**Index**

Admissions3

Non-Discrimination Policy3

Right to Amend3

Confidentiality4

Student Records4

Tuition4

Academics6

Curriculum8

Textbooks8

Homework8

Attendance: Absent and Tardiness9

Conduct11

Pre-K Program14

Federal Programs14

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures15

School to Home Communication17

Change of Address/Phone Emergency Contacts17

Lunch Policy18

Visitor Policy19

Emergency Procedures19

Health Procedures20

Supervision and Liability21

Circles of Grace21

Parent School Association (PSA)22

Parent Participation22

Activities22

School Facilities23

Telephone Use and Messages23

Items from Home23

Uniforms24

Acknowledgement27

**Admissions**

To be accepted as a student:

* Parents/Guardians and students must agree to uphold the Catholic Christian values which form the basis of education at St. Helena Catholic School and to abide by the policies of the school.
* The student can benefit from the educational program offered by the school.
* There is space available according to the established policy of class size.
* The parents/guardians of the child to be admitted can pay the reasonable tuition and other required fees.
* Kindergarteners must be five (5) years of age by Sept. 1st of the current year.

At the time of pre-registration, all new students must present:

* Baptismal Certificate (if applicable)
* Birth Certificate
* Current Immunization Record
* Completed Enrollment Packet

Final registration will take place in August. Students may not be enrolled if there is an unpaid balance from the previous year.

Families who are currently enrolled are given Letters of Intent in April. The responses to these letters help the School Board and the Administrator make plans for the following school year.

**Non-Discrimination Policy**

The schools of the Diocese of Las Cruces admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. They do not discriminate based on sex, race and color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

Employment of school personnel will be dependent upon a person’s qualifications for the job, regardless of sex, race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

These government regulations will be observed in all areas except when in conflict with a specific tenet of our Faith.

**Right to Amend**

This handbook is a means of communication. It is meant to provide you, the parent/guardian, with helpful information on how our school works. The office of St. Helena School of Hobbs, Inc., reserves the right to amend this handbook, as necessary. Parents/Guardians will be given prompt notification in the event of any revisions to the school policy handbook.

**Confidentiality**

School records including information such as grade reports, test scores, special services/needs, medical records, behavior issues, and financial information are kept in strict confidence. Permanent folders are kept in the school office and are available to authorized personnel only.

Registration forms containing personal information such as phone numbers, address, emergency contacts, and names of individuals authorize to pick up specific children are kept in the office and are shared with classroom teachers.

**Student Records**

Teachers are required to keep complete and accurate records of each student’s attendance and academic progress. These records are kept by the school indefinitely on official forms called Permanent Record Cards. The principal has the responsibility to ensure that all required information is accurately and clearly recorded on these cards. This includes family information, standardized test score results, and changes of address. The Permanent Records are confidential. Cumulative folders containing correspondence between the school and the student’s parents/guardians, disciplinary reports, psychological/Special Education reports, legal document of adoptions and custody, and all other documents of a personal nature are retained in separate student files in the principal’s office. These are destroyed or forwarded according to regulations when the student transfers to another school or when they graduate. Health records are kept in the principal’s office file.

**Access to Student Records**

Ordinarily written parental permission is required prior to releasing the record of a student eighteen (18) years or younger. Students’ records may be given without a written release from a parent/guardian or eligible student:

* To principals, teachers, other qualified educational personnel who have a legitimate educational interest.
* To Federal or State officials for audit purposes or in connection with a student’s application for receipt of financial aid.
* To health or safety personnel in extreme emergencies.
* To comply with a judicial order or subpoena. In this case, a written notice to parent or guardian must follow.
* Records will not be given if there is an unpaid balance. Records will be released as soon as this balance has cleared.

**Tuition**

**Rates and Fees**

Tuition and fees are set each year by the School Board. Please obtain the current tuition rate schedule and list of fees from the school office.

**Tuition (cont.)**

**Payment Policy**

1. **Annual Payment**

Under this plan the entire amount of tuition for the school year is made in one payment directly to the school on or before the first day of school.

1. **Monthly Payments (Payments through FACTS)**

This plan is an automatic payment plan made through your checking account, savings account, or credit card. Those choosing this plan will complete a FACTS agreement form to authorize the automatic monthly payments. There is a $43.00/year per family charge for using this option. A monthly service report from FACTS is provided to the school which will be checked by our secretary to confirm each month’s withdrawal. Please check your bank balance each month to confirm that the payment has been deducted.

*\*Neither FACTS nor the school will have direct access to/or any knowledge about your bank or credit card account.\**

**Late Payments**

It will be the responsibility of each family to keep the principal informed of any personal difficulties in making tuition payments. Any special arrangements for tuition payments will have to be made with the principal.

* **Full Payments**

If the family would like to make a full payment, the full payment must be received by the first day of school. The family will be contacted within five days by the principal or secretary to plan to either make full payment or make payments through FACTS.

* **Monthly Payments – FACTS**

Families who miss a monthly payment due to insufficient funds will be assessed a $25.00 missed payment fee by FACTS and may incur a fee from their own financial institution. The missed payment will be reattempted by FACTS within 20 days. St. Helena Catholic School may withhold report cards, diplomas, and/or take other action necessary for financial delinquencies until financial obligations have been met. Accounts that are not up to date by the end of the first semester will be evaluated individually. Student attendance may not be permitted the second semester if account is not current. If tuition is not paid the student will be dis-enrolled.

**Scholarships**

Scholarships are available for students in grades Kindergarten through 5th Grade.

Every family wanting to apply for a scholarship must complete the application and submit their financial documents to FACTS. No awards will be granted without a completed application. Once FACTS has all the information, they will make a recommendation to St. Helena Catholic School.

All financial decisions regarding awards will be based upon these recommendations. There is a $35.00 fee (payable to FACTS) for applying and applications must be submitted electronically. Applications are found on www.factstuitionaid.com.

No financial application will be considered unless the School Registration Fee is paid in full at the time of the application.

For every year, a student attends our school, a new application must be completed.

**Tuition (cont.)**

**Withdrawal of Students**

If it becomes necessary for a child to transfer to another school, the principal and teacher should be notified 15 days in advance so that all records and procedures can be properly completed. It is the responsibility of the parents to get the child’s report card, and their personal possessions on the last day of the child’s attendance.

When a child is withdrawn from school, for any reason only tuition paid in advance for future months will be refunded. If a child withdraws before the end of the month, the tuition for the entire month must still be paid.

**Academics**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Religion | * Science | * Mathematics | * Language Arts |
| * Social Studies | * Health | * Fine Arts |  |

**Testing**

St. Helena Catholic School utilizes a series of assessments to monitor student performance and growth.

1. Every child in first grade and above is given a pre-test at the beginning of each school year. This test assesses the cumulative curriculum standards in each core subjects. Each child is given the same test as a post-test at the end of the year to determine growth.
2. STAR 360 Tests are administered at each teacher’s discretion. STAR tests are computer adaptive, which means that they adjust to each answer the student provides. This helps teachers get the best data to help your child in the shortest amount of testing time (about one-third of the time other tests take). Your child may take a STAR test for early literacy, math, reading, or other subjects of their teacher’s choice. Unlike the TERRA NOVA, which is only given once a year, we will be able to use STAR 360 year-round. The benefits of this, for your child is that the assessments will pinpoint exactly what your child knows, and teachers can personalize your child’s practice to keep them growing. Plus, short test times ensure your child spends more time learning and less time testing.
3. Curriculum unit assessments are given throughout the school year as students’ progress through the curriculum.

**Report Cards**

Report cards will be distributed after each nine-week period if all tuition, fees, and fines are paid.

Kindergarten: Please refer to the classroom handbook for grading scale.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Pre-K - Kindergarten** | **Grade’s 1st – 5th** |
| E = Excellent  G = Good Performance  S = Satisfactory  N = Needs Improvement | A = 100% - 93% High Quality Performance  B = 92% - 83% Good Performance  C = 82% - 73% Acceptable Performance  D = 72% - 63% Unacceptable Performance  F = 62% - 0% No Performance; must be  improved to insure credit |

**Academics (cont.)**

**Awards and Honor Roll**

An awards assembly will be held after each grading period. Students in grades 1st – 5th grade will be eligible for AB Honor Roll with at least a B in conduct. Students in grades 4th – 5th earning an A in all subject areas, including conduct, will be eligible for the A Honor Roll. Grades Pre-K through 5th grade will receive awards for perfect attendance, most improved, and Light of Christ. These awards will be given during our Awards Assembly at the end of each nine-week grading period. Parents will be notified of these events.

**Parent – Teacher Conferences**

Mandatory parent-teacher conferences are scheduled at the end of the first nine-week period. Conferences may be scheduled at other times by parents or teachers as they deem necessary or advisable. Please make appointments with the teachers.

**Promotion** **and Retention Criteria**

A student may be promoted to the next higher grade upon satisfactorily completing all requirements and 80% attainment of the benchmark for the grade level presently enrolled. Failure to achieve the above criteria may result in retention of the student in the present grade level. Other factors will also be considered, such as: social and mental maturity, the teacher’s evaluation of the student, test scores, and remediation programs (summer school).

Retention in the same grade shall be for no more than one school year. A parent or guardian must be advised in advance of any plans of retention. A conference including the principal may be requested. A parent may sign a waiver indicating that a child’s promotion is against the specific advice of the teacher or principal.

**General Screening Plan**

General Screening is a process for identifying the needs of students to determine appropriate educational programs for them. It is the beginning of a process which occurs prior to the determination of need for in-school tutoring which precedes referral for special education through Hobbs Municipal Schools. When a student need is suspected, a parent/teacher can initiate the process by informing the principal. The teacher in turn will call for and facilitate an initial student assistance team meeting. The student assistance team will be composed of teachers and principal and may consist of professionals from other disciplines if the team determines this to be beneficial.

*The aims of the General Screening Plan and Process are:*

* To identify at the earliest academic stage possible reading deficiency, limited English proficiency, speech, psychomotor, or social/behavioral difficulties experienced by children in our school.
* To explore and utilize alternatives within the school setting to meet the needs of each student referred for special need.
* To provide the least restrictive alternative for each student referred.
* To expedite the process leading from initial referral to placement in special services beyond the school’s capabilities

Although referrals are generally made by the school to outside resources such as Title I, special education, speech, counseling, etc., some referrals may be made by parent/guardian or the students themselves by

**Academics (cont.)**

contacting the Hobbs Municipal School’s Special Services Division, Lea County Guidance Center, Parish Priest (spiritual counseling) or a Children at Risk social worker.

The length of the school year is 990 hours per year as required by the State of New Mexico Department of Education.

**Length of a School Day**

1st through 5th grade will attend school from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. While Pre-K and Kindergarten levels will attend from 8:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

**Curriculum**

As part of the effort to ensure academic excellence for every child, St. Helena Catholic School has adopted the Common Core Standards. Parents can rest assured knowing that their child is being taught exactly what they need to learn for their age to academically successful now, and in the future. More information on Common Core can be obtained through their internet website. These standards were chosen since:

1. We are a feeder school to the Hobbs Municipal Schools who use Common Core
2. The ACT and SAT are based on Common Core Standards

**Textbooks**

Students are to take proper care of their books, which are to be kept always covered. Textbooks must not be written in or defaced in any way. If a book is lost or damaged, parents must pay full cost of a new book.

**Homework and Late Work Policy**

Good study habits include developing memorization skills. Students need time to learn and practice reading fluently, to learn the basic math facts, spelling words, etc. A busy school day does not always permit such time.

To encourage better study habits, it is suggested that parents set aside a definite study time each school night when the TV, radio, etc., are off. As a minimum time, we recommend 30 minutes for primary students (grades 1st – 3rd) and 45 minutes to an hour for students in grades 4th – 5th.

All homework must be completed on time. Failure to complete assignments by the due date will result in the student remaining after school or loss of recess until the work is finished. Parents will be notified if their child is remaining after school.

Parents can assist the homework process by:

**Homework and Late Work Policy (cont.)**

* Checking each child’s homework assignment
* Providing a quiet study place at home
* Setting aside regular study time each evening
* Restricting the use of electronic devices during homework periods
* Checking in on your child periodically, or sitting down with your child while they complete their homework
* Praising and rewarding your child upon their completion of a job well done

**Policy on Make-Up Homework for Excused Absences**

If a child is absent for only one day, all make-up work will be given to the student when he/she returns to school the following day. ***We will not provide make-up work on the date he/she is absent for the following reasons: If a child is too sick to come to school, he/she should be resting and recuperating***. Reading is always a standing assignment and should be done every day when possible. Much of missed work is not replicable in the form of homework and must be adjusted by the teacher. Again, this is best done when the child returns. We will make sure that missed homework is given when the child returns. ***If a child is absent for an extended period (at least 2 days), homework can be sent to the office for the parent to pick up at the end of the school day (3:00 p.m.)***. We will no longer send homework to other classrooms for siblings to bring home, and homework cannot be picked up in the office during the school day. It is too disruptive to our instructional day.

**Homework Policy for Unexcused Absences**

No homework will be sent home in advance for unexcused absences.

Grades K-1: Extra credit which is given for completed homework assignments will not apply to homework assignments that are due during an unexcused absence.

Grade 2: All missed tests and quizzes will need to be made up within 2 days of the student’s return to class.

Grades 3-5: All missed tests should be made up the day the student returns to class. There will be 5 points taken off class work, book reports, and projects due during the unexcused absence.

Questions? Please do not hesitate to contact any of us in the office should a question arise. We are here to help and enjoy working with you every day.

**Policy on Late Work**

Work that is not turned in on time will not receive a full credit. For each day, an assignment is turned in late, 10 points will be deducted from the final grade. After 3 days, the assignment will no longer be accepted, and the student will receive a zero.

**Attendance: Absents and Tardiness**

Regular attendance at school is essential for all student’s Pre-K through 5th grade.

School is in session 990 hours per year. Every day holds multiple learning opportunities for students, and we prefer that students be present every day to maximize their learning potential. However, we understand that students may be absent due to illness, and/or family emergency.

**Attendance: Absents and Tardiness (cont.)**

A student’s absence will be coded excused when the parent/guardian provides the school with written communication to the teacher within three days of the child’s absence stating the reason for the absence. The school office may require a doctor’s note to excuse the absence if the student’s absences are deemed excessive.

Whenever a child is absent, it is important for the child to have access to the information presented in class. The teacher will collect the work during the day while the child is absent. It will be given to the child upon their return to school. They will have the same number of days they were gone to make up the work. It is the child’s responsibility to turn in the work to the teacher for grading.

**A Parent’s Guide to Absences**

Attending school is required by law whether the school is public, parochial, private/independent or in a home setting. There are only two types of absences – Excused and Unexcused

*Excused Absences*

Student’s illness or injury

A quarantine issued by the Health Department

Death in the immediate family

Child’s medical or dental appointment (please try to schedule outside of school hours)

Court or administrative proceedings if student is party to the action or under subpoena

Educational opportunity which is required by a student’s curriculum

\*Even if an absence is excused it will still be considered an absence and will be recorded as such.

*Unexcused Absences*

This covers every other absence from vacation to oversleeping to family celebrations or occasions to not wanting to get out of bed in the morning.

**The Importance of Attending School**

We only have 990 hours to cover an extremely comprehensive curriculum. As with any good school, our teachers do not teach straight out of a textbook. They prepare demonstrations, outside learning experiences, experiments, activities, and discussion groups as well as different exciting interactive strategies to help our students master their course work. Most of these experiences cannot be duplicated when a student is absent, so good attendance is a must if each child is to succeed at his or her highest level.

* For your child’s protection, we request that the parents notify the school office between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. of the student’s absence on any given day
* Excessive tardiness and/or absences will be addressed by the principal. The school reserves the right to withhold grades and credit from a student whose absences reach or exceed eight in a semester. Truancy reports will be made after 10 unexcused absences and may result in withdrawal from the school.
* Students who arrive after 9:00 a.m. or depart before 2:00 p.m. will be marked ½ a day absent

Students are not excused from tests or assignments. They must be completed.

* **Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. or 12:15 p.m. must be escorted by parent or guardian and check in at the** **office**. Three tardies will be counted as one absence and affect perfect attendance.
* Do not pick up your child up until time of dismissal unless you have a valid medical or dental appointment or an emergency.
* Absences whether excused or unexcused affect perfect attendance.

**Conduct**

Student behavior at school must be such as not to disturb the general order of the school or classroom. Thus, students are required to keep silence in the hall and restrooms during the school day so as not to disturb classes in session. When leaving the building for recess, students will be silent until outside the building.

St. Helena Catholic School has a zero-tolerance bullying policy that includes no acceptance of physical and verbal abuse. The intentional act of isolating a specific child is also considered bullying, as are threats. Fighting will be punishable by in-school suspension, which means no classes, recess, or lunch with the other students. The student must complete all assignments on time.

**Minor Offenses**

Minor offences are those actions which directly involve only an individual student i.e., profanity, failure to conform to the dress code. These violations will be handled by the teacher according to class procedure. If this behavior persists it will be brought to the attention of the principal. The consequences of these actions may be a parent conference, probation, or on-campus suspension, and if continued, suspension. If all attempts of parents and the school to change the behavior fail, the student will be asked to leave.

**Major Offenses**

Major offenses are those actions which affect the well-being of others and the school, such as truancy, threat of bodily injury, insubordination and disrespect towards adults, theft, substance abuse, sexual harassment, etc. These offenses will be turned over to the principal. The consequences of these actions can be probation, on-campus suspension, immediate school suspension and possible expulsion depending upon the seriousness of the offense or the endangerment. If all attempts of parents and the school to change the behavior fail, the student will be asked to leave.

**Parent Responsibility**

If something has happened in school and a problem seems to exist, it is your responsibility to contact the teacher. A teacher cannot possibly call you every time your child is disciplined. We strongly encourage you to find out the facts by hearing all sides of the situation. The teacher should be approached first. If you do not feel the problem has been resolved, then talk to the principal. If you still feel there is a problem, you can contact the priest or the school board.

**Disciplinary Action and Consequences**

Discipline is as fundamental in Catholic education as it is fundamental in Catholic life. Correct training in discipline for the young child means that the child must learn to act in conformity with controls imposed by those in authority with the aim of cultivation personal responsibility for one’s actions as well as self-control.

**Suspension**

Suspension is the barring of the student from school entirely for a specified period, but no longer than 10 days. Suspension is for a continued minor or major offense. This will take place after the principal contacts the parents giving the reasons and the effective dates for the suspension.

**Conduct (Cont.)**

Suspension is invoked to prevent disruptions of the school environment or to assist the affected pupil in overcoming a disciplinary problem. A written notice of the suspension will be given to the parents and the pastor; a copy is also kept in the student’s file. Parents/guardians must meet with the principal before the student can return to school. Teachers involved will participate in this conference and the student will be present. Repeated suspensions for whatever the cause will result in the student being asked to withdraw from St. Helena Catholic School.

**Probation**

Probation is of two kinds: Academic and Behavioral

Probation applies to:

* A student who is having difficulty following the school’s code of student behavior
* A student transferring to St. Helena Catholic School whose conduct/academic performance has been deficient at his or her previous school
* A student who has become academically deficient in most or all areas

At the end of the probationary period, all requirements that had been previously written down and agreed upon must be met. The decisions made at the end of the probation period determining whether a student will continue their education or terminate at St. Helena Catholic School will be based on the recommendations of teachers and the principal. Based on these recommendations the child may be removed from probation status, may continue for one more quarter (not more) on probation, or may be asked to withdraw from St. Helena Catholic School.

A decision of withdrawal can be reconsidered in the instance of a student who leaves St. Helena Catholic School due to academic failure. If the student wishes to reapply to St. Helena Catholic School later, he or she must have succeeded for at least two semesters elsewhere before his or her request will be reviewed.

**Dismissal and Expulsion**

Dismissal and expulsion are a final decision. It represents the end of a series of attempts to assist the child to alter his or her behavior, and a complete and continual disregard for St. Helena Catholic School’s philosophy, values, and rules. The decision for termination will take place after a conference like the one for suspension except the pastor is notified and given the opportunity to participate in the conference. If parents/guardians fail, without cause, to attend the conference, the pastor, principal (and teacher) will reach a final decision. This decision will be non-negotiable at any future time.

**Due Process**

Parents/guardians and students have recourse to due process which allows a hearing about decisions made. It gives those concerned the opportunity to defend themselves and a chance to appeal a decision against them. The procedure is as follows:

1. The request for a due process hearing must be made in writing and sent to the president of the St. Helena Catholic School Board.
2. A date will be set for a hearing by the School Board.
3. The parties concerned must appear in person at the hearing before the School Board and make their plea.

**Conduct (Cont.)**

1. The School Board will consult together privately and make their decision, which will be given in writing to those who made the appeal.
2. The decision of the School Board will be binding. It is the expectation of St. Helena Catholic School that parents and guardians will be supportive of actions taken, concerning their children. Such actions are not taken lightly.

**Moral Issues**

The St. Helena Catholic School Board adopted the following procedures in handling moral issues:

* When the pastor and principal believe there is a question of morality, suspension of five days from school will begin immediately.
* A meeting will be called with parents, teacher, and principal; thereafter, the pastor and principal will meet and make the final disciplinary decision.

**Harassment/Bullying**

Harassment of or by students, teachers, supervisors, parents, or guardians is prohibited by both Federal and New Mexico State Laws and shall not be tolerated in the Catholic Schools of the Diocese.

Retaliation in any form against a student who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited and shall itself be cause for a disciplinary action.

**Drug Abuse Procedures**

Although the school stands ready to work cooperatively with other agencies in the community in evolving programs for prevention and treatment of drug abusers, for the sake of the common good, the school will not provide a sanctuary to insulate its members from the consequences of illegal acts. Therefore, in case of someone found selling drugs, at school or at school functions he or she will automatically be expelled. The school will do all in its power to advise and warn students and other members of the school of the consequences of drug use. Having done this, the school expects that the individuals who choose to use, sell, or keep drugs in their possession must then be prepared to accept complete responsibility for their actions. These procedures apply to any student found possessing drugs or under the influence of alcohol.

* If the student is ill, parents/guardians and medical personnel will be contacted. The student will be separated from the student population and appropriate authorities will be notified.
* The student will be suspended by the principal for a period not to exceed five days. During this time, the student and parent may request a conference with the principal to discuss further outcome.

**Child Abuse**

State Law requires teachers and all school personnel to report all suspected child abuse and child neglect cases. In the case that a report of suspected child abuse has been filed with legal authorities, (either by the school or other outside person or group), the school must by law allow social services to speak with the child in question without parent consent. Afterwards, a representative from social services will contact the parents followed by a call from the principal of the school.

**Conduct (Cont.)**

**Custody Situations**

At the time of registration, the parent/guardian is to make known the custodial status of the child (ren). It is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to provide the principal with a copy of all legal documentation relative to custody of the child (ren). The Court Order declares who is the custodial parent and decision-maker for the child (ren). The custodial parent determines whether the other parent can pick the child (ren) up from school, sit in on the child’s classes, eat lunch with the child (ren), etc. Such information about the child (ren) must be shared with the appropriate persons: the child (ren)’s teachers, school secretary, and other supervisors. The Court Order must be followed by the school. A motion is only a request for the order and is not binding as is the Court Order.

Non-custodial parents may request reports from the school on their child (ren)’s progress but may not use the school for increased visitation. Paying the child (ren)’s tuition does not give the non-custodial parent any rights beyond the Court Order.

For each child in a legal custody situation, the documents of custody and clear procedures for the custody plan must be on file in the principal’s office. These documents are kept confidential.

**Pre-K Program**

St. Helena Catholic School provides an all-day Pre-K program. The program follows the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten, produced by a collaborative effort of the New Mexico State Children Youth and Families Department, Department of Health and Public Education Department. The children are actively engaged in learning, and provided with opportunities to make choices, to experiment and explore. Play is fundamental in learning as well as social and emotional development at these levels.

Children must turn three years of age and be completely toilet trained before being accepted into the program. The Pre-K staff will be allowed to change a child’s clothes three times if necessary, thus giving them time to acclimate to the program. If it appears that the child is not completely toilet trained, they may be asked to wait a couple of weeks to give parents an opportunity to work with them before returning to the program or parents may be given the opportunity to come to the school and according to their condition, either take them home and bathe them or change their clothing here at the school. St. Helena Catholic School’s Pre-K Program is licensed under CYFD.

**Federal Programs**

**Title I – ESEA Funds**

…provide local educational agencies (LEAs, or school districts) with extra resources to help improve instruction in high-poverty schools and ensure that poor and minority children have the same opportunity as other children to meet challenging State academic standards. The “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” (NCLB) reauthorizes the ESEA and incorporates nearly all the major reforms especially in the areas of assessment, accountability, and school improvement. The new law requires States to develop standards in reading and math, and assessments linked to those standards for all students in grades 3-8. Local schools’ districts can only use Title I funds for activities that scientifically based researched to be highly effective in helping all students meet these State standards

**Title II – Funds for Math and Science Title IV – Funds for Safe & Drug Free School**

**Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

For the safety of our children and the convenience of our working parents, it is critically important that the drop off and pick up procedures be followed strictly. Please read the procedures below. If you have any questions, please contact the school office for clarification.

**Morning Drop Off**

All children in grades Pre-K – 5th may be dropped off at school from **7:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.** through the *cafeteria doors*. If your child arrives after 8:00 a.m. the parent MUST escort the child inside and sign them in at the office.

**Pre-K – 5th (Cafeteria Doors)**

Enter through Bender Blvd. entrance only. Exit through Fowler St. See **DIAGRAM** below.

* Drop off: Form five (5) lanes in the cafeteria parking lot. Lanes are designated with orange cones.
* All grades will wait for an either a staff member or parent to walk them to the cafeteria doors.
* All cars exit at Fowler Road only.
* All children who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must use the St. Anne Street entrance and check their child in at the office. Going directly to the classroom with your child after the 8:00 a.m. bell is not allowed: office staff will take your child to his or her classroom.
* On Wednesday, 2nd – 5th Grade will be attending Mass at the church. Mass begins at 9:00 a.m. Students who are late for Mass must enter through the front door and sit with the principal for the remainder of the Mass.
* **DO NOT ENTER THROUGH THE SIDE DOORS ONCE MASS HAS BEGUN**.

**Important DO NOTS:**

* **Do not** drop children off and drive away.
* **Do not** enter at the west/Fowler Road exit.
* **Do not** make U-turns or back up in the parking lot.
* **Do not** leave vehicles unattended to speak with other parents or to do school business. Pull forward out of lanes to keep traffic flowing.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bob Moran Parish Center** | Bender Blvd.  **ENTRANCE** *only* | Youth House | Church |  | Rectory |
|  | | |  | **EXIT HERE** |
| **Line 5** | | |  | **Grass Area** |
| **Line 4** | | |  |
| **Line 3** | | |  |
| **Line 2** | | |  |
| **Line 1** | | |  |

**Arrival and Dismissal Procedures (cont.)**

**Afternoon Dismissal**

Afternoon dismissal will go just like morning drop off for Grades K-5. Please stay in your cars and a teacher will escort your child to you. If you want to pick up your child personally, please park in the church parking lot, and walk to the school to pick your child up.

Pre-K and Kindergarten dismissal is at 2:45 p.m. every day.

1st – 5th grade dismissal is at 3:00 p.m. every day.

**Pre-K Dismissal (St. Anne Street Entrance)**

Turn onto St. Anne Street from Fowler Road and form a lane close to the sidewalk. See DIAGRAM below.

* Form one lane, close to the sidewalk, starting at the red mailbox.
* Parents will need enter school building and sign out their child.
* All cars will exit by driving east towards Dal Paso Street. Absolutely no U-Turns at any time.

**Important DO NOTS:**

* Do not make U-turns or back up
* Do not leave vehicles unattended to speak with other parents or to do school business. Pull forward out of lane to keep traffic flowing.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **St. Helena Catholic School Building** | Office Entrance  🡪 |  | **Playground** |
|  | | | |
| **St. Anne Street Entrance 🡪** | | |  |

**Early Dismissal**

Students needing to leave school before the day is finished or who must leave for scheduled appointments must follow the steps below:

* The parent/guardian must physically present themselves at the office to request the student be dismissed.
* The parent/guardian will obtain from the school office a form indicating the time of departure, the person taking the child, and the office person who completed the form. Excused or unexcused will be determined and documented.
* Office personnel will present the written permission for early dismissal or release to the student’s teacher. If any other person besides the legal parent or legal guardian is picking up the child, the office must be notified by the legal parent/guardian by phone or in writing.

**Arrival and Dismissal Procedures (cont.)**

If legal authorities wish to pick up a student, the following procedures must be followed:

* The school administrator will be notified immediately.
* The legal authorities will identify themselves and provide the proper identification. This will be checked by a call to their supervisor.
* The parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to come to the school, if appropriate. The only exception allowed in New Mexico is in case of suspected child abuse by parent/guardian, in which case, authorities may remove a child from school premises without parent notification.

**Safety in the Parking Lot**

Safety for our children must be the primary concern of everyone in the parking lot. Please make sure that these instructions are given to all the adults who pick up your child from school. One car not following the directions can cause chaos in the parking lot. We appreciate your willingness to comply with our Security Policy and your patience as we continue to improve it.

**Bad Weather Days**

In case of bad weather, listen to the local radio stations: KZOR 94.1 or KLMA 96.5 for school reports. St. Helena Catholic School will follow the public-school decisions regarding cancellation or delay of the school day.

**School to Home Communication**

All communication from the school office will be done through notes from the school office. It is each family’s responsibility to remain informed.

Each child is required to have a school to home folder. These will be provided by the school and will be paid for by the parent if it is lost or damaged.

Please check this folder daily for notes from the school or teacher, homework assignments and graded work.

**Change of Address/Phone/Emergency Contacts**

The school office **MUST** be notified if there is a change of address or phone number during the year. If you have an unlisted number, it will be kept confidential. It is necessary that we have a number where we can contact you. In case of illness, or of an emergency, it is essential that the school have the telephone number of a relative or friend who could be called if the parents cannot be reached.

Emergency contacts given to the school must be people who are:

* 18 years or older
* Regularly available
* Can be reached by phone
* Have transportation to come and pick up the child, when necessary

These three possibilities must exist before the names of emergency contacts are acceptable. If you plan to be away from home or your workplace on a given day, please tell your child, the school, and the emergency contact where you will be.

**Lunch Policy**

We do not serve lunch. Children must bring their own lunch to school, every day.

1. **Lunch must be sent with the child each morning they attend school.**

Teachers will take a lunch tally each morning and report children who do not have lunch to the office. Parents, guardians, relative’s, or emergency contacts will be called to provide a healthy lunch.

1. **Fast food is discouraged**

Fast food is not healthy for a growing child. While it is harmless as an occasional treat, it is not ideal for daily consumption because it contains increased amounts of sugar, salt, and fat.

1. **Please make sure to pack spoons, forks, and napkins with your child’s lunch.**
2. **Parents or guardians are more than welcome to come and eat lunch with their child. Please keep in mind that you must have gone through the Safe Environment Training to do so.**
3. **Parent or guardians can pick up their child (ren) to take them to lunch any day.**

We ask that you only do so within the lunch period so that your child does not miss instructional time. Students may not leave the school grounds to eat lunch unless they are checked out by a parent or guardian. Students in Pre-K must return to school by 11:30 a.m. and K - 5th Grade must return by   
12:15 p.m. and be signed in, or they will be counted as tardy.

**Lunchroom Rules:**

* Children will use the restroom before lunch.
* Each classroom will say prayer before meals in their classroom.
* When in the lunchroom they will sit at the designated table assigned to their grade level.
* Children may talk and visit with their classmates after eating.
* Prayer after meals will follow lunch time.
* Children will go back to class.

**Penalties for breaking lunchroom rules are:**

1. Child goes to bench and sits for the remainder of the lunch period.
2. Teacher will follow up with consequences.
3. Parents may be called.

**Lunchroom Schedule:**

Pre-K students will eat lunch at 11:00 a.m., go out to recess at 11:25 a.m. and be back in class by 11:45 a.m.

Kindergarten through 5th grade, will eat lunch at 11:30 a.m., go to recess at 11:50 a.m. and be back in class by 12:15 p.m.

**Visitor Policy**

All visitors must check in at the office. It is important that we know who is always in our school, therefore it is mandatory that you sign in at the office and get a visitor tag before making your way through the building. Our front door is monitored by a surveillance system. We ask your patience as we become acquainted with our families.

Parents may not interrupt class time to speak to a student or teacher. Messages may be left in the office or you may make appointments for after school conferences. For safety reasons children should not be called to the office during recess. Teacher must always watch all children.

Parents or guardians of current students may visit the classroom. Classroom visits must not disturb the teacher or students and are to be no longer than one 30-minute class period, unless previously arranged with the teacher. Visitors are to sit in the back of the classroom.

**Emergency Procedures**

**Fire**

Fire drills are conducted for two purposes: (1) to train students to leave the building in an orderly manner and quickly in case of an emergency alarm; and (2) to teach self-control in times of emergency in later life. These aims can be accomplished with student cooperation. When an alarm is sounded, all students should immediately leave the room as directed by the teacher and proceed to the designated exit. They should walk in an orderly manner without talking or pushing. When the students reach the safety zone, they should turn and face the building while remaining in line. Each teacher will then take roll. Any child not accounted for is to be reported to the nearest fire officer or principal. Any child not with his or her class is to leave the building by the nearest door and report to his or her teacher promptly. The regular school bell will ring as a signal to re-enter the school.

**Tornado**

Most tornadoes in New Mexico occur in the months of April, May, and June. Most tornadoes occur from 12 noon through midnight, and 85% of them occur between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Approaching tornadoes sound like a continuous rumbling of thunder. Strict discipline will be enforced. During drills, students are to go to designated areas away from windows and doors. Students who are outside should go to designated areas. The proper position for students after reaching the designated areas is as follows: kneel on the floor, lean forward, and touch the forehead to the floor, then clasp the hands together behind the back of head. Teachers are to take roll and any child not accounted for is to be reported to the principal immediately. No child will be released from school for the duration of the warning of the tornado.

**Bomb Threat**

All bomb threats must and will be taken seriously. The same plan as that for a fire will be followed. This will become a matter for the police to handle.

**Missing Child**

The parents will be notified immediately as well as the police and a search of the grounds and neighborhood will begin at once.

**Emergency Procedures (cont.)**

**Code Red**

Lock-down drills may be conducted to prepare schools for emergency situations when students and staff may be in imminent danger of serious bodily injury. Classroom doors are closed and locked. Doors remain locked until the proper authorities and law enforcement deem it safe to open. If on the playground, children will be moved to the Bob Moran Parish Center. If the cafeteria, children will follow specific escape routes.

Certain situations may require releasing students from school or relocating them from the school site to another safer place (Bob Moran Parish Center) when parents expect their children to be in school. The principal, pastor, and/or superintendent of Catholic Schools will authorize such actions in times of extreme emergency. All attempts shall be made to notify parents about the situation.

In addition, after receiving authorization to relocate students or send them home early, the principal or authorized representative will notify the area radio and television stations to broadcast the prepared announcement which includes dismissal time, reasons for closure, traffic control, transportation plans, site of relocation, etc.

**Health Procedures**

No teacher may ever give any medication. If your child is directed by a doctor to take medication during the school day, a parent or legal guardian and student assume full responsibility. Medications must be kept in the office and labeled with the student’s name, dosage, time, and parent’s signature. Students may not keep any type of medication in their personal belongings. Only asthma inhalers and epi-pens may be kept in the school office for the student to use in the case of an emergency. These medications must be in the box and have the prescription label attached.

Parents/guardians must also have a current Medical Request Permission Form completed by the child’s doctor and signed by both the doctor and the parent/legal guardian on file in the school office. Medications that are expired will not be used in the case of an emergency.

If a student demonstrates inability to breath or shows symptoms of a severe allergic reaction, and no medication is available at the school, if the correct documentation is not at the school, or if the medication held at the school has expired, paramedics (911) will be called first and the parent or legal guardian on file in the school office, second. Children will not be allowed to take medication that they have in their personal possession.

In the case of severe cough, cough drops may be kept in the school office. The child must come to the school office to get them when needed. Throat lozenges or other types of drops containing medicine will not be allowed.

**Chronic Problems and Allergies**

If a child is unable to participate in recess or P.E., the child is to be kept home until fully recovered. St. Helena Catholic School has no supervised area for such students to stay apart from their class. A doctor’s request must be on file in the school office for any student to be excused from P.E. or recess, for longer than five days.

**Health Procedures (cont.)**

**Communicable Diseases**

Any student or staff member having a communicable disease will be dealt with on an individual basis in accordance with the guidelines for the disease issued by both the State and Local Health Departments and the Center for Disease Control. Written authorization from a physician presented to the principal is required for readmission.

**Illness Criteria**

For the protection of all students, the following rules have been established. Whenever a student exhibits one or more of these symptoms, the child should be kept at home. If the following symptoms are exhibited after the child arrives at school, parents will be contacted, and the student will be sent home.

* Fever 99.6% or higher
* Suspected contagious disease, including but not limited to the flu virus
* Vomiting
* Diarrhea
* Severe cold symptoms
* Discomfort lasting 30 minutes or longer

**Procedures for In-School Health Problems**

For cuts, scratches and minor playground accidents, emergency first aid in the form of cleansing and bandaging will be administered at the school. If a child becomes ill during the day, the teacher will send the child to the office with a note. The school secretary will call the parent, guardian, or emergency contact to come and pick up the child. This must be done immediately.

**Supervision and Liability**

Children will not be allowed to play outside of the school building during PSA meetings or any other school sponsored activities that take place inside of the school building, outside of school hours, since there will be no supervision of licensed personnel available.

**Circles of Grace**

Out of concern for all God’s people and in response to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, we have a program for the safe environment education of children and young people supported and mandated by Bishop Peter Baldacchino.

*Diocese/eparchies will establish ‘safe environment’ programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. Diocese/eparchies will make clear to clergy and members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust about sexual abuse.*

*Article 12 – Charter for the Protections of Children and Young People*

This program is called ***Circle of Grace***. It is meant to supplement and be integrated into the excellent programs and curricula for the formation of children and young people in our schools and religious education programs. ***Circle of Grace*** aims to equip or children and young people by arming them with essential knowledge and skills grounded in the richness of our faith. This program helps children and young people to understand their own (and other’s) dignity in mind, body, and spirit.

**Parent School Association (PSA)**

PSA officers are to coordinate the agenda with the administrator one week prior to each meeting and to coordinate with the office staff any communication needing to be sent to parents. All parents of students attending St. Helena Catholic School are members of the PSA which meets the second Tuesday of each month.

The basic goals for the PSA are:

1. To raise money through various fundraisers for the purchase of needed school equipment, renovation projects, library needs and school activities, and to offset the overall operational costs of the school.
2. To organize volunteer help for school parties, and various other events and fundraisers.
3. To provide a forum for communication for parents, students, and faculty.

**Parent Participation**

The minimum service hours required of ALL family’s Pre-K through 5th grade is 30 hours.

St. Helena Catholic School strongly believes in “parent power.” The greater the parent/guardian support the increased success we can achieve as a school. There is endless research that outlines the countless benefits of parent involvement in children’s education.

Each family is required to serve a minimum of thirty (30) service hours during the school year. Four (4) of these hours **MUST** be worked at our Mardi Gras Fundraiser and another four (4) at our annual Family Fair. All hours must be completed by May 5, 2023. A cash fee of $20 may be substituted for each service hour not served. Unmet obligations will be added to the family’s bill at the end of the year. Items may be donated such as water, Kleenex, wipes, etc. in lieu of service hours but a receipt must be turned into the office for the items donated. Items will be given credit towards service hours based on the receipt total.

Any scholarships granted to students will not cover service hour fees.

Although we would much rather have you volunteer your time, we realize many of you are extremely busy so there are many opportunities to meet the remaining balance.

**Activities**

Extra-curricular activities (dance, swimming, etc.) are not to be scheduled during the class hours for grades K-5. Such activities interfere with regularly scheduled classes which the student is required to attend; therefore, the children will not be excused.

**Assemblies**

Assemblies may be scheduled throughout the school year, with the primary aim to provide educational experiences that cannot normally be provided in a classroom. Since assemblies represent a part of the educational program, attendance is required of all students. Students will be supervised by teachers at assemblies. Students are expected to conduct themselves in keeping with school-wide expectations

**Contests**

Student participation in legitimate contest involving creative writing, speech, art, music, science, and the like are encouraged. Such contest gives individual students an opportunity to develop their skills and often reflect credit on the school. St. Helena Catholic School participates in essay contests, county and any other contest deemed to be beneficial for student achievement.

Any student wishing to participate in a contest which will require his or her absence from the school during school hours shall obtain the approval of the principal prior to entering the contest. The principal shall consider the academic status of the student and the contest before issuing such approval.

**Activities (cont.)**

**Field Trips**

Field trips are scheduled by the teachers or the administration with the permission of the administrator for the enrichment of the school program. Teachers must complete a Field Trip Request Form (see Staff Policy Handbook).

A release form is kept in the office. Notices of field trips will be sent home. Parental consent must be signed and returned. Any student failing to have consent will not participate.

Behavior during the trip must be such as to not cause disturbance or danger to self or others. Students who do not follow the rules will be returned to school and field trip privileges will be suspended.

At the end of the year, students in the Fifth Grade will take a special field trip. This is an annual event. If the graduating class is combined with another class, it will be at the principal’s discretion whether non-graduating students will be allowed to attend the field trip.

**School Parties**

Each month PSA will have a birthday celebration to commemorate all the birthdays of the month. Birthday children will gather the cafeteria after mass for their birthday celebration. **PSA will oversee scheduling or asking someone to bring a birthday cake and supervise the celebration which will be no longer than 30 minutes after Mass.**

**School Facilities**

Groups wishing to use the school for meetings must acquire permission from the school principal. The organizers will be responsible for the facilities and for acquiring the appropriate liability insurance coverage. The facility must be left clean and in good order. The behavior of the group, if school age, must be monitored consistently. Children under the age of 18 must be always supervised by an adult.

**Telephone Use and Messages**

Unless an emergency exists, neither a teacher nor a student may be called to the phone during school hours. Teachers will be notified of calls and will return them at their convenience. Parents who desire to talk to a teacher should call the office for an appointment or call and visit the teacher after school. Do not call teachers at their homes.

Student cell phones will not be allowed. Teachers are prohibited from using cell phones during school hours.

**Items from Home**

Students are not to bring toys, games, sports equipment, or electronic devices to school unless special permission has been granted. In case of special permission, only E-rated games will be allowed. Other electronic items, such as cell phones, should not be seen, heard, or used in the school building during school hours without permission. If a student violates this rule, the student is subject to disciplinary action, and the item will be held in the office until the parent/guardian can pick it up. St. Helena Catholic School is not responsible for valuables students bring to school.

**Uniforms**

The goal of having a dress code at St. Helena Catholic School is that students present themselves in a clean and neat manner as a representation of the school. While we recognize the uniqueness of each student and seek to develop individuality, it is also important for each student to understand the concept of appropriate dress for situations.

Uniforms must be kept clean and fit appropriately. Every effort should be made by the student to be presentable, and model good personal hygiene and be in a clean uniform.

Only school sweaters or a solid black jacket with the school logo may be worn while in the classroom or during Mass. Other jackets and coats may be worn outside during recess and to and from school.

All shirts must be worn tucked into pants.

Black dress shoes and black or white athletic shoes are required.

“No show” socks are not allowed.

**Uniform Holiday**

To reward those students who faithfully observe the uniform code, a Uniform Holiday will be given at the principal’s discretion throughout the year. Students may wear the school uniform that day if they wish. Students who have violated the uniform code prior to Uniform Holiday will not be allowed to enjoy a day without uniform and must appear in their uniform.

The following play clothes are not permitted: cotton shorts, sport shorts, leggings (as pants), spaghetti strap shirts, and tank tops, cut off shirts, halters, sweat and wind suits. Slogan shirts and camouflage clothing are not allowed. Jeans can be worn, but may not have holes, rips, or be too big (slouchy on the waist) or too tight. Students may wear different colored athletic shoes, but cannot wear slippers, flip-flops, crocs, or sandals.

**Field Trip Attire**

Approved attire for field trips will be announced before each field trip depending on where the students will be going into the community.

**Uniform Responsibility and Consequence**

Responsibility and adherence to the uniform policy begins first at home with the parent and child and then at the school with the principal and staff. To ensure the consistent dress of all students, the principal and/or teacher will have a daily spot check. New families have one week to supply child (ren) with proper uniforms.

If student is not in full compliance with the uniform policy, the following consequences will result:

1. A Uniform Infraction Slip indicating the specific uniform infraction will be given to the student to take home. It must be signed and returned the next school day.
2. If the indicated infraction has not been made by the next school day, parents will be called, and students will not be able to return to class until they are in the Approved Uniform and they will not be able to participate in the next uniform holiday.

Any negative attitudes and behavior regarding uniforms will result in a parent and/or principal meeting and will be addressed considering the policy handbook and the signed agreement of compliance.

Parent will be given prompt notification in the event of any revisions to the school-policy handbook. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to enforce the uniform policy. Any questions about uniform infractions will be decided by the principal.

**Dress Code for Girls**

**Formal Uniform Attire**

Any of the following outfits must be worn on School Mass days. Outfits may be put together only in combinations as outlined below.

* Jumper, skirt or skort
* Short or long sleeve white button-up shirt, only
* Polo shirts may not be worn with plaid items
* Plaid tie (**Not optional**)
* Only approved black or brown dress shoes can be worn with dress outfits
* White fold socks, white cable knit knee high socks, or solid white nylon tights
* Wine sweater vest or cardigan, optional

**Casual Uniform Attire**

Any of the following outfits may be worn during regular school days. Outfits may be put together only in combinations as outlined below.

* Khaki pants, capris, or shorts
* Short or long sleeve white, wine, or black polo shirts
* Black belt required
* Approved black or white athletic shoes
* White fold socks only
* School t-shirts may be worn only on Fridays.

**Hair Accessories**

Coordinating hair accessories in plaid, wine, black, white, or brown may be worn with any outfit.

Non-coordinating accessories are not allowed. Girls’ hair must be neat and out of the eyes. Color streaks are not allowed.

**Nail Polish**

Girls’ nails may only have a clear coat of polish over the nails. Any other color is not allowed, and if worn to school will result in a uniform infraction.

**Dress Code for Boys\_**

**Formal Uniform Attire**

Any of the following outfits must be worn on School Mass days. Outfits may be put together only in combinations as outlined below.

* Khaki pants (**CANNOT** be khaki joggers or have elastic at the waist band or ankles)
* Short or long sleeve white button-up shirt
* Plaid tie
* Approved black dress shoe
* Black dress socks
* Black belt, required
* Wine sweater vest or cardigan, optional

**Casual Uniform Attire**

Any of the following outfits may be worn during regular school days. Outfits may be put together only in combinations as outlined below.

* Khaki pants or shorts (**CANNOT** be khaki joggers or have elastic at the waist band or ankles)
* Short or long sleeve white, wine, or black polo shirt
* Approved belt, required
* Wine Cardigan, optional
* Approved white or black athletic shoes with white crew socks or 1” athletic sock

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Approved Dress Pant Outfit** | **Approved Casual Outfit** |
| front view of  V-Neck Pleated Plaid Jumper -  of  Girls Uniform Flower ShoesGirls Uniform Pique Polo Dress |  |

* School t-shirts may be worn on Friday with blue jeans or blue jean shorts



**Acknowledgement**

The Student Policy Handbook has been written to provide important information concerning specific rules, policies and procedures related to the safety and operation of our school. For the school to operate safely and efficiently, you and your student(s) must be familiar with and abide by the expectations, procedures and rules outlined in this handbook.

The student handbook summarizes policy and contains general guidelines and information. This handbook’s content may be changed from time to time throughout the 2022-2023 school year.

An up-to-date version will be maintained online at www.sthelenaschool.net. St. Helena Catholic School will provide notice of changes through email. It is the responsibility of students and parents to review such changes and to remain apprised of the current version of the handbook.

I/we have read St. Helena Catholic School Policy Handbook and agree to comply with the outlined policies.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I/we fully understand the Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

(Initials)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I/we fully understand the School Uniform Policy

(Initials)

Failure to sign or return this portion does not excuse the student, parent, or guardian from adherence to the policies and regulations as stated in the policy handbook.

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Parent/Guardian Name Parent/Guardian Signature Date

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Student Name Student Name

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Student Name Student Name