

Parent – Student

Handbook

2025-2026

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Welcome

Welcome to St. John’s Area School (SJAS)! We are a Pre-K through 6th Grade Catholic school, committed to partnering with families to educate children academically, socially, and spiritually.

Dear Families:

Welcome to a new school year! No doubt, this school year will be a year filled with challenges, but these challenges also present opportunities for deepening our faith, strengthening relationships, and developing the gifts and talents God has blessed us with. Working together as a community of faith and learning, we can build God’s Kingdom in our homes, in our neighborhoods, and at St. John’s Area School by seeking truth, revealing goodness, and radiating beauty.

**Seek Truth**- Above all things, we seek the Truth, the Way, and the Life, Jesus Christ. We seek Him in the Eucharist, we seek Him in the Word, we seek Him in each other, we seek Him in creation, and we seek Him in our studies. Wherever there is Truth, whether it be in math, science, social studies, or language arts- we find the presence of the divine, we find God in all things. We seek the Truth because when we find it, we know that we have found God. When we have found the Truth- we are set free from those things in our lives that keep us from God.

**Reveal Goodness**- God’s goodness surrounds us, lives in us, and inspires us, but it can sometimes be hard to recognize. We seek to reveal His goodness- in ourselves, in our friends and classmates, in our family members, in the world around us, and in the events of our lives. Revealing God’s goodness starts with each one of us allowing the love of God to shine through our words and actions. We do this by loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving our neighbor as ourselves through acts of love, mercy, and forgiveness. Revealing God’s goodness unveils the promise and potential in ourselves and the world around us.

**Radiate Beauty**- When something is so good, so joyful, so incredible, we can’t help but share it with others. When others experience this joy, they can’t help but be attracted to it as well. We strive to joyfully and enthusiastically share the Holy Spirit with our friends, family, neighbors, and the world by sharing who God is, how he loves us, and how he wants us to live. Through prayer, works of mercy, and being present to others, we can bring about the unparalleled beauty of His kingdom- a kingdom of peace, a kingdom of justice, a kingdom of love.

“Whatever is **true**, whatever is **honorable**, whatever is **just**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**, whatever is **gracious**, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

This year, I invite all of us to do whatever it takes to enter more deeply into a community that strives to seek truth, reveal goodness, and radiate beauty. I know that together, we can enrich each student’s journey by nurturing their growth in academics and service to Christ in the world.

Sincerely,

Christopher Bemis, Principal

Mission Statement

Inspiring students to reveal their God-given goodness and beauty while seeking truth in a joyful and loving community rooted in Catholic values.

Vision Statement

St. John’s Area School welcomes all children into our Christ-centered learning environment.

* We strive to promote an excellent education and instill in our students the courage to imagine their bright futures.
* We build on the children’s varied backgrounds and challenge them to achieve success morally as well as academically.
* Together, in a safe and loving environment, we share experiences that will foster well-formed individuals and life-long learners who live and model their Catholic Faith.
* Students are encouraged to use their God-given gifts to serve and positively impact the lives of others.
* We support students in their spiritual growth in order to prepare the next generation of Catholic leaders.

Root Beliefs

* All people are created in the image and likeness of God and blessed with gifts and talents
* God calls us to loving relationships through faith, family, and friendships.
* Faith in Jesus Christ is expressed and deepened through prayer, study, worship, and loving service to others
* A living faith guides us through this life and prepares us for eternal life in heaven

Core Values

* Pray
* Connect
* Serve
* Explore
* Create
* Love

Animating Principle

**In Christ we learn; in love we serve.**

Statement of Catholicity

At St. John’s Area School, our Catholic identity is not just an aspect of who we are, but the very essence of our mission and purpose. Rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the rich traditions of the Catholic Church, our educational approach is holistic, nurturing the spiritual, intellectual, and moral development of each student. Every aspect of our curriculum, activities, and community life is infused with Catholic values, guiding our students to grow in faith, knowledge, and love. We are dedicated to fostering an environment where the Gospel message is lived and witnessed daily, creating a foundation for lifelong discipleship.

As Pope Benedict XVI said, “First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth (Benedict XVI, Address to Catholic Educators, 2008). This profound understanding underscores our commitment to excellence in education, while also ensuring that our students experience the love and truth of Christ in every aspect of their school life. At St. John’s Area School, our Catholic faith is the heart of all we do, inspiring us to cultivate a community where each person is valued, and every student is prepared to contribute meaningfully to the world.

Accreditation

St. John’s Area School is accredited by the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA). The mission of the Western Catholic Educational Association is to advance quality Catholic education for all students in member schools and arch/dioceses through an accrediting process that promotes the primacy of faith formation, the rigor of educational excellence, and the vitality that comes through continuous school improvement. Accreditation validates that a school has met high standards and is actively seeking a quality educational program. For more information, please see…<https://www.wcea.org/>

Nondiscrimination

At St. John’s Area School, we are committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and supportive environment for all members of our community. Rooted in our Catholic values, we uphold the dignity of every individual and ensure that all students have equal access to the benefits and opportunities provided by our school, without discrimination.

In alignment with Catholic social teaching and applicable federal and state laws, St. John’s Area School prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, disability, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, or any other characteristic protected under applicable law in the administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and tuition assistance, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

As a Roman Catholic religious institution, the school also has the right and duty to conduct its school, programs, and activities in a manner consistent with the Catholic faith and doctrine. Accordingly, nothing in this handbook precludes the school’s ability to act in conformance with its Catholic beliefs and identity, including taking appropriate actions with respect to students, parents, or volunteers, whose actions are inconsistent with the religious teachings of the Catholic faith. This applies to actions on school grounds, at school functions, or off school grounds if such actions interfere with or obstruct the mission or operations of the school.

Purpose of Handbook

This handbook is designed to help parents, teachers, staff, and students partner together for success, and to provide a general framework for policies and procedures at our school. It is not all-inclusive, and when unique circumstances arise administration will provide direction on a case-by-case basis.

St. John’s Area School retains the right to change, modify, suspend, or interpret any policies whether written or not, without notice, at its discretion. The provisions of this handbook do not, and should not be construed to, constitute a contract between any applicant, student, or parent, and St. John’s Area School.

Application of Policies

School policies are enforced year-round, for the duration of a student’s enrollment. St. John’s Area School may impose discipline for student misconduct on school grounds, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation. Discipline may also be imposed on any student whose misconduct or policy violation at any time or in any place interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school or the safety or welfare of the student or other students, or materially and substantially interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges.

**St. John’s Area School Goals**

● We will create and model a community that worships God and supports the faith formation of our students through weekly celebration of the Eucharist, prayerful reflection on God’s word, shared knowledge of Catholic doctrine, and the practice of Gospel values.

● We will fulfill Christ’s commandment to love through service projects that benefit our local community and the global community. Our commitment to love others will be nurtured through stewardship by every member of our community.

● We will work in partnership to enhance the educational opportunities, experiences, and academic success of each member of the community through student enrichment programs, faculty development, peer cooperation, parent education, and community involvement.

● We will develop, implement, and continuously evaluate curricular programs and practices based on the needs of the students, faculty expertise, parent input, current educational research, and technological developments.

● We will provide and maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning where the diverse needs and styles of students are respected and accommodated and where individual achievement is valued and recognized.

● We will promote academic excellence by maintaining high expectations, setting high standards, and rewarding outstanding effort and accomplishments.

● We will participate as students, families, parishioners, and faculty members in the community building events that support the students and the financial, physical, technological and educational needs of the school.

● We will utilize various means of communication and technology to encourage the sharing of information and knowledge among our faculty, students, and parents and to maximize the connection of every member of our community.

● We will provide a variety of resources for intellectual, interpersonal, physical, emotional, and spiritual growth because we value the uniqueness of each member of the community. ● With Jesus as our role model, we will celebrate the uniqueness of each person and encourage an ongoing welcoming spirit in all that we do from the classroom, to the playground, to outside our immediate community so that people of all backgrounds feel valued.

**General School Information**

About St. John’s Area School

This handbook is a summary of normal routines and policies at SJAS that are especially helpful for you to know. If you have any questions about information in this handbook, please do not hesitate to call the office at 968-7972, or you can email:

Office email: [info@saintjohnsschool.net](mailto:info@saintjohnsschool.net)

Principal’s email: [principal@saintjohnsschool.net](mailto:principal@saintjohnsschool.net)

**Faculty & Staff**

St. John’s Area School’s faculty and staff place high expectations on themselves as well as their students, both academically and spiritually. [Our Faculty & Staff - St. John's Area School - Foley, MN](https://saintjohnsschool.net/staff)

**Daily Schedule**

7:30 Office opens

8:00 School day begins. Students not in their classrooms at this time are considered tardy/absent.

2:30 Bus Dismissal for Pre-K – 6th Grade. School day ends.

2:45 Parent Pick-up for Pre-K – 6th Grade.

3:00 Office closes

**Mass Schedule**

Tuesday 8:30 AM- Parish Mass, grades 2, 3, 4 attend

Wednesday, 10:00 AM- All School Children’s Mass (K-6 students attend, classes alternate planning Mass)

Thursday, 8:30 AM- Parish Mass, grades 1, 5,6 attend

Arrival and Dismissal

Students may arrive at school up to 30 minutes before school starts. All students in Pre-K – 6th Grade must be dropped off at the main entrance, Door #1. Students arriving in the morning before it is time to go to their classroom must wait in the designated area in the gym. The school provides supervision of students at the school beginning 30 minutes prior to school start, and 30 minutes after school ends. All students will be sent home on their scheduled bus unless we have a note from the parents making other arrangements. Students must have a written note from home to change plans. If you need to make other arrangements for your child, you must call the school before 2:00 pm.

When entering the building after 8:05 am, students must check in at the office. During the school day, students must check in with the office when they leave and again when they return. Parents must notify the office for their child to be permitted to leave the school during school hours.

**Authorized Pickup**

Students will only be released to parents or an authorized pick-up person. If you have designated another person to pick up your child on a specific day, please inform the school no later than that morning.

**After School Events**

When a student participates in a school activity that does not begin immediately after school, it is necessary that parents make arrangements for their children in the interim. Unless specifically arranged, St. John’s Area School does not supervise children after school. Generally, students should leave school grounds and return at the appropriate time for the event.

Attendance

When students are tardy or absent, this causes interruptions and hinders learning for both the individual student and the classroom. The purpose of this policy is to encourage punctuality and regular school attendance.

Families must inform the school office by 8:00 on or before the day of the absence if a child is to be absent or tardy for any reason. This can be done via email [info@saintjohnsschool.net](mailto:office@saintjohnsschool.net), phone call (320) 968-7972, or voice message to the main office. Please provide your child’s name, grade, and the reason for the absence.

If we are not contacted by 8:00, families will receive a call from the school.

* Students arriving before 10:30 will be counted as present all day but marked tardy.
* Students arriving between 10:30 and 1:00 will be marked 0.5 days absent.
* Students leaving between 10:30 and 1:00 will be marked 0.5 days absent.
* Students leaving after 1:00 will be excused.

*Excused and Unexcused Absences/Tardies.* There are two types of absences/tardies – excused and unexcused. School administration, not parents, has the final determination regarding which type of absence applies. Please note that the school is required to report excessive tardies and absences to the county truancy office.

Excused Absences/Tardies include: illness, funeral, doctor/dentist/orthodontist appointment, vacation when the school office is notified at least 48 hours in advance, family emergency

Unexcused Absences/Tardies include: oversleeping, missed the bus, refused to go to school, attending or participating in a sporting event or activity.

*Absence due to illness.* If a student misses one day due to illness, please do not call for make-up work. The student will receive any missed work the following day. If a student will be absent longer than one day, families should contact the student’s teacher regarding make-up work. Teachers will decide which items may be given during the absence and which will be made up after the absence. If a student is absent for an entire day due to illness, they are not allowed to participate in after school activities.

*Absence due to vacation.* Vacations taken while school is in session are strongly discouraged. If a family takes a vacation while school is in session, the school office must be informed as far in advance as possible, and at least 48 hours before the planned absence. Teachers are not expected to prepare assignments in advance to accommodate vacation plans. When the student returns to school after a vacation, the assignments will be given out together with a deadline for their completion.

*Truancy.* St. John’s Area School follows Benton County truancy procedures for children under 12 years of age. Children having seven (7) or more unexcused absences will be assessed as educational neglect. (MN Statute 260C.163 Subd. 11)

Building Use

Any person or group can request to use the school facility during non-school hours. Requesters will be required to complete an application for use, must certify that their use will not violate our policies or contravene Catholic doctrine, and may require a fee and proof of insurance. Please contact the school office to inquire about building use.

Dress Code

The Dress Code Policy is designed to reflect the dignity of the body and the modesty taught by our Catholic tradition.  The dress code is intended to maximize educational achievement and promote the general safety and health of students and staff. It enhances a sense of school pride and belonging, while encouraging discipline and eliminating unnecessary distractions.  Because of this, all students are expected to dress in a neat, clean, respectful, and modest manner. Complying with the dress code is a requirement for attending school.

The following dress expectations list covers many specific expectations but is not exhaustive, and school administration reserves the right to amend the dress code as needed:

**General**

* Clothing and other items or grooming in a manner that represents and/or promotes politics, political candidates, inappropriate messages, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other illegal substances, violence, threats, gangs, hate groups, or any messages that are immoral or contravene the teachings of the Catholic Church, are prohibited.
* The school may restrict the wearing of clothing or other adornment that is disruptive to school operation or that is generally distracting to the learning environment.
* Students should wear clothing that does not require regular adjustment to abide by the dress code expectations.
* Hats, caps, hoods, or other head coverings may not be worn during the school day unless a student has administrative approval or for special events.
* Simple earrings are allowed for girls only. Facial jewelry (excluding earrings) or visible body piercings are not allowed. Jewelry should not be distracting.
* Sleeveless shirts must have straps at least 3 fingers wide (student’s fingers) and a hem around the armhole. The looseness and size of the armhole on sleeveless shirts should be considered.
* No excessively ripped, holey, or torn clothes.
* Jeans styled with holes, rips, or tears need to have leggings worn under the jeans.
* Students may bring shorts/pants to wear under dresses/skirts for PE classes.
* Shorts and skirts need to be at an appropriate length (fingertip of a fully extended arm or mid-thigh: half way between the upper leg and the knee). **No shorts at Mass!**
* All clothing must cover all undergarments.
* Bare or stocking/sock feet are not permitted.
* Tennis shoes are required for Physical Education class and other active events in the gymnasium.
* Sandals worn in warm weather need to have a back strap (no flip flops).
* During snow and mud season, BOOTS are required for recess.

**Mass**

* Mass is a very important part of our school and faith life. Students should always dress respectfully for Mass and liturgical functions. Students are encouraged to “dress up” if they are part of the ministry team at the Mass.
* **No Shorts!** Students can change into shorts after Mass.

**Swimming pools/Waterparks/Beaches**

* Swimsuits must be modest in nature.
* Girls must wear a one piece or tankini. If the midriff (torso/belly area) is showing, a tank top or t-shirt must be worn over the swimsuit.
* Boys must wear swim trunks.

If a student violates the dress code policy, they will be informed and the student’s parents may be notified. Students will be sent to the school office for violations that are substantial, relate to modesty, or create a distraction to the academic environment. Options to address the violation may include turning clothing articles inside out, being provided replacement clothing (when possible), parents bringing other clothes, or being sent home. Ongoing dress code violations, or individual instances of severe violations, may result in disciplinary action.

Dress for the Weather

Students should come dressed for the day’s weather. Recess happens each day unless it is raining or it feels like it is below 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Refer to the following table for guidelines:

* **46 degrees and warmer**- students may need to wear long-sleeved outerwear to recess based on teacher/administrator discretion.
* **36-45 degrees**- students must wear a sweatshirt or long-sleeved outerwear to recess.
  + Students may need snow pants, hats, mittens, or gloves during cold weather.
  + During snow and mud season, BOOTS may be required.
  + Based on the amount of snow or water on the playing surface, classroom teachers or administration may use personal discretion for the class.
* **35 degrees and colder**- students must wear a coat to recess.
  + Students must also have snow pants, hat, mittens, or gloves during cold weather. Please label your child’s personal items to avoid confusion*.*
  + During snow and mud season, BOOTS are required.
  + Based on the amount of snow or water on the playing surface, classroom teachers or administration may use personal discretion for the class.

Extracurricular Activities

All student programming should direct students to be formed in the virtues. Enrichment and extracurriculars should cultivate in students a strong character so that they can grow into adulthood living responsible, productive and holy lives. Virtues acquired by education are purified and elevated by grace, and with God’s help, allow each child to become the person God has made him or her to be. Therefore, it is necessary that all curricula, programs, experiences, athletics, extracurricular, and other school activities be deeply grounded in the Church’s virtue tradition, and designed and operated so as to form students in Catholic virtue.

St. John’s Area School is proud to offer a range of extracurricular activities in which students may choose to participate, including soccer, volleyball, basketball, and Knowledge Bowl.

Students who are not present for a school day are not eligible to participate in extracurriculars on that day. Students who are failing classes may be restricted from participating in extracurriculars, at the discretion of the administration, to allow the student to focus on academic success.

All school policies apply at extracurricular events (including practices), whether on or off campus.

Field Trips

Field Trips are part of the educational curriculum and are designed to support the curriculum and introduce students to learning opportunities beyond our campus. Since field trips are learning situations, they are counted as a school day and attendance is generally required.

Prior to scheduled trips, an authorization form signed by a parent is required. Students without a signed form are not allowed to go on the field trip and must stay at school. Handwritten notes and phone calls are not accepted in place of a signed authorization form. Certain field trips require an additional fee which must be paid for the student to participate. Students are not allowed to bring any type of electronic devices on field trips.

Whenever possible, transportation for field trips is by bus. If it is necessary to use transportation provided by vehicles, parents will be notified.

Chaperones may be needed for field trips; all chaperones must comply with all volunteer requirements. [Chaperone Expectations](https://docs.google.com/document/d/10FaY3a7goThdqm7WnnMq0-ajh_cqHPr71a-j1_oWNMU/edit?usp=sharing)

Guiding Principles Concerning Human Sexuality and Sexual Identity

St. John’s Area School is committed to providing a safe environment that allows students to flourish academically, physically, and spiritually. Our school provides an education and resources consistent with Catholic teaching. The starting point for Catholic education is a deeply held understanding that affirms the God-given irrevocable dignity of every human person. St. John’s Area School will relate to each student in a way that is respectful and consistent with each student's God-given sexual identity and biological sex.

House System

St. John’s Area school teams up older grades with younger ones to help both groups grow from collaborating with each other. The mission of the House System at St. John’s Area School is to inspire students to radiate their God-given goodness and beauty while seeking truth in a joyful and loving community rooted in Catholic values. More information can be found by visiting [House System - St. John's Area School - Foley, MN](https://saintjohnsschool.net/house-system)

Library

St. John’s Area School offers a large variety of books for all skill levels of readers. Our books are meant to be routed by our faith while providing intellectual growth. For more information on how our books are selected you may read: [LIBRARY DONATION & SELECTION GUIDELINES](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yaX7Z1M0fKGAkJ0I4ZHP9VlrTW_4B__9EVhk4QTzO8o/edit?usp=sharing)

Lost and Found

The school maintains a lost and found for misplaced items. It is located in the entryway of the school by Door #1. Please check the lost and found if you are missing an item. It is recommended that parents mark ALL clothing items with their family name. St. John’s Area School is not responsible for lost items, and the lost and found is periodically cleaned out. Items that remain in the lost and found for more than one month may be discarded.

Lunch Program

St. John’s Area School offers a hot lunch program. Students may choose to order hot lunch or to bring lunch from home. St. John’s Area School aims to provide a variety of balanced and nutritious meals for our students. Lunch menus are made available on our website as well as through our newsletters. St. John’s Area School is a participant of the MN Free School Meals Program. For more information on this program, see [Free School Meals for Kids Program](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/FNS/SNP/free/).

**Food Allergies**

For any special dietary needs, allergies and disabilities, a written form needs to be filled out by the parent and a physician, and then returned to the school. If possible, it is advisable for the parents, teacher, and kitchen staff to meet and review options and needs. The kitchen is committed to providing healthy food alternatives.

Parent Messages for Students

Messages for students regarding a change in plans for the end of the school day (e.g. bussing, pick-up, etc.) should be left at the main office. Please limit messages to your child to urgent matters only, as messages are disruptive to class. Whenever possible, messages regarding the end of the day should be called in at least one hour before the school day ends.

Pets in School

Out of concern for the health and safety of our students and staff, along with many being allergic or

fearful of animals, pets may not be brought into our schools or around the outside of school during

the school day (including drop off and pick up times). Please contact the principal who may grant an

exception if the pet visit is for educational purposes, the benefit of the school, does not pose a health or safety hazard, or for extenuating circumstances.

Photo Release

Throughout the year, there are many occasions to share photos and details about what is happening at our school, through newspaper articles, social media posts, and school communications. We ask families at the beginning of each school year if they would like to opt out of having their child’s photo published through these various forms of media. Families who opt out of the release will be noted and their children’s photos and name will not be published in any descriptions of pictures.

Prayer and Worship

Formation in the spiritual life leads children to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church. A robust and intentional program of spiritual formation encourages the life of grace through daily personal and communal prayer, regular opportunity for reception of the sacraments, and participation in the liturgical life of the Church. With a strong faith that continues to grow, Catholic school students find in God the ultimate meaning and purpose of their lives. Students participate in daily prayer, seasonal prayer services, retreat experiences, vocational information, and liturgical celebrations. Students also attend mass weekly. We invite parents to join us for mass and liturgical celebrations throughout the year.

Sacramental Preparation

In coordination with our parish, St. John’s Area School provides a preparation program for students in second grade for receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion. Parental involvement is important in a child’s preparation, so we ask parents to work at home with their children and to attend parent meetings relating to sacramental preparation. Parents are expected to communicate to the school which parish their child will make their sacrament at so the proper arrangements can be made in coordination with the parish.

School Calendar

The school year generally runs from September to May. The school calendar can be found on the main school webpage, along with a list of non-attendance days, parent transportation days, and holidays.

Smart Device Policy

For the purposes of this policy, “Smart Device” refers to any internet-enabled digital tool with a visual display or screen. Common examples include smart phones, smart TVs, computers, iPads, iWatches, smart watches and Chromebooks.

St. John’s Area School discourages students from bringing Smart Devices to school. We recognize some parents may make the decision to allow their child to bring Smart Devices to school. In this case, the following policies are in place under normal circumstances and exclude emergency situations:

* Students will turn off their Smart Devices upon entering the building and those devices must remain in the child’s backpack for the day. Students may not access their phones between classes or during lunch.
* If a phone call or text message needs to be made, students are to use the office phone, or a teacher/staff member will place a call/text for them.
* Students are not allowed to use personal Smart Devices during off-campus, school-sponsored field trips that occur during regular school hours.
* Parents who send their children to school with a Smart Device accept the possibility of loss or damage and will hold the school harmless for any loss or damage.
* Smart devices being actively used by students contrary to this policy may be confiscated. Confiscated devices may be returned at the end of the day, or require a parent to retrieve.

School Issued Smart Devices

SJAS students use school issued computers, tablets, and internet for student work. Each student/parent must sign and agree to a Digital Device Agreement for students to use a school issued device. In addition, each student must agree to an [Internet Use Agreement](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DW4F94mnb1BtFAdPfAkBxyRaBPlTH0ye1sZ6YTTIXwU/edit?usp=sharing) for internet access that is conditional upon adherence to the agreement. Permission for usage of the internet resources at SJAS and a school issued device are granted after the agreements are signed by both parent and student.

Standardized Testing & Accelerated Reading

Star Assessments are short tests that provide teachers with personalized learning data for each student. Star tests are computer adaptive, which means they adjust in difficulty to each answer students provide. This helps teachers get the best data to help students in the shortest amount of testing time (about one-third of the time other tests require).

Students may take a Star test for early literacy, math, or reading. Teachers analyze the data they receive from Star Assessments to learn what students already know and what they are ready to learn next, to monitor student growth, and to determine which students may need additional help.

Star Assessments are research-based and scientifically proven to help teachers guide each student on their unique path to proficiency.

**Accelerated Reading**

St. John’s Area School provides students with the opportunity to improve their reading skills through research-proven reading practice in the Accelerated Reader program.

For more information, one either one of these academic tools please visit: <https://www.renaissance.com/products/assessment/star-assessments/>

or

<https://www.renaissance.com/products/accelerated-reader/>

Technology Fee and Insurance

SJAS requires a ‘tech fee’ for each student attending in 2nd through 6th grade. This fee is compensation for time spent maintaining and troubleshooting problems on the devices throughout the school year. It does not cover the replacement or repair of the devices.

There is an *additional* option to purchase insurance on school issued smart devices. Detailed information is on the Digital Device Agreement form. [Device Agreement](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dlY2TcCut0LXbGA3QM-whBpAquexR4QFIn8nOQr1GjU/edit?tab=t.0)

Transportation

Students of SJAS are transported through the Foley Public School bus service. Our students are bound by the same bus policies as the public school students.

The Foley School District School Bus Policy can be found at <https://rst6-livesite.rschooltoday.com/sites/foley.k12.mn.us/files/files/District/DistrictDepts/TransportationDept/709%20STUDENT%20TRANSPORT%20AND%20SAFETY%20POLICY.pdf>

If you have any questions, or a problem arises, please contact SJAS, or you may contact the school bus garage at 968-8618.

Wellness Policy

SJAS has a wellness policy in place. SJAS updates or modifies the wellness policy as appropriate, identified by triennial assessment. A copy of the written policy can be viewed here: [SJAS Wellness Policy 2024](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c8gz3-fytZ4TZSJTABZU15up8wm6HZhTe0cmrCY6aH8/edit?usp=sharing)

**Admission/Enrollment Policies**

Enrollment for New Students

St. John’s Area School accepts applications for new students year-round. Should more applications for admission be received than spaces are available, applications will be considered in the following priority:

* Siblings of students already enrolled at St. John’s Area School
* Children of Catholic families who are members of one of our contributing parishes.
* Children of non-parish families.

Within each of the above priority categories, applications will be taken in the order received, as much as possible. (An application from the third category received earlier than an application from category 1 will still have a lower priority; though it would be higher in priority than any other application from the same category submitted after it.)

St. John’s Area School may admit students who are not Catholic, provided they understand and accept that participation in Catholic religious instruction and school religious activities is required, and that our faith is a part of everything we do at the school.

Enrollment for Current Students

St. John’s Area School utilizes continuous enrollment, meaning that after a student is initially enrolled, enrollment for each successive academic year will occur automatically unless notice of withdrawal is provided in accordance with the continuous enrollment agreement. Letters of intent will be sent out to families in January to gather their intentions for the next school year. The form will be due by the beginning of February to help plan and budget for the following school year.

Registration Requirements

To complete registration, each family must pay all registration fees and submit all required paperwork, including a completed application and tuition contract.

Students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years of age prior to the first day of September of the Kindergarten year.

Probationary Period

All new and transfer students will be accepted on a probationary period of 90 days. This period is intended to allow both the family and the school the opportunity to determine whether the school is a good fit for the student. During this time, the student should maintain passing grades, display good behavior, have no disciplinary concerns, and no attendance issues. If there are academic or behavior concerns, the student may be asked to unenroll.

**Financial Policies**

Tuition and Fees

The school relies on the tuition from families to fulfill our budget obligations. The school sets tuition rates and fees each year and communicates this to families in conjunction with annual enrollment. Families will receive a tuition agreement form that states the amount of tuition to be paid for the coming year and several payment options. This form must be completed each year as part of the annual enrollment process. [25-26TuitionAgreement](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CM7T8rG--5dz81SZ8iniSJckohffZIdzaF3ej7nRz78/edit?usp=sharing)

All tuition and fees must be paid on time. A family who has a delinquent tuition account will be contacted and we will work to resolve the situation with the family. If a resolution has not been achieved within 30 days of delinquency, a student may not be allowed to attend school, and the family may not be allowed to re-enroll for the following year.

Fundraisers

Fundraisers are a major part of the St. John’s Area School experience which builds community, provides opportunities for parent participation, fosters charitable growth, and helps meet the financial needs of the school. Participation in fundraising activities is vital for the success of the school.

Some examples of various fundraisers during the year include: **Walkathon**, **Cookie Bake**, **Catholic United Spring Raffle**, **Soup Fest**, **Spring Garage Sale**, **Spring Breakfast and Silent Auction**. For more information on these events see [Fundraising - St. John's Area School - Foley, MN](https://saintjohnsschool.net/fundraising)

Financial Assistance

While we strive to keep tuition at an affordable rate, we understand that private school tuition can be a major expense for families. With this in mind, St. John’s Area School has financial assistance funds available. Distribution of funds is based on financial need and availability of funds.

Families struggling to make payments or who wish to apply for financial assistance should contact the Principal or the Scholarship Committee which meets to discuss who will receive scholarship money and how it is distributed. Documentation of income, assets, expenses, and special circumstances is required for the process. Families who experience a change in financial circumstances during the school year which makes fulfilling their tuition obligation difficult should contact the school office for assistance.

Financial Reports

A general summary of the financial reports for St. John’s Area School is included in the State of the School Report that is sent home each summer to families. A detailed financial report is available to all stakeholders upon request.

**Academic Policies**

Integrated Curriculum

St. John’s Area School is dedicated to providing an integrated curriculum that is academically excellent and instills strong Catholic moral values. The curriculum is presented with a coherent vision of reality through the lens of the Catholic intellectual tradition. This comprehensive approach encompasses intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual development honoring the truth of what it means to flourish as a human person. The impact of this holistic formation is mature young men and women who are able to engage the civic, spiritual, moral and professional challenges of their society and, assisted by God’s grace, use their success to transform our world for the good.

St. John’s Area School has a written curriculum for each subject area for grades K-6. Curriculum guidelines and a textbook adoption cycle are followed by SJAS. Elements of each core subject area are reviewed, revised, and updated according to an established timeline. St. John’s Area School follows this standard curriculum cycle and includes all state-required core subject areas to enhance offerings to students.

The **Standard Curriculum** includes:

| Religion | Science |
| --- | --- |
| Social Studies | English/Language Arts |
| Music | Mathematics |
| Art | Technology and Computer Science |
| Physical Education/Health | Friendzy - <https://friendzy.co/> |

Homework

Homework is a part of the learning process, and generally expands on or reinforces classroom objectives and teaching. Homework can include reading, memorizing, reviewing, studying, researching, and working on long-term projects. Whatever type of homework is assigned, the student must accept responsibility to be prepared for the upcoming class and do their best to complete the assignment. It is the student’s responsibility to turn in completed work as assigned.

Homework for children in the primary grades (K, 1, and 2) is limited. Students in the intermediate grades (3, 4 and 5) generally have homework three to five days per week. Students in Middle School (6th) will have both long and short term assignments on a daily basis.

Students are responsible for all assignments given in class during any absences.

Parents who have questions or want more information on their child’s homework expectations should contact the child’s teacher.

Report Cards and Parent/Teacher Conferences

At the end of each trimester students receive report cards. These are intended to inform parents and students regarding the student’s progress. This is an opportunity to assess how a student is progressing and to set goals for the year. Report card grades are final. If a student or parent has questions or concerns about report cards, they should contact their teacher. Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice yearly (fall and spring). Meetings and/or conferences with the teacher may be scheduled and are encouraged anytime throughout the year.

Promotion/Retention

Promotion and graduation take place when a student demonstrates satisfactory completion of grade level work. The decision to retain a student at current grade level will be made only after an evaluation has been made which indicates the student would benefit from retention. St. John’s Area School has the final decision in promotion/retention of students.

Special Education Services

Students who qualify for Speech, Learning Disabilities, Emotional and Behavioral Disorders and ESOL are serviced through ISD #51 at Foley Elementary or Intermediate School for students in grades K – 6. The classroom teacher works with district staff to follow the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Student Records

St. John’s Area School maintains and manages student records following its policies and practices and in accordance with federal and state law. Student records may include identifying data, academic work completed, level of achievement (grades, standardized achievement test scores), attendance data, scores on standardized tests, health data (maintained as separate records), teacher or counselor ratings and observations, and verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns.

Parents can make a request with the school office to review their child’s record. Such requests should be written and the school will respond in a reasonable amount of time.

No one except appropriate school personnel, parents of minors, and students who have reached legal age shall have access to student records without either a subpoena or appropriate written authorization from the parent.

More information can be found at: [www.ed.gov/ferpa](http://www.ed.gov/ferpa)

**Behavior Policies**

Student Conduct Guiding Principles

Each student is responsible for behavior that maintains a respectful, welcoming, and joyful learning environment within the school. Respect for oneself, others, authority, and property is expected from each student. Students are to behave in a manner that is morally responsible and brings credit to themselves, their families, and the school community, and to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

As a Christ-centered school, we value learning, respect, and responsibility. Our general school conduct expectations are:

Be respectful

* + - * Listen, speak, and act with respect to adults and peers
      * Treat all property respectfully, yours and others
      * Follow directions in a timely manner and without argument
      * Be attentive and respond appropriately when greeted or spoken to

Be responsible

* + - * Be on time, prepared and ready to learn
      * Complete work carefully and punctually
      * Be in control of your own words and body

Be safe

* + - * Follow school rules
      * Avoid conduct that could hurt someone else
      * Seek an adult if you see anyone being unsafe

Be like Jesus

* + - * Be kind to others
      * Include others and make everyone feel welcome
      * Be a peacemaker
      * Be willing to forgive

*Nurtured Heart Approach* is a program SJAS is committed to in order to help students experience academic and social success. [NHA Summary.pdf](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OqIy0XkYe0aH_oOmymAL3KYsjhynRcfN/view?usp=sharing)

Behavior in Various Locations

**Church/Liturgy Behavior**

* + - * Students are to enter and exit the church quietly and reverently.
* Students are to participate in an active yet reverent manner.
* Students will be dismissed by their classroom teacher.

**Lunchroom Behavior**

Manners and order in the lunchroom are expected. All students in grades K-6 shall remain in the lunchroom until they are dismissed by the lunchroom supervisor. All tables and areas around tables should be left in a presentable manner. Students needing a longer eating time are allowed to remain for a reasonable amount of time. Students are expected to remain respectful while leaving the lunchroom.

* Students should be respectful and responsible, especially while waiting in line.
* Students should speak using inside voices without shouting.
* Students should use “please” and “thank you.”
* Students should remain seated while at their table and keep their feet on the ground.
* Students should raise their hand if they need to use the restroom or ask a question.
* Students should walk, not run while in the lunchroom.
* Students should not throw food.
* Students should be sure to clean up after themselves and pick up any trash that they see.
* Students should hand their tray to kitchen staff when they are done eating.
* Students should line up quietly on the black line after dumping trays without jumping or putting their hands and/or feet on walls.
* Students should keep their hands to themselves.
* Students should not jump in line to dump trays or line up for recess/go back to their classroom.

**Playground/Recess Behavior**

Rules of conduct on the playground exist to foster thoughtfulness and consideration of others and bring order to the school environment. Show respect, cooperation, and fair play at all times. The recess rules and expectations are shared with the students each year during the first week of school. These rules and expectations are reviewed yearly with staff.

* Bathroom breaks need to be taken care of before recess.
* All food and drink (other than water bottles) should be consumed in the lunchroom.
* No foul language or disrespect to any supervisor or other children. This includes words and actions!
* No tackle football or other rough play that could cause an injury.
* No games that make a student a “target”.
* No climbing trees, poles and playground equipment (except for items that are made for climbing).
* No sitting on the purple monkey bars or the support bars/framework of equipment.
* No walking up or standing on the slides or the benches.
* Go down slides feet first only!
* No wood chips, rocks, balls, sleds or other equipment on the slides.
* No defacing the playground equipment or benches (writing on it with markers or sharp objects, including rocks). Supervisors will notify the principal immediately!
* No playing outside of the fence. If balls go over the fence, report it to the supervisor for assistance.
* No throwing of baseballs, snowballs, rocks, ice chunks, etc. that could cause an injury.
* No jumping off the swings while swinging.
* Students should return all equipment to the appropriate bins before returning to the classroom.
* Students must dress appropriately for the weather as specified in the school dress code.

**Bathroom Use**

Behavior in all bathroom areas will show respect for others and their privacy as well as respect for school property. Students are to properly use the appropriate facilities and bathroom fixtures and keep the lavatories and wash areas clean from litter.

**Care of School Property**

If a student breaks or damages something, it needs to be reported to the office or a staff member immediately for repair. In some situations, and depending on the circumstances, parents may be asked to pay for repairs.

**Care of Textbooks**

Students at St. John’s Area School are given books to use. Hard bound texts and some paperbacks must be used for multiple years. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the students to use textbooks wisely and with care. Books should be covered, free of marks, dry, un-torn, and un-creased.

If a book is judged unusable by the classroom teacher, or lost, the student is responsible for the replacement cost of the book. If the book is judged to have been poorly cared for, a nominal fee may be charged for the damage; the student is responsible for up to half the cost of the book and for cleaning it up. Final report cards will not be issued until all book fines are paid.

**Trading Cards**

Due to the misuse of trading and playing with “trading cards”, Pokémon, sports cards, and/or other types of trading cards are NOT allowed in school.

Discipline Policy

**Minor Misconduct**

Consequences for minor misconduct will typically be managed by the classroom teacher. Generally, minor misconduct or policy violations will result in lighter discipline. This may include, but is not limited to, a verbal warning, time-out, written warning, call to parents, reparation of damage, loss of privilege, detention, or being placed on a behavior plan. Continued infractions, aggravating factors, or more severe behavior may result in more substantial discipline. Because each child and situation is unique, in determining the appropriate response to a disciplinary situation the school may consider contextual factors such as the age of the student, the type of misconduct, the frequency of the student’s misconduct, and the severity of the problem.

Examples of minor misconduct include (but are not limited to):

* Inappropriate language
* Not following rules/directions promptly
* Arriving late to class
* Dress code violations
* Teasing, insulting, or otherwise being unkind to others
* Turning in homework late
* Any disruptive behavior
* Other minor policy violations

**Major Misconduct**

There are certain behaviors that, due to the severity of the action, are considered major misconduct, and more substantial and immediate consequences are necessary. Discipline for any minor misconduct may include disciplinary actions, as well as immediate removal of the student from the classroom, meeting with parents, in school or out of school suspension, and expulsion. Disciplinary actions for major misconduct are determined by the principal. If necessary for the safety of other students or to avoid significant disruption to the school’s social or academic environment, the student may be placed on a temporary out of school suspension pending appropriate resolution.

Examples of major misconduct include (but are not limited to):

* Continued misconduct
* Violence or threats of violence
* Bullying/Harassment
* Disrespect for authority, refusing to follow directions
* Lying, cheating, plagiarism, or academic dishonesty
* Use or possession of alcohol, drugs, or weapons on school property or at school events
* Abusive behavior (verbal or physical)
* Inappropriate language or actions
* Sexual misconduct
* Theft, property destruction, or vandalism
* Other major policy violations

Students, employees, or volunteers who are aware of major misconduct should report it to the principal as soon as possible.

**Guidelines**

The disciplinary procedures set forth in this handbook are intended as general guidance policies. Any step in the discipline procedures may be bypassed or modified at the discretion of the teacher or administration. The school has the right to discipline or require student withdrawal for any reason. Failure to comply with expected standards of conduct will subject the student to potential disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion or dismissal.

For more information on guiding principles of the discipline policy and examples see:[25-26Rules&Behavior](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BYroBQdHonJ-0dklgJKzMBUywn3MBmBWHazCcLAyzOI/edit?usp=sharing)

**Behavior On & Off Campus**

The school may impose discipline for student misconduct on school grounds, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation. Discipline may also be imposed on any student whose misconduct at any time or in any place interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school or the safety or welfare of the student or other students, or materially and substantially interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges.

Harassment

St. John’s Area School, in partnership with families, strives to create and maintain a positive learning environment where students are treated with dignity and respect so that they can celebrate and grow in their faith, discover their academic potential, and become concerned, respectful, and responsible young people. This philosophy is the foundation of our harassment policy.

**Harassment Definition**

Harassment is any unwelcome behavior (verbal, physical, written, or electronic) which has the intention or effect of intimidating, degrading, humiliating, or offending another person, or that interferes with another person’s academic performance or participation in school activities. Whether an action constitutes harassment is determined by school administration, and not by the intentions of the accused.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

* Bullying: Intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive and: (1) an actual or perceived imbalance of power exists between the student engaging in the prohibited conduct and the target of the prohibited conduct, and the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern; or (2) materially and substantially interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges.
* Cyber-Bullying: Bullying (or other harassment) performed using technology or other electronic communication.
* Hazing: Any activity undertaken by a student or group of students towards another student or group of students with the purpose of “initiation” into the school, a student organization, a team, or a social group, including but not limited to*,* any physical, sexual, verbal or psychological abuse that is demeaning, harming, or embarrassing anyone as a “rite of passage.”
* Physical: Unwelcome physical force or unwanted touch that shames, hurts, alienates, threatens, intimidates, or attacks another person, or stealing, damaging, or destroying another’s property.
* Psychological: Humiliating or abusive behavior that lowers a person’s self-esteem or causes torment or emotional harm.
* Sexual: Includes unwelcome sexual advances, gestures, jokes, comments, actions, or symbols, unwelcome sexual questioning, remarks, or touching, pressuring for sexual activity, displaying sexual images, videos, or sounds, and/or promoting rumors of a sexual nature
* Verbal: Face-to-face or otherwise spoken harassing action, including the use of offensive speech, taunts, name-calling, put-downs, intimidation, slander, and threats of any kind toward another person or group.
* Written: Written statements that taunt, name-call, put down, intimidate, slander, or threaten another person or group.

**Procedure**

Any student who is a victim or witness of harassment is encouraged to deal with the situation immediately by politely and firmly advising those involved that the behavior is inappropriate and should stop. However, if the individual does not wish to deal with the problem directly, if the harassment is severe, or if a request to stop is not respected, the student should report the incident to the principal, or any teacher or staff member.

Teachers and staff members who witness harassment or receive a report of harassment should make reasonable efforts to promptly address the harassment and must inform the principal as soon as possible.

The school will promptly initiate an investigation into any reports of harassment. The investigation may include interviews with the complainant, the alleged harasser, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident. The investigation will be conducted in a confidential manner to the extent possible, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

The school may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the victim, complainant, or others pending completion of an investigation of alleged harassment.

The school will determine, based on the preponderance of the evidence (“more likely than not”), whether the alleged conduct occurred and was a violation of this policy, and if so will take appropriate disciplinary action. If appropriate, an investigative report documenting interviews, conclusions, and outcomes will be completed. The complainant, victim, alleged harasser, and their parents, will be informed of the outcome of the investigation, to the extent permitted by law. However, the school may not disclose private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the school.

**No Retaliation**

Retaliation of any form against any person making a good faith report of harassment or participating in an investigation regarding harassment will not be tolerated.

**Bullying Policy**

Full details can be viewed here: [SJAS Bullying Policy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oiPwvXwazmuv-Z81eImPhW433EW-d58HB5bC1f39kzU/edit?usp=sharing)

Technology and Acceptable Use Policy

St. John’s Area School offers students access to the internet and other technology resources, which are essential learning tools in 21st-century education. Our school is committed to improving students’ educational experience using technology. Student use of technology is a privilege and must be consistent with the school’s mission and values. Using digital tools correctly and responsibly is very important.   All student policies, including this policy, apply to all students using school technology resources, including computers, tablets, and the internet.

Parents are encouraged to discuss this policy with their children and to monitor their technology use at home. Ensuring that students understand and adhere to these guidelines is a shared responsibility between the school and families.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to loss of technology privileges, detention, suspension, or expulsion.

**General Guidelines**

* Educational Use: Technology must be used to support learning and adhere to Catholic values. Students must follow all school policies when using technology, including appropriate language and respectful communication.
* Behavior: Users are expected to act respectfully, responsibly, ethically, morally, and legally. Respect for others is paramount.
* Internet Safety: Filtering software may be installed to block inappropriate content. Users must report access to inappropriate sites immediately.
* Equipment Care: Treat all technology equipment with respect. No food or drink near devices.
* Supervision: When possible, staff will supervise student use of technology to ensure it is appropriate for their age and aligned with educational goals.
* Personal Information: Do not share personal addresses, passwords, or phone numbers.
* Privacy: Users have no expectation of privacy in their use of school technology. The school reserves the right to monitor and review all technology use to ensure compliance with this policy or in conjunction with any disciplinary matter or investigation.

**Unacceptable Uses**

* Illegal or Unethical Behavior: Engaging in activities that are illegal or violate school policies.
* Inappropriate Content: Accessing, downloading, or distributing material that is inappropriate, offensive, or immoral.
* Off-Task Use: Using technology for non-educational purposes during instructional time.
* Inappropriate Communication: Sending or receiving messages that are harassing, threatening, obscene, or that use offensive language.
* Plagiarism and Cheating: Using others’ work without proper attribution or engaging in academic dishonesty.
* Unauthorized Access: Attempting to access restricted areas or other users’ accounts.
* Tampering, Security: Disabling filtering software, altering device settings, or installing unauthorized software. Attempting to bypass or undermine network security measures, including unauthorized access to restricted areas of the network, the introduction of malware, and other activities that could compromise network integrity.
* Privacy and Misuse Violations: Sharing personal information or accessing others’ information without permission or using another person’s password or device.
* Misuse of Resources: Misusing or damaging technology resources. This includes physical damage to devices and tampering with software or hardware configurations.
* Personalization: Altering school devices without explicit permission from staff.
* Harassment: Using technology to harass, bully, or mistreat others.
* Commercial Use: Using school technology for commercial or political purposes.
* Malware: Introducing or spreading viruses or other malicious software.
* Copyright Infringement: Copying or distributing copyrighted material without permission.
* Violations: Engaging in activities that violate laws or school policies.
* Encouraging Misconduct: Helping others violate these guidelines.

Weapons/Dangerous Items

The school strictly prohibits the unauthorized carrying or possession of weapons on its premises. For the purpose of this policy, the term “weapon” shall include, but not be limited to, firearms, ammunition, knives, explosives, or any device, material, or substance that is used for, or readily capable of, causing death or serious injury or any other object that can reasonably be considered a weapon (including replicas).

Any student violating this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. Any weapon found on school premises may be confiscated. Local law enforcement may be contacted.

Drug Use Policy

The use, possession, sale, purchase, transfer, or being under the influence of tobacco, nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, mood altering chemicals, or any other illegal or controlled substance by students on school grounds, or at any school event is strictly prohibited.

When it is determined that a student has violated this policy, the following actions may be taken:

* Parents notified
* Law enforcement officials notified
* Required drug screening at a facility approved by the school, with results of the screening shared with the school
* Chemical use evaluation
* Referral to an outside agency for treatment/counseling options
* Detention/suspension/expulsion
* Parent-student conference with the principal required before the student can resume attendance at school

Theft, Vandalism, Destruction of Property

Theft, vandalism, or intentional destruction of school property or the property of others will result in discipline. Students are expected to exercise reasonable care in the use of school property and school provided resources and equipment. A student's family may be required to pay for damage to desks, lockers, other equipment, or property.

Property Searches

St. John’s Area School is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment. To help ensure the safety of students and compliance with school policies, the school reserves the right to inspect and search student lockers, desks, and any other school property provided for student use (including electronics) at any time, with or without notice, to ensure compliance with school policies. The school reserves the right to search students’ personal property, including backpacks, purses, other containers, and electronics, when there is reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of school rules or laws. Students should not expect privacy for personal belongings brought onto school premises.

Money & Valuables in School

For safety and security reasons, children are discouraged from bringing large amounts of money or expensive personal items to school such as trading cards, cell phones, video games, headphones, rollerblades and skateboards. Any items brought for personal reasons are the sole responsibility of the child. No items are to be brought to school to be traded or sold for any reason unless approved by the principal.

**Safety and Well-Being Policies**

Entry Information and Visitors

All entrances to the school are locked during the day, except during designated arrival and dismissal times.

All visitors (including parents) may enter the building through the doors on 7th Avenue. You must ring the bell and be buzzed into the building. All visitors must report to the main office and sign in.

Any person in the building or on school grounds without permission will be considered a trespasser. If any student believes a person is in the school building or on school grounds without permission or without having followed visitor procedures, they should immediately inform a teacher or staff member.

Students or staff should not open an exterior school door to anyone, even if they know the visitor. Visitors must ring the bell and be buzzed in by the main office.

Fire, Tornado, Lockdown and Safety Drills

St. John’s Area School participates in fire, tornado, lockdown, and safety drills. When an alarm sounds or other emergency alerts are raised, students are expected to act quickly, quietly, and in an orderly fashion and to follow the directives of teachers and staff.

SJAS will conduct 5 school fire drills, 5 school safety intruder/lockdown drills, and at least 1 tornado drill every year. (MN Statute 121A.037)

Emergency Response Plans

St. John’s Area School has an emergency management plan in place should a crisis situation occur. These plans are reviewed annually with all employees. Safety drills are practiced in accordance with state laws. The school will use alarms or coded signals through the PA system to alert staff of situations. The crisis plan includes procedures for severe weather, fire emergencies, hazardous spills, safety threats and lockdown procedures, and bomb threats.

School Closing

In case of an emergency or severe weather, the school will notify families through the Remind app and by email. As we share busing with the public school district, if the school district closes schools or has a late start or early closing due to weather, in most cases our school will act accordingly.

Emergency Contact Information

To ensure that the school can contact families should the need arise, and especially in case of emergency, families are responsible to keep their contact information current. Each school year, emergency information must be completely filled out for each child, including parent phone numbers and emergency contact phone numbers. Parents must notify the school office of any changes in address or phone number.

Health Services

The administrative assistant or principal may approve the dismissal of a student who becomes ill or hurt during the school day. Parents will be contacted when a student reports to the office or school nurse with an illness. If a parent is unable to come for the student, arrangements for a relative or other authorized person must be made to pick up the student. No student will be sent home due to illness if no one is at home to be with the student.

Accidents/Injuries

If a student is injured at school, our first concern is to care for the student’s comfort and safety, followed by contacting the parents. If it is determined that the injury requires immediate emergency health care, 911 will be called for emergency vehicle transportation to the hospital or to the urgent care center identified by the parents.

Health Records

Health records are required for every student. This includes results of required health exams, screenings, immunizations, and specific health concerns or conditions. Health records are maintained and managed as confidential documents.

Medication During the School Day

Medications, both prescribed and over-the-counter, should be taken at home if at all possible. If medication must be taken during the school day, there must be a current form signed by a licensed physician and a parent regarding the medication.

Any such medication must be sent to school in a labeled prescription bottle or in the original over-the-counter container. Parent consent forms and a written physician order must accompany all medications.

Administration of the medication during school hours may only be performed by qualified personnel and in a manner consistent with instructions on the label. Students may *not* self-medicate (other than an inhaler or EpiPen as provided in this policy).

Students who wish to carry and administer their own inhaler or EpiPen must have on file in their health record written consent from the parent, physician, and the school nurse to carry the medication.

Illness and Staying Home

We believe it is important that children are in school as often as possible in order to provide the best opportunity for learning and development. However, it is everyone’s responsibility to help stop the spread of contagious conditions and communicable disease. We ask that parents refrain from bringing children to school if they are sick or displaying symptoms of illness such as: fever (100 F degrees or higher), vomiting or diarrhea, rash, eye drainage, uncontrolled coughing, sore throat. If a student develops these symptoms during the school day, parents will be called to pick up their child and bring them home.

Reporting Child Maltreatment

Out of concern for the care of children and to abide by legal requirements, staff and members of the clergy are required to report a suspected case of child maltreatment to the local law enforcement agency or local welfare agency within 24 hours. This must be done if they know or have reason to believe maltreatment is occurring presently or has occurred within the past three years. If the report is made verbally, a written report must be filed within 72 hours of the verbal report.

Maltreatment is defined by Minnesota Statutes Section 260E.03 and includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, mental injury, and maltreatment of a child in a facility.

Background Check Requirements

School policy requires that all employees and volunteers, as well as any vendor who interacts with students, must successfully undergo a background check, complete safe environment training, and sign a Code of Conduct before beginning employment, volunteering, or providing services. This is also an ongoing requirement which must be completed at least once every three years.

**Leadership and Governance**

Head of School

The principal is the head of the school and is responsible for day-to-day operations and management of the school and its activities. The principal has decision-making authority on all matters related to students, staff, facilities, curriculum, textbooks, athletics, discipline, health and safety, and extracurricular activities.

Committees

**Building & Grounds Committee** - A group of parent volunteers that works to maintain and improve the school grounds and facilities. The group of parents along with the principal decide the projects that will best help the school.

**Finance Committee** - members of our Board of Directors along with the principal tasked with maintaining the annual budget and financial success of the school.

**FFF** – Faith, Family, and Fun (Home and School Association)

* Each family is automatically a member of FFF (Home and School Association), a group of parents and staff that work to support the school community through various activities and fundraisers.
* Activities hosted by FFF have included Teacher Feature, Guess the Weight of the Pumpkin, Feast of St. Nicholas, Family Dance, and Teacher/Staff appreciation meals and treats.
* Fundraisers held by FFF include Soup Fest in February and the Annual Garage Sale in March.
* Funds raised by FFF have helped pay for scholarships, field trip busing, classroom supplies, and other items requested by staff members.
* Meetings are held 4-5 times throughout the year and families are encouraged to attend and take part.
* FFF decisions/actions are then included in the standard agenda for the School Board meetings.

**Marketing Committee** - composed of the administrative assistant, principal, and parents. The goal of this committee is to spread the word about the school through social media and other advertising ventures.

**Policy Committee** - includes members of the Board of Directors along with the principal working together to establish standards and rules to govern the school.

**Scholarship Committee** - consists of members of the Board of Directors and the principal to allocate funds available to assist families with the cost of tuition.

School Structure

St. John’s Area School is a regional school. This means that we are a non-profit corporation, sponsored by: St. Elizabeth, Brennyville; St. John, Foley; St. Joseph, Morrill; St. Lawrence, Duelm; St. Louis Bertrand, Foreston; St. Patrick, Minden Township; Sts. Peter and Paul, Gilman. As a separate non-profit, our board of directors is responsible for corporate governance of the school.

Corporate Board

The Corporate Board consists of the diocesan bishop, vicar general, chancellor, and the pastors of the sponsoring parishes. It meets annually to approve new members of the board of directors and make changes or revisions to the Corporation Bylaws.

Board of Directors

The board of directors is the governing body for our school. The board has general oversight of all school operations and is responsible for overseeing all of the business and affairs of the school, including school finances and fulfillment of the school’s Catholic mission and identity, as well as other powers and responsibilities as articulated in our school’s bylaws.

The board generally does not involve itself with day-to-day management or operational issues, or student or employee matters. While board members are available to listen to the ideas, questions, and concerns of the community, the board acts as a whole and no board member individually may speak or act on behalf of the school.

The board of directors consists of *ex officio* voting members: the pastors of the sponsoring parishes; the school principal as an *ex officio* non-voting member, and one voting member from each sponsoring parish chosen by the pastor and approved by the Corporate Board. Appointed board members serve three-year terms, and may serve no more than two consecutive terms. For members and more information visit: [Board of Education - St. John's Area School - Foley, MN](https://saintjohnsschool.net/board-of-education)

**Parent Involvement, Roles, and Responsibilities**

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Parents possess the right and obligation of educating their children and selecting a school that best matches their vision for their child’s flourishing. Parents are invited to cooperate closely with teachers in the growth and maturation of their child’s total development.

Parent/Guardian

For purposes of this handbook, the term parent includes both parents and legal guardians of a child.

Parent Conduct

Our school community is a special place, rich with opportunities for learning, growth, and belonging. It takes all members of our community, working together, to maintain our strong school environment. We expect all parents of our students to commit to support the faith, support the school, be respectful and positive, and follow school policies.

If the partnership is no longer viable in the principal’s opinion, the school reserves the right to ban the parent from school grounds/events, require the parent to unenroll their child, or to not accept registration for the next school year.

Non-Custodial Parents

It is the school’s policy to comply with federal and state laws regarding parental rights. If a court order exists which limits a parent’s access to a student or to student or school information, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide a non-custodial parent with access to records and other school-related information regarding the child upon request.

If a legal document is on file for a student limiting non-custodial access to the child, but arrangements are made between the custodial and non-custodial parent to pick up or see a child, the custodial parent must inform the school.

Volunteer Policies

Our school is possible through the efforts of many volunteers, and we are so grateful for parents who volunteer their time and talent to help make our school a special place! There are many opportunities throughout the year to volunteer. Please call the main office for a current list of opportunities.

**Hour Requirements**

Involvement of parents is essential for our school to operate and for our community to thrive! To this end, every family is expected to volunteer at least 8 hours per year.

**Confidentiality**

Volunteers at St. John’s Area School are expected to treat student matters that they happen to observe or be involved in with confidentiality, to refer all discipline matters to school employees, and to follow all applicable employee policies while serving as a volunteer.

**Safety Requirements**

All volunteers at our school must follow the St. Cloud Diocese requirements for school volunteers. This includes undergoing a background check, completing safe environment training, and signing a Code of Conduct, every three years. All volunteers are also required to complete the Reporting Suspected Child Abuse training module.

Please contact the main office for more information on volunteer safety requirements.

Information about scheduled training in the VIRTUS Protecting God’s Children program will be provided when sessions are scheduled.

**Volunteer Expectations**

Volunteers at St. John’s Area School are expected to adhere to a reasonable standard of modest dress that reflects and serves as a positive role model for students. Volunteers are to be respectful, considerate, and grounded in love in their interactions with students and other adults. Bullying and harassment of others is not tolerated. Failure to meet these basic expectations or other violations of school policies may result in dismissal from volunteer duties and/or responsibilities.

[SJAS Volunteer Agreement.docx](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XrVapfpz3ZQ5IzOG94SUrnSYSRs9P6W1/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106068531353024902014&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Family Grievance Policy

As we work together in partnership to educate children, difficulties and differences of opinion and approach inevitably arise due to human nature. When concerns or conflicts arise, all members of our community are expected to work together in good faith to find solutions.

Whenever possible, concerns should be raised first with the person with whom you have a concern or complaint, to try to come to an understanding or mutually agreeable resolution. Only after this has been attempted and is unsuccessful, should concerns be brought to the principal. *Note: if at any time concerns exist regarding student safety or mistreatment, such concerns should be immediately brought to the principal’s attention.*

When a concern is brought to the principal in accordance with this policy, the principal will determine appropriate action, which may include but is not limited to mediating a conversation between the parties, proposing a resolution, or investigating the issue.

Throughout the process, all parties are expected to remain respectful, professional, and to act in good faith. While parents of course may discuss the situation at home, they should remember that their child must still function within the school setting and that these conversations can undermine the administrator’s and teacher’s authority to do their jobs. Just as the teacher or administrator is responsible to respect the child and parents even when difficulties arise, the parents are responsible to see that the problems do not affect the child’s respect for the position of the teacher or the administrator.

Communication Between Home and School

As parents are the primary educators of their children, we place great importance on open and frequent communication between the school and home. The following are just some of the many ways we communicate with parents: school website, student/parent handbook, SJAS Newsletter, phone calls, email, and school events.

When parents have questions or concerns about anything happening at the school, they should communicate respectfully and openly at the appropriate level – teacher, staff, or leadership. As a community, we assume the good will of others and work together to address issues with the appropriate parties, and refrain from gossip.

Updated August 2025

Parent – Student Handbook Acknowledgement

Parental cooperation is essential. Just as a parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, St. John’s Area School reserves the right to require withdrawal of a student if the administration determines the partnership with the family is irretrievably broken.

Upon enrollment, parents and students consent to be governed by the policies and rules set forth in this Parent – Student Handbook.

St. John’s Area School has the exclusive rights to judge its own rules and policies and may amend them at any time.

We have read/reviewed the Parent – Student Handbook for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year. We will partner with the school to help create a positive and healthy learning environment for our child(ren).

*Parents and students, please sign below and return to the school office by September 16, 2025.*

Parent Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Student Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you on behalf of everyone at St. John’s Area School for your commitment to Catholic education!