



St. Michael Catholic School

103 E. North Street
Weimar, Texas 78962

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www.stmichaelswords.org

Student-Parent Handbook

Rev.
8-4-2018

Saint Michael Catholic School Handbook for Students and Parents

Forward to Parents

Welcome to St. Michael Catholic School. Together we share the responsibility and the privilege of passing on the rich tradition of faith and providing the educational excellence each child deserves. By choosing to send your child/children to St. Michael Catholic School you have demonstrated your trust in us. For this, and the many ways you show your support and spirit of cooperation, we are grateful.

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with a copy of school rules and policies and other general information. A common understanding of rules and policies by all concerned – parents, school staff, and students – is essential.

We recommend that you study this handbook carefully, discuss it with your child, then sign and return the Acceptance of Terms page.

We realize that there is no way that we can foresee every event or circumstance that may occur, therefore the administration of St. Michael Catholic School reserves the right and obligation to make decisions in the best interest of all.

Accreditation:

Saint Michael Catholic School is fully accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED). The Texas Education Agency recognizes the authority of the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department to accredit Catholic schools in the state of Texas. Our accreditation manuals have a letter of understanding written by the Commissioner of Education verifying “the continuing recognition of the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) and its affiliates associations for the purpose of determining the accreditation of non-public schools (*Guide to Quality and Effectiveness: An Accreditation Manual for Catholic Schools of Texas*, III-6).”

Handbook reviewed and revised 6/2018

PREFACE

Herein is provided basic information about St. Michael Catholic School (hereinafter called St. Michael School or SMCS) that we believe will benefit all. We call on all parents and students to become familiar with the mission statement, philosophy, vision, goals, objectives, guidelines, and policies as they are outlined in the following pages.

History shows our school to be a most reliable and efficient educational institution. But St. Michael's special attraction lies in experiencing the school as a living and loving community, continuously striving for a greater appreciation of the intrinsic value of each student, and eliciting from that student continual growth toward the full measure to which he/she is called by God.

May these pages bring a deeper understanding of what we are about, and the spirit of good will and cooperation, that is part of St. Michael Catholic School, continue to bring God's blessing on all.

Each family (parents and students) must read this handbook and sign an acknowledgement stating that they will abide by the policies and rules laid out in this document. The acknowledgement must be dated, signed by parents and each child and returned to school where it will be kept on file. Any addendums to the current document will be provided in a timely manner to all families.

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Section I: SCHOOL AND ADMINISTRATION

Mission Statement: to be friendly, respectful, responsible, and Christ-like.

Tagline: Building Faith, Achieving Excellence

Philosophy of Education

St. Michael Catholic School was founded to assist parents in the education and spiritual formation of their children in a genuine spirit of Christian love and responsible freedom. The school's goal is to guide the child through spiritual, academic, intellectual, physical, and social growth so that each may share in the rights, privileges, obligations, and responsibilities of our democratic republic.

Each student is encouraged by all members of the school community to develop his/her talents by cultivating these characteristics: an inquiring mind; a love of truth and beauty; a friendly rapport with the elderly and people of other cultures; a profound respect for humanity; and above all, a desire to personal commitment to Christ which should manifest itself in service to his/her family, neighbor, community, country, and world.

St. Michael Catholic School, through daily religious instruction, the liturgy, and the sacraments, strives to provide opportunities and challenges for the development of well-integrated spiritual values by fostering growth in integrity, self-discipline, respect for others, and reverence for God.

Vision Statement

The vision of St. Michael Catholic School is to guide the mind, body, and spirit of the next generation of Catholic leaders to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet their full potential as people created in the image of God.

School Colors: Kelly Green and White

School Song

For we are the mighty swords of St. Michael School. We live and work and play together as long as we are true. Do not think we ever falter to give our school a boost. For we love you with our whole heart, our own green and white. Fight!

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

To implement the philosophy of education at St. Michael Catholic School, we as faculty and staff, in collaboration with the parents and the community, strive to meet the needs of each student by developing and nurturing:

the incorporation of the beliefs, values, and traditions of the Catholic Church in such a way that these become an integral part of our students' lives and that they will consequently spread the Gospel message to others.

the importance of the Christian family as the foundation upon which to build Christian values.

a profound reverence for the Eucharist and the other sacraments in their lives.

a profound respect for the dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God and respect for the human body, from conception to natural death.

an understanding of the responsibilities of Christian citizenship in a democratic society and throughout the world.

an attitude and atmosphere of respect for diverse religious and cultural practices that will enable the student to strive for peace and justice for all.

a spirit of cooperation with respect for designated authority.

a spirit of collaboration with peers through group work and extracurricular activities.

a desire for learning and an appreciation for culture through exposure to the liberal arts, classical literature, fine arts, and sciences and achieving the highest development possible through the formation of a positive work ethic and good study habits.

an atmosphere where critical thinking and problem solving are cultivated, appreciated, and respected.

HISTORY OF ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Founded in the summer of 1889 and served by two Sisters of Divine Providence, St. Michael Catholic School began as a public school with an enrollment of sixty students. In 1914, problems arose with nuns teaching in the public school, and the Sisters withdrew after the 1915 scholastic term. The Right Reverend Bishop Shaw of San Antonio saw the need of a Catholic School, and Father Joseph Szymanski proposed it to the congregation. The parishioners gave their loyal support making it possible for him to open St. Michael Parochial School.

The new parish school reopened under the direction of three sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament whose Motherhouse was then located in Hallettsville. A frame building which served as the Sisters' residence afforded two classrooms, and the old St. Michael Church served as an additional classroom. In 1919, because of a steady enrollment increase resulting in up to 200 students, a two-story building with four classrooms downstairs and an auditorium/gym upstairs was erected. Today, this 94-year-old landmark proudly sits next to a modern brick building added in 1965 and is across the football field from the Parish Center, gym, and cafeteria added in 1984. An addition to the brick building was completed in 1993 and included a chapel, storage room, and an additional classroom. It was at this time that inspectors realized that a portion of the brick building needed to be demolished because of a faulty foundation. The completion of that project occurred in 1994 and was made possible through the generosity of St. Michael parishioners. Included in that replacement were the current Principal's and Secretary's offices, a computer lab, faculty lounge, janitor's room, mechanical room, and restrooms. In 2002, through a grant from the Kenedy Foundation, St. Michael School purchased a mobile building which houses two classrooms. These provided space to open a Pre-K 4 program and a Kindergarten class for the first time in its history. With a generous grant from the Stanzel Foundation, the two new classrooms were completely furnished with furniture and curriculum materials. Then in 2013, another Kenedy Foundation grant allowed the school to upgrade its entire wireless network, buy all new computers and printers for the computer lab, and add new laptops to its mobile laptop cart.

While St. Michael's buildings represent the old and the new, the philosophy and curriculum of the school are different from most schools in the area because of the school's goal to return to the basic values that, in the past, have made students great leaders in the Church and in the local and world communities. The school continues to promote the tried and true fundamental elements of manners, respect, responsibility, friendliness, and Christ-like behavior. Solid basic skills are taught while computers are available in every classroom making the latest technology accessible to every student.

The success of this philosophy is evident as graduates, who make up only about one-fifth of the local public high school enrollment, consistently comprise a high percentage of the top ten honor students of their senior class. In addition to scholastic accomplishments, every junior high student anticipates a trip to our nation's capital. Hundreds of St. Michael students and their parents have visited Washington, D.C. through the school program over the years.

The last of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word retired in 2010; the school remains open under the direction of the parish priest and a lay principal. St. Michael Catholic School remains an important part of the parish and community of Weimar. St. Michael Catholic School is blessed to have the generous backing of not only the students, parents, teachers, and pastor, but also of the local parishioners, banks, businesses, foundations, volunteers, alumni, and the community at large, who generously support the school and its programs. Spiritually and academically challenging, grounded in truth and basic values, and technologically advanced, St. Michael's students can and will continue to serve the Church and the world.

Governance

Bishop

Through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to them, bishops are the successors of the apostles by divine institution; they are constituted pastors within the Church so that they are teachers of doctrine, priests of sacred worship and ministers of governance (The Code of Canon Law, c. 375). As chief representative of the Church's teaching authority, the Diocesan Bishop is juridical head of the school system. His is the ultimate responsibility for articulating the faith and educational policies. He delegates ordinary oversight of the Catholic School System to the Superintendent of Schools (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 2100*).

The Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent of Schools is the chief administrative officer of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible to the Diocesan Bishop. It is the duty of the Superintendent of Schools to coordinate all school programs and to represent the diocesan school system in dealing with state and regional educational offices. The Superintendent of Schools acts as the executive officer of the diocesan School Advisory Council (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 2100*).

The Pastor

The Pastor of Saint Michael Church is the proper shepherd of the parish entrusted to him, exercising pastoral care in the community entrusted him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share; in accord with the norm of the law he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and assistance of the lay members of the Christian faithful (*The code of Canon Law, c. 519*). The Pastor is ex-officio the chief administrative officer of the parish school. The Pastor serves as spiritual leader of the school community. The Pastor, in consultation with the Local School Advisory Council, has final approval over actions taken by the Local School Advisory Council (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 2100*).

School Advisory Council

The Saint Michael School Advisory Council provides advice and direction to the pastor and principal in aspects of the local school including planning, policy formation, finances, and public relations. All policies and significant actions of the local school council shall need approval of the pastor, and must be in accord with diocesan policy. (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 1120*).

Principal

The principal, as administrator of the school, is responsible for the implementation of council policy, diocesan policy and governmental requirements. As the educational leader of the school community, the principal has full administrative responsibility for carrying out the instructional program. The Principal also acts as the executive officer of the Local School Advisory Council (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 2100*).

The Principal is the educational, spiritual, and managerial leader in accordance with the policies of the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department and the Superintendent of Schools. The Principal is directly responsible to the Pastor and will work collaboratively with the Pastor and the Local School Advisory Council for the fulfillment of the mission of the school (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 2120*).

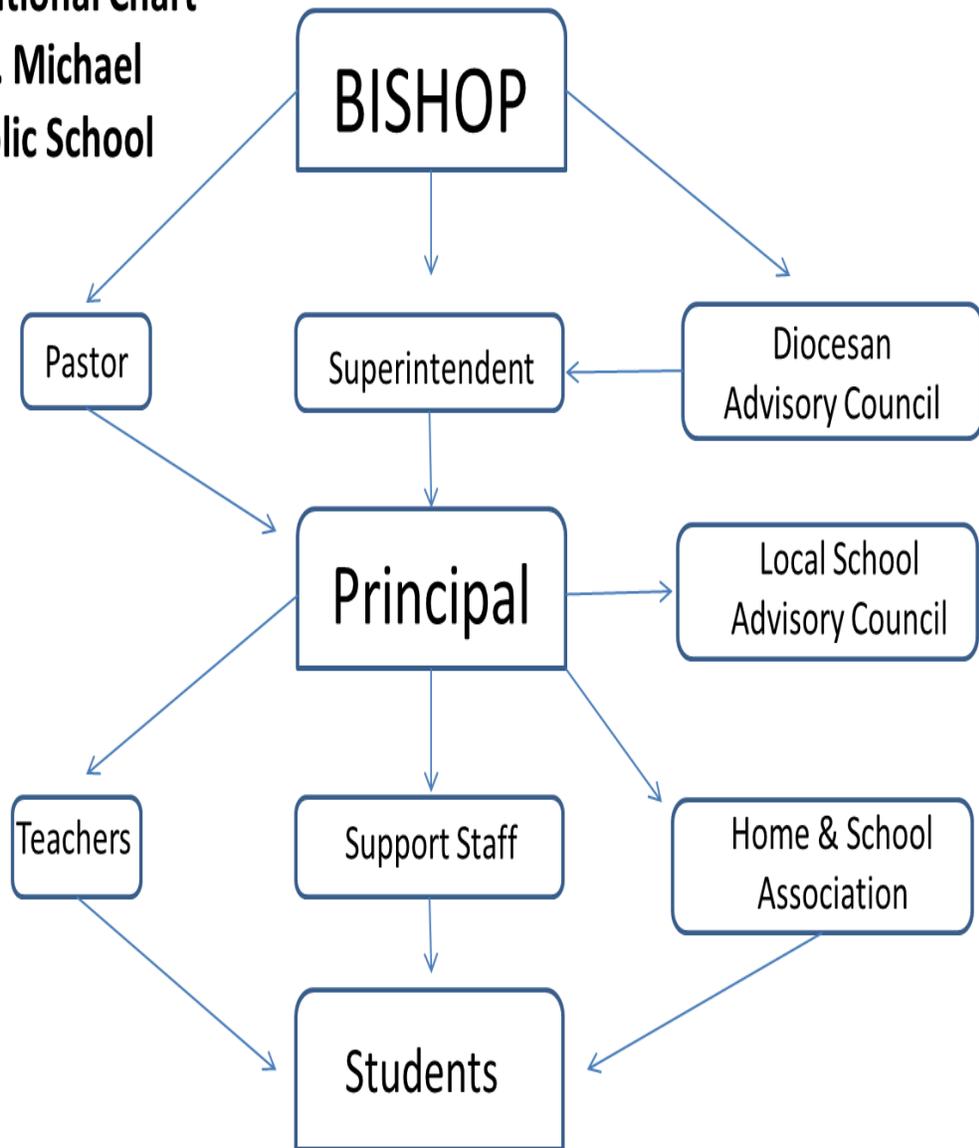
Teacher

The teacher is accountable to the principal and the parents for providing suitable learning experiences that are in accord with the philosophy of Saint Michael School. The main responsibilities of the teacher include the religious and academic instruction of the student, the evaluation and grading of scholastic achievement, the maintenance and promotion of discipline, and the implementation of the requirements of the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED), the Diocesan School Office, and the Saint Michael School.

Home & School Association (HSA)

The main purpose of the Saint Michael Catholic School Home and School Association (HSA) is to foster unity and understanding between the home and the school. Dates of meetings are listed in the school calendar. Special meetings are publicized in the school newsletter.

**Organizational Chart
of St. Michael
Catholic School**



Section II: PARENT'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

PARENT SUPPORT OF ADMINISTRATION, POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

The parents or guardians of students enrolled at St. Michael School must demonstrate a willingness to comply with school policy, particularly as it is described in this handbook and implemented by the school's administration. A deliberate or persistent disregard, whether stated or demonstrated, for school policy could be grounds for a family being required to withdraw their child from St. Michael School.

St. Michael Catholic School considers it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children as "parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children (No. 2223 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.) As partners in the educational process at St. Michael Catholic School, it is the parent's role to do the following:

- Set rules, times, and limits so that your child: gets to bed early on school nights; arrives at school on time (7:45 a.m.) and is picked up on time (3:30 p.m.); is dressed according to the school dress code; completes and returns assignments on time; has purchased cafeteria lunches or brings a sack lunch every day.
- Call the school by 9:00 a.m. if your child will be late to school or absent for the day. Provide a written/emailed note upon your child's return to school. If your child was under the care of a physician, a note signed by the doctor stating the dates of care and release to school will suffice. If you plan to pick up classwork/homework, please let the front office know. Work may be picked up from the front office from 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- Notify the school in advance if your child will be picked up early, i.e. doctor's appointment.
- Notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers.
- Actively participate in the Home & School Association (HSA) by attending parent meetings, contributing to the "point system" by volunteering your time and talent to our fundraising events and volunteer at the church picnics. Be on time to work your event, sign-in and out, and find someone to take your place if you will be unable to fulfill your obligation. Tuition rates are lower because our Parish and HSA make financial contributions to the school's budget.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- If you have an issue with a teacher, policy or procedure, you must speak with the teacher before speaking to the principal. Treat teachers, school staff, and administration with respect and courtesy in the discussion of school business regarding a student problem or voicing a complaint or concern.
- Meet all financial obligations to the school (tuition, fees, cafeteria, point system, etc.)
- Inform the school of any special situation regarding your child's well-being, safety, and health.
- Complete and return to the school any requested information promptly. Take the time to review the student's planner, the weekly newsletter and the school's

website (www.stmichaelswords.org), and show interest in the student's total education.

- Check in the front office, sign in, and get a visitor's badge before going to any location on campus.
- Support the religious and educational goals of the school.
- Support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.

Sacramental Programs

The sacramental life for second grade students at St. Michael Catholic School is central to our religious instructions. Preparations for two sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist, form the core of our efforts. In accordance with the Diocesan guidelines, candidates for First Eucharist will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist.

Parents are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are only conferred to students baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Section III: ADMISSIONS/TRANSFER/WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION

Nondiscriminatory Policy

Saint Michael School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

Admission

All new students are provisionally admitted until all admission and registration requirements have been met. Failure to complete the registration process could result in a student not being admitted. Admission and registration documents may be found on-line at www.stmichaelswords.org or in the school's office.

A child must be:

- Three (3) years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted into the Pre-K 3 program;
- four (4) years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted into the Pre-K 4 program;
- five (5) years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted into the Kindergarten program; or
- six (6) years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted into First Grade.

(Any exceptions to the foregoing will be made at the principal's discretion and any expenses for evaluation and/or standardized testing to determine readiness for admission at a particular grade level will be at the parent's expense.)

The admission of a student who wishes to transfer from another school is determined after the needs of the student are discussed and the reasons are verified by the school from which the student wishes to transfer. Students who wish to transfer to St. Michael School may be admitted on a probationary basis for six (6) weeks. If the student does not show a willingness to accept the conduct and academic requirements of the school, he/she will be asked to leave.

Provisional Enrollment

All immunizations should be completed by the first date of attendance. A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by this rule. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school.

A school nurse or school administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and the school shall exclude the student from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

Students Transferring from another Catholic School

St. Michael School enrolls students who live within the parish boundaries, both parishioners and non-parishioners, unless the parents/guardians work or have a business within parish boundaries.

Registration

Registration of current students and admission for new students takes place in the spring. New students applying for admission to St. Michael are required to bring the following:

- Birth certificate
- Baptismal Certificate (if Catholic)
- Immunization record
- In the case of students whose parents are separated or divorced, a copy of the official custody agreement must be furnished to the school Principal. (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 5110*)
- Completed application and registration packet with fees

The following documentation is required and must be provided for older students who were previously enrolled in a school:

- Official transcript from the previous school
- Standardized test scores
- Special Education/504 documentation including any IEP or Behavior Plan

A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of registration.

Withdrawing a Student

When a student withdraws, the school “Notice of Withdrawal/Exit Interview Form” is completed, and a notation of the fact is made, as required, on the Attendance Record and the student’s Cumulative Record.

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) will complete the “Notice of Withdrawal/Exit Interview Form” at least two school days prior to withdrawal of the student.
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) will satisfy all financial responsibilities to the school.
- On the day of withdrawal, the principal will give the student’s report card and a copy of the health record to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- A copy of the permanent record and any pertinent additional information will be sent directly to the school at the written request of the receiving school.

Tuition and Fees

The School Advisory Council sets tuition, registration, and additional fees. This information is posted on-line at the school’s website and made available to current families and those wishing to apply for admission to St. Michael School during the spring registration and admission period. St. Michael Catholic School’s tuition is paid either annually or monthly. If the tuition is paid monthly, it is due on or before the 18th of each month. A late fee is assessed for payment received after the 18th of the month. The school recognizes that there are rare but extenuating circumstances which may occur that might cause one to fall behind in payments. If this should occur, please call the rectory business office (979-725-6714) or the school office (979-725-8461) so that we can work with you.

Failure to do so, and allowing three months tuition to go unpaid, may result in the removal of your child/children from St. Michael School.

Arrangements are to be made with the pastor if tuition and fees are not paid before the end of the school year. In addition, **in order to compete or participate in any extra-curricular activities (including, but not limited to sports, cheerleading, PSIA, Washington D.C. trip, Splashway trip) throughout the school year, tuition and other fees must be kept up to date, month to month.**

Additional Fees

Sports: Students are assessed an additional fee for participation in each sporting activity for the purposes of uniforms, referees, and equipment expenses.

Band: A band fee is also assessed for the purpose of instrument repairs, maintenance, and supplies.

Section IV: ACADEMIC INFORMATION

St. Michael Catholic School is the parish school of Saint Michael Catholic Church and such is a Catholic institution of the Diocese of Victoria. Thus, the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, and physical elements of the education that it offers are taught within the context of the Catholic Faith. SMCS maintains a balanced curriculum which meets or exceeds the accreditation standards of the Texas Catholic Conference Educational Department. Curriculum guides are written, reviewed and approved by the Diocese of Victoria Curriculum Committee. SMCS offers its students opportunities in the following core subjects: religion, English-language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and

social studies. The following subjects are also offered in the early childhood, elementary and/or junior high: speech, fine arts, Spanish, health, physical education and computer technology. The school year is divided into two semesters with each semester divided into two nine-week grading periods (quarters). **For grades 2-8, major core subjects have a minimum of nine grades per quarter.**

Grades/Report Cards

Report cards are distributed quarterly (every nine weeks) using the format specified by the Office of Catholic Schools. The school uses the RenWeb on-line system for maintaining grade reports and transcripts. A duplicate report card and transcript is kept in the principal's office at the end of each school year. Grades in the subject areas will be based on academic achievement and not on the student's behavior or other factors. The grading scales are as follows:

Grade PK

- S – Satisfactory Progress
- N- Needs more time to develop skill
- Indicates weakness
- + Indicates strength

Grades Kindergarten and Grade 1

- E – Excellent Progress
- G – Good Progress
- S – Satisfactory Progress
- N – Needs Improvement
- U – Unsatisfactory

The first grade teacher may also use the grading scale from grades 2-8 in conjunction with the first grade scale.

Grades 2 – 8

Core Subjects

- 94-100: Excellent Achievement
- 85-93: High Achievement
- 75-84: Average Achievement
- 70-74: Low Achievement
- 69/Below: Unsatisfactory/Failure to Master Material
- SR – Summer School Required
- SE – Summer School Enrichment Recommended

Other Subjects

- G: Good Progress
- S: Satisfactory Progress
- N: Needs Improvement

Conduct Codes

- S: Satisfactory
- N: Needs Improvement
- U: Unsatisfactory

Grades 2-8: Nine week grades are determined by the following percentage:

- Daily work, homework, quizzes, etc. 40%
- Tests and major assignments/projects 60% (*a minimum of two per quarter*)

Grades/Progress Reports

The RenWeb Parent Portal provides up-to-date information including homework assignments and grades entered by the teacher. Teachers will enter all grades for a 9-week reporting period by the progress report deadline as to provide a mid-point progress report for parents on-line. No paper progress report will be sent home.

Academic Honesty

Students at St. Michael Catholic School need to understand the importance of the virtue of integrity. They should strive to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and be willing to provide appropriate help to their peers. It is the student's duty to abide by the teacher's instructions both inside and outside the classroom, and to avoid any unauthorized use of sources that could constitute cheating or plagiarism. Cheating on tests, copying homework, and all forms of plagiarism constitute serious offenses. A student who is caught cheating will be assigned an academic penalty by the teacher and will be referred to the principal.

Academic Honor Roll

High Honors is awarded to students in grades 2-8 who have all grades on their report cards within the range of 94-100 and have no "U's" in conduct.

Honors is awarded to students in grades 2-8 who have all grades on their report cards within the range of 85-100 and have no "U's" in conduct.

A student with three or more "N's" (Needs Improvement) in conduct will not be allowed on the Honor Roll.

Academic, Sports, Religion and Service Awards

During the course of the school year and at the end of the year, students will be recognized for various accomplishments including but not limited to the following: Academic Excellence, Accelerated Reader, Attendance, Honors, High Honors, PSIA, Religion, Service, Sports and Physical Fitness, and Graduation or Promotion Exercises for grades PK4, Kindergarten, and grade 8.

Accelerated Reader (AR)

This program is used at SMCS to increase students' interest to read more, to expose students to a variety of genres and to help students grow in reading comprehension. Each student is provided a 9-week goal. As students read and complete comprehensive computer-based tests on the books read (AR tests), they will earn points toward their goal. Students in grades 2-8 receive a test grade for each 9-week grading period.

Homework

Homework assignments should be definite and meaningful and fit the intellectual needs of the students. The amount assigned should be reasonable and based on material that has been taught. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences. Academic achievement is dependent upon development of skills and content mastery. Homework is part of the mastery process and is expected by the date set by the teacher. Whether students are present or absent they are responsible for daily homework assignments and for handing them in on time. Academic penalties may be implemented by the teacher to encourage students to turn in homework or projects on time. Teachers will provide students and parents with a printed homework policy statement. **Reading, which is essential for all subjects, is to be done daily at home.** Parents are to help provide a good study atmosphere for their child.

In grades 2-8, if homework is missing without good reason, the student may receive a zero “0” until the missing work is completed and turned in to the teacher (penalties will apply to the final grade). Three zero’s in any class results in student detention.

Promotion and Retention

The promotion or retention of a learner should be based primarily on the degree of achievement of the specific objectives of the grade or course. A learner who has not achieved satisfactorily in a grade or subject should repeat the subject or grade. To permit a learner to take a course for which he or she does not have the proper preparation is an injustice to him or her, to the other learners, and to the teacher. There may be cases in which ability, effort, interest, and other factors must be weighed. In such cases, the Principal’s decision shall be final.

Parents shall be informed of possible non-promotion at the beginning of the second semester or as soon as this becomes evident. If the learner is promoted conditionally, the parents shall make provisions for the learner to remove the condition through summer work. The Principal shall approve these provisions.

Regulations for Promotion

1. A student who has made satisfactory progress at one grade level will be promoted to the next higher grade.
 - Students in first grade must have completed the primer level in reading and have at least a final average of “N” in religion, mathematics, and reading in order to be promoted to second grade.
 - Students in grades 2-3 shall earn a final average of “70” in each major subject in order to be promoted to the next grade. The major subjects for these grades are religion, reading, English and mathematics.
 - Students in grades 4-8 shall earn a final average of “70” in each major subject in order to be promoted to the next grade. The major subjects in grades 4-8 are religion, reading, English, mathematics, social studies, and science.

- Because language skills (English and reading in grades 2-8, reading in first grade) and number skills (mathematics in grades 1-8) are the basis for all other learning, a student who fails two of these subjects shall not be promoted to the next grade.
- 2. Students who fail two major subjects, provided that both subjects are not in the area of language skills or number skills as indicated above, shall be promoted on the condition that they receive remedial instruction, during the summer and receive a passing grade.
- 3. The principal must approve all remedial instruction and/or attendance at summer school programs.

Field Trips

Field Trips are to be related to the curriculum, have an educational purpose, and serve to enhance learning. Classroom teachers with the approval of the principal plan these trips. A field trip is a privilege. The school reserves the right to permit or deny a student the privilege of participation in a field trip. Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of such outings. Only students having signed permission forms will be allowed to participate. The school may accept a signed permission slip that has been FAXED from the parent/guardian, but may not accept a permission slip that has been transmitted via electronic mail. Signed permission slips must accompany supervising personnel on field trips to provide information in case of an emergency. When possible, school buses are used on field trips; otherwise, volunteer drivers arranged by the teacher and room parents must provide adequate transportation. Generally, educational trips taken by students in the primary grades should be within a close distance.

Since the school is responsible for the students while on a school-sponsored trip the following is required.

- Orderly behavior is expected at all times.
- Proper attire – *green polo shirts* will be worn unless principal permission is granted for other attire.
- Proper respect and cooperation with the driver, teacher, guide or other adult in charge is expected.
- All misconduct on the trip is to be reported to the teacher and principal by the chaperone so proper action may be taken.
- Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on any school related trip.
- Drivers are to have completed the Safe Environment training required by the Diocese of Victoria and follow guidelines of the Diocese of Victoria Transportation Policy which include completing the Volunteer/Driver Information Checklist and Volunteer Driver Information forms.
- Every private vehicle used must have a minimum insurance coverage of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000/\$50,000 property per occurrence.
- When private vehicles are used, parents will be given a list of drivers for the event and be asked to choose the individual with whom they wish their child to ride. In the event there are no vehicle spaces available, the parent must provide the transportation or the student will not be able to attend. *All parents should seek to

attend the Safe Environment training and assist with transportation and volunteer duties for their children while at St. Michael Catholic School.

- ❑ For all trips other than interscholastic athletics, supervision of one adult per ten students is required. For trips with students in the early childhood program (3K, 4K, 5K) supervision of one adult per five students is required (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 5214*).

Physical Education

Participation in P.E. is mandatory for all students in accordance with the Texas Educational Agency (TEA) and Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (T.C.C.E.D) requirements. A signed note is needed for a student to be exempt. If requests from parents for exemptions are too frequent, a doctor's request will be mandatory. Students in Grades 5-8 are to wear the designated PE uniform.

Standardized Testing

The Iowa Assessment is given in the fall to grades 1-8. The Cognitive Abilities Test (Cog AT) is given in the fall to grades 2 and 6. The NCEA IFG: Assessment of Catholic Religious Education is given to students in grades 5 and 8 during the second semester. The STAR Early Literacy may be administered to grades PreK-2, the STAR Reading and STAR Math to grades K-8, to assess growth and progress. These are administered in the fall, mid-year, and end-of-year. School Readiness and Kindergarten Readiness are administered at the end of the year to Kindergarten and Pre-K4 respectively.

Student Records

Cumulative records are permanently retained by the school when a student transfers, withdraws or is promoted.

When a student transfers or is promoted, a copy of the cumulative record is sent directly to the receiving school upon written request. Copies of cumulative records are hand-carried in a secured envelope only when leaving the country.

Anecdotal information is not placed on permanent records.

Only the principal may grant access to student records. Test data will be made available to parents in terms that are readily understandable.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should follow the procedure addressed in the *Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools 5118* when the parent/guardian or student challenges information contained in school records. In addition, please refer to said policy with regard to the recordkeeping for assisting in the location of missing children less than 11 years of age.

Section V: ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be present and punctual for all classes. A student who has been absent is always at a disadvantage because it is impossible for the teacher to repeat the

lectures or to provide the learning experiences missed. When requesting that a student be dismissed from school for any planned reason, parents are to submit an email request to the registrar, homeroom teacher, and principal well in advance of the planned absence. Students are responsible for all assignments missed during their absence.

Once on the school grounds, no child may leave the grounds **during school hours**. Exceptions are:

1. Parent, guardian, or person designated by parent takes child out of school for legitimate reason.
2. Express permission of principal

All children must be dismissed and re-admitted through the school office for any absence during the school day, and only authorized personnel will be allowed to release a child through the school office.

Students are considered absent for the morning if they leave **before or arrive after 10:00 a.m.** Students who leave before or **arrive after 1:30 p.m.** are considered absent for the afternoon. **Students leaving after 1:30 p.m. (before regular dismissal) will be issued a “tardy.”** On early dismissal days, the student must be present for the entire session to be counted present. **Students need to be present in school 90% (162) of the 180 days. Students who exceed 18 absences are in danger of repeating their academic year and may be brought before an attendance committee made up of faculty and administration; this is left to the discretion of the principal.**

When a child is absent, the parent/guardian is to notify the school office by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If you would like to pick up your child’s classwork/homework, notify the office when you call in the absence. Books and assignments may be picked up between 3:30 and 4:00 p.m. Do not interrupt the teacher to get make-up work. It is unreasonable to ask a teacher to prepare assignments and gather books on short notice.

Students who have been absent from school **must, on their return to school, bring a written note or excuse.** The note should contain the date of absence and reason for the absence. If the school is notified by email, a written excuse is not required unless the absence requires a doctor’s note to return to class. Failure to notify the school for reason of absence within three days from the date of absence will result in an unexcused absence.

Excused Absences

- Family Emergency – A death in the immediate family and/or a serious, prolonged illness of a family member. Special arrangements can be made for make-up work.
- Illness/Doctor’s Appointment – If a student is unable to come to school due to illness or for medical visits.
- Livestock Show – Student participation in the local livestock show will be recorded as school activity. Participation in any stock show other than the local show will be considered an excused absence with prior principal approval. Verification by the event sponsor is required.

- Other Reasons – Participation in events that are not sponsored by the school and other circumstances such as a family vacation must have prior principal approval in order to determine the absence as excused or unexcused.

Prior Principal Approval Procedure

- Notify the principal prior to the absence in writing or via email reporting the dates the student will be absent and the reason for the absence.
- Contact the classroom teacher(s) to discuss work that will be missed and pick up the materials necessary for the successful completion of the missed assignments before the absence.
- Make sure the work is complete upon the student's return to class. Extensions will be determined by the teacher. The highest grade allowed for incomplete work and work turned in after the due date will be a 70.
- If this procedure is not followed, the absence will be considered unexcused.
- The principal has the right to determine if the absence will be considered excused or unexcused based on student academic performance, excessive absences, or tardiness.

Excused Absence Make-up Work Procedure

When a student has an excused absence that did not require prior principal approval, h/she may make up the work without penalty as long as the assignments are completed in a timely manner as determined by the teacher; generally work is due within two days from the date of absence for one day's absence, three days for two day's absence, etc. Failure to comply with the teacher assigned due date may result in the grade of a "0" until the assignment is completed. Late assignments are subject to penalty as determined by the teacher.

Unexcused Absences

- Any absence from school that does not meet the guidelines stated for excused absences.
- Any absence from school in which the student does not bring an excuse signed by the parent, or the parent has not called or emailed the school registrar within three days of returning to school after being absent.

Unexcused Absence Make-up Work Procedure

In the event of an unexcused absence, work will be made up, but the highest possible grade that can be achieved will be a 70 on a 100 point grading scale. The work is required to be completed and turned in the next day following the absence.

Prior Assignment Due Dates

Students who have been given a major assignment, project, or major test date prior to the absence will be expected to turn in the assignment/project or take the test upon return to school. The teacher may make an exception to this rule for extenuating circumstances.

Release of Students

Students will be released only to parents, guardian(s), or someone explicitly authorized by them. School personnel will take care to comply with court orders regarding child

custody and parent access. A third party who is authorized by parents must be personally identified by them or be known to the principal or staff member. Students will be released from school during the day only with written notice by a parent or guardian. Release notes must be verified as authentic. All parents, guardians or authorized third party must present themselves to the office for the student to be released. Parents are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments after school hours, if possible (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 5112*).

Tardiness

Tardiness creates a disruption of a class in progress. Students must arrive on time and remain in class for the full time period. Homeroom begins at 7:45 a.m. A student who arrives after 7:45 a.m. is at a disadvantage and has less time to get organized and prepared for the school day. **A student who arrives after 7:45 a.m. is tardy. A student who arrives after the 7:50 a.m. bell must report to the office for a tardy slip.** Any student who is tardy will not be eligible for Perfect Attendance.

- An unexcused tardy is to be avoided. Any student who receives an unexcused tardy is not eligible for Commendable Attendance.
- Excused tardiness includes, but is not limited to, medical and dental appointments. Excused tardiness does not result in detention or a fine.
- **Any student**, in grades 2 – 8, who accumulates more than 3 tardy slips for unexcused tardiness will receive a lunch detention. Students' parents in grades Pre-K thru 1 will be contacted by the teacher regarding attendance and tardy policy.
- **Any student** in Pre-K thru grade 8 who receives more than six tardy slips for unexcused tardiness or two lunch detentions for tardiness will result in the parent being fined \$10 for each subsequent tardy.

Tardy to Class

Junior high students in grades 5-8 are provided a 3 minute transition to move between classes throughout the school day. Any student who is not in class on time will receive a tardy. The faculty with approval from the principal will establish the consequences for excessive tardiness to class. This information will be provided in the discipline plan for grades 5-8.

Arrival Procedures

All students must arrive and enter through the main building entry and report to their assigned places. As a courtesy to those parents working out-of-town, students may be dropped off at school as early as 7:20 a.m. but **not** before this time. **In general, and out of respect for faculty and staff, students should be dropped off beginning at 7:30 a.m. and by 7:45 a.m.** Students will be dismissed to their homeroom classrooms at 7:45 a.m. **ANY STUDENTS IN GRADES PK THRU GRADE 4 ARRIVING AFTER THE 7:45 A.M. BELL MUST BE ESCORTED TO THE FRONT OFFICE BY A PARENT.** No student should ever be dropped off in front of the main building or the adjacent school buildings (PK, K, or elementary) without adult supervision. **THE PARENT OF A PRE-**

K OR KINDERGARTEN STUDENT MAY BE ASKED TO ESCORT THE STUDENT TO THE CLASSROOM.

Dismissal Procedures

All students will be dismissed at 3:30 p.m. Walkers will be released first.

All St. Michael Catholic School families will be issued two **name cards for their family which should be visible in the front dash/window of the vehicle when picking up a student from school during afternoon dismissal.** The additional name card may be provided to a family member or friend whom you have given permission to pick up your student from school. Please remember to inform the school when someone other than the parent will be picking up a child from school.

In order to assure the safety of all students at the end of the school day, staff and students will adhere to the following dismissal procedure:

1. Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1st through 4th graders will begin to report to the main building for dismissal shortly after 3:25 p.m. Students are to sit in their assigned places as they do at morning drop-off. Teachers are to accompany students into the building and remain with students until dismissed.
2. Junior high students are dismissed to homerooms at 3:25 p.m.
3. At 3:30 p.m. the dismissal bell rings and the junior high students move to their assigned location. Junior high walkers should be released directly from their homerooms at 3:30 p.m.
4. Duty teachers will be stationed out front at the curb to call students and assist them in getting into their vehicles. Students will be dismissed in the order that vehicles arrive so that there will be no reason for traffic to pull out of the carline. **We ask that no one gets out of their car to come in and pick up students or attempt to park on the opposite side of the street next to the church, along FM 155, or in the back of the White Building.** Traffic will flow one way from east to west on North Street during dismissal. **ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ENTER AND EXIT A VEHICLE CURBSIDE AND MUST NOT WALK IN FRONT OF OR BEHIND A VEHICLE FOR EXIT OR ENTRY** (per TCCED guidelines).
5. Teachers will be stationed in the hallway relaying information to students, monitoring the front entry, and assisting with dismissal of students.
6. Students walking home will be dismissed first followed by students going to the After School Care program, local daycare facilities, those riding the Boys and Girls Club bus, and then all car riders.

7. Teachers and the on-duty personnel are dismissed when all students are gone for the day or when the principal dismisses personnel.

Section VI: ATHLETICS/CHEERLEADING

St. Michael School participates in and follows the rules of the Diocese of Victoria Athletic League (DVAL). Sports include football, volleyball, cross country, basketball, soccer, track, softball, and cheerleading. Good Christian sportsmanship must be exhibited at all times by coaches, students, and parents. The principal reserves the right to remove any student from a particular game, sport, or from any team for serious disruptions, infractions, or any just cause he/she deems serious enough. Permission forms (signed by parent/guardian), physicals, and sports fees, must be in the school office prior to participation in any athletic activity.

Athletic Policies

Participation in athletics requires the following:

- Students are to maintain a 70% in all their classes, and demonstrate proper attitude and behavior.
- Students are eligible under the Athletic Eligibility Policy.
- All fees and tuition are paid up and up to date, month to month.
- Students are under the direct supervision of the coaches or designated sponsors while participating in athletic events.
- A student must have been in attendance for at least four hours of the school day in order to participate in the event. A student who left school due to illness may not participate.
- Students are to have permission from the coach to leave the premises of an athletic event (practice or game).
- Students are to return with the same driver/chaperone with the exception of returning with a parent or someone authorized **in writing** by the parent with the coach's permission.
- Parents who volunteer to drive students to athletic or other events are to have the required information filed in the school office and have attended the Safe Environment Training session required by the Diocese of Victoria.
- Parents/drivers are always to drive safely and have seatbelts for each occupant.
- Parents/drivers are to see to it that alcohol, drugs, or other improper substances are **not** present and/or consumed at any school function or athletic event.
- Parents and students are to clean up their areas after each event.

Athletic Eligibility

Cumulative averages are taken each week (Monday to Monday). In order for a student to be eligible a student is to have a passing grade in each subject (70 or above). If a student fails one subject, he/she may practice that week but not play in the game that week. A student failing two subjects may not practice or participate in any games during the week or weeks of ineligibility. **Grades are checked every Monday morning for eligibility.**

Parents are notified by noon Monday if student is ineligible to practice/play for that week. If the student is passing the following Monday morning, h/she becomes eligible.

Athletic Physicals

All students who participate in any school sponsored athletic event throughout the school year are to have a physical before participating in that sport (this includes practice prior to participation in games). Any student who does not have his physical prior to the school year **may not practice or play** in the sport until their physical is complete.

Athletic Uniforms

Athletic uniform shirts and cheerleader uniform shirts may be worn to school on the day of each sporting event. If Mass falls on this day, the Mass uniform will be worn. The principal has the discretion of designating other times when athletic uniforms may be worn.

Cheerleaders

Eight students from grades 5-8 are eligible for cheerleading. If more than eight students desire to participate, a try-out will be held and cheerleaders will be selected by outside judges. Cheerleaders are to maintain satisfactory academic work, be responsible, and demonstrate qualities of leadership, courtesy, respect, poise, and friendliness. To be eligible to try out for cheerleader, a student is to obtain three teachers' signatures that teach him/her and receive principal approval. All paperwork in preparation for cheerleading must be turned in by the deadline or the student will not be eligible to participate.

Please note: Extracurricular activities (sports and cheerleading) are not required, they are privileges.

Section VII: DISCIPLINE

General Guidelines

Disciplinary procedures shall be based on Catholic values and uphold the dignity of the human person. The SMCS mission should be upheld: to be friendly, respectful, responsible, and Christ-like. By working together the school and family can achieve the vision of helping each student live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and meet his/her full potential as a person created in the image of God.

The primary purpose of discipline is to create a positive environment conducive to learning for all students. Students are to act in such a manner as to make St. Michael Catholic School a center of Christian social living and to enable themselves to acquire the fullest education possible. No student has a right to interfere with the teacher's ability to teach or with the students' ability to learn. Behavior that is harmful to the good order of the school, to themselves or to their peers is to be avoided. Unacceptable behavior at school or any school-related activity constitutes the following:

1. **Disturbing Class:** Any disturbance that interferes with another student's opportunity to learn, including, but not limited to: talking, making noises, out of

seat, eating in class, slamming books or lockers, playing with toys, or throwing spit wads

2. **Insubordination:** Argumentative, uncooperative, refusal to follow directions ignores or defies authority figures
3. **General/Blatant Disrespect:** In words or actions to any teacher, aide, other student(s), religious traditions, or any other legitimate authority
4. **Uniform Violation:** Improperly dressed or not following the uniform dress code policy
5. **Chewing Gum:** Students may not chew gum at school
6. **Cheating and Plagiarism:** Cheating of any sort on tests, examinations, class assignments, or copying homework is a serious offense and goes against Christian principles. Plagiarism is the use of another person's original ideas or writing as one's own without giving credit to the true author. Plagiarism is considered cheating. The consequences for cheating or plagiarizing are a zero (0) on the assignment/test, notification to parent, and half-full day in-school suspension (ISS). Additional offenses of plagiarism will result in further disciplinary action which may include suspension and possible expulsion.
7. **Harassment:** Harassment is contrary to the Catholic faith and detrimental to the education process. Accordingly, harassment involving any student or staff member shall be investigated, and appropriate discipline action shall be promptly taken. Harassment shall be defined as any conduct of an intimidating nature, which creates a hostile or offensive environment. Bullying another person is an example of harassment.

Expected Classroom Behavior

The students are responsible for the following:

- Follow the school's mission to be friendly, respectful, responsible, and Christ-like
- Follow the rules set forth by the classroom teacher
- Be considerate and courteous to others, treating the teacher, other students, and guests with respect and dignity
- Be in class on time
- Be responsible for the cleanliness of grounds, lockers, classroom, and school building
- Keep books and other supplies off the floor (safety hazard)
- Leave unnecessary materials at home, such as toys, video games, etc.
- Keep all non-consumable textbooks covered and pay for any damage to school property for which h/she is responsible

- Follow directions and turn in assignments when they are due

General Classroom Discipline

Each teacher handles classroom discipline. Consequences for not following the guidelines set up by each teacher include but are not limited to the following:

- Verbal or nonverbal warning
- Verbal reminder
- Time out
- Note to parents
- Detention
- Office visit (frequent or serious infractions)

Severe Disruptions (Include but are not limited to):

The following instances of misconduct qualify as a severe disruption whether they occur during the school day or at a school related activity.

- Committing an assault
- Stealing, damaging or destroying property
- Using abusive, obscene or vulgar language or obscene gestures
- Leaving the school grounds or the site of a school activity without permission
- Cheating/Plagiarism
- Damage to school property
- Committing any illegal act
- Possessing or using dangerous items including drugs, alcohol, tobacco, knives, matches, guns, etc.
- Committing misconduct in church, during the Liturgy or other prayer services
- Improper use of the internet
- Improper use of cell phones

The Principal will address consequences for continuous disruptive behavior or severe disruptions which result in an office referral. Consequences include, but are not limited to principal-student conference, detention, school/community service, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension and/or expulsion. Corporal punishment shall not be permitted in the schools of the Diocese of Victoria (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 5121*).

Harassment/Bullying Policy

Harassment is contrary to the Catholic faith and detrimental to the education process. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (**seriously, in jest, or online**) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policies 5210 and 5211*). All students must respect and abide by principles of good, Catholic, moral conduct. Bullying others, including teachers and other personnel, will not be tolerated. Parents/guardians are expected to reinforce these standards at home. Bullying means: an expression of any kind, whether written, oral, or

physical conduct, that is determined to have the effect of physically harming another, damaging another's property, or placing another in reasonable fear of harm to another's person or property; or any conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for another; or any conduct that is designed or likely to result in causing physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another. Bullying includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Physical assault against a person or group of people because of a perceived physical, economic, intellectual, cultural or racial difference;
- Derogatory name-calling of an insulting or personal nature intended to offend another;
- Verbal abuse;
- Threats that are intended to intimidate another;
- Demanding money, material goods or favors by means of threat or force;
- Ridiculing an individual because of physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference;
- Graffiti designed to intimidate or embarrass;
- Inciting others to commit acts of bullying;
- Using language that is intended to insult or discriminate against another based on a protected class; or
- Deliberate exclusion or isolation of an individual or group by other students.

Cyber-bullying means bullying through the use of any electronic means, i.e. Internet, text messages, e-mail, blogging, social media sites, telephones, cell phones, etc.

Students, faculty, and staff are to report all allegations or believed cases of bullying to the principal. All allegations will be promptly investigated. Persons who allege bullying by others should, to the extent possible, maintain evidence of the alleged bullying. The proper disciplinary action against any person found to be in violation of this policy will be determined by the principal.

Threats

Any threat of bodily harm or threat of the possession of a weapon shall be taken seriously. Students, parents, and staff shall be responsible to report to the administration any knowledge of verbal or written threats. Any such threats and any false reports of such threats may result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

Consequences

The principal will deal with severe disruptions and/or behavior in a manner appropriate to the age of the student and the severity of his/her behavior. Methods used by the principal may include but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- ❑ Student/principal conference – Classroom behavior that is disruptive of the learning/teaching process is ordinarily the responsibility of the teacher. A student conference, parent conference, teacher/student/principal conference, or teacher/parent/principal conference may be required. Any teacher or staff member

has the authority to correct any student any time while on the school campus or at any school event.

- ❑ Detention – Students may be assigned detention before, during, or after school by the teacher or the principal. This detention is for undesirable patterns of behavior, attendance violations, tardiness, misconduct, or other disciplinary problems. If a student is assigned detention by a teacher, h/she is to report to the room indicated by the teacher for the detention. No extracurricular activity after school will exempt a student from an after-school detention. Lunch detention requires the student to bring a sack lunch or receive a “detention” lunch from the cafeteria.
- ❑ In-school suspension – The in-school suspension program (ISS) is provided to correct inappropriate student behavior and help the student keep up with his/her school work. The student will not attend classes or participate in any school activity the day of suspension. After-school participation is permissible unless this privilege has been lost. The student will receive assignments to be done in an isolated area apart from other student. Social interaction with other students is prohibited.
- ❑ Out-of-school suspension – A student may be suspended from school by the principal if h/she has engaged in serious or persistent misbehavior that violates school policy both on/off campus. The suspension will be for a minimum of one day and maximum of three days. The student will be required to make up all work missed during suspension, but the student will automatically receive a zero for each core subject for each day of suspension. The parent/guardian must accompany the student and conference with the principal upon return to school.
- ❑ Expulsion (dismissal from school) – The principal reserves the discretionary right to expel any student whose attitude and conduct, on or off campus, reflects adversely on the St. Michael Catholic School community.

Suspension and Expulsion

A student may be suspended and/or expelled for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- ❑ Habitual misconduct that is disruptive of the teaching/learning process
- ❑ Refusal to obey reasonable directives, orders, rules or regulations of the school, or any teacher/administrative officer of the school, which are promulgated for the well-being of the student body, the staff, or the institution
- ❑ Violation of any penal law or ordinance applicable to the respective jurisdictions of all parties concerned
- ❑ Engaging in any activity or conduct which is a serious violation of the Roman Catholic ethic or which attempts to promote teachings contrary to those of the Roman Catholic Church

The principal must notify the student and the student’s parent/guardian of the reason for the suspension, the duration of the suspension, and requirements for reinstatement.

Only the principal is authorized to expel a student. The principal will follow the following procedures:

- Confer with the student, the teacher(s), the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pastor regarding the problem with a view to resolution or reconciliation.

- Advise parents, in writing, of the decision, the effective date of expulsion and their rights under these policies.
- Parents must be notified of their right to appeal the action according to procedures specified by **Policy 5500: Complaint Procedure for Students and Parents**.
- Inform the Superintendent of Schools and submit to the Superintendent of Schools a copy of the official letter of expulsion to parents.

(Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 5114)

Expected Playground Behavior

- Play in designated areas only
- Follow the direction of the on-duty adult
- Keep playground free of all litter
- Never go into the street
- Never leave the playground without the expressed permission from the on-duty adult
- Use playground equipment properly
- Always be respectful toward other students and the on-duty adult

Expected Cafeteria Behavior

- All students report to the cafeteria for lunch and remain there until dismissed by a teacher.
- Students enter and leave the cafeteria in an orderly manner
- Proper table manners are to be observed
- Students are not to waste, throw or play with food
- Students do not touch food on another student's plate
- Students are to leave their tables clean, free of trash when finished, and chairs pushed under the table or placed on the table as instructed

Expected Bus Behavior

- Riders are to be prompt and ready to board the bus as instructed
- Riders are to be seated when the bus is moving
- Riders are to sit up straight and not put feet on the seat in front of them
- Riders are to respect the bus driver and peers at all times
- Riders are to never use or exhibit abusive, crude or improper language or behavior
- Riders are to keep arms, legs, and heads inside the bus while riding
- Riders are to never shout or scream at anyone inside or outside the bus
- Riders are to keep the bus free from trash, never throwing anything inside or outside the bus
- Riders are to not have sharp objects out of their back packs while riding the bus
- Riders are to keep their belongings with them while on the bus
- Food or drinks are not allowed on the bus
- Riders are to put all trash into the trash cans

The bus may be used to transport students on field trips or to extracurricular activities. When a bus rider chooses not to behave as expected, he/she will be given a warning by the bus driver and the principal. If the bus rider receives a second warning, this warning will

be sent home and is to be signed by the parent and returned to the office before the student may resume riding the bus. If a student receives more than three (3) warnings, he/she will not be allowed to ride the bus for the remainder of the year. The principal reserves the right at any time to take away bus-riding privileges from any student for serious misconduct at any time.

After School Program (ASP) Expected Behavior

Rules:

1. Show respect at all times.
2. Move appropriately throughout campus during program hours.
3. Follow instructions set forth by ASP staff.
4. Refrain from damaging any school property.
5. Refrain from disruptive behavior, fighting, violence of any kind, and inappropriate language.
6. Comply with any and all other regulations set forth by the ASP Director and/or school administrator.

ASP Consequences

Rules will be reviewed with students at the beginning of the school year. It is imperative that both students and parents understand the expectations of ASP as well as the potential consequences.

The first offense will result in a warning from the ASP director. The second offense will result in a warning and a letter to parent from the ASP director, a third offense will involve the school administrator and will result in temporary suspension for one quarter or the semester, determined by the principal. A fourth offense after readmission will result in permanent dismissal from ASP.

Section VIII: DRESS CODE: UNIFORM POLICY

Uniforms

Uniforms speak of pride and spirit in your school. Blue jeans should not be too tight, frayed below the soles or low-waisted. Shorts or skorts are to be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee. Jumpers, skirts, or dresses should be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee. Girls must wear shorts underneath a jumper or skirt. Belts, worn with belt loops, should be of solid color (leather or braided) with no rhinestones or large buckles. Shirts worn un-tucked must not fall below the bottom of the back pockets.

Girls

- Navy or khaki slacks, Bermuda walking shorts, skorts or capris pants
- Navy or khaki jumper or skirt
- Blue jeans (pants or capris only) – not on Mass days
- Kelly green or white, short sleeve or long sleeve polo shirt (Kelly green polo required for field trips)
- Black or brown belt (optional)

- Athletic shoes
- *NO blue jeans or shorts on Mass days*

Boys

- Navy or khaki slacks or Bermuda walking shorts
- Blue jeans (pants only) – not on Mass days
- Kelly green or white, short sleeve or long sleeve polo shirt
- Black or brown belt (optional)
- Athletic shoes
- *No blue jeans or shorts on Mass days*
-

T-shirts, turtleneck shirts, etc., worn under uniform shirts during cooler weather are limited to the following solid colors: white, Kelly green, navy, or black

Mass Attire for Junior High Boys

- Navy or khaki slacks
- White button-up collared dress shirt, short or long sleeves with white undershirt
- Tie or bowtie: Navy, Kelly green, or pattern variation in these colors, no clip-ons for grades 7 or 8
- Optional navy vest, sweater, or blazer for cooler weather
- Black or brown non-marking soled dress shoes/boots
- Navy, white, or black socks
- Black or brown belt required (Dress shirts must be tucked in on Mass days.)

Boys in Pre-K thru Grade 4 are required to wear a white, short or long sleeve polo shirt and athletic shoes in lieu of the dress shirt, tie, and dress shoes. The polo shirt must be tucked in during Mass.

Mass Attire for Junior High Girls

- Navy or khaki skirt or jumper with undergarments (shorts)
- White button-up collared shirt, short or long sleeves with proper undergarments
- Optional navy or Kelly green cardigan/sweater, vest, or blazer
- White, navy, or black short or knee-high socks, tights or leggings may be worn during cooler weather (optional in warmer weather)
- Black, brown, or navy non-marking soled dress shoes with no heel (small prints are acceptable as long as the shoe is predominantly black, brown, or navy)
- Skirts with belt loops require a black or brown belt
- Hair accessories (bows, headbands, ties, etc. must be in uniform colors)

Girls in Pre-K thru Grade 4 are required to wear a white, short or long sleeve polo shirt and athletic shoes in lieu of the dress shirt and dress shoes. Shirts should be tucked in during Mass.

Winter Wear

- Black, navy, or gray athletic pants may be worn. (NEVER ON MASS DAYS) **(Cotton warm-up pants, leggings, or knit pants are not permitted.)**
- Non-uniform coats or jackets may be worn during cooler months. These will be removed while in the church unless permission is granted by faculty.

P.E. Uniforms for Grades 5-8 will be purchased from locally approved vendors

- Approved black mesh shorts (required shorts length)
- SMCS approved PE shirt

Spirit Day (Thursday)

- Uniform sports jerseys, cheer t-shirts, or St. Michael spirit T-shirts may be worn
- **Black P.E. mesh, uniform sports, or cheer shorts are not permitted.**

Free Dress Days

- Students must adhere to rules regarding hem and shirt-tail length
- No pajamas or costumes
- No flip flops, open-toe shoes or high heels are permitted; sandals may be permitted during spring pictures or other days as approved by the principal
- Low-cut blouses, spaghetti straps, and bare mid-section or backs are not permitted

Personal Appearance

- Cleanliness and neatness are absolute requirements
- Any style of dress, article of clothing or hairstyle which interferes with, or disrupts the learning process is unacceptable (Examples: feathers or colored extensions in hair are not permitted.)
- Both male and female students must have hair out of eyes. Male students must not have hair past the collar of a dress shirt/polo shirt. Students should have hair brushed/combed to prevent the appearance of “bedhead.”**
- Clothing with logos suggestive of cults, beer or drug commercials or any slogans, images or symbols contrary to the school’s philosophy and Christian values are not permitted.
- Mini-skirts, short split skirts, tight legging pants or tops exposing the waist are not permitted at any time.
- Makeup, if worn, is limited to girls in grades 7 and 8 and should have a natural appearance to enhance one’s natural beauty.

Section IX: SCHOOL SAFETY

Catholic schools of the Diocese of Victoria provide a safe environment for all individual. Routine drills are conducted for protection against fire, inclement weather, other disasters, and intruders. When the alarm is sounded for a drill, students must quickly and silently go to their assigned places without running. They are to remain there until the signal to return is given. Escape routes are posted throughout the school buildings and in all classrooms.

Fire extinguishers are inspected regularly to insure proper working condition. Routine maintenance is provided by qualified and trained personnel in accordance with the manufacture's specifications and state statutes. The school will comply with the local fire codes.

Accidents

Accidents in the school building or on the school grounds during any school related activity should be reported to the person in charge and the school office personnel. Proper medical action will be taken.

Disaster Procedures

Fire

Each school will maintain close contact with the local Fire Department and work out details for fire drills and for prevention (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 1390*).

Every occupant of the school building should be familiar with the method of sounding the fire alarm. The fire alarm system should be checked regularly, and some alternate system of alerting the occupants should be established in case of alarm failure.

The principal will determine the fastest possible means of reporting a fire and designate a responsible person to do this.

Schools must conduct a fire drill at least once a month. ***The first of these must be conducted within the first two days of the school term.*** Accurate records must be kept regarding the dates drills were conducted and the time required to completely vacate the building. **All occupants** shall use a regular exit route, but an alternate route must also be specified for use in the event the regular route is blocked by debris, smoke or fire.

Drills should be conducted when students are in various areas of the school, such as gymnasium, auditorium, cafeteria, etc. Occasionally a regular exit should be blocked during a drill so that students will have practice in using the alternate route. Drills should always be conducted without advance notice to students or staff.

During the fire drills, students should follow these regulations:

1. Rise in **silence** when the alarm sounds.
2. Exit and close doors.
3. Walk to assigned place in single file in **silence**.
4. Stand in a column of two's facing the building.
5. Return to the building when signal is given.
6. Teachers take attendance as students and exit and once in designated place of safety.

The principal is responsible for carrying out the requirements of the Fire Department relative to fire prevention measures and equipment.

Tornado

Schools should conduct periodic tornado drills. The procedures are:

1. Rise in **silence** when the alarm sounds.
2. Walk briskly to the assigned place in single file.
3. Kneel, face wall, and put hands over head.
4. Return to classroom when signal is given.

Principals should confer with Civil Defense Authorities for further requirements pertaining to tornados.

Unwanted Visitors

Unwanted visitors will be asked to leave the school by the principal or authorized personnel. If the visitor refuses to leave, the principal or authorized person shall activate emergency service (911).

Crisis Management

Each school will develop and implement a crisis management plan (including but not limited to the following areas: power failure, hostages, shootings, intruders, suicide, and discipline). All faculty and staff must be informed and oriented to the plan. The plan must include an emergency code and instructions to teachers on classroom procedures to include such things as lock doors, pull shades, and seat students on the floor or below window height until an all-clear notification is received.

Other Emergencies

The principal is responsible for planning and executing procedures for other emergencies, such as hurricanes, earthquake, etc., in cooperation with local civil defense authorities (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 6110*).

Hazards

1. Buildings and grounds will be kept clear of items that might cause fires, accidents, etc.
2. Cleaning materials and other chemical substances will be kept in a secure place in clearly marked containers. The MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) for chemicals will be kept on file in the school office.
3. **Annual Notification of the Asbestos Management Plan:** The school must comply with federal AHERA (Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act) regulations pertaining to asbestos. The school maintains on file and complies with the School Asbestos Management Plan, which verifies that the school has been inspected for evidence of asbestos annually, as well as all documentation pertaining to removal and/or modification of asbestos containing materials found in the school. This plan is available for inspection in the front office during normal school hours. No friable asbestos is present in any building on the St. Michael Catholic School campus.
4. Lighting in classrooms, corridors and stairs will be adequate.

5. Bi-annual gas line checks will be conducted and a record kept in the administrative office.
6. Personnel are trained on the policy of Blood Borne Pathogens according to the TCCED Health Manual.
7. The school will provide instruction in all aspects of health care and safety as required by the State of Texas and the TCCED.

Student Illness

In case of student illness or similar emergency, the school office will notify the parent or guardian to make arrangements for the child to be picked up immediately. When a parent cannot be contacted, persons who are listed for emergency contact will be notified.

Student Insurance

All students in St. Michael School are covered under the insurance policy approved by the Diocesan School Office and School Advisory Council. The fee is included in the registration fee to cover this insurance. Additional coverage is available to parents at a higher premium, but not required.

Section X: HEALTH AND WELLNESS

AIDS Policy

Based on the current opinion of the scientific and medical community, AIDS is caused by a virus known as HTLV-III/LAV which attacks the body's immune system, thereby leaving the individual vulnerable to opportunistic infections. A person afflicted with AIDS suffers a variety of virus and/or fungus-caused illnesses that debilitates the body resulting in a substantially high mortality rate often within three years after diagnosis. The spread of the virus has occurred through the exchange of bodily fluids (blood, blood by-products, or semen) between individuals, and no evidence exists to indicate the spread of the virus through casual contact.

Recognition of a student or employee with AIDS is not reason alone enough for exclusion from school. Each person will be evaluated as an individual case, and exclusion from the school and exclusion from the school environment will be based upon the person's physical limitations, psychological activity patterns, and the opinion of a panel of responsible persons designated by the Superintendent of Schools. In the case of a student, the panel shall be comprised of the student's parent, the school's physician, the school's nurse, the student's physician, and the principal of the school the child attends or will attend. The Superintendent may appoint additional persons if he/she deems it appropriate and necessary. In the case of an employee, the panel shall be comprised of the school's physician, the school's nurse, the employee's physician, the principal of the school, and a representative of the Superintendent's Office.

If a student has been diagnosed as having AIDS and has any of the following conditions, he/she shall be excluded from attending school:

1. Vomiting

2. Lack of toilet training
3. Tendency to bite
4. Open sores
5. Other medical conditions conducive to spreading the virus

Basic First Aid

Washing with soap and water, use of ice packs and/or bandages are the treatments used for minor injuries. Parents are called in the event of a head injury or any injury judged to be of a more serious nature.

The school is responsible for first aid only, i.e., that immediate care be given to a student whose sickness or injury occurs on the school premises during school hours. Parent/guardian is contacted and if unable to come for a student, persons named on the emergency sheet will be contacted. If the student is in need of medical care and the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the principal will follow procedures on the emergency sheet.

TCCED requires two full-time employees of the school be certified in first aid and two who are certified in CPR. St. Michael's complies with this policy and provides minimum first aid supplies. First aid is rendered according to the Red Cross Aid Book. All staff members adhere to the procedures outlined in the Blood Borne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan.

Cafeteria

St. Michael School will provide a well-balanced meal for lunch. Meals are to be purchased monthly, by the first of each month, from the school office. Exact cash/change or a check is to be turned in with the monthly order form. No lunch money is collected in the cafeteria and charges are to be avoided. Students not taking advantage of a cafeteria lunch may bring a lunch from home. Parents are encouraged to follow nutritional guidelines in providing a healthy, well-balanced lunch for their child. Fast food items, candy and sodas are **not permitted** in the cafeteria. Exceptions will be made only for school or HSA sponsored events with permission from the principal. Students who bring a lunch from home may purchase a dessert by ordering during the attendance/lunch procedures in homeroom and paying the office the required price in advance of the lunch period.

Child Abuse Laws

St. Michael School abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act of the State of Texas. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services. **All personnel and volunteers who work with or have contact with the students are required to attend the Safe Environment training and undergo a criminal background check as mandated by the Diocese of Victoria.** In addition, St. Michael School follows the guidelines promulgated by the Office of Child and Youth Protection to govern the Safe Environment Program/Transportation Policy for the Diocese of Victoria.

Federal, State, and Local Regulations

St. Michael Catholic School follows all federal, state and local civic regulations including, but not limited to, the areas of asbestos, immunizations, health screening, communicable diseases, hazardous materials, and transportation.

Guidelines for Excluding Students from School due to Illness/Disease

Exclusion Guidelines	Return to School Guidelines
Oral temperature of 100° or above	Fever free for 24 hours
Vomiting, nausea or severe abdominal pain	Symptom Free
Marked drowsiness or malaise	Symptom Free
Sore throat, acute cold or persistent cough	Symptom Free
Red, inflamed or discharging eyes	Written physician release
Acute skin rashes or eruptions	Written physician release
Swollen glands around jaws, ears or neck	Written physician release
Suspected scabies or impetigo	Written physician release
Any skin lesion in the weeping stage	Covered and diagnosed as non-infectious
Earache	Symptom Free
Pediculosis	Lice and nit free
Other symptoms suggestive of acute illness	Written physician release

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

Head lice can spread rapidly. Students found to have head lice must be excluded from school immediately. It is strongly recommended that the school follow a “nit free” policy for re-admittance to school.

Head lice are transmitted through close, personal contact, and also, through the use of common brushes, combs, and hair ornaments, and the sharing of hats, headbands, or other apparel. Despite opinions to the contrary, head lice are found in frequently shampooed hair and on persons with good personal hygiene habits.

Each female head lice lay 50 to 150 eggs. Since these eggs hatch within one week, the infestation builds rapidly. Check the hair in bright light, preferably sunlight, as the lice are small, grayish-white insects, one-sixteenth to one-eighth inch long. They are dependent upon human blood for sustenance. The nits or eggs are smaller, yellowish-white particles attached to the hair shaft with a waxy, waterproof substance.

If lice are present, the entire family should be inspected and undergo simultaneous treatment. You may phone a physician for treatment and advice or see the pharmacist in a local drug store. Some medications and medicated shampoos will only kill the adult lice. Others will kill both the adult lice and the eggs, which are recommended. Depending on the severity, number of applications, and methods of application, all eggs are not always

killed or eliminated. Combing the hair with a fine tooth comb (some medications include it) is recommended after the medication has been applied (follow directions). In more severe cases, it may require manual removal of each egg. It is strongly recommended that school follow a “nit free” policy – that is, students are not allowed back into the classroom until the hair and scalp are free of nits (eggs). Make a careful visual check to insure that all eggs have been removed. Many lice shampoo preparations recommend a second shampooing 7-10 days after the first.

If head lice have been experienced, it is recommended that beds, bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, etc.) rugs, upholstered furniture, etc., be inspected. There are prepared sprays on the market that can help eliminate the problem. ²²

In recent years, as head lice have become increasingly resistant to traditional pharmaceutical interventions, many non-traditional treatments, such as oil or mayonnaise, are being purported as effective. It is strongly recommended that parents be advised to seek medical or pharmaceutical advice before trying one of the “new” home remedies, some of which may be unsafe or ineffective.

Additionally, there is now concern in the medical community about the toxicity of shampoos and treatments containing pesticides. According to the National Pediculosis Association the surest, most effective method of controlling head lice is manual removal of lice and nits.

Health Records, Medication and Immunizations

All schools of the Diocese of Victoria will maintain health data on students. A health record is sent with the student when withdrawing and transferring to another school.

Health records will contain:

- Name, address and telephone of parent/guardian
- Name and phone number of the family physician
- Record of diseases and immunizations
- Results of vision, Hearing and scoliosis screening (dates). If referrals were indicated or attention was received, these actions should be recorded with dates and results.
- Record of special health problems such as epilepsy, diabetes, etc.
- Emergency phone number

Schools follow guidelines on health and medical procedures as outlined in the TCCED Health Manual.

Every student enrolled in a Catholic School in the State of Texas shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents (diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid, rubella, pertussis, polio and mumps) in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health Services. A student who fails to present the required evidence shall not be accepted for enrollment. The ***only exception*** to the foregoing requirement is a medical exemption signed by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) authorized to practice in the State of Texas.

Pregnancy (Morality)

A primary purpose of Catholic Education is to guide students' growth in Christian values and moral conduct. Catholic teaching stresses that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that the sanctity of family life is enhanced through the fulfillment of God's plan as expressed by a loving and permanent commitment. Premarital sexual activity is contrary to these values. However, when a pregnancy occurs outside of marriage, the total school community seeks to offer support to the pregnant student and/or the student father so that the pregnancy can be brought to term. The reality of the situation, in all its dimensions, is to be treated in a Christian and humane manner. The diocesan policy regarding pregnancy will be implemented as per the *Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 5213*, in the event of student pregnancy.

The involvement of any student in procuring or assisting in the procurement of an abortion is cause for expulsion.

Medication – All prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications will be kept in the school office unless express permission is provided by the principal. Follow Diocese of Victoria policy on rules for storing and administering inhalers and Epi-pens.

Prescription Medication

Prescription medication will be properly identified with the prescription label from a pharmacy. This label will include:

1. Student name
2. Medication name
3. Directions concerning dosage
4. Route of administration (i.e.: oral, topical, right eye, left eye, etc.)
5. Time that the medication is to be given
6. Length of time medication is to be given (duration)

Procedures outlines in the TCCED Health Manual will be followed carefully. The parent will be notified if the principal will not accept the responsibility to administer medication to a student.

Non-prescription Medications

Non-prescription medication (over-the-counter) must be in original container, with visible directions, and displaying the student's name. Parent request for administration of such medications must be consistent with directions for use on the package.

With the use of cough drops, they must be in the original container, and labeled with the child's name and written directions from the parent. Parent request for administration of cough drops must be consistent with directions for use on the package.

Nutrition Education

- Nutrition education will not only be part of health education classes, but will also be integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as math, science, language arts, social studies, and religion.
- Nutrition education will promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices.
- The school cafeteria serves as a “learning laboratory” to allow students to apply critical thinking skills taught in the classroom.
- Nutrition education will include sharing information with families that encourage them to teach their children about health and nutrition and to provide nutritious meals for their families.
- Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.
- Students will receive instruction on media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing.
- Training will be provided for teachers and other staff.

Physical Activity

- Physical activity will be integrated across the curriculum and throughout the school day. Schools will consider research and national and state standards in allotting time for physical activity. Teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.
- Physical education class will be the environment where students learn and practice physical activity and exercises that will be of value to them and promote lifelong physical fitness.
- Schools should provide a daily recess period, which is not used as a punishment or a reward.
- Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their students’ lives.

Regulation on Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs and Weapons

1. No student shall possess, use, or attempt to possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances on school premises during any school term or off school premises at a school-related activity, function, or event.

Definitions:

“Use” means a student has smoked, ingested, imbibed, inhaled, drunk or otherwise taken internally a prohibited substance recently enough that it is detectable by the student’s physical appearance, actions, breath, and speech.

“Under the influence” means a student’s faculties are noticeably impaired, but the student need not be legally intoxicated.

- b. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to tobacco products, marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
 - c. Alcohol or alcoholic beverage
 - d. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other volatile chemical substance for inhalation)
 - e. Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drug, including facsimiles of drugs or alcohol
 - f. Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action including expulsion.
 - g. The school reserves the right to search any student locker or personal property on school property when reasonable cause leads to suspicion that an item or items injurious to the student or others may be present. This practice also extends to the student, his/her materials, and items in his/her possession. Any searches will be conducted by an administrator in the presence of another adult. Parents may be notified if a search has been conducted. NOTE: If a student refuses to cooperate with such a search, his/her parents will be notified, and he/she may become subject to suspension or dismissal.
 - h. A student who uses, in the manner prescribed by school policy, a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for the student's use shall not be considered to have violated this policy. (Please note that any prescribed medication used by someone other than for whom the medication is prescribed is considered an illegal drug.)
2. The transmittal, sale, or attempted sale of what is represented to be any of the above-listed substances is also prohibited under this policy. Students involved in such actions shall be expelled from school.
 3. No student shall possess any form of a weapon or facsimile of a weapon, including but not limited to a gun, knife, or stun gun.

Smoke-free Zone

St. Michael's is smoke-free, and according to federal guidelines, no smoking is allowed within ten feet of the school buildings.

Vision, Hearing, Acanthosis, and Scoliosis Screening

The Texas Department of Health requires that students be screened for vision, hearing, Acanthosis Nigricans (diabetes) and scoliosis annually. Schools follow the screening schedule of the TCCB ED. Typically students in grades 6 are screened for scoliosis, and

students in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7 are screened for Acanthosis Nigricans. All students undergo vision and hearing screenings.

Wellness Program: Local School Goals

Schools will implement the Wellness Policy by developing local school goals based on the Guidelines for Implementing the Wellness Policy. A Wellness Committee will annually evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy and local school goals. That evaluation will be shared with the Superintendent.

Section XI: OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION

After School Program (ASP)

St. Michael Catholic School offers after school care from dismissal time until 5:30 p.m. to students enrolled in our school. The main goal is to provide working parents with a safe and supervised place for their children to stay until their workday is finished. Contact the school office to enroll a student and receive the full policy for attendance in this program and the payment schedule.

Appeals Process

Although the Diocese of Victoria endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within its schools, it recognized that misunderstandings or differences of opinion sometimes occur. Ideally, such matters can be resolved informally by a parent or guardian by meeting with the immediate authoritative person to discuss the matter. If, however, the matter is not then settled to the parent or guardian's satisfaction, and the parent or guardian believes the dispute to be a misapplication or misinterpretation of a school related policy, only then may the parent or guardian institute a formal grievance. A formal grievance must be in writing and must be received in five (5) working days following the occurrence of the event on which the grievance is based. Please contact the principal for a copy of the Diocese's current *Complaint Procedure for Students and Parents* for further details. Also, please note that current policy supersedes and replaces all previous policies and statements regarding institution and processing of formal grievances within the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Victoria (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 5500*).

Cell Phones

Cell phones are to be in the off-mode and kept in the back pack/locker at all times during the school day and in hallways before and after school. A student may request permission from the principal or principal designee to use a cell phone during the school day, before or after school. Students are to request permission to use his/her cell phone from the teacher, coach, or chaperone in charge at any extracurricular or school related activity in order to text or call. Smart watches/cell phone watches may not be worn to school.

Failure to abide by these rules will result in the phone being confiscated and brought to the principal. A \$25.00 fine is to be paid to the office before the cell phone will be returned.

Texting: Students should at no time be involved in texting or sending photos during the course of the school day. Students involved in texting at school face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Sexting: Sexting is a harmful and dangerous practice that typically occurs when students use cell phones to send others sexually explicit messages or images electronically, primarily between cell phones.

Illegal or immoral conduct using cell phones or other electronic equipment which reflects adversely on the school, subjects the student to disciplinary action, which could result in immediate suspension and/or expulsion. This behavior includes, but is not limited to, sexting, harassment of any kind, or intimidation.

Communication

Since it is impossible to foresee all events that might occur during the school year, parents are kept informed through the school's private email, *RenWeb* email or *Parent Alert*, the school's website, the school newsletters and memos sent home periodically. The oldest or only child will be responsible for bringing home any notes or written communication from the school office. Please encourage your child to be responsible for relaying this information to you. Please refer to the *Diocese of Victoria Communications Policy* for additional information including video, photo, media, and/or audio release.

Library

The Library is an essential part of Saint Michael School. It is to be used for checking out books for reading at home, for silent study, or for research. The library is established for the benefit of all the students attending Saint Michael School. Students are responsible for all library materials which they use or check out. Care should be taken to return books and/or magazines before they become overdue. Students will be held responsible for the replacement cost or lost or damaged library materials that are checked out to them.

Consideration for other students requires avoidance of unnecessary noise or boisterous behavior in the library. Students should observe silence and display mature behavior at all times in the library.

Open Forum Policy (School Advisory Council)

With the exception of the Bishop and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Victoria, no person or group shall have the right to address a meeting of the school advisory council (SAC) unless prior written approval has been obtained. Any person or group desiring to address a meeting of the school advisory council shall notify the president, in writing, of the nature of their request no less than seven (7) calendar days prior to the next meeting of the school advisory council. On receipt of such a request, the president shall contact the pastor and the principal. An affirmative vote of two of these

three persons shall be required to approve such a request and the approval shall set forth the amount of time and the nature of the presentation to be made. Notice of such presentations shall be given to each advisory council member in advance of the meeting at which the presentation is to be made.

Prior to the initiation of a formal grievance, parents who seek redress for their child(ren) in matters of policy, regulation, or discipline, must first confer directly with the teacher, staff members, or administrator, with whom they have a complaint for resolution of the situation. If there is not a satisfactory resolution of the complaint, steps in the formal adopted grievance procedure are to be followed.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers should consult parents regularly about a child's progress at school. These conferences may be formal or informal. A formal Parent-Teacher conference will be scheduled prior to the distribution of report cards at the end of the first nine weeks. The purpose of this conference is to enable both parent and teacher to help the student.

Party Invitations, Balloons, Flower Bouquets, Etc.

Students in Grades 5-8 are not allowed to hand out invitations to parties held outside of school. Students in Grades PreK-4 may hand out invitations if all students in the class are invited. All students receiving balloon or flower arrangements will receive them in the office after school is dismissed.

Permanent Records

A permanent record is maintained for each student according to the policies and procedures of the Catholic Schools Office for the Diocese of Victoria. Policy number 5118 in the Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools provides our guidelines for maintaining and allowing access to these records. Saint Michael School will retain original permanent records when a student transfers or graduates. A copy of the permanent record will be released to a receiving school when that school applies directly to Saint Michael School by mail or fax on school letterhead.

All information in a student's file shall be treated as confidential and shall be accessible only to the principal, professional staff, the legal guardian and the parents.

A non-custodial parent may also have the right to access a student's educational records. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and other school related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there should be no information given to a non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with a copy of the court order.

Religious Activities

Attendance at Mass on Fridays and other special days is an important mandatory part of the school day and is not optional. Participation in other weekday Masses may also be arranged. During the day, teachers will lead the students in prayer to begin or end an

activity. Communal Reconciliation services or individual opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation may be arranged. Students take part in reciting the rosary monthly, and during Lent, they participate in the Stations of the Cross. Service projects in and out of the community are also a vital part of religious growth at St. Michael School. Parents are encouraged to become active in their faith communities. Members of St. Michael or the mission church in Dubina are encouraged to volunteer assistance at St. Michael School. All families, parish and community members are welcome to attend Mass and other religious activities and celebrations.

Room Parent Activities

Room parents will work closely with the HSA Board and Membership and are asked to help with all activities including but not limited to the following:

1. Night on the Town gala, Crawfish Boil, and other fundraisers
2. Thanksgiving: Share-A-Meal
3. Advent - Christmas/End-of First Semester parties
4. Catholic Schools Week special activities
5. Individual class parties approved by the principal
6. End-of-School events: Field Day or Splashway
7. Spring Picnic
8. Graduation

School Calendar

All schools must complete the minimum number of teaching and in-service days as required by the Texas Catholic Conference Bishops Education Department. The school calendar will also include inclement weather days. When possible, school closings in weather related incidents in the Catholic schools should correspond with closings in the local public school districts. Notification of school closures will be sent through RenWeb Parent Alert and/or local radio. Schools may not take additional days or dismiss classes early without the expressed authorization of the Superintendent of Schools. Catholic schools of the Diocese of Victoria are permitted a maximum of 10 early release days per school term. A school day is considered an early release day when arrival and/or dismissal of student is scheduled so as to shorten the day to less than the regular 7 hours but more than the minimum requirement for a full day of 4 hours (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policies 6110 and 6111*).

School Curriculum

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria will use the curriculum guides published by the Arch Diocese of San Antonio. The curriculum guides are reviewed by the Diocese of Victoria Curriculum Committee and adhere to the curriculum guidelines adopted and approved by T.E.A. (Texas Education Agency) and TCCED (Texas Catholic Conference Education Department).

Education in human sexuality may be integrated into the religion curriculum of the school as provided by the Religion Curriculum Guides adopted by the Diocese of Victoria. This instruction will be based on, and in accordance with, the *United States Catholic Bishops*

Guidelines entitled Human Sexuality; A Catholic Perspective for Education and Life-long Learning, the General Directory for Catechesis, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

School Parties

Please consult with your child's teacher prior to bringing any food items for the entire class. Christmas parties are held in all classrooms the last day before classes dismiss for the holidays. Room parents help plan the parties with the classroom teachers. Valentine parties may be held in grades Pre-K and Kindergarten. The graduating 8th grade class will have an end-of-year party on the date of graduation practice, hosted by the 7th grade class. All parties are to be simple and economical.

Street Closure

The Weimar City Council approved E. North Street between Mechanic and Center (FM 155) in front of St. Michael Catholic School for closure during the school year from the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Only those conducting school business, dropping students off or picking students up from school, attending Mass/church services, or the local residents may use this portion of the street during the school day. All others are subject to tickets and/or fines.

Textbooks

Textbooks used at St. Michael School are those officially adopted and recommended by the Diocesan School Office. Textbooks not adopted by the Diocesan School Office may be used as supplemental to the curriculum with approval from the principal. All textbooks are the property of Saint Michael School loaned to students and those textbooks that are not consumable are to be covered at all times. Students are responsible for their books and will be required to pay for the loss or damage done to a textbook issued to a student.

Visitors to the School

For reasons of safety, all visitors to the school are required to sign-in upon arrival at the school office, receive a "visitor badge" and sign-out upon departure from the school campus. Visitors must notify office personnel of the purpose for the visit. Please be prepared to show photo identification.

Section XII: INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Office of Catholic Schools

Diocese of Victoria

St. Michael School

Mission Statement of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Victoria is dedicated to the teaching mission of the Catholic Church through service and leadership to the schools of the Diocese. We proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and promote the ideals of message, community, and service. We encourage and support school administrators in their ministry and management. We provide assistance, information, and direction for the

enhancement of quality education in the Catholic schools that strive to instill values for a lifetime.

Introduction

With Jesus, the Great Communicator, and in the spirit of our Christian tradition, we recognize that we live in a new media age, immersed in a new culture with an evolving language. We propose to make use of the most effective, most powerful means to communicate the integration of faith and culture, which is at the center of Catholic values and education.

The use of new technologies presents new possibilities and challenges for the mission of the Church and Catholic education.

The Church views emerging technologies as gifts of the Spirit to this age and challenges “God’s faithful people to make creative use of new discoveries and technologies for the benefit of humanity and the fulfillment of God’s plan for the world...” Aetatis Novae, #2, #3; Rome 1992

General Information for Internet Users

Catholic schools are using new technologies, electronic resources, and Internet access to enhance student learning and to provide a quality educational experience for all students. Internet access and activities in the schools are strictly limited to educational use and are teacher-supervised and monitored.

In keeping with the purpose of the Catholic schools to promote values for a lifetime, the schools will instruct about and guard against inappropriate, unethical, and illegal use of the Internet by the student or the adult user.

In order to ensure the proper use of the Internet and its resources, it is necessary that each user (and also his/her parents, if the user is a student under 18 years of age) sign the attached Internet agreement before the user is allowed to access the Internet at school.

Account Information

Student and adult* access of the Internet with either school accounts, school-sponsored accounts, or adult personal accounts in the school setting is strictly limited to educational purposes. In cases where remote access using a school account or school-sponsored account is available, the access is still limited to educational use. Acceptable use adheres to the Children’s Internet Protection Act, and may be further governed by the policies of the Data Acquisition Sites or other Internet service providers. Students, including those 18 and over, are not allowed to access personal accounts at school but are subject to the provisions of this policy. *The term adult refers to administrators, faculty and staff members, parents, volunteers, and other school-affiliated adults. It does not include students who are 18 years of age or older.

School Responsibility

It is the school's responsibility to maintain contact with the Internet provider, ensure educational use not open access to the Internet, provide for teacher in-service opportunities, address security and discipline issues, supervise and monitor student access, guard against the access of objectionable material, and to comply with all technology protection measures of the Children's Internet Protection Act. The school shall take measures to provide for the safety and security of minors if using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications. The school shall forbid and take measures to prevent unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.

User Responsibility

Each user is responsible for all the information that is sent and received under his/her account and/or school account. Passwords are to be guarded and not displayed nor shared with others. In addition, the user must strictly adhere to the copyright laws. Unethical and/or illegal activities will not be allowed. Unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," is strictly forbidden. Internet privileges will be revoked for those who violate the educational intent of Internet access.

Online Conduct

The user agrees to not submit, publish, and/or display any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or otherwise illegal material; nor shall the user encourage the use, sale, or distribution of controlled substances. Any use in violation of any local, state, or federal law is also prohibited and is a breach of the terms and conditions of this policy. Also, any commercial use is strictly forbidden.

Blogs: Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, MySpace.com, Friendster, Xanga, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. may result in disciplinary actions including suspension and/or expulsion, if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding a Catholic school, school personnel, other students, the parish, or the diocese (*Handbook of Policies and Regulations for Catholic Schools, Policy 5212*).

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary Action for inappropriate use of the Internet with a school computer or a personal computer on school premises will result in loss of Internet privileges for the period of time as determined by the school personnel authorized to make such determinations. In certain cases, if the inappropriate use violates other school or diocesan policies, further disciplinary measures may be taken.

Students should be aware that the texting of or posting of inappropriate, vulgar, threatening, or demeaning statements or images on the internet will subject them to school discipline for engaging in such behavior. While the texting or posting of demeaning or threatening statements may not have occurred on school time or utilized school equipment, they, nonetheless, have the potential to negatively impact the school's efforts to maintain a safe and dignified learning environment for all students. Engaging in calumny, detraction, or other offenses against the dignity of others via text message or on the internet will be disciplined according to the school's

Discipline Management System. The school has the right to demand that a student remove such postings as a condition of his or her continued enrollment in the school. While on campus or using school equipment, students should not access networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat without the express permission of the principal or principal designee.

Agreement Form

The Internet User Agreement Form governs the user's access of the Internet resources with a school account, school-sponsored account, or adult personal account accessed with a school computer and/or personal computer on school premises. The signed form must be on file at the school before Internet access is permitted. Signing the form indicates that the user will abide by the rules governing Internet access as stated in this Internet Acceptable Use Policy and will not hold the school, its personnel and/or Diocese of Victoria or any of its personnel liable in the event of breach of this policy by the user.

Note: The Diocese of Victoria reserves the right to modify this policy as needed.

Section XIII: OFFICE OF SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Diocese of Victoria

How to Protect Children from Child Abuse

A Parent's Guide

Provided to you by:
The Office of Safe Environment
Diocese of Victoria
1505 E. Mesquite
Victoria, Texas 77901
361-573-0828

Parents are encouraged to review the following Safe Environment information provided by the diocese with their children. Students receive safe environment training at St. Michael School. A parent who does not desire for his/her child to receive this training must submit the Safe Environment "opt out" form, thus accepting responsibility for educating their children with regard to Safe Environment.

Diocese of Victoria

HOW TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM CHILD ABUSE

We are all deeply concerned about the general welfare of our children. There are many challenges that confront today's youth and child abuse is one of these. Child abuse is a fact in our society and a matter of great concern for most parents. Fortunately, child abuse is preventable and parents can help their children master prevention strategies.

The "3 R's"

Three underlying principles to effective youth protection strategies:

- 1. Recognize. The child needs to be able to recognize the situations that may result in abuse.*
- 2. Resist. The child needs to be able to assert the right to resist the abuser.*
- 3. Report. The child needs to be able to tell an adult when he or she has encountered abuse and to feel confident that the adult will take actions to prevent further abuse.*

Recognize Situations

Traditionally, children have been told of the risks associated with strangers. As we have come to learn, child abuse is committed most often by a family member or person who is known to the child, often in a position of authority over the child. Therefore, if we teach only to be wary of strangers, we are not protecting our children as completely as we must. Children and youth need to understand that they have a right to refuse adults or persons of authority (i.e. baby-sitters, teachers, aunts, uncles) when they are touched on the private parts of their body or in ways which make them feel uncomfortable or frightened. The exercises in this booklet will help to prepare your child to identify situations requiring caution.

Resist the Abuser

Interviews with child molesters document that when children resist advances made by the molester, the molester will usually abandon further attempts with that child. A relatively low incidence of child molestation involves the use of physical force. Children need to be trained to say "NO" or "yell" and get away when inappropriately approached by anyone—friend, relative, or stranger.

Tell an Adult

Children and youth need to be taught to tell their parent, teacher, or other trusted adult whenever they encounter questionable situations or attempted abuse. Since adults do not always listen when a child talks to them, the child needs to be told to keep on telling until someone listens.

Sometimes, a child may not be able to talk about what has happened but will communicate in other ways. For example, the child may go out of the way to avoid being alone with a particular person, such as a babysitter. This is a kind of communication to which parents need to be sensitive as it may be an indicator of abuse.

When a Child Discloses Abuse

If your child becomes a victim of abuse, your initial reaction can be very important in helping him or her through the ordeal. The following guidelines may help you:

- ❖ Don't panic or overreact to the information disclosed by your child.
- ❖ Don't criticize your child or claim that you child misunderstood what happened.
- ❖ Do respect your child's privacy and take your child to a place where the two of you can talk without interruptions or distractions.
- ❖ Do reassure your child that you believe him or her that he or she is not to blame for what happened. Tell the child that you appreciate being told about it and that you will help make sure it will not happen again.
- ❖ Do report the incident to the police or Child Protective Services, and encourage your child to tell the proper authorities what happened. Try to avoid repeated interviews, which can be very stressful for the child.
- ❖ Do consult your pediatrician or other child abuse authority about the need for counseling to assist your child.

Finally, if abuse happens to your child, do not blame yourself or your child. Individuals who victimize children are not readily identifiable; they come from all walks of life and all socioeconomic levels. Often, they present a nice image-they may even go to church and be active in the community. The molester is skilled at manipulating children, often by giving a child excessive attention, gifts, and money. Most abuse occurs in situations in which the child knows and trusts the adult.

Teach Your Child to Be Assertive

It is important that your child understands the right to react assertively when faced with a situation he or she perceives as dangerous. When teaching your child self-protection skills, make it clear that although some of the basic strategies involved seem to contradict the sort of behavior you normally expect of your child, these strategies apply to a situation that is not normal. When feeling threatened, your child must feel free to exercise the right to:

- ❖ Trust his or her instincts or feelings.

- ❖ Say “no” to unwanted touching or affection, say “no” to an adult’s inappropriate demands and requests.
- ❖ Withhold information that could jeopardize his or her safety.
- ❖ Refuse gifts’ be rude or unhelpful if the situation warrants. Run, scream, and make a scene.
- ❖ Physically fight off unwanted advances.
- ❖ Ask for help.

It’s important to remember that these are protective strategies designed to give youth the power to protect themselves.

The following exercises will help to clarify when it is appropriate to apply these strategies.

Exercise 1: What If...

In this exercise the parent sets up situations that the child should recognize as potentially dangerous. Once the parent describes a situation, the child tells what he or she would do if ever confronted in such a way. Suggested actions are listed with each situation.

Situations and Suggested Actions for Each

1. What if you are home alone and the telephone rings; a voice on the other end asks if your parents are home. What do you do?
 - a. Tell the caller your parents are busy and cannot come to the phone.
 - b. Take a message and the phone number of the caller.
 - c. If the message needs an immediate response, call your parent.
 - d. Do not tell the caller you are home alone.

2. What if an older child hangs around your school and tries to give pills to younger students. What do you do?
 - a. Tell your teacher.
 - b. Tell your parent even if you told the teacher.
 - c. Stay away from the person with the pills.

3. What if you are home alone (or with your brother or sister) and someone knocks on the door and asks to read the electric meter. This person is not wearing a uniform or identification. What do you do? (Alternate situation: If the person were wearing a uniform, would the responses be different? Probably not.)
 - a. Keep the front door or screen door locked.

- b. Do not open the door to anyone without permission from a parent.
 - c. Tell the person to come back later when your parent can come to the door. Do not let the person know your parent is away.
 - d. Use the telephone to call a neighbor and ask for assistance.
4. What if someone comes to you and says that your parent is sick and you must go with him or her. What would you do?
- a. If at school, go to the principal or your teacher for assistance and verification.
 - b. If at home or somewhere else, call the emergency number-parent's employer, neighbor, close relative-for assistance and verification.
 - c. Do not go anywhere without verification from someone in authority whom you have been told to trust.
5. What if you are in a public restroom and someone tries to touch you. What do you do?
- a. Yell "STOP THAT" as loudly as you can.
 - b. Run out of the room as quickly as possible.
 - c. Tell your parent, a police officer, security guard, or other adult what happened.
6. What if you are walking to school in the rain. A car stops and the driver asks if you want a ride. What do you do?
- a. Stay away from the car. You do not need to go close to the car to answer.
 - b. Unless you have your parent's permission to ride with the person, say "No, thank you" If the driver persists, say "No!"
 - c. Tell your teacher when you get to school and tell your parent when you get home.
7. What if you are playing on the playground and an adult comes up to you and asks you to help find his or her lost puppy. What do you do?
- a. If you do not know the person, stay away and go directly home.
 - b. Even if you know the person, do not help. Adults should ask other adults for help. Before you assist, you must get your parent's permission.
 - c. Tell your parent what happened.
8. What if you are walking down the street and someone comes up to you and wants to take your picture. The person asks you to come to his or her house. What do you do?
- a. Stay away from the person and say in a loud voice, "No, I don't want my picture taken!"
 - b. Do not ever go into anyone else's house without your parent's permission.
 - c. Tell your parent about the person.
9. What if an older child you know invites you to play a game, and to pretend that he or

she is the doctor and you are the patient. This child tells you to take off your clothes so that the "doctor" can examine the "patient" What do you do?

- a. Keep your clothes on.
- b. If he or she persists, yell and get away.
- c. Tell your parent.

What-If Exercises for Older Children

1. What if you get on a bus by yourself and a person sits down next to you and puts a hand on your thigh. What do you do?
 - a. State in a clear, loud, firm voice, "No. Take your hand off"
 - b. Move to the front of the bus near the driver.
 - c. Tell the driver and tell your parent when you get home
2. What if, while collecting on your paper route, a customer offers you a beer, puts his or her arm around you, and says you have a fine body? What do you do?
 - a. Tell the customer, "I don't like that, take your arm off me" and get away.
 - b. Tell your parent when you get home.
3. What if a family friend offers you a ride home and, instead of taking you home, drives down a dead end street, parks, and starts rubbing your leg?
 - a. Tell the person "NO! STOP!" in a firm, loud voice.
 - b. Get out of the car, go to the nearest telephone (if you are too far away to walk home), and call your parent. Always carry enough money to make a phone call, or a cell phone.
 - c. Tell your parent what happened.
4. What if you are babysitting for a couple that your family does not know well and the couple returns home late at night. While driving you home, your employer makes suggestions that make you feel uncomfortable. What do you do?
 - a. Refuse to comply. Ignore the driver.
 - b. If the driver stops the car and makes inappropriate advances, say "NO", get out, go to the nearest phone, and call your parent or the police department. Again, always carry enough money to make a phone call, or carry a cell phone.
 - c. Do not baby-sit for these people again. It is much safer to baby-sit for people known to you or your family.
 - d. Tell your parent what happened.

Exercise 2: My Safety Notebook

This exercise will help your child be prepared to avoid situations that could lead to abuse or molestation. The safety notebook can be a loose-leaf notebook or pages fastened together with staples for which your child has made an original cover. The safety notebook provides a place where your child can list emergency telephone numbers, including parents' work numbers and a neighbor or friend's number to be contacted when parents are unavailable. In addition, your child can list the safety rules that you have discussed together. Encourage your child to decorate each page with pictures and drawings that illustrate some of the rules. He or she may also want to list other kinds of safety guidelines, such as rules for bicycle safety.

"My Safety Notebook" is intended to be a fun activity for getting across some serious concerns. It is a personalized reference that can reassure your child in how to respond when confronted by a potentially dangerous situation.

Exercise 3: Child Abuse and Values

While we teach children the core values of respect, kindness and helpfulness, we must make it very clear that no child is expected to place himself/herself in potentially perilous situations. In addition to teaching and modeling the values children need to be prepared to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous situations. A few reminders:

A. If a teacher, coach, or other youth leader, ever asks a child to do something he thinks is bad, the child has the right to say "No!" and tell his parent.

B. Sometimes people who really do not need help will ask for it in order to create an opportunity for abuse. Children should be aware of the rules of safety so that they can recognize situations to be wary of; for example:

1) It is one thing to stand on the sidewalk away from a car to give directions, and something else to get in the car and go with the person to show the way to go. A child should never get into a car without his parent's permission.

2) It may be okay for a child to help a person when there are other people around, but he should never go into another's house unless he has permission from his parents.

3) The child may be taught to be obedient, but a child does not have to obey an adult when that person tells him to do something that the child feels is wrong or that makes the child feel uncomfortable. In these situations, the child should talk with his parent or another trusted adult about his concerns.

Exercise 4: Family Meeting

The most important step a parent can take to protect his or her child from abuse is to establish an atmosphere of open communication in the home. A child must feel comfortable in bringing to his or her parent any sensitive problems or relating experiences in which someone approached the child in an inappropriate manner or in a way that made the child feel uncomfortable. Studies have demonstrated that more than half of all incidents of child abuse are never reported because the victims are too afraid or too confused to report their experiences.

It is important that your children be allowed to talk freely about their likes and dislikes, their friends, and their true feelings. One way to create open communication is through family meetings at which safety issues can be addressed by the entire family. (The "What If . . ." exercises could be done in the context of a family meeting, as could the development of the safety rules for "My Safety Notebook")

As we address the basic rules for child safety, it is important to stress that traditional cautions about "strangers" are not sufficient to protect our children. Child abusers are usually known to the child. Therefore, a more appropriate protection strategy is based upon teaching children to recognize harmful situations or actions. Discuss the following safety rules with your child:

- If you are in a public place and get separated from your parent (or authorized guardian), do not wander around looking for him or her. Go to a police officer, a checkout counter, the security office, or the lost-and-found area and quickly tell that you have been separated from your parent and need help.
- You should not get into a car or go anywhere with any person unless you have your parent's permission.
- If someone follows you on foot or in a car, stay away from him or her. You do not need to go near the car to talk to the person inside.
- Adults and older youth who are not in your family and who need help (such as finding an address or locating a lost pet) should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.
- You should use the buddy system and never go anywhere alone.
- Always ask your parent's permission to go somewhere, especially into someone else's home.
- Never hitchhike.
- Never ride with anyone unless you have your parent's permission.

- No one should ask you to keep a special secret. If this happens, tell your parent or teacher.
- If someone wants to take your picture, tell your parent or teacher.
- No one has the right to touch you on the private parts of your body (parts which would be covered by a bathing suit,) nor should you touch anyone else in those areas. Your body is special and private.
- You have the right to say "No!" to someone who tries to take you somewhere, touches you, or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way. These are some simple safety rules that can be approached in the same non-frightening manner in which you tell your child not to play with fire. They emphasize situations common to many child molestation cases.

Computers and Child Abuse

If your child is alone with his computer - do not assume he is safe. Cyberspace can be dangerous. If your child uses a computer and talks on a network or bulletin board your child can be at risk of child abuse.

It is possible and often very easy for children to access pornographic pictures and stories on their computer. They can even download and print this material. Exposure to pornography is inappropriate for children of any age and can be harmful to their development.

Abusers are using the computer to reach children and make friends with them. When a child begins to feel comfortable with this new friend they may forget that their computer "buddy " is really a stranger. Abusers are very good at making friends with young children. While most computer users are trustworthy people, you cannot be certain who is on the information highway with your child.

You can prevent child abuse by computer if you caution your child not to give out any personal information over the network (such as full name or address). Tell them not to answer any personal questions about themselves. Instruct your child to inform you if someone requests personal information or makes comments that leave your child with uncomfortable feelings.

Know your child's friends, even their e-mail ones. If your child is going to meet someone face to face that they first met through a computer network - check it out. Go with your child. Be aware and supervise just as you would if they were meeting any other stranger.

Consider placing your home computer in a central location, such as the kitchen or family room so that the screen is openly visible. This aids in direct supervision of computer usage as well as deters a child from accessing inappropriate material.

Consider also limiting the amount of time your children and teenagers are allowed to spend solely with the computer. Psychologists warn us that children who spend excessive time with computer or video games may have increased difficulty in relationships with other persons. Pediatricians caution us that excessive sedentary time at computer and video based activities contributes to health and learning problems.

A word about reporting

If you know or suspect that abuse has resulted from computer contact, you should immediately report it to your local police department. Because more than one geographical area may be involved, federal law enforcement authorities may also be contacted by the police. This new type of abuse requires special attention. Working together we can keep our kids safe.

Report Abuse or Neglect of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities.

1-800-252-5400

- Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it.*
- If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency.
- You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

What is Abuse?

Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child

What is Neglect?

Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

How do I make a report?

1. Call the abuse and neglect hotline at 1-800-252-5400.
2. When you make a report, be specific. Tell exactly what happened and when. Be sure to record all injuries or incidents you have observed, including dates and time of day and keep this information secured.
3. Reports should be made as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before bruises and marks start to fade. It is important for the investigators to be able to see the physical signs.

4. Give the agency person any information you have about the relationship between the child and the suspected abuser.

5. Please provide at least the following information in your report.

- Name, age, and address of the child
- Brief description of the child
- Current injuries, medical problems, or behavioral problems
- Parents names and names of siblings in the home

Will the person know I've reported him or her?

Your report is confidential and is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides for immunity from civil or criminal liabilities for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as your report is made in good faith. Your identity is kept confidential.

What if I'm not sure?

If you have reason to suspect child abuse, but are not positive, make the report. If you have any doubts about whether or not it is abuse, call the hotline. They can advise you on whether the signs you have observed are abuse.

If church personnel are involved:

1. Contact civil authorities 800-252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org
2. Contact the bishop or chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria at 361-573-0828.
3. Vicki L. Pyatt, LMSW 361-827-7186 or pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org

Written allegations may be sent to:

Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Victoria
P.O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903
Marked "Personal and Confidential"

Section IV: CONCLUSION

Acceptance at St. Michael Catholic School each year is neither guaranteed nor automatic. Each year the faculty and administration evaluate all students. The Principal reserves the right to ask any student to withdraw or to refuse admission if a student does not appear to be profiting from attendance at St. Michael Catholic School or if other family members cause disruption to the school community.

Teachers have individual practices and procedures in their classrooms that may not be covered in this handbook.

The Pastor and Principal observe the right to amend the handbook. Prompt notification will be given if changes are made.

In all cases, the interpretation of the handbook remains with the Principal and the Pastor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS

This is to verify that we, parents and children listed below, have read and discussed the policies, rules, and regulations outlined in the St. Michael Catholic School Parent/Student Handbook (*reviewed and revised edition 6/2018*) and agree to abide by them.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

(Please print this page and return to the school office.)