



Diocese of Pittsburgh Elementary Schools Parent-Student Handbook

The Diocese of Pittsburgh has a unified Parent-Student Handbook for all of the Regional Elementary Schools. Each elementary school also has its own addendum for items that are school specific. Revised:
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Nothing contained in our handbook, or in any other document, custom or practice, is intended to, or shall be construed to, create any contractual obligations, express or implied, on the part of the diocese or the school. The school reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Parents/guardians will be given notice of any amendment.



PITTSBURGH CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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Introduction

Mission and Vision of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh operate with a clear vision and mission: to support the Bishop in his role as a teacher of the Catholic faith. The goal is to create an environment that promotes excellence in both religious and academic education, in line with the teachings of the Church. These schools are dedicated to developing students who are academically strong, grounded in their faith, and committed to service.

In partnership with parents and guardians, the Department of Catholic Schools, regional administration, teachers, and staff work together to help students reach their fullest potential and live faith-filled lives.

School Mission Statements

The broader mission of the schools is to foster the spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional development of students based on the Gospel and Catholic Church teachings. As part of the Middle States Accreditation Process, each individual school and/or region defines its own specific mission statements, belief statements, and profiles of a graduate.

Accreditation by the Middle States Association

All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh are accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. This accreditation publicly validates the excellence of the schools and serves as an expression of confidence in their educational programs. The Middle States Evaluation is an ongoing process that requires schools to submit updated plans every three years. After seven years, each school or region undergoes a re-evaluation for continued accreditation.

Family - School Partnership

Parents and guardians are the primary educators of their children. Our schools are privileged to partner with families in this vital work, and a relationship built on mutual cooperation, trust, and support is essential.

All students and parents/guardians are required to sign a **Student-Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form** and a **Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding**. By doing so, parents acknowledge that they have read and agree to support our school's philosophy, policies, and procedures.

This partnership requires active participation from both sides. The school expects parents to:

- Support Catholic Identity: Understand and actively support the school's Catholic mission and identity, including baptismal promises by ensuring the family's regular Mass attendance, if Catholic.
- Foster a Positive Home Life: Provide a loving and disciplined atmosphere at home that supports their child's spiritual, physical, and mental well-being.
- Communicate Effectively: Read all school communications, know their child's teachers, and attend parent-teacher conferences. If parents have a concern, they should discuss it with the person most directly involved before escalating it.
- Be Involved and Supportive: Be an active partner in their child's education and support the school and its staff in words, deeds, and on social media.
- Fulfill Financial Obligations: Be responsible for any financial obligations incurred by their children at school.

As a partner in their child's education, parents can expect the school to:

- Prioritize Safety: Expect their child's safety to be a top priority.
- Receive an Authentic Catholic Education: Expect their children to receive an authentic Catholic education in a Catholic environment.
- Expect Competent Teachers: Expect their children to be taught by caring, respectful, and competent teachers.
- Communicate Effectively: Expect timely responses to requests for meetings with school personnel.
- Review Records: Review their child's educational records and respond to them.
- Program Participation: Give their children the opportunity to participate in all programs and activities. However, the school reserves the right to determine a child's participation based on what is deemed to be in their best interest.

While a parent has the right to withdraw their child, the school administration reserves the right to require a student's withdrawal if the partnership is determined to be "irretrievably broken."

Instructional Program

The schools of the Diocese of Pittsburgh are uniquely Catholic, existing to promote a Catholic way of life based on Gospel values. They play an important role in transmitting the faith, building community, and promoting service. To preserve traditional moral and religious values and to meet new ethical challenges in tomorrow's society, emphasis is placed on critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and decision-making. Our Catholic Schools are committed to an educational program that seeks knowledge and practice of the Catholic faith, academic excellence, moral courage, and the learning

of the faith in the light of the Church's social teachings.

The Catholic school offers a strong academic and catechetical curriculum. In addition to meeting all of the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the curriculum gives special attention to integrating Gospel values. The curriculum integrates faith into all areas of instruction. Dedicated professionals, whose teaching ministry is based on a love for the Church, create a communal and service-oriented environment. Research indicates that children will achieve according to the expectations placed upon them by their teachers and parents/guardians. Catholic school teachers place high expectations on all children so that they are encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability.

The leadership of the principal and the host pastor or chaplain provide opportunities for Catholic practice, including liturgies, reception of the sacraments, and other spiritual experiences.

Curriculum Guidelines

In our Catholic schools, a high-quality academic education is built upon an organized plan of essential content infused with Gospel values. Our Curriculum Guidelines, used by every elementary school, align State, National, and Diocesan standards to ensure continuity in teaching and learning while honoring each student's individual needs. Curriculum teams made up of highly qualified diocesan teachers and administrators meet to review, update, and strengthen our curriculum. These dedicated educators ensure that our academic programs remain rigorous, relevant, and responsive to the needs of all students. Grounded in both educational best practices and our Catholic mission, the teams work collaboratively to align the curriculum with state standards, integrate faith-based learning, and support the formation of well-rounded, faith-filled learners.

To meet the diverse needs of all learners, our schools use a variety of strategies and supports that help every student succeed. Teachers regularly assess progress and adjust instruction to ensure each child begins at the right level and continues to grow. Instruction is flexible and personalized, providing both remediation for students who need extra help and enrichment for those ready to go beyond grade-level expectations. This balanced approach allows all students to build skills, deepen understanding, and reach their full potential.

Our curriculum guidelines and instructional approach help our students engage meaningfully, [Diocese of Pittsburgh Curriculum](#)

The Central Role of Catechetics

Catechetics, or religious formation, is the central pillar of a Catholic school's identity. A conscious effort is made to create a Christ-centered atmosphere by integrating Christian values and morality throughout the entire curriculum and school environment.

Our shared belief in Jesus draws us together as a school community. This faith is expressed and strengthened through daily communal prayer, where students learn to love the Church's worship. The school day begins and ends with prayer, and simple prayers are said before and after lunch. The liturgical seasons of the year are recognized, as are the anniversaries of historical figures, peacemakers, and significant civil holidays.

Faith experiences are an integral part of this formation. Participation in opportunities like Eucharistic Liturgies, Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, Adoration, and other Catholic prayers is expected. Additionally, service to others is a key component. At the heart of Catholic education is the concept of community, not just as an idea, but as a reality to be lived out as we are united in Christ through Baptism and His Church.

Sacraments of Initiation and First Reconciliation

The Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation) and First Reconciliation are pivotal moments of spiritual growth. The parish is the spiritual home and central faith community for every Catholic, making it the ordinary place for these sacraments to be received. While Catholic schools provide the necessary catechetical formation, the parish remains the primary location for their celebration, even for students of Catholic schools.

However, a pastor may allow parishioners to celebrate these sacraments with their peers in another parish (for example, the parish where the school is located), if the other pastor agrees. If parents wish to pursue this option, they must follow these steps at the start of the school year:

1. Inform your school about your home parish and your desire for your child to receive the sacrament(s) at the parish associated with the school.
2. Contact your home parish in writing to request permission from your pastor. In this communication, state that your child attends a specific Catholic school and that you would like them to receive the sacrament(s) at the parish associated with that school. You should communicate with both the parish's director of faith formation and the pastor.
3. Return the written permission from your pastor to the school principal. The principal will then inform the pastor of the school's parish and seek his permission for your child to receive the sacrament there.

NOTE: Either pastor has the right to decline this request. If this occurs, parents should remember that receiving these sacraments outside of their home parish is an irregular exception, as the parish is the natural and intended place for their reception.

Regarding catechesis, the Catholic school's program is considered sufficient for the primary educational preparation for the sacraments. While additional formation experiences at the parish may be desirable, they should not duplicate what the child is already learning in school and should not be overly burdensome. Parish policies regarding sacramental reception must be clearly communicated to families at the beginning of the school year. This communication, however, depends on parents first reaching out to their parish about their child's situation.

Catechetical Curriculum

The Catholic Church recognizes parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. The school's role is to supplement and complement the parent's role. A formal catechetical program is taught daily in the school. The Diocesan Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines, "Growing in God's Covenant," contain a balance of doctrinal content, scriptural understanding, faith formation, and prayer and worship experiences.

The goals and objectives of the Catechetical program consistently enhance the spiritual formation and moral development of all students. A genuine, personal relationship with God is cultivated through worship and service. Liturgical and personal prayer are essential in the development of a strong spiritual foundation. Careful planning and programming ensures a broad and deep understanding of authentic Church Doctrine. A variety of materials and resources are used to foster both spiritual growth and moral development.

Education on Marriage, Family, and Human Love: The Diocese of Pittsburgh also provides education on the dignity of the human person and God's plan for marriage and family through a comprehensive, K-12 program from the Ruah Woods Institute. This curriculum is a supplement to the regular religion

curriculum and grounds students in what it means to be human. It is based on Scripture, Tradition, contemporary Church documents, and the Theology of the Body of St. John Paul II. Through this program, students gain an understanding of who God is, who they are as images of God, how to see others as images of God, and how to live as a gift to others. The Ruah Woods curriculum provides an essential vision supporting many important areas, including virtue-based formation and social and emotional learning. While it is not a chastity program, it provides a profound understanding of God's plan for marriage, family, and sexuality. With its emphasis on staff formation, it makes possible a profound shift in school culture, where every member understands themselves and others as unique, unrepeatable, precious, and infinitely loved.

Parents are welcome to review all materials for the Ruah Woods curriculum and are recognized as the primary educators of their children regarding human sexuality. Parents' witness and example of loving each other, their love for the sacrament of marriage, and their love for their family enable their children to integrate the Church's teaching on marriage, family, and human sexuality into their own lives.

Education for Personal Safety: In concert with all the bishops of the United States, the Diocese of Pittsburgh requires that all K-12 students participate in a program that gives children and youth the tools they need to protect themselves and to know what to do if someone tries to violate their boundaries. The Diocese of Pittsburgh has adopted the Empowering God's Children program for this purpose. Parents are welcome to review the materials for this program.

Assessment Program

To support our mission of educating the whole child, the Diocese of Pittsburgh has developed a

comprehensive assessment plan that measures student growth and progress in alignment with both state standards and our diocesan curriculum. These assessments help guide classroom instruction, provide targeted support, and ensure high-quality learning experiences for all students.

Assessment also plays a key role in communication between teachers, students, and families. By sharing results and progress, we work together to support each child's unique needs and development. Through this partnership, we help form individuals who are not only well-prepared academically but also grounded in their faith and ready to make a positive impact in the world.

[K-12 Diocese of Pittsburgh Assessment Plan](#)

Student Support

As part of our mission to educate the whole child in mind, body, and spirit, the Diocese of Pittsburgh is committed to providing strong student support services that help all learners thrive. Our Student Support Program is designed to identify and address a variety of academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs, ensuring that each child receives the resources necessary for success. This program was developed in collaboration with the other Catholic dioceses across Pennsylvania and is being implemented in all of our schools for the 2025-2026 school year.

Each school in the Diocese works collaboratively with families, teachers, and professionals to provide tiered support through strategies such as classroom accommodations, intervention plans, consultation with specialists, and connections with external agencies when needed. Our approach is rooted in early identification, compassionate understanding, and proactive planning so that all students can access a high-quality Catholic education in a supportive and inclusive environment.

In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Catholic schools are committed to supporting students with unique learning needs through a faith-based, inclusive approach. While our schools do not implement public school IEPs or 504 plans, we provide a tool called an Instructional Support Plan (ISP).

The ISP is developed when a student presents documented academic, medical, or behavioral challenges that significantly impact their learning. It outlines specific, minor adjustments or strategies to support the student in the classroom while maintaining the same curriculum expectations as their peers. Adjustments may include things like extra time on tests, the use of assistive technology, or access to a quiet workspace.

To begin the support process, families are expected to provide:

- An existing IEP, 504 plan, or private evaluation;
- Medical documentation from a licensed physician; and
- Evidence of ongoing academic or behavioral concerns observed by teachers (from a former school).

Each school has a structured process involving an Academic and Behavioral Concerns (ABC) Council and a Student Support Team (SST). These teams—made up of school staff—review the

documentation, consult with parents/guardians, and create a personalized ISP or Medical Support Plan, as needed.

Please note:

- ISPs do not modify curriculum or grading expectations—they support student access to grade-level learning.
- All support plans and related records are kept confidential and follow diocesan guidelines for record retention.

While the school does not discriminate against students with special needs, a full range of services may not always be available to them. Decisions concerning the admission and continued enrollment of a student in the school are based upon the student's emotional, academic, and physical abilities and the resources available to the school in meeting the student's needs.

In some cases, it may be determined that we are unable to fully support a student's needs, and a recommendation may be made to an alternative school program that can develop and service a full IEP or 504 plan.

Auxiliary Services

The following services may be offered through the local Intermediate Units or the student's local public school of residency.

Remedial Reading and Math (Title I)

The federally-funded Title I program provides additional assistance to students who are not demonstrating grade-level proficiency in reading and/or math. Referrals for this program are based on teacher recommendations, standardized test results, and parental approval. Alternate strategies are planned for students in accordance with individual instructional goals and in support of the classroom curriculum, helping students develop mastery of basic skills.

Act 89 Services

Intermediate Unit personnel provide support to students in remedial math and reading. These teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to identify educational needs and design interventions and strategies to help a child succeed. Act 89 is a state-funded program, and some Intermediate Units combine funding from both Title I and Act 89 Services.

Speech/Language

Speech and language services are currently provided through Pennsylvania Act 89 funding. This special service is offered to students to enhance communication skills, which directly impact social and academic interactions.

Special Education Evaluation

Evaluations to determine a student's support needs are available through the student's school district of residency or Intermediate Unit. For more details, please consult the school principal or Student Support Coordinator.

School Counseling

A certified school counselor may be available to provide individual and small-group counseling sessions to children in grades K-8.

Daily Practices and Policies

Anti- Bullying Policy

Bullying, harassment, cyberstalking, and cyberbullying are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. These behaviors will be just cause for disciplinary action. Our schools prohibit any unwelcome physical, social, electronic, nonverbal, verbal, or written conduct directed at a student that has the effect of:

- Physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student.
- Recording videos of others without permission.
- Damaging, extorting, or taking a student's personal property.
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of emotional, mental, or physical harm. ● Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or the Catholic mission of the school.
- Disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Definitions

- Bullying is repeated, unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. This can be physical, verbal, social, or electronic. It results in physical hurt or psychological distress. Examples include, but are not limited to, teasing, name-calling, slurs (including racial slurs), rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, threatening, stalking, demeaning comments, public humiliation, and theft.
- Harassment is a course of conduct directed at a specific student that causes emotional distress and serves no legitimate purpose. This includes:
 - Verbal Harassment: Derogatory comments, jokes, slurs, or belligerent words.
 - Physical Harassment: Unwanted deliberate touching, pinching, punching, kicking, or patting.
 - Visual Harassment: Derogatory pictures, posters, cartoons, or computer-generated images.
 - Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, sexually motivated physical contact, or sexually suggestive remarks.
 - Online Harassment: Unkind behavior via email, texts, or social media that meets the

criteria for harassment.

- Cyberstalking is engaging in a course of conduct to communicate words or images via electronic mail or communication directed at a specific student, causing emotional distress and serving no legitimate purpose.
- Cyberbullying is the willful and repeated harassment and intimidation of a student through digital technologies, including email, blogs, texting, and social media websites (e.g., Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat). It includes teasing, recording video, intimidating, or making false accusations using any technological tool.

These definitions apply to any student who either directly engages in bullying or harassment or who, by their behavior, actions, or conduct, supports another student's act.

When a student is found to have violated this policy, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The specific action taken will be unique to the incident and may vary in assigned level, method, and severity.

Assemblies

Assemblies are held throughout the school year and are planned in conjunction with the principal, faculty, and parent organizations. Participation in such assemblies is expected and exceptions will be determined by the building principal.

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for academic success and spiritual growth. Excessive absences disrupt learning, hinder community engagement, and may violate state education laws. The Diocese of Pittsburgh Catholic Schools expect students to maintain consistent attendance in accordance with our mission to foster holistic development rooted in Catholic values. Effective attendance policies require collaboration among schools, parents, and community resources, with early intervention being a key component.

Parents/guardians of students who acquire excessive absences may be required to provide documentation from a physician indicating that the absences are related to an existing medical condition. Students with excessive absenteeism during any given academic year may be denied continued enrollment within the existing school year or denied re-enrollment for the next academic school year.

The Pennsylvania School Code outlines attendance policies and procedures designed to ensure that all children within the state receive an education and has several sections that collectively define and regulate student attendance and truancy for both public and non-public schools.

The following is a summary of the key provisions:

- Compulsory School Age: The period from the time a child's parents elect to have them enter school (no later than age 6) until the child turns 18 or graduates, whichever comes first.
- Truant: A child who has three or more school days of unexcused absences during the current

school year.

- Habitually Truant: A child who has six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.
- Unexcused Absence: An absence from school that is not a lawful absence and for which an approved explanation has not been submitted. Out-of-school suspensions are not considered unexcused absences.
- Excessive Absences: Accumulating ten (10) or more absences (excused or unexcused) in a semester, or eighteen (18) or more in a school year.
- Defining and Reporting Absences: Absences are considered unlawful until a written excuse is provided, typically within three days.
- Lawful or excused absences : When a student is prevented from attendance for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons, which include but are not limited to
 - Illness
 - Family Emergencies
 - Death in the family
 - Quarantine
 - Court appearance
 - School Sponsored Educational trips
 - Family educational trips of five (5) or fewer days with prior approval.
 - Prior approval from the principal is required or will be classified as an Unexcused Absence.
- Upon returning to school from an absence, a student must submit a documented excuse. If this excuse is not submitted within three days following the absence, the absence will be classified as Unexcused.
- Health-related absences can be excused by various health professionals or school administrators.
- Homeless Students: Absences due to homelessness are not considered unexcused, and schools must assist these students.
- A School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) may be held to address attendance issues.
- Legal Action: Citations for habitual truancy can lead to fines, community service, or loss of driving privileges.
- Referrals: Habitually truant children may be referred to outside programs or agencies.

Important note: It is the policy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh Catholic Schools that a parent/guardian should email or call the school to report their child(ren) absent for the day by 10:00 a.m. on the first day that a child is absent from school, giving the child's name, homeroom teacher, and reason for absence. Messages may be left on a provided voicemail. A representative from the school office will be responsible for verifying all student absences. He/she may call the home if a student is not in attendance and has not been reported absent by a parent/guardian. Follow up calls may be made until all absences are verified.

Parents/guardians and guardians of students who are absent for three (3) consecutive days or acquire excessive cumulative absences (ten days) may be required to provide documentation from a physician indicating that the absences are related to an existing medical condition.

A student is responsible for making up work when absent from school and for satisfactorily completing the courses of study.

Tardiness to School

It is the responsibility of all parents/guardians to ensure their children arrive on time for school. Punctuality is important because tardiness interrupts instructional time. If a student is unavoidably tardy, a note should accompany the student explaining the reason for the tardiness. All students who are not in their assigned homeroom at the designated time according to each individual school schedule will be considered tardy and must report to the Office with a Parent/Guardian. If for any reason a school bus is late, the students will be considered excused tardy.

- The Parent/Guardian must sign the child (ren) into school.
- The student(s) should inform the Office as to their Lunch Choice for the day.
- The school will notify parents/guardians if tardiness becomes excessive during each 9-week period and may affect the student's continued enrollment.

Early Dismissals/Early Arrival/Late Pick-up

Parents/guardians should make every effort to schedule appointments at a time that school is not in session. However, if a child must have an early dismissal, parents/guardians should submit written communication to the office. For these dismissals, parents/guardians or an authorized adult must come to the office and sign the child out at the authorized time. Children who arrive later than 10:00 a.m. will be marked absent in the morning. Children who leave school after 12:00 p.m. will be marked absent in the afternoon.

Any student arriving after 7:55 am must be signed in by a parent or guardian. There is a Tardy/Late arrival binder located outside the front office. Students will then be given a late slip to be admitted to class. Students who arrive after 10:30 am are marked absent for the morning session.

If a child must have an early dismissal, which is leaving school before 2:20 pm he/she must provide a written note from a parent or guardian prior to the dismissal. For these dismissals, parents or an authorized adult must come into the main office and sign the student out in the dismissal book. Students will be excused only at the authorized time.

DAILY SCHEDULE

<p>The following is the standard schedule. Saint Therese School follows a modified schedule on school delays, early dismissal days and liturgy days.</p>	
<p><u>Regular Daily Schedule</u></p> <p>7:30 - School building opens, students report directly to classroom</p> <p>7:55 - Tardy bell rings. Opening Prayers</p> <p>8:10 - Period 1</p> <p>8:50 - Period 2</p> <p>9:30 - Period 3</p> <p>10:10 - Period 4</p> <p>10:50 - Period 5 – 1st Lunch (K-3)</p> <p>11:30 - Period 6 – 2nd Lunch (4-8)</p> <p>12:10 - Period 7</p> <p>12:50 - Period 8</p> <p>1:30 - Period 9</p> <p>2:20 - Dismissal</p>	<p><u>Friday Mass Schedule</u></p> <p>7:30 - School building opens, students report directly to classroom</p> <p>7:55 - Tardy bell rings. Opening Prayers</p> <p>7:55 - Period 1</p> <p>8:25 - Period 2</p> <p>8:55 - Mass</p> <p>10:10 - Period 3</p> <p>10:40 - Period 4</p> <p>11:10 - Period 5 – 1st Lunch (K-3)</p> <p>11:50 - Period 6 – 2nd Lunch (4-8)</p> <p>12:30 - Period 7</p> <p>1:00 - Period 8</p> <p>1:30 - Period 9</p> <p>2:20 - Dismissal</p>
<p><u>2 Hour Delay Schedule</u></p> <p>9:55-10:05 - AM Homeroom</p> <p>10:05-10:30 - Period 1</p> <p>10:30-10:55 - Period 2</p> <p>10:55-11:30 - Period 5 (K-3 LUNCH)</p> <p>11:30-12:05 - Period 6 (4-8 LUNCH)</p> <p>12:05-12:30 - Period 3</p> <p>12:30-12:55 - Period 4</p> <p>12:55-1:20 - Period 7</p> <p>1:20-1:45 - Period 8</p> <p>1:45-2:10 - Period 9</p> <p>2:10-2:20 - PM Homeroom</p> <p>Announcements at 2:15</p>	<p><u>Early Dismissal Schedule</u></p> <p>7:55-8:00 - AM Homeroom</p> <p>8:00-8:25 - Period 1</p> <p>8:25-8:50 - Period 2</p> <p>8:50-9:15 - Period 3</p> <p>9:15-9:40 - Period 4</p> <p>9:40-10:05 - Period 7</p> <p>10:05-10:30 - Period 8</p> <p>10:30-11:05 - Period 5 (K-3 Lunch, NO recess)</p> <p>11:05-11:40 - Period 6 (4-8 Lunch. NO recess)</p> <p>11:40-12:05 - Period 9</p> <p>12:05-12:15 - PM Homeroom</p> <p>12:15 - Dismissal</p>

Cafeteria/Lunch

All students must bring or buy lunch during a full-day of school. The cost of lunch is \$3.75 and is paid through FACTS. Students will have an option to purchase the main entree that is listed on the

monthly calendar or an alternative option available everyday. Breakfast will be available to all students free of charge. St. Therese participates in the National School Lunch Program (NLSP). NLSP is part of a broader network of federally funded child nutrition programs that provides free or reduced lunch and/or breakfast to eligible students in schools. Details and information on the Free and Reduced Lunch Program are available in the office or at the links below.

[STT Lunch Letter 2025-2026](#)

[PERCES Free and Reduced Lunch Information](#)

[Pennsylvania Free and Reduced Lunch Application](#)

[Free and Reduced Lunch Application Instructions & FAQs](#)

The use of good manners is encouraged in our school cafeterias and the following general cafeteria rules are to be observed:

- Remain seated until finished eating.
- Discard all papers, scraps of food, etc. at your place and dispose of them properly.
- Obey cafeteria monitors at all times.
- Speak in a conversational tone.
- Walk at all times.
- Remain in the Cafeteria until dismissed.

Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

To avoid disruption to the learning environment, **cell phones, smartwatches, and other personal electronic devices are not to be used during school hours**. Students must keep these devices stored in their backpacks.

If a device is used, it will be confiscated. The student can pick up the device at the end of the school day. Repeated violations of this policy may result in a disciplinary consequence, and a parent or guardian may be required to pick up the device. In these cases, the student's privilege of bringing a device to school may be revoked.

The specific location for device pickup will be determined by each individual school.

Custody

Court Orders and Documentation

- Parents must provide the most current court-certified copy of the custody decree. If no such copy is on file, school officials will assume that both parents have equal custodial rights.
- It is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with an official, court-certified copy of any order that restricts access to a child or their records.
- In the absence of a court order specifying otherwise, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the child's academic records and other school-related information. To receive this information, the non-custodial parent must provide a current physical address, email, and phone number.
- It is the parents' responsibility to keep the school informed of the addresses where a student's records should be sent.

Release of a Child

School officials will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that children are released only to the appropriate parent according to the court-ordered custody arrangements. However, parents have the primary responsibility for communicating these arrangements and should instruct their children on which parent has physical custody on any given day.

Please note: School administrators, counselors, and teachers will keep all entrusted information confidential, except in cases where a person's life, health, or safety is at risk. The school, its staff, and administrators cannot become involved in adjudicating marital disputes. Parents should strive to keep personal issues out of school. The school's responsibility is focused solely on the child and their welfare.

Discipline

Student Discipline Policy

The Diocese of Pittsburgh Catholic Schools are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and faith-filled learning environment. This policy is a formal expression of our mission to educate the whole child in the likeness of Jesus Christ. Discipline is not viewed as punishment, but as a form of **"discipleship"**—the process of guiding students toward self-discipline and virtuous living. Our approach is rooted in the dignity of the human person and is designed to be proactive, instructional, and restorative. Embedded in Catholic teachings, our discipline emphasizes forgiveness and understanding, with the ultimate goal of developing thoughtful, caring, and loving individuals.

Core Components of Our Proactive Culture

The schools strive to establish clear behavioral expectations and a positive school culture for all students. The goal is to prevent misbehavior by creating a predictable and encouraging environment. Classroom behavior expectations are shared with students at the beginning of the school year, and a written outline is available upon request. If a student is unable to meet these expectations, they may be referred to the administration.

- **School-wide Virtues:** Each school identifies and promotes core virtues (e.g., Kindness, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility) that are explicitly taught and reinforced in all school settings, including before, during, and after school, at athletic events, and during assemblies.
- **Positive Recognition:** Staff actively and consistently acknowledge students who demonstrate these virtues through verbal praise, positive notes home, or other non-monetary rewards.
- **Consistent Minor Consequences:** Low-level, non-punitive consequences (e.g., a verbal redirect, a short "think-it-through" conversation, or a brief time-out in the classroom) are applied consistently for minor infractions, with a focus on teaching the expected behavior.
- **Data Monitoring:** Schools collect simple data on infractions to identify trends and adjust school-wide strategies as needed.

Administration and Teacher Authority

All school staff have the authority to manage the conduct and behavior of students while they are in attendance. A variety of behavior management techniques and strategies will be used as necessary to ensure that the learning environment is not disrupted. Administration has the right to search anything that a student brings onto the school campus. In addition, the school has the right to search backpacks, lockers and/or cubbies at any time.

Administration is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any regulation for just cause, at his or her discretion. **Corporal punishment and verbal abuse are strictly prohibited.**

Tiered System of Misbehavior

The schools use a tiered system to address student misbehavior, with increasing levels of severity. Depending on the severity or frequency of the non-compliant behavior, consequences may advance to the next level and will determine the appropriate consequences. All disciplinary actions are handled according to the child's age and developmental stage.

Level One: Minor Disruptions and General Misconduct

These are low-level infractions that disrupt the learning environment but do not pose a threat to safety.

- **Examples:** Arriving late or unprepared for class, chewing gum, eating at inappropriate times, minor disorderly behavior, dress code violations, talking during a fire drill, or minor misuse of

school technology.

- **Possible Consequences:** Verbal reprimand, loss of recess, teacher/student conference, or a teacher-issued disciplinary referral.

Level Two: Disruptive or Potentially Harmful Behavior

These behaviors interfere with the safety or well-being of others or show disrespect for the learning environment. This level also includes repetitive Level One behaviors.

- **Examples:** Use of inappropriate language, cheating or plagiarism (first offense), refusal to cooperate, disrespect toward faculty/staff, disruptive behavior during school events, using a cell phone without permission, lying, or minor physical acts of aggression (e.g., pushing, tripping).
- **Possible Consequences:** Administrative referral, detention/reflection time, referral to the ABC Council and/or Student Support Team, or suspension. A parent/guardian conference may also be required.

Level Three: Harmful or Repetitive Misconduct

These are serious behaviors or repeated lower-level violations that pose a greater risk to school safety, demonstrate ongoing defiance, or involve aggression.

- **Examples:** Repetitive Level One and Two violations, physical acts of violence (e.g., fighting), verbal abuse or harassment, bullying, vandalism, major bus violations, gambling, or inappropriate use of social media.
- **Possible Consequences:** One or more detentions and/or suspensions (in-school or out-of-school). Continued Level Three violations may result in the loss of school privileges (e.g., participation in field trips or sports) and possible expulsion.

Level Four: Dangerous, Illegal, or Severely Disruptive Behavior

These are severe offenses that involve illegal activity, endanger the safety of the school community, or represent severe violations of school and Diocesan policy.

- **Examples:** Intentional actions resulting in physical harm, violations of the Diocesan Weapons or Drug and Alcohol Policy, threats to harm others or oneself, serious theft, or severe out-of-control behavior.
- **Possible Consequences:** An immediate suspension of up to 10 days or possible expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense. Law enforcement and/or Childline may be contacted if appropriate.

In some cases, students may be required to undergo an evaluation by either their treating pediatrician or a licensed child psychologist/psychiatrist, depending on the circumstances, to determine whether he/she presents a threat to the safety of him/herself or others and identify any recommended follow-up treatment. Students will not be permitted to return when the suspension ends without a note from the psychologist/psychiatrist:

- 1. indicating that he has undergone an evaluation and deemed not a threat to him/herself or others,**
- 2. listing any recommended follow-up treatment, and**
- 3. evidence that he/she has initiated and continues to receive such recommended care.**

After the opportunity to review the required documentation, the school will determine whether or not it is appropriate for the student to return to school. A failure to provide the requested documentation within the 10-day suspension period may result in expulsion unless withdrawn.

These examples are illustrative, but not exhaustive, of possible behaviors and resulting consequences.

Level 1	Level2	Level3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arriving late or unprepared for class • Chewing gum in school Eating food at inappropriate times • Minor violation of teacher/classroom policies • Running or making noise in any area of the school that is disruptive • Minor disorderly behavior during lunch • Minor disruptive classroom behavior • Violation of dress code • Wearing hats, caps, hoods in the school building, cafeteria or gym • Talking during a fire drill or other drills. • School iPad/Chromebook minor misuse • Refusal to cooperate • Use of inappropriate language • Cheating/Plagiarism (credit for the assignment/test, will be determined case by case basis) • Refusal to complete homework or classwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive Level 1 violations • Violation of the compute/device "Acceptable Use Policy" • Disrespect for faculty and staff/any adults in authority/volunteers • Use of obscenity, profanity, or abusive language (written, spoken, or gestured) • Disruptive behavior in school settings, field trips, Mass, etc. • Behave inappropriately or unkind toward another student • Using any type of electronic devices on school grounds (cell phones, etc.) unless approved by faculty • Repeated request to stop talking and/or disruptive behavior during a fire drill or other drills. • 1st Offense of Minor Physical Acts of aggression such as (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ kicking, tripping, hitting, pushing • Cheating/Plagiarism (repeated and/or use of AI) • Lying or dishonesty • Defacing school Property • Minor bus violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive Level 1 and 2 violations • Physical Acts of violence such as (but not limited to): kicking, tripping, hitting, pushing • Verbal abuse or harassment towards staff, volunteers, or students • Fighting • Bullying another student (including cyber - see below) • Damaging school property • Major bus violations • Potentially dangerous behavior to self-and/or others • Gambling • Use of obscenity, profanity, abusive language that is hurtful and disrespectful, causing emotional distress and/or damaging social interactions • Unauthorized use of the school or region's branding including name, logo, etc. • Use of anyone's picture or likeness without expressed written permission • Inappropriate use of social media - student activity, even outside of school, can lead to serious consequences. • Minor theft • 2nd offense of using any type of electronic devices on school grounds (cell phone, etc.) unless approved by faculty • Blatant and repeated disrespect toward teachers, staff, or other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional actions resulting in physical harm to others. • Violations of the Diocesan Weapons Policy • Violations of the Diocesan Drug and Alcohol Policy • Vandalism to the school or another individual's property • Repeated bullying of another student • Bringing indecent materials to school • Possessing smoking materials such as vape, cigarettes, lighter, matches, etc. • Using racial or ethnic slurs • Leaving the school grounds • Serious violation of the technology acceptable use policy • Verbal assault on a teacher, staff member, or another student • Threatening or intimidating a student with physical harm • Sexual harassment • Refusing to comply with school rules and regulations • Inappropriate use of cell phone ex. pictures/text messaging. • Endangering students during all drills • Threats to harm others • Threats to harm self • Severe or out of control behavior • Major theft

Consequences of Misbehavior

The following consequences may be issued based on the severity and frequency of a student's misbehavior. Please note that extracurricular activities are not a valid reason to postpone or cancel a consequence.

- **Detention/Reflection Time:** The student will complete a reflective task at a designated time and location. Parents are responsible for transportation if it is before or after school and will receive written notice at least 24 hours in advance.
- **Extracurricular probation:** Denial of participation in school activities, including sports. *Extracurricular activities are not a valid reason to postpone or cancel a consequence.*
- **In-School Suspension:** The student reports to school but is excluded from classes for the day. They will be given schoolwork and reflective tasks and are ineligible for extracurricular activities that day.
- **Out-of-School Suspension:** The student will be suspended from school and all school activities for a period of up to 10 days. They may work on school assignments and are required to make up any missed work. During the suspension, students are not permitted on school premises or to attend any school activities.
- **Expulsion:** This is considered in extreme cases with administrative and pastoral counsel. It is a permanent status, and parents are responsible for finding a new school for their child.

Elastic Clause

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems that arise, this clause empowers the administration and faculty to take disciplinary action for any behavior that violates the spirit and philosophy of the school even though it is not specified in the Discipline Policy.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Depending on the severity of the infraction, a teacher or administrator will contact parents/guardians to discuss the situation and consequences. A pattern of continuous infractions will result in a mandatory parent conference.

Student Discipline Records

All level three and four disciplinary actions are documented and require the principal's review and signature. Each school maintains a Discipline Record for every student. Student Discipline Records are kept by the school administration.

Dress Code

Each of our Catholic elementary schools maintain the right to establish a uniform dress code for its students. It is recognized that proper school attire and good grooming are conducive to a student's educational and social development. Dress Codes are developed for the following reasons:

- promote a Christian atmosphere;
- free children for academic concentration;
- de-emphasize competition among children regarding clothing;
- allow more economical dress for school, and
- provide some choice to accommodate individual differences.

This dress code policy is intended to maintain a standard of dress that is neat, economical, modest and attractive.

Parents/guardians are strongly urged to mark their children's personal belongings with their names. Since children do not readily claim lost items, proper identification helps us to find the owner and save parents/guardians the cost of replacement. A lost-and-found area may be designated in each school. Students are encouraged to look for lost clothing items there. More valuable lost items, such as glasses, watches and purses, are to be turned into the office. Items that are not claimed by the end of each school year may be donated to charity or the uniform exchange program.

[Dress Code 2025-26](#) (printable)

Emergency Information

At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians are required to complete Student Emergency Information through FACTS. It is imperative that the school be able to reach a parent in case of illness or an emergency. It is also important to list the names of others who can be contacted should a parent be unavailable.

Emergency Closings and Delays

If inclement weather or some other emergency requires that school be delayed or closed, this information will be announced via parent notification system and/or television stations. Please do not call the school for this information.

In the event the school has a two-hour delay, all children should report to school by the time indicated by each individual school, generally two hours later than the normal scheduled time. Busing is the responsibility of your local school district; therefore, you must follow their directives for cancellations and delays, if using their transportation. If your district cancels and we do not, there will be no bus service provided. If a public school has a delay when the school does not, those children may follow the delayed bussing schedule unless a

parent or guardian can bring them. Likewise, if we are on a two- hour delay and your district is running on a regular schedule, please do not put your child on the bus unless arrangements have been made ahead of time with each individual school. Please note that children may not be admitted to the building nor may supervision be available if students arrive prior to the two-hour delay start time.

PLEASE NOTE: Because our attendance registers are legal indicators of a child's presence at the times we are in session, children who arrive late or are absent because of busing when school is in session will be marked as Excused Tardy or Excused Absence.

Emergency Dismissals

In the event that we would be required to dismiss school early, that information will be announced via the parent notification system. Children will be dismissed as indicated on the emergency information in FACTS. Please make arrangements and alert your child where to go if he/she arrives home in your absence. Children will be dismissed as parents/guardians are notified and transportation is arranged.

Extended Care

For an additional fee, before and after school programs are available in some schools for parents/guardians who need child care beyond the regular school day. This service may be available on a daily, weekly or yearly basis.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Saint Therese School offers an after school program from the close of school until 6 p.m. every day that school is in session for a full day. This program offers top quality care at an affordable per hour cost. The program is open to all Saint Therese School students and Saint Anthony School Program students at Saint Therese School in Kindergarten through 8th Grade.

During each session children have a snack and time for play in the gym or outdoors. A thirty-minute quiet time is scheduled for children who choose to complete homework assignments independently.

Families must sign up for the After School Care Program in advance for each day they plan to have their child participate in after school care by clicking the link below.

Registration forms and paperwork must be submitted to the school office before the first day the student participates in the program. There is an additional fee for this program. Fees are charged directly through FACTS.

[After School Care Program Registration Form](#)

[After School Care Program Guidelines](#)

[After School Care Rules & Procedures](#)

[Pennsylvania Child Care Emergency Form](#)

Extracurricular Activities

All students participating in a field trip or school-sponsored extracurricular activity are expected to follow the discipline codes outlined in this handbook. Students should remember that their behavior reflects on their Catholic school and are expected to act accordingly.

To participate in a school-sponsored activity scheduled for a particular day or evening, a student must be in school for at least half a day. Exceptions may be considered but must be approved by the building principal in advance.

Field Trips

Field trips are a privilege, not a right. All field trips should be educational and require approval from the principal.

To participate in a field trip, a standard permission form must be signed and returned to the school before the scheduled trip. Students may be denied participation if they demonstrate inappropriate behavior or fail to meet academic standards (including grades, class assignments, and homework). Parents and guardians have the right to deny their child permission to attend a field trip. If a parent denies permission, the student's required attendance on that day will be determined by the school. If the student is not required to report to school, the absence will be considered excused. However, if the school requires the student to report and they fail to do so, they will be marked as unexcused absent.

Participation is restricted to students in the class for which the trip is scheduled. Siblings or other children are not permitted to attend.

All designated chaperones are required to be in full compliance with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy and must be approved by the school or region's Safe Environment Coordinator.

Fundraising

Current funding of elementary Catholic schools requires each school to have fundraising activities to raise money toward the total operating budget. This enables tuition rates to remain less than the total cost per pupil. School parents/guardians are expected to participate in these fundraising activities to the best of their ability through monetary donations, purchases and/or volunteer work.

St. Therese School parents are expected to participate in the general fundraising events such as the School Walk-a-thon and other PTG-sponsored general fundraising activities to the best of their ability through service, monetary donations, and attendance.

Gender Identity

Our approach to gender identity is rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person, created male and female in the image of God. We believe that a person's biological sex is a gift from God and an essential part of their identity. While we strive to provide a compassionate and supportive environment for every student, our policies on issues such as names, pronouns, dress codes, and the use of facilities will align with a student's biological sex. For students who are struggling with their gender identity, we are dedicated to offering pastoral care and spiritual guidance, and we will work with parents to connect families with resources and counseling that are consistent with Catholic teaching and values. This approach allows us to care for the whole person with love and truth, while remaining faithful to the tenets of our faith.

Diocese of Pittsburgh Grading Scale

- **A - Advanced Performance (93-100):** Demonstrates a thorough understanding of basic skills and concepts and is working at developing advanced skills and concepts.
- **B - Proficient Performance (85-92):** Demonstrates an understanding of the basic skills and concepts and is able to exemplify these skills and concepts in detail.
- **C - Basic Performance (75-84):** Demonstrates an understanding of the basic skills and concepts.
- **D - Below Basic Performance (70-74):** Demonstrates an incomplete understanding of the basic skills and concepts with possible misconceptions.
- **E - Experiencing Serious Difficulty (Below 70):** Demonstrates an inadequate understanding of basic skills and concepts.

Guidelines for Honor Roll and Honor League

The purpose of an Honor Roll is to provide student recognition for academic achievement. Honor roll recognition may be given at the end of each marking period and is based on criteria established by each school.

Honor League

The Diocese of Pittsburgh (DOP) Honor League is an organization that recognizes and encourages academic achievement while fostering Catholic values of service, leadership, character, and citizenship among students. Membership in the Honor League is both an honor and a responsibility. Members are expected to uphold high standards in their academics, behavior, and moral decision-making, rooted in the teachings of the Catholic faith. Students need a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA (6th grade - 8th grade) to be considered for the DOP Honor League.

[Diocese of Pittsburgh Honor League-Handbook](#)

Homework

In our Catholic schools, homework is viewed as an extension of the learning process that supports the formation of the whole child—mind, body, and spirit. It provides students with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of academic concepts while also developing habits of discipline and responsibility.

The diocese recommends the following time schedule for home study:

- **Primary (Grades K-2):** 10-30 minutes
- **Intermediate (Grades 3-5):** 40-60 minutes
- **Upper Elementary (Grades 6-8):** 70-90 minutes

For a student to be successful, parents/guardians are expected to partner with the school in the completion of assigned homework. If, for some reason, a child cannot complete an assignment, the parent should inform the teacher in writing with a note stating the reason. Arrangements should be made as soon as possible to make up incomplete assignments.

Home School Communication

School information is communicated electronically on a regular basis. Some information may also be sent home with the students. A monthly calendar and monthly hot lunch menus are sent electronically and posted on the school's website.

An automated parent notification system is used for emergencies and other time-sensitive issues. Positive communication between teacher and parent is vital to our total educational program. Parents/guardians are asked not to call teachers/administrators/staff at their homes, on their personal cell phone, or contact through social media. Any questions concerning a child should be directed to the teacher via email or by calling the school office.

Reporting student progress to parents/guardians is one of the primary responsibilities of the school. Parents/guardians are informed of their student's progress as follows:

- Online grading
- Progress Reports
- Quarterly Report Cards
- Parent/student/teacher conferences
- Conferences on request
- Discipline referrals

Parent-teacher conferences are formally conducted two or three times per year at the administration's discretion.

Parent teacher conferences have the following goals:

- Enable home and school to meet the needs of the student more effectively;
- Establish a working relationship with parents/guardians in the interest of the student; interpret to parents/guardians their child's academic growth and progress;
- Suggest ways parents/guardians can help students succeed in school.

Efforts are made to provide every parent with an opportunity for a conference. Students may be dismissed early to facilitate meeting with parents/guardians. Evening conferences may be scheduled.

Health and Safety

Health Issues

School Nurse

In Pennsylvania, non-public schools receive school nurse services through the public school system. The public school district in which the non-public school is located is responsible for providing these services. The public school administrator oversees the service, consulting with the non-public school administrator as needed. The nurse schedules vision and hearing tests and height and weight screenings as required by PA law. Health information and emergency cards are kept on file in the school to be available in any emergency situations.

The school nurse has the following responsibilities:

- Maintain updated health records
- Make sure all immunizations are current
- Conduct vision and hearing screening
- Conduct scoliosis screening

Please note: Parents/guardians of children who have any type of pre-existing medical conditions or allergies should contact the principal to make them aware of the problem and for the Student Support Team to create a Medical Support Plan.

Illness

It is often difficult to decide if a child should stay home from school when complaining of illness. An objective sign is an elevated temperature. Please be vigilant in measuring your child's temperature. If it is 100.4° or greater they need to stay home. A child is to be kept home from school until the temperature has remained normal (below 100°) without fever reducing medication for 24 hours.

If a child has a temperature of 100.4° or more, skin rash, diarrhea/vomiting, strep throat, or evidence of lice, the child will be sent home. Parents/guardians are asked to use discretion in sending their children to school if they display any of these symptoms. Please inform the school office if your child becomes sick with a contagious illness and report cases of head lice.

Accident and Injury

In the case of a minor accident or injury at school, parents/guardians will be notified. In the event of a serious injury where it is determined that a child needs to be taken to a hospital, 9-1-1 will be called first, and then the parent will be notified.

It is crucial for your child's safety and comfort, as well as for the effective operation of the school office, that up-to-date emergency contact information for parents/guardians is on file for each child.

Medication Administration

Whenever possible, medicine is to be given at home, and parents/guardians are to request the physician to adjust the schedule for administration so that it can be given before and after school hours.

A policy implemented by the Pennsylvania Department of Health regulates the administration of prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medication to students throughout the school day. The directives are as follows:

1. Only a licensed professional (such as a school nurse) can dispense prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) medication in a school.
2. For a medication to be administered by a licensed professional, it must be accompanied by a doctor's order.
3. If your child is on a maintenance medication, such as Insulin, arrangements may be made with the public school district nurse to administer the medication, provided a doctor's order has been issued and is on file with the school office.
4. All medications must be delivered to the office by an adult. Students are not permitted to transport medications to or from school.
5. In the absence of a licensed professional, school personnel cannot administer OTC or prescribed medications **unless it is an emergency medication**. This includes medications that are administered reasonably non-invasively, such as such as an epinephrine auto-injector, an asthma inhaler, or Narcan (naloxone) in the event of an opioid overdose.
6. Even with a doctor's order, office personnel are not permitted to dispense any prescription or OTC medications other than in a designated emergency.
7. Office personnel are not permitted to dispense medications like Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Tums, cough drops, or any prescription drugs.

Please note: Because school office staff cannot administer medication in the absence of a licensed professional, this policy provides an option for medication administration when a licensed professional is not available to do so. In these situations, the school allows a parent or legal guardian to come to the school campus and personally administer the medication to their child. This permission also extends to a "designated authorized individual" whom the parent has explicitly named to perform this duty on their behalf. This means that if a student needs a dose of a prescription or over-the-counter medicine during the school day, the school's office staff will not be able to administer it. Instead, the parent or their designated authorized person may come to the school to perform the administration themselves.

Self-Administration

In Pennsylvania, the policy for a student to self-administer medication is very specific and generally applies only to emergency medications. This policy is designed to balance a student's medical needs with the safety of the entire school community.

The default rule is that students are not permitted to carry or self-administer any medication, including both prescription and over-the-counter drugs. An exception is made for students who require certain emergency medications for life-threatening conditions. In these cases, and with the proper documentation, a student may be granted permission to carry and self-administer the medication.

The following are the most common medications approved for self-administration:

- **Asthma rescue inhalers** (e.g., Albuterol)
- **Epinephrine auto-injectors** (e.g., EpiPen) for severe allergic reactions
- **Medications for diabetes** (e.g., insulin, glucose tablets)

Requirements for Self-Administration

For a student to be approved to self-administer one of the above emergency medications, a comprehensive process must be followed, which typically includes:

- **Written Doctor's Order:** A signed statement from a licensed prescriber (physician, CRNP, or PA) is required. This order must confirm that the student has the condition, specify the name and dosage of the medication, and explicitly state that the student is capable of and permitted to self-administer the medication.
- **Parental/Guardian Permission:** The parent or guardian must provide a written request and consent for their child to self-administer. This form may include a waiver of liability for the school.

- **Demonstrated Competency:** The school nurse must assess and determine that the student is competent to self-administer the medication responsibly. This evaluation considers the student's age, maturity, cognitive function, and their ability to follow all established procedures.
- **School Policy Adherence:** The student must agree to follow all school policies, which includes notifying school personnel immediately after using the medication.
- **Annual Renewal:** All documentation for self-administration must be renewed at the beginning of each school year and included in a Medical Support Plan.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

If a student abuses or ignores these policies, such as sharing the medication or using it inappropriately, the privilege of self-administration will be revoked. The student may also face potential disciplinary action.

Safety Issues

Asbestos Notice

Pursuant to the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act (AHERA), our schools are inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector. A Management Plan was developed and submitted to the PA Department of Education by the Diocese. A copy of our Asbestos Inspection Report and Management Plan is available upon request.

Safety Drills

The safety and well-being of our students are of utmost importance at our schools. We work closely with the Diocesan Security Department and local law enforcement to ensure our safety procedures align with best practices .

Throughout the school year, we will conduct regular safety drills to practice responses to different situations. These drills help students and staff develop the confidence to respond calmly and effectively in an emergency and include hold, secure, shelter, lockdowns, evacuations, fire, and shelter-in-place scenarios. Some drills are practiced monthly, some annually, and others on an as-needed basis. Teachers and staff are trained regularly on safety drills and protocols according to each building need. Parents/guardians should know that while some drills may be scheduled, others may occur without prior notice. Parents/guardians wishing to observe or participate in drills should contact the school principal. We encourage parents to talk with their children about the importance of these drills and reassure them that they are a proactive measure to keep our school community safe.

Students must maintain silence at all times during emergency drills and follow all staff directions. Misconduct of any nature is to be reported to the principal. Misbehavior during drills is a serious offense and will be dealt with immediately according to our discipline policy.

Exit directions, which are posted in prominent places in each room, are to be followed. Any student needing assistance will be supported by faculty and staff.

As part of our commitment to providing a secure learning environment, in addition to “Run, Hide, Fight,” we have adopted The “I Love U Guys” Foundation’s Standard Response Protocol (SRP), a nationally recognized safety program. This protocol ensures that our students and staff are well-prepared for various emergencies through clear, common language and structured drills. Please look at the attached flyer for more information.

[SRP-K12-2021-Parent-Handout_EN.pdf](#)

Safe Environment

Empowering God’s Children

Keeping your children safe physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually is a top priority for our schools. Empowering God’s Children® is an age-appropriate comprehensive program through which educators and parents/guardians can give children and youth the tools they need to protect themselves and what to do if someone tries to violate their boundaries. The Empowering God’s Children program seeks to empower children to keep themselves safe from the grave tragedy of sexual abuse. The Diocese of Pittsburgh requires that every Catholic school and faith formation program teach the children two safety lessons per year.

Safe Environment Policy

The purpose of the Safe Environment Policy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh is to take reasonable measures to assure that adults who have contact with minors (1) are committed to providing a safe environment for children and youth and (2) are capable of identifying and preventing abuse of children and (3) have no personal history of behavior that would be a threat to children.

Adults (18 or older) volunteering with children at the school must be compliant in the requirements of the safe environment policy:

All School Volunteers must complete the following steps by visiting the following website: <https://diopitt.org/school-volunteers>

- Safe Environment Database
- PA State Police Clearance
- Code of Pastoral Conduct
- Child Protective Services Law
- Child Abuse History Clearance
- Protecting God’s Children
- Mandated Reporter Training
- FBI Clearance (lived outside of Pennsylvania within 10 years) OR
 - FBI Clearance Waiver (if Pennsylvania resident for 10 years or more)

Security/Visitors

All doors to the school will be closed and locked during school hours. Parents/guardians and visitors should use the designated school door to gain entrance to the building.

For security reasons, anyone entering the school is to report to the office immediately regardless of the purpose for the visit. A visitor's badge should be worn at all times while on school grounds or with a school sponsored field trip.

Parents/guardians are not permitted to visit classrooms unannounced. Any articles or items to be left for a student will be held in the school office.

Personal Property

The school is **not responsible** for any personal property brought in by a student, including electronic devices.

Recess

Every school day, weather permitting, the students enjoy an outside break supervised by a staff member and/or volunteer monitors. If inclement weather makes it necessary to stay indoors at lunchtime, indoor recess rules are to be observed. These are determined by the supervising teacher/monitor.

Recess monitors have the responsibility of enforcing rules. Students are never to leave the recess area without the knowledge of the recess monitor. In case of illness or accident, the student will be sent to the school office by the recess monitor.

School lunch and recess monitors will be staff and/or volunteers that are compliant with all Diocesan clearances. Volunteers will register in advance online for days they are available to assist as lunch/recess monitors. The required times are **Monday-Thursday from 10:40am-12:15pm and Friday from 11am-12:40pm**. We would prefer that all volunteers stay for the entire lunch period on any given day but will accept any time that you have to offer! All monitors will be responsible for both lunchroom and playground duty. Lunch/Recess monitors must follow all visitor guidelines while on school premises, including checking-in and checking-out of the main office each day. Students are expected to listen to all instructions given by volunteers as if given by a teacher or staff member.

[Lunch & Recess Monitor Sign Up](#)

Registration, Enrollment, and Admission Policies

The following items all play a part in acceptance to our schools:

Age Requirements

- Students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years of age on or before the 1st of September.
- Students entering 4-year preschool must be 4 years of age on or before the 1st of September.
- Students entering 3-year preschool must be 3 years of age on or before the 1st of September.

Those registering for grades 1-8 must fulfill the age requirement for the desired grade and present letters of recommendation from the previous school. Grade level and academic group determinations are made on the basis of school records.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

The Diocese of Pittsburgh Catholic Schools admit and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of our educational and admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic and other school-administered programs, or access to all privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at our school.

Our school reserves the rights and protections granted to it in the areas of admissions practices by applicable laws and constitutional provisions to act in furtherance of its religious objectives.

Registration

Families must complete registration to be considered registered for the following school year. Registration procedures are determined by each region. Families must enroll in FACTS for tuition management for all schools and are highly encouraged to apply for tuition assistance through FACTS also. All registrations are subject to approval by the school/regional staff. The appropriate paperwork must accompany all registration forms.

Required Documents

- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate, if applicable
- Custody Documents

- Registration Forms and Student Information Sheet
- Catholic School Parents/Guardians Memorandum of Understanding
[DOP Memorandum-of-Understanding](#)
- Registration on FACTS Management for Tuition Payment
- Non-Refundable Enrollment Fee
- Home Language Survey
- Internet Usage Policy Form
- Release of School Records Form
- Publicity Release Form
- Existing IEPs/504s

All students enrolling in a Catholic School in the Diocese of Pittsburgh must also provide the school with the following medical forms:

- Physical Exam Form
- Current Immunization Record
 - including immunizations required by the State of Pennsylvania, County Health Department of school, and/or the Diocese of Pittsburgh
- Dental Exam Form

Immunization and Medical Requirements.

In Pennsylvania, non-public schools are required to follow the same immunization and health requirements as public schools. The Pennsylvania Department of Health sets these regulations to ensure all children are protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Unless a medical, religious, or philosophical exemption is on file, all students must have the following:

- **Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Acellular Pertussis (DTaP):** 4 doses. One dose must have been given on or after the child's fourth birthday.
- **Polio:** 4 doses. The fourth dose must be given on or after the child's fourth birthday and at least six months after the previous dose.
- **Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR):** 2 doses.
- **Hepatitis B:** 3 doses.
- **Varicella (Chickenpox):** 2 doses, or proof of immunity from a physician's statement or a blood test.

Additional Requirements by Grade

- **7th Grade:** Students must have one dose of Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Tdap) and one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV).
- **12th Grade:** Students are required to have a second dose of the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV). If the first dose was given at 16 years of age or older, only one dose is

required.

Other Health-Related Requirements

In addition to immunizations, the Pennsylvania Department of Health also mandates physical and dental exams for specific grade levels:

- **Physical Examinations:** Required upon school entry, and again in grades 6 and 11.
- **Dental Examinations:** Required upon school entry, and again in grades 3 and 7.
- **Screenings:** All students, K-12, receive annual vision, height, and weight screenings. Hearing screenings are conducted in grades K-3, 7, and 11, and scoliosis screenings are typically performed in grades 6 and 7.

Provisional Enrollment and Exemptions

Students who have received at least one dose of each required multi-dose vaccine may be admitted provisionally. However, they must provide a medical plan for completing the remaining doses within the first five days of school. If a student is not in compliance, they risk exclusion.

Exemptions from these immunization requirements are granted for medical, religious, or philosophical reasons, but you must provide proper documentation directly to the public school nurse. Keep in mind that even with an exemption, a child may be excluded from school during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

Priority of Acceptance

Priority of acceptance into each of our schools is a privilege granted to children and is generally based on the following:

- Accept brothers/sisters of students currently enrolled at the school/region.
- Accept brothers/sisters of students formerly enrolled at the school/region whose parents/guardians are registered members of a Parish.
- Accept baptized Catholic students from Catholic parishes in the Diocese of Pittsburgh
- Accept all others

Additional Information

Failure to provide all necessary registration information without prior notification to the school may result in your child being denied enrollment or placed at the bottom of a waiting list. If your child is placed on a waiting list and an opening becomes available, you will be notified immediately of the opening. It is always our hope that we can accommodate every child.

All students admitted to our schools will be on probation to be sure any adjustments proceed as smoothly as possible. In most cases, the length of probation is the child's first semester.

Parents/guardians are required to inform school administration of their child's special academic, emotional, or physical needs. School administration must also be informed of any testing for learning disabilities by public schools or any private agency. Copies of evaluation reports are required to be considered for acceptance. Administration has the right to determine if its program will best meet an individual child's special learning needs.

Please note: In order for a student to maintain or re-enroll at a Diocese of Pittsburgh Catholic School, the administration evaluates each student's progress in alignment with our mission to foster spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social growth. This mission reflects our commitment to all families investing in a Catholic education for their children. The administration reviews a student's academic performance, attendance, discipline records and account balance to ensure compliance with these standards. Based on this evaluation, a student may be denied continued enrollment or re-enrollment. Families will be notified of this decision in writing. All enrollment decisions are at the sole discretion of the administration.

Tuition Assistance

All diocesan financial aid opportunities are available for eligible families based on an independent evaluation from FACTS. All families are highly encouraged to apply and cannot receive any tuition assistance or discounts without filing an application on FACTS online system. The application is usually due by March 15th of the application year. Scholarship money, awards and amounts are determined by the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Awards are granted from the Bishop's Education Fund and the Scholastic Opportunity Scholarship Fund. (EITC) Parents/guardians will be notified of their eligibility and any financial aid awards directly from the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Individual schools do not determine eligibility or amounts of financial aid given to applicants.

[Financial Aid Information and Instructions](#)

Policy on Outstanding Tuition and Fees

This policy is established to ensure the financial sustainability of our schools and to maintain fairness and transparency in our tuition and fee management. A commitment to fiscal responsibility is essential for the school to provide the highest quality Catholic education and resources for our students.

Students with an outstanding balance of tuition and/or fees from a prior academic year at their current school, or from any other Catholic school, will not be permitted to register, re-enroll, or begin the new school year until the full balance is paid or a satisfactory payment plan has been agreed upon with the Regional Business Office. The school reserves the right to deny admission or re-enrollment to any student with a history of delinquent payments, regardless of a new payment plan.

Implications of Outstanding Balances

Failure to adhere to the terms of a tuition and fees agreement, or maintaining an outstanding balance, will result in the following implications. These measures are necessary to ensure the responsible management of school finances and to maintain a fair environment for all families.

- **Withholding of Records:** Official transcripts, report cards, diplomas, and other academic records will be withheld until the balance is paid in full. This may impact a student's ability to transfer to another school, or participate in secondary admissions processes.
- **Ineligibility for Extracurricular Activities:** Students with an outstanding balance may be suspended from participation in all extracurricular activities, including but not limited to athletics, clubs, school trips, and performances. This suspension will remain in effect until the balance is resolved.
- **Access to School Services:** Access to certain school services, such as online student portals, may be suspended until the balance is paid.

Our Catholic Schools administration understands that families may face unexpected financial hardships, and we are committed to working with you to find a solution. We highly encourage any family in need of assistance to proactively reach out to our team. For those experiencing unexpected hardships after financial aid has already been distributed or during the school year, you are encouraged to contact the Department for Catholic Schools at 412-456-3108 or email budplan@diopitt.org. It is the family's responsibility to communicate any financial difficulties to the school administration, regional business office or the diocese in a timely manner.

Technology & Internet

- The Catholic Schools of Diocese of Pittsburgh has an **Internet Usage Policy**. This policy requires a signature of agreement from both a parent/guardian and the student. Schools and/or regions may also have a **Hardware Use Policy** which outlines the use of devices.
 - Acceptable behaviors.
 - Financial responsibilities for lost or damaged devices.

Textbooks/School Supplies

Pennsylvania's Act 195/90 is a program whereby the state purchases textbooks and instructional materials of non-religious nature. A form requesting permission to have a child use these books must be signed by a parent and kept on file in the school office. Most textbooks are used for multiple years and should be covered and taken to and from school in a book bag. Students are responsible for the condition of the books given to them and may be required to pay for a book if it is damaged or lost.

Students provide their own school supplies, but are expected to comply with individual teacher requirements.

[2025-2026 St. Therese School Supply List](#)

Transportation

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

It is important that the school knows the ordinary means by which each child arrives and departs daily. Notification is to be sent when a change is necessary. For reasons of safety and insurance, each child is only permitted to ride his/her assigned bus and/or car.

Schools use a variety of methods to ensure that only authorized individuals are allowed to pick up students. These procedures are in place to prevent unauthorized individuals from leaving campus with a student and to provide a clear, consistent process for all parties involved.

At the start of each school year, parents will be asked to complete an online form indicating how the student is to be dismissed each day (bus, car, walker, or After School Care) as well as indicating any individual who has permission to receive the student at dismissal.

MORNING DROP-OFF INSTRUCTIONS

- From Main Street, enter behind the preschool (along the fenceline). DO NOT enter the driveway between the Church and the Rectory.
- If your child will be eating breakfast, proceed straight ahead to the open cafeteria door beyond the covered patio. There will be a teacher and student leaders there to assist. Doors open at 7:00am.
- If your child will NOT be eating breakfast, turn right at the end of the school building. Continue straight ahead to the second school door on the right. There will be a teacher and student leaders there to assist. Doors opens at 7:30am.
- If you need to assist your child with the car door, car seat, seat belt, carrying items, etc., please pull over in one of the parking spaces on the left to allow drop-off traffic to continue moving.
- Please use only the cafeteria or side doors for morning drop-off. Students are NOT to enter through the front doors of the school.
- If your child arrives after 7:55am, all doors will be locked and he/she must enter through the front doors of the school with a parent/guardian.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL INSTRUCTIONS

WALKERS

Students will be dismissed through the front doors of the school after the buses have left. They will be escorted to the corner near the crossing guard by several staff members.

CAR RIDERS:

- From Main Street, enter the driveway between the Rectory and the Church (this is one-way only).
- Continue straight ahead to the gym parking lot, and park facing the gym. Please park directly behind the car in front of you using all available space.
- PLEASE NOTE: The parking lot is roped off during the school day to allow our students to play outside for recess/gym. It will remain roped off until 1:45pm.

Please DO NOT arrive any earlier than 1:45pm for pick-up. This causes major traffic issues in the parking lot and driveway for both the Parish and the Plaza.

- Students will be dismissed from the side door of the school across from the gym Entrance.
- Kindergarten students will be dismissed first; however, NO CARS WILL BE DISMISSED FROM THE PARKING LOT UNTIL ALL STUDENTS ARE SAFELY IN THEIR CARS.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to stand next to their car so students can find them.
- A staff member will dismiss the rows of cars once all students have safely reached their cars.

Teachers will line students up from the classroom into their identified route of transportation at dismissal.

Bus riders will be taken to their assigned bus, while walkers will be released from the care of St. Therese School in front of St. Therese Church. They will be released according to the written and signed instructions designated on the Walker Release Form.

Car riders will be released by the side exit across from the gym, starting with Kindergarten students first, followed by all other grades. Teachers will be present during dismissal to ensure all children are safely met by a known adult. No cars will be released and allowed to drive through the parking lot until all students have gotten into vehicles, or are on the sidewalk with a teacher.

Students who are not met by a known, responsible adult by 2:30 pm will be taken to the main office and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

Bus Policies and Expectations

Student eligibility to be bused to school is determined by local public school district policies. Those who live along a route that has been declared "hazardous" are also eligible for busing. The Board of Education Transportation Division determines "hazardous route" claims. The student transportation policies and procedures of the local educational agencies responsible for busing students are applicable to all students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Concerns regarding bus scheduling should be addressed to the respective school district. Only their departments of transportation can authorize changes.

Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior while on a bus to ensure their safety and the safety of others.

The following general bus rules are to be obeyed by all of our students riding a bus:

- Remain seated at all times until the correct stop has been reached. If the driver has assigned seats, these seat assignments are to be honored
- Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus. Do not put anything out the window of the bus.
- In vehicles where seat belts are available, use them properly.
- Observe the same conduct as in the classroom. Quiet, respectful talking is permitted. Loud talking, etc. may distract the driver, prevent students from hearing instructions, or prevent the driver from hearing signals from emergency vehicles.
- Keep the bus clean; do not eat, drink, or chew gum on the bus.
- Cooperate with the driver. Any directives of the bus driver in addition to the above are to be followed.

If improper conduct occurs, the driver shares with the public school district or transportation company according to their policies. The school will investigate, when appropriate, and provide supplemental information to the bus company. The school will work together with students, bus drivers, and families, to find a resolution. The school will support the public school district's determination. If the behavior persists, the bus company has the right to ask the school district to suspend the student's privilege of riding the bus, temporarily or permanently. This will result in the student losing bus privileges. The parent will be responsible to make other arrangements for transportation.

Use of School Grounds

The school is only responsible for students during posted school hours. Children are not to be on school grounds unattended at any other times.

Volunteers

The help of volunteers is always appreciated at our schools and during school-sponsored events. We encourage families to consider donating their time and talents to help enhance our programs.

Parents and guardians play an integral role in their children's education through organizations and roles such as the PTG, School Advisory Councils, athletics, fundraising events, homeroom parents, cafeteria/recess monitors, and field trip chaperones. This partnership is invaluable to the success of our school.

[Website and Social Media Access and Content Management Policy](#)



PITTSBURGH CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

It is important that parents/guardians/guardians, students and staff know the policies and procedures of The Diocese of Pittsburgh Catholic Schools. To ensure that the process of communication is complete, please review the revised Parent/Student Handbook with your children.

When you have reviewed the contents, please sign and return this form to the school office via your child's homeroom teacher.

Family Name _____

Children's Name(s): _____

I have read and agree to be governed by the Parent/Student Handbook of the Diocese of

Pittsburgh. Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Request for Excused Absence for Students Taking Non-School Educational Tour or Trip with Family or Other Approved Adult Sponsor

Regulations of the state of Pennsylvania provide that, upon written request from the parents/guardians of the student involved, a student may be excused from school attendance to participate in an educational tour or trip not sponsored by the school when the trip is evaluated by the superintendent as educational, and if the adult supervision is acceptable to both the superintendent and the student's parents/guardians. The building principal has been designated by the superintendent to make the initial decision, based on the information provided.

In order to provide guidance to parents/guardians, the following procedure for non-school educational trips/tours has been established:

1. This form must be submitted to the principal a minimum of ten (10) school days prior to the trip (except in an emergency). Parents/guardians will be notified in any case in which the request is denied. 2. Requests will be approved only if it can be determined that the trip/tour is of educational value to the student.
3. If more than one child in a family will be taking the trip/tour, a separate request for each child shall be made to each child's principal if the children attend separate schools.
4. No more than five (5) school days per student will be approved for educational trip/tour requests in any school year. (Special requests with unusual circumstances or exceptional opportunities for learning should be discussed personally with the building principal well in advance of the requested dates for absence.)
5. Unless there are unusual or emergency circumstances, such requests will NOT be approved for the first ten (10) school days of the year, during periods of standardized assessments, when a student has accumulated an excessive number of unexcused absences, or when a student is in academic jeopardy. Please consult the school calendar or contact your building principal for specific assessment dates.
6. All schoolwork missed during the trip/tour must be made up at the initiation of the student immediately upon returning to school. Failure to complete schoolwork will result in a lack of evidence toward learning targets and will negatively impact a student's characteristics of a successful learner/citizenship/employability skills score.
7. Days that are not approved for an educational trip are unexcused and may therefore result in any or all of the following actions:
 - First legal notice
 - School Attendance Improvement and Truancy plan
 - Citation from district court

Be advised that if the family trip combined with the total number of absences to date exceeds 10 days, you will be required to provide a doctor's note for each subsequent absence.

Student Information

- **Student Name:** _____
- **Grade:** _____
- **Homeroom/Primary Teacher:** _____

Travel Information

- **Dates of Absence:** From _____ to _____
- **Number of School Days to be Missed:** _____
- **Travel Destination:** _____
- **Sponsor of Trip:** _____
- **Purpose of Trip:** _____ •

Explanation of Educational Value: (Please explain how this trip will provide a meaningful educational experience for your child)

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment

I understand that my child is responsible for all missed assignments, tests, and other schoolwork during this absence. I will work with my child's teachers to ensure that all work is completed in a timely manner as agreed upon with the school.

- **Parent/Guardian Name:** _____
- **Signature:** _____
- **Date:** _____
- **Phone Number:** _____
- **Email Address:** _____

School Approval

This request for an excused absence has been:

- ☐ **Approved**
- ☐ **Denied**

Reason for Denial:

- **Principal's Signature:** _____
- **Date:** _____