the ideals of Catholic education.
- To promote a sense of community among families, faculty, staff, and friends of Santa Cruz Catholic School.
- To encourage cooperation between home and school to work together in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- To work with the Principal and Administration of the school together and collaborate with the Finance Committee of the School Advisory Board in raising funds for the social, personal, and academic enhancement of our children.
- To administer parent volunteer programs.
- To promote the spiritual, educational, physical and cultural welfare of the children of Santa Cruz.

Meetings are held on a regular basis and all parents or guardians of Santa Cruz students will be considered eligible for membership in the CFSA.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are encouraged as a method to enhance the effectiveness of our educational programs and to broaden a child's understanding of their world and environment. Participation in cultural and educational activities is encouraged. Field trips should be directly related to the curriculum. Final approval of all field trip plans is the sole discretion of the Principal.

Depending on the type of trip planned, teachers will allocate the appropriate number of chaperones. Field trips are educational excursions. **Only chaperones, teachers, and currently enrolled students may attend field trips.** Parents on the field trip may **not** bring other children as this greatly detracts from their ability to give their full attention to the students in their charge.

Chaperones are placed in charge of a designated number of students. They are responsible for the students' safety and learning experience. The teachers will give the parent chaperones specific instructions before the start of each field trip on expected behavior, safety, schedule, etc.

A field trip permission form completed and signed by the parents is required of everyone participating in the activity and must be presented before the activity takes place.

Whenever possible, bus transportation by an insured carrier will be provided. If there are not a sufficient number of students attending an off-campus event to warrant a bus, a private passenger vehicle may be used. If a private vehicle must be used, the following criteria are the policy of the Santa Cruz School Advisory Board:

1. Drivers must have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability that would impair the ability to drive safely.
2. All drivers, chaperones and volunteers must have a cleared driver's license check done through the diocese Ethics and Integrity in Ministry for all field trips.
3. The vehicle should have a valid registration and meet state safety requirements.
4. The vehicle must be insured for minimum limits of \$100,000/per person, \$300,000/per occurrence. Copy of insurance card or policy *denoting limits of liability* will be required of all drivers.
5. Drivers should be experienced drivers and demonstrate the maturity necessary to provide safety for those they are transporting.
6. The number of riders must not exceed the rated capacity for the vehicle and seat belts available and worn for each passenger. All passengers must wear seatbelts.
7. Drivers must be at least 25 years or older.

GRADUATION

Santa Cruz will recognize this traditional hallmark for our eighth-grade students with a liturgical celebration, graduation ceremony, and luncheon for the graduate and immediate family.

HARASSMENT

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The Principal will investigate and make a finding in all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior, even first-time offenses, could face disciplinary measures up to and including suspension and expulsion.

HEALTH/FIRST AID/MEDICATIONS

Health Program: The State of Texas and the Diocese of Austin require all students be immunized against Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Poliovirus, Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella. Immunizations should be completed prior to the beginning of school. According to Texas law, a student shall show acceptable evidence of vaccination prior to entry, attendance, or transfer to a public or private elementary or secondary school.

The state further requires that health records be kept current throughout the school year. Notify the school office when a child receives an immunization by providing the name of the immunization, date it was administered (mm/dd/yyyy), and child's name on a form from your doctor or health clinic.

Santa Cruz Catholic School follows diocesan policy for vaccinations. Admission will be denied for any child who has not been vaccinated. In accordance with diocesan policy there is no "opt out" option for vaccinations.

Communicable Diseases

Santa Cruz Catholic School adheres to the following guidelines directed by Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department for excluding students with communicable diseases from attending school:

Exclusion Guidelines	Return to School Guidelines
Oral temperature of 100 or above	Fever free for 24 hours
Vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, or severe abdominal pain	Symptom free for 24 hours
Marked drowsiness or malaise	Symptom free
Sore throat, acute cold or persistent cough	Symptom free
Red, inflamed or discharging eyes	Written physician release
Acute skin rashes or eruptions	Written physician release
Swollen glands around jaws, ears, or neck	Written physician release
Suspected scabies or impetigo	Written physician release
Any skin lesion in the weeping stage	Covered and diagnosed as non-infectious
Earache	Symptom free
Pediculosis	Lice free/nit free

Other symptoms suggestive of acute illness	Written physician release
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Infectious Disease Policy and Procedure

It is the policy of Santa Cruz Catholic School to provide a quality Catholic education to any child who desires to attend, provided the child does not constitute a health hazard to any Santa Cruz Catholic School student or employee. Santa Cruz Catholic School follows the policies as given in the diocesan Policy Book and CDC guidelines.

First Aid

First Aid supplies are available in the office for illness, minor cuts, bumps, and bruises. Parents are notified as soon as possible in case of serious injuries. In case of serious injury or illness when parents cannot be reached, the child will be taken to the hospital or 911 called, at the discretion of the Principal in accordance with the *Emergency/Medical Release Form*.

There is a defibrillator on campus.

Medications

A *Medication Authorization Form* must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian for dispensing medications to students during school hours. **Medication should be given outside school hours, if possible.** Only medication that cannot be given at home will be given at school. Medications prescribed three times a day should be given before school, after school, and at bedtime.

A student may take medication at school only if:

1. a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or dentist has prescribed the medication, or a parent requests the administration of non-prescription medication (over-the-counter); and
2. the parent/guardian delivers the medication to the school office or nurse; and
3. the medication is delivered in its prescription container with a current pharmacy prescription label or if the medication is over-the-counter medication, in the original labeled and sealed container (unopened); and
4. the staff or nurse administers the medication to the student; and
5. the parent/guardian completes and returns the *Medication Authorization Form* to the school office or nurse.

Item 4 above does not apply if a parent authorizes a student to self-carry and self-administer medication through an epi-pen, inhaler, insulin pump, or glucometer and completes and delivers this form to school.

The school may not:

1. accept any medication that is not in the proper container as previously stated;
2. accept any medication from the student or any person other than the parent/guardian;
3. administer experimental medication or dosages;

4. administer any herbal medication, dietary supplements, or nutritional aids, which are not approved as medication by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA);
5. administer any medication with an expiration date that has passed;
6. administer any medication via a central line at school; or
7. administer any medication for which the school personnel, in its sole discretion, is not qualified or licensed to administer.

A student may not:

1. carry any medication on their person or in their belongings, unless permission has been granted for an inhaler, epi-pen, insulin pump, or glucometer; or
2. give any medication to other students.

The school will destroy or dispose of any medication

1. a parent/guardian does not retrieve after the school has requested the parent/guardian to retrieve it;
2. in a vial (e.g., insulin) once started (opened) and not used in 30 days; or
3. has an expiration date that has passed.

HOMEWORK

Homework is studying at home and is ordinarily an extension of classroom instruction. Santa Cruz Catholic School students ordinarily have homework. This may be written, online or study work.

The purpose of homework is the improvement of the learning process by reinforcing newly acquired skills, by engaging in preparatory activities such as reading for background, and by extending and applying classroom learning for developing new and deeper understanding. Students should be encouraged to read or drill in areas of weakness even when no formal homework has been assigned.

Students are expected to put effort into their studies outside school hours on a daily basis according to these approximate guidelines:

Kindergarten	15 minutes
Grades 1 & 2	30 minutes
Grade 3 & 4	45 minutes
Grades 5 & 6	1 hour
Grades 7 & 8	1 hour and 15 minutes

Homework time will vary according to the nature of the assignment and the ability of the student. If your child(ren) consistently spends more than the suggested time on homework, please contact their homeroom teacher for assistance. Parents are requested to see that homework is completed in an atmosphere conducive to study and the student's learning style. Homework is not normally assigned over the weekends to promote and foster family activities. There will be times, however, when long-term projects or extended assignments will be expected after a weekend.

Makeup work

When a student is absent due to illness, the student is responsible for obtaining missed work from their teacher(s) on the day they return to class. The student will have the same number of days as missed to complete the work, unless specified otherwise by the teacher. If a student was absent three (3) days, they will have three (3) days after their return to turn in their work.

Major projects

Due dates for long-term projects are not extended due to absences.

Make Up Tests

Make-up tests must be scheduled with the individual teacher according to the teacher's availability before or after school.

Late Work and Penalties

Students will be penalized for late work. The points taken off and allowances for late work vary by grade level.

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Flowing from our school philosophy that each student is unique in God's plan and possesses individual gifts and talents, we respect individual differences. We explore different ways to help students learn, and retain information, develop skills, and increase academic performance.

If a student is not meeting grade level expectations a meeting will be scheduled with parents and teacher(s) to discuss an action plan for the student.

LIBRARY

The Library is a quiet area for reading, study, and reference work. Students must maintain proper decorum in the Library. Students are given regular opportunities to visit the Library to check out or return books. Fines may be assessed for lost or damaged books.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Santa Cruz Catholic School students eat lunch in Deane Hall at tables assigned for their class. All students are expected to use good table manners. It is the responsibility of students to pick up after themselves leaving the tables and floor clean. All trash and food waste should be thrown away in the trash containers. No food may be taken outside the lunch area.

Students pray and wash hands before lunch. Each teacher will establish standards for table manners, cleanliness of the environment, and appropriate lunchtime behavior. Students end their lunchtime with a prayer.

Students bringing their own lunch must provide utensils needed. We are unable to warm, cook, or refrigerate lunch items for students. Lunches should be nutritious and simple so children can be as independent as possible during lunch. In order that lunch be as safe and pleasant as possible, the following are strongly discouraged:

1. Fast food (whether brought in the morning or delivered at lunchtime)
2. Glass containers or any type of glass
3. Soft drinks
4. Food or drink with red or purple dye
5. Trading, sharing, or selling lunch items of any type

Santa Cruz Catholic School offers daily hot lunch. Lunches need to be purchased through FACTS Tuition Management before the last day of the previous month. Lunches do not include drinks (students are allowed to bring one from home). Lunches are \$5.25. Refunds are not available for absent days.

Snacks and treats

Students in all grades bring their own nutritious snack each day

MEDIA RELEASE

Students who attend Santa Cruz Catholic School are occasionally asked to be part of school and/or diocesan publicity, publications, or public relations activities. Student and Parental/Guardian signature on the *Santa Cruz Catholic School Media Release Agreement* form indicates your approval for your child's name, picture, voice, or verbal statement to appear in school, parish, or diocesan publication, video, website. Santa Cruz Catholic School has no control over pictures, statements, or media of students taken without permission.

Student and Parent/Guardian understand that signature of the *Santa Cruz Catholic School Media Release Agreement* form provides consent and agreement to the following:

- The photo, video, or student statements may be used in subsequent years;
- Consent and release have been given without coercion or duress;
- All rights are waived to inspect and approve the finished product or copy that may be used in connection with an image that the school, parish or diocese has taken of your child(ren), or the use to which it may be applied.
- No compensation will be made for these uses, and that the diocese and/or Santa Cruz Catholic School exclusively own all rights to the images and recordings.
- Signature of the *Santa Cruz Catholic School Media Release Agreement* form is binding upon heirs and/or future legal representatives.
- Signature of the *Santa Cruz Catholic School Media Release Agreement* form releases The Catholic Diocese of Austin and/or Santa Cruz Catholic School, its successors, employees, and agents from any and all claims for compensation, damages or rights to monies arising out of the use by the Catholic Diocese of Austin and/or Santa Cruz Catholic School or any other parties to whom such videos, images, or other media has been distributed.
- If the student and/or parent/guardian wish to rescind this agreement, they may do so with written notice to the school office prior to publication and/or production of materials.

OFF-CAMPUS CONDUCT

The administration of Santa Cruz Catholic School reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the course of the school day. This off-campus behavior includes, but is not limited to, violence, threats of violence, bullying, cyber-bullying, and moral, civil, or criminal offenses.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents/guardians are required to attend one (1) formal teacher conference each year. The conferences are held at the end of the first and third quarters. For these regularly scheduled conferences, videoconferencing may be an option for parents who are not able to meet in person.

Parents or teachers may request additional conferences during the calendar year.

Parents/guardians may email the teacher or call the school office to request a conference with a teacher. The teacher will contact the parent/guardian to set a mutually agreeable date and time for the conference by e-mail or telephone call.

Conferences may happen in different formats including, but not limited to, parent-teacher, parent-teacher-student, and student-led. The conference format is typically decided by the teacher.

The teachers, staff and administration of Santa Cruz Catholic School request they not receive calls, texts, or messages through personal social networks.

PARENT ORIENTATION

A “Meet the Teacher” Night is scheduled in August, before the start of school so that students may drop off supplies, meet their teachers, and become familiar with the layout of the school. A “Back to School Night” is scheduled in September so parents can meet the teachers and review long-range plans, goals, and objectives for the year. A second Open House is held during Catholic Schools Week, usually held at the end of January, for new incoming families.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Santa Cruz Catholic School attempts to provide a safe environment for everyone.

Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously.

Students making threats to harm themselves, a specific individual, or the campus at large, whether in jest or seriously and whether in person, on the phone or online face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The Principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

PLAYGROUND AND RECESS

During recess periods, the playground/recess area is under the supervision of staff and volunteer supervisors. Students should remain in their assigned play areas. Students may never leave the school grounds during the lunch or recess period without being signed out through the front office.

To ensure the safety of our students, once outside for recess, no student can return to the building until the entire class comes in with the teacher — this includes restroom visits. Emergency need for restroom and nurse are at the teacher's discretion. Students should use the restroom before their lunch period. Students are to walk in and out of the building quietly and orderly at all times.

Only school-issued sports equipment will be permitted at school for recess use. Faculty may use their discretion to allow sports equipment from home to be used at recess. All other equipment will be confiscated. The safety of the entire playground is to be considered at all times.

Balls may not be kicked or thrown against any building or fence. Should a playground ball be accidentally kicked out of the play area, the student responsible must inform a supervising adult.

Santa Cruz Catholic School students will play outdoors when weather permits. If a child needs to remain indoors for serious health reasons, send a detailed note to the office. A recess exemption should be a temporary exception. No student may remain indoors at recess for longer than three (3) days without a written note from the doctor.

PROMOTION/RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

Promotion to the next grade will be conditioned upon the following, according to the *Diocese of Austin Handbook of School Policies*:

Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten: As developmental programs, these programs recognize that students make progress at different rates. While student mastery will be monitored, promotion is based more on a holistic picture of the student's readiness for the expectations of the next level.

Elementary grades (1-5): To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain for the year an overall average of 70 or above, which is derived by averaging the final numerical grade for language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and religion. In addition, a student shall attain an average of 70 or above in language arts and in mathematics. Grades for health, fine arts, and physical education may be determined by local school regulations using numerical grades, letter grades, or indications such as Excellent, Satisfactory, or Needs Improvement.

Middle School Grades (6-8): To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain an overall average of 70 or above for the year in all courses taken. In addition, a student shall attain an average of 70 or above in the following subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and religion.

RELIGIOUS FORMATION

The faculty of Santa Cruz Catholic School strives to form committed Christians by means of a planned program in catechesis and liturgy.

Parents are required to attend parent meetings prior to the reception of a sacrament by their child. All families are encouraged to participate in weekly Sunday Mass and regular reception of the sacraments together. During the school year, the faculty and students participate in the following Religious Formation Activities:

1. Attendance at Mass as a school community
2. Religious instruction
3. Preparation for and reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist in Grade 2
4. Stations of the Cross weekly during Lent
5. Special sacrifices and prayers for the Missions during Lent
6. Experiences of various forms of prayer, such as the Rosary, spontaneous prayers, reflections, etc.
7. Participation in service projects in the school, parish, and community

Prayers

As part of their religious education, all students are taught to pray. Santa Cruz Catholic School uses the text of prayers as given in the official diocesan prayer book, *Catholic Prayers*. Santa Cruz Catholic School also follows the schedule of prayers given by grade in *Catholic Prayers*. All families are given a copy of the *Catholic Prayers* upon new registration. Middle school students are given a copy of the *Catholic Prayers* at the start of fifth grade to use throughout middle school. A modest fee will be charged to replace a lost prayer book.

Santa Cruz Catholic School students begin each day with a Morning Offering Prayer that is different than what is published in *Catholic Prayers*.

Morning Offering Prayer

Heavenly Father, I praise you and thank You for your great love and I lift up this day for your blessing! With your help, I will live today as a responsible, generous, and honest person. Like Jesus, as taught by his mother, Mary, I will try today to treat everyone I meet with dignity and respect. With Jesus' spirit alive in me, I will witness my love by thinking of others first and myself last. Help me today Father, to put into action what I have said in words. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

SAFETY

School Security: All visitors of Cruz Catholic School during school hours must sign in and obtain an identification badge to be always worn. Upon exit, the badge should be returned and the visitor should sign out.

Santa Cruz Catholic School has a *Crisis Management and Response Manual* that encompasses all aspects of any disaster. The following are the student and parent responsibilities as detailed in the plan:

1. Be certain the *Emergency Contact Form* is accurate and complete and returned to school on or before the first school day. Any changes made during the school year (phone number, address, etc.) must be sent to the school immediately.
2. Make certain your child(ren) understands where to go when an emergency arises en route to and from school.
3. Be aware of, support, and reinforce the emergency procedure information your child receives at school.

Fire & Safety Drills

1. Adequate instructions are given to the faculty and students regarding procedures.
2. Students are instructed to evacuate in an orderly manner and to remain calm.
3. Fire evacuation procedures are posted in every classroom.
4. Fire drills are conducted at intervals according to regulations.

Inclement Weather Drills

1. Adequate instructions are given to the faculty and students regarding procedures.
2. Students are instructed how to evacuate the classrooms and go to a place of shelter.
3. Periodic drills are conducted.

SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

The Santa Cruz School Advisory Board is an advisory body consisting of nine lay people, the Pastor, and the Principal. The School Advisory Board advises the Principal and Pastor on policies for the operation of educational programs in Santa Cruz Catholic School, subject to regulations and policies that proceed from the Diocesan School Advisory Board.

Each spring applications are requested to fill vacancies on the Board. To qualify to be a voting member of this Board, a candidate must be at least 21 years of age and not be an officer of any other parish board. All members must be affiliated with the parish either by being a member of Santa Cruz Catholic Church, an active Catholic from one of the supporting parishes in Hays County, have a child enrolled or be a supporter of the Philosophy of Catholic Education. Parent membership is limited to 49 percent of the Board Members at any one time.

The Advisory Board remains open at all times to parent comments, opinions, and questions pertaining to school policies. If you wish to address any comment or ask any questions of a board member, please feel free to call any member. The Advisory Board meets every other month.

SCHOOL PICTURES AND YEARBOOK

Individual pictures and group class pictures with students in full dress uniform are taken annually in the fall. A second photo session featuring specialty shots with students may be offered in the spring. Parents will be offered the opportunity to purchase pictures.

A school yearbook is produced each year and is available for purchase by families and friends. An order form will be sent home for yearbook purchases.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of social media may result in disciplinary action, if the content of a student's posts includes defamatory or detrimental comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish. Families and students are held responsible for social media posts made on and off campus and before, during, and after school hours.

SPIRIT INFORMATION

School Song: *Lift High the Cross*

School Motto: Growing in the Spirit, with Courage, Compassion and Service to others.

School Colors: Hunter Green and Gold

School Mascot: Cardinal

School Emblem: Cross

Monday of each week is Spirit Day.

Students and staff may wear school spirit shirts on Spirit Days.

STUDENT SERVICE HOURS

Service is an integral part of living our Catholic faith. Santa Cruz Catholic School offers numerous service opportunities throughout the year for all grade levels.

Students in the National Junior Honor Society (Grades 6-8) are required to complete service hours as part of their membership.

TECHNOLOGY

Santa Cruz Catholic School is committed to providing an environment for academic excellence for our students, integrating the basic elements of education with an emphasis on emerging technologies. We are proud to offer all students access to our school's technology networks. Access to these network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. This access is a privilege – not a right.

Equipment Responsibility: School-provided **equipment includes Chromebooks and iPads and other technological equipment** as needed. All equipment must be treated with respect.

- All students must sign and adhere to the *Technology Acceptable Use Policy*.
- No food or drink is permitted when students are using computers or tablets.
- Equipment should be handled safely.
- Any use of flash drives must be approved by the teacher.
- A student will work only on their computer, unless asked by the teacher to switch or share computers.
- A student is responsible for all equipment issued with their computer, including the computer, carrying case and strap. A student will immediately report any lost, missing or damaged computers or accessories.
- Whether accidental or purposeful, students who return damaged computers (broken screen, broken keys, etc.) will be assessed a fee payable through FACTS Tuition Management.
- Students must provide their own mouse and headphones.
- A student's use of technology shall not contain or access materials that are profane, obscene, advocate illegal acts, or advocate harassment, violence, or discrimination.
- Permission must be obtained to download any software from the internet.
- Students may not use school computers to play online games (including .io games).
- Students found gaming will be disciplined.
- Students may not take photographs or make audio or video recordings while on school property without prior authorization.

Certain equipment is restricted for teacher use only

- Teacher workstations and any equipment on their desks
- Televisions, projectors, speakers, and other presentation units

Passwords are strictly confidential.

- A student shall not give their user identification to anyone else.
- A student shall not attempt to get or use another's password.
- A student shall not ever work in another's folder or file unless working on a group assignment.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Violation of the policies and procedures of Santa Cruz Catholic School concerning the use of technology and networks will result in disciplinary action.

- **First Offense:** Student can lose computer privileges/Internet access. Length of privilege suspension will be determined by the administrator/teacher. Restitution of damages will apply.
- **Second Offense:** A student can be removed from class and recommended for in-school suspension. Restitution of damages will apply.
- **Third Offense:** Expulsion may be considered for flagrant violations that blatantly corrupt the educational value of computers, of the Internet, or instances when students have used Santa Cruz Catholic School equipment or infrastructure to violate the law or to compromise another computer network. Restitution of damages will apply.

Only students who do not have access to a personal device at home will be permitted to remove their Chromebook from campus.

TEXTBOOKS

All students are required to have a school bag or backpack that fits in the cubby to protect their textbooks, papers, notebooks, and school supplies. Rolling book bags that do not fit in school cubbies will be permitted only on approval of an individual's need.

All hardcover textbooks must be covered with a sturdy book cover at all times. Damaged or lost textbooks will be assessed fines for repair or replacement.

TESTING

Santa Cruz Catholic School adopted the NWEA test, which tests students three times a year to measure growth and achievement

Santa Cruz Catholic School administers the ACRE Religious Education Assessment provided by the National Catholic Education Association at the end of the fifth- and eighth-grade year.

TRANSFERS

When a student transfers or graduates out of Santa Cruz Catholic School, a copy of their cumulative record is sent upon receipt of a signed parent request from the receiving school.

No records will be sent to another school until all fees (lunch, library fines, textbook, computer, etc.) and/or tuition are paid in full.

TUITION/INCIDENTAL PAYMENT POLICY

All tuition and incidental payments are handled through FACTS Tuition Management, Inc. All incidental billing (lunches, field trips, athletic fees, etc.) are also billed through FACTS. All families must set up an account at <https://online.factsmtg.com>.

Tuition Payment Options

- Pay in full by August 1, or
- Pay half of annual tuition by August 1 and the remainder by January 1, or
- Pay in eleven (11), or twelve (12) monthly installments.
- Monthly payments not received on time will have a 10 percent late fee added to the account.

Enrollment/Re-Enrollment Fees

- The \$150 Application Fee for new students must be submitted with the application.
- Returning students must reserve their spot by paying the registration by the date designated.
- All Application Fees are non-refundable.
- There will be a \$25 returned check fee for each check that does not clear the bank.

Tuition/Incidental Delinquencies

- Written notice will be given ten (10) days after any tuition/Incidental payment delinquency.
- If the delinquency amount is not paid within thirty (30) days a meeting will be requested by the administration to work out a plan for payment.

UNIFORM DRESS CODE

Uniforms help to identify the student as a member of the Santa Cruz Catholic School Community.

Neatness, cleanliness, and modesty are admirable virtues expected of our students. Students and Parents are expected to abide by these guidelines at all times.

Clothing

- It is the parent's responsibility to check their student for complete and proper uniform and dress code compliance before dropping them off at school.
- It is expected that all students be in a complete and proper uniform daily beginning on the first day of school.
- Mondays are spirit shirt days.
- Students must wear their complete dress uniform on Mass days.
- The dress code applies to arrival and departure from school, unless the student is engaged in special school activities, authorized by the Principal, which demand a change of clothes.
- All clothing should be of proper fit, clean, and neat at all times.
- If any student must be out of uniform for any reason, a note from the parent must be presented to the office before school on the same day.
- Girls should wear a girl's blazer and boys a boy's blazer. They should not switch jackets during the day.
- Skirts should be no more than 2 inches above the knee.
- Girls' undergarments should be white or skin tone and not visible through their shirts.
- Girls should wear modesty shorts under their skirts for PE.
- The principal may authorize dress code exceptions for activities such as field trips, Catholic Schools Week, and free dress days.
- When a uniform is not-required for after-school functions (banquet, concert, school dances, etc.) students must still be dressed appropriately and modestly.
- Students may only wear clothing with the school emblem as it has been issued.

Footwear

- Colorful socks should not be worn.
- Girls may wear white or navy-blue socks that are either knee-high, under the knee or ankle length.
- Boys may wear white socks that are either crew or ankle length.
- Shoes should be clean and solid white or solid black.
- Shoes should not be painted on, colored, or decorated in any way except for the manufacturer's logo.

Hair

- Hair length, style, and color must be appropriate.
- Hair must be kept out of the face.
- Hair accessories (bows, scrunchies, etc.) should be minimal and color-coordinated with the uniform.
- Boys may not wear hair accessories.

- No out-of-the-ordinary haircuts will be permitted. Hair must be a natural color. If a haircut causes a distraction in the classroom the student will be asked to adjust it.

Makeup

- Makeup is not allowed. If makeup is worn, students will be asked to remove it before going to class.
- Girls may wear clear nail polish only. Boys should not wear nail polish. If colored nail polish is worn, students will be asked to remove it before going to class.

Jewelry

- Buttons, brooches, and pins may not be worn on uniforms, except for a First Communion pin, Boy or Girl Scout emblem, NJHS pin, or club related pin on the uniform jacket/blazer.
- Students may wear one necklace with a cross, crucifix, or religious medal.
- Students may wear one wristwatch.
- Students may wear one ring.
- Rosaries may be carried in the pocket or in a rosary pouch. Rosaries should never be worn as a necklace.
- Only girls may wear earrings.
- All jewelry is worn at the wearer's risk. Santa Cruz Catholic School, its faculty and representatives are not responsible for jewelry that is damaged, broken, or lost at school.

Outwear

- Only Santa Cruz Catholic School branded outerwear may be worn in the classroom.
- All other outerwear must be removed and stored until after school.
- School-branded sweatshirts and hoodies are available for purchase from the office.

No dress code can cover all eventualities or possibilities. The Principal will have the final and binding decision on what is acceptable.