

# SAINT CECILIA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## *Family Handbook*

**2026-2027**



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***“To Serve as Jesus Did”***

## Welcome from the Principal

Dear St. Cecilia Catholic School Families,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year! It is with great joy and gratitude that I welcome our returning families and extend a warm welcome to those who are joining the St. Cecilia Catholic School community for the first time.

At St. Cecilia, we are blessed to partner with you in the education and formation of your children. Our mission is not only to provide academic excellence, but also to help our students grow in faith, character, and service. Each day, we strive to build Saints and Scholars who are prepared to serve as Jesus did. The Family Handbook is an important guide for our school community. It outlines the expectations, policies, and procedures that help us create a safe, respectful, faith-filled, and academically focused environment for all students. I ask that you take time to carefully read the handbook and review the information with your family. When home and school work together with a shared understanding, our students are better supported and more successful.

As a Catholic school community, we are called to live with respect, compassion, responsibility, and love for one another. We recognize that no community is perfect, but through faith, communication, and partnership, we continue to grow stronger together. Your support, involvement, and trust play an important role in the success of our school. Thank you for choosing St. Cecilia Catholic School and for allowing us to be part of your child's educational and spiritual journey. I look forward to a wonderful school year filled with learning, growth, faith, and many blessings.

May God bless our students, families, faculty, staff, and parish community throughout this school year.

In Christ,

**Estela Valdez**

Principal

*St. Cecilia Catholic School*

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**RIGHT TO AMEND**

*St. Cecilia Catholic School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of such changes or amendments will be sent to parents/guardians via e-mail and/or written communication.*

***St. Cecilia Catholic School reserves the right to modify, amend, or terminate any policies, procedures, or programs whether or not described in this Handbook at any time.***

# **ST. CECILIA CATHOLIC SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Cecilia School's mission is to create an atmosphere of joy, to nurture a child's natural curiosity, and to stop for prayerful pauses. Our endeavor is to create an environment that develops the whole person while stimulating critical thinking under the framework of Catholic Social teachings.

### **VISION:**

The vision of Saint Cecilia Catholic School is to shape and form Saints and Scholars.

### **CORE VALUES:**

At its heart Saint Cecilia Catholic School is a community in pursuit of these goals:

- ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE and individual attention
- SPIRITUAL GROWTH where every individual discovers the importance of Christian faith in their lives.
- ARTISTIC AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT where every individual is challenged and inspired.
- EMOTIONAL SUPPORT where every individual is valued and respected.

## **SCHOOL MOTTO**

*"TO SERVE AS JESUS DID"*

Students are reminded daily of the behavior expected of them. With Jesus as our model and guide, children are encouraged to live and follow Christ's example of service.

## **HISTORY**

St. Cecilia Catholic School, conducted by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, opened in 1935 under the direction of Msgr. William. M. Robinson. The first year the sisters taught 50 children in two rooms. In 1954, a building campaign was undertaken, resulting in the construction of the existing plant.

The school presently consists of twelve (12) classrooms, library/media center, cafeteria, SMART lab, computer lab, and auditorium/gymnasium with well-equipped stage and seating for 900.

Today, St. Cecilia Catholic School serves students living in the southeast and southwest districts of Dallas. It offers classes from Pre-Kindergarten aged 3 through the eighth grade, with a faculty and staff of dedicated individuals.

St. Cecilia Catholic School has an Extended Day Program providing after school care until 6 p.m. Classroom teachers offer after school tutoring for students at risk.

The school has many extra-curricular activities which currently include a variety of sports (soccer, basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading), Scouts, Drama Club, Student Council, Music, and Running Club. These activities are supported by volunteers who have received training and passed background checks.

The purpose of the school is to cultivate the intellect, ripen the capacity for right judgment, provide a sense of values, and to prepare the students for further education in an atmosphere of service to the community. Each morning, our day begins with a prayer service that ends with the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **ACCREDITATION**

St. Cecilia Catholic School is accredited through the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED) and through that group by the Texas Education Agency. The accreditation program of TCCB ED is designed to assist and support Catholic schools, fulfilling the educational mission of the Church, by providing a comprehensive quality education based on Gospel values. The most compelling reason for having a school accredited is to add distinction to its existing quality and esteem and to assure the credibility of the education received.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

St. Cecilia Catholic 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 of the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT STATEMENT FOR THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF DALLAS**

Sexual harassment violates the mission and policies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas. Harassment by or of a student, parent, faculty member, or another individual related to the school or church is unacceptable and will not be allowed.

## **CHILD ABUSE LAWS**

St. Cecilia Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

## **TITLE IX**

St. Cecilia Catholic School adheres to the tenets of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

## **FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**

St. Cecilia Catholic School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the U.S. Mail or electronically. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

To request records/transcripts, students should submit forms to the St. Cecilia School Office, allowing five schooldays for the request to be fulfilled.

***No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.***

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

St. Cecilia Catholic School is a general education program and exists and operates based on the educational mission of St. Cecilia Church. As such, the administration of the school includes:

### **Pastor**

The pastor is the chief administrator of the parish. He is canonically responsible for all organizations within his parish. The Pastor is both spiritually and fiscally responsible for the school.

### **Principal/Chief Administrator**

The chief administrator is the educational leader of the school and directly responsible to the Pastor for the administration, operation, and development of all programs of the school and the planning and coordination of the school's educational policy. The chief administrator is responsible for developing a school strong in academic achievement, students' services, and extracurricular activities ensuring an effective day-to-day operation of the school. The chief administrator is the external face to the community to build relationships and raise awareness that will lead to providing the school with necessary resources to carry out the mission of the school.

### **Director of Curriculum & Instruction**

The Director of Curriculum and Instruction provides oversight for curriculum and instruction, coaching the teachers, leading professional development, leading data-driven decision-making, and managing all student academic assessments and student services.

### **Administrative Assistant/Health Coordinator**

The administrative assistant serves as a source of information to the parents, teachers, and children and assists the chief administrator and teachers with clerical work. The health coordinator is responsible for maintaining the appropriate health records and student screenings.

### **Business Manager**

The Business Manager works with the Principal and Pastor to coordinate financial matters including preparation of budgets, managing the annual audit, and handling the school's expenses and investments. The manager reports the school's quarterly financial results to the president and pastor and advises them on all aspects of the financial health of the school.

### **Safe Environment Coordinator / Advancement Development**

The Safe Environment Coordinator / Advancement Development staff member supports the mission of St. Cecilia School by helping maintain a safe, welcoming, and supportive school community. This position is responsible for assisting with Safe Environment compliance for employees, volunteers, and school activities, including maintaining records, communicating requirements, and supporting the school's commitment to the safety and well-being of all students.

In addition, this position supports advancement and development efforts by assisting with fundraising initiatives, donor relations, community partnerships, school events, sponsorship opportunities, and communication efforts that promote the growth and sustainability of St. Cecilia School. This role works closely with the Chief Administrator, faculty, staff, families, volunteers, and community partners to strengthen school safety, engagement, and support for the mission of forming Saints and Scholars.

### **Faculty/Staff Members**

The faculty, using experience and initiative, create an atmosphere in which children are motivated to learn according to the curriculum objectives designed by the Diocese. Teacher aides provide professional service to the faculty.

### **Guidance Counselor**

The guidance counselor is made possible through federal titles funds. This individual has a documented process that works to meet the needs of the students.

### **School Advisory Council**

The Council serves as an advisory group to the Principal and Pastor in the administration of the school as regards to policy development in the areas of Academics, Catholic Identity, Marketing and Admissions, Facilities, Strategic Planning, and Finances. Members meet monthly. They are appointed annually to the Council by the Principal with suggestions from the School Advisory Council. Those serving on the Advisory Council must sign a non-employee confidentiality agreement or NDA.

### **Parents**

The church teaches that parents are the primary educators of their children. Having made the decision to give their child(ren) a Catholic education, they remain a critical component of this educational partnership of student, teacher, and parent. Parents are *expected to work in partnership with the chief administrator, faculty, and staff to ensure the decisions and actions that are in the best interest of the child and reflect the St. Cecilia School mission.*

### **Volunteers**

All volunteers are screened to follow the guidelines for the Diocesan Safe Environment Program. Volunteers must sign and follow a non-employee confidentiality agreement or NDA. Volunteers of St. Cecilia Catholic School assist the school by giving time and talent for the betterment of the school community. *Volunteers support the school in promoting the growth, development, and education of our students. Their service is a valuable benefit to the school community.*

### **St. Cecilia School Parent Community Club**

The Community Club serves as a collaborative organization that supports the mission, values, and educational objectives of St. Cecilia Catholic School. All members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, respectful, and constructive manner when interacting with school administration, faculty, staff, students, parents, and volunteers.

The Community Club shall not engage in activities that undermine, interfere with, or publicly criticize school administration, faculty, staff, or school operations. Concerns, questions, or recommendations regarding school matters should be addressed through established communication channels and in a manner that promotes mutual respect, collaboration, and the best interests of the school community.

Harassment, intimidation, threatening behavior, abusive language, disruptive conduct, or any form of verbal or physical aggression toward school personnel, students, parents, volunteers, or event participants will not be tolerated. Individuals who engage in such conduct may be removed from school events, prohibited from participating in Community Club activities, or subject to additional restrictions as determined by school administration.

The Chief Administrator retains final authority regarding school operations, policies, activities, and decisions affecting the school community.

### **The Dad's Club**

The St. Cecilia School Dad's Club is dedicated to serving our school, parish, and families through fellowship, volunteerism, and stewardship. Guided by Catholic values, members foster community, support school initiatives, and provide opportunities for fathers and father figures to actively engage in the life of the school.

Through service projects, fundraising efforts, and community-building events, the Dad's Club helps strengthen our school family, supports student success, and promotes the mission of St. Cecilia School.

### **Benefactors**

The Benefactors of St. Cecilia Catholic School are parishioners and local/national resources who contribute and assist in providing educational programs for our students.

## **RELIGIOUS FORMATION**

St. Cecilia Catholic School begins every day in prayer as a school community. Classes take turns assisting in the school prayer service. Students attend religion classes every day except on Friday, depending on grade level.

Students in Kindergarten through eighth grade attend weekly Mass. During this time, we have special intentional prayers for religious vocations and share a Vocational Chalice, that classes take back to their room and pray for vocations throughout the week. Homeroom classes (4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) take turns providing altar servers and lectors. Family members are always invited to attend these Friday Masses. Following Mass on the first Friday of each month, students participate in the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

During certain months of the year, the Rosary is recited in honor of the Blessed Mother. During Advent and Lent, students may participate in special prayer services such as Benediction and Stations of the Cross. Advent is concluded with a special birthday party for the Infant Jesus in lieu of class parties. Baby gifts from the students are donated to a local charity. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to students on a regular basis.

Families are invited to attend the All-School Family Masses. We take this opportunity to pray together and to give thanks for the many blessings that Our Heavenly Father has bestowed upon St. Cecilia Catholic School. Families will be notified of times and dates.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

The threefold purpose of Catholic Schools is to foster growth in our faith, build community and to serve others. The sacramental life of the children of the Catholic tradition is a vital component of the religion program at St. Cecilia Catholic School.

- Preparations for three sacraments, Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation, form the core of instruction in second and eighth grade. In accordance with the diocesan guidelines, candidates for First Communion will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Communion. These Sacraments are only conferred to students in the Roman Catholic tradition; however, all students in second and eighth grade will participate in

the religion class as an academic course. Parents of first grade students are responsible for and prepare the reception following First Communion.

- Older students who have not received the Sacrament of Baptism, Reconciliation or First Communion will have an opportunity to enroll in these sacramental preparation classes in the spring. Students receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis.
- Students interested in becoming altar servers may participate in this training program beginning in fourth grade.

## ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSIONS

By signing the acknowledgement and agreement section at the end of this Handbook, parents and/or guardians affirm the following with regards to enrollment and admissions:

We is/are the natural parent(s) or managing conservator(s) of the Student(s) listed below and have the legal authority to enroll Student in the School. Having considered all the facts, I/we believe that enrolling Student in the School for the coming school year is in Student's best interest. I/we understand that School is a Roman Catholic School and that Student's education and the expectations for Student's behavior and the conduct of Student's family in relation to the School community will be consistent with and governed by Christian morals, values, and principles.

I/we have been provided with and have read, understood, and had the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the School's student/family handbook. I/we understand that the handbook is incorporated into this agreement and forms a part of this legally binding contract. As a result, I/we understand that Student's continued enrollment at School during the coming school year is contingent upon compliance with the policies set out in the handbook by Student and by Student's family in their dealings with the School community. I/we understand and agree that failure to comply with the expectations for conduct set out in the handbook may result in discipline, up to and including separation of Student from the School at School's sole discretion and without any right to appeal.

I/we understand that I am/we are responsible for providing the School with a current and complete copy of any court order affecting Student's enrollment in School or the right of a parent or conservator of Student to make educational decisions for Student, communicate with School, or access Student's educational records. I/we understand that it is not School's responsibility to mediate or resolve disputes regarding custody of Student and related matters, and that involving School in custody and similar disputes requires School to expend unbudgeted time and other resources. I/we have read and agree to the provisions of the School handbook regarding School's right to recover attorneys' fees incurred because of Student or family misconduct and custody and related legal matters.

I/we have informed School of all relevant information regarding any special educational or medical needs of Student and agree to advise School if Student's educational or medical needs change during the school year. I/we agree that School may contact any person who signs this agreement or whose name is provided to School as an emergency contact regarding any emergency involving the Student and may disclose to those individuals' information regarding Student's education, behavior, and/or medical conditions as needed.

I/we have been provided with and understand all necessary information regarding tuition, fees, and costs associated with Student's enrollment at School for the coming school year and am/are satisfied that I/we will be able to pay all such tuition, fees, and costs subject to any applicable

financial aid awarded. I/we understand that the School's budget for the school year anticipates full payment of all amounts due on behalf of all enrolled students. Accordingly, I/we understand that failure to pay all tuition, fees, and costs in full and on time may, in School's sole discretion, result in Student's separation from School without any refund of amounts already paid.

St. Cecilia Catholic School first admits the children of families who currently have students enrolled in the school. If spaces are available after these students are admitted, then the school accepts other children who meet the admission requirements.

Important Admissions Disclaimer: Diocesan financial aid is determined by required submission through FACTS<sup>®</sup>, not the administration of St. Cecilia Catholic School. St. Cecilia awards in-house assistance using the information obtained from the FACTS<sup>®</sup> application.

## **AGE OF ADMISSION**

St. Cecilia Catholic School follows the diocesan recommendations regarding the minimum age of admission of children. The child's birth certificate, Baptismal certificate or a notarized affidavit is required for verification of age.

- **Pre-K**
  - A child entering PK3 will be three years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year and toilet trained. The date of birth should be verified by an official copy of a birth certificate.
  - A child entering PK4 will be four years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year and toilet trained. The date of birth should be verified by an official copy of a birth certificate.
  - Children who do not meet the age requirements for 5-year-olds may be placed in a pre-kindergarten program.
- **Kindergarten**
  - A student entering kindergarten must be at least five years of age by September 1. The date of birth should be verified by an official copy of a birth certificate.
  - The child must be toilet trained.
- **First Grade**
  - A child entering first grade will be six years old by September 1. The date of birth should be verified by an official copy of a birth certificate.
  - The child must be toilet trained.
- **After 1st Grade**
  - Admission after 1st grade will be based on successful completion and achievement in an accredited school.
- **Conditions of Admission**
  - Admission to the school is granted in good faith and is subject to all school policies and procedures. The school reserves the right to review continued enrollment if a student is withdrawn by the parent/guardian or dismissed by the school. Admission also required that the student has successfully completed the previous school year and is in good academic, behavioral, and financial standing.

## **ADMISSION PROCESS**

Families new to St. Cecilia Catholic School must first submit an online application for admission. At the time of registration, all new students seeking admission to St. Cecilia Catholic School are evaluated based on current standardized test scores and report cards.

Requirements include:

- Official copy of the child's birth certificate
- Full legal name of student
- Parent/Guardian's name, address, and phone number(s).
- Copy of the student's Social Security card
- Immunization record (must be up to date) and health records, including health history and physical exam form.
- Official cumulative record or transcript of previous grade, including standardized test results, if applicable
- A copy of any educational diagnostic testing results, current IEP and/or 504 accommodations
- A baptismal certificate, if applicable
- Student emergency contact information, including names of persons authorized to pick up children from school.
- Legal custody agreement if parents are separated or divorced.
- I-20 for International Students, if applicable
- Other important items requiring discussion and documentation, record of IEP, copies of educational testing, etc.
- Testing for placement
- Family interview with the Principal/chief administrator
- Agreement with parents to have a student repeat a grade or enter a grade on probation (if applicable)

### **Parental Disclosure of Student Information**

To honor the partnership between the School and families, it is essential that parents/guardians provide school personnel with thorough and accurate information that may be relevant to their student's success and that could impact the safety and/or integrity of the learning environment for other students in the school community, including but not limited to, any information regarding disciplinary and/or criminal history or action. Parents/Guardians are required to disclose such information at the time of application to the School and this duty continues as long as the student is enrolled. Failure to disclose such information at the time of application or at any time the student is enrolled at the School may result in the dismissal of the student.

A final decision on admission and placement is made by the chief administrator based upon the parent/student interview, receipt of records, space limitations, and the availability of an appropriate educational program.

New students to St. Cecilia Catholic School will be accepted on a trial period in which to prove himself/herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period there are any problems the School reserves the right to take one of the following actions:

- Place the student at a grade level where he/she can progress successfully.

- Require any tutoring and/or testing necessary to aid the student to meet the grade level requirements.
- Recommend placement in another school.

## **ADMISSION OF HOME SCHOOL CHILDREN**

Parents of children who have been home-schooled and are seeking admission into St. Cecilia Catholic School are to provide proper documentation to support evaluation and placement. That information will include, but not be limited to:

- Immunization records,
- Report cards (if applicable),
- Recommendation from the leadership of the home school,
- Grade level/subject testing results.

In addition, standardized testing or admission testing may be required. Parents may be asked to pay for testing that is administered by another agency. Home school students shall be placed at the appropriate grade level as determined by the school administration.

## **ADMISSION OF TRANSFER STUDENT**

### **Placement**

A student transferring from another accredited school or district may be admitted conditionally as the records indicate until placement can be verified. The chief administrator has the final decision regarding student placement. Transferring students and their parents must have reasons for enrolling consistent with the school's Catholic nature. A deliberate choice for Catholic religious instruction and values must be part of that choice. All students are required to participate fully in religion/theology classes and religious services.

### **Timing of Admissions**

Transfers between schools are generally more successful and less disruptive when they occur at the end of a school year or between semesters. Mid-semester transfers are generally discouraged, except when circumstances make a mid-semester transfer necessary or advisable.

### **Credit for Partial Grading Period**

The chief administrator of each school shall formulate procedures for awarding credit to students who are not enrolled for a complete grading period. The procedures shall include at least the following:

- Students transferring from an accredited school shall have their grades from that school included in determining the final period grades in proportion to the time they represent.
- Students transferring from a non-accredited and/or non-graded school or home school shall have their final grades for that period determined by conferences between the teachers and chief administrator. A performance assessment may be administered by the receiving school to determine class credit. These conferences and the performance of the transferring student shall determine a fair and reasonable grade for schooling received at the non-accredited or non-graded school or home school. A student transferring from another school or district may be admitted conditionally as the records indicate until placement can be verified. The

chief administrator or designated academic administrator has the final decision regarding student placement.

St. Cecilia Catholic School honors credits and records from all officially accredited elementary schools. The transfer from another Catholic School is contingent on meeting all withdrawal requirements at the previous school and completing the entrance requirements of St. Cecilia Catholic School.

### **Admission Priorities**

Since the schools of the Diocese of Dallas are established by the diocese or one of its parishes as religious schools, preference in admission shall be given to practicing Catholics. Preference may be given to siblings of students already enrolled in the school or to the children of past graduates.

Preference will be given considering the following order:

- a) Applicants who have siblings already enrolled in the school;
- b) Catholics active in the parish (registered in the parish, participates in liturgical worship and the life of the parish, makes regular contributions to the support of the parish);
- c) Catholics active in parishes that do not have a Catholic elementary school;
- d) Non-Catholic applicants on a space available basis.

### **TUITION AND FEES**

Each year in the spring, the Catholic Schools Office and the chief administrator establish tuition rates and fees, including the registration fee for the coming year.

- Registration fees for returning students should be paid in full by the deadline or a late fee will be assessed.
- Registration fees are non-refundable.
- Tuition and fee schedule are available upon request.

Tuition does not cover the actual cost of educating a child. Families whose financial situation enable them to pay the actual cost of education are encouraged to do so. Any amount paid over the tuition rate is a donation to St. Cecilia Catholic School and is tax deductible.

All St. Cecilia Catholic School families are financially responsible for the payment of tuition, registration fees, cafeteria fees, library fines, fundraising projects and any other additional fees that may be incurred throughout the year. Tuition is payable in full to St. Cecilia Catholic School by the first day of school, or the family may choose to make payments through FACTS®. If payment is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, a late fee will be added to the payment.

If financial obligations are not met within ten (10) days of the due date, a family will be considered delinquent, and one or all the following actions may take place:

- The student will not be allowed to attend classes at St. Cecilia Catholic School
- Students whose families are delinquent may not be allowed to take semester assessments.
- Transcripts and report cards will be withheld.
- In the case of a graduating eighth grader, the student will not be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.
- Registration for the following year may not be accepted.

Upon settlement of any outstanding debt, the chief administrator will determine the re-acceptance of the family for the following year.

### **Non-Sufficient Funds Policy**

If a check made payable to St. Cecilia Catholic School is returned as dishonored for non-sufficient funds (NSF), the following policy will be followed:

- An NSF fee will be incurred.
- Within ten (10) days of notice, the check signer shall deliver cash or money order in the amount of the check plus the NSF fee.
- If full remuneration is not received by the expiration of the ten (10) days, the child will not be allowed to return to school until paid in full.
- After the second returned check, only cash and/or money orders will be accepted for as long as the family is a member of the St. Cecilia Catholic School community.

### **Tuition Assistance**

Families in need of tuition assistance must speak with the business office and complete an online application form through FACTS. Families will be notified in the spring regarding the allocations.

Financial assistance forms are only available online. In addition, a non-refundable fee is due at the time of application. The application deadline to FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment for rapid decision is November 1<sup>st</sup> through January 5<sup>th</sup>, for all others, April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **FUNDRAISING PROJECTS**

Tuition alone does not cover the expense of education at St. Cecilia Catholic School; therefore, fundraising projects require the support of the entire community to insure the financing of the education program. Fundraising participation is required of all families whose students attend St. Cecilia Catholic School. The fund raisers may include a variety of events and online giving programs and/or raffles. The school's financial situation determines the necessity of additional fund-raising events. Other fund-raising opportunities are offered, and families are invited to participate. **Any fund-raising opportunities must be approved by the chief administrator.**

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

At St. Cecilia Catholic School, we work in partnership with parents to enable each child to develop as an independent learner. Parents should allow their child(ren) to enter the school building on their own each morning. Various classes may invite parent involvement or visitation on specific occasions.

### **Arrival**

The school doors open for students at 7:00 a.m. Adult supervision is provided in the school cafeteria before school, beginning at 7:00 a.m. All parents are to drop their children off at the west side driveway. Students must exit and enter from the right (passenger side) of the car.

Doors will close at 7:50 a.m. and all students arriving later than 7:50 must enter through the Mary Cliff entrance, and they will be marked tardy.

**For the safety of children and school personnel, St. Cecilia is a closed campus, and all doors will remain locked throughout the day.**

Parents enter the parking lot via the ramp from Mary Cliff Road or the entrance on Davis Drive. They are to stop in front of the school doors to drop off the children. Then, they follow the road and exit down the north ramp onto Mary Cliff. From 7:00-7:30 a.m. students will be directed to go to the cafeteria; after 7:30, students will be directed to their homeroom(s).

### **Dismissal**

School is dismissed at 3:15 p.m. for students in grades Pre-K through 8th grades. To provide for the ease of and security of the community, students will be dismissed at different locations around the building. Parents of PreK3 through 4<sup>th</sup> grade and families, and those with multi-aged children will pick up children at the west side doors. Teachers will assist in bringing students to the designated door and helping them safely into their cars. Students in 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be picked up at the south side door next to the parish office.

All vehicles and “walk-up” families must display the official dismissal card for a child to be allowed to enter the vehicle. Without this card, the parent/guardian will be asked to park and go to the office to sign-out their child. Please have identification available for the teacher on duty. Once in the vehicle, all students must buckle up for safety.

Teachers are stationed in the parking lot to provide for the security and safety of our students. Parents are asked to respond quickly and courteously to any request made by a teacher. The driveway speed limit is 5 MPH. Children are not allowed to walk to a parked car without teacher supervision.

**REMINDER: Use of a wireless communication device is prohibited in a school zone unless the driver is using a hands-free device or the vehicle is stopped, according to the Texas Transportation Code.**

Students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be signed-into the extended day program. They must be signed out by the parent/guardian and extended day staff.

### **Early Dismissal**

Early dismissal days occur periodically in the school calendar. No extended day/after school care will be offered on early dismissal days.

### **Late Pick-Up Fee**

No child may be left unattended in the school building. Students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be signed-into the extended day program. Children must be signed out by the parent/guardian and extended day staff. Children not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will be charged according to the Drop-In Fee schedule. The charge will be added to the family’s FACTS account.

### **Students Leaving School During the School Day**

If a pupil must leave school during the day or before dismissal, a written request or telephone call from the parent must be presented to the office. **Any student who is dismissed prior to the end of school must be signed out by his/her parent/guardian through the school office.** No elementary or middle school students may be released during the day to anyone other than the parent or guardian, or another adult who has been authorized by the parent or guardian in writing. An early dismissal log is kept in the school office. Students are responsible for any missed homework, assignments and/or classroom work and it is due the following day.

Parents picking up students during the school day are to park and enter the building through the main entrance on Mary Cliff Road. The student will be called out of class and can be signed out by the parent/guardian.

### **Appointments During the School Day**

Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling appointments for students during the school day to prevent the loss of instruction. In the case such an appointment is unavoidable, parents must notify the office indicating the date and time of the appointment. Students should attend classes before and after appointments. **Parents must sign their child out following the above procedures.** The student will not be called from the classroom until a parent arrives and calls the office. Upon return to school, the student reports to the school office and provides a doctor's Return to School form to their homeroom teacher. Remember, *St. Cecilia is a closed campus, and visitors/parents will not be allowed inside the school building without authorization.*

### **Student Release to Authorized Individuals Only**

Students are released only to custodial parents, legal guardians, or adults authorized by the parent/legal guardian. The custodial parents/legal guardian provides the authorization for such release by a note or phone call to the office.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER OR INCIDENTAL SCHOOL CLOSURE**

In the event of a school closure or delay in opening, the information will be posted on the school website, Parent Alert and/or email will be sent to everyone, and social media. St. Cecilia School will implement e-learning protocols and students will be expected to follow those rules and procedures.

If a school day is to be terminated early due to unforeseen circumstances, notice will be communicated to parents via RenWeb/FACTS. **Parents are responsible for ensuring that the school office has the most current cell phone numbers, email addresses, approved pickup contacts, and emergency contacts on FACTS.**

## **ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES/TARDINESS**

The State of Texas provides by law for compulsory school attendance by all children from the age of six until their eighteenth birthday unless subject to a stated exemption. Each school will be in session according to the number of days required by Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department Standards.

The responsibility for compliance with this law belongs to the parents, but the school is obliged to keep and maintain an accurate record of daily attendance for each student. Parents are responsible for notifying the school of any absences.

St. Cecilia Catholic School is committed to the emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth of every student. Students are required to attend class regularly to meet the standard of academic preparation and excellence.

If a student is absent, the parent must notify the office by 9:00 AM on the day of the absence. There is no way to make up for a missed day, as it is not possible to replicate class discussion, hands-on activities, and much instruction.

Upon a student's return to school, a note must be sent by the parents stating the cause of the absence. If a student is absent for more than three (3) consecutive days, a doctor's excuse must be

provided. Per diocesan policy, students arriving after 10 a.m. will be counted as absent for half the school day.

Parents of absent students will receive an automatic notification from RenWeb/FACTS. Please notify the office if this is an error. Students who miss three (3) consecutive school days may be required to attend after-school tutoring with the appropriate teacher.

### **Attendance**

A student is expected to maintain a healthy class attendance record every semester of the school year. A 90% class attendance for each semester is considered a healthy record (***no more than 17 absences of 176 school days***) according to Texas state law.

A student may be retained in their current grade level or be required to attend summer school if they miss 10% (17 days or more) of the school year for any reason. Extensive absence due to a medical illness will be assessed and taken into consideration by the chief administrator and the health coordinator.

A student is subject to dismissal from the school if they miss more than 10% (17+ days of 176 days) of the school year.

### **Medical Absences**

Verification of medical and dental appointments is required from the medical or dental office. Appropriate notations must be made in the attendance register.

### **Excused Absence**

Student absences may be excused for the following reasons: personal illness, illness or death in the immediate family, or other unexpected reasons approved at the discretion of the chief administrator. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must submit signed documentation to the office within 48 hours for excused absences. Families whose children must miss school for other unexpected reasons must request approval from the chief administrator as soon as they are aware of the need for the absence. Approval of the absence must be given before the absence occurs.

### **Unexcused Absence**

An unexcused absence is defined as an absence from school without signed documentation and/or prior approval of the chief administrator. Absences for travel are unexcused, with or without approval. A student with 4 or more absences in a quarter is in jeopardy of violating the 90% attendance rule for the state of Texas, and a written notification will be sent to the parents/guardians. As a consequence of excessive unexcused absences, the student may be required to attend and pass an accredited summer program. The chief administrator or designated administrator will make the final decision.

### **Excessive Absence**

Should excessive absences occur, parents and the student must meet with the chief administrator and homeroom teacher to develop an attendance improvement contract. If a student has excessive absences during the school year, the student may be required to attend and pass an accredited summer program, may be retained in the present grade, or may not be allowed to attend St. Cecilia Catholic School the next school year.

Student absences may be excused for the following reasons: personal illness, illness or death in the immediate family, or other unusual reasons approved at the discretion of the chief

administrator. Families whose children must miss school for other unusual reasons must request approval from the chief administrator as soon as they are aware of the need for the absence. Approval of the absence must be given before the absence occurs.

### **Extended Absence**

As soon as parents are aware of the need for an extended absence of a student, they should communicate that information to the chief administrator. A student who is absent for an extended period is responsible for all assignments and work (including tests and quizzes) missed during this absence and must make up the work within a timeframe agreed upon between the teacher(s) and chief administrator.

Homeroom teachers will send via email the classroom topics, learning expectations, and homework, on the weekly agenda. If a student fails to turn in work by the agreed due date, they will receive a zero (0) for the assignment.

Students with excessive absences may be required to attend and pass an accredited summer program. Notification will be sent to the parents/guardians of a student whose continued absences approach the state of Texas limit.

**Quarterly Perfect Attendance awards will be given to students who have NO absences, excused or unexcused absences and have not been tardy.**

### **Tardiness**

Tardiness disrupts the classroom instruction and the learning environment for all students. Students who arrive after Morning Prayer or Mass begins will be marked tardy. Tardies may be considered excused or unexcused.

A student is tardy if they arrive after 7:50am. A student who arrives after 10 a.m. will be marked absent for half of the day. A record of all tardiness shall be maintained. In each case, a written excuse from the parent shall be required at the beginning of the next school day. A student who arrives tardy more than five (5) times in a quarter will require a parent/guardian conference with the homeroom teacher to develop a student drop off plan to prevent excessive tardiness.

The student may be retained at the same grade level or be required to attend summer school if frequent tardiness continues to occur.

### **Excused Tardies**

An excused tardy is defined as an illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, or weather-related problems. An excused tardy may be considered in the event that a noticeable number of students are tardy because of unexpected traffic delays due to accidents or weather conditions. The excuse must be reported by the parent by telephone or email.

### **Unexcused Tardies**

Tardies which occur frequently for the same reason, and/or result from the actions of the student or the parent may be unexcused. Excessive tardiness due to traffic is not considered an excused tardy. In the case of excessive tardies, failure to resolve the issue may result in mandatory summer school or jeopardize the student's continued enrollment or re-admission to the school.

### **Truancy**

If a student is absent without an excuse or if the school has reason to suspect the validity of the excuse, the chief administrator should investigate the situation and apply appropriate remedies.

Any student who is absent from school without a valid excuse on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period is a truant.

A student considered a truant may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion in accordance with applicable provisions of this Handbook.

## **CURRICULUM**

St. Cecilia Catholic School is distinguished by its implementation of the diocesan Saints and Scholars curriculum which is designed to provide instruction not only in human knowledge and skills, but also in religious truths and Gospel values. The curriculum is in accordance with Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department, the Catholic Schools Office and includes the specific guidelines for each subject area.

All students are expected to perform academically to the best of their abilities. The development of a child is multifaceted. The intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual areas all require care and nurturing for the formation of a healthy child. We recognize this process by utilizing developmentally appropriate teaching practices. The Diocesan Curriculum serves as a model for content and pacing at each grade level. Teachers are expected to communicate with families regarding a student's level (on-, below-, or above-) through email, conferences, and on the weekly progress reports. Report cards will also indicate the student's academic level.

Our goals for each student are as follows:

- Empower each student to find satisfaction in learning,
- Guide each student to an understanding that subject matter skills are tools to use in recognizing and solving problems,
- Assist each student in developing self-confidence through hard work and accomplishment,
- Encourage each student to think creatively and imaginatively,
- Encourage students to explore ideas,
- Guide the student to assume responsibility for his or her own learning through a robust social-emotional learning program.

### **Academic Fairs & Competitions**

A Science Fair and Social Studies Fair are held each year. Additional opportunities may also be planned during the school year. Students participate in each event, receiving a grade for their individual work.

### **Academic Testing**

NWEA MAP and CogAT® are national standardized tests administered to all St. Cecilia students in kindergarten through eighth grade according to the diocesan schedule. Test results are given to the parents. Teachers use the results in curriculum planning and development.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND INTEGRITY

Academic success is a shared responsibility between the student, the parent, and the teacher. The key is communication among those three parties for the benefit of the student. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will post after-school tutoring times (for k through 8<sup>th</sup> grades in every core subject) to inform parents as to when they will be available to help a student who may be experiencing difficulties with class lessons. Homework is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for future lessons through various experiences.

### Consequences of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty of any type will not be tolerated. Such dishonesty may include but is not limited to: conduct associated with the classroom learning environment, cheating, and/or plagiarism. St. Cecilia Catholic School expects students to do their own homework, to test without using unauthorized help, and to submit original work for all assignments. Students are to deny all requests to copy class work, homework, and tests. Students shall not misrepresent the work of others as their own.

Students who choose this may face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. A student who is involved in dishonesty may also be unable to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities. Any graduating student may lose their graduation privileges.

**WHAT IS CHEATING:** Cheating is defined as turning in work that is not your own. This can happen during a test, a project, or homework. It includes:

- Looking at someone else's paper for answers
- Copying from the internet, a book, or any other source
- Getting help from a classmate, a parent, or another person and using their words or ideas as your own.
- Letting someone else do the work for you.

Even if the person helping you means well, it is still cheating if the work isn't truly yours. At our school, **we believe in honesty, effort, and learning from our mistakes.** We want every student to try their best and be proud of what they do on their own.

Examples of electronic sources may include but are not limited to "personal communication devices (i.e. telephone, cell phone such as a smartphone or flip-phone, tablet, smartwatch, radio device, paging device, or any other electronic device capable of telecommunication or digital communication" (*H.B. 1481, Texas Legislature, effective 6/20/25*)

**WHAT IS PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism means using someone else's words or ideas and claiming they are your own. It includes:

- Copying from a book, website, or article without saying where it came from
- Using another person's work (like a friend or family member's) and turning it in as your own
- Changing a few words but still using someone else's ideas or sentences
- Taking information from the internet and not giving credit to the source

At our school, we want students to learn how to think for themselves and give credit to others when they use their ideas. It's okay to get help with ideas or research—but it's important to write in your own words and always be honest.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is intended to help students practice self-discipline and self-responsibility. Students are encouraged to achieve this by 1) focusing on the assignment, 2) making an effort to explore solutions, and 3) completing the task independently. The purpose of encouraging this healthy study habit is to prepare students to become successful in high school, especially in a Catholic high school learning environment.

Homework is used as practice and as an exercise to help students become familiar and confident with the concepts and lessons that have been discussed in class.

Students benefit from successful completion of homework assignments because it helps them study and prepare for the next class topic and future content assessments.

Parents/Guardians are expected to teach their children how to advocate for themselves by communicating respectfully and appropriately with their teachers. For example, parents may help students practice the habit of writing an email to their teachers to schedule an appointment when they experience difficulties understanding a class lesson or homework assignment.

### **Homework Guidelines**

Students should be instructed in study skills, which include scheduling time to complete assignments. Time allocation for long-term assignments should be incorporated into daily study schedules. Homework may be assigned to students Monday through Friday.

Students are expected to meet all assignment deadlines. When a student fails to complete assignments, this may result in the student's inability to participate in enrichment classes and/or extracurricular activities. If an assignment becomes late, the teacher will communicate with the parents to advise them of the missing work and to enlist their assistance in getting the work turned in. Homework detention (during or after school) may also be issued at the discretion of the teacher and/or chief administrator. During this time, a student will focus on completing outstanding assignments. Homework detention and tutoring take priority over all other extracurricular activities, including sports practices and/or games.

When a student is absent, it is the student's responsibility to make up any missed assignments. Students will be given one day for each day of absence to turn in the missing homework. Points are deducted for assignments that are turned in late. A zero (0) will be given if an assignment is never completed.

### **Time Commitment for Homework**

The mastery of both academic and athletic skills requires a consistent commitment to practice and exercise. Elementary students who seek to achieve mastery should typically expect to spend about 20 minutes on homework in grades 1-2 each night to complete homework assignments and study; 30-45 minutes in grades 3-4; 45-60 minutes in grades 5-6; and 60-90 minutes in grades 7-8.

St. Cecilia Catholic School makes every effort to meet each student's unique learning, creative abilities, interests, and needs. As part of their homework, the school expects students to read a minimum of 15-20 minutes each night and practice math for 10-20 minutes a night. The recommended time commitment may vary for each student.

### **Homework Due to Illness/Vacations/Planned Absences**

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. **Teachers will NOT be responsible for preparing and sending work with a student who plans an extended absence. Parents are responsible for reviewing the weekly agenda with their students.**

### **Missed Assignments**

Students are responsible for any assignments missed during an absence, whether the absence is due to an illness, a doctor's appointment, or an extracurricular activity. A teacher may take points off for any assignments turned in past the assigned due date upon the student's return. A zero (0) will be given if an assignment is never completed and turned in and will not be considered as missing work.

Students will be given one day for every one day of absence to complete make-up work. If there are extenuating circumstances, a teacher and chief administrator may, in a conference with the parent/guardian, vary these terms. Teachers must be in constant communication with an absent student's family throughout that student's absence.

**Teachers will NOT be responsible for preparing and sending work with a student who plans an extended absence. The work must be completed after the student returns.**

### **Daily Planners**

Students in grades 2 through 8 use a daily planner to record homework, projects, etc. **Planners are provided by the school.** Parents of students in grades 2 through 8 must sign the planner daily, indicating that they have read the homework assignments. Communication is essential to the success of the student. Homework will be posted by all teachers on the weekly agenda.

## **GRADES AND GRADING**

### **Late Work**

A student who was present for class is expected to complete and submit homework on the assigned due date.

**Late point deductions will be charged for any work turned in after the due date. Any homework submitted a week after the assigned due date will receive a zero (0) and will no longer be considered as missing work. There is an expectation that the work will still be completed as part of the learning process in preparation for future concepts.**

### **Makeup Work Due to an Excused Absence**

A student will be allowed to complete and submit any missed assignments due to an excused illness. An absence is recorded as an excused illness when parent(s)/guardian(s) provide dated and signed documentation within 48 hours of the student's absence.

A student will be allowed one day to make up assignments for each day of absence. For example, a student who is absent for three (3) days will be allowed a total of three (3) days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) to complete and submit the missed assignment.

**The student is responsible for scheduling an appointment with their teacher(s) to make up any missed exam the first day they return to school. If a student is absent for more than one day, a maximum of three extra days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) may be granted to prepare for**

**the test.** The failure to schedule an appointment with their teacher(s) and makeup any missed exam will result in a zero (0).

### **Makeup Work Due to an Unexcused Absence**

Any absence without dated and signed documentation is considered an unexcused absence. A student with an unexcused absence is responsible for communicating with the teacher to request any missed work covered the day of their absence.

The student is responsible for completing and submitting any missed assignments one day after they return to school. The Late Work Policy will be applied to any assignments not submitted on the day after the student returns to school.

**Teachers will NOT be responsible for preparing and sending work with a student who plans an extended absence.** The work must be completed after the student returns.

### **Gradebook Policy**

The following weights will apply to students' work at all grade levels.

| Summative Assessments<br>(Tests & Projects) | Daily Work (Classwork &<br>Quizzes) | Homework |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| 50%                                         | 40%                                 | 10%      |

## Underperforming Grades

A student who receives 75% or below in any class on the weekly progress report will be required to attend after-school tutoring to help them gain a better understanding of the class lesson. The student will no longer be required to attend after school tutoring upon receiving an overall class grade of 76% or above, but the teacher may encourage continuous tutoring for the student's academic benefit.

The failure to participate in after school tutoring will result in:

- The student will be temporarily ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities (e.g., athletic practices and/or games, field trips, other special school events, etc.).
- A conference with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher, and chief administrator. The student may be subject to being placed on an Academic Probationary Contract for the remainder of the semester. The chief administrator may, in his or her sole discretion, determine that a student must participate in a period of academic probation or withdraw from the school for academic reasons.

A student who receives 75% or below in two or more classes will require a conference with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher, and chief administrator. The student will be placed on an Academic Probationary Contract for the remainder of the semester. The chief administrator may, in his or her sole discretion, determine that a student must participate in a period of academic probation or withdraw from the school for academic reasons

## Grading Scale

The grade scale for grades **1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades** is as follows:

|                      |   |            |
|----------------------|---|------------|
| E (Excellent)        | A | 94-100     |
| G (Good)             | B | 85-93      |
| S (Satisfactory)     | C | 76-84      |
| N (Need Improvement) | D | 70-75      |
| U (Unsatisfactory)   | F | 69 - Below |

The grade scale for **kindergarten** is:

- 3 Meets Grade-level Standards.
- 2 Making Adequate Progress Toward Grade-level.
- 1 Not Making Adequate Progress Toward Grade-level.

The grade scale for **PreK** is:

- G Good Progress
- W Working on Skill
- / Not Applicable

The **CONDUCT** grade scale for **1st-8th grades** is as follows:

- E (Excellent)
- G (Good)
- S (Satisfactory)
- N (Needs to Improve) and
- U (Unsatisfactory)

## TUTORING

Tutoring/Remediation during the regular school year is an extension of regular instruction.

Teachers provide one to two days of tutoring for struggling students each week. Teachers will notify parents of the tutoring schedule, post a copy in the classroom, and provide a copy to the office. At the discretion of the teacher and/or the parent, a student will be referred for tutorial help if they hold an average of 75 or below in a content area.

## **DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

It is the teacher's responsibility to differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs of all students. This includes challenging the academically gifted and providing remediation for the academically challenged. If a student demonstrates significant difficulty in acquiring the basic learning skills, despite full use of local resources by the teacher, the teacher shall consult with the chief administrator and the Coordinator for Student Services concerning the advisability and procedures for referral to outside agencies for further educational evaluation.

St. Cecilia School does not have a Special Education program. However, students in need of additional academic/behavioral support must undergo the Student Services process through Child Find in the student's local district. When the evaluative process is completed and the documentation is submitted to the school, students will receive a Student Success Plan. This plan will identify the agreed upon accommodations in every class. Teachers review these Student Success Plan(s) with the Coordinator for Student Services and follow the recommended plan to assist the student in the learning process.

The Coordinator for Student Services and classroom/homeroom teacher(s) will meet with families whose child(ren) have documented learning differences. The documentation will be revisited and updated at regular intervals. The school will assist families in obtaining referrals for evaluation through Child Find and other local resources.

While the Coordinator for Student Services will support families in the evaluation process, however, it is the responsibility of the parents to initiate and follow up with the district and the school.

## **GRADUATION**

Requirements stated in the accreditation handbook of TCCB-ED must be fulfilled by each student before the formal status of "graduation" is conferred. **Students must have earned a grade of 70 or above in all classes, and citizenship excellence. In addition, all financial responsibilities of the parent/guardian must be fulfilled before the student is allowed to participate in graduation exercises.**

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY**

Each child should be considered individually. Any decision concerning promotion vs. non-promotion must be made after considering all facts related to the child's development (emotional, physical, social as well as intellectual and academic), collected from a wide range of sources throughout the year.

Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The chief administrator may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as a requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade.

Written documentation of the following procedures is kept in the student's confidential file.

- a) There is consultation between the academic support team and chief administrator or designated academic administrator as early as possible in the first semester.
- b) A conference is held with the parents no later than the beginning of second semester to advise them of the possibility of retention and to discuss possible remedial actions.
- c) Follow-up conferences with the parents are held to evaluate the academic progress of the child.
- d) Evaluations and reports to parents must indicate failure to achieve minimum objectives required at the particular grade level.
- e) A final decision will be made only when all academic work for the year is considered. Exceptions to this time frame may be made by the principal or chief administrator, in consultation with the Superintendent.
- f) A student shall be retained no more than one year at any given grade or level. Ordinarily, a student should not be retained more than once while in the elementary school.

The final responsibility for a student's promotion or retention rests with the chief administrator. Such a decision will be communicated to the parents/guardians and Catholic Schools Office. Conversations regarding retention will begin at the end of the third quarter and continue throughout the remaining year. Documentation of these conversations will be retained in the student's cumulative file.

**Social promotions and skipping grade levels are prohibited in Catholic schools in Texas.**

### **Summer Program**

A student who receives a final cumulative semester grade of 69% or below in any of the following: Reading/Literature, English/Language Arts, and/or Math, is required to attend a credit recovery course during summer school. The student must be in attendance 90% of the time and receive a 70% or above in the credit recovery course.

As stated above, a student may be retained in their current grade level or be required to attend summer school if they miss 10% (17 days) of the school year for any reason. Extensive absences due to a medical illness will be assessed and taken into consideration by the chief administrator and health coordinator.

The failure to do so may result in the ineligibility to re-enroll at St. Cecilia Catholic School the following school year.

Proof of successful completion of the program must be given to the office before the beginning of the next school year.

In addition, a summer enrichment program may be offered to students. The school will communicate this offer to the community.

## **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Families must notify the school in writing when planning to withdraw a student from the school.

For registered students who withdraw before the first full day of school or anytime during the school year, monthly tuition payments previously submitted and/or registration fees will not be refunded.

Records will only be released once all financial obligations have been met with the school.

## STUDENT SERVICES

### Title I

This intervention and counseling program is offered and is financially supported by the federal government. The purpose of the program is to give assistance to students in grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade through additional study in the areas of reading and math. Students qualify for the program based on individual standardized test scores and the student's zip code. Contact the school office for more information.

Other services provided are a support program for dyslexic students, and a talented and gifted program. Eligibility for these in-house programs is reviewed annually.

### Other Student Services (speech, physical or occupational therapy)

To receive these additional needed student services, parents should contact the district public school where the child would otherwise attend. The school does *not* offer a Special Education program.

## TECHNOLOGY

All students share a responsibility in using technology in the proper way so as not to bring harm to themselves or others. Any student assigned a school device to use throughout the school year may not trade or use the device assigned to another student. Any damages to the device will incur a fee charged to the family FACTS account.

The handbook includes an Acceptable Use Policy outlining the correct and proper use of technology/virtual environment(s) for students and parents to review and sign. Some unacceptable behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Sending, displaying, or downloading offensive messages or pictures.
- Using obscene language.
- Harassing, bullying, insulting, or threatening others.
- Damaging of computer systems or computer networks.
- Violating copyright laws.
- Plagiarism in any form, including submitting documents from the Internet as a student's personal work.
- Using another person's log-on and/or password.
- Trespassing in someone else's folder, work, or files.
- Intentionally wasting limited resources.
- Using the network for commercial purposes.
- Revealing a personal phone number, name or address of oneself or another.
- Defaming the school, the administration, the staff, the Church, or any other members of the school community.

Failure to comply with school policies, whether in person or virtually, may result in loss of privileges including but not limited to suspension of technological access or in-school suspension.

## DIOCESE OF DALLAS INTERNET SCHOOL SAFETY POLICY

St. Cecilia Catholic School follows the "Diocese of Dallas Internet School Safety Policy" found in Appendix A of this handbook. Parents and students are asked to read the policy and sign the school's Acceptable Use Policy included with the parent consent and release forms at the end of this handbook.

## OTHER TECHNOLOGY CONCERNS

A personal communication device is defined as a “telephone, cell phone such as a smartphone or flip phone, tablet, smartwatch, radio device, paging device, or any other electronic device (including any type of video camera or photography camera) capable of telecommunication or digital communication.” (*Texas H.B. 1481, effective 6/20/2025*)

### Wireless Communication Devices

Students who need to bring a cell phone to school for after-school communication (including, but not limited to, walking home, entering a home without adult supervision, or attending extracurricular activities, practices, or games) must turn the device off and place it in the designated storage location assigned by their homeroom teacher upon arrival.

At no time during the school day may students have in their possession or use any personal electronic device, including but not limited to cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, earbuds, headphones, smart glasses (including Meta glasses), wearable technology, communication devices, or any similar electronic device capable of communication, recording, internet access, or media playback.

Any prohibited device found in a student's possession during the school day may be confiscated and will be released only to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). Upon a third confiscation, the device will be held by the school and returned on the last day of the school year.

**The school reserves the right to apply this policy to emerging technologies and electronic devices not specifically listed above.**

### Listening Devices

Students may use listening devices only with permission and for school-related work.

### Sexting

Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion.

### Texting

Students should at no time be involved in texting during the school day, unless it is virtual learning day and directed by the teacher. Students involved in texting on any platform (including TEAMS) at school face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. As above, hate speech, threats, or racial defamation in any form will not be tolerated.

### Chat Rooms (*TEAMS*)

Chat rooms may be used during virtual learning experiences while under teacher supervision only. Therefore, students are expected to be respectful of teachers, other students, and **should only be used for school purposes**. Failure to use appropriate behavior and communication expectations may face detention, suspension, or expulsion.

### Virtual Reality Sites/Social Media Platforms

Virtual Reality Sites/Social Media Platforms pose a developmental and moral risk to the life of a student. Parents are cautioned to be aware of the online sites visited by their children, knowing that often predators are not living in a neighborhood, but are virtually present within the student's home via a computer. Students whose avatars depict the school logo, other

students, teachers, or school/parish staff in a defamatory light face detention, suspension, or expulsion.

## **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM**

St. Cecilia provides an extended day program from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. Any children not picked up by 3:30 will be signed into the extended day program. Children must be signed out by the parent/guardian and extended day staff. Children not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will be charged according to the Drop-In Fee schedule. The charge will be added to the family's FACTS account.

The monthly bill will be posted to the family's FACTS account on the first of the month and is due by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. To cancel participation in the program, notification must be given by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the previous month.

A snack is provided for all students. The children are supervised in an environment that allows for study and playtime. The parents are required to sign out their student(s) when they leave. Parents/Guardians who pick up their children after 6:00 p.m. will be charged a late fee of \$1/minute per child for every minute past 6:01 p.m.

**The program is not available on half-days.**

## **LIBRARY**

St. Cecilia School library provides a selection of library materials for all students in areas of curriculum support and for recreational reading. Every grade has a specified library time that supplements the formal reading program. The librarian and teachers strive to aid students in using the collection. Cooperation, courtesy, and concern for library upkeep are the responsibilities of all students. Students are encouraged to obtain library cards from their local public library for additional independent reading and research.

### **Library Procedures**

- Books may be checked out for one week and may be renewed twice.
- A student whose book is overdue will not be able to check out a new book.
- Books must be in-hand to be renewed.
- Each borrower is personally responsible for the materials checked out in his/her name.
- Students responsible for lost or damaged books will be charged the current replacement cost plus a \$5.00 processing fee.

Students may be denied library privileges if overdue books are not returned as requested by the librarian.

## **CAFETERIA**

Meal service provided by the school cafeteria complies with all applicable diocesan human resources policies and applicable state and local laws and regulations relating to food safety and food service. The school participates in programs funded by local, state, or federal governments and follows requirements of those programs. As such some requirements apply to our campus that may not apply in other schools.

Lunch is served daily in the school cafeteria. Monthly menus are available at the beginning of each month. Lunch is served from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. depending on a child's grade level. Meals are charged to a family's incidental FACTS account.

Students in grades PreK – 8<sup>th</sup> grade eat in the cafeteria. Students desiring to eat lunch provided by the school cafeteria must place their order with their homeroom teacher before 9:00 a.m. Students arriving at school after this time must bring a sack lunch.

A sack lunch may be brought from home in lieu of purchasing a meal. It is suggested that an insulated lunch box and cold pack be used to transport a student's lunch. Students may purchase milk with their sack lunch. **Lunches may not be brought in from fast food restaurants. Soft drinks are not permitted with lunch.** Microwaves are available for student use.

***No sharing of food will be allowed.***

## **STUDENT EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extra-curricular activities help promote a well-rounded student. St. Cecilia Catholic School offers a variety of extra-curricular activities for the students. All activities acting in the school's name outside of the classroom are under the direct authority of the chief administrator. **The chief administrator has the authority and the responsibility to intervene if the activity is not functioning for the good of the students. Students are reminded that participation should be limited to 1 or 2 activities at any given time so that these activities do not interfere with academic subjects.**

### **No Pass - No Participation**

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege. **Students must be in good standing in both academics and conduct as determined by the principal of their school of attendance. In addition, a student must be in good standing with regard to past sportsmanship.**

A St. Cecilia student must maintain an average of 70+ in all academic subjects on weekly progress reports and maintain acceptable conduct to participate in any extra-curricular activities. Teachers, coaches, club moderators, and the administration will regularly monitor the grades of students involved in these programs.

A student whose average falls below 70 will be deemed ineligible for a minimum of two weeks and required the student to attend after-school tutoring. Tutoring will take priority over any extra-curricular activity. Teachers, coaches, and club moderators will notify families in writing when a child becomes ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

**Ineligible students will be expected to attend after school tutoring and will not be allowed to practice or participate in a public event until the next regularly scheduled progress report is reviewed, and the student achieves passing grades and maintains satisfactory behavior.** Ineligibility reports will NOT be created or changed in the two-week interim. **Students will not be granted eligibility during that time.**

The school believes all students can maintain a minimum 70 average with tutoring, intervention strategies for special needs students, and with student effort and parent collaboration.

### **Athletics**

The Athletic Director (AD) administers the Athletic Program. In collaboration with the Dallas Parochial League, it is the responsibility of the AD to formulate sporting teams, recruit volunteer coaches, communicate with parents and students and facilitate the athletic program.

**No child will be allowed to practice or play until the athletic fees are paid.**

As partners in the educational process at St. Cecilia Catholic School, we ask parents to follow all diocesan and health department guidelines.

We ask parents to 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 at the end of the day.**
- **Is dressed according to the school dress code.**
- Completes assignments on time; and
- Has lunch money and/or nutritional sack lunch every day.

We expect parents will:

- ***Supports the religious and educational goals of the school.***
- ***Abide by the Dallas Parochial League behavior expectations in all locations.***
- ***Parents and spectators are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and appropriately during and after all games, demonstrating good sportsmanship toward players, coaches, officials, staff, and other families.***
- Actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- See that the student pays for any damage to schoolbooks or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student.
- Notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy.
- Notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers.
- Meet all financial obligations to the school.
- Inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health.
- Complete and return to school any requested information promptly.
- **Read school notes and newsletters and show interest in the student's total education.**
- Attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example; or is an active participant in the church of their own faith.
- Support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.
- Treat teachers with respect and courtesy when discussing student problems.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP CODE FOR PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND SPECTATORS**

This code is to be considered supplemental to the school's expectation for conduct of its community.

- Interscholastic competition exists for students to foster sportsmanship, leadership and teamwork; fans should set the example of good sportsmanship.
- Every child is equally important.
- **Fans should always conduct themselves as an example of Christian behavior.**
- **Fans should support and encourage in everything they do and say; they should never verbally assault or harass others.**
- **The only people who talk to officials during and after a competition are the coaches or administrators, not fans or parents.**
- The only people who talk to coaches during a competition are the other coaches, officials or student participants, never parents or fans.

- The only people who talk to players during a competition are the coaches, officials or student participants, never parents or fans.
- Understand and follow the distinctions: the coach's role is to coach, the officials' role is to officiate, the player's role is to respectfully participate; the fan's role is to support.
- Remember that coaches and officials are human.
- **Remember to do all for the glory of God.**
- Conduct which falls outside that listed at practice is subject to disciplinary measures from the school.
- Conduct which falls outside that listed at a game is subject to disciplinary measures from the DPL.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP CODE FOR PLAYERS**

This code is to be considered supplemental to the school's expectation for conduct of its students.

- Interscholastic competition exists for students to foster sportsmanship, leadership and teamwork; students should set the example of good sportsmanship as set forth by their parents, guardians, and coaches.
- Students should stay physically fit so as to do be able to do their best in all situations.
- Student should make every effort to attend all practices and give 100%.
- Students should maintain their eligibility by successfully completing all of their required coursework (See Policy 7111 for specifics). Students must remember their priorities: (1) God, (2) family, (3) academics and (4) extra-curricular activities.
- Students are to comply with all school and league rules and directives as given by their coaches and teachers.
- Every player is equally important to a team. Players should positively encourage all teammates to do their best.
- Players should always conduct themselves as an example of Christian behavior, both at the field/court and away from it. Revised July 1, 2024
- Players should address concerns to their coaches in a calm manner during games.
- Players should respect officials and opponents at all times, for without them, there would be no game.
- Remember to do all for the glory of God.
- Conduct which falls outside that listed at practice is subject to disciplinary measures from the school.
- Conduct which falls outside that listed at a game is subject to disciplinary measures from the DPL in consultation with the school.

*See the Parent Consent and Release Form at the end of the Handbook.*

## **PARENTAL COOPERATION AND BEHAVIOR**

All members of the school community, including parents, guardians and family members, are expected to comply with all school rules and policies while on campus and in communications with the school, be respectful, cooperate with the school with respect to all decisions affecting the student, and avoid behavior which disrupts the orderly administration of the school. **A community member's failure to meet these expectations jeopardizes school administration, requires the**

**school to expend limited resources to address inappropriate and unnecessary behavior, and detracts from the school's core mission and, as a result, may jeopardize a student's continued participation in the school community.** At the school's sole discretion, the failure of a student's parents, guardians or other family members to comply with these expectations, separate and apart from the student's conduct, **may result in suspension or expulsion of the student.**

### **Parents' Role in Education**

Parents are the first educators of their children. During periods of online learning, children may need assistance accessing materials and supervision to complete assignments.

**We, at St. Cecilia Catholic School, consider it a privilege to collaborate with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children.** Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life—physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of St. Cecilia Catholic School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

A good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter a partnership with us at St. Cecilia Catholic School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 8), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. **To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority.** If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make the investigation of the complete story as your first step with **your** child. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, boundaries and limits provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

### **Parent Concerns or Complaints (Grievance Process)**

The Diocese generally supports a collaborative approach to resolving parental concerns or complaints regarding school employees. Accordingly, such concerns or complaints should

generally be addressed to the affected employee first to allow an opportunity for open communication and direct problem-solving. If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved directly with the affected employee, it should be presented to the employee's supervisor (or the chief administrator), preferably in writing. If the complaint or concern is escalated to the supervisor or chief administrator, **the affected employee will be notified of the concern or complaint and provided an opportunity to provide an explanation and additional information. In parochial schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to resolution of the concern or complaint—acting in concert with the pastor when necessary—shall be final.**

This process demonstrates respect for each of these individuals in their prospective roles as professionals. **It is by working together and sharing information that success is achieved.**

**The spread of gossip and incorrect information destroys relationships, creates walls, and builds mistrust. It negatively impacts the school community. Teachers, students, and parents are called to live Christ's message of love found in the Gospels, to celebrate and show love for each other.**

#### **Parent/Guardian-School Agreement**

This agreement stipulates the commitments required of all St. Cecilia Catholic School families. St. Cecilia is a pro-active learning environment and emphasizes parent participation.

## **COMMUNICATION**

**All concerns pertaining to a student's religious, academic, and social development must first be discussed with the student's teacher.**

#### **Parent Teacher Communication**

Effective communication between home and school is desirable since teachers and staff partner with parents in the students' educational and personal development. Communication between students, teachers, and parents is an integral part of quality education. **If you need to speak with a teacher, an appointment must be made in advance.** Parents are encouraged to call the school office and leave a message on the teacher's voicemail or send an e-mail to communicate with teachers. It is the goal of the faculty to respond by the evening of the next school day.

#### **Means of Communication**

RenWeb<sup>®</sup>/FACTS and Microsoft Teams are the primary means of communication to parents about grades, missing assignments, and important school notices. Parents will receive username and password information to access RenWeb/FACTS information pertaining to each student enrolled at St. Cecilia Catholic School. Every family in grades PK through 8 must activate their parent RenWeb account, provide an email address, and keep that email address current with the school office. Through this email address, parents will receive school wide notices, including inclement weather and emergency closing notices, and classroom announcements. The school faculty updates grades weekly and assignment information regularly.

**Parents are expected to access email, RenWeb, and Microsoft Teams on a regular basis.** In addition to checking RenWeb regularly, parents are expected to review all graded and returned schoolwork to keep informed of their child's progress.

Information transmitted via e-mail to and from e-mail addresses provided by St. Cecilia Catholic School is not encrypted or transmitted over a secure connection. St. Cecilia Catholic

School and its staff cannot guarantee the security of the information in electronic correspondence or be held liable for its dissemination.

Parents are responsible for communicating any change of address, phone number, and email address to the office manager.

### **Parent Concerns or Complaints ~ Conflict Resolution**

In all human involvements, misunderstandings and conflicts will arise. Clear, respectful, honest communication within a community can sometimes be challenging, but it is vital for the success and growth of the members of the community. The administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents are expected to have rational conversations without the fear of reprisal within the classroom, the community, or social media.

The Diocese supports a collaborative approach to resolving parental concerns or complaints regarding school employees. Accordingly, such concerns or complaints should be addressed to the affected employee first to allow an opportunity for open communication and direct problem-solving. If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved directly with the affected employee, it should be presented to the employee's supervisor (or chief administrator) preferably in writing. If the complaint or concern is escalated to the supervisor or chief administrator, **the affected employee will be notified of the concern or complaint and provided an opportunity to provide an explanation and additional information. In parochial schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to the resolution of the concern or complaint—acting in concert with the pastor when necessary—*shall be final.***

### **General Office Communication**

Communication is sent home electronically from the office each week. Items requiring your special attention or signature will go home in a special folder/envelope. Parents are asked to check student backpacks daily and to return necessary documents with the student the following day to the homeroom teacher.

### **Microsoft Teams**

Microsoft Teams is a communication tool that helps connect all learners with the people and resources needed to reach their full potential. It is the communication tool that will be used by teachers and students. Each student will receive a school email account. **Parents are expected to continuously monitor this account and chat rooms.** Students will use their email address to access Teams for assignments or to communicate with their teachers (**school purposes ONLY**), in the case the school must hold online classes. Parents will be granted access to the student's Teams account by using their student's credentials.

### **Family Portal on RenWeb/FACTS**

RenWeb/FACTS is our Learning Management System (LMS). The Family Portal is a secure, online tool that allows parents and guardians to stay connected to their child's academic progress and school information. Through the portal, families can view grades, attendance, homework, report cards, schedules, and school announcements. It also provides access to financial accounts, including tuition, lunch balances, and billing. We encourage all families to log in regularly to stay informed and engaged in their child's education. An automated progress report will be sent out weekly from the family portal with your students' grades.

### **Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences**

Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences are held each year at the end of the first quarter. A mandatory conference will be held at the end of the third quarter for families whose students are at risk. Other conferences may be called throughout the year at the discretion of the teacher or the parent. Conferences may be held virtually or in person. When you need to see a teacher, please call, and make an appointment through the office, or send a note directly to the teacher. Teacher email addresses are on the school website. **Please remember that teachers are not free to stop and have a conference while in class, while monitoring students, or in the parking lot.**

### **School Visits & Parent Observations**

St. Cecilia School is a **closed campus** and follows diocesan health department and safe environment guidelines regarding school visitors and parent observations.

If a parent would like to observe their child's performance in the classroom, then the respective parent must make an appointment with the chief administrator. The chief administrator will make the arrangements, allowing the teacher 24-hour notice. The planned 35 to 45-minute observation will be scheduled in consideration of the teachers' lesson plans. **Parents who observe in a classroom have a responsibility to keep observations of other students in strict confidence.**

Parents are to meet with teachers at mutually agreed upon times when classroom instruction will **NOT** be interrupted. Parents may be requested to schedule an appointment if the teacher is not available for a drop-in conference.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEER HOURS**

St. Cecilia follows diocesan, health department, and safe environment guidelines regarding parent volunteers.

It is the intention of our community that parents share their time and talent for the betterment of all. All families are asked to volunteer a minimum of 25 hours during the school year at specific events. Ten hours may be completed through donations and the final 10 hours must be done in person. Five hours must be in attendance at Home & School meetings, Dad's Club, or other event planning meetings. Families will be notified of the balance of hours due. **For hours not met, a fee of \$25/hour will be added to the family FACTS account. All volunteer hours and/or donations must be approved through the school office.**

### **SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM**

All school personnel, including volunteers, will comply with the tenets of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as well as the procedures and/or regulations of the school, of the Diocese of Dallas, and the State of Texas for providing a safe environment for children and minors.

In accordance with the Safe Environment program, as mandated by the Diocese of Dallas, any person having contact with a student in regard to coaching, volunteering for any school event or substitute teaching must annually complete an online screening or attend the in-person volunteer clinic scheduled by the Safe Environment Coordinator. **He/She will not be allowed to volunteer in any respect unless the proper screening has been completed.** All volunteers must complete this training and be cleared with a background check annually. **An individual's Safe**

**Environment status may be revoked at any time by the chief administrator. Volunteers must sign a non-employee confidentiality agreement or NDA.**

## **CUSTODY AND FAMILY LAW ISSUES**

The Diocese and its schools understand that many families within the school community are affected by custody and other related legal disputes. The Diocese and its schools work to balance sensitivity to difficult family situations and the interests of safety and orderly school administration. Involving school personnel in family and custody diverts finite school resources from the school's primary function. As a result, it is important that families within the school community who are affected by custody and other related legal disputes read and understand the following policies and procedures.

Generally, a child's biological or adoptive parents have equal rights to custody of and visitation with the child unless and until a court orders otherwise. When this arrangement has been changed by court order, it is the responsibility of the affected student's family to provide the school with a complete, final, signed copy of the relevant order and to point out to the school any relevant portions of the order. Unless and until a student's family does so, the school may assume that both of a child's biological or adoptive parents have equal rights to custody of and visitation with the student.

It is the responsibility of the parents, not the school, to ensure that the school is promptly provided with any relevant, original, or amended custody orders. Schools will take reasonably practical steps to facilitate compliance with relevant family court orders. However, it is the responsibility of the family, and not the school, to enforce family court orders regarding a student. School personnel are not family law attorneys and are not responsible for interpreting or enforcing custody or other family court orders.

**Attorneys representing parents in custody disputes should not contact school personnel directly, including to request the production of documents and execution of supporting affidavits for use in litigation. Parents may obtain contact information for diocesan legal counsel from the school and should provide this information to the parents' attorneys if school involvement in a custody dispute is requested. If the school is required to engage counsel to interpret or otherwise advise the school regarding a custody or other family court order or dispute, the parents of the affected student are jointly and severally liable to the school for all costs and attorneys' fees associated therewith. Additionally, if the school is required to engage counsel to participate in witness interviews, depositions, and/or trial preparation involving attendance of a school employee, with respect to a legal matter involving the student, the parents of the affected student are jointly and severally liable to the school for all costs and attorneys' fees associated therewith. As an exception to this general rule, upon request by either parent, the school will generally, at the chief administrator's sole discretion, provide one copy of a student's central file (e.g., attendance records, report cards, enrollment documents, etc....) with a supporting business records affidavit to both parents or their attorneys free of charge.**

Diocesan schools are private property and are not open to the public. Additionally, it is detrimental to the well-being of the affected students and to the school community as a whole when family disputes are brought onto school property. Parents are expected to do everything possible to avoid parental confrontations or arguments on school grounds. The chief administrator of the school or his or her designee has full discretion to exclude any person from the school when, in his or her

sole discretion, doing so is necessary or appropriate. School personnel may contact law enforcement for assistance when doing so is necessary to enforce this discretion. If a parent who is prohibited by court order from coming to or near the school attempts to enter the school, the school may call the police and/or seek other appropriate recourse.

If school personnel believe that the behavior of a parent or other legally responsible adult presents an imminent threat of harm to a student, the school may refuse to release the student to the parent or other legally responsible adult or take such other steps, including but not limited to contacting law enforcement or the student's emergency contact, as the school deems necessary.

## GRADE REPORTS TO PARENTS

**Report Cards** are important tools for communication. Report Cards will be given four (4) times during the academic school year, approximately every nine (9) weeks. St. Cecilia School uses the report card form approved by the Catholic Schools Office.

A final grade, representing an average of previous report card periods in all required subjects and categories is recorded on the student's permanent record for all students.

**Progress Reports** are regularly sent via an automated email to parents every Sunday evening from the Family Portal in RenWeb/FACTS.

**Missing/Failing Assignments**—whenever a student has a missing or failing assignment, parents will receive an automated email from the Family Portal in RenWeb/FACTS.

## TELEPHONE CALLS

Students will be permitted to use the school phone only in an emergency and with the permission of the chief administrator, teacher, or office personnel. Arrangements for after-school activities and routine transportation questions should be made prior to arriving at school. Communication with students by parents during school hours should be made through the school office. However, if after school carpool arrangements should unexpectedly change, parents should email the classroom teacher and the school office. This information will be communicated to the students prior to dismissal. Please limit your requests for messages to be delivered to your child from the front office only in emergency situations.

## CUMULATIVE RECORDS

The chief administrator or designee of the school is responsible for the collection, maintenance, and dissemination of student records and for the education of the staff about student record policies. Administrators shall take particular care to preserve both the integrity and privacy of the required school records. Local procedures must adhere to the following requirements.

### **Retention of Records:**

A duplicate copy of each report card and conference form should be retained on file at least until the student's grades are recorded on the cumulative card for the current school year.

A permanent, paper, or electronic student record is to be maintained by the school for every student who is admitted to and attends the institution. In addition to the data concerning academic progress and attendance, the records shall include at the minimum, the following:

1. Legal name of student,
2. Place and date of birth,
3. Gender of student,

4. Name and address of parent (guardian) of minor student,
5. Religious preference,
6. School entrance date,
7. Date and place of Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation (if applicable),
8. Standardized test results,
9. Verification of required immunizations.

For students in grades pre-K through 8th grade, their cumulative record should be retained 5 years from the date of withdrawal or graduation. Disposal of these documents should include permanent deletion (electronic records) and shredding (paper records).

Attendance records will be retained for 5 years. After 5 years, the documents may be shredded/deleted.

## **PARENTAL ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS**

Parents will be allowed to inspect and review their student's education records, at a date and time convenient to the school, unless a court has ordered otherwise. Records will always be reviewed in the presence of school personnel appointed by the chief administrator. The school may provide copies of the records and, if it does so, may charge a fee.

In the event a court order is in place which limits a parent's access to a student's educational records, or which otherwise limits the contact a parent may have with the school regarding the student, the family must provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school when the student is enrolled. If such a court order is issued after a student has enrolled, the family must provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school as soon as it is signed by the judge.

The school will, when and to the extent reasonably possible, honor restrictions on access to educational records imposed by such an order. However, school personnel are not family lawyers, and it is not the school's responsibility to enforce court orders. See Miscellaneous section for additional information regarding reimbursement of the school's costs and attorneys' fees for involvement in family custody disputes.

Schools will generally not release a student's records to third parties without the written consent of a student's parent or legally responsible adult. As an exception to this rule, a school may disclose student records to or for:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest.
- Other schools to which a student is transferring.
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student.
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school.
- Accrediting organizations.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

If a specific reason exists to further limit access to a student's educational records, the student's parent or legally responsible adult must provide a specific, written request that explains the basis for the additional restriction to the school's chief administrator. The chief administrator, in his/her

sole discretion, will determine whether implementing special procedures for a student's records is appropriate and reasonably feasible on a case-by-case basis.

## **SAFETY AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

If there is a change in address, phone number, work numbers or any other important information during the school year, it is the responsibility of the parents to notify the school office.

### **Heat Index and Ozone Days**

When the Temperature-Heat-Index (THI) reaches 95° F, outdoor activity will be limited to 10-15 minutes with proper hydration of the children (recess, dismissal, etc.). No outdoor PE or Diocesan sports/practices longer than 15 minutes will be permitted. The following precautions will be taken:

- **Orange Ozone Days:** Monitor ozone sensitive children who are active outdoors as well as referring them to the nurse/school office if respiratory distress symptoms appear.
- **Red Ozone Days:** A plan is recommended for children with known lung disease (example: asthma) to be retained indoors; however, if parents/guardians/doctor release students for outdoor activity, a plan should then be in place to observe and monitor students as well as to refer them to the clinic and /or office should distress symptoms appear.
- **Purple Ozone Days** (confirmed in your area): No outside PE or recess for PK-8th grade No outdoor sporting events for upper schools if the area is in a confirmed purple ozone area.

### **Cold Weather Guidelines**

When the temperature and/or the wind chill is below 32° F, the children should be kept indoors for PE and recess. When the temperature is above 32° F, the children should be properly dressed for outdoor activity.

### **Severe Storms Including Lightning**

When lightning is detected within a distance less than or equal to 8 miles, all students are moved indoors. A 30-minute wait period following the last lightning strike recorded is required before students may return to outdoor sports/activities. Proper documentation is recommended.

### **Safety Drills**

St. Cecilia will follow diocesan and health department guidelines regarding safety drills. Staff and students are instructed as to the procedures to follow at the beginning of every school year. These procedures are reviewed throughout the year.

#### **Fire Drills (Evacuate)**

Monthly drills are held. Exits are clearly marked. Evacuation plans are posted in all classrooms in the building.

#### **Shelter-in-Place Drills (previously known as Tornado or Lockout Drills)**

These drills are practiced twice a year. Students are taught to use appropriate safety strategies for the hazard.

#### **Lockdown Drills**

Lockdown drills are held regularly as recommended by the Crisis Management Team. In the event a crisis arises in which the safety of students is in jeopardy or at the recommendation of law enforcement, the school will issue a lockdown. No one is allowed

to enter the building until the “all clear” is given by the chief operating officer or law enforcement.

## ASBESTOS ABATEMENT

St. Cecilia Catholic School has performed asbestos abatement. A copy of the Asbestos Maintenance Handbook is available for review in the chief administrator’s office.

## VISITORS

**St. Cecilia School is a closed campus** and follows the diocesan safe environment and health department guidelines regarding visitors to the building.

**Essential visitors with prior appointments must first report to the school office.** This includes parents, alumni, contract workers, etc. The entrance to the office is on Mary Cliff Road. **Please do not solicit entrance to the building at any other door. A student opening an outside door for anyone will be subject to suspension or expulsion.**

No visitors are allowed in the classrooms without permission from the front office. That permission must be granted in advance. All visitors will be required to show identification upon entrance. Authorized visitors will be expected to wear an identifiable visitor pass while in the building.

## HEALTH

St. Cecilia follows diocesan and health department guidelines. **Principals and school health personnel will refer to the *School Health Manual* published annually by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department for general guidelines related to school health services.**

**In cases of accident or sudden sickness, the chief administrator or designee is responsible for giving appropriate immediate care, notifying parents/guardians, sending students home, and guiding parents to sources of treatment, when necessary or requested.** All student accidents and injuries on school premises and at school sponsored events should be reported to the school office immediately.

The school staff has the right and duty to render first aid to injured students. Only the necessary emergency first aid and treatment to protect the child will be administered. When necessary medical care will be obtained, and parents will be notified immediately. An emergency card file is kept in the office for ready reference. This file contains important data such as parents’ phone numbers, family doctor, etc. **It is the parent’s responsibility to keep the school office updated of any changes.** CPR training is provided for the faculty and staff of St. Cecilia Catholic School.

## EMERGENCY CARE AND FIRST AID

Every school shall have a current Crisis Management Plan. Provisions shall be made to implement the procedures, to fully inform parents, and to inform and prepare all staff members.

In cases of accident or sudden sickness, the chief administrator or designee is responsible for giving appropriate immediate care, notifying parents/guardians, sending students home, and guiding parents to sources of treatment, when necessary or requested.

School staff should render first aid when it is safe and practical to do so but should only provide a level of care for which they have received competent training. When in doubt, in case of

emergency, school staff should call 911, comply with instructions given by emergency personnel when doing so would not place any person in danger, and should take reasonable steps to safely prevent the situation from becoming worse when possible.

## **AUTHORIZATION OF CONSENT TO TREAT MINOR**

By signing the acknowledge and agreement section at the end of this Handbook, parents and/or guardians affirm the following with regards to consent to treat a minor:

I/We, the Parents listed below, are the parent(s)/guardians of the Student listed below, and as such do hereby authorize the School named below and its employees, contractors, and adult volunteers as our agent(s) (collectively, "School") to consent to any x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical, dental, or surgical diagnosis or treatment or hospital care which is deemed advisable by, and is to be rendered under the general or specific supervision of, any physician or surgeon licensed under the laws of the jurisdiction where such diagnosis or treatment may be given, whether such diagnosis or treatment is rendered at the office of said physician, at a hospital, or at any other location.

I/we understand that this authorization is given in advance of any specific treatment or diagnosis but is given to provide authority and power of treatment or hospital care which the physician in the exercise of best judgment may deem advisable. This authorization is given pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 32 of the Texas Family Code. This authorization shall remain effective for up to one year from the date of completion of this form, unless sooner revoked in writing delivered to said agent(s).

**In consideration of acceptance of this authorization, but without any time limitation and without any future right of revocation, I/we hereby release and agree to fully and unconditionally protect, indemnify, and defend School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and their respective officers, agents, and employees, (collectively, "Indemnitees") and hold each Indemnatee harmless from and against any and all costs, expenses, attorney's fees, claims damages, demands, suits, judgments, losses, or liability for injuries to property, injuries to persons (including Student) and from any other costs, expenses, attorney fees, claims, suits judgments, losses, or liabilities of any and every nature whatsoever arising in any manner, directly or indirectly, out of, in connection with, in the course of, or incidental to such treatment, treatment decisions, diagnosis, or hospital care relating to Student, regardless of cause or of the joint, comparative, or concurrent negligence of the indemnities.**

## **STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

St. Cecilia Catholic School provides each student with student accident insurance. **This coverage is only secondary when the student has health coverage under another Insurance Plan.** This insurance covers accidental injuries to students during school hours and at all school-sponsored functions, including sports on and off campus at other diocesan schools. This coverage is not health insurance. Insurance claim forms are available in the school office.

When an accident occurs the school office must be notified, the school will fill out the top portion of the Student Accident Claim Form and provide this to the parents. The parent(s) will then complete the remainder of the form and mail it, along with all the required attachments, to the insurance carrier directly at the address indicated on the form. All claims under the Student Accident Insurance are handled directly by the insurance carrier with the Parent/Guardian. If there

are any issues that arise during the course of the claim, please contact the school office. Coverage is provided in accordance with the plan documents and specific coverage terms and conditions.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

St. Cecilia will follow diocesan and health department guidelines. In addition, the school will follow guidelines provided by the Texas Department of Health “Communicable Disease Chart for Schools and Child-Care Centers.” St. Cecilia Catholic School will use the list provided by the Texas Department of Health “Reportable Diseases in Texas” to determine how to deal with the condition.

The school makes every effort to control the spread of communicable diseases. Any student showing suspicious symptoms may be sent home as a matter of precaution. A student is considered ill and must go home if he or she is vomiting, has diarrhea, pink eye, head lice or a temperature over 100. The student must be temperature free, symptom-free, and not contagious for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication, before returning to school after any illness.

## **GENERAL MEDICAL INFORMATION**

### **Confidentiality**

Knowledge that a student has reportable disease will be confined to those with direct need-to-know, e.g., the chief administrator, teacher, coordinator of health services, etc. St. Cecilia Catholic School can release information, with parental/guardianship approval, only to physicians, nurses, and other health care personnel who have a legitimate need to know to provide treatment for the student. Parents/guardians will provide approval in writing and shall specify the persons or positions to which the information may be released. Any person receiving such information will be aware of confidentiality. Parents will be notified if their student’s classroom has experienced contagion.

### **School Clinic Records**

St. Cecilia Catholic School will keep a daily clinic log and a daily medication log.

### **Student Health Records**

St. Cecilia Catholic School is a non-exemption school per diocesan policy and will comply with immunization requirements established by the Texas Department of Health as stated in “Immunization Requirements for Children and Students—Texas Public and Private Schools, Child Care Facilities, and Institutions of Higher Learning.”

St. Cecilia Catholic School will have on file a permanent health card and an emergency information form for each student.

### **Immunizations**

In the State of Texas, it is mandatory that immunizations be up to date at all times. It is the belief as stated in the Pontifical Academy for Life Statement regarding the use of vaccines that immunizations are not in conflict with the Catholic faith. Therefore, each year, every student must present evidence of the required immunizations from a physician or health care provider authorized to administer immunizations to the school before the first day of school. The school reserves the right to refuse admission to a student who does not have up-to-date immunizations. We do not accept immunization exemptions. Current students may be withdrawn from school unless proof is provided to St. Cecilia Catholic School that

immunization records are up to date. Physical exams and medical history are required for all new students.

### **Medication Usage and Distribution**

The parents of any student on a continuing medication regimen to be taken during school hours shall inform the school nurse or designated school official. If necessary, with parental consent, the school nurse or designated school official may communicate with the prescribing physician/nurse practitioner regarding the prescribed use, potential side effects and emergency procedures as indicated.

The school nurse or designated school official shall only administer medication(s) prescribed or directed for use by the specified student. Prescription medications must be in pharmacy-labeled prescription bottle or packaging, including student's name, dosage, and directions for use. Nonprescription over the counter (OTC) medications must be in original packaging including directions for use and clearly labeled for the specified student and must be turned in to the health coordinator.

A consent form to administer all prescription (physician/nurse practitioner-signed) and OTC (parent-signed) medications must be obtained, in accordance with TCCB-ED policy.

The following procedures will be implemented when receiving and dispensing medications:

All student medications with appropriate forms must be given to and verified by the school nurse or designated school official and recorded in the student's health record. Medications will be stored in a secure, locked location; with no more than a 1-month supply retained at school.

- a) Medications should be administered per label/package directions; or as otherwise directed in writing by the prescribing physician/nurse practitioner.
- b) Medications will be administered by the school nurse or designated school official and recorded in the student medication log. Students are not allowed to administer their own medications.
- c) At their discretion, the school nurse or designated school personnel may assist with reminding the student to begin a new medication regimen, until the student becomes familiar with the routine. However, parents should be informed that the school nurse or designated school personnel are not required to remind the students to take prescribed or as-needed medications.

School personnel will not administer injections, with the exception of Epinephrine Auto-Injector devices, administered per diocesan policy.

### **Injections**

School personnel will not administer injections, with the exception of an Epi Pen or equivalent. Should the need for an injection arise and be administered for life saving measures, the school will notify the parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact immediately following the incident. When no one is available, the student will be taken to the nearest emergency hospital at the expense of the parents.

## **Epi Pens**

Texas Senate Bill 579 allows private schools to stock epinephrine auto-injectors in the event of an anaphylactic emergency resulting from a severe allergic reaction. The Diocese of Dallas Catholic Schools Office requires all diocesan schools to stock epinephrine auto-injector devices on campus. The items below are in accordance with the guidelines from Senate Bill 579 and TCCB ED Health Manual.

### **Standing Physician Order**

Each school must have a physician's standing order for the administration of an epinephrine auto injector to a person in anaphylaxis.

### **Maintaining Records**

Schools must maintain records of trainings and place in each personnel file, and a master record of who is trained on their campus. These records will be retained according to the minimum retention periods posted by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

### **Unassigned Opioid Antagonist Naloxone Protocol**

In the event of a reasonably suspected opioid overdose, a Designated Employee, acting in good faith and with reasonable care, shall follow the below protocols outlined in the Naloxone training and summarized here:

- Administer rescue breathing or basic life support as indicated.
- Prepare and administer Naloxone.
- Call 911 when Naloxone is administered and procure EMS transport after administering Naloxone.
- Alert the School administration and School crisis response team.
- Contact the parent or guardian of any School student for whom Naloxone was administered.
- Continue rescue breathing or basic life support as indicated and applicable (Note: Naloxone generally wears off after thirty (30) to ninety (90) minutes, which often requires emergency medical care to be consistently applied to the patient).
- Administer another dose of Naloxone after three (3) minutes if there is no response or minimal breathing or responsiveness.
- When the individual who received the Naloxone becomes responsive, place the individual in recovery position (left side lying); and
- Provide support and comfort to the individual through immediate symptoms of withdrawal and remain with the individual until EMS arrives.

## **Allergy and Asthma Policy**

St. Cecilia Catholic School recognizes that asthma is an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with asthma. All children with asthma or life-threatening allergies are required to have an Emergency Action Plan on file with the school office.

The school encourages children with asthma to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by school staff and pupils. Teachers and staff are made aware of all students' Emergency Action Plans.

### **Asthma Medication**

Immediate access to reliever inhalers is vital. Children are encouraged to carry their relief inhaler as soon as the parent, doctor or nurse and class teacher agree they are

mature enough. Parents are asked to ensure that the school is provided with a labeled spare relief inhaler. All inhalers must be labeled with the child's name by the parent.

### **Record Keeping**

At the beginning of each school year, or when a child joins St. Cecilia Catholic School, parents are asked to submit a child's medical record. From this information the school keeps its asthma register which is available for all school staff. If medication changes in between times, parents are asked to inform the school.

### **The School Environment**

The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favorable to children with asthma or allergies. As far as possible the school does not use chemicals in science and art lessons that are potential triggers for children with asthma.

### **Food Allergy Policy**

St. Cecilia Catholic School recognizes that life threatening food allergies are an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with food allergies. In order to minimize the incidence of life-threatening allergic reactions, St. Cecilia Catholic School will maintain a system-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions and maintain an Emergency Action Plan for any student(s) whose parent/guardian, and physicians have informed the school in writing that the student(s) has a potentially life-threatening allergy.

### **Notifications**

Parents/guardians must inform the school office of life-threatening and/or severe allergies. The school office will be responsible for notifying all appropriate teachers and the cafeteria manager about the nature of the life-threatening allergies faced by students. This notification will include an explanation of the severity of the health threat, a description of the signs and symptoms to be aware of and what allergens (food, materials, etc.) to avoid.

Notice of all allergy treatments need to be provided in writing. For emergency allergic reaction treatment (bee stings, etc.) necessary medications need to be provided in the original container with detailed instructions. These treatment kits must be kept in the school office.

### **Classrooms**

Teachers must be familiar with the Emergency Action Plan of students in their classes and respond to emergencies as per the emergency protocol documented in the Emergency Action Plan.

- In the event of a suspected allergic reaction (where there is no known allergic history), the school office will be called, and the school's Emergency Response Plan activated. The emergency medical services will be called immediately.
- All teachers, cafeteria workers, and substitutes will be educated about the risk of food allergies.
- A parent or guardian of a student with food allergies is responsible for providing all food for his/her own child. Snacks will be kept in a separate snack box or chest provided by the parent or guardian.

### **School Field Trips**

- St. Cecilia will follow diocesan and health department guidelines regarding school field trips.
- In the event of a field trip, medications including an EpiPen® and a copy of the student's Emergency Health Care Plan must accompany the student.
- A cell phone or other communication device must be available on the trip for emergency calls.
- The adult carrying the EpiPen® will be identified and introduced to the student as well as the other chaperones.

### **Vision/Hearing/Spinal Screening**

St. Cecilia Catholic School will provide vision, hearing and spinal screening for students annually as specified by the Texas Department of Health.

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

St. Cecilia Catholic School believes that nonpunitive and nonviolent consequences promote the health and well-being of the individual and community. **Students and parents are expected to understand that consistent disciplinary consequences are intended to hold them responsible and accountable for inappropriate and unacceptable attitude, behavior, and conduct.** Any repeated action(s) that demonstrates the unwillingness to follow any reasonable request from a faculty or staff member may result in disciplinary action.

### **Attitude, Behavior, and Conduct**

St. Cecilia Catholic School expects students to hold themselves responsible to the standards and principles reflected in the Catholic virtues and the St. Cecilia Catholic School mission statement. The expectations and standards apply to both on- and off-campus attitude, behavior, and conduct during school hours, activities, and events (e.g., athletics, extra-curricular activities, field trips, etc.).

### **Self-Control and Self-Responsibility**

St. Cecilia Catholic School encourages every child to express themselves freely, creatively, and innovatively in their academic and spiritual development. Our school is committed to providing supportive guidance to help students to develop and maintain a healthy habit that models self-control, self-discipline, and self-responsibility for their own attitude, behaviors, and actions.

A student who demonstrates inappropriate and/or unacceptable conduct on- or off-campus that reflects negatively upon the reputation of St. Cecilia Catholic School may be subject to disciplinary consequences, athletic suspension, school suspension, and school-initiated withdrawal.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The ideal of discipline within Catholic education is to work in a safe, orderly, and nurturing learning environment. This system seeks maintain an acceptable learning environment and a safe place for students. The school believe in helping students develop the critical understanding that their actions have consequences, good decision-making leads to desirable outcomes, and poor decision-making leads to undesirable consequences.

**While the teaching of discipline is the primary responsibility of parents, the school's responsibility is to reinforce habits of good behavior.**

St. Cecilia's students are expected to be accountable for their behavior, to conduct themselves in a polite and courteous manner, and to treat all others with dignity and respect. These guidelines will assist students to grow into mature adult citizens. The students represent Christ and St. Cecilia's School whether they are on or off campus. **Full parent cooperation is expected.**

### **Classroom Rules**

**Each teacher posts classroom rules in person for students.** These rules and consequences are explained to the students at the beginning of school. The rules will also be discussed at the beginning of the school year with families at Meet the Teacher Day. St. Cecilia's goal is to create an environment where children recognize their behavior, own their actions, offer solutions, and after reflection, choose to make positive changes. Teachers will repeat and reinforce the rules and consequences as needed.

**Classroom rules and expectations are established by the teacher to promote a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment. While parents may communicate questions or concerns, students are expected to follow and respect classroom rules as directed by the teacher and supported by the Chief Administrator, regardless of differing personal opinions.**

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

The promotion and the safeguarding of student health (physically, mentally, and emotionally) are a concern to our schools. The use, misuse and/or abuse of alcohol, drugs, and hazardous substances cause grave problems in the areas of student health and student stability. Students who possess drugs and/or alcohol at school or at any school function face suspension and/or expulsion.

Therefore, the following general school policy is set forth:

- Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and/or hazardous substances on the campus, at school functions, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or its welfare, render a student liable to expulsion.
- Students who are involved in the use of alcohol or drugs will be referred to appropriate counseling, medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and/or rehabilitation agencies.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

Disciplinary actions will depend on:

- Seriousness of the student's action(s). Some examples of the different levels of seriousness may range from, but are not limited to:
  - Inability or unwillingness to abide by the school's dress code, process and procedures.
  - Disruption to the classroom learning environment,
  - Inability or unwillingness to follow a teacher's or staff member's directions,
  - Disregard of acceptable and appropriate actions or behaviors (physical, verbal, or written), or
  - Bullying or harassment of any kind.

- **Intentional and continued misconduct.**
- Consequences of misconduct on the learning and school environment.
- **All disciplinary misbehavior and the consequences, whether written or verbal, with a student or parent will be documented in RenWeb/FACTS.**

The following steps will be taken based on the severity of the misconduct (not necessarily in specific order) to respond to a student's inappropriate and unacceptable attitude, behavior, and conduct:

- A conference with parent(s)/guardian(s), student, and school administrators will be held. **All matters discussed during the conference are expected to remain confidential between the specific parent(s)/guardian(s), student, and school administrators.** Inappropriate disclosure of confidential information on- or off-campus may result in employee termination and/or family conference with the St. Cecilia Catholic School Pastor.
- Any student that consistently demonstrates inappropriate and unacceptable attitude, behavior, and conduct will be placed on a behavioral improvement contract for the remainder of the semester.
- **The inability or unwillingness to demonstrate a positive change in attitude, behavior, and conduct will require the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and school Administration to meet with the School Counselor and have further consequences.**
- A student's continued inability or unwillingness to demonstrate improved attitude, behavior, and conduct will require the family and school administration to meet with St. Cecilia Catholic School's Pastor. Based on the seriousness of the student's action, this may also result in out-of-school suspension or school-initiated withdrawal.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

St. Cecilia Catholic School believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment free of all forms of intimidation or harassment. As a matter of both school policy and religious obligation, bullying, harassment, and/or other threatening behavior by a student will not be accepted or tolerated in a Catholic school. Students engaging in such behavior, seriously or in jest or online, may be liable to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

**The chief administrator and/or other designated administrator will investigate all complaints of bullying, harassment, or any other types of threatening behavior, whether verbal, written, or online according to the guidelines listed in this policy.** All allegations of bullying, harassment, and/or other threatening behavior shall be taken seriously and investigated in a timely manner. *Violations of school expectations are considered serious matters and may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, as determined by the Chief Administrator.*

### **Bullying**

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written, verbal expression, or physical conduct that:

- a. Will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student's property, or

- b. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

**Examples:** Bullying of a student may include, but is not limited to, hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, ostracism, and cyber bullying.

***Teachers/Parents at St. Cecilia Catholic School are expected to:***

- Teach their students about what constitutes bullying, effective strategies to avoid being bullied, and ways to report bullying.
- Give their students opportunities to role play and practice the strategies taught to avoid bullying and to report incidents.
- Teach students strategies that can be used when students find themselves bystanders to an incident. The strategies should also be practiced by the students under the guidance of the classroom teacher.
- Have a designated method for students to report bullying and to leave messages discreetly and anonymously for the teacher's attention.
- Teachers will take seriously every incident reported by the students. Such reports will not be dismissed as tattling. Every incident will be taken seriously. ***The teacher will determine if the report is unfounded or if further action should be taken.***

***Parents of St. Cecilia Catholic School students are expected to:***

- Report concerns about bullying behavior to their child's appropriate teacher as soon as possible following the incident(s). If concerns are not handled sufficiently at this level, a report should be made to the chief administrator or teacher in charge as outlined in the grievance procedures of the school handbook.
- Understand and support the school's anti-bullying policy and actively encourage their child to avoid bullying behavior. This includes encouraging their child (after an incident) to respond to the situation by using non-bullying behavior.
- Obtain anti-bullying information from teachers and/or chief administrator.
- Parents of St. Cecilia School are expected to be cooperative and supportive when bullying concerns are reported or investigated. Families are asked to work respectfully with the school administration, faculty, and staff to address concerns, support the students involved, and promote a safe, Christ-centered learning environment for all.
- Due to student confidentiality, parents should refrain from asking about disciplinary actions or consequences assigned to other students involved in a reported bullying incident. The school will communicate with each family only regarding matters that directly involve their own child.

***Students at St. Cecilia Catholic School should:***

- Report incidents of bullying they witness to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident, or to another staff member as soon as possible following the incident.

- Whenever possible, stand up for the student being bullied and refrain from joining in the bullying behavior.
- Treat others with respect and dignity that is expected of any Catholic school student.

### **Harassment**

Harassment may include, but is not limited to, continued offensive derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation, threatening or intimidating conduct, offensive jokes, name calling, slurs or rumors, physical aggression or assault, display of graffiti, printed material, or computer generated online material promoting racial, ethnic or other negative stereotypes, or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property. *Violations of school expectations are considered serious matters and may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, as determined by the Chief Administrator.*

### **Bullying and/or Harassment Using AI Tools**

Using AI tools to manipulate media to impersonate others for bullying, harassment, or any form of intimidation is strictly prohibited. All users are expected to employ these tools solely for educational purposes, upholding values of respect, inclusivity, and academic integrity at all times.

### **Reports of Bullying, Harassment, or other Threatening Behavior**

Reports of bullying, harassment, or other threatening behavior shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. Failure to promptly report may impair the administrator's ability to investigate and address prohibited conduct. *Due to student confidentiality, parents should refrain from asking about disciplinary actions or consequences assigned to other students involved in a reported incident. The school will communicate with each family only regarding matters that directly involve their own child.*

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of a student may include, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can be directed toward a student under a variety of conditions. *Violations of school expectations are considered serious matters and may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, as determined by the Chief Administrator.*

- a) Verbal Harassment: Sexually demeaning comments, sexual statements, questions, slurs, jokes, anecdotes, or epithets.
- b) Written/Electronic Harassment: Suggestive or obscene letters, emails, blogs, posts, text messages, tweets, notes, or invitations. Includes computer-generated posts online.
- c) Physical Harassment: Unkind, immoral, and/or unlawful physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal study or movement.
- d) Visual/Electronic Harassment: Leering, gesture, display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, posting pictures, cartoons, posters, or any other type of electronic messaging.

### **Inappropriate and Violent Language**

St. Cecilia Catholic School is committed to providing a healthy and positive learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, and all forms of violence. Our school

believes the use of inappropriate language and slurs against human dignity by any student, teacher, or parent as unacceptable behavior and an inconsistent act to our Catholic virtues. *Violations of school expectations are considered serious matters and may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, as determined by the Chief Administrator.*

### **Fighting**

St. Cecilia Catholic School is committed to promoting the emotional, physical, and psychological safety and well-being of students in their learning environment. Any acts of violence, including fighting or aggressive behavior, will not be accepted, or tolerated. Any student engaged in this type of behavior on- or off-campus may be subject to immediate suspension or school-initiated withdrawal. *Violations of school expectations are considered serious matters and may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, as determined by the Chief Administrator.*

### **Off-Campus Conduct**

The administration of St. Cecilia Catholic School reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the school day, in person or virtually. Any conduct (verbal, written or electronic) both in and out of school that reflects negatively upon the reputation of the school, its students, or its faculty will be subject to disciplinary actions. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. *Violations of school expectations are considered serious matters and may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, as determined by the Chief Administrator.*

Off- Campus Conduct includes but is not limited to bullying and items posted on blogs, social network sites, discussion boards, etc. The administration reserves the right to discipline a student for activities committed off-campus if they are intended to have a negative effect on a student/faculty member or they adversely affect the safety and well-being of students/faculty while in school.

Students are not allowed to use the school's name, logo, or pictures to make social media pages or posts without permission. This includes:

- Making fake accounts that look like they are from the school
- Using pictures of the school building, teachers, or students in a way that makes it seem like the school is part of the post
- Pretending to speak for the school online

Our school wants everyone to be safe and respectful online. Anything shared on the internet that uses the school's name, or image must be approved by the chief administrator.

## **SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

When a student makes a poor decision which results in undesirable behavior that fails to follow classroom and/or school rules, the following disciplinary action(s) may be taken, depending on the severity of the infraction.

### **Detention**

Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. Students will be given warnings for misbehavior. Repeated referrals to the chief administrator for these same behaviors will result in detention or after school behavior reflection. **Homework Detention**

may also be issued when a student fails to complete a significant number of missing assignments. **After School Behavior Reflection** may be assigned when a student fails to follow school rules or behave appropriately. This time allows the student to reflect on his or her behavior, accept responsibility, and make better choices in the future.

Parents are notified of the detention by telephone call. The day, date, and time of detention are at the discretion of the chief administrator. **Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, tutoring, ball games, etc.**

### **Probation**

At the sole discretion of the chief administrator, a student may be placed on probation for conduct that, in the chief administrator's judgment, merits probation. Such conduct may take place on campus or off campus and may include, but is not limited to, relatively serious violations of school rules and continued misconduct after a warning. A student has absolutely no right to probation before more severe disciplinary action is taken, up to and including separation from the school. When a student is placed on probation and when the chief administrator deems it appropriate, the following procedure will be implemented by the chief administrator or designee:

- a) A formal probation must be approved by the chief administrator or designee. A formal probation must be approved by the chief administrator.
- b) A conference with parents, the student, and school administrator shall be held.
- c) When a student has been placed on probation, the parents or guardians shall be informed in writing of the reason for the probation, the length of the probationary period, and the conditions under which the probation will be lifted.
- d) A written record of student probation shall be kept for reference should more serious action become necessary at a later time. Efforts should be made to assist the student through constructive counseling in order to forestall further sanctions.
- e) Due to student confidentiality, parents should refrain from asking about disciplinary actions or consequences assigned to other students involved in a reported bullying incident. The school will communicate with each family only regarding matters that directly involve their own child.

### **Suspension**

At the sole discretion of the Chief Administrator, a student may be placed on suspension for conduct that, in the Chief Administrator's judgment, merits such action. This conduct may occur on or off campus and may include, but is not limited to, serious violations of school rules or continued misconduct after a warning. Suspension is not required before more serious disciplinary action is taken, up to and including separation from the school.

Students who repeatedly engage in the same behavior or continue to receive disciplinary referrals for the same concern may lose the opportunity for suspension as a corrective action. In these cases, the school may proceed with higher-level disciplinary consequences in order to address ongoing behavior concerns.

Official suspension may include any of the below-listed sanction examples. However, this list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

### **In-School Suspension (ISS) and/or Off-Campus Suspension (OCS):**

- a) The student may attend class but lose the right to participate in any school activity on or off campus.
- b) The student may be suspended from a particular class and required to report to a specific place on campus during that time.
- c) The student may be sent home for the entire period of suspension provided that the student is assigned academic work to make up the loss of class time.

### **Procedures for Suspension**

Except when the school's chief administrator determines that immediate suspension is necessary, the steps listed below should be followed and, when practical, to minimize the opportunity for misunderstanding, the school should document each step below in written communication to the student's parents. Use of the procedure below, however, is within the sole discretion of the chief administrator, and no student has any right to the use of any or all of the procedure below in a particular case.

- a) The student may be given oral or written notice of the charges against him/her, and a fair opportunity to present his/her side of the story before the suspension is imposed. If, however, suspension is imposed before such notice takes place, the student should be given the opportunity to present his/her viewpoint on the situation to the chief administrator in writing.
- b) Parents should generally be advised of a suspension by telephone and/or by written notice from the chief administrator or designee.
- c) A written form of suspension should be **signed by the parents and student**. On this form the exact length of the suspension period should be specified and the reason for the suspension clearly noted, as well as the behavior modification necessary for reinstatement.
- d) When a student is suspended, the school's chief administrator/designated school personnel should document the grounds for suspension, a summary of the facts leading to the suspension, any conferences with the student and/or his/her parents, and the means by which final notice of suspension was provided to the student and his/her parents. This documentation remains a part of the student's permanent record/transcript on Renweb/FACTS.
- e) Due to student confidentiality, parents should refrain from asking about disciplinary actions or consequences assigned to other students involved in a reported bullying incident. The school will communicate with each family only regarding matters that directly involve their own child.

### **Guidelines for Suspension**

The length of any suspension is left to the discretion of the chief administrator or behavior committee in accordance with the nature of the conduct and all circumstances. A student may be afforded an opportunity to do make-up work, including tests. Since the grounds for suspension ordinarily differ only in degree from the grounds for expulsion, the possibility of expulsion must be clearly stated to the student and parents.

Students who are given an In-School Suspension (ISS) will be required to report to school each day in full-dressed uniform and complete assigned work. Students who receive an Off-Campus Suspension (OCS) will not be allowed on campus during the time of their suspension. Students must complete all class work and tests from the days of suspension or probation.

## **Expulsion for Disciplinary Reasons**

Orderly school administration and behavior committee is essential to fulfilling the core mission of Catholic schools. Even a single failure by a member of the school community to uphold the standards of behavior to which all community members agree when a student is enrolled can cause irreparable harm. Thus, while in many cases expulsion is reserved for very serious or persistent misconduct, a school may properly determine that a single instance of on- or off-campus misconduct requires separation of a student from the school community. Misconduct committed by a member of the school community other than a student (including parents, guardians, or other family members) can also significantly hinder a school's ability to perform its essential task of educating students. As a result, misconduct committed by a person connected to the school through a student (including parents, guardians, or other family members) may result in the expulsion of the student from the school when, in his or her sole discretion, the chief administrator determines that such action is appropriate. Provided that any applicable school and diocesan policies have been substantially followed, the decision to expel a student rests in the sole discretion of the chief administrator of a school.

### **Procedure for Expulsion**

Circumstances giving rise to expulsion can arise and unfold quickly. The chief administrator's primary duty in such situations is to protect the school community. No student or family has any right to the application of a particular procedure before or in connection with the expulsion of a student. Nevertheless, the following process can serve as a general guideline when, in the chief administrator's discretion, circumstances warrant:

- When practical, the pastor of a parochial elementary school and the chief administrator of a diocesan school should be apprised of the circumstances of a potential expulsion before the decision to expel is implemented.
- When circumstances permit, before the decision to expel is implemented, the student's parents should be advised of the potential for expulsion and a summary of the grounds for expulsion.
- The student and his or her parents should be invited to a conference with the school's chief administrator. In parish schools, the local pastor should be advised of the scheduled conference. In diocesan schools, the chief administrator should be advised of the scheduled conference. At the chief administrator's discretion, this conference may be held before or after the decision to expel is implemented.
- The final decision to expel a student rests with the school's chief administrator and will not be reviewed except to ensure compliance with any applicable pre-expulsion procedures. In parochial elementary schools, the pastor should be consulted.

### **General Grounds for Expulsion**

Any instance or course of misconduct may, at the sole discretion of the school's chief administrator, be sufficient grounds for expulsion. In many cases, it is appropriate to attempt to correct the problem behavior through less severe disciplinary measures. In other cases, however, the school's chief administrator may determine that expulsion is the appropriate sanction for misconduct that has not previously resulted in probation, suspension, or other discipline.

Examples of such severe misconduct include but are not limited to:

- a) Actions gravely detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of other students;

- b) Incurable or disruptive behavior which impedes the progress of the rest of the class;
- c) Assault, battery, or any threat of force or violence—whether intended in jest or not—directed toward any school personnel, students, member of the school community, or other person on school property or during school-related activities;
- d) Habitual or persistent violation of school regulations;
- e) Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of alcohol and drugs and/or hazardous substances (vapes) on campus, **at school functions**, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or the welfare of members of the school community;
- f) The on-campus use, sale, distribution, or possession of a substance intended or commonly used to mimic a narcotic, controlled substance, or alcoholic beverage;
- g) Use or possession of firearms or other potentially harmful objects or weapons;
- h) Gang-related conduct or activity including but not limited to, symbols, graffiti, apparel, colors, hazing/initiations, and hand signals commonly associated with gangs;
- i) Theft, extortion, arson;
- j) Habitual truancy;
- k) Malicious damage or destruction of real or personal property at school;
- l) Hazing;
- m) Serious bullying and/or harassment;
- n) Conduct which may damage the reputation of the school or parish;
- o) Transmission of nude or otherwise inappropriate images of any student or person who appears to be a minor child; and
- p) Use of social media in such a manner as constitutes bullying or online harassment or which causes another student or member of the school community to fear for the safety of any member of the school community.

**Additionally, off-campus misconduct may result in expulsion, especially when it is related in some way to the school community because it is directed towards a member of the school community, directly or indirectly involves multiple members of the school community, or may negatively impact the school's reputation in the community.**

### **Grounds for Expulsion Related to Alcohol and Drug Abuse**

The promotion and the safeguarding of student health (physically, mentally, and emotionally) are a concern to our schools. The use, misuse, and/or abuse of alcohol, drugs, and hazardous substances (vapes) cause grave problems in the areas of student health and student stability. Many incidents of scholastic failure, school dropout, violence, tension, and suicide can be traced to alcohol and drug abuse.

- a) Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of alcohol and drugs and/or hazardous substances (vapes) on campus, at school functions, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or the welfare of members of the school community constitute grounds for expulsion.
- b) Notwithstanding section (a) above, when the school's chief administrator, in consultation with appropriate school or other personnel, believes it is appropriate, students who are involved in the use or abuse of alcohol or controlled substances should

be provided with information regarding available substance abuse counseling and treatment resources. Additionally, the chief administrator or appropriate school personnel should, when practical, notify a student's parents or other guardian or conservator when use or abuse of alcohol and/or other controlled substances is reasonably suspected. The school should, when possible, refer the student and his/her parents, guardian, or conservator to resources known to the school for medical and/or psychiatric care, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and/or substance abuse recovery programs.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Prepaid tuition and fees are not refunded if a student is expelled. If a student is expelled before tuition or fees would ordinarily come due, the family of an expelled student shall be excused from further payment.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment including, but not limited to: spanking, shaking, slapping, pinching, hair pulling shall not be permitted in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Dallas.

## **TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT**

A student's enrollment may be terminated in accordance with the policies set forth in this Handbook.

If the school decides to terminate enrollment in light of parent or guardian behavior, a discipline situation, or as a way to help a student avoid embarrassment or unnecessary hardship, the school has an obligation to inform other Diocesan schools about the termination action.

The local chief administrator, in consultation with the Superintendent, will determine what information is pertinent to a situation and ensure that information is shared with any receiving Diocesan schools.

Parents should be made aware that termination as a result of financial issues, legal issues, moral turpitude, or other serious reasons can and will be shared with other diocesan schools and may also be shared with non-diocesan schools if permitted by law.

## **TERMINATION FOR ACADEMIC REASONS.**

### **Academic Exit Policy for Elementary and Middle School**

Termination for academic reasons should generally occur only after the following procedure has been implemented. Appropriate documentation of the process should be maintained in the student's confidential file. When a chief administrator, in his or her discretion, determines that the following process is not appropriate for a particular situation, he or she should still document the alternative process and the justification for following that process. Written documentation of compliance with the following procedures is to be retained in the confidential file.

- a) There is consultation between the academic support team and chief administrator as early as possible in the first semester.
- b) Conferences are held with the parents to advise them concerning the possibility of withdrawal for academic reasons and to discuss possible remedial actions and educational alternatives.

- c) Follow-up conferences are held with the parents to evaluate the progress of the student.
- d) The chief administrator makes the final decision.

## **EXIT POLICY ON GROUNDS OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

See **Expulsion for Disciplinary Reasons** (above)

## **EXIT POLICY ON GROUNDS OF NON-PAYMENT OF FEES/TUITION**

Subject to applicable laws and diocesan policy local boards and administrators will exercise full discretion in determining criteria by which inability or unwillingness to pay tuition and fees is judged, but any action in individual cases shall be taken only after the school complies with the following procedures.

If financial obligations are not met within ten (10) days of the due date, a family will be considered delinquent, and one or all the following actions may take place:

- The student will not be allowed to attend classes at St. Cecilia Catholic School
- Students whose families are delinquent may not be allowed to take semester assessments.
- Transcripts and report cards will be withheld.
- In the case of a graduating eighth grader, the student will not be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.
- Registration for the following year may not be accepted.

Upon settlement of any outstanding debt, the chief administrator will determine the re-acceptance of the family for the following year.

Prepaid tuition and fees are not refunded if a student is expelled. If a student is expelled before tuition or fees would ordinarily come due, the family of an expelled student shall be excused from further payment.

## **EXIT POLICY ON GROUNDS OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOR**

All members of the school community, including parents, guardians and family members, are expected to comply with all school rules and policies while on campus and in communications with the school, be respectful, cooperate with the school with respect to all decisions affecting the student, and ***avoid behavior which disrupts the orderly administration of the school***. A community member's failure to meet these expectations jeopardizes school administration, requires the school to expend limited resources to address inappropriate and unnecessary behavior, and detracts from the school's core mission and, as a result, may jeopardize a student's continued participation in the school community. At the chief administrator's sole discretion, the failure of a student's parents, guardians, or other family members to comply with these expectations, separate and apart from the student's conduct, may result in suspension or expulsion of the student. Except in cases of severe misconduct which may jeopardize the safety or security of another member of the school community, the chief administrator should provide a written/verbal warning to the parent involved before suspending or expelling a student for parental misconduct.

## SEARCH AND SEIZURE

### Searches

**School administrators are entitled to search personal possessions. Another faculty/staff member will witness the search.**

### Seizure

The chief administrator or administrative delegate will conduct “search and seizure” without prior notification to the students or parents if the chief administrator or administrator in charge deems there is probable cause.

## REPORTS TO AND COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

### Reports to Law Enforcement

Texas law requires the chief administrator of a private school, or his or her designee, to notify law enforcement if the chief administrator has reasonable grounds to believe that certain crimes listed in section 37.015 of the Texas Education Code. The notice provided to the police must include the name and address of each student the person believes may have participated in the activity and must also be provided to each employee of the school who has regular conduct with a student whose conduct is the subject of the notice. It is the policy of the Diocese of Dallas and its schools to comply with this statutory requirement.

### Cooperation with Law Enforcement and Child Abuse Investigations

Texas law requires schools to make students available for interviews by child protective workers in connection with an investigation into suspected child abuse. The child protective worker may or may not allow a school representative to witness the interview. Diocese of Dallas schools will cooperate with such interview requests.

From time to time, law enforcement officers also seek to interview students while at school in connection with an allegation or suspicion that the student has committed a crime. When faced with such a request, school personnel will refer the requesting officer to the school’s chief administrator or his or her designee. The chief administrator or designee will request additional information regarding the nature of the interview requested and the allegations or suspicions relating to the student. The chief administrator or designee will, if the crime is not serious and contemporaneous or imminent, also request that the interview be delayed until the student’s parent or other legally responsible adult is present. School personnel will then notify the student’s parents, other legally responsible adults, or emergency contact as soon as possible.

If the officer refuses to delay the interview until the student’s parent or other legally responsible adult arrives, the chief administrator or designee will request to be present during the interview.

**However, if the officer refuses to allow the chief administrator to be present and refuses to delay the interview, school personnel will not physically prevent the officer from conducting the interview, and the parent or other legally responsible adult signing below agrees that the school is under no duty to do so.**

## DRESS CODE

Student uniforms are to be purchased through Levine's. (<https://levinesstores.com/collections/st-cecilia>).

| <b>EVERYDAY UNIFORM OPTIONS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Girls (PK3-4<sup>th</sup> grade)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Boys (PK3 – 4<sup>th</sup> grade)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Plaid Jumper (Dress) with</b><br>-white polo with logo<br>-white oxford with logo<br>-black dress shoes or solid black tennis shoes<br>-white crew or knee socks or<br>-white or black tights (opaque or cable)<br>-navy, cheer or biker style, modesty shorts                                                                                                               | <b>Khaki Pants with</b><br>-green polo with logo<br>-white oxford with logo<br>-black belt ( <b>required daily for 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade boys</b> )<br>-white crew socks<br>- <b>black dress shoes or solid black tennis shoes only</b>                                                              |
| <b>Khaki Pants with (PK3-8<sup>th</sup> grade all year) Not worn on Mass days.</b><br>-white polo with logo<br>-white oxford with logo<br>-black dress shoes or solid black tennis shoes (no design or other color)<br>-white crew socks<br>-black belt ( <b>1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade student girls</b> )                                                          | <b>Khaki shorts (Aug-Oct/Apr-May) with</b><br>-green polo with logo<br>-white oxford with logo<br>-black belt ( <b>required daily for 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade boys</b> )<br>-white crew socks<br>- <b>black dress shoes or solid black tennis shoes only</b> (no design or other color)                |
| <b>Khaki Shorts (Aug-Oct/Apr-May) with</b><br>-white polo with logo<br>-white oxford with logo<br>-black dress shoes or solid black tennis shoes<br>-white crew socks<br>-black belt (only 1 <sup>st</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade students)                                                                                                                                    | <b>*All socks (both boys &amp; girls) must be above the ankle bone</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Girls (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Boys (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Plaid Skirt (<b>hem 2-3" above knee</b>) with</b><br>-white polo with logo<br>-white oxford with logo (through 7 <sup>th</sup> grade)<br>-black dress shoes, oxfords (middle school only), or solid black tennis shoes (no design or other color)<br>-white crew or knee-high socks<br>-white or black tights (opaque or cable)<br>-navy cheer or biker style modesty shorts | <b>Khaki Pants with</b><br>-green polo with logo<br>-white oxford with logo (through 7 <sup>th</sup> grade)<br>-black belt ( <b>required daily for 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys</b> )<br>-white crew socks<br>- <b>black dress shoes or solid black tennis shoes only</b> (no design or other color) |

**Students must wear socks that ARE ABOVE THE ANKLE BONE.**

**SHIRTS MUST BE TUCKED IN AND SHOES TIED AT ALL TIMES.**

**BOYS MUST WEAR BELTS AT ALL TIMES (1<sup>st</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys)**

### Cool Weather Wear

Long sleeve shirts in white or black may be worn under the regular uniform shirt. They may NOT be worn on days when the Dress Uniform is required.

Girls in all grades may wear white or black tights. **Leggings, sweatpants, or any other pants may not be worn under uniforms.**

All outerwear must be removed when entering the church for Mass.

### Sweaters and Sweatshirts

A green cardigan, green fleece jacket, green pullover sweater, or green crew sweatshirt with logo may be worn in the classroom. In addition, a green St. Cecilia sweatshirts and official school windbreakers may also be worn. **Hoodie style sweatshirts are NOT allowed.** Students must remove sweatshirts, fleece jackets, and windbreakers before entering the church for Mass.

**All sweaters, sweatshirts and windbreakers must be uniform and must not have any other insignias on them. Street wear is not acceptable. Students will be asked to remove non-uniform garment(s) and store it in their locker or backpack.**

### Dress Uniform Requirements

Dress uniform is required for all students for Friday Mass and when leaving campus on field trips, except when otherwise notified.

## **DRESS UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS**

| <i>Girls (PK3-4<sup>th</sup> grade)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>Boys (PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Plaid Jumper (dress) with</b><br>-white oxford with logo<br>-black oxford shoes (an all-black shoe)<br>-white crew or knee-high socks or<br>-white or black tights (opaque or cable)<br>-navy, cheer or biker style, modesty shorts                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Khaki Pants and black belt (1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> grade only) with</b><br>-white oxford with logo<br>-plaid tie<br>-white or black crew socks<br>-black dress shoes (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> only) or solid black tennis shoes (PK-Kinder) |
| <i>Girls (5<sup>th</sup> grade)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Boys (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Plaid Skirt (hem only 2-3" above knee) with</b><br>-white oxford with logo<br>-all black oxford shoes<br>-plaid cross tie<br>-white crew or knee-high socks or<br>-white or black tights (opaque or cable)<br>-navy, cheer or biker style, modesty shorts                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Khaki Pants and black belt with</b><br>-white oxford with logo<br>-plaid tie<br>-white or black crew socks<br>-black dress shoes                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Girls (Middle School, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>Boys (Middle School, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Plaid Skirt (hem only 2-3" above knee) with</b><br>-plaid cross tie<br>-white oxford with logo (through 7 <sup>th</sup> grade)<br><b>-yellow oxford (req'd) with logo (8<sup>th</sup> grade only)</b><br><b>-saddle oxford shoes (black and white) M.S. girls only</b><br>-white crew or knee-high socks or<br>-white or black tights (opaque or cable)<br>-navy, cheer or biker style, modesty shorts<br>-navy blazer with logo | <b>Khaki Pants and black belt with</b><br>-white oxford with logo (through 7 <sup>th</sup> grade)<br><b>-yellow oxford (req'd) with logo (8<sup>th</sup> grade only)</b><br>-plaid tie<br>-white or black crew socks<br>-black dress shoes<br>-navy blazer with logo    |

### Online Learning Dress Code

During online learning classes, all students are expected to be dressed in a St. Cecilia t-shirt.

### Free Dress Day Passes

Free Dress Day Passes may be given to students at the discretion of the teacher and at the approval of the chief administrator. These passes are a privilege and may be revoked at any time for cause. Free Dress Day Passes may NOT be used on field trips or any other days requiring dress uniform. Free Dress Day Passes may not be used on the last day of school.

On Free Dress Days, **students are expected to dress modestly** following the general guidelines of the dress code. Clothing may not reference drugs, alcohol, or demonstrate obscene or offensive language. **Pajamas and leggings or other tight clothing may not be worn.** No tank tops may be worn; all shirts must have sleeves. Closed shoes must be worn on free dress days.

### Spirit Wear—These ARE NOT FREE DRESS DAYS

- Spirit Days are every Tuesday (unless otherwise noted). **Students may wear any official St. Cecilia t-shirt (that is sold by St. Cecilia School or approved vendor)** or school team jersey with their regular uniform jumper, skirt, shorts, or pants. In addition, girls may wear green or yellow hair ribbons.
- On Jeans Days, students may wear blue jeans with a spirit shirt **(that is sold by St. Cecilia School or approved vendor)**. Jeans may not be ripped or torn with holes.
- On Field Day, in the spring, students may wear **long blue jeans shorts** with a spirit shirt **(that is sold by St. Cecilia School or approved vendor)**.
- **Leggings/pajama bottoms are not permitted at any time.**

### Physical Education Uniform

Physical education uniform black shorts (knee length- no volleyball shorts) and SCS spirit T-shirt- **(that is sold by St. Cecilia School or approved vendor)** for all students can be purchased from the uniform provider. Tennis shoes must be worn during physical education class. Students change clothes for all PE classes, so names **MUST** be written on all uniform pieces to minimize loss. The color of PE shoes is not regulated. **Uniform clothing may not be shared by students, even within a family.**

### Accessories

**The following uniform standards apply to both boys and girls. Makeup, tattoos, nail polish, artificial nails, and excessive jewelry are not permitted. Earrings may not exceed the size of a quarter. Jewelry must be modest, in good taste, and not distracting to the student or others, as determined by the Chief Administrator. Small religious medals or chains may be worn but must remain inside the uniform at all times.**

**Boys are not permitted to wear earrings or any other visible body piercings while on campus or at school-sponsored events.**

If a student uses these accessories for a special occasion over the weekend, they **MUST** be removed prior to returning to school the next week. A student will NOT be allowed to return to class until nail polish and fake nails are removed.

### **Body Piercing & Tattoos**

Students (boys and girls) may not have visible facial or body piercings. **Girls, not boys**, may have one (1) piercing in the earlobe. Earrings must be smaller than a quarter. Students may not display tattoos anywhere on their body.

### **Grooming Code**

Students are to be clean, neat, and always well-groomed. Older boys are to be clean-shaven without facial hair. Boys may be asked to shave if facial hair becomes noticeable.

### **Hair Code**

At St. Cecilia School, we believe that every student should present a neat, clean, and well-groomed appearance that reflects the values of our school community and supports a positive learning environment. We respect and celebrate the natural diversity of our students' hair and encourage styles that are appropriate, modest, and non-distracting.

#### **The following standards apply to all students:**

- Hair must be clean, neat, and well maintained.
- Hair color must remain natural. Dyed, tinted, bleached, highlighted, or streaked hair is not permitted.
- Extreme, trendy, or distracting hairstyles that draw undue attention are not permitted.
- **Words, symbols, pictures, shapes, patterns, designs, shaved lines, or similar markings in the hair or eyebrows are not permitted.**

#### **Boys' Hair Requirements**

- Boys' hair must be neatly groomed and may not extend below the shirt collar, cover the ears, or fall below the chin.
- Boys' haircuts must be traditional in appearance and may not include shaved lines, fades with designs, patterns, symbols, lettering, artistic cuts, or any decorative elements. No designs of any kind are permitted.

#### **Girls' Hair Requirements**

- Girls' hairstyles must be neat, modest, and kept out of the eyes.

#### **All Students**

- Hair must be worn so that the eyes remain visible and unobstructed at all times.
- If there is any question regarding the appropriateness of a hairstyle, families should consult the Chief Administrator before making a significant change.

Students whose hairstyles do not comply with these standards may be removed from class or school until the issue is corrected. Parents or guardians will be notified immediately, and the student may not return until the hairstyle is in compliance with school policy.

### **VIOLATION OF DRESS CODE**

St. Cecilia Catholic School is committed to preparing to become leaders, professionals, and role models in the community. It is important to uphold a respectable Catholic identity on- and off-campus. Students are expected to follow the school dress code policy at all times.

Your child must arrive at school in complete St. Cecilia Catholic School uniform as is appropriate for the day (including socks, **belt**, tie, etc.), unless otherwise authorized.

**Proper wear of the school uniform is required at all times. Uniform pants and shorts must be worn at the waist and secured with the required plain black belt. Wearing pants or shorts below the waist or otherwise wearing the uniform in a manner inconsistent with school**

**expectations is prohibited. Parents are responsible for ensuring that students arrive at school in compliance with the dress code. Students are expected to maintain compliance with all dress code requirements throughout the entire school day. Repeated violations may result in disciplinary action and a conference with a parent or guardian.**

**Written notification of improper uniform will be emailed and/or sent home by the homeroom teacher to parents with a parent acknowledgment needed in return.** Parents may be called to bring proper clothing to the child during the school day. A student will not be allowed back in class until they are properly dressed.

Any violation of the school dress code policy will result in the following:

- **First occurrence:** Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by phone or email about the first violation of the St. Cecilia Catholic School dress code policy.
- **Second occurrence:** A parent/guardian will be required to drop off the student's correct school uniform to the front office. The student will be removed from athletics, extracurricular activities, recess, etc. until they are in compliance of the St. Cecilia Catholic School dress code policy.
- **Third occurrence:** Student may be assigned an In-School Suspension
- **Fourth occurrence:** A student's inability or unwillingness to abide by the St. Cecilia Catholic School dress code policy will require a conference between student, parent, and Chief administrator. This may result in the family (both student and parents/guardians) being placed on a behavioral improvement contract, which will be documented on the student's permanent record.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Reimbursement for School Costs and Attorney's Fees**

The Diocese of Dallas and its schools recognize the financial sacrifice many of its families make to participate in the school community. Out of respect for this sacrifice and in recognition of the school's responsibility to wisely steward financial resources for the benefit of all members of the school community, the Diocese and its schools have implemented the following policy:

From time to time, a school is required to retain outside legal counsel to respond to parent requests or demands, requests or subpoenas for testimony or documents in legal proceedings to which the school is not a party, or to address other issues affecting or involving only one or a few students or families. In such situations, the school is typically required to expend finite financial resources to address an issue which otherwise affects only a very small portion of the school community. To ensure that the school community at large is not adversely impacted in such situations, the school will, when the chief administrator in his or her sole discretion deems it appropriate, require the family or families involved to reimburse the school for attorney's fees, costs of court, and other expenses incurred (including, without limitation, the cost to secure substitute staff when school personnel are subpoenaed to testify in court proceedings).

Accordingly, each person who acknowledges his or her agreement to the contents of this Handbook, either by written or electronic signature or by enrolling a student in a school within the Diocese of Dallas, agrees that, in the School's absolute and sole discretion, he or she shall indemnify and reimburse the School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and

their respective officers, employees, agents, and representatives (“Indemnitees”) on demand from and for any and all attorney’s fees and related costs including without limitation the cost of responding to requests for documents or other records or information arising from, in connection with, or related to 1) a violation of any provision of this Handbook, 2) any request or demand made upon the School which pertains to a legal proceeding to which the School is not a party, 3) threatening or harassing communications directed to any Indemnatee, or 4) threatened or actual litigation against any Indemnatee which does not result in a final and appealable judgment adverse to the Indemnatee.

### **Solicitation**

No solicitation will be allowed on the school grounds without written authorization from the chief administrator.

### **Use of School Grounds**

The school building during the school day is for sole use of the children and faculty/staff. The school building acts as a community center after 6:00 PM each day for various church organizations and community groups. Permission for the use of the school building after hours must be obtained in advance of the usage from the chief administrator or Pastor of St. Cecilia Church and placed on the church and calendars.

### **Textbooks**

All textbooks are property of St. Cecilia Catholic School unless otherwise purchased. **Any textbook that is lost, damaged, or destroyed must be replaced before student records, including the report cards, are released.** Students will be charged at the replacement rate. Consumable texts lost during the school year must be replaced **at the family’s expense**, so learning is not interrupted.

### **Awards**

Student of the Month Awards are given to those deserving students who have shown effort in demonstrating the virtue of the month, considerable improvement in their academic work, or behavioral improvement. The students are honored at an assembly during the last week of each month.

**Perfect attendance awards are given each quarter to students who have neither been absent nor tardy during the previous quarter.**

Here's a professional, positive, and faith-centered version that emphasizes merit and virtue without explicitly saying that every student will receive an award:

### **End-of-Year Awards**

At the end-of-year awards assembly, St. Cecilia School recognizes students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement, growth, merit, and commitment throughout the academic year. Awards are presented to students who have distinguished themselves in various subject areas through academic excellence, effort, and dedication to learning.

In addition, students may be recognized for exemplary citizenship, Christian virtues, leadership, service to others, and perfect attendance. These honors reflect our commitment to celebrating students who embody the values and mission of Catholic education.

Award recipients are selected based on criteria established by the faculty and administration. While not every student will receive an award each year, every student is encouraged to strive for personal excellence, growth in virtue, and service to others as valued members of the St. Cecilia School community.

Additional awards in academic fairs, contests, or participation in a project are given as student recognition.

### **Student Directory**

St. Cecilia Catholic School does not publish a School Directory.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips of educational or cultural value shall be authorized in advance by the chief administrator/designee. A field trip must be planned and carried out as an extension of, or supplement to, the counseling or instructional program. The educational value of the trip must justify the time, distance and expense involved.

St. Cecilia Catholic School expects students to hold themselves responsible to the standards and principles reflected in the Catholic virtues and the St. Cecilia Catholic School mission statement. The expectations and standards apply to both on- and off-campus attitude, behavior, and conduct during school hours, activities, and events (e.g., athletics, extra-curricular activities, field trips, etc.). Participation in a field trip experience is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked at the discretion of the chief administrator.

The chief administrator/designee shall establish and supervise local procedures for school field trips in accordance with diocesan regulations. The field trip shall be approved by the school's administration prior to publicity or collection of money or parent permission slips.

No student shall participate in a field trip unless a signed parent permission slip has been returned to school. This permission slip shall include full details about the field trip. A separate permission slip must be obtained for every field trip.

All adults, school personnel as well as other adult chaperones must have completed the diocesan Safe Environment Program. The number of adult chaperones necessary will be determined by the local school administration to be appropriate for the age group and type of field trip. These adults shall assist the teacher with supervision.

Teachers should carry first aid kits and their Go-Bag when taking students on a field trip. This will include a roster of participants including emergency information of all students. The preferred method of transporting students is by school bus or by properly certified common carrier. Common carriers must be contracted and approved by the diocese. The use of private vehicles is strongly discouraged.

For overnight field trips additional diocesan requirements will apply that includes supervision of overnight lodging and the chaperones must include both men and women over 21 years of age as supervisors who have completed the diocesan Safe Environment Program.

### **Class Parties**

St. Cecilia will follow diocesan and health department guidelines regarding class parties.

School-wide celebrations will include All Saints Day/Halloween Parade, Birthday Party for Baby Jesus, and Valentine's Day. Treats for class parties will be provided by homeroom

parents. **A maximum of 2-3 parents will be given the opportunity to assist the teacher.** Student participation in all class parties and similar school events is a privilege and can be withdrawn by the chief administrator for cause.

Remember, St. Cecilia is a closed campus, and visitors/parents/volunteers will not be allowed inside the school building without pre-authorization. **All volunteers must have completed the Catholic Diocese of Dallas Safe Environment Program and have had a background check. Volunteers must also have signed the non-employee confidentiality agreement or NDA.**

### **Non-School Parties**

Non-school sponsored party invitations may not be passed out at school unless everyone in the class is invited to the party. Personal gifts (flower or balloon deliveries, limos, entertainers, clowns, etc.) are discouraged. Any gifts that may arrive will be held in the school office until dismissal.

School-sponsored social events will be adequately supervised by school personnel and, when appropriate, by Safe Environment-cleared adult volunteers. To ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, security personnel and/or law enforcement officers may be present at events when deemed necessary by the Chief Administrator.

All attendees, including parents, guardians, family members, guests, and volunteers, are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, appropriate, and Christian manner that reflects the values of St. Cecilia School. Disruptive, inappropriate, threatening, or disorderly behavior may result in removal from the event and, when warranted, further action by the school administration or law enforcement.

### **Student Birthdays**

St. Cecilia will follow diocesan and health department guidelines regarding student birthday celebrations.

**Parents may bring prepackaged treats or cupcakes for a student to share with classmates in their classroom at the end of the school day. Other celebrations by family and friends are to be at home. No fast-food meals, only dessert treats are allowed.**

## **RIGHT TO AMEND**

***St. Cecilia Catholic School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of such changes or amendments will be sent to parents/guardians via e-mail and/or written communication.***

# ***Appendix A: DIOCESE OF DALLAS*** **INTERNET SCHOOL SAFETY POLICY**

A guide for students, staff, parents, and visitors to use the internet safely and responsibly

## **Introduction**

The internet is a powerful tool for learning, communication, and collaboration. It also poses some risks and challenges for the safety, privacy, and well-being of students, staff, and parents. This document outlines the Internet Safety Policy of our school, which aims to meet the regulatory requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

The Internet Safety Policy applies to all users of the school's network, devices, and online resources, whether on or off campus. The policy covers the following topics:

- Acceptable and responsible use of the internet
- Filtering and monitoring of online content
- Protection of personal information and data
- Educating and empowering students to be safe and responsible digital citizens
- Reporting and responding to cyberbullying, harassment, and inappropriate online behavior
- Enforcement and consequences of violating the policy

## **Acceptable and Responsible Use of the Internet**

The school provides access to the internet for educational purposes only. Users are expected to use the internet in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission, values, and policies. Users are also expected to respect the rights and property of others, and to follow the laws and regulations that govern the use of the internet.

Some examples of acceptable and responsible use of the internet are:

- Using the internet to access, create, and share educational content and resources
- Using the internet to communicate and collaborate with teachers, classmates, and other learners
- Using the internet to research and explore topics related to the curriculum and personal interests

- Using the internet to develop and practice digital skills and literacy
- Using the internet to access and participate in online learning platforms and programs approved by the school

Some examples of unacceptable and irresponsible use of the internet are:

- Using the internet to access, create, or share content that is illegal, harmful, offensive, or inappropriate
- Using the internet to engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or discrimination
- Using the internet to cheat, plagiarize, or violate academic integrity
- Using the internet to disrupt, interfere, or damage the school's network, devices, or online resources
- Using the internet to download, install, or run unauthorized software, programs, or files
- Using the internet to access or participate in online platforms, programs, or activities that are not approved by the school
- Using the internet to access others' accounts

## Filtering and Monitoring of Online Content

The school uses filtering and monitoring software to block or restrict access to online content that is deemed inappropriate, harmful, or illegal for students. The filtering and monitoring software is designed to comply with the requirements of CIPA, which mandates that schools prevent access to visual depictions of obscenity, child pornography, or material that is harmful to minors.

The filtering and monitoring software is not infallible and may not block all inappropriate or harmful content. Users are responsible for their own online behavior and choices, and should report any content that is inappropriate, harmful, or illegal to a teacher or administrator. Users should also avoid accessing or sharing any content that violates the Acceptable and Responsible Use of the Internet section of this policy.

The school reserves the right to monitor and review any online activity or content that is accessed, created, or shared by users on the school's network, devices, or online resources. The school may also monitor and review any online activity or content that is accessed, created, or shared by users on their own devices, if they are connected to the school's network or using the school's online resources. The school may use the monitoring and review data to ensure compliance with this policy, to investigate potential violations or incidents, or to provide feedback and guidance to users.

# Protection of Personal Information and Data

The school is committed to protecting the personal information and data of users and complying with the requirements of COPPA. It protects the privacy of children under 13 years of age online.

The school collects, stores, and uses personal information and data of users for educational purposes only. The school does not disclose or share personal information and data of users with third parties, unless required by law or authorized by the user or their parent or guardian. The school also does not sell or rent personal information and data of users to third parties for any reason.

The school uses encryption, passwords, and other security measures to safeguard the personal information and data of users from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. However, the school cannot guarantee the absolute security of personal information and data of users, and users are responsible for protecting their own personal information and data online.

Some examples of personal information and data that users should protect online are:

- Name, address, phone number, email address, or other contact information
- Birth date, age, gender, or other demographic information
- Social security number, student ID number, or other identification information
- Grades, test scores, transcripts, or other academic information
- Medical records, health conditions, or other health information
- Photos, videos, or other media that can identify the user or others
- Passwords, usernames, or other login information

Some examples of how users can protect their personal information and data online are:

- Using strong and unique passwords, and changing them regularly
- Not sharing passwords, usernames, or other login information with anyone
- Not using the same password, username, or other login information for multiple accounts or platforms
- Logging out of accounts or platforms when not in use
- Not clicking on links or opening attachments from unknown or suspicious sources
- Not responding to requests for personal information or data from unknown or suspicious sources and reporting to an adult when such request is made.
- Not posting or sharing personal information or data on public or unsecured platforms or networks
- Checking the privacy settings and policies of platforms or networks before using or joining them

- Asking for permission from parents, guardians, teachers, or administrators before providing or sharing personal information or data online

## Educating and Empowering Students to be Safe and Responsible Digital Citizens

The school recognizes that educating and empowering students to be safe and responsible digital citizens is essential for their success and well-being in the digital age. The school provides opportunities for students to learn and practice digital skills and literacy, such as:

- Searching, evaluating, and using online information effectively and ethically
- Creating, publishing, and sharing online content respectfully and responsibly
- Communicating and collaborating online appropriately and productively
- Managing and balancing online time and activities healthily and wisely
- Protecting and respecting online privacy and security
- Understanding and following online rules and norms
- Recognizing and reporting online risks and threats
- Resolving and preventing online conflicts and issues
- Cyberbullying awareness

The school also encourages parents and guardians to be involved and supportive of their children's online learning and activities. The school provides resources and guidance for parents and guardians to help them:

- Monitor and supervise their children's online access and use
- Discuss and establish rules and expectations for their children's online behavior and choices
- Teach and model safe and responsible online habits and practices
- Support and assist their children with online learning and challenges
- Communicate and collaborate with the school on online safety and education issues

## Reporting and Responding to Cyberbullying, Harassment, and Inappropriate Online Behavior

The school does not tolerate any form of cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior on or off campus. Cyberbullying, harassment, and inappropriate online behavior are defined as any online actions or communications that are intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, humiliate, or harass another person or group, or that create a hostile or offensive online environment.

Some examples of cyberbullying, harassment, and inappropriate online behavior are:

- Sending or posting mean, rude, or hateful messages or comments
- Spreading rumors, lies, or gossip online
- Sharing or posting embarrassing, private, or false information or images of another person or group
- Excluding, isolating, or discriminating against another person or group online
- Impersonating, hacking, or stealing another person's online identity or account
- Stalking, threatening, or blackmailing another person or group online
- Encouraging or inciting violence, self-harm, or illegal activities online

The school expects all users to report any cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior that they witness or experience to a teacher or administrator as soon as possible. The school also expects all users to cooperate and assist with any investigation or intervention of cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior.

The school will respond to any reports of cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior promptly and appropriately, in accordance with the school's policies and procedures. The school will take appropriate actions to stop, prevent, and address any cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate online behavior, such as:

- Removing or blocking access to the online content or platform involved
- Contacting and notifying the parents or guardians of the users involved
- Providing support and counseling to the users involved
- Applying disciplinary or legal consequences to the users involved
- Referring and/or reporting on the users involved to external agencies or authorities, especially as required by law.

## Enforcement and Consequences of Violating the Policy

The school will enforce this policy and monitor compliance with this policy regularly and consistently. The school will use various methods and tools to enforce and monitor compliance with this policy, such as:

- Requiring acknowledgement and acceptance of this policy annually or as needed
- Providing training and education on this policy and its expectations to users
- Reviewing and updating this policy and its expectations periodically or as needed
- Using filtering and monitoring software to block or restrict access to inappropriate or harmful online content
- Using filtering and monitoring software to monitor and review online activity and content of users

- Conducting audits and inspections of the school's network, devices, and online resources
- Investigating and responding to any reports or incidents of policy violations

The school will apply appropriate consequences to any user who violates this policy, in accordance with the school's policies and procedures. The consequences will depend on the nature, severity, and frequency of the violation, and may include:

- Warning or reprimand
- Loss or restriction of online access or privileges
- Confiscation or suspension of device or account
- Restitution or compensation for damages or losses
- Detention or suspension
- Expulsion or dismissal
- Legal action or prosecution

## ***APPENDIX B: PARENT CONSENT & RELEASE FORMS***

***(These forms must be signed and returned to the school)***

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM**

The School offers students the opportunity to participate in a wide range of education, extracurricular, and athletic activities, both on and off campus. The School believes that parents, students, and the School community are best-served when parents and students together determine the range of activities that are appropriate for a particular student's participation. Parents should review the opportunities listed below, determine which activities are appropriate for their student's participation, and students and parents should sign where indicated below for each activity.

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Student Name<br/>("Student"):</b> |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|

**Athletics:**

**Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms below,** by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's participation in School-sponsored athletic activities, including without limitation athletics-related training and exercise programs, practices, School-sponsored pre- and post-game activities, games, competitions, and tournaments. I/we have read, discussed with Student, and understand the Student conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued participation in athletics is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct when engaged in any School-related activity, whether academic, athletic, or otherwise.

|                            |      |     |
|----------------------------|------|-----|
| <b>Parent(s) initials:</b> | Yes: | No: |
|----------------------------|------|-----|

**Transportation to/from Athletics:**

**Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms below,** by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's use of School-sponsored transportation to and from any and all School-sponsored athletics activities described above. I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued use of School transportation is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct

|                            |      |     |
|----------------------------|------|-----|
| <b>Parent(s) initials:</b> | Yes: | No: |
|----------------------------|------|-----|

**Extra-curricular Activities:**

**Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms below,** by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's participation in School-sponsored extracurricular activities, including on-campus and off-campus extracurricular activities. I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued participation in extracurricular activities is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct when engaged in any School-sponsored activity, whether academic, extracurricular, or otherwise.

|                            |      |     |
|----------------------------|------|-----|
| <b>Parent(s) initials:</b> | Yes: | No: |
|----------------------------|------|-----|

**Transportation to/from Extracurricular Activities:**

**Subject to the Release and Indemnification terms** below, by my/our initials below, I/we consent to Student's use of School-sponsored transportation to and from any and all School-sponsored extracurricular activities described above. I/we have read and discussed with Student the conduct expectations set forth in the Handbook and understand that Student's continued use of School transportation is conditioned upon his/her compliance with all applicable policies and rules of conduct.

|                            |      |     |
|----------------------------|------|-----|
| <b>Parent(s) initials:</b> | Yes: | No: |
|----------------------------|------|-----|

**Video/Image Release:**

**Subject to the Release and Consideration and Indemnification terms** below, by my/our initials below, and for good and valuable consideration, I hereby grant to the School the irrevocable and unrestricted right to make, use and/or publish any and all photographs, videos, and other images of Student, or images in which Student may be included, now existing or hereafter made, in any case, with or without identifying Student for editorial, advertising, news, or any other purpose and in any manner and medium; to alter the same without restriction; and to copyright the same.

|                                                                                 |      |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|
| <b>Parent(s) initials:</b>                                                      | Yes: | No: |
| <b>Student: <i>If age 18 or over</i>, initial appropriate box to the right:</b> | Yes: | No: |

**Release and Indemnification:**

For and in consideration of admitting Student to School, allowing Student to participate in any of the activities described above, and for other good and valuable consideration, on behalf of myself, Student, and our respective heirs, assigns, survivors, estates, beneficiaries, I hereby release and agree to fully and unconditionally protect, indemnify, and defend School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and their respective officers, agents, and employees, (collectively, "Indemnitees") and hold each Indemnatee harmless from and against any and all costs, expenses, attorney's fees, claims damages, demands, suits, judgments, losses, or liability for injuries to property, injuries to persons (including Student) and from any other costs, expenses, attorney fees, claims, suits judgments, losses, or liabilities of any and every nature whatsoever arising in any manner, directly or indirectly, out of, in connection with, in the course of, or incidental to any activity described above in this Section 10.

## Technology Acceptable Use Policy / Internet School Safety Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students use technology and virtual environments responsibly, in alignment with the values and guidelines set forth by the diocesan policy. This policy aims to promote safe, ethical, and effective use of technology for educational purposes.

### Scope

This policy applies to all students who use the school's technology resources, including computers, tablets, internet access, software, and virtual learning environments.

### Responsibilities

#### Students:

1. **Use Technology for Educational Purposes Only:** Students must use school technology resources for academic activities only.
2. **Follow Ethical Standards:** Students should adhere to ethical guidelines, including honesty, integrity, and respect for others in all digital interactions.
3. **Protect Personal Information:** Students should not share personal information, such as addresses, phone numbers, or passwords, online.
4. **Respect Intellectual Property:** Students must respect copyright laws and not plagiarize content.
5. **Report Unsafe Activities:** Students must report any unsafe or inappropriate activities they encounter to a teacher or school administrator.
6. **Avoid Cyberbullying:** Engaging in cyberbullying or any form of harassment online is strictly prohibited.

### Prohibited Activities

- Accessing or distributing inappropriate content, such as pornography or violent material.
- Engaging in illegal activities, such as hacking or downloading pirated software.
- Using technology resources to cheat on assignments or exams.
- Sharing login credentials with others or using someone else's credentials.
- Damaging or altering school technology equipment or software.

### Consequences

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary actions, including but not limited to:

- Loss of access to technology resources.
- Notification of parents or guardians.
- Detention or suspension.
- Legal action, if applicable.
- **Financial Responsibility:** If a student damages any school technology equipment, the family is responsible for the cost to fix the device. The cost will be charged to the family's FACTS account.

### Agreement

By signing this document, students acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the *Technology Acceptable Use Policy / Internet School Safety Policy*.

### Student Agreement

I, [Student Name] \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the Technology Acceptable Use Policy / Internet School Safety Policy. I agree to follow the guidelines and responsibilities outlined in this policy.

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

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PASS-THROUGH COPPA PARENT WAIVER (English)**

Dear Parents,

Our school uses certain web-based tools and other applications that assist your child in learning. For your child under age 13 to use those tools and applications, federal law requires that you provide your consent. A list of the applications and web-based services our school uses, or may choose to use, has been enclosed with this parental consent form. For your child to use these programs and services, your child must provide certain personally identifying information. This information is limited to first and last name, a username, and email address.

Privacy policies for the programs can be found on the websites of the developers of these applications. If you have questions about a particular policy or would like further information about these privacy policies, please review the applicable website or contact your child's teacher.

Under the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, the operators of these educational applications and services must notify you, as your child's parent, and obtain your consent before collecting limited personal information from children under the age of 13.

The law permits schools to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of all its students. This form, when completed below and on file with us, will authorize our school to provide consent for your child to provide personal identifying information, consisting of first and last name, a username, and an email address, to the operators of applications identified on the enclosed list.

If you consent to your child providing personal identifying information to use the applications and web services, check the OPT-IN box below. By checking the OPT-IN box, you expressly authorize St. Cecilia Catholic School to provide your child's first name, last name, username, and email address to the operators of one or more of the applications identified on the enclosed list. You also agree to release and indemnify our school from and against any claims arising out of our providing such information to the operators of the applications and services listed on the enclosed list.

If you do not want our school to provide this information, select the OPT-OUT box below. Note that checking the OPT-OUT box will prevent your child from participating in certain educational activities, including the use of the applications on the enclosed list. While our school will make reasonable attempts to provide alternative assignments to your child, we reserve the right to determine that a student's consistent inability to participate in the assigned curriculum may impair the student's academic progress at our school and require that you and we explore other options.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**OPT IN** \_\_\_\_\_ **or** **OPT OUT** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PASS-THROUGH COPPA PARENT WAIVE (Spanish)**

Estimados Padres de Familia,

Nuestra escuela utiliza ciertas herramientas y aplicaciones a través del internet que estimulan el aprendizaje de su hijo. Para que su hijo menor de 13 años utilice estas herramientas y aplicaciones, la ley federal requiere que usted dé su consentimiento. Una lista de las aplicaciones y servicios a través del internet que utiliza nuestra escuela, o que puede decidir utilizar, ha sido incluida con este formulario de consentimiento de los padres de familia. Para poder utilizar estos programas y servicios, su hijo debe proporcionar cierta información de identificación personal. Generalmente, esta información se limita a su nombre y apellido, un nombre de usuario y dirección de correo electrónico.

Los reglamentos de privacidad de los programas pueden encontrarse en los sitios web de los diseñadores de estas aplicaciones. Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de un reglamento en particular o desea información adicional acerca de estos reglamentos de privacidad, le pedimos que revise el sitio web correspondiente o se ponga en contacto con el maestro de su hijo. Bajo la Ley Federal de Protección de la Privacidad Infantil en Internet, los operadores de estas aplicaciones y servicios educativos deben notificarle a usted, como padre de su hijo, y obtener su consentimiento antes de recopilar información personal limitada de niños menores de 13 años.

La ley permite que las escuelas den su consentimiento a la recopilación de información personal en nombre de todos sus estudiantes. Esta forma, al ser llenada y conservada en nuestros archivos, autorizará a nuestra escuela a dar el consentimiento para que su hijo proporcione información de identificación personal, la cual consta de nombre y apellido, un nombre de usuario y una dirección de correo electrónico, a los operadores de las aplicaciones identificadas en la lista adjunta.

Si usted da su consentimiento para que su hijo proporcione información de identificación personal para utilizar las aplicaciones y servicios a través del internet, marque la casilla AUTORIZO en la parte de abajo. Al marcar la casilla AUTORIZO, usted autoriza expresamente que la Escuela Católica Santa Cecilia proporcione nombre, apellido, nombre de usuario y dirección de correo electrónico de su hijo a los operadores de una o más de las aplicaciones identificadas en la lista adjunta. Asimismo, usted acuerda liberar e indemnizar a nuestra escuela de y contra cualquier reclamación que surja al proporcionar dicha información a los operadores de las aplicaciones y servicios que se encuentran en la lista adjunta.

Si usted no desea que nuestra escuela proporcione dicha información, seleccione la casilla NO AUTORIZO en la parte de abajo. Tenga en cuenta que la casilla NO AUTORIZO evitará que su hijo participe en ciertas actividades educativas, incluyendo el uso de las aplicaciones incluidas en la lista adjunta. Si bien nuestra escuela generalmente hará los intentos razonables para proporcionar tareas alternativas para su hijo, nos reservamos el derecho de determinar si el impedimento constante de que un estudiante participe en el plan de estudios asignado perjudique el progreso académico del estudiante en la escuela y requiera que tanto usted como nosotros exploremos otras opciones.

Nombre del Estudiante: \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del Padre/Tutor (IMPRESO): \_\_\_\_\_

Firma del Padre/Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

**AUTORIZO** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO AUTORIZO** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fecha:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT *For hard copy handbooks***

By my signature below, I agree that I will comply and will require the student listed below to comply with the school's policies, procedures, and instructions, and understand that such compliance by me, the student, and persons connected to the school by reason of the student is a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school. I also understand and agree that the timely payment of all tuition, fees, and costs imposed by the school is also a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school. Furthermore, by signing below, I represent, warrant, and agree that I am authorized to sign this agreement, undertake the duties, and grant the releases set forth herein on behalf of Student.

|                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Student(s)<br>Name(s)(print): |                             |
| School Name (print):          | ST. CECILIA CATHOLIC SCHOOL |
| Parent Name (print):          |                             |
| Parent Signature:             |                             |
| School year:                  | 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR       |
| Date:                         |                             |

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT *For online acknowledgement***

By submitting this form to the school, I represent that I have read the foregoing Handbook and understand and agree to the contents thereof. I agree that I will comply and will require the student listed below to comply with the school's policies, procedures, and instructions, and understand that such compliance by me, the student, and persons connected to the school by reason of the student is a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school. I also understand and agree that the timely payment of all tuition, fees, and costs imposed by the school is also a condition of the student's continued enrollment in the school.

|                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Student(s)<br>Name(s)(print): |                             |
| School Name (print):          | ST. CECILIA CATHOLIC SCHOOL |
| Parent Name (print):          |                             |
| Parent Signature:             |                             |
| School year:                  | 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR       |
| Date:                         |                             |