



**2023-2024
Family-Student
Handbook**

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,

Welcome to St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy and the 2023-2024 school year! We are pleased to provide you and your children with a team of professionals, dedicated to the highest standard of Catholic education and care of your child(ren).

As parents/guardians of children enrolled in the Academy, you also serve as a partner in education. As partners, parents, faculty and staff will work together to ensure the academic, social, spiritual, and emotional growth of your children while they attend the Academy. I trust that you are up to the task, and I welcome working with you to ensure the success of your child and all the students at the Academy!

In order to provide the best quality of education and safety, we ask that all parents/guardians and students adhere to the Academy's policies. This Parent-Student Handbook contains the Academy's policies and is intended to provide you with a guide. Please take the time to review this Handbook in its entirety. I hope the Handbook will answer questions you may have regarding the policies of the Academy, although you may always reach out to me or the Board of Trustees if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

This Handbook will be distributed as a hard copy upon request. It will remain accessible to you on the school website.

At the end of this Handbook are various documents for you to review and sign, as well as an Acknowledgement of Receipt of this Handbook. Please sign and return all these documents by September 11th.

Thank you for your support and I look forward to working with you as we provide the utmost quality Catholic education to your children in a secure, safe and nurturing environment.

Sincerely,

Christopher Scharbach, Ed.D

Principal

ACADEMY OVERVIEW

A. Mission Statement

The St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy family is committed to academic excellence, Christian service to others, and providing a Christ-centered, safe, and engaging environment where students can grow spiritually and academically towards a faith-filled future.

B. Parental Expectation of Adherence to School Policy

Discipline in the schools should reflect the spirit of *Vatican Council II*, as expressed in *the documents on Christian Education and Religious Liberty*. Therefore, discipline should be geared to assist a child develop in the understanding of self as being made in the image of God.

...Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. 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 (cf. *Spe Salve*, 4). This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet him are drawn by the very power of God to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church...Dear friends, I wish to conclude by focusing our attention specifically on the paramount importance of your own professionalism and witness within our Catholic universities and schools. First, let me thank you for your dedication and generosity. I know from my own days as a professor, and have heard from your Bishops and officials of the Congregation for Catholic Education, that the reputation of Catholic institutes of learning in this country is largely due to yourselves and your predecessors. Your selfless contributions – from outstanding research to the dedication of those working in inner-city schools – serve your country and the Church. For this I express my profound gratitude. Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, April 17, 2008

Evidence of discipline exists in a school community when the students, teachers, administration, and parents/legal guardians work cooperatively to educate the whole child: spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

I. PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This Parent-Student Handbook (“Handbook”) is designed to provide important information regarding rules, policies and procedures relating to the operation and safety at our Academy. The Handbook summarizes policies and contains general guidelines and information. To the extent that anything in this Handbook conflicts with applicable law, the applicable law governs. Further, this Handbook may be changed from time to time during the academic year. An

up-to-date version can be found on our website, and parents/guardians are expected to regularly check that version to be aware of any changes. If you have any questions on this Handbook or otherwise, please contact the Principal.

Parents/guardians are required to sign a form stating that they have read the rules and regulations outlined in this Handbook and that they agree to abide by those rules, and to ensure that their children abide by the rules. Students in grades 6-8 must also sign this form. Failure to sign the form will not prevent the Academy from enforcing its policies, but could result in disciplinary action being taken and/or the prevention of the student from enrolling in the school. This form can be found at the end of this Handbook.

In this Handbook, the term “parent” refers not only to a child’s natural or adopted parent, but to a student’s non-parent legal guardian or to any person or agency authorized to act in place of a parent.

Finally, in light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues, the Academy reserves the right to address and take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this Handbook. And, in light of the unique and essential religious mission of the Academy, the Academy may take actions in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the Academy, the Diocese of Brooklyn, or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the Academy to perform its religious mission or to effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the Academy and the community of Faith.

II. CATHOLIC IDENTITY

A. Catholic Identity

The mission of Catholic Education is to form children in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the Catholic Church, while providing a comprehensive academic education that will help them reach their full human potential and contribute to the common good of our nation and the world. Ultimately, the mission of all Catholic education is to lead those entrusted to its care to find salvation in Jesus Christ.

In *Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (#11) Saint John Paul II wrote that Catholic schools are “...the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. Catholic schools are at once places of evangelization, of complete formation, of enculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds.”

Diocesan academies and schools strive to emulate the words of Saint John Paul II by:

- creating an evangelizing community, where people come to have a better and deeper understanding of Christ and His Church

- recognizing the importance of multi-cultural, multi-faceted, academically sound educational programs that meet the needs of the poor and the rich, the Catholic and the non-Catholic, the wise and the not so learned
- welcoming members to the school community regardless of culture, race, or religion and celebrating the diversity that exists within our communities, churches, and schools
- creating an environment that encourages young people to grow, not separated from others, but as part of a larger community, as part of the family of God
- not only promoting and encouraging academically sound individuals, but rejoicing with children who are spiritually, theologically, and liturgically enlivened and fulfilled

B. Adherence to Catholic Doctrine

The Academy is a Roman Catholic school located in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn (“Diocese of Brooklyn”), and is committed to providing quality Catholic education for both Catholic children and those of other faiths who share our commitment to Gospel values and academic excellence. Our goals include teaching Christ’s truth and fostering the formation of the Academy’s students by conveying the values rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a religious organization of the Roman Catholic faith, the Academy, at all times, adheres to the doctrines, customs, tenets and teachings of the Roman Catholic church, and the curriculum guidelines in religion from the Diocese of Brooklyn. All students and parents, including those who are Non-Catholic, must accept and adhere to the standards, values, and religious tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. All parents/guardians are expected to support the Academy’s mission and commitment to Christian principles.

C. Inclusion of All Other Faiths

The presence of students from other faiths provides a wonderful diversity, and the Academy welcomes students and parents/guardians of other faiths. However, as a Catholic school located within the Diocese of Brooklyn, the Academy is focused on the formation of children in the Catholic faith. Parents/guardians must accept the intentional Catholic values and tenets that are the underpinning of our Academy. All students, including Non-Catholic students, are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of the Academy, including, but not limited to, liturgies, religious functions, and religious classes. It is also expected that Non-Catholic students and parents/guardians participate as fully as they can in the liturgical and prayer life of the Academy. The teachers and administration at the Academy are also committed to teaching the fullness of revelation as it is taught by the Roman Catholic Church and the Diocese of Brooklyn. While our teachers, administration, and staff value the presence of

students from other faiths and respect other faiths, they always teach and model within the context of the doctrines and tenets of the Roman Catholic Church.

III. ACADEMICS

Academic Expectations

The Academy expects its students to perform to the best of their ability. Teachers evaluate students' progress on a regular basis with quizzes, tests, homework, presentations, participation, behavior in the classroom, and class participation. After a test is graded, it will be sent home for a parent/guardian to review. All grades are posted on the FACTS Family Portal.

Curriculum & Assessments

NYS Testing

Students in grades 4, 6, and 7 will participate in New York State Testing in both math and English Language Arts. Students in grades 5 and 8 will take the New York State Assessment in Science. Parents receive an Individual Student Report (ISR) which includes a breakdown of a student's performance in different skill areas within ELA, math, and science. This helps parents understand where their child is doing well and in what areas he or she may need additional practice. Parents can use these results to guide a discussion with their child's teacher about additional support or challenges that may be needed in the classroom, as well as ways to support learning at home. There are no negative consequences when taking state tests as the tests are considered diagnostic. The ELA and math test results are not recorded on student permanent record cards or report cards. New York State law forbids the use of state test results as the determining factor in promotion.

i-Ready

i-Ready is an online program for reading and/or mathematics that helps teacher(s) determine students' needs, personalize their learning, and monitor progress throughout the school year. I- Ready allows teachers to meet students exactly where they are and provides data to increase students' learning gains. i-Ready consists of two parts: Diagnostic and Personalized Instruction. The Diagnostic provides a score reflecting students' grade level and potential. i-Ready scores are the standardized test results that will be entered onto students' permanent record cards and the TACHS record for 8 th grade students applying to Catholic High Schools.

Writing Benchmark Assessments

Students in Kindergarten through grade 8 will participate in the St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy's writing benchmark assessments three times per year. These on demand writing tasks will measure the writing growth of each individual student throughout the course of an academic year. The writing samples for each student will be part of an individualized student writing portfolio that will move from grade to grade with that child to assess the child's writing strengths and weaknesses over time.

Religious Education

Religion is part of all that we see, teach and do at the Academy, and is a crucial component of our students' academic learning. The Academy adheres to the current Diocese of Brooklyn curriculum guidelines in religion. Non-Catholic students are expected to fully participate in all religious education and formation programs, including, but not limited to, religion class, liturgies, and religious functions.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the Academy's instructional program, as it reinforces learning and provides students with opportunities to practice what they were taught in class. Homework can come in many forms, including, but not limited to, projects, reports, and independent reading. Students are required to complete all homework, including when a student is absent. **Parents, guardians, or other adult assistance with homework is key to a student's academic success!**

ALL students are expected to read independently for 10-30 minutes per evening based on grade level.

Please keep in mind that each child works at a different pace and the time frame for completing homework for one student may be different than that for another.

Homework must be done at home and may not be done at school, with the exception of students who attend the After School Program.

Grades

The determination of grades is the responsibility of each individual teacher. These expectations will be shared with you on Back to School Night. Parents/guardians and students must know and understand how grades are determined and are encouraged to reach out to each student's teacher or teachers.

Protecting Instructional Time

Maintaining school schedules and structures is of the utmost importance during the school year. As academies make their calendar and schedules, their goal is to protect instructional time as much as possible. In protecting instructional time, parents are asked to refrain from removing their children during the school day for unnecessary activities. Appointments should be scheduled, when possible, before or after the school day in order to avoid disrupting student learning. Vacations and family trips should also be planned, when possible, for existing school vacation weeks. In the event of a necessary absence, parents should alert the school and classroom teacher as soon as possible. If an extended absence is known, parents should communicate with their child's teacher to create a plan for making up missed work. Students with 15 or more days absent in one school year will be asked to attend a meeting with the administration and the families.

Report Card Schedule

Parents/ legal guardians will receive report cards three times a year, at the end of each trimester. Parents/ legal guardians will also be able to see student's grades via the FACTS parent portal. It is vital to a student's progress that open communication exists between parents/ legal guardians and their child's teacher. Any concerns regarding a child's progress should be addressed first to the child's teacher.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents/ legal guardians will have the opportunity to attend parent-teacher conferences at the end of the first and second trimester following receipt of student report cards. While these are formally scheduled conferences, parents are also encouraged to schedule meetings with teachers or other staff, when necessary, to discuss their child's progress and learning goals.

Admission Policies

Roman Catholic schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn base their educational purpose and all their activities on the Christian teaching of the essential quality of all persons as rooted in God's love.

PRIORITY FOR ADMISSION

Students will be enrolled or added to a waiting list in the order of applications received based on the following criteria:

1. Current student presently enrolled.
2. A sibling (brother/sister) of an enrolled St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy N-8 student
3. Transferring Diocesan Catholic School students from Blessed Trinity or St. Francis de Sales Parish
4. Students of families who are registered, supporting, and active in Blessed Trinity or St. Francis de Sales Parishes. The family must be in good standing with regard to the participation, finances, and support of the parish. When the applicants are equal, the following will be taken into account: a) Longevity in Blessed Trinity or St. Francis de Sales parishes, b) Grandchildren of longtime parishioners, c) Results of any interviews deemed necessary by the principal.
5. Transferring Diocesan Catholic School students not from Blessed Trinity or St. Francis de Sales Parish
6. Students of families who are registered in and supporting other Catholic parishes
7. Non-Catholic students.

CONDITIONS FOR ADMISSION

All new students are accepted on a three-month probationary basis. Students must meet St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy's academic standards and expectations.

1. A state-issued birth certificate, copy of a baptismal certificate if Roman Catholic, proof of medical exam, and record of immunizations must be submitted by all new students before school begins. Additional medical/dental/vision exam requirements may apply for certain grade levels.
2. In order to be accepted into Kindergarten, a student must be 5 (five) years of age by December 31, 2024.

3. Students applying for our 3-year-old preschool must be 3 (three) years of age by December 31, 2024. Students applying for Prekindergarten must be 4 (four) years of age by December 31, 2024. All preschoolers must be potty trained.

Students registering for Grades 1 to 8 will be accepted only if their previous academic and conduct records are satisfactory.

St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy follows the policy of a maximum of 31 students in each classroom. Consideration for additional staff members due to full enrollment will be made at the discretion of the administration and the Board of Directors.

ADMISSION OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Students with special needs shall be given the same consideration as all applicants. However, prior to admitting a student with diagnosed special needs, St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy shall make a determination as to whether or not it feels it can provide an appropriate education for that child. Each child will be considered on an individual basis. St. Francis de Sales will consider:

- the severity and degree of the learning disability;
- the level of support needed from special services and any special equipment the student may require;
- the number of students with disabilities currently enrolled in an assigned class;
- the school's resources, such as available support personnel, class size, and accessibility of school facilities;
- the accommodations, if any are necessary, and the school's ability to meet those accommodations;
- the child's individualized education plan (IEP) if one exists, and the school's ability to meet the IEP.

Parents and/or the public school district in which the student resides shall be responsible for any additional special education services that a student may require.

St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy will engage the services of the Office of Catholic Schools to assist in making a determination of whether a student's educational needs can best be met in the least restrictive environment.

The Academy's guidelines for students with special needs must be read, signed, and returned by September 18, 2023, if your child will be receiving any services in the school building. [Special Education Guidelines](#)

Refusal to sign the Academy's guidelines may forfeit the ability to receive services in the building of St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy.

Choosing a school is a great challenge with so many offerings. It is our hope that whatever your final choice is, that you are happy and your children are successful.

For more information, please call 718-634-2775 or visit the office during school hours between 8AM and 3PM. During the summer please call the school for modified office hours.

The Catholic academies and parish schools within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn welcome students of all backgrounds to share in the Catholic education experience. As parents of children who attend the Catholic academies and parish schools, you are encouraged to share in our Faith community. In accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Faith, the Catholic academies and parish schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn admit students of any race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin. The Catholic academies and parish schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin in admission, policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Transfers and Withdrawals

If a parent/guardian wishes to transfer his or her child(ren) out of the Academy, the transfer request must be made in writing to the Administration. Before records are transferred to another school, all bills must be paid in full and all books must be returned.

When a student transfers from one school to another or enters high school, the new school may request a copy of the permanent record and health card from the former school. The Academy may disclose a student's cumulative record (*i.e.* permanent record, attendance record, test results) to another school with a legitimate educational interest if a written request is made and when a parent/guardian has given written permission for the release of the child's records. Parent/guardian signature is required for release of a student's confidential file, which includes special education records, psychological reports, disciplinary records, and reports by a school counselor.

At the discretion of the administration, and in accordance with applicable law, the Academy has the right not to certify a student's graduation or provide transcripts of the

student's academic record to third parties such as other schools, colleges, or employers, or to issue a diploma to the student, if there has been a breach of a material condition of the educational contract, such as failure to meet financial obligations, infractions against the school's code of conduct, anti-bullying policy or violations of the policies of the Academy and those set forth in this Handbook.

The Academy reserves the right to request that a parent/guardian withdraw his or her child from the school.

Recommendation for Next Grade Level

The Academy takes the decision whether to promote or retain a student extremely seriously. Sometimes, however, testing, diagnosis and actual performance may indicate that a student cannot follow the school's complete course of study. In accordance with NYS Education Law, Assessment and Performance if a student is being considered for retention at the same grade level, teachers will discuss the possibility with the Administration. Although the teacher consults with the administration, the final decision for retaining a student rests with the administration. Certain criteria the administration and teachers may take into account as they consider a recommendation for retention includes that the student has failed to pass major subjects on each grade level and/or has not demonstrated acceptable progress toward mastery of standards, including failure to complete assignments, or repeated low scores in several areas on a report card.

A student who receives a final failing grade in religion will NOT be promoted.

A student who is absent for 30 or more days will be in danger of Not being promoted.

If a student completes all requirements for promotion or graduation, and there has been no recommendation or approval to retain the student, a parent/guardian or family cannot self-select that the student be retained.

Graduation

At the discretion of the administration the Academy has the right not to certify a student's graduation or to issue a diploma to the student, if there has been a breach of a material condition of the educational contract, such as failure to meet financial obligations, infractions against the school's code of conduct, anti-bullying policy or violations of the policies of the Academy and those set forth in this Handbook.

Extracurricular Activities

The Academy offers various extracurricular activities such as the After School program. Students are expected to follow the school policies while engaged in any extracurricular activity. Participation in these activities is a privilege and students are expected to fulfill their obligations in the classroom as a priority to any extracurricular activity.

When participating in extracurricular activities, including sports or otherwise, students must at all times demonstrate Catholic values. It is expected that students, coaches, and fans display respect, civility, and responsibility during all events, contests, and/or practices.

Students who do not abide by the Academy's policies will lose the opportunity to participate in any extracurricular activity.

Please see the [After School Handbook](#) on our website for more information on the Afterschool Program.

Recess

With the exception of school-wide events, which may include Mass, recess will be provided. If weather permits, the students will attend recess in the schoolyard. If a student has any physical limitation which may affect his or her ability to engage in all recess activities, the Academy must be notified in accordance with the Limitations of Physical Activity policy below.

Summer School

In accordance with NYS Education Guidelines, a student who has received a failing grade in reading, mathematics, and social studies, and/or science in two of the three marking periods of the report card will be required to attend mandatory summer school in the low-performing content areas. Summer school may also be recommended due to poor performance on standardized tests or in the classroom. Excessive absences during the school year may result in the child being required to attend summer school. The final determination as to whether a student must attend summer school rests with the administration.

The summer school report card must be submitted to the Principal before August 30th. Failure to attend summer school when required will result in retention at the same grade level or discharge of the student. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide

documentation that summer school has been successfully completed. In cases in which tutoring is allowed for remediation, it must be undertaken by a qualified teacher and approved in advance by the administration

GENERAL INFORMATION

Academy Calendar and Hours

New York State Law currently requires a school calendar to provide 176 days of instruction with 3 professional days and cites the following holidays when schools may not be in session:

Columbus Day	Second Monday in October
Veterans Day	Eleventh Day in November
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Christmas Day	Twenty-fifth day in December
New Year's Day	First Day in January
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Third Monday in January
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Juneteenth	Nineteenth day in June

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the feast of the patroness of the Diocese of Brooklyn, the Academy will be closed. All advanced school closings will be indicated in the school calendar. The Academic calendar can be found on the Academy's website. To the extent any changes are made, the website will be updated.

School Hours

Nursery

Morning arrival between 7:55 am- 8:05am

Students who are registered for our Half-day program will be dismissed at 11:30am everyday.

Half-day dismissal for Full Day Nursery students will be at 11:50am.

Dismissal 2:20pm

Pre-Kindergarten

Morning arrival between 7:45 and 7:55 A.M

7:55 A.M. – 2:20 P.M.

Half-day dismissal time for Pre-Kindergarten students will be 11:50 A.M.

Grades Kindergarten to Eight

Morning arrival between 7:40 A.M. and 7:55 A.M.

Morning bell 7:55 A.M.

Dismissal 2:30pm

Half-day dismissal time for Kindergarten to Eight students will be 12:00 P.M.

Please refer to the school's arrival and dismissal procedures that are distributed at the beginning of the year.

After School Program

The Academy offers an After School program. This occurs Monday-Thursday. The After School program is an extension of the school day, and students are expected to follow all Academy policies and procedures during After School. Directors of individual

activities during After School may also issue rules of behavior, which recognize the special nature of non-classroom activities. In instances where students are picked up, parents/guardians are expected to make arrangements to pick up their children at the end of the program or activity. Students will be released only to a parent/guardian or a person previously specified **in writing** by the parent/guardian. After School program fees are expected to be paid in full upon being invoiced. Past due balances will result in a student not being allowed to participate in the program until the account is brought up to date.

For more information on After School please [click here](#).

Attendance

The Academy has developed our attendance policy in accordance with New York State Education Law. This comprehensive attendance policy will help us uphold the philosophy and mission statement of our Academy. There is a high correlation between academic success and school attendance. Prompt, regular attendance has a marked influence on student achievement.

Families are encouraged to schedule vacation days in accordance with the school calendar. This includes leaving early on a school day. Please note that vacations are illegal absences. It is the responsibility of the child to make up assignments, projects and tests missed during any absence due to a vacation.

Education Law of the State of New York mandates school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 16, but the responsibility for compliance rests with the parents/legal guardians. The school is required to keep an accurate record of daily attendance, absences, and tardiness in the register of attendance in a manner approved by the Commissioner of Education.

- When a child has been absent, a written excuse is required from his or her parents/legal guardians. If a student is absent without an excuse, or if the school has reason to suspect the validity of the excuse, the administration will investigate the situation.
- When a student has been absent for five days without a satisfactory explanation, a report will be made to the attendance officer of the local public school district.
- Continuing illegal absences, totaling five or more days, will also be reported to the attendance officer at the local public school district office.

- Although each case is different, it should be noted that at 30 truancy days, retention is a strong possibility and the administration will contact the local district office to alert the truancy officer.
- Children who are absent during the school day are not permitted to attend any Academy related events on that day, without approval from the administration.

Doctor or dental appointments should be scheduled for after regular school hours. Family vacations should not be planned for days when school is in session. Rather, students receive vacation time throughout the year. Teachers are not required to give assignments in anticipation of family vacations and are not required to give make-up tests for absences due to vacation trips.

Be mindful that high schools will take into consideration students' attendance during the admissions process.

Lateness

A student who arrives after the time set by the Academy for the beginning of the day will be marked late. **When a child is late** it becomes a bad way to start the day for the child and a disruption to the teacher and other students in the class. Some of the consequences for chronic lateness will be; privileges being revoked, detention and mandatory parent conference. A child who has 4-5 latenesses during a trimester will be given a 2 in complies with school policies on the report card. A child who has 6 or more latenesses during a trimester should be given a 1 in complies with school policies. Students on the National Junior Honor Society who are chronically late, risk being placed on probation.

Please refer to the Family-Student Handbook for more information.

It is important that children attend school and arrive on time daily. Time on learning matters and makes a significant difference in student learning and social-emotional development. As you can imagine, multiple absences and tardiness create significant learning gaps, making it increasingly difficult for a child to keep up with the class routines and curriculum. This [link](#) clearly outlines how absences and tardiness add up.

Here are a few practical tips to help support regular attendance:

- Make sure your child(ren) keeps a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before school.
- Ensure your children go to school every day unless they are truly sick.

- Avoid scheduling vacations or doctor's appointments when school is in session.
- Talk to teachers, counselors, or school administration for advice if your child(ren) feels anxious about going to school.

Arrival and Dismissal Policy

Early arrival begins at **7:40 am**. Parents/guardians are to drop their children off at **the entrance that has been said at the beginning of the year**. This is the safest place for children—with their peers and with an adult from the Academy present. We strongly encourage parents/guardians to drop their children off at early arrival time, as the additional time gives students more time to prepare for the day and socialize with their peers. For safety reasons, parents/guardians and visitors are not permitted to enter the building at the arrival time unless it is an emergency.

The Academy will not release a student to any adult that is not known to it as a parent, guardian, or custodian. If a parent/guardian sends another individual to pick up his or her child, the parent/guardian must notify the Academy in writing at least 24 hours in advance.

Students who proceed home on their own (Grade 5 and up), either by walking, bicycle, or otherwise, must do so as safely and directly as possible. They must obey all traffic and trespassing laws, and cross at designated crosswalks. Students in grades 4 and below will not be permitted to travel home from the Academy without a parent, guardian or other authorized adult or another pre-arranged travel accommodation (such as a school bus). In the case of a younger student traveling home with an older student, such as an older sibling, the Academy must receive written authorization from a parent/guardian. The Academy reserves the right to not release the student(s) to travel home on their own, either by walking or otherwise, if it deems that is not in the best interest of the students.

No bikes, scooters, or ride-on toys are permitted in the schoolyard during dismissal times.

Early Release

Students are expected to be in attendance for the complete session each school day. If for any reason a student must leave the Academy before the regular dismissal hour, a parent/legal guardian or a person authorized by the parent/legal guardian must come to the Academy office to pick the student up and escort the student out of the building.

Parents/ legal guardians must provide authorization for their child to be released to an individual other than a parent/ legal guardian.

Use of School Grounds

Unless students are formally registered for before or after school programs, including Academy extracurricular activities, The school does not have staff available to supervise students present on the school grounds outside the general school hours.

Birthdays/Celebrations

There are a variety of ways in which we celebrate birthdays at **St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy**. Celebrations are at the discretion of the teacher but may include handmade cards, storytelling, the sharing of a book, etc.

Please communicate with the homeroom teacher beforehand. Families/guardians may drop off party goods (cookies, cupcakes, munchkins, or donuts, small plates, napkins, etc.) with Security at the beginning of the school day.

Diocesan policy is that all food items shared be store-bought. The reason for this rule is strictly to serve as a safety precaution, allowing the school to know the ingredients of any item.

We ask that no toys, gifts for students, lollipops, goody bags, frozen treats, or drinks be brought into school for any celebration. If these items are brought into school, they will be sent back home with the child at dismissal.

Dress Code

The Academy believes that clothes do not define a person. The wearing of a uniform allows everyone to be seen for who they are, not by what they have. The purpose of a uniform is a means of consistency in student dress, while keeping costs to a minimum. It also reduces the problem of competitive dressing. Students, unless otherwise notified by administration, will wear the school uniform.

All students are expected to keep themselves well-groomed and neatly dressed at all times. A clean and healthy appearance is important. Any form of dress which is considered by the Administration to be contrary to good hygiene or which is distracting

or disruptive in appearance and detrimental to the purpose or conduct of the school will not be permitted. All clothing must be clean, neatly pressed, and in good repair. No ripped, torn, or defaced item may be worn.

For more information on our uniform policy please [click here](#).

Grooming Code

Hair must be its natural color, clean, neatly combed, not totally covering the ears or eyes.

- Facial hair is not permitted
- Hair must be a natural color.

Students are not allowed to wear make-up other than nail polish at any time. Nail polish must be light in color. No dark or neon colors are permitted. Students are not permitted to wear any makeup including eye make-up and acrylic/fake nails. Only appropriate modest and safe jewelry is allowed. One pair of small post earrings may be worn by girls only. One bracelet may be worn at a time. Necklaces must be tucked into the shirt. Tattoos and body piercings are not allowed.

Nothing in this policy is meant to prevent a student from attending school with an ethnic hairstyle in connection with his or her race, heritage, or national origin, including, but not limited to, braids, locks, or twists.

Parents/guardians will be notified if a child comes to school consistently in an unkempt manner. If no improvement is noticed within a reasonable amount of time, an appointment with the parents/guardians and the administration will be made.

Inclement Weather Attire

At times the administration may decide to allow students in Grades 1-8 to wear their gym uniforms to school due to inclement weather. On these days students must wear the complete gym uniform including sneakers. No other shoes will be permitted in school.

Dress Down Days

There may be occasions in which students are allowed to wear non-uniform attire. Students are reminded to dress with modesty. Students should adhere to the following attire:

- Appropriate length skirt, skorts, shorts, or dress – no shorter than 3” above the knees
- No spaghetti strap tanks, midribs, tube tops, etc.
- No logo type T-shirts
- No hats (unless specifically designated)
- No loose/baggy pants or shorts
- No hoop earrings or excessive jewelry
- No slippers, slides, or flip flops. All shoes must have a back.

Field Trips

Written permission must be obtained from parents/legal guardians of students who wish to go on scheduled trips. Information to the parents/legal guardians will include the date, purpose, and destination of the trip, the expense, the means of transportation, and probable time of return.

Adults who wish to chaperone must complete Virtus training and background checks prior to accompanying students. Please see the section on Volunteering, Chaperoning & VIRTUS training for further information about this process.

Field trips are considered an extension of the school day and the code of conduct and anti-bullying policy will apply. All disciplinary rules pertaining to students equally apply to students during school field trips. Students who engage in poor behavior on field trips may be required to be escorted by a parent/guardian for future field trips or may lose the privilege of attending field trips. Individual teachers in consultation with the administration reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance, violation of the code of conduct or poor behavior, or violation of school policy.

All medications given on field trips must comply with the Administering Medication policy. For a student with prescription medication and/or medical necessary related treatments, a trained individual needs to be present on a field trip. This can include a parent/guardian, a designated family member to ensure care in the case of an emergency, or the school nurse *if* the nurse is attending the field trip. Given the needs of the Academy, the Academy cannot guarantee that the nurse will attend the trip. If a trained

individual of the Academy cannot attend the field trip, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide a trained individual to accompany the student on the field trip. Any adult accompanying the student must complete Virtus training and background checks prior to accompanying the student.

The Academy reserves the right to cancel school-sponsored field trips at any time and for any reason, including inclement weather and safety risks.

Care of School Property

Students will be held responsible for the proper care of all books, supplies, devices, accessories or equipment furnished to them by the Academy. Students who damage, lose, or deface Academy property shall be required to pay for the damage or loss. Any incident of vandalism could lead to a suspension or expulsion.

Desks, lockers, and any other area on Academy property where students store items are Academy property and subject to searches by school authorities to protect the safety of all.

Books and Supplies

All assigned books must be properly covered. Contact paper is NOT to be used to cover any books obtained under the New York State textbook loan. Books that are not part of this loan and are soft-covered should be covered in contact paper. Each child is responsible for keeping his or her books in good condition. Books that are lost or defaced become the liability of the student and his or her parents. Students are responsible for providing supplemental materials listed on the yearly supply list for use in the classroom.

Textbooks are used on a rental basis and must always be kept **clean** and **covered** with Book Sox or Book Covers. Book covers that are marked with drawings, etc., will be required to be changed. Any books that are damaged or lost must be replaced at the expense of the student responsible for the damage or loss. Workbooks should be covered in clear contact paper. The student, not the school, is responsible for supplying book covers. Books must be carried in some type of schoolbag in order to protect them. All textbooks are collected at the end of the school year and must be in good condition. Most of these books are on loan to us by the State and are, therefore, the property of New York State. Uncovered books will be confiscated.

Telephone Use to Call Parent/Guardian/Custodian

If a parent/guardian needs to reach a student, he or she must call the **Main Office**. Similarly, if a student seeks to call his or her parents, the student must make the request to the **Main Office**. **Under no circumstances should a parent/guardian or child call or text each other during school hours from a cell phone.**

Personal Property

The Academy is not responsible for valuables that are lost or damaged. It is strongly advised that students do not bring valuables into the school building including electronic devices such as tablets, phones, etc.

Announcements

Informational announcements are handled through the Academy's P.A. system or via daily videos. Students must courteously listen when a message is presented over the daily video or P.A. system, especially when prayers are recited.

Fliers and Informational Brochures

Students may, upon approval by the administration, distribute, at reasonable times and places, unofficial material, including petitions, buttons, or other insignia. However, all such material must be in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Failure to comply will result in confiscation of the material and possibly disciplinary action. Further, any such material may not be obscene, libelous, contain indecent or vulgar language or content, advertise a product not permitted to minors by law, constitute insulting or fighting words the purpose of which is to injure or harass other people, or present a high likelihood of causing a disruption at the Academy. Further, parents/guardians may not distribute, either through their child or otherwise, any unofficial material.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND BEHAVIOR

Student Behavior and Code of Conduct

The Academy Student Code of Conduct is as follows:

Students are expected to be responsible, make good choices, and participate in St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy community life in a mature manner. This positive behavior is

reflective of their deepening faith and religious development, together with the guidance from their families/guardians.

Some of the expectations that demonstrate this progression are:

- Being considerate and respectful of other students
- Respecting class and school policies
- Speaking to one another with respect and care
- Speaking and acting respectfully to teachers and other families
- Controlling anger at all times
- Showing responsibility by doing homework each night and preparing for the day's class
- Arriving at school on time
- Respecting school property, for example: keeping desks neat and clean; books, etc.
- Keeping school grounds free of litter and graffiti
- Looking neat and clean at all times

Members of the St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy are taught to show the utmost respect to one another, in words and actions. Pushing, hitting or fighting are not acceptable behaviors. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the parent/guardian being notified, and a meeting set up to discuss a plan of action to improve behavior. Continued hitting or fighting with another student could result in the parent/guardian being asked to remove the child from the school. This is at the discretion of the administration

In the past, certain behavior was considered harmless child's play. However, in our world today, the same behavior can be seen as harassing. Any behavior that can be interpreted as intimidating, humiliating, or disrespectful, whether in word or action is absolutely unacceptable. This includes any behavior that causes undue trouble, worry, or discomfort. The deciding factor is whether a particular phrase, gesture, behavior is unwelcome by the student or students receiving it or witnessing it.

All students are expected to strive toward excellent behavior at all times. Behavior problems include disrespecting authority, including teachers and staff, and other students, teasing, bullying, socially unacceptable behavior, or behavior contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church or the mission of the Academy. If behavioral issues persist, the Academy may request a conference with the parent. Failure on behalf of a

parent/guardian to attend a conference may result in the child staying home until the parent/guardian and student attend the conference with the Academy.

5th-8th Grade Discipline Policy

Please see the [5th-8th Grade Discipline](#) policy for the Academy's handling of infractions to the code of conduct.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The school communities within the Brooklyn Diocese believe in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person. We believe that all students, school employees, and volunteers have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All members of the school community, in turn, have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. Research shows that students who learn in a safe and supportive environment succeed academically. Students have a right to learn in an environment free of any harassment that substantially interferes with their education.

Bullying, bias-based harassment/intimidation are intentional, repeated, hurtful acts (physical, verbal, written) committed by one or more persons towards another person or persons. It usually involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power which can be physical, emotional, or verbal. If not addressed, bullying can lead to the creation of a hostile, offensive, or intimidating school environment and can affect a student's educational opportunities. The behaviors include but are not limited to:

- *Physical*: physical violence, stalking, threats, aggressive or menacing gestures, exclusion from peer groups which is intended to humiliate or isolate the target (relational bullying).
- *Verbal*: taunts, teasing, derogatory language, derogatory jokes, name calling, slurs, spreading rumors
- *Written*: written or graphic material including graffiti containing comments or stereotypes that are electronically written and transmitted via internet, social messaging sites, blogs, instant messaging, text messages, cell phone, webcams. This would also include forwarding such messages if received. This generally constitutes cyber-bullying.

Reporting Procedures:

- The targeted student, parent/guardian of a student or other students in the school (bystanders), or any school staff who believe that bullying has occurred should report the incident to the administration.
- The administration needs to conduct an investigation by interviewing all parties separately.
- The parents of all involved students should be notified.
- If it is determined that bullying has occurred the child who bullied is to be subject to consequences per the school's disciplinary code.
- Parents should be advised to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if the situation warrants such a report.
- Referral to counseling should be made for all parties if deemed necessary.
- The Administration must follow up to see that the offending conduct has stopped.
- All students should be notified that retaliation against anyone who makes a report will not be tolerated and those that retaliate will be subject to disciplinary actions.

Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

In accordance with New York State Law on Cyber-Bullying, inappropriate, defamatory, or content found to be injurious to an Academy community member may result in disciplinary action, even if done outside of Academy premises or using devices not owned or controlled by the Academy. All instances of such behavior must be reported immediately to the administration, who will investigate the matter and enforce the consequences deemed appropriate.

Violation of this policy in whole or in part may result in any or all of the following and will be issued at the discretion of the Academy administration:

- Loss of use/privileges of school/academy technology.
- Disciplinary action including, but is not limited to, detention, suspension, expulsion, and /or legal action by the school/academy, civil authorities, and/or other involved parties.
- Compensation for damages, both physical and punitive, incurred due to actions in violation of this policy

Alcohol and Drug-Free Zone Policy

The New York City Tobacco Products Regulations Act of 1994 curtails exposure to tobacco use on school grounds. For the purpose of this legislation "school grounds"

means the “buildings, grounds or facilities, or any part thereof, owned or occupied by public or private institutions for the primary purpose of providing educational instructions to students at or below the twelfth grade level.” Tobacco use is not permitted on school grounds at any time. A “tobacco product” is any substance which contains tobacco including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, and chewing tobacco. New York City regulations are far more stringent than the regulations promulgated by New York State. However, schools subject to the rules of this municipality, as are the schools of the Diocese of Brooklyn, must follow the local laws. Thus, smoking is prohibited on ALL SCHOOL PREMISES AT ANY TIME. For the safety of our students, alcohol is also prohibited from being consumed on school premises at any time when students are present.

Impermissible Items

Students must conduct themselves, at all times, in a courteous manner in accord with Catholic principles. To that end, and also in the interest of safety of the students and protection of the Academy’s property, the following items are NOT allowed at any time but not limited to the following:

1. White-out or any type of permanent marker
2. Spray cans, smoke bombs, stink bombs, powders/choking agents or chemicals or any kind.
3. Alcohol or drugs of any kind, and matches or lighters, and drug paraphernalia
4. Laser pointers, knives/box cutters, or any type of weapon
5. Any type of toy weapon
6. Nail files
7. Energy drinks
8. Extreme jewelry, more than two wristbands or bracelets, dangling earrings, or hoop earrings.

The presence of any of these items can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension/expulsion. The presence of alcohol, drugs, or weapons is a criminal offense and the police will be notified.

Discipline Policy

The Academy may need to involve disciplinary measures from time to time. The purpose of disciplinary measures are to provide structure to students and for them to learn self-discipline, which strengthens and promotes the values incorporated in our Catholic

faith. Disciplinary measures should have as an end the development of the human person who respects oneself, other persons, and those in authority.

At no time will corporal punishment be used against a child. Any perceived acts of corporal punishment or reports from a child of corporal punishment should be reported to the administration immediately by the student and/or the parent/guardian.

By enrolling your child in the Academy, the parent/guardian agrees to be supportive of the rules and regulations that the Academy deems as critical in the spiritual, academic, and behavioral growth of the child.

Teachers are the primary disciplinarians within the classroom and among students. Teachers will discipline students for minor classroom disruptions, such as not completing homework, minor verbal disputes with other students, or not being in the complete uniform. To the extent a teacher finds it necessary, parents/guardians will be notified of classroom problems. As partners in education, parents/guardians should work with the teacher to ensure that inappropriate behavior is changed.

At times, however, teachers will refer classroom discipline issues to the administration of the Academy. This is likely to include chronic minor problems listed above, or major problems, including chronic lateness, verbal abuse of a teacher, signs of disrespect to a teacher or another adult on the staff, fighting, vandalism, stealing, physical, sexual, or verbal harassment or bullying of a fellow student, violent behavior, smoking, or the possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, cigarettes, lighters, matches, stink or smoke bombs, chemicals/irritants, alcohol, dangerous items or a weapon. The administration will handle such matters in a variety of ways depending on the severity of the incident, up to and including suspension, police notification, and expulsion.

For serious acts of misbehavior, such as, but not limited to, fighting, stealing, vandalism and harassment, the student may immediately be suspended for a period of one to five days. In cases of vandalism, the parent/guardian must pay the full cost of the repair or replacement of the item before the child may return to school. In cases of theft, the item is either returned in good condition or the cost of replacement is borne by the parent/guardian before the child can return to school.

In cases where a child engages in a fight which causes injury to another child or adult, the police may be summoned and, then, the parents/guardians will be notified. Likewise, the possession of drugs or alcohol by a child may be reported to the police. The Academy reserves the right to expel the child due to such an offense.

In cases in which a child brings a weapon to school, the police are summoned, and then the parents/guardians are called. The Academy reserves the right to expel the child due to such an offense.

Police will always be called in the case of a weapon.

Individual-directed threats of violence or harm communicated directly or indirectly by any means, as well as building-directed threats of violence or harm communicated directly or indirectly by any means (e.g., shooting, bomb threats), or to harm students, employees, or visitors are taken seriously. Upon knowledge of the threats, the Principal will notify the Office of the Superintendent and call the parents. The administration will determine the course of action to be taken up to and including calling law enforcement, requiring a mental health referral, and/or expulsion.

It is the expectation of the Academy that student behavior is exemplary both on and off school grounds. A student always represents the entire school community. Therefore, the Academy reserves the right to discipline students for acts such as, but not limited to: stealing, fighting, vandalism, bullying or any other type of threatening or inappropriate misconduct (personally, via telephone, or the internet). Such misconduct could result in punishments including suspension and/or expulsion.

Lastly, a child's arrest for a crime on or off of school grounds, within or beyond the vicinity of the Academy, at any time could result in the child's suspension or expulsion. A child's conviction of a crime on or off of school grounds, within or beyond the vicinity of the Academy, will likely result in a child's expulsion.

The Handbook serves as a guide for discipline. If a certain behavior is not listed in the handbook it is in the Academy's discretion to determine the appropriate consequences for the action.

Respect for Life

A fundamental belief and tenet of the Roman Catholic faith is that human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. All students and parents are expected to live and follow gospel teachings and the Catholic faith in this area.

EXPECTATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parental Involvement

Home is the first place where a child learns love and respect for God and neighbor. Parents/legal guardians, in choosing a Catholic school to continue the education begun at home, have responsibilities as well as opportunities to share in the continuance of their children's education.

Parental involvement consists of parents/legal guardians and staff meeting together because of common interests in the child. It is expressed in many ways such as sharing in student supervision during lunch in the classroom. In some instances, parents/legal guardians may be asked to assist in advocacy in all areas that would benefit the schools, including programs that request government assistance, in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent. The involvement of the total family is also a means of communicating the Academy's performance to the total parish community.

Parental support for the education of their children is of the utmost importance. Parents and legal guardians are also expected to uphold the behavioral expectations set forth for students and staff within the Academy community. Failure of parents to act in a manner compatible with the values of the Academy may result in student dismissal.

Proximate Preparation for the Reception of Sacraments

Proximate preparation takes place during the Faith Formation year immediately preceding the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation. The Five (5) proximate preparation sessions offer the candidates and their families the opportunity to "deepen the life of faith, especially regarding knowledge of the sacraments of the Church."

"The 'Year of Renewal' begins with the core of the mission of Catholic education — to form children in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the Catholic Church. By investing in our children, we are investing in the future of the Church. Education isn't just in the classroom or the religious education room. It begins and is nourished in the family. 'Year of Renewal' provides an opportunity to highlight parents' roles as primary witnesses of the faith and educators in everyday life... This is just the beginning, and it's meant to be a spark of awareness that will grow, year after year."

These words describe the "Year of Renewal for Catholic Education." This Renewal is a combined effort to enhance Catholic Academies/Schools, Faith Formation Programs, and Parishes. It reflects the missionary call to all God's people to evangelize and renew the face of the earth. In this Year of Renewal, it is most important that we, as parents and

educators, once again familiarize ourselves with the Diocesan guidelines for the reception of sacraments.

“As a family of families, the parish remains the ideal home for Catholic families to join together”, to ensure the integrity of parish life, all constituents should review these guidelines and discuss the pastoral implications. Parents and children should be catechized as to the importance of returning to their home parishes for the reception of sacraments. It is the parish that confers a sacrament, not a Catholic academy or parish school.

Can. 913 §1 For holy communion to be administered to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and be accurately prepared, so that according to their capacity they understand what the mystery of Christ means, and are able to receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.

Can. 914 It is primarily the duty of parents and of those who take their place, as it is the duty of the parish priest, to ensure that children who have reached the use of reason are properly prepared and, having made their sacramental confession, are nourished by this divine food as soon as possible. It is also the duty of the parish priest to see that children who have not reached the use of reason, or whom he has judged to be insufficiently disposed, do not come to holy communion.

THOSE TO BE CONFIRMED

Can. 889 §1. Every baptized person, not yet confirmed and only such a person is capable of receiving confirmation.

- **2.** To receive confirmation licitly outside the danger of death requires that a person who has the use of reason be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew the baptismal promises.

Can. 890 The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the proper time. Parents and pastors of souls, especially pastors of parishes, are to take care that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the appropriate time.

Can. 891 The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion unless the conference of bishops has determined another age, or there is the danger of death, or in the judgment of the minister, a grave cause suggests otherwise.

SPONSORS

Can. 892 Insofar as possible, there is to be a sponsor for the person to be confirmed; the sponsor is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this sacrament.

Can. 893 §1. To perform the function of sponsor, a person must fulfill the conditions mentioned in **can. 874.** (**Can. 874 §1.** To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must: 1/ be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function; 2/ have completed the sixteenth year of age unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause; 3/ be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on; 4/ not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared; 5/ not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized. §2. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.)**2.** It is desirable to choose as a sponsor the one who undertook the same function in baptism.

Parental Communication

Regular communication between the Academy and parents/guardians is a crucial component of your child's school experience. Scheduled parent-teacher conferences allow teachers and parents/guardians to discuss student achievement as well as to develop means to assist students in areas of difficulty.

Students benefit tremendously when an open line of communication exists between families and teachers. It is recommended that parents/ legal guardians communicate any concerns regarding their child. Parents/ legal guardians as well as teachers should always use FACTS, SeeSaw school communication platforms (I.e. Google classroom), or a note sent directly to the teacher/ family. If needed, the parent/ legal guardian or teacher can schedule a follow-up meeting to address any further issue. It is also recommended that a parent communicates with a teacher regarding their concerns prior to involving the administration. Initiating open communication with the teacher first continues a positive relationship between families and teachers. It is strongly advised that parents and teachers do not use personal social media accounts or personal cell phones (texting) as a means of communication in regards to school-related concerns.

Email and Communication Etiquette Tips for Parents and Teachers

St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy strives to promote respectful, well-mannered, and Christian-like relationships between students, students and teachers, faculty members, teachers and administration, and of course with parents, parishioners and community members as well. We ask that the etiquette you receive is reciprocated when communicating with teachers, our office staff, our neighbors on Beach 129th Street, and each other. This etiquette should be in place during in-person communication as well as phone, email, notes to the teacher, SeeSaw, etc. Please be mindful to include a respectful tone and we will be sure to reciprocate the same through everything we do.

These guidelines can help parents use email in ways that will be most beneficial to the student.

- Never use email for matters of controversy or real distress. When you have a really serious matter, it is always best to meet with the teacher directly.
- Do not send multiple emails on the same topic. Generally, teachers will try to get back to you as quickly as possible, remember they have many students and are concerned about all of them.
- The rules for civility in the email are the same as in face-to-face meetings. Convey a positive tone in your emails which can set the stage for a cordial working relationship with teachers and other school personnel.

Additionally, the Academy may communicate with the parent/guardian in many ways, including:

- **Email, SMS, phone messages and posts through the FACTS Family Portal**
- **School Website and Social Media** The Academy website can be found here: <https://stfrancisacademybh.org/>. This website does not require a login and is accessible to the public. Various announcements may be made on the school website, such as emergency school closing, snow days, and other important information. The website will also contain various resources, such as the academic calendar.
- **Information Sent Home With the Children:** Occasionally, teachers or administration at the Academy will send hard copy information home with your children. Please check your child's backpack *daily* to check for any information sent home by the Academy.

Respect

Our goal is to teach our students to respect one another and their teachers; therefore, we ask families to help us with this task by using a teacher's proper title when speaking to the children. *Miss, Mrs., Mr.* is much more respectful than calling a teacher by his or her last name only.

Academy Family Association (AFA)

Every Academy is encouraged to establish an Academy Family Association. Its purpose is the educational enrichment of parents/legal guardians and teachers. The goal of the Academy Family Association is to foster a clearer understanding of the mutual responsibilities of parents/legal guardians and teachers regarding the education of the students.

The mission of the Academy Family Association (AFA) is to support and enrich the academic, spiritual, and community programs of St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy. Mirroring the traditions and teachings of the Catholic faith, parents work in partnership with the school to ensure students have the very best in education.

The goals of the AFA are to: Support the spiritual events and create opportunities to develop a strong and meaningful Christian community for students, families, faculty, and administration, provide a vehicle of communication between parents and the school, and offer interesting and informative programs that are relevant to students and the school community

An added responsibility of the Academy Family Association will be to assist in the fundraising efforts of the Academy. In the school, this is done in coordination with the administration. In an academy, it is done in coordination with the board of directors of the academy. All financial transactions must be approved by the academy board of directors.

Homework

As a partner in education, parents' role in homework is vital. Parents/guardians or another caretaker should remain available to assist students with homework and ensure that all homework is completed.

Fundraising

Fundraising activities are beneficial to the Academy and are often a quality way to involve students in furthering their school community. Any fundraising program should

have the approval of the administration and should be organized and executed so that the Academy program is not interrupted.

Volunteering, Chaperoning & VIRTUS Training

Parent volunteers and chaperones are an integral part of the school community. All parents/ legal guardians/ other adults, must complete VIRTUS training, sign a Code of Conduct, and complete a background check.

- The VIRTUS program for adults is a three-hour live awareness session that instructs adults of the Church that to protect children you must have continuous awareness and vigilance. This awareness session helps trainees understand signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse, and five empowerment steps to prevent child sexual abuse.
- The Code of Conduct is a document that acknowledges the importance of legal, professional and responsible conduct of all who work with children and young people. All clergy, employees and volunteers are required to read the Code of Conduct and to sign a Statement of Acknowledgement Form. The Code of Conduct is distributed at all VIRTUS sessions.
- All employees and volunteers are also required to have a criminal background screening completed before they start their employment or service. These forms are also distributed at all VIRTUS sessions. As of May 2010, all background screenings (employees and volunteers) will be done through the Safe Environment Office. The searches are done through LexisNexis (volunteers) or HireRight (employees). All information is kept confidential and if a positive result is returned, the pastor/administrator will be notified and appropriate steps will be taken. Background searches will be rerun every 3 years for employees and 5 years for volunteers

Custody and Guardianship Orders

Parents must provide accurate custodial information to be kept on file at the Academy. Non-custodial parents do have rights. The law protects non-custodial parents and maintains that parents do not cease to be parents when they no longer have custody of their children. The Academy abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the Academy will provide the non-custodial parents with access to academic records and other school information regarding his or her child. **If there is a court order**

specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a court-certified copy of the court order.

Contacts with Media

Throughout the academic year, the Academy may take pictures or videos and release personal information about students for promotional purposes. This might include:

- where a special event or program at the Academy is covered by a newspaper or television station, resulting in student interviews and pictures;
- award-winning students who may have their names and photos published in a local newspaper; or on social media.
- if the Academy posts pictures of school activities on web pages and social media.

Parents/guardians have the right to exclude their children from videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography or participation involving printed materials or on the internet. If a parent/guardian chooses to exclude their child, the parent/guardian must provide written notification to the **Main Office**.

Parents/guardians who do not object must fill out the media authorization release form, attached at the end of this Handbook. Please be advised that, if a parent/guardian does not fill out this form, the child may be excluded from certain group photographs or otherwise taken in connection with the school day or other Academy functions.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Medical Requirements

The New York City Department of Health requires that all new students entering nursery through grade 12 show proof of having received a complete medical evaluation. Children who transfer from one school to another in New York City are not considered new students. These requirements may change from year to year.

New York State Law states that all students in Grades Nursery through 12 must be immunized as directed by the New York State and New York City Departments of Health. New students may enter school provisionally with documentation of **an initial series of immunizations**. Once admitted provisionally, a student has a certain amount of time to continue and complete the medical requirements. Students who fail to complete the necessary requirements within the appropriate time frame **must be excluded from**

school. Parents must provide records of immunization to be kept on file at the Academy. Any exemptions to the immunization requirements must be approved by the Academy with documentation being kept in the student's health records. Only medical exemptions are permitted per New York State Law. Religious exemptions are no longer permissible.

Nursery, Pre-k, and UPK Programs—Between July 1 and December 31 of each year, all children between the ages of 6 months and 59 months and attending a group child care or school-based child care program must receive one dose of influenza vaccine.

Health Services

St. Francis' school nurse can be contacted at 718-474-4276. If there's no answer, call the main office number: 718-634-2775

Immunization Information

Please [click here](#) for the New York State Immunization Requirements for all students.

Illness and Medical Conditions

The following provides an overview of various medical conditions and illnesses, the Academy's policy on how it handles such illnesses and conditions, and parent/guardian requirements. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but rather explanatory. In the case of any other illness or medical condition, or if there are any questions, please contact the administration. **The policies in this section may be altered or superseded by policies in light of COVID-19.**

Parents are reminded of the NYC Department of Health Core Practices for reducing illness in school:

- **Keep your child home if they are sick**
- **Practice good Hand Hygiene (wash hands)**
- **Practice good Respiratory Hygiene (cover coughs and sneezes)**

Allergies

Parents/guardians must notify the Academy of any documented allergies that a student may have.

Policy on nuts and other allergens:

We Are a NUT Aware School! Unfortunately, our school cannot guarantee a nut, milk, or “allergen-free” environment. The risk of exposure is always present. Instead, we have an “allergy aware” policy, which empowers everyone. Children with allergies become aware of what they can and cannot eat, and school staff are alert and careful about each student’s allergies. As we have students with SEVERE LIFE THREATENING ALLERGIES, we ask all families to avoid bringing in items such as nut butter, Nutella, or any other nut-based products. We ask that you be very aware of any items brought into our school which: may contain nuts/may have been processed or manufactured in a facility that uses/contains nuts. Finally, please remind your children to never share snacks, food, or drinks with anyone.

Asthma

Parents/guardians are required to notify the Academy of the medical needs and protocols of any student who has asthma or a related condition.

Clearance to Return

In certain instances, the Academy may require medical clearance for the child to return to the Academy. If requested, the medical clearance note must specifically state that the child may return to the Academy and resume all activities including gym and playground. Clearance notes will likely be required for severe illness, including hospitalizations and ER visits, surgical procedures, head injuries, cardiac/respiratory concerns, fractures, sprains, or significant changes in a child’s health state which may impact physical activities.

Contagious Illness

To the extent a child has a contagious illness, please notify the Academy as soon as possible so that we may alert others who came in contact with your child. We also may be required to notify the Department of Health. A student with a contagious illness should not arrive for school. This applies even if the parent/guardian has not received confirmation that the child’s illness is contagious, but the child is exhibiting signs of a possible communicable disease, such as a suspicious skin rash, suspicious open wounds, redness of the eyes with intense itching/burning and a thick drainage, painful, reddened

sore throat, and a constant cough accompanied by other symptoms. Students with a contagious illness should remain home from school until a doctor advises that he or she is no longer contagious and can resume normal activities.

Diarrhea/Vomiting

Students who are exhibiting vomiting and/or diarrhea should not arrive for school. Rather, they should stay home until they are free from symptoms for at least 24 hours.

Epinephrine

Severe allergic reactions leading to anaphylaxis are a life-threatening and time-sensitive medical emergency. Therefore, and in accordance with New York State and City Departments of Health recommendations, Academies will work with local health providers to receive training on the administration of epinephrine. For more information, see the administering epinephrine policy below.

If a child is at risk of anaphylaxis, the parent/guardian MUST notify the school and inform it of the risk. Additionally, the parent/guardian must 1) inform the Academy whether the student can self-administer epinephrine, 2) supply the Academy with two epinephrine devices in its original packaging; and 3) replace the devices when it expires, has been used, or shows any other signs of defect, such as discoloration.

Fever

If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or over, he or she must stay home. Your child may not return to school until they are fever free *without* Tylenol, Motrin or Advil for at least 24 hours.

Lice

To the extent, a student contracts head lice, he or she must stay home from school until the parent/guardian has treated the condition in accordance with the New York City Department of Health Regulations. This is to protect the health and safety of all students and staff given the high likelihood that others can also contract head lice. In any cases where a student is infected, a letter will be sent out to the entire class. The student's name will not be revealed. If a parent/guardian becomes aware of a lice infection at home, do not send your child to school. Please inform the school via telephone. The Academy does not pay for lice treatment regardless of where exposure may have occurred.

Mobility

As a matter of safety, and in accordance with all applicable laws, the Academy may not be able to accommodate in-person learning for a child who is immobile, such as a child who is utilizing crutches or in a cast. The Academy will endeavor to provide reasonable accommodations whenever possible, but must ensure the safety of the student and all other students and be in accord with fire safety laws.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act

The Dominic Murray Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act is a new law as of July 1, 2022.

This law requires schools, students, and parents/guardians have information on sudden cardiac arrest risks, signs, and symptoms. Please note that sudden cardiac arrest in children and youth is rare. The incidence of sudden cardiac death (SCD) on the playing field is 0.61 in 100,000. Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is an emergency that happens when the heart suddenly stops working. SCA can cause death if not treated immediately, and even with treatment death may occur. Immediate treatment is cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and use of an automatic external defibrillator (AED).

Preventing SCA before it happens is the best way to save a life. Both your family health history and your child's personal history must be told to healthcare providers to help them know if your child is at risk for sudden cardiac arrest.

Ask your child if they are having any of the symptoms listed below and tell a healthcare provider. Know your family history and tell a healthcare provider of any risk factors listed below.

The signs or symptoms are:

- Fainting or seizure, especially during or right after exercise or with excitement or startled
- Racing heart, palpitations, or irregular heartbeat
- Dizziness, lightheadedness, or extreme fatigue with exercise
- Chest pain or discomfort with exercise
- Excessive shortness of breath during exercise
- Excessive, unexpected fatigue during or after exercise

Student's Personal Risk Factors are:

- Use of diet pills, performance-enhancing supplements, energy drinks, or drugs such as cocaine, inhalants, or "recreational" drugs.
- Elevated blood pressure or cholesterol
- History of health care provider ordered test(s) for heart related issues

Student's Family History Risk Factors are:

- Family history of known heart abnormalities or sudden death before 50 years of age
- Family members with unexplained fainting, seizures, drowning, near drowning or car accidents before 50 years of age
- Structural heart abnormality, repaired or unrepaired
- Any relative diagnosed with the following conditions:
 - Enlarged Heart/ Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy/Dilated Cardiomyopathy
 - Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy
 - Heart rhythm problems, long or short QT interval
 - Brugada Syndrome
 - Catecholaminergic Ventricular Tachycardia
 - Marfan Syndrome- aortic rupture
 - Heart attack at 50 years or younger
 - Pacemaker or implanted cardiac defibrillator (ICD)

Finally, the law requires any student who has signs and symptoms of pending SCA be removed from athletic activity (physical education class) until seen by a physician. The physician must provide written clearance to the school for the student to be able to return to athletics (physical education).

Administering Medication

School nurses may administer over-the-counter-prescription drugs to students with written consent and medical authorization from a parent or legal guardian. School nurses may administer prescription medication that has been prescribed by a physician but must be provided with:

- Medical authorization from the parent or legal guardian consenting to administer the medication

- A medical plan developed by the child’s parents and health care provider detailing the proper administration of the medication, details regarding the child’s medical concerns, and other pertinent details.

The Academy reserves the right to call 911 in any case of a medical emergency.

Administering Epinephrine

Parents or guardians will supply their own epinephrine auto-injector and must provide written consent and medical authorization for its use. The Academy must have an up-to-date medical statement on file for each child in care. For a child with identified allergies or with special health care needs, the Academy must have a copy of an individual health care plan developed by the child’s parents and health care provider. Parents must make program staff aware of the individual health care plan on their child’s first day at the program.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of the student who is at risk of anaphylaxis:

- to notify the school that the child/student is at risk of anaphylaxis and is in need of the presence of epinephrine on school premises
- to indicate to the school if the child/student is capable of self-administration of the epinephrine device
- to supply the school with the epinephrine device* in its original packaging as received from the pharmacist
- to replace the epinephrine device when it expires, discolors, or has been used

*It is recommended that two epinephrine devices be supplied, the second functioning as a backup in case of malfunction or if an extra dose is necessary in accordance with medical documentation.

Administering Epinephrine on Field Trips

In the event of a school trip or school event conducted outside of the school premises, it is the responsibility of the parent (or a designated person who appears on the child’s emergency contact list) to attend with the child/student for the purpose of epinephrine administration, if necessary.

City & State Health Services

The Education Law of New York State mandates that students attending nonpublic schools receive the same health services provided to students attending public schools.

Accommodations

Students requiring medical accommodations throughout the school day (including physical education, dietary conditions, physical limitations, and medical interventions) must submit a statement from his or her licensed medical provider stating the need for such accommodation each academic year. The Academy will attempt to provide the accommodation in accordance with all applicable laws and will inform the parent/guardian if it is unable to do so. If the Academy is unable to do so, it may withdraw the child's enrollment in accordance with the law.

Emergency Services in the event of a Serious Injury

In the event of a serious injury, the Academy may call 911 and an ambulance may take the child to the hospital. The ambulance staff will determine the hospital-based upon the severity of the emergency. A staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance and the parent/guardian will be notified to meet the child at the hospital. The Academy, its staff, and the Academy officials shall be held harmless from any liability, costs, or expenses associated with any emergency services and such costs or expenses shall be the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents/guardians.

Limitations of Physical Activity

Students at the Academy will be enrolled in physical education classes. To the extent a student has a physical disability or issue which may impair his or her ability to engage in the class, or which may make the class unsafe, the parents/guardians must notify the Academy at the beginning of the school year or as soon as the issue arises. A written doctor's recommendation may be required. Further, a student will be required to attend the physical education class for the instructional component and observation, and to complete an alternative assignment or to complete missed activities when physically able to participate.

Counseling Services

St. Francis de Sales Catholic Academy offers counseling services through the Program for Development of Human Potential (PDHP)

Wellness Policy

The Academy meets minimum federal and state standards for goals of physical education, nutrition and healthy environments in schools.

Breakfast/Lunch Program

During lunch, whether in the classroom or, if the case may be, a lunchroom, each child is expected to remain in his or her seat until dismissed. Each child is also responsible for keeping his or her area clean. Respect and obedience are to be shown at all times to those who are supervising lunch.

Accident Policy

If a student is seriously injured, the parent/guardian will be notified by the Academy as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the student.

If an accident results in a medical condition/injury, the Academy is authorized to render reasonable first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion and judgment of the Academy, minimize the severity of the student or injured person's condition. The Academy may secure a professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion and judgment of the Academy, appears not to be reasonably warranted. The Academy, its staff, and the Academy officials shall be held harmless from any liability, costs, or expenses associated with any treatment of first aid provided (including, but not limited to the cost of transportation), and such costs or expenses shall be the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

TECHNOLOGY

Acceptable Use Policy

The use of technology is permitted on school premises under limited conditions as authorized by the administration for the sole purpose of enhancing academic achievement while respecting the dignity and safety of all members of the Academy community.

In using the information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways, the following conditions of being a digital citizen within the Diocese of Brooklyn are expected:

Respect One's Self

- Public names should be appropriate
- Be mindful of any and all content you post including photos, personal views, comments, personal information, etc.
- Avoid seeking out and/or viewing inappropriate content
- Do not engage in potentially harmful activities such as communicating with persons unknown to you or internet challenges

Respect Others

- Be mindful of comments, posts, photos, or any content directed toward or including others
- Refrain from engaging in inflammatory, harassing, or any other such disrespectful behavior
- Do not perpetuate inappropriate content by sharing it with or sending it to others
- Warn others of potentially disturbing or harmful content that should be avoided

Protect One's Self and Others

- Report any and all cyber-abuse committed against you or others to parents, teachers, and/or administrators
- Keep groups with friends private to avoid potentially inappropriate or dangerous content and communications from unknown sources

Respect Intellectual Property

- Cite sources when using any content not originally authored by you

Members of Catholic Academy communities must remember that when telecommunicating with individuals, groups, or institutions, you are doing so as an individual. You should not represent yourself, your views, ideas, questions, or actions as representing the Catholic Academy you are associated with without the expressed permission of the administration.

Security of Technology

The schools and academies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn assume no responsibility for the theft, loss, repair, or replacement of any technology devices that are brought onto school/academy property, whether it is lost, stolen, damaged, or confiscated.

Security on any computer system is a high priority. If you believe you can identify a security issue, you must notify a system administrator, principal, or teacher and not disclose the problem to others in any way. Although there are safeguards in place to protect all users from inappropriate content, we are not responsible for failures in filtering that result in a bypass of our program and/or access to objectionable content. If any inappropriate content bypasses these safeguards, any parties involved should turn off the monitor and report the security breach immediately to a system administrator, teacher or the principal. Additionally, members of the school/academy community shall not:

- Use another's credentials for any reason
- Gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to Diocesan or school/academy computers or computer systems.
- Download or install any software application without prior authorization.

Administrative Rights (To monitor the use of technology)

The school/academy reserves the right to monitor both student and employee use of technology and computer-accessed content. Due to the evolving nature of technology, the Catholic Schools and Academies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn reserve the right to amend or add to this policy at any time without notice.

Personal use of Social Media (Teachers, Students)

This section refers to the personal use of social media. This includes, but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn, Snapchat, or any other such medium. All references to school/academy personnel, students, and/or any member of the school/academy community in technology-related mediums such as web pages or email which is deemed to be conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or academy are violations of this policy. Any communication with current students by faculty, staff, or administration is strictly forbidden on any personal social networking site. Personal posts must use appropriately respectful speech and refrain from

harassing, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, threatening, or other inappropriate communications.

Representation of the school/academy in whole or part on any personal posts and/or communication is prohibited.

Parents/guardians for all students must sign this Acceptable Use Policy which effectively gives permission for their child to use the internet and the Academy's technology resources for educational purposes and also understands and accepts the Academy's guidelines.

The acknowledgment of the Acceptable Use Policy to be signed by parents/guardians and, where applicable, students.

FACTS Family Portal

The FACTS Family Portal will be your one-stop destination to view student academic information, school announcements, school calendar, and your FACTS payment plan and incidental billing information. You will conveniently be able to access all this information in one centralized location, eliminating the need for multiple log-ins. Once the FACTS Family Portal is set up your child(rens) school will notify you with some simple instructions on creating log-in credentials. Once you create your user profile, you will be able to access the FACTS Family Portal from any device, including your smartphone whether it is an Apple or Android device.

Communications with Teachers

Students benefit tremendously when an open line of communication exists between families and teachers. It is recommended that parents/ legal guardians communicate any concerns regarding their child. Parents/ legal guardians, as well as teachers, should always use FACTS, school communication platforms (I.e. Google classroom), or a note sent directly to the teacher/ family. If needed, the parent/ legal guardian or teacher can schedule a follow-up meeting to address any further issues. It is also recommended that a parent communicates with a teacher regarding their concerns prior to involving the administration. Initiating open communication with the teacher first continues a positive relationship between families and teachers.

Parents and teachers should not use personal social media accounts or personal cell phones (texting) as a means of communication in regards to school-related concerns.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices, although useful and helpful tools in many ways, must only be used appropriately by faculty, administration, staff, and students. The use of electronic devices by faculty, administration, staff, and students must be appropriate to the educational setting, and may not distract the student, other students, or the class as a whole during the course of the school day and after school. (i.e., cell phones, iPads, iPhones, Smart Watches, and other personal electronic devices). In the event, an electronic device, including a student cell phone, is believed to contain evidence of a violation of Academy policy and/or a threat to the school community, the individual possessing the electronic device is obliged to grant the administration of the Academy access to the device and the information on the device to ensure compliance with policy and the safety of the school.

Inappropriate use of any electronic device may result in serious consequences.

Schools are not responsible for the loss, theft or damage to electronic devices.

Parent/Guardian Monitoring of Child's Non-School Devices

Today more than ever young individuals need guidance from their parents to help navigate the technological world, create boundaries, and filter out inappropriate content. There are multiple consumer products, including some at no cost, which parents/guardians can secure for monitoring and controlling their child's access to technology. Specifically, products for mobile and cellular services include, but are not exclusive to, Apple Screen Time, Google Family Link, Qustodio and OpenDNS Family Shield. The Academy expects parents/guardians to equip their child's personal electronic devices, including cellular devices and tablets, with parental controls if not already in place. The Academy expresses no preference or recommendation for any specific product but expects that parents/guardians utilize such a product to monitor their child's electronic activity. Further, as Catholics, we all have an obligation to our fellow Academy-community members. Therefore, the Academy expects that parents/guardians will notify the school if activity on a child's personal electronic device threatens the health and/or safety of any member of the Academy community.

SAFETY

Commitment to Safety

The safety of the students is the Academy's number one concern and we maintain a high standard of safety. This requires that the Academy complete periodic drills and exercises

and that all members of the community are trained in our safety standards. In order to maintain a safe environment, the Academy requires cooperation across the board including the administration, teachers, staff, and, of course, parents. We must ensure safety is practiced in hallways, when passing during class, while on staircases, when using restrooms, during recess and physical education, during after-school programs and extracurricular activities, when outside the school building, during arrival and departure, and in connection with parent parking.

Emergency Drills

Per New York State laws, academies are required to conduct twelve emergency drills over the course of the school year. Four of these drills must be lockdown drills. Students are expected to follow all directives provided to them by school teachers and staff. Failure to comply or act appropriately during emergency drills will result in disciplinary action.

School Closings

The Diocese of Brooklyn will base their closings on the New York City Public School System. If the New York City school system closes due to inclement weather, the schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn are closed. Local academies may also make decisions to close their individual schools based on inclement weather or other hazardous conditions (infrastructure issues, flooding, property damage, etc.). Parents will be notified as soon as possible. In the event of a closure during the school day, proper provisions will be made for students to return home or to be cared for in other premises until usual dismissal time.

Crisis/Emergency Information

Should a crisis require evacuation from the school building, the students will be brought to a safe place located at **St. Francis de Sales Church** and parents/guardians should meet them at that location. The Academy utilizes **the FACTS Parents Portal** to notify parents/guardians directly about the crisis.

Reporting Concerns Regarding School Safety

Students, parents/guardians, and staff must report all dangerous and potentially dangerous situations and/or events directly to an administrator at the Academy.

Visitors

All visitors must be admitted to the building by school staff. Visitors should proceed to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor designation (lanyard, sticker, etc.) if available. Visitors to the school are asked to remain in the office until they have confirmed their destination within the school. For the safety of staff and students, visitors should not walk about the school but should travel to their intended destination within the school. Prior to leaving the school, visitors should return to the main office, sign out, and leave through the main doors. Visitors should not exit through side doors to ensure that building security is maintained.

Video Surveillance/Photographs

Academies within the Diocese of Brooklyn are authorized to use video camera surveillance on Academy property to monitor the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to the property, and to safeguard facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be placed in locations as deemed appropriate by the designated school administrators.

Violations of Diocesan policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or laws that images, video, and audio capture through surveillance may be used as evidence that may subject students, staff, and visitors to appropriate disciplinary and legal action, including, but not limited to, disclosure to law enforcement.

Data from video surveillance is typically retained for a year. Data related to a known incident that involves injury to students, staff, or members of the public or property, or which involves any potential violation of the law or Diocesan policies will be kept with reports of the incident until the incident has been appropriately resolved.

The Academy recognizes that parents/guardians will often want to document their student's life at the Academy, including by taking pictures or video recordings. The Academy asks parents/guardians to exercise caution, however, and be mindful of not taking pictures of other children without the express consent of those children's parents/guardians. Parents/guardians and students are not permitted to take pictures or video recordings on school grounds without the express consent of the administration.

Students are prohibited from making any and all recordings (including audio and video) on Academy grounds or at an Academy-sponsored event, regardless of whether such event is on Academy grounds. This prohibition applies to the recording of a class or Academy event through the use of a personal electronic device, including, but not limited

to, cell phones, smart watches, iPads, tablets, laptops, and/or iPhones. The Academy may, in its sole discretion, authorize the recording of a class or Academy event; however such recording may only be done with the prior consent of the administration.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Safe Environment Protocol & VIRTUS training

All teachers, staff, and volunteers must complete VIRTUS training and a background screening which is administered by the Diocese of Brooklyn.

There are additional steps parents/guardians can take to keep their children safe, which we recommend parents/guardians consistently and regularly review with their children. This includes:

- Students should never go home with a stranger
- Students should never talk to stranger
- Students should never take things from stranger
- If students are approached by strangers and are still near the Academy, they should be encouraged to return to the Academy and immediately inform a staff member
- Young students should be escorted to and from school
- Older children should be encouraged to walk/travel to school in groups whenever possible.

The teachers at the Academy will also remind students of the importance of not responding to strangers and actions each child should take if approached by a stranger, including reporting it to responsible adults.

Child Lures Prevention Program

The Child Lures/Teen Lures Prevention programs are presented to the children and youth who attend each Academy. This program is tailored to different age groups and covers topics such as staying healthy and safe, kindness and respect, trusted adults, my body belongs to me, child luring, choosing grown-ups to help, children are special, and abuse is never a child's fault (topics will vary based on age level appropriateness). For older students, topics include sexual assault, harassment, dating violence, bullying/cyberbullying, sexting, identity theft, online luring, suicide and human

trafficking with the goal of facilitating authentic conversations to bring awareness to the topics.

Each program provides teachers with the resources to facilitate appropriate conversations. Parents/legal guardians will also be provided with a link to access parent guides digitally to continue the conversations within their homes.

Child Abuse Laws

Under NYS law, teachers are all **mandated reporters** and are legally required to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect to the proper agency. The teacher will make a judgment that the child may be presenting signs of abuse or neglect. If the mandated reporter makes such a judgment and suspects abuse or neglect, in addition to reporting to the proper agency, the reporter must also notify the administration.

Confidentiality

There is a professional, legal and moral ethic that requires all persons to safeguard all student information of a privileged nature. However, if a teacher learns of something that could impact the health or safety of a student or any person, the teacher has the responsibility to share the information with the administration. Further, school officials are required to report when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is an abused or maltreated child.

Sexual Harassment

The Academy is committed to providing for its students an atmosphere and school zone free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is a direct violation of the Catholic faith as it signifies a lack of respect for other persons.

Any student who believes that he or she is being sexually harassed or a parent/guardian who was informed by their child that the child was sexually harassed shall immediately report this information to the teacher and to the administration. A student/parent who is uncomfortable reporting the alleged harassment to a teacher or administrator may report it directly to the Office of the Superintendent. Any information shall be treated as confidential, to the extent permitted by law. All claims of sexual harassment will be investigated in an appropriate manner under the supervision of the Office of the

Superintendent. No student will be subject to any retaliation or disciplinary action on the part of the Academy for reports of sexual harassment made in good faith.

No student is to sexually harass another member of the school community. Any student who engages in sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

Child Reporting Abuse to Parents

If a student reports any form of abuse at the Academy to his or her parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must notify the administration. Any information shall be treated as confidential, to the extent permitted by law. This will permit the Principal to investigate the situation and will ensure that the alleged abuse or harassment does not occur to other students. If a parent/guardian is uncomfortable going to the administration, he or she may go directly to the Office of the Superintendent.

SIGNS OF SUICIDE (SOS) PREVENTION PROGRAM

SOS Signs of Suicide (SOS) is a universal, school-based prevention program designed for middle school (ages 11-13) and high school (ages 13-17) students. The goals of this program are:

- Decrease suicide and suicide attempts by increasing student knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression
- Encourage personal help-seeking and/or help-seeking on behalf of a friend
- Reduce the stigma of mental illness and acknowledge the importance of seeking help or treatment
- Engage parents and school staff as partners in prevention through “gatekeeper” education
- Encourage schools to develop community-based partnerships to support student mental health
- Raise of awareness of self-harm behaviors, such as cutting and burning

Through a video and guided discussion, students learn to identify warning signs of suicide and depression. At the end of the session, students complete a seven-question screening for depression (anonymous or signed – the school can decide) to further encourage help-seeking and connect students at risk with trusted adults. The curriculum raises awareness about behavioral health and encourages students to ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell) when worried about themselves or their peers.

TUITION AND FINANCES

School Tuition Policies

The success of our Academy relies on the commitment of our families to make Catholic education a financial priority. The Academy has full-year contractual and financial obligations that must be met, such as teacher salaries, utility bills, building maintenance and improvements, and other expenses. Families that seek enrollment are required to satisfy the annual tuition by specified due dates.

These policies are not intended to deprive anyone of a Catholic education. It is our desire to maintain a fair approach to collection of tuition and to provide a sound financial policy for the overall welfare of our families. We encourage all responsible parties to maintain open communication with the business office to ensure a complete understanding of each family's financial obligations. The goal of our academy is to provide a Catholic education to every student who desires one, but only by mutual cooperation can we make certain that this goal is met. Parental non-payment or delinquency in meeting financial obligations creates an additional burden for the Academy.

- Tuition contracts specifying a payment schedule will be published and shared with families. All families must sign an enrollment contract that guarantees the family will be responsible for the full payment of tuition for the academic year.
- Academies will arrange for all tuition and fees to be collected through FACTS Tuition Management.
- The tuition payment schedule will follow the most appropriate schedule for the Academy and parents: monthly, one payment, or three installments.
- A Tuition Assistance Committee will be in place at every Academy

Tuition and Other Fee Schedules

The Academy will collect tuition and fees over a ten-month period. This ten-month period will typically extend from August to May. Tuition collection will begin prior to the start of the school year.

Please [click here](#) for the 2023-2024 tuition rates

Academies reserve the right to place severely delinquent accounts in the hands of a collection agency or its attorneys for collection. It is not our desire that any family should incur unnecessary legal fees or suffer further embarrassment or inconvenience in

this regard. Again, we encourage prompt communication with the academy in an effort to avoid litigation.

In order to withdraw a student, the parent must submit written notice to the administration in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the academy to prepare the necessary information and settle accounts. No student records will be forwarded to another academy or school until all accounts have been settled.

Following the terms of the enrollment contract, refunds will be made only in accordance with the stated guidelines and/or at the discretion of the administration. The refund must be requested prior to the start of the period for which payment would be made.

1. Resources for Tuition Assistance

Catholic education is meant to be available to every Catholic family. Every family desiring a Catholic education for their child(ren) will participate to the extent capable in the cost of providing that education.

Each family in need of tuition assistance must complete a scholarship application through Futures in Education, which may currently be found at: www.futuresineducation.org/scholarships . The one exception is families returning to the Teddy Forstmann program coordinated by Children's Scholarship Fund.

If the family requests additional assistance beyond the awarded amount, the request will be forwarded to the Tuition Assistance Committee. The review will be completed as early as possible.

1. Tuition Assistance Committee

The Tuition Assistance Committee is an essential advisory body to the pastor/board chair and principal. It has a two-fold purpose.

- The Committee will have the responsibility of direct involvement in the monitoring and collection of tuition arrears from the families of its respective school or academy.
- The Committee will be empowered to recommend when needed a partial deferment of tuition for families that have demonstrated true financial need or face unforeseen extraordinary circumstances. Such a deferment will establish a

fair and just tuition rate that will allow students to remain enrolled when even scholarship assistance is not enough. This discernment must be guided by an approved process that is fair, transparent and reasonable. Any recommendation made by the Tuition Assistance Committee must be approved by the respective pastor of a parochial school and the Board of Directors for an academy.

Should there be a concern regarding the tuition assistance process or if an appeal for discernment is requested, parents/guardians should present their concerns in writing. In the case of a Catholic academy, the letter should be addressed to the chairperson of the Board of Directors. The response from the pastor or chairperson would be final.

FACTS

FACTS is a tuition management company designed to make tuition collection simpler for families as well as academies. There will be one FACTS record per family, and each student must be listed separately. This provides valuable detail about the charges and discounts each student is receiving. In turn, this provides the Academy better reporting. A major benefit of FACTS is the ability to process automatic drafts of the payer's bank account or credit card. There is a 2.85% convenience fee on credit card transactions. FACTS does offer an invoicing option as well. With this option, FACTS will send an invoice to the payer (via email or postal mail) 20 calendar days prior to the payment due date. The payer must then initiate payment either by using a credit card or bank account online, over the phone or by mailing a check directly to FACTS. Families are encouraged to pay via an automatic draft. FACTS also allows for flexible payment options. Common options are monthly payments, two trimester payments, and payment in full.

Tuition Delinquency

By standard practice, FACTS will send payment reminders prior to any due date, returned payment notices in the case of a failed payment, and will make automated phone calls to delinquent payers. Payers who fail to communicate with the Academy and resolve the delinquency through a payment schedule approved by the Academy will result in the suspension of services for the student.

Students will not be permitted to attend class at the start of the trimester should any balance be past due.

No student will be permitted to begin an academic year unless all registration and other required fees are current. Registration and other required fees are paid through FACTS

Tuition Management at enrollment. Enrollment for students whose families are not currently in the registration or other required fees by June 30 may be canceled at the discretion of the Academy. In no event will students be permitted to attend class at the commencement of the academic year unless the delinquency is paid in full.

In order to participate in graduation activities, all debts for eighth-grade students must be cleared by the third Monday of May. Eighth-grade transcripts will not be released to the high schools if the financial obligations have not been met.

For all grades, in order to participate in school activities and field trips, all financial accounts are to be current and up to date.

All fees must be paid in full before records or progress reports will be processed. It is the sole discretion of the Academy to withhold trimester exams, report cards, transcripts, records, and diplomas until all financial obligations are satisfied in full.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus Procedure

While students are being transported to and from the Academy, it is expected that they will uphold the behavior expectations of the Academy as well as rules set forth by the bus driver or bus company. Students who continuously disregard bus procedures and rules are at risk of losing their access to bus transportation.

Each bus company must hold an evacuation drill at least once a year. Students are expected to follow all instructions as given by the bus driver or other adult facilitating the drill.

Use of Other Vehicles

Only a licensed public carrier that is fully insured should be used to transport students. Teachers or administrators are not permitted to transport students in their personal vehicles.

The Academy does not assume liability for transportation not operated by it, such as Ubers, car service, private buses or van services.

Parents/ legal guardians must provide authorization for their child to be transported by someone else. This includes transportation for dismissal as well as extracurricular activities.

RECORDS

Change of Information

For student safety, it is imperative that parents/ legal guardians alert the Academy to any changes in address or phone number. Parents/ legal guardians must also provide the Academy with an adequate number of emergency contacts (with up to date information).

Educational Records Request

In the event of a student transferring to a different academy, parish school, or public school, the school will provide student records to the school of transfer. Requests can be made in writing by the parent/ legal guardian or by the school that the student will be transferring to. The school office is responsible for sending student records directly to the school of transfer. If records are not provided in a timely fashion, parents or legal guardians may contact the Office of the Superintendent to receive further assistance in this matter.

Authorization to Release Records

Academies may not release the records of students without the written consent of the parents/legal guardians to any individual, agency or organization other than the following:

- Other academy or parish school officials who have legitimate educational interests.
- Officials of other academies or parish schools in which the student intends to enroll.
- Officials of the courts with the lawfully issued judicial process, i.e., subpoena, court order, etc.
- Please note health records are the property of the Department of Health.

Review of a Child's Official Records

Parents/legal guardians have the right to inspect any and all material that is part of their child's permanent record. Academies require parents/legal guardians to provide a written request prior to when they wish to examine their child's permanent record. At the time of inspection, the academy administrator, or qualified delegate, will be present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Parent-Student Handbook and all subsequent forms (“Handbook”).

I have read and understood the contents of this Handbook, and will act in accord with these policies and procedures. I have explained the contents of this Handbook to my child. I agree that I am responsible for my child’s adherence to the policies in this Handbook.

I understand that this Handbook supersedes any other previously issued handbook and personnel manual and that all previous versions are hereby revoked.

I understand that the Academy reserves the right to add, amend, modify, or discontinue any of the policies and procedures as set forth in the Handbook at any time, with or without notice.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Child(ren) and Grades:

FOR STUDENTS GRADES 5-8

I have read the Parent-Student Handbook, have discussed its contents with my parent/guardian, and agree to abide by all its terms.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE AUTHORIZATION

If a parent/guardian chooses to sign any form electronically, the following MUST be submitted beforehand to the Academy with an original, and not electronic, signature:

I authorize the Academy to accept my electronic signature.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Parent/Guardian

As the parent/guardian of a student at the Academy, I have read the Acceptable Use policy and agree to abide by its terms, and to ensure my child abides by its terms. I understand that computer and internet access at the Academy is designed for educational purposes. I am aware that it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold the Academy responsible for materials acquired in use. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use of school's technology resources is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission for my child to use the school's technology resources and certify that I have reviewed this information with my child.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

Grade: _____

Name of Student: _____

Grade: _____

For Students Grades 5-8

I have read the Acceptable Use Policy in this Handbook.

Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____

Student's Grade: _____ Date: _____

Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____

Student's Grade: _____ Date: _____

MEDIA AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE

I hereby consent to the taking of photographs, movies, videos, and images capable of reproduction in any medium of me or my children or children of whom I am the designated guardian by the Academy, Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, and/or Department of Education and their parents,

affiliates, trustees, directors, members, officers, employees, volunteers, agents and contractors (the “Parties”).

I hereby grant the Parties the right to edit, reproduce, use and reuse images for any and all purposes including, but not limited to, advertising, promotion and display, and I hereby consent to the editing, reproduction, use and re-use of said images in any and all media in existence and all media yet in existence including, but not limited to, video, print, television, internet, and podcasts.

I forever grant, assign, and transfer to the Parties any right, title and interest that I and/or my child/children may have in any images, including negatives, taken of me and/or my children by the Parties. I hereby agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the Parties from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of actions, loss, liability, damage, or cost arising from this authorization.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and Grade of Child: _____

If you are choosing to opt out of this policy, the Academy MUST receive the signed acknowledgement below and return it to the Principal by the first day of school:

I have read the Media Authorization and Release Policy and am choosing to opt out.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and Grade of Child: _____