



# **St. Michael Catholic School**

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Weimar, Texas 78962  
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**[www.stmichaelswords.org](http://www.stmichaelswords.org)**

## **Student-Parent Handbook**

Revised  
8-1-2023

# ***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 Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Terms form in your Parent Orientation packet.*

*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 Bishops Education Department (TCCBED). The Texas Education Agency recognizes the authority of the Texas Catholic Conference Bishops 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 affiliate 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 August 2022*

## **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 may 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 (grades 2 thru 8), 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.*

**Student/Parent Handbook 2022 - 2023**  
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>SECTION I: SCHOOL AND ADMINISTRATION</b> <b>Page 5</b>		<b>SECTION IV cont.</b>	
Goals and Objectives.....	6	Instructional Resources.....	20
Governance.....	9	Physical Education.....	20
Mission Statement.....	5	Promotion/Graduation.....	20
Organizational Chart.....	11	Promotion and Retention.....	18
Philosophy.....	5	Standardized Testing.....	21
School Colors.....	5	<b>SECTION V: ATTENDANCE</b> <b>Page 21</b>	
School History.....	7	Arrival Procedures.....	24
School Song.....	5	Dismissal Procedures.....	25
Tagline.....	5	Excused Absence Make-up Work	
Vision Statement.....	5	Procedure.....	23
<b>SECTION II: PARENT'S ROLE IN EDUCATION</b> <b>Page 12</b>		Excused Absences.....	22
Parent Support of Administration and/or Policies and Regulations.....	12	Prior Assignment Due Dates.....	23
Sacramental Programs .....	13	Prior Principal Approval Procedures.....	22
<b>SECTION III: ADMISSIONS/TRANSFER/WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION</b> <b>Page 13</b>		Release of Students.....	23
Admission .....	13	Tardiness.....	24
Nondiscriminatory Policy.....	13	Tardy to Class.....	24
Other Fees.....	15	Unexcused Absence Makeup Work	
Provisional Enrollment.....	14	Procedure.....	23
Registration.....	14	Unexcused Absences.....	23
Tuition and After School Program		<b>SECTION VI: ATHLETICS/CHEERLEADING</b> <b>Page 26</b>	
Payments.....	15	Athletic Eligibility.....	27
Withdrawing a Student.....	14	Athletic Physicals .....	27
<b>SECTION IV: ACADEMIC INFORMATION</b> <b>Page 15</b>		Athletic Policies.....	26
Academic Honesty.....	17	Athletic Uniforms.....	27
Academic Honor Roll.....	17	Cheerleaders.....	27
Academic, Sports, Religion, and Service		<b>SECTION VII: DISCIPLINE</b> <b>Page 27</b>	
Awards.....	18	After School Program (ASP) Expected	
Accelerated Reader (AR).....	18	Behavior.....	34
Curriculum.....	16	Discipline Referral to the Principal-	
Family Life and Guidance.....	16	Consequences.....	31
Field Trips/Education Off-Campus		Expected Bus Behavior.....	34
Outings.....	19	Expected Cafeteria Behavior.....	33
Grades/Progress Reports.....	17	Expected Classroom Behavior.....	29
Grades/Report Cards .....	16	Expected Playground Behavior.....	33
Homework.....	18	General Classroom Discipline.....	29
		General Guidelines.....	27
		Harassment/Bullying Policy.....	30
		Procedure.....	30
		Severe Disruptions.....	29
		Suspension and Expulsion.....	32
		Weapons.....	31

<b>SECTION VIII: DRESS CODE/UNIFORM POLICY</b>		<b>Page 35</b>
Boys.....	35	
Free Dress Days.....	36	
Girls.....	35	
Mass Attire For Junior High Boys.....	35	
Mass Attire For Junior High Girls.....	36	
P.E. Uniforms for Grades 5-8.....	36	
Personal Appearance.....	37	
Spirit Day (Thursday).....	36	
Uniforms.....	35	
Winter Wear.....	36	
<b>SECTION IX: SCHOOL SAFETY</b>		<b>Page 37</b>
Accidents.....	37	
Child Abuse Laws.....	38	
Disaster Procedures.....	38	
Hazards.....	39	
Safe Environment.....	40	
Unwanted Visitors.....	39	
<b>SECTION X: HEALTH AND WELLNESS</b>		<b>Page 40</b>
Allergies.....	41	
Basic First Aid.....	41	
General Health Guidelines and Records....	40	
Guidelines for Excluding Students from School and Readmission to School.....	45	
Immunizations.....	41	
Medication.....	42	
Morality.....	43	
Note on Provisional Enrollment.....	42	
Regulation on Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs.....	43	
Student Illness.....	45	
Wellness.....	45	
<b>SECTION XI: OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION</b>		<b>Page 46</b>
After School Program (ASP).....	46	
Appeals Process.....	46	
Cafeteria.....	47	
Cell Phones.....	47	
Communication.....	48	
Library.....	48	
<b>SECTION XI cont.</b>		
Open Forum Policy (School Advisory Council).....	48	
Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	49	
Party Invitations, Balloons, Flower Bouquets, Etc.....	49	
Religious Activities.....	49	
Room Parent Activities.....	49	
School Calendar.....	50	
School Parties.....	50	
Special Needs.....	50	
Street Closure.....	50	
Student Ambassadors.....	50	
Student Records.....	51	
Textbooks.....	51	
Visitors to the School.....	52	
<b>SECTION XII: INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY</b>		<b>Page 53</b>
Account Information.....	53	
Agreement Form .....	55	
Disciplinary Action.....	54	
General Information for Internet Users.....	53	
Introduction .....	53	
Mission Statement of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria.....	53	
Online Conduct.....	54	
School Responsibility.....	54	
User Responsibility.....	54	
<b>SECTION XIII: OFFICE OF SAFE ENVIRONMENT</b>		<b>Page 56</b>
How to Protect Children from Child Abuse (A Parents' Guide)		
<b>SECTION XIV: CONCLUSION</b>		<b>Page 66</b>
Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Terms (To be signed and returned)		

## **Section I: SCHOOL AND ADMINISTRATION**

### ***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.*

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

***Tagline: Building Faith, Achieving Excellence***

***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 for 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 104-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. The Kenedy Foundation also provided funds for a new security fence around the school property in 2019. Chromebooks for students in grades 1-4 were added in 2021 thanks to a contribution from the Stanzel Family Foundation.

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 and students in Grades 1 – 8 have a Chromebook available for use, making the latest technology accessible to every student.

The success of this philosophy is evident as graduates, who make up only about one-tenth 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, rooted in Christ, 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 Bishops 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*).

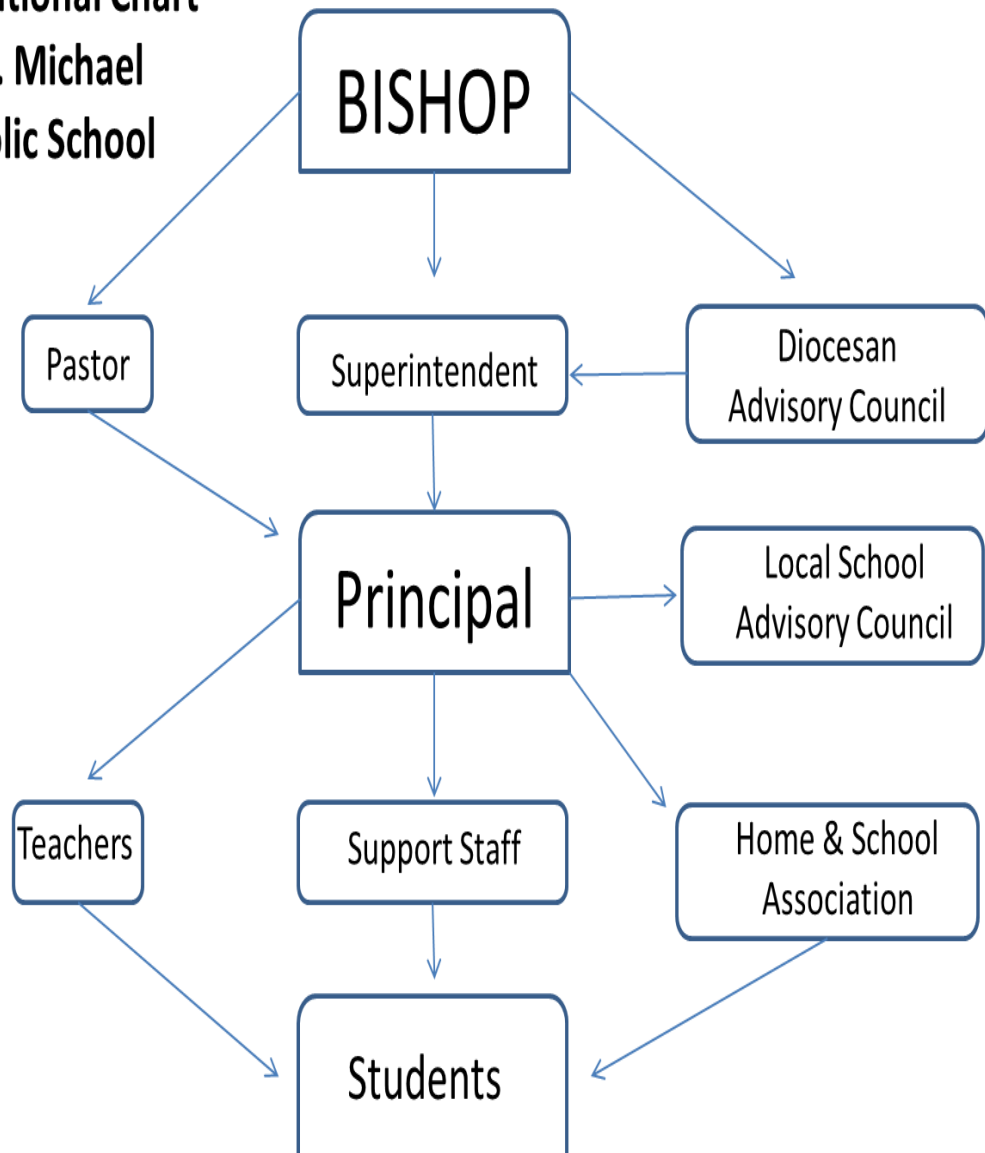
### **Teacher**

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 and is picked up on time; 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 **8:30 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 office in advance if your child will be picked up early, i.e. doctor's appointment.
- Notify the school office of any changes in marital status, custody, 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 operations budget.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- If you have an issue with a teacher, an assignment, or classroom policy or procedure, you must speak with the teacher before speaking to the principal.
- Treat teachers, school support 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 FB page and website ([www.stmichaelswords.org](http://www.stmichaelswords.org)), and show interest in your student's total education.
- **Respect the need for school safety and security.** Check in at the front office when visiting campus and be prepared to show ID. The office staff will have you sign in and issue you a visitor's badge before you are allowed to go anywhere on campus other than the front office. Return the badge at the completion of your visit, and the office staff will sign you out as a visitor.
- 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](http://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.

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. There is no social promotion or “skipping” grades per TCCBED guidelines.

Admission records from all previous schools, verification of presented records, and certified birth certificate are required for enrollment. If a person enrolls a child under 11 years of age in school and does not provide the valid prior school information or documentation required, the school will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency before the 31<sup>st</sup> day after the person fails to comply according to the Diocese of Victoria Catholic Schools Policy 5118.1 – *Recordkeeping for Assisting in the location of Missing Children under 11 years of age*.

### **Provisional Enrollment – see *Immunizations***

### **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:

- ☐ State birth certificate (from Bureau of Vital Statistics)
- ☐ Baptismal Certificate (Catholics or those desiring sacramental preparation)
- ☐ Current immunization records
- ☐ 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 registration forms

In addition, the following documentation is required and must be provided for students who were previously enrolled in another 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 After School Program Payments and Other Fees**

The School Advisory Council sets tuition rates, registration fees, after school care rates, and other 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 during the registration and admission period. St. Michael Catholic School's tuition and After School Program fees are paid via FACTS Tuition Management Company. They offer several payment options using either ACH (automatic draft) or credit card payments. Using ACH allows you to establish a payment draft date convenient for you. FACTS charges an annual processing fee for their service. If you choose not to establish an account with FACTS, you will need to pay tuition in full, cash or check, by August 18 of the current school year, or in two payments with the first half (50%) due August 18 and the second half due by January 18 of the current school year. There will be a late fee assessed for past due tuition payments. 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.**

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, etc. throughout the school year, tuition and other fees must be kept up to date, month to month.

**Home & School Association (HSA) Dues:** \$10 per family, required

**HSA Class Fees:** \$25 per student, required, to cover the cost of fundraising donations from the class, the spring picnic raffle donation, and class parties

**Sports:** Students in grades 4 thru 8 are assessed an additional fee for participation in fall and/or spring sports.

**Fine Arts:** Students in grades 5 thru 8 are assessed a fine arts fee to cover the cost of art supplies, sheet music, and general instrument maintenance and repairs.

**Technology Fees:** \$25 per student in all grades

### **Section IV: ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

St. Michael Catholic School is the parish school of Saint Michael Catholic Church and the mission church in Dubina, and as 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 curricula which utilize the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and meets the accreditation standards of the Texas Catholic Conference Bishops Educational Department (TCCBED.)



## **Curriculum**

The curriculum at SMCS consists of all learning experiences of the child that come under the supervision of the school. These experiences are planned and organized to meet the school's educational goals and to help each student to become a self-supporting and contributing member of society and the Catholic Church. Instruction will be in accord with the Curriculum Guides approved by the Office of Catholic Schools and approved for use in the Diocese of Victoria. SMCS offers its student opportunities in the following subjects: religion, English-language arts and reading, mathematics, science, social studies, speech, fine arts, Spanish, health, physical education and computer technology.

## **Family Life and Guidance**

In addition, education in human sexuality is integrated into the religion curriculum which provides Catholic Christian human sexuality and family living appropriate to the age and maturity of the students and in accordance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Guidelines entitled Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Life-long Learning. The curriculum, which qualifies for Article 12 of the USCCB Chapter for the Protection of Children and Young People, used at SMCS is Benziger Family Life available for grades 1 – 8 and Theology of the Body for Middle School Teens for grade 8, thus, satisfying Safe Environment requirements for students in these grades. (*Office of Catholic Schools Policy 6332*)

## **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 FACTS on-line system for maintaining student records. Parents may view their student's grades via FACTS Parent's Web by the second week of each quarter. Grades may not be available during the final week of the quarter when report cards are being printed. A duplicate record is kept in the student's file at the end of each school year. Grades in the subject areas will be based on academic achievement. The grading scales are as follows:

### *Grade PK and K*

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

### *Grade 1*

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

### *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

*Core Subjects are: Religion, English, Math, Reading, Science, and Social Studies*

#### *Other Subjects*

S: Satisfactory Progress  
N: Needs Improvement

#### *Conduct Codes*

S: Satisfactory

N: Needs Improvement

U: Unsatisfactory

*For grades 2-8: Each quarter grades are determined by the following percentages:*

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

### **Grades/Progress Reports**

The FACTS Parent Portal provides up-to-date information including homework assignments and grades entered by the teacher. While grades are generally entered weekly, teachers will have all grades for a 9-week reporting period entered by the progress report deadline as to provide a mid-point progress report (on-line) for parents.

### **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, Commendable (3 or fewer days absent) or Perfect Attendance, Honors, High Honors, State PSIA, Service, Sports, and Physical Fitness. Graduation or Promotion Exercises are held for grades PK4, Kindergarten, and grade 8.

### **Accelerated Reader (AR)**

This supplemental 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 fluency and 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 5-8 receive a test grade for each 9-week grading period and may be eligible for an end-of-year award.

### **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 will 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 an assignment is missing without good reason, the student may receive a zero "0" until the missing work is completed and turned in to the teacher. A penalty of five points per day will be taken up to ten days, not to exceed the quarter. Work not turned in by this time, will remain or be entered as a zero. Three zero's in any class results in 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. The principal, in consultation with the superintendent of schools, will make the final decision.

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/ Educational Off-Campus Outings

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 to include emergency and medical information, will be allowed to participate. The school may accept a verified, signed permission and medical form that has been FAXED or scanned and emailed from the parent/guardian. When possible, school buses will be used for transporting students on off-campus educational outings; otherwise, Safe Environment trained drivers with the required minimal insurance and the required number of adult, Safe Environment trained chaperones will be arranged by the teacher, in consultation with administration.

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 attending must be Safe Environment compliant.** Safe Environment training is offered at SMCS two times per year, early fall and spring. Additional locations and dates may be available.
- ☐ For all trips other than interscholastic athletics, supervision of one adult per ten students (two adults per twenty students) is required. For trips with students in the early childhood program (3K, 4K, 5K) supervision of two adults per three to five students is recommended. All chaperones will follow Diocesan Safe Environment guidelines.

### **Instructional Resources**

Instructional resources available in the community will be incorporated into the curriculum as much as possible to enhance the teaching-learning process. SMCS maintains a well-organized library and media center in accordance with TCCBED Guidelines, for use by the students and staff.

### **Physical Education**

Participation in P.E. is mandatory for all students in accordance with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and TCCBED 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.

### **Promotion/Graduation**

Completion of the final year of elementary school is actually a promotion to the next grade, and is to be governed by the same criteria as established for other grades. Promotion from eighth grade may be marked by a modest exercise that gives recognition to the unique value of the phase of Christian education just completed. However, schools will avoid elaborate ceremonies that would overestimate the educational accomplishment, social events that would be inappropriate for the level of maturity of the students, or other arrangements that would entail undue expense for parents.

### **Standardized Testing**

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

### ***Section V: ATTENDANCE***

Parents are responsible for the regular school attendance of students. State law requires students must be in attendance 90% (162 days) of the school year to receive credit. *The 90% rule applies to all absences, including excused absences.* The principal will use discretion in determining excused or unexcused absences. 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 school secretary, 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 and with prior written notice, verified as authentic, or by phone call.
2. A third party authorized by parents must be personally identified by student or known to the principal or staff member and must present to the office for the student to be released.
3. 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 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 under consultation with the superintendent of schools. **Per Office of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Victoria, the superintendent of schools will be notified when a student has 10 or more absences.**

When a child is absent, the parent/guardian is to notify the school office by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. Work for that day and any homework assigned will be available for pick up from 3:30 – 4:00 p.m. in the office. We will automatically send work with a sibling when the student has one. 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. Junior high students who leave school during the day may check in with their teachers prior to leaving to gather assignments and homework and may ask a peer to gather items on subsequent days of absence which may be picked up prior to the 3:30 dismissal. However, all assignments may not be available until 3:30 p.m.

**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, reason for the absence, and any physical limitations due to illness or injury. A verified email will be accepted. 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 – If a student is unable to come to school due to illness or for medical visits that cannot be schedule outside of the school day.
- Livestock Show – Student participation in the local livestock show will be recorded as a school activity as long as participation can be verified by the sponsoring organization, i.e. County 4-H Agent. 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 for the additional stock show participation.
- 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. **Vacations during the school year are highly discouraged, particularly in grades K-8, due to mandatory, compensatory state law for attendance.**

#### **Prior Principal Approval Procedure**

- Notify the school secretary prior to the absence in writing or via email (copying the principal) noting 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 in consultation with the principal. The highest grade allowed for incomplete work and work turned in after the due date will be a 70.
- Failure to follow this procedure will void *prior principal approval* and the absence will be considered unexcused.

### **Excused Absence Make-up Work Procedure**

When a student has an excused absence that did not require prior principal approval, he/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.

### **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 provide an extension in 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 7:50 a.m. is tardy and must report to the office for a tardy slip. Younger students may be held in the office until morning announcements are completed.**

- Any student who has an unexcused tardy will not be eligible for Perfect or Commendable Attendance.
- Excused tardiness includes, but is not limited to, medical and dental appointments and does not result in detention.
- **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 the 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, i.e. 7<sup>th</sup> tardy fined \$10, 8<sup>th</sup> tardy fined an additional \$10, etc.

### **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**

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students will be dropped off before 7:45 a.m. and picked up at 3:15 p.m. in the circular driveway in front of the Pre-Kindergarten building. Students in grades 1-4 will be dropped off before 7:45 a.m. and picked up at 3:25 in the parking lot in front of the white building. Students in grades 5-8 will be dropped off before 7:45 a.m. and picked up at 3:30 p.m. in front of the brick building.

**ANY STUDENTS IN GRADES PK THRU 4 WHO ARRIVE AFTER THE 7:45 A.M. BELL MUST BE ESCORTED TO THE FRONT OFFICE BY A PARENT SINCE THERE WILL BE NO ONE ON DUTY OUTSIDE AFTER 7:45 A.M. DO NOT DROP THESE STUDENTS OFF IN FRONT OF ANY SCHOOL BUILDINGS WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION. THE PARENT OF A PRE-K OR KINDERGARTEN STUDENT MAY BE ASKED TO ESCORT THE STUDENT TO THE CLASSROOM WHEN THE OFFICE IS SHORT-STAFFED.**

## Dismissal Procedures

Walkers in grades 3K through 4<sup>th</sup> will go to the brick building when dismissed. All walkers and those going to the *Boys & Girls Club* will be released first. Any walker who does not report for dismissal on time will be held until the car-line has ended and then he/she will be released to walk home.

Upon initial registration, 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, particularly when the authorized person is not listed on the emergency card.

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 and Kindergarten students will be dismissed in the circular drive in front of the Pre-K building at 3:15. The teacher or staff member on duty will bring the student to the car. Students in grades 1-4 will dismiss in front of the white building at 3:25. Two teachers will be on duty to assist students into their car. Students in grades 5-8 will be dismissed in front of the brick building at 3:30 p.m.
2. Junior high students are dismissed to homerooms at 3:25 p.m.
3. Duty teachers will be stationed at the front of each building 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 car line. **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.** If you have a large travel trailer or animal trailer in tow, please call the office in advance to let us know where you will need to park in order to pick up your child and avoid backing up the car line. 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 TCCBED guidelines).
4. Teachers will be stationed in the hallway near their class relaying information to students, monitoring the front entry, and assisting with dismissal of students.
5. Students walking home and those going to the local *Boys & Girls Club* will be dismissed first followed by students going to the After School Care program. Then we will begin dismissing students whose parents are in the car line. **Parents must follow Texas law regarding no use of cell phones in a school zone and rules on car seats and child safety seats (booster) seats.**

6. Any student remaining after 3:45 p.m. may be sent to the After School Program if space is available, at the expense of the parent/guardian. A parent/guardian will be contacted for immediate pick up.

## ***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, tennis, 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 or adult from a game or a student from the team for serious disruptions, infractions, or failure to follow DVAL or school policy including the school's mission statement. 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 the core subjects and an S in all other subjects and demonstrate proper attitude and behavior.
- ☐ All fees and tuition are paid in full and up to date, month to month.
- ☐ Students are under the direct supervision of the athletic director, coaches or designated sponsors while participating in sports or cheer.
- ☐ 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 athletic director or administrator to leave the premises of an athletic event.
- ☐ Students are to return home from out-of-town games with the same driver/chaperone with the exception of returning with a parent or parent-authorized person, **verified in writing by the athletic director or administrator**.
- ☐ Bus transportation will be provided when possible for those events that require students to leave prior to regular dismissal. The proper permission form and emergency form must be on file and will be taken on the bus with the driver and chaperone(s). When volunteers are needed to drive students to events occurring prior to general dismissal, the school will follow the Diocese of Victoria Transportation Policy to include Safe Environment compliance and proper driver and insurance requirements.
- ☐ Alcohol is not to be present or consumed at any school-sponsored athletic function or event when students are present. Illegal drugs should never be found or consumed on school property.
- ☐ Parents and students are asked to help clean up our gym/field and clean up their area at the opposing school gym/field 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. 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 by the Athletic Director. Parents are notified by 1:00 p.m. on Monday if the student is ineligible to practice and/or play for that week. If the student is passing all classes the following Monday morning, he/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/her physical prior to the school year **may not practice or play** in the sport until his/her physical is complete and verified by the principal.

### **Athletic Uniforms**

Athletic uniform shirts and cheerleading spirit shirts may be worn to school on the day of a game. If Mass falls on this day, the Mass uniform will be worn. The principal has the discretion to remove or extend this privilege.

### **Cheerleaders**

Students from grades 5-8 are eligible for cheerleading. Cheerleaders are to maintain satisfactory academic work, be responsible, and demonstrate qualities of leadership, courtesy, respect, poise, and friendliness. To be eligible for cheerleader, a student is to obtain three teachers' signatures that currently teach the student and then 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 subject to being withheld for academic penalty and/or disciplinary infraction per administrative decision.***

## ***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. Emphasis will be placed on the individual growth of the student involved in a disciplinary infraction.

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 best education possible to help them meet their full potential as God wills. Students in grades 1 – 8 sign a creed (code of conduct) which is aimed at developing sound character, responsibility, and citizenship. Even though it is an “imposed” code, it provides for the exercise of self-control, which creates an atmosphere conducive to learning, maintaining conditions essential to the orderly operations of the school, and prepares the student for effective participation in adult life. No student has a right to interfere with the teacher’s ability to teach or with a student’s ability to learn. Behavior that is harmful to the good order of the school, to oneself, or to one’s peers is to be avoided. Unacceptable behavior at school or any school-related activity constitutes the following and is subject to the classroom/school discipline procedures: corrective or punitive action including referral to the principal/pastor:

1. **Disturbing Class:** Any disturbance that interferes with another student’s opportunity to learn, including, but not limited to: excessive talking, continually making disruptive noises, continual blurting out or rudely interrupting others who have the floor, slamming books or lockers, playing with toys, or throwing items
2. **Insubordination:** Argumentative, uncooperative, refusal to follow directions, ignores or outwardly defies authority figures
3. **General/Blatant Disrespect:** In words or actions to any teacher, aide, support staff, or another student, or any other legitimate authority
4. **Uniform Violation:** Improperly dressed or not following the uniform dress code policy after verbal and written warning
5. **Chewing Gum:** Students may not chew gum at school or at school events that are held on school grounds
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 teacher will assign a penalty and refer the student to the office. Generally, consequences for cheating or plagiarizing are a zero (0) on the assignment/test, notification to parent, and a minimum of ½ day of in-school suspension (ISS). Additional offenses of plagiarism will result in further disciplinary action which may include out-of-school suspension and consultation with the pastor regarding expulsion.
7. **Harassment:** 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*). (See SMCS Policy to follow.)

### **Expected Classroom Behavior**

The students are responsible for the following:

- ☐ Follow the school's mission to be friendly, respectful, responsible, and Christ-like
- ☐ Sign and adhere to the creed for students (grades 1-8)
- ☐ Follow the rules set forth by the classroom teacher
- ☐ Be considerate and courteous to others, treating the principal, 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 and do the same when you are a guest at other schools and churches
- ☐ 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 he/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; Choking or grabbing around someone's neck
- ☐ 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**

All students must respect and abide by principles of good, Catholic, moral conduct. 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. 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. Harassment 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;
- Using language that is intended to insult or discriminate against another based on a protected class;
- Ridiculing an individual because of physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference;
- Threats that are intended to intimidate another;
- Demanding money, material goods or favors by means of threat or force;
- Graffiti designed to intimidate or embarrass;
- Inciting others to commit acts of bullying; 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.

**PROCEDURE:** Students or their parents, faculty, and staff are to report all allegations or believed cases of harassment to the principal. All allegations will be promptly investigated. Persons who allege harassment/bullying by others should, to the extent possible, maintain evidence of the alleged incident(s). Accordingly, harassment involving any student or staff member shall be investigated and appropriate disciplinary action shall be promptly taken. Incidents of harassment are to be reported directly to the school administrator either by the victim, victim's parent, a witness, or faculty/staff member to whom the incident was first

reported. The report should be made in writing indicating the date and time (if known) of incident, name of victim(s), any witnesses, name and/or description of person(s) being indicated as committing the act of harassment, and the specific details of the incident. An adult should assist any student under the age of nine when completing the report. The report may be made in writing or via school email to the principal. The proper disciplinary action against any person found to be in violation of this policy will be determined by the principal. *Refer to #7 above under General Guidelines for Discipline.* Any false reports of harassment/bullying may result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

### **Weapons**

The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Victoria provide a safe environment for all individuals. It is a crime for any person, student, or non-student, to carry a firearm or any other type of dangerous weapon within 1,000 feet of school property, onto a school campus or bus, or at a school-sponsored athletic, social, or extracurricular event (18 U.S. Code 922(q)(2)(A)). The possession, use, or distribution of weapons by student, parents, or visitors is strictly prohibited in Catholic schools of the diocese of Victoria, on school premises, or at any school-sponsored activity. Any threat of bodily harm or threat of the possession of a weapon shall be taken seriously. (See Harassment policy regarding reporting procedures.) Any such threats and any false reports of such threats may result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

A “weapon” is any object, device, or instrument designed as a weapon, capable of producing bodily injury, or used for the purpose of threatening or intimidating another person, including, but not limited to, loaded and/or unloaded firearms, knives, explosive devices, and any other object modified or intended to serve as a weapon. No student parent, or visitor will possess, use, or distribute any weapon or any object, device or instrument having the appearance of a weapon, including, but not limited to, weapons which may be broken or non-functional, look-alike weapons, toy guns or knives, or any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.

Any student found in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, a report to the authorities and permanent expulsion.

### **DISCIPLINE: Referral to the Principal - 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. The pastor, administrator, administrative assistant, any teacher or support staff member has the authority to correct any student any time while on the school campus or at any church/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 during the period 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 students. 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, and the student will receive an academic penalty of a zero for each core subject for each day of suspension. The parent/guardian must accompany the student to a 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 pastor, 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:

- Confer with the student, the teacher(s), the parent(s)/guardian(s), the pastor, and the superintendent of schools 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.
- File the notification of the decision to expel with the superintendent of schools.
- Parents will be notified of their right to appeal the action according to procedures specified by **Policy 5500: Complaint Procedure for Students and Parents**.

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

**Note:** Allegations of sexual assault and serious criminal offenses will be reported to the authorities, and other misdemeanors may be reported to authorities. In Texas a person can be charged in a juvenile court for criminal offenses committed on or after his/her 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. A person who is at least 10 years old and under the age of 17 can be charged as a juvenile. Once a person turns 17 in Texas, h/she is legally considered an adult, and any criminal charges would be handled in adult court. Administration or designee will notify parents/guardians of any student the police seek to question. Minor children should not be questioned unless a parent or legal guardian is present. The school will cooperate fully with the local and state police while safeguarding the rights of both students and parents.

Ordinarily, police will conduct investigations regarding the behavior of students outside of school hours and away from school grounds, outside of school. In the event this does not occur, the school official will attempt to contact the parent/guardian, take down the name, badge number, and agency name of the authority, and secure a copy of the arrest/search warrant or the order taking the child into custody. The school official will ask where the student will be detained so that the school official can advise the parents/guardians.

**In addition to the code of conduct (creed) for students, the following are expected behaviors in specific areas or programs at school:**

#### **Expected Playground Behavior**

- ☐ Play in designated areas only.
- ☐ Follow the direction of the on-duty adult.
- ☐ Keep playground free of all litter.
- ☐ Do not enter the street.
- ☐ Do not 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.
- ☐ Students will observe and practice proper table manners.
- ☐ Students are not to waste, throw, or play with food.
- ☐ 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.

- ☐ Students in PK thru grade 4 will eat in silence the first 10 minutes of their lunch period before being allowed to socialize in order to promote good eating habits and learn time management.
- ☐ All faculty, staff, students, and guests will observe periods of silence during Lent or other times designated by administration or the on-duty teacher(s).
- ☐ A student may eat with a parent/guardian or an authorized grandparent/adult sibling who has followed the procedure for notifying the school and reported to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor's badge. The student and his/her guest will sit at a designated area in the cafeteria away from other students to preserve a *safe environment* per the policy for Catholic schools as set forth by the Diocese of Victoria and the TCCBED. The student and his/her guest are expected to follow the rules for cafeteria behavior during this visit.

### **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, chaperone, and peers at all times.
- ☐ Riders are never to 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 never to shout or scream at anyone inside or outside the bus.
- ☐ Riders are to keep the bus free from trash (use the trash can on the bus), never throwing anything inside or outside of the bus, and assist with cleaning the bus as assigned.
- ☐ Riders are not to 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 without permission from the driver.

The bus may be used to transport students on off-campus educational outings (field trips) or to extracurricular activities. When a bus rider chooses not to behave as expected, h/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, h/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. Insubordination and defiance will not be tolerated.
2. Move appropriately throughout campus during program hours.
3. Follow instructions set forth by the 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 Assistant Director and/or school administrator who serves as the director.

*After School Program (ASP)* 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.

Parents are required to read the *After School Program Handbook* and sign an application form prior to enrollment. ASP is reserved for and designed to serve up to 25 SMCS students from PK thru grade 4. Applications are accepted on a first come, first served basis.

### ***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 **5 inches** above the knee. Jumpers, skirts, or dresses should be no shorter than **3 inches** above the knee. Measurement will be taken from the floor while student is kneeling. Girls must wear shorts underneath a jumper or skirt. Belts, worn with belt loops, should be brown or black (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, walking shorts, skorts or capris pants. Leggings are to be worn under a skirt, skort, or shorts only.
- Navy or khaki jumper or skirt
- Blue jeans (pants or capris only) – not on Mass days
- Kelly green or white polo shirt, short sleeve or long sleeve (Kelly green polo required for field trips)
- Black or brown belt (optional unless belt loops are present)
- Athletic shoes
- *NO blue jeans or shorts on Mass days*

#### **Boys**

- Navy or khaki slacks or walking shorts
- Blue jeans (pants only) – not on Mass days
- Kelly green or white polo shirt, short sleeve or long sleeve (Kelly green polo required for field trips)
- Black or brown belt (optional unless belt loops are present)
- 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
- Optional navy vest, sweater, or blazer for cooler weather
- Black or brown non-marking soled dress shoes or 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 with navy or khaki pants and athletic 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 shorts 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 with a navy or khaki skirt or jumper and athletic shoes. Shirts should be tucked in during Mass.**

#### **Winter Wear (November 1 through February 28)**

- Black, navy, or gray athletic pants may be worn in **grades Pre-K through 4 only**. (NEVER ON MASS DAYS)
- Non-uniform coats or jackets may be worn during cooler months.

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

- Approved black mesh shorts (required shorts length of no shorter than **5 inches** above the knee)
- 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 unless approved by the principal
- No flip flops, open-toe shoes or boots for PK- 4, or high heels are permitted
- 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 individuals. SMCS has a Crisis Management Plan in accordance with diocesan policy and receives training and safety updates from the Diocese of Victoria, Texas Education Agency, Region 3 Education Service Center, and the Texas State Texas School Safety Center, including the *I Love U Guys*® Foundation for Standard Response Protocol for Teachers and Students. Assistance of the local and/or state police departments is sought in training and planning and evaluating school safety.

Routine drills are conducted for protection against the following: fire, inclement weather, active shooter, and intruders. Additional emergency procedures are provided for other areas of threat, including but not limited to, a bomb threat and a civil defense emergency. Faculty, staff, and students are trained utilizing emergency drill procedures. Verbal commands and codes (bell tones) are used to alert faculty, staff, and students to a potential threat to safety. When the command is announced or an alarm is sounded for a drill, students must quickly and silently go to their assigned places without running, unless instructed by administration, faculty, or staff to do so. They are to remain there until administration or designee gives the signal to return. 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. SMCS uses a NOAA weather radio and refers to the local radio, and weather app for communication and assistance in decision-making during inclement weather.

## **Accidents**

Accidents in the school building, on a bus, or on the school grounds or during any school related activity should be reported to the person in charge who will secure additional

assistance to attend to the accident/injury. The accident/injury will be reported to administration. The on-duty personnel in charge of the student is responsible for completing the accident/injury report. Proper medical action will be taken in accordance with diocesan policy, starting with basic first aid, contacting the parent/guardian, and/or seeking emergency assistance. If emergency care is needed and administration cannot reach the parent/guardian, he/she will follow the procedures on the student's emergency card. No student will be sent home because of illness or injury unless the parent/guardian or other designated caregiver is informed and provides transportation. Accident insurance, provided by the school, is available for any student who is injured at school or during a school related activity in the event the student needs medical care for the accident/injury.

#### *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.

#### **Child Abuse Laws**

St. Michael School has a moral obligation to protect and value children as Jesus did, school personnel are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect under provisions of Chapter 261 of the Texas Family Code. This law states that a person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report. A report is made to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services who has the authority to investigate a report of child abuse or neglect by presenting valid ID to school personnel. Notification will be made to the school principal who will provide a secure room for the interview. A report may also be made to local law enforcement authorities. (Refer to the section on *How to Protect Children from Child Abuse, A Parent's Guide*)

#### **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. Close any windows and doors and exit the building.
3. Walk to assigned place briskly, in single file, and 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 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, even if a parent/guardian, will be asked to leave the school by the principal or authorized personnel. If the visitor refuses to leave, the principal or authorized person will activate emergency service (911).

### **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 SDS (Safety Data Sheets, formerly 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 by a local, authorized company who provides a report to the proper authority, and a record of this inspection is kept in the school office.
  6. Personnel are trained on the policy of Blood Borne Pathogens and universal precautions as required by OSHA and according to the TCCBED 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 TCCBED.

### **Safe Environment**

All personnel and volunteers who work with or have contact with the students are required to complete 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 and Transportation Policy for the Diocese of Victoria. Refer to the *Code of Pastoral Conduct* under the Safe Environment tab on the diocesan website found at [victoriadiocese.org](http://victoriadiocese.org).

## ***Section X: HEALTH AND WELLNESS***

Catholic tradition teaches us that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and need to be respected and nurtured as such. As educators we must do all in our power to advance this tradition of respect and care for our bodies both for ourselves and our students.

### **General Health Guidelines and Records**

St. Michael Catholic School follows all federal, state and local civic regulations including, but not limited to, the areas of asbestos, immunizations, health screenings, communicable diseases, hazardous materials, child abuse training and reporting, and transportation. Additionally, health and safety instructions and services will be provided for all students in compliance with the State Health Department and TCCBED. SMCS will follow guidelines on health and medical procedures as outline in the TCCBED Health Manual.

As a school in the Diocese of Victoria, SMCS will maintain health data on students. The health record will contain the following:

- Student's name, date of birth, and name, address, and telephone of parent/guardian
- Name and phone number of the student's physician
- Record of immunization history (according to state law)
- Results of vision, hearing, spinal, and Acanthosis Nigricans screenings (dates) and notation of any referrals and results
- Physical condition/chronic conditions (including allergies)

In addition, an emergency card will be maintained on file and updated annually or as necessary and include the following:

- Student's name
- Parent/guardian's names, address, and phone numbers
- Parent/guardian's place of employment and phone numbers
- Persons to contact in case of emergency, address, and phone numbers
- Allergies and medical conditions
- Signed consent/release for emergency medical treatment

### **Basic First Aid**

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 card 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 card.

TCCED requires a minimum of two full-time employees of the school be certified in first aid and two who are certified in CPR to include the use of AED equipment. St. Michael's complies with this policy, providing more than two certified staff members trained in First Aid, CPR, and the use of AED equipment. First aid supplies are available in all classrooms, gym, cafeteria, on buses, and in the main office and teacher workroom. First aid is rendered according to the Red Cross First Aid Book.

### **Allergies**

It is the responsibility of the anaphylactic or potentially anaphylactic child's parents/guardians to inform the school principal of their child's allergy. TCCBED *recommends* that the student wear a MedicAlert® bracelet that states his or her allergy/allergies and the location of his/her epinephrine auto-injector(s). The parent/guardian of a student who has been issued a prescription for an Epinephrine Auto-Injector shall deliver two (2) to the school administrator/nurse for use in case of emergency. In addition, an individual treatment protocol needs to be established by the child's physician. The school cannot assume responsibility for treatment in the absence of such a protocol. A copy of this must be delivered to the school office/administrator along with the non-expired medication and diocesan medication permission form.

### **Immunizations**

Every student enrolled in a Catholic School in the State of Texas shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infections 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, per TCCBED regulation, is a medical exemption signed by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) authorized to practice in the State of Texas, including the physician's license number.

A list of current immunization requirements can be found at [immunizetexas.com](http://immunizetexas.com) or you may request a copy from the school office.

**Note on 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 and/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.

### **Medication**

All prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications will be kept in the school office according to TCCBED guidelines. We will follow the Diocese of Victoria policy on rules for storing and administering inhalers and Epi-pens. We are unable to accept any medication in an unlabeled container or plastic bag. In addition, we are unable to administer any medication that has expired.

#### *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 Medication*

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.

#### *Cough Drops*

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.

### *Sunscreen*

Sunscreens are regulated by the FDA and are to be treated at school like any other medication, with the appropriate medication permission form on file in the school office.

The following items will not be used at SMCS as specified in the TCCBED Health Manual and in accordance with FDA regulations as potential allergens and/or hormone disruptors:

Essential oils, scented sprays, scented diffusers, candles, or insect repellent.

**Note:** A parent may apply insect repellent to his/her child before school and elect to report to the school office to reapply as needed.

### **Morality**

#### *Pregnancy*

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 5213.1*, in the event of student pregnancy, and all policies apply equally to the new mother and new father, where applicable.

Furthermore, *abortion*, which disregards innocent human life, is incompatible with and contradictory to the fundamental teachings of the Church, the mission of the Catholic school, and the values that ought to permeate Catholic education. Catholic teaching does not accept that anyone may justifiably arrange for or procure an abortion for oneself or for another person, be forced or pressured into having an abortion, or influence or coerce another person to have an abortion. Therefore, the involvement of any student in procuring or assisting in the procurement of an abortion is cause for such student to be dismissed from school.

### **Regulation on Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs**

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 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.

- a. 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.
  - b. Alcohol or alcoholic beverage
  - c. Any glue, aerosol paint, or any other volatile chemical or substance for inhalation or potential for abuse
  - d. Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drug, including facsimiles of drugs or alcohol
  - e. Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action including expulsion.
  - f. 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.
  - g. 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.

*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.

## **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, the school official will follow the instructions on the student's emergency card.

## **Guidelines regarding exclusion from school and readmission to school**

When your child is ill, please refer to the *Communicable Disease Chart for Schools and Childcare Centers, revised July 30, 2021* provided by the Texas Catholic Conference Bishops Education Department 2022-2023, found on the Handbook page of the school website under the "parents tab." Additional literature provided by TCCBED and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) will be sent home with families prior to or within the first week of school. These include, but may not be limited to, the following information: bacterial meningitis, head lice, Zika virus, a pandemic flu checklist and family emergency sheet (for family use.)

## **Wellness**

SMCS is committed to equip the students under our care with the awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to make lifelong healthy choices. Our schools will strive to create environments that promote healthy eating choices and more focused physical activity. Our cafeterias, classrooms, and all school-related activities will provide clear and consistent messages that encourage respect and care for our bodies as God's gifts to us. Therefore, per TCCBED and the Diocese of Victoria Wellness Policy, SMCS will implement a **Wellness Plan**, developing our local school goals and objectives, based on the TCCBED Health Manual guidelines and those. The Wellness Committee made up of members from administration, faculty/staff, students, parents, and other health professionals, as deemed appropriate, will meet on or before October 15 to review previous data and present the plan to the superintendent/diocesan committee for approval. Then the Wellness Committee will meet on or before April 15 to review the plan objectives, actions, and determine the overall effectiveness and results. The outcomes will be presented in a report to the superintendent/diocesan committee.

## **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.
- Students have 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.

#### *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 TCCBED. Female students in grades 5 and 7 and male students in grade 8 are screened for scoliosis in the fall, and students in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7 are screened for Acanthosis Nigricans (diabetes) as early as possible in the school year. All students ages 4 thru 12 undergo vision and hearing screenings during their first year in attendance at SMCS within the first 120 days of school and then in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7 thereafter.

### ***Section XI: OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION***

#### **After School Program (ASP)**

St. Michael Catholic School offers after school care from dismissal 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. Parents are required to read the *After School Program Handbook* and sign an application form prior to enrollment. ASP is reserved for and designed to serve SMCS students from PK thru grade 4. Applications are accepted on a first come, first served basis.

#### **Appeals Process (Formal Complaint Procedure)**

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*).

### **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 or through FACTS. If paying the school office directly, please send exact cash/change or check made payable to St. Michael School with your cafeteria payment 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 from popular establishments in the area and soft drinks/colas 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 cafeteria dessert by ordering one during the morning attendance and lunch procedures in homeroom and paying the office the required fee at that time.

### *Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)*

FMNVs are not allowed to be provided to students anywhere on campus, unless administrative approval has been provided in advance, and then may not be allowed until after the last scheduled class of the day. FMNVs include: soda water, pastries, donuts, water ices/popsicles that do not contain fruit or fruit juice, chewing gum (banned at SMCS), certain candies made from predominantly sweeteners or artificial sweeteners such as hard candy, jellies, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy-coated popcorn, or homemade desserts made with any of these “candy” items.

### **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 and will be treated according to the policy for cell phones.**

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

This is defined as any behavior (on-campus or off-campus) which is illicit, immoral, or illegal and/or 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. (See *Internet Acceptable Use Policy*.)

**Communication**

Since it is impossible to foresee all events that might occur during the school year, parents are kept informed through administrator/faculty/staff school Gmail, FACTS email or *Parent Alert*, the school website and *FB* page, the school newsletter, and periodically, thru an administrative or Diocesan memo/letter. The oldest or only child will be responsible for bringing home any notes or written communication from the school office, unless the parent/teacher has identified a younger sibling to be more responsible. It is the parent's responsibility to check the student's black take-home folder, daily in grades PK thru 4 and at least weekly, generally on Thursday evening, for grades 5 thru 8. In addition, please encourage your child to be responsible for relaying information to you. Please refer to the *Diocese of Victoria Communications Policy* for additional information including video, photo, media, and/or audio release.

*Student Email*

Students in grades 1 thru 8 will be issued a school email with the policy and procedure for use. The policy must be signed by both parent and student before a student is allowed to use his/her school email. School email is monitored by administration.

**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 PK thru 4 may hand out invitations **if all students in the class are invited**. All students receiving balloon or flower arrangements will receive them upon dismissal from school.

### **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. They also participate in the Stations of the Cross during Lent and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament if it is scheduled by the priest. 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 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

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 FACTS Parent Alert, but families are also encouraged to tune in to local radio. 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 students is scheduled so as to shorten the day to less than the regularly scheduled 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 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 homeroom teacher. Valentine parties may be held in grades PK and Kindergarten. The graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grade class will have an end-of-year party on the date of graduation practice, hosted by the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class. All parties are to be simple and economical.

### **Special Needs**

Catholic schools in the State of Texas promote inclusion for all children with different learning needs. SMCS strives to provide the accommodations and/or modifications within the scope of our school's resources for students identified as having special learning needs.

### **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 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 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.

### **Student Ambassadors**

Generally 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and Student Council Members are considered the school's "ambassadors." The principal may select other classes who will contribute to this service. Student ambassadors are expected to assist the principal, teachers, and other students with the following:

- Greeting guests
- Raising and lowering flags
- Posting information on the marquis
- Escorting early childhood students to/from their classrooms

- Morning Announcements over the intercom
- Placement of barricades each morning and afternoon
- Assisting with the monitoring of younger students during Mass and modeling expected behavior
- Setting up and breaking down tables, chairs, etc. for special programs and assemblies
- Altar serving for a funeral Mass
- Other duties as assigned by the principal

### **Student Records**

Cumulative records are permanently retained by the school according to TCCBED regulations, including a health record. The cumulative record includes, but may not be limited to, the following information: personal and family data, attendance records, academic records, and achievement test scores.

When a student transfers or is promoted, a copy of the cumulative record and health record are 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.

All material in the cumulative record is confidential and accessible only to members of the professional staff, legal guardian(s), parent(s), and the student after his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Parents/guardians have a right to this information according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 1974. Only the principal may grant access to student records. Test data will be made available to parents in terms that are readily understandable.

As to non-custodial parents, SMCS will delete all reference, in the records, to place of residence of the custodian of the child before releasing the record (Amendment to Texas Family Code, Section 14.04, 1983.) A divorce decree or court order must be on file defining the rights of the custodial parent.

All student records must carry the legal name of the student as shown on the birth certificate. The student's file must contain a copy of a court order showing a name change.

Parent(s), guardian(s) or a student age 18 or older 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. This policy is available from the Administrative Assistant in the school office upon request, or you may contact the Office of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Victoria to request the procedure for challenging information contained in the school record.

### **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 and security as outlined in the campus crisis and security plan, all visitors to the school are required to check in at the school office. Upon arrival at the school office, a visitor must be prepared to show ID. Personnel is required to ask the purpose of the visit and may need to seek administrative approval and verify eligibility or “right” to visit a particular student. Personnel will sign-in the visitor, note the time, ask for signature, and then issue a “visitor” badge which must be returned to the school office upon exiting the school, at which time personnel will note the time and have the visitor initial his/her departure from campus. Repeated failure to comply with this procedure by any visitor, including a parent, may result in the visitor being asked to leave campus, being escorted from campus, and referred before the School Advisory Council and Pastor for additional action.

## ***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.



# **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

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### **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 24-hour abuse and neglect hotline at 1-800-252-5400, or a report may be made on their website at [txabusehotline.org](http://txabusehotline.org).
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 agents of the church/school are involved:**

1. First contact civil authorities 800-252-5400 or [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org). If person is in immediate danger, call 911, and
2. Then contact Shannon Thomas, LMSW 361-827-7186 or [pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org) or
3. Contact the Bishop or Chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria at 361-573-0828.

Written allegations may be sent to:

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

If sexual abuse by a member of clergy has occurred in another diocese, the Diocese of Victoria will help bring your concerns to church officials. For assistance contact Shannon Thomas at 361-827- 7186 or [pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:pastoralcare@victoriadiocese.org).

The investigation of allegations of sexual abuse is the responsibility of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or local law enforcement. The bishop or his designee may also conduct an independent investigation.

***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 8/2023*) and agree to abide by them.

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Parent Signature

Date

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Parent Signature

Date

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Student Signature

Date

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Student Signature

Date

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Student Signature

Date

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