



# **CEDAR VALLEY**

## **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

*To provide an exceptional Catholic education to every student, built on the foundation of faith, discipline, knowledge and service.*

### **Parent/Guardian-Student Handbook 2022-2023**

### **Preschool and Elementary School**

**Blessed Sacrament Early Childhood Center  
Saint Edward Catholic Elementary School**

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## **Cedar Valley Catholic Elementary Schools**

In the Cedar Valley Catholic Elementary Schools we strive to create a learning environment which builds essential skills to lead in Faith, Service, Discipline and Knowledge. Our schools support the efforts of our families to strengthen their personal relationship with God and we strive to be Christ-centered for all. Our school culture works to influence the development of positive attitudes and Catholic Christian virtues. Our students, parents/guardians, faculty, support staff, our pastor, Faith Formation Committee members, and CVCS School Board members - who make up the school faith community, create this culture. An education in the Cedar Valley Catholic Schools will prepare our students to Learn, Serve, Lead and Succeed in their mission to become the best version of themselves.

### **I. Philosophy**

#### **A. Cedar Valley Catholic Schools Mission**

The mission of the Cedar Valley Catholic Schools is to provide an exceptional Catholic education to every student, built on the foundations of faith, discipline, service and knowledge.

#### **B. Cedar Valley Catholic Schools Vision**

Cedar Valley Catholic Schools will be the first choice of families who believe God, community, leadership and service are the foundation of a learning environment.

### **II. Office Directory**

#### **St. Edward Elementary School**

**Phone:** 319-233-6202      **Fax:** 319-235-2898

**Address:** 139 E. Mitchell Ave  
Waterloo, IA 50702

#### **Contacts:**

Aaron Becker, Principal  
Carmen Lappe, Administrative Assistant  
Amy Rasmussen, Administrative Assistant  
Amanda McNamara, Guidance Counselor  
Sarah Hansen, Food Service Site Manager  
Mary Jones, Food Service Director  
Matt Verbraken, Business Manager  
Karey Schultz, Bookkeeper  
Sarah Smith, Advancement Director  
Mike DeWald, Marketing and Special Events Coordinator  
Tanya Cutsforth, Operations and Human Resources Manager

### **III. Cedar Valley Catholic Elementary Discipline Protocol**

The discipline protocol is intended to complement the CVCS Code of Conduct found in this handbook. Through teaching, reflection and growth we seek to more closely model our actions and words on the tenets of Christ; however, knowing our need for growth, Cedar Valley Catholic Elementary Schools will work to establish discipline procedures to allow for reflection and

continued growth for our students. The examples given below are to serve as a guideline. Discretion is given to the school administrator when implementing procedures outlined below.

#### Level I - Mildly Disruptive Behavior

Defined as: A behavior that is committed without malice but causes a disruption or affects the orderly processes of the classroom, church and other sites, including but not limited to, assemblies, hallways, cafeteria, playground, school programs and field trips.

Examples of unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to: uniform violations, arguments with peers/adults, inappropriate behavior in assemblies/church, homework incompleteness, and rude/disrespectful actions.

Handled by: Adult (teacher/substitute, educational associate, parent volunteer, UNI student, cafeteria worker, custodian, priest, or visiting speaker) in charge of the setting in which the problematic behavior occurred.

Possible Interventions:

- Model and teach expected behavior.
- Remind, redirect, and reinforce expected behaviors.
- Appropriate consequences may apply.
- An incident report will be completed on PowerSchool at the discretion of the teacher and a copy of the incident report will be shared with parents by the classroom teacher.

#### Level II- Pattern / Serious Misbehavior

Defined as: Behavior that is deliberate or disruptive to orderly educational environments / misbehavior whose frequency or seriousness disrupts the learning climate of the school. Repeated Level I misbehavior may warrant a Level II response.

Examples of unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to: physical altercation, repeated Level I behaviors, cheating, stealing, and destroying property.

Handled by: Adult staff member who is responsible for the setting in which the problematic behavior occurred. Administrative support may be necessary with Level II concerns.

Possible Interventions:

- Model and teach expected behavior.
- Remind, redirect, and reinforce expected behavior.
- An incident report will be completed on PowerSchool and a copy of the incident report will be shared with parents by the classroom teacher and returned signed the next day.
- All Level II misbehavior will be reported to the principal via PowerSchool.
- A student behavior intervention plan may be warranted as a result of Level II concerns.
- Temporary loss of privilege (i.e. leadership roles, seating placements, recess activities etc.) may be considered in relationship to Level II concerns.

#### Level III - Severe Misconduct

Defined as: Severe misbehavior that seriously disrupts the learning environment and possibly threatens the safety or well being of students or teachers.

Examples of unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to: repeated or more serious levels of misbehavior such as those listed Level II above, use/possession of drug/alcohol/tobacco, inappropriate bus behavior, possession of dangerous weapon(s), bullying/harassment, truancy, refusal to comply with the teacher's command, personal injury/fighting, vandalism/theft, habitual late or missing assignments, or using inappropriate language.

Handled by: teacher and/or adult in charge and principal

Possible Interventions:

- Student removal from the classroom or situation.
- An administrative investigation of the incident.
- A parent conference will be scheduled to discuss the results of the investigation. A behavior plan will be created or modified.
- Loss of privileges assigned as outlined in a behavior intervention plan.

#### Level IV - Probation, Suspension, and Expulsion

Repeated offenses of Level III and other behaviors as listed in this handbook will result in appropriate consequences, which may include probation, suspension or expulsion.

#### **IV. Attendance & Cancellations**

##### School Day Schedule - Saint Edward

The school day schedule is as follows:

8:00 - Breakfast begins  
 8:25 - Student supervision begins  
 8:35 - Student day begins/First Bell  
 8:40 - Tardy Bell  
 3:40 - Student dismissal  
 3:50 - Student supervision ends.

##### School Day Schedule - Blessed Sacrament

The school day schedule is as follows:

8:15 - PK3 and PK 4 begin  
 11:15 - PK 3 morning ends  
 12:15 - PK 3 afternoon begins  
 2:15 - PK 4 day ends  
 3:15 - PK 3 afternoon ends

Elementary school students will enter the building no earlier than 8:35 a.m. There is no staff supervision before 8:25 a.m. Student supervision at the end of the day will end at 3:50 p.m. and remaining students will be taken to the office to wait for their parents. Students who are waiting past 3:55 p.m. will be taken to the daycare at the cost of the family.

#### **A. Preschool Attendance Days**

PK 3 and PK 4 attendance will happen on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday throughout the school year. The goal will be to create a schedule in which four days of student attendance can be possible. Most weeks will be Monday - Thursday with Friday as a non-attendance day. However, a specific PK attendance schedule will be sent to families to ensure clarity around yearly attendance.

#### **B. School Cancellation**

When weather conditions worsen during the day, it is possible for students to be dismissed early. Parents must be alert to this possibility and have a plan prepared for such occasions. Arrangements also need to be made with other childcare providers. The Cedar Valley Catholic Schools daycare program will remain open on school cancellation days unless otherwise noted.

**C. Early Pick-Up During School Hours**

Parents wishing to pick up their children during school hours should check in at the office to sign out your child. We will call your child to the office when you arrive. In case a friend or relative is to pick up the child, please contact the school office beforehand and identify the individual calling for the child. For the safety of your child, this individual must be listed as a person authorized to pick up your child. Photo identification and/or student pickup number will be required.

**D. Attendance**

In order to develop character traits of self-discipline and responsibility, students are to attend school regularly. Absent students can make up most of schoolwork missed; however, repeated absences are detrimental to a student's academic success. It is a parent/guardian responsibility to see that the child attends school as required by the Iowa Compulsory Attendance statute, which states the length of the school year. All attendance policies and procedures can be viewed with more detail in the Cedar Valley Catholic Schools Handbook. The following procedures are followed in the event of absence:

- Please contact the school office by 8:30 am. Please leave a voice message if necessary. This assures us that your child is safe and that they will not attend school that day.
- If the school has not been notified of an absence, the office will contact the parents.
- Parents will receive notification from the principal on the seventh day of absence.
- Students who reach 15 days absent (considered excessive absenteeism) will be subject to attendance record review and, per policy 299.1 of the Iowa Code; the County Attorney will be notified.
- Students enrolled in our PK4 Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program are expected to maintain 90% attendance. Failure to meet this attendance level could result in removal from the program.

**E. Tardy**

If a student arrives late to school, without a written note or a phone call received, he/she is considered unexcused tardy. If a student arrives late to school, and a written excuse is provided, arrives with a parent, or a phone call has been received from the parent regarding the same, this will be considered an excused tardy.

**F. Excused and Unexcused Absences**

If a student is absent and no note or phone call has been received from the parent, this is considered an unexcused absence. Conversely, if a note or phone call is received at the school from the parent, this is an excused absence.

**V. Communication Between Home and School**

Adequate and clear communication between school and home is essential for the success of the children. Parents should feel free to call teachers about student progress or other situations of concern.

The school office is open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm each school day. Teachers may be contacted via email during the school day or by telephone by leaving a message with the main office. The teacher will return the call at his/her earliest convenience. Requests for parent/guardian

conferences may be made at any time by a parent/guardian. Teachers are available to meet with parents before or after school by appointment only.

#### Weekly Family Newsletter

Each week the Administrator sends a weekly family Newsletter to all families with a student enrolled in the Blessed Sacrament PK program as well as students enrolled at Saint Edward. This newsletter shares information about upcoming events, highlights from the classroom or school events as well as sharing information about community opportunities within the CVCS community. This newsletter is sent to all families who have an email address in our PowerSchool Student Information System. If you are not receiving weekly emails please contact our office to ensure we have the most accurate email address in PowerSchool.

#### Classroom SeeSaw Accounts / Brightwheel

Each of our classroom teachers will utilize a digital application to keep families up to date on items that are most pertinent to the classroom. This information is evidence of their learning, communications regarding classroom level activities and opportunities for direct communication with the classroom teacher. Students in our PK program at Blessed Sacrament will have access to the Brightwheel App which will include features for updates and parent communication. Students at Saint Edward will have access to the SeeSaw App which will provide families with communication opportunities with the classroom teacher. These resources are embedded into our student experience to ensure families have access to regularly shared information to support their students.

Families can expect regular communications from the school office through email communication, unless families indicate a preference for mailed communication. Field trips, permission forms and event invitations are shared with families via hard copy and sent home with students. Report cards are sent home with students.

## **VI. Specials Classes**

### **A. Physical Education**

It is recommended that all students have periodic physicals. Parents/guardians of students with a disability must inform the instructor of the nature of the disability. Excuses from class must come from the parent/guardian. For prolonged excuses, it should come from the family physician.

While there is no official Physical Education uniform, all students are to wear gym or athletic shoes in the gymnasium. Do not wear shoes with black soles or heels as they may leave marks on the gym floor.

### **B. Music**

Vocal music is offered for all students. Through the vocal music program all students will actively participate in essential learning in music. The students in all grade levels will perform in a grade level concert as a part of their music education curriculum. These performances are held outside of the school day to accommodate families and community members to engage in the performance.

**C. Library**

All students in Grades K-5 will be scheduled to visit the school library once a week. Each student is responsible for the book(s) he/she checks out from the library and will be charged for lost or damaged books.

**D. School Counselor**

Cedar Valley Schools provides a school counselor. The counselor works with students individually, in small groups, or in classroom guidance lessons. The counseling relationship allows children to explore feelings and interests and provides an opportunity to explore specific issues or concerns. The counselor strives to help students develop a better understanding of themselves and others. At times that means developing plans for meeting children's needs by bringing together information from parents, teachers, and other professionals.

School counselors are a valuable resource for parents. Parents are encouraged to visit with our counselor to discuss any concerns they may have about their child. The counselor can also help families make contacts with organizations within the community.

**E. Technology**

As a part of the K-5 educational experience all students will have a weekly technology course throughout the school year. Students will learn the basics of both desktop and tablet operating systems, how to use a desktop keyboard and to functionally use the iPad for classroom and individual use. Additionally, students in all grade levels will learn coding practices to help increase an understanding of code input and operation.

**VII. Electronic Devices**

Personal electronic devices such as portable radios and iPods, DVD players, beepers, cellular phones, electronic games, remote controls, laser pointers, and other similar electronic devices are not to be used during the school day unless the teacher has given permission to use them to supplement instruction. The school will provide the necessary electronic devices if they are to be used during instruction. These items may interfere with a positive educational environment. All such devices will be immediately confiscated and returned to the parents/guardians of the student. These personal electronic devices are to be left at home or in your child's backpack.

**VIII. Homework**

Homework is encouraged in order to teach students the importance of practice, review, and application. Teachers assign homework in accord with the age of students. Parents/guardians should not have to instruct students, but are encouraged to support the homework process through questions and suggestions when appropriate. They are also asked to help students become responsible in completing their own homework and turning it in on time.

If a student is absent from school, he/she is responsible for completing the work missed. On the day of absence, requests for homework may be made by calling the office by 9:00a.m. and may be picked up at 3:20p.m. in the office.



## **IX. Children's Liturgies**

The Cedar Valley Catholic Schools hold children's liturgies as a part of our religious curriculum. K-5 school children attend a 9:00 a.m. all-school Mass every week. Grades take turns in planning and in leading the celebration of the Eucharist. All are welcome and encouraged to celebrate with us.

## **X. Health Guidelines for Parents**

Our philosophy regarding attendance is that students should be in school when they are in good health so that learning and development may progress. On the other hand, it is not in the best interest of the student or others to be in school when he/she is not well. Please consider the health of your child and others before sending your child to school with cold or flu symptoms.

Please keep your child home from school if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- Oral temperature of 100.3 degrees or higher. Temperature should be normal for 24 hours without the benefit of aspirin or acetaminophen.
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
- Unexplained skin rash or eruptions, especially with other physical complaints.
- Constant cough, sore throat, nasal congestion/discharge, or red eyes with yellow drainage present.
- Children should be on antibiotics for a full 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is placed on antibiotics for an infectious disease, a note from the doctor stating when it is ok to return to school is recommended.

Other health guidelines/reminders:

- As a general rule, if students are well enough to be in school, then they should be well enough to go out for recess. Requests that students stay in for recess will be honored in circumstances in which a doctor's note has been provided.
- Research shows that absenteeism due to illness is decreased 40% when children are taught good hand washing techniques. Please reinforce these habits with your children.
- When a diagnosis of a contagious illness or condition has been made for a student, we will send home a note or email notifying families with children in that grade/classroom. This is so parents/guardians can be watchful for symptoms.
- Students who are too sick to come to school during the day may not participate in evening activities, such as concerts.

### **Birthday Treat Policy**

The Cedar Valley Catholic Schools are Blue Zones campuses and work to help our students make healthy choices in their daily lives. As a part of this initiative we take steps to ensure that we are promoting this lifestyle in our journey at school as well. Below are guidelines for parents wishing to provide a treat for their child's birthday.

- We recommend birthday celebrations to focus on items that are non-food related. Items such as pencils, erasers or other options that do not incorporate food choices are the preference for our students for birthday celebrations.
- All treats that are brought in for birthday celebrations should be individually packaged items.
- Treats such as birthday cakes or cupcakes will not be consumed in the classroom. These items will be given to the student to take home for parents to decide if they should be consumed by the student.

- Cakes or other whole item foods which cannot be individually dispersed to take home will not be permitted in the classroom.

## **XI. Services**

### **A. Food Service Program**

Lunch is available for free or at reduced rates to families who qualify for this program. Parents/guardians need only to complete the necessary form in August or at any time during the school year. All information shared is confidential. **We strongly encourage families who qualify for free or reduced lunches to take advantage of this benefit. Participation in these programs helps to raise revenues and maximizes eligibility for federal grants to support supplemental academic programs.** Parents who wish to participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program may apply at registration or at any time in the school office, in accord with eligibility guidelines. All information regarding free and reduced eligibility is kept confidential.

Lunches are available in the school cafeteria. A lunch menu will be provided at the beginning of each month. If the start of the school day is delayed due to bad weather, no breakfast will be served that day. Menus are designed to meet nutritional guidelines and promote healthy eating habits. Please do not send or bring commercially prepared fast food for your child. Carbonated soda and candy are also prohibited.

Grades 3-5 students may also purchase extra milk on any day and extra main dish entrees on some days. The cost of these “extras” will be charged to the family's Food Service account. Parents/guardians need to contact the Food Service Site Manager (233-5642) to request that no “extras” be charged to their family's account.

We encourage parents/grandparents to join their child(ren) any day for lunch. Please make a reservation with the cafeteria before 9:30 in the morning. As with students, we ask that parents do not bring fast food items into the lunchroom.

### **B. Extended Care**

Before and after school care is available from 6:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. The initial non-refundable family registration fee is \$25.00. Please call the Blessed Sacrament Early Childhood Center office for additional information regarding before and after care for your child(ren).

## **XII. Ways to be Involved**

### *Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)*

The PTO coordinates fundraising activities and sponsors social events for students throughout the year. Events may be held during the school day or may occur in the evening or on weekends. All parents/guardians of enrolled students are members of this organization. Your participation in events supported by our PTO is greatly appreciated.

### *Volunteer Helpers*

Education volunteers are an integral part of our learning program. It is our goal to involve

volunteer service in our school. Parent volunteers are needed; whether it is once a week or once a month (at school or at home) to work with small groups, cut or color items for crafts or bulletin boards, etc. To become a Volunteer Helper, contact the PTO, the principal, or a classroom teacher. ALL volunteers are required to sign an acknowledgment form, have a background check, and take an online Safe Environment Training course through Catholic Mutual Group.

\*Teachers appreciate the assistance volunteers provide and volunteers experience the pleasures of being needed while helping others.\*

### ***Classroom Visitation Policy for Parents and Guardians***

Visiting a classroom is one of the best ways to gain insight into the educational program and observe your child's performance in a classroom setting. During your visit please follow the basic procedures, guidelines, and expectations for classroom visitations to ensure the safety and rights of all of our students:

#### **Procedures:**

##### **At Least 24 Hours Prior to Your Visit**

- Contact the school administration to request a classroom visit and arrange a time to observe the classroom.

##### **On the Day of Your Visit Prior to Classroom Observation**

- Sign in at the main office and get a visitor's sticker or badge.
- Meet briefly with an administrator to go over procedures, guidelines, and expectations.
- Discuss any questions you may have regarding the classroom observation.

##### **On the Day of Your Visit Following the Classroom Observation**

- Sign out at the main office.
- Discuss questions regarding observation with building administrator / designee.

#### **Guidelines and Expectations:**

- Staff members initiate interactions with others in the classroom. Please remember that you are there to observe. Please do not disrupt the learning environment.
- The school reserves the right to limit the amount of visitations. Special circumstances may warrant additional visits.
- This is not a time to conference with the teacher. If you would like to schedule a conference time, please contact the teacher via email and set up a time after your visit.
- Classroom visitors must be adults. Younger children cannot accompany a parent/guardian during the observation.
- Parents/guardians are expected to follow the same school-wide expectations as students. For example, no cell phone or technology use, etc.
- Teachers will manage classrooms while parents/guardians are observing. If questions arise, please contact the teacher after class via email and a meeting can be arranged outside of instructional time.
- Anything you see in the classroom shall remain confidential due to educational privacy laws. Audio or video recording is not permitted.
- The time allotment for a classroom visit can vary based on the age of the student and the time

scheduled. We offer the following as suggestions for observation time amounts to allow for an appropriate visit for the age of the student:

- Early Childhood / PK - 30 minutes - 45 minutes
- Elementary School - 30 minutes - 60 minutes
- Middle School - 42 - 84 minutes (2 class periods)
- High School - 90 minutes (1 block)
- CVCS suggests a frequency of classroom observations to be limited to once per quarter. This allows the family an opportunity to see student growth and check on student progress for any areas the teacher and family are working on supporting.

By signing this agreement, student(s), staff, and parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to the procedures, guidelines, and expectations above. At any point a staff member or administrator feels that the parent(s)/guardian(s) is/are not adhering to the guidelines set forth, he/she has the right to end the visit and/or restrict further visits.

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Visit \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Visit \_\_\_\_\_