# PARENT – STUDENT HANDBOOK

# Grades K – 8

# 2026 – 2027

*"Do not be satisfied with little things, because God wants great things!"*

*~ Saint Catherine of Siena*

**Saint Catherine of Siena School**

**190 Shelton Road**

**Trumbull, CT 06611**

**203.375.1947**

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Dear St. Catherine of Siena School Families,

Welcome to St. Catherine of Siena School. As we begin this new year together, I want to thank you for being part of a community rooted in faith, joy, and a shared commitment to helping children grow into the young people God calls them to be. Our school "has long been known for its strong Catholic identity, its commitment to academic excellence, and its dedication to forming young people in faith, character, and service." That mission guides every aspect of our work and every partnership we build with families.

This Parent–Student Handbook is an important resource that supports that mission. It outlines the expectations, policies, and procedures that help our school operate smoothly, safely, and consistently. More importantly, it reflects the values that shape our daily life together—respect, responsibility, compassion, and a deep love for our students. When we all understand and uphold these shared commitments, we create an environment where children can thrive academically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally.

At St. Catherine of Siena School, we believe:

- **Faith comes first** and anchors every decision we make.
- **Families are essential partners** in the growth and success of each child.
- **Teachers create joyful, engaging classrooms** where students feel known and supported.
- **Whole-child education matters**, forming confident, compassionate disciples.
- **Community strengthens identity**, connecting school, parish, and family life.
- **Consistency and clarity help children flourish**, which is why this handbook is so important.

Our goal is to ensure that every child experiences a school environment where they are safe, respected, challenged, and loved. "Together, we will continue to nurture a school community where every child is known, loved, and supported—and where Christ remains at the center of all we do."

Thank you for taking the time to read and familiarize yourself with this handbook. Your partnership allows us to maintain the strong, faith-filled culture that makes St. Catherine of Siena School such a special place. I look forward to a year of learning, growth, and joyful community life.

Warm regards,

Mr. Edward H. Goad
Principal, St. Catherine of Siena School

# Saint Catherine of Siena School Faculty/Staff

| | |
|---|---|
| Pastor | Father Joseph Marcello |
| Principal | Mr. Edward Goad |
| Administrative Assistant | Mrs. Pat Bell |
| Bookkeeper | Mrs. Maria Cohen |
| School Nurse | TBD |
| Marketing and Enrollment Manager | Mrs. Katie Keeney |
| PreK 3 | Mrs. Renee Kugit |
| PreK 3 Aide | Ms. Alyssa Hornak |
| PreK 4 | Mrs. Stacey Brennan |
| Prek 4 Aide | Mrs. Emilia Dobrydney |
| PreK 4 | Karen Mariot |
| PreK 4 Aide | TBD |
| Kindergarten | Mrs. Christina Buck |
| Kindergarten Aide | Ms. Deborah Costa |
| Grade 1 | Miss Allie Paster |
| Grade 1 Aide | Miss Anne Mastroni |
| Grade 2 | Mrs. Stacey Platt |
| Grade 3 | Mrs. Suzanne Cartell |
| Grade 4 | Mrs. Kelly Paris |
| Grade 5 | Mr. Pat Yerina |

| | |
|---|---|
| Grade 6 | Miss Katherine Quinn |
| Grade 7 | Mr. Tung Tran |
| Grade 8 | Mrs. Carole Kamienski |
| Science/STEM | Mr. Daniel Nyitrai |
| Art | Ms. Maggie Adams |
| Spanish | Mrs. Elizabeth Torres |
| Music | Dr. Rosemary Boone |
| Physical Education | Mr. Robert Best |
| Media Specialist | Mrs. Kelly Blair |
| Academic Support Specialist | Mrs. Jessica Pincheon |
| Counselor | Ms. Clare Foertsch |
| Support Staff | Mrs. Erin Mikos |
| | Mr. David Turner |
| After School Coordinator | Mrs. Lynne Kiss |
| After School Staff | Mrs. Sharon Watson |
| Athletic Director | Mr. Brian Shedlock |
| VIRTUS Coordinator | Mrs. Pat Bell |

# Saint Catherine of Siena School Advisory Board

*All diocesan schools will have a School Advisory Board (SAB) composed of administrators, clergy, and laity with skills and finance, facilities, marketing/development and strategic planning. The SAB represents the educational institutions of the Diocese of Bridgeport and are under the authority of the Superintendent of Schools. The SAB provides leadership to foster an environment which provides underlying Catholic values, long term strategic planning, and financial stability.*

*The role of the School Advisory Board complements the school's mission, which is to nurture and foster the spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical, and social growth of the student through its religious and academic curriculum and extracurricular programs. Some general responsibilities of the SAB include, but are not limited to*

*1. Participating in this strategic planning and goal setting for finance, facilities, marketing, and development, which should complement the curriculum and instructional strategic plan developed by the local school administration.*

*2. The Finance Committee of the School Advisory Board helps to review and revise, if necessary, the annual operating budget prepared by the local school administration and submitted to the Office of the Superintendent for approval. Salary and other personal information should not be shared with the board.*

*3. Planning and facilities.*

*4. Establishing and maintaining effective marketing and development programs.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 1.111 – School Advisory Board revised September 1, 2021***

**School Advisory Board Members**

Rev. Joseph Marcello, Pastor, Ex Officio, voting member

Mr. Edward Goad, Principal, Ex Officio, nonvoting member

Ross Bacarella, Board Chair

Patrick Donegan

Robert Hojnacki

Robert Marini

Jeremy Nappi

Richard Spencer

# Home and School Association (HSA)

*Each school shall have a parent organization (Home School Association or similar organization), which operates by by-laws approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools (OSS).*

*All disbursements from income raised by parent organizations are to be determined by the school administrator in collaboration with the parent organization and may be used to offset budgeted expenses in the school's budget.*

*All income fund-raised for a specific purpose must be disbursed for that purpose unless alternative disbursement options were set forth at the time the income was raised.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 1.113 - Parent Organization Revised: September 1, 2021***

The mission of the Home and School Association (HSA) is to cultivate a supportive and inclusive community for all families associated with the school. The HSA is composed of dedicated volunteers who work collaboratively to outline and pursue annual fundraising goals. These goals are established in alignment with the directives set forth by the school principal. The funds raised through these initiatives play a key role in ensuring the long-term sustainability and growth of SCSS, benefiting both current and future students.

HSA meetings are open to all parents, clergy, faculty, and staff. In keeping with diocesan policy, any adults volunteering in school activities are required to be in a current active status with their VIRTUS Safe Environment training.

**Home and School Association Board**

Kathleen Monaco, President

JP and Katy Rizzitelli, Vice-Presidents

Tara Craig, Parent Liaison

Dr. Jennifer Trifiatis, Secretary

# School Hours

## School Hours: Kindergarten – Grade 8

**Full Day Schedule:** 7:30 am – 2:20 pm

Arrival: 7:30 am – 7:45 am

School begins with morning prayer: 7:50 am

Dismissal: 2:20 pm

Optional After School Program: until 5:30 pm (additional fee and required sign up)

**2 Hours Delayed Opening:**

Arrival: 9:30 am

**Early Dismissal Days:**

Dismissal: 11:50 am

Teacher supervision begins at 7:30 am in the classroom on regular school days and 9:30 am on a delayed opening. Students are not permitted in the classrooms before the time allowed.

## Office Hours (School Year)

7:30 am – 3:30 pm

## Office Hours (Summer)

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

# History and Mission Statement

## Saint Catherine of Siena School History

Saint Catherine of Siena School began in September 1965 when three School Sisters of Notre Dame arrived to teach the seventy-one pupils in Grades 1, 2, and 7. The classes were held in the church hall until a well-equipped eight-classroom school was opened in October of 1966 with one hundred fifty students in Grades 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8. The following year, Grades 4, 5, and 6 were added, bringing enrollment up to two hundred fifty students. In 1973, the school joined with two other local parochial schools to form a regional school system. St. Catherine School left the regional system in 1975 to operate on its own. That same year, a kindergarten class was added to the school. Gym classes, art, music, and library were added to the curriculum. In 1984, a three-room addition was planned and completed in 1987, providing a small group instruction room, a data-processing room, and a large multipurpose room for art, music, band, and other activities.

St. Catherine of Siena School became a part of the bishop's regionalization plan in 1990 to strengthen Catholic education in Fairfield County through increased enrollment and shared expenses. The school stayed in the regional group for one year and then once again left to operate on its own. The Home School Association is an active and vital part of the school and offers opportunities for social and fundraising activities. The faculty and administration provide an enriched curriculum, and the school has continued to provide a well-rounded education for the children of the local parishes.

St. Catherine of Siena School has a strong Catholic identity that binds the school's families into a community of faith, love, and commitment. Consistent with other Catholic schools in Fairfield County with U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon designation, the school's academic program includes curriculum mapping, differentiated instruction, and ongoing faculty professional development to ensure students continue to meet and exceed state proficiency tests in reading and math. We continue to actively work on its mission and rigorous curriculum that is designed to support the needs of twenty-first-century students. Parents, faculty, and staff work together to nurture and educate children to live lives centered on God, meaningful relationships, and commitment to enriching society. The school is committed to the development of Catholic values, which enrich family values. These values bring our graduated students back to visit their

teachers and school, and have our alumni sending their children to the school. The close relationship between faculty members and between faculty and students makes us more than a school; it is a community that lives its mission.

## School Mission Statement

At St. Catherine of Siena School, we are dedicated to the holistic development of each child, grounded in Catholic values. We strive to foster academic excellence, cultivate kindness and respect for others, and inspire a lifelong love of learning within a supportive, family-centered community.

## Student Mission Statement

As a student of  Saint Catherine of Siena School, I will do my best to learn about God and live my faith, to work to the best of my ability, and treat others the way I want to be treated.

## Philosophy

As a Roman Catholic educational community, we believe that each child, regardless of race, color, and creed, has the right to an education, and we accept this responsibility of educating the whole child with an emphasis on Catholic Christian ethics and more. Our philosophy is guided by the view of a “total Christian formation” that is spiritual, academic, social, moral, and physical.

# Parents As Partners

As partners in the educational process at Saint Catherine of Siena School, we ask parents to set rules, times, and limits so that your child

- Gets to bed early on school nights, is sufficiently rested, and is adequately nourished
- 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 with weather-appropriate outerwear
- Completes all assignments on time
- Has a healthy snack and lunch every day

In addition, SCSS asks parents to

- Notify the office of ANY changes to address, phone numbers, and emails of parents, guardians, and emergency contact information.
- Actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- Ensure that the student pays for any damage to school books or property, such as chromebooks, 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
- Meet all financial obligations to the school
- Inform the school of any particular situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health
- Complete and return to school any requested information promptly
- Read school notes and the school newsletters and show interest in the student's total education and formation

- Support the religious and educational goals of the school
- Support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
- Regard the teachers, staff, and administration with respect and Christian values in discussing student problems and/or other concerns
- Note that, per diocesan-wide policy, no students or parents may have Twitter, FB, Instagram, or a website with the SCSS logo or name appearing on it. If you have one of these accounts, please adhere to this policy and delete the account or change the appearance so that it does not include the logo or name of St. Catherine of Siena School.
- Not friend or tag current teachers on social media
- Do not post any negative or derogatory comments about teachers on social media.
- Parents and families may not bring nor consume alcohol at any SCSS or diocese athletic or family event. You will be asked to leave the premise if you are seen with any alcohol. If you refuse, the police may be called to escort you off the property. Further disciplinary actions may be discussed.

We at Saint Catherine of Siena School consider it a privilege to work with parents in children's education because parents are their children's primary educators. Therefore, it is your responsibility and duty to become the primary role model for developing your child's life spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of Saint Catherine of Siena School involves a commitment and exhibits a priority in helping your child recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

**Deeds, not words, are the strongest teachers. Your personal relationship with Christ, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to Him and others.** Ideals taught in school will not be well rooted in the child unless they are nurtured by a culture of good Catholic/Christian morality.

Once you have chosen to partner with us at Saint Catherine of Siena School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (PreK–8), your child needs constant support from parents and faculty to develop his/her

highest potential. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partners in both challenging and 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 to all authority. If there is an incident at school, you, as parents, must make an investigation of the complete story your first step.  Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good, mature behavior and proper respect for authority. Talking negatively about a child's teacher and/or the school will not have a positive outcome.

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. Please trust that the teachers are working and providing the best care for your child.

The classroom teacher is the first person to contact with concerns. If the need arises for additional support, a parent may contact the principal.

# General Information

## Absence and Tardiness

*Student attendance in Catholic schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport shall be in accordance with the statutes of the State of Connecticut. The responsibility for compliance with this law belongs to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child. Students must attend school punctually and regularly and conform to the attendance policies and procedures established by the school and outlined in the parent/student handbook.*

*A student not physically present at a school, excused or unexcused, is marked absent.*

*When a student is absent due to illness, accident, quarantine, or attendance at the funeral services of a member of the student's family, this is considered an excused absence.*

*When a student is absent due to a medical and/or dental appointment, verification of such appointments is required from the medical or dental office in order to be considered an excused absence.*

*When a student is absent because a parent wishes to take their child out of school for personal reasons, this is considered an unexcused absence.*

*It is recommended that the principal discuss the student's progress with the parents and advise them of the effect such an absence would have on the student's schoolwork.*

*By law, schools in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, local police, and courts are responsible for enforcing the mandatory school attendance laws when parents fail to send their children to school or provide them with equivalent instruction. If a truancy problem cannot be solved by the school, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) shall be notified. Excessive tardiness may also be reported to DCF.*

*Students may not participate in any school-sponsored event if they are not in school on the day of the event without express permission from the principal.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.302 - Attendance Revised: September 1, 2019***

## Absence and Tardiness

Regular school attendance is essential for consistent academic and social development. We ask families to make every effort to have their children at school each school day promptly. Students should be in their classrooms by 7:45 am. Doors close at 7:45 am, and once they are closed, parents are to walk their child(ren) to the door and wait for them to be buzzed in. Students who arrive after 7:50 am will be marked tardy. Students unpack and prepare for the day to begin

promptly at 7:50 am.The academic day begins at 7:50 am with Morning Prayer and concludes with Afternoon Prayer at 2:15 pm.

Students who arrive after 7:50 AM must report to the school office to receive a tardy slip before proceeding to their classroom. Repeated tardiness will result in communication with the family and may require a conference with the principal. We appreciate your partnership in fostering habits of responsibility and respect for the school day. Students who arrive late due to a delay with busing will receive an excused tardy. Students must come in with a note if they arrive late due to an appointment or family obligation.

When a child is going to be absent, parents should click on and complete "Report Absence" under Quick Links on the SCSS Website. When the child returns to school, he/she should bring a note or a parent should email the nurse stating the date(s) of absence and the reason for the absence. A note from the attending physician is required if the absence is due to a communicable disease or if the student has been absent for three days or more in a row. Students are expected to make up the school work missed during an absence from school. ***Students may not participate in any school-sponsored activity if they are not in school on the day of the event.***

While regular attendance is a necessary component of school success, it is imperative that parents keep ill children home. Any child showing signs of illness, including congestion, sore throat, cough, chills, shortness of breath, headache, loss of taste or smell, fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle or body aches, hives, or rash, should not attend school.

Parents are asked to notify the school in writing at least one week before an extended absence. The parent is responsible for having the child make up work missed during these absences upon the child's return to school. Teachers are not required to give advanced assignments. If possible, students in middle school should check their Google Classroom during their absence for the most current work assignments. If a student is absent on the day the assignment is given, they will be given one day to complete the assignment and turn it in. If absent for two days, then two days to complete and turn the work in is permitted and so forth. Students need to make up all missed tests. Please set up a schedule with the teacher upon returning to school.

## Bus Transportation

Residents of the Town of Trumbull are eligible for bus transportation to and from school. Students are expected to behave orderly and respectfully on the bus. Failure to comply with bus regulations may cause a student to lose the right to ride on a Trumbull bus. Students are required to adhere to the rules and regulations set forth by the Town of Trumbull.

## Late Pickup

Prompt pickup is essential. Please be considerate of teachers' schedules and your child's well-being. Teachers often have additional responsibilities after school, such as offering extra help, coaching, or attending meetings, and are unable to stay if their students' pickup is delayed. Be sure to have a backup plan in case of emergencies, and consider adding a classmate's parent or family member to your dismissal list. When possible, notify the main office if you won't arrive by 2:20 pm. After three late pickups, teachers will issue a warning. After five, students will be sent to the afterschool program, with families being charged the daily fee, including any late registration fees for each occurrence. If you have a temporary situation in which you need assistance, please contact the office so we can make arrangements.

## Early Release from School

Parents must submit in writing to the office and homeroom teacher any requests for a child to leave the school building during school hours. The parent/guardian must report to the school office and the student will be called to the office. Under no circumstances may a parent/guardian interrupt class to pick up a student. No child will be permitted to leave the school building early unless an adult accompanies him or her. At such times, the authorized adult must sign the student out. **Students will not be dismissed early from the office after 1:45 pm on a regular school day or after 11:00 am on early dismissal days.** Parents are asked to make every effort to schedule medical and dental appointments after school hours.

## Snack and Lunch

Parents can choose to order lunch for their children from Catamount Catering or bring their own lunch. Parents should send a snack and a refillable water bottle appropriate in size for their age. Please send in food packed in containers that the student can open and close independently. Students are encouraged to make nutritious choices; **gum, soda, energy and caffeine drinks, as well as candy, are not allowed** during the school day. For safety reasons, no glass containers are allowed to be brought to school. **We are a peanut/tree nut/sesame free school.** Students eat lunch in their classrooms, and the individual classroom teachers set behavior expectations. Parents are asked NOT to deliver fast food lunch to a student as an alternative to a bag lunch or the hot lunch meal offered for the day. The arrival of pizza, Subway, or McDonald's meals into a classroom is disruptive.

Occasionally, students may forget to bring their lunch and require alternate plans. If a student is without lunch, he/she will be sent to the office to make a phone call home.

For the safety of all students, food and/or beverages may not be shared.

We will support allergen-clean classrooms to the best of our ability.

Do not send peanut/tree nut/sesame food or products made with nuts for lunch, snacks, or treats.

Some products may resemble peanut butter, such as soy nut butter, sunflower butter, etc. When you send in those items, it would be very helpful to mark the sandwich to help the teacher identify that it is **not** peanut butter.

When food is part of the curriculum, we will notify parents in ample time. **We ask that families with children with allergies provide food for these occasions, too.**

## Lost and Found

It is not unusual for students to periodically misplace their belongings. A proactive approach is to have students write their names on all their school materials and label outerwear. Items left for over one month will be donated to charity.

## Communications

The school does its utmost to keep parents informed of all activities. There is a weekly communication sent home electronically to all families on Thursdays. **Parents must notify the office at** office@scsstrumbull.org **of any change of address, phone number, or email to be sure to receive communication.** An additional source of school information is the school's website, https://www.stcatherinesienatrumbull.org/. The administration and faculty are mindful of the environment and, therefore, use email as a regular means of conveying information to parents.

## Financial Obligations

In addition to tuition, there is an “assessment” fee, which, like tuition, contributes to our operating budget. Each school family with students in Kindergarten through eighth grade is assessed $225.00 for the school year. Preschool families are assessed a $125.00 obligation that can be met through direct contribution or participation in the school's fundraising events. 100% of the assessment fee goes to the operating budget of St. Catherine of Siena School. All financial obligations, tuition, and the assessment fee must be met by June 1. Graduation diplomas will not be awarded to students with outstanding fees. There is a limited pool of financial aid; families who need assistance should request the necessary forms from the school office.

# Academics

## Curriculum

Saint Catherine of Siena School offers students a comprehensive curriculum that includes daily instruction in religion, language arts, math, science, and social studies. The curriculum provides students with experiences that develop their skills sequentially and encourage students to apply what they have learned to new situations. Instruction is conducted in both whole class sessions as well as small groups. Students are encouraged to articulate their thinking and be purposeful in planning for their classwork. In addition to the core curriculum, Spanish instruction is provided to students in PreK through eighth grade. In addition there are cocurricular classes that enrich the school week and add depth to the curriculum: music, art, PE, and technology.

## Homework

Homework is an essential component of school life, and the attention given to homework builds responsibility. Homework is given to reinforce and review the skills and concepts taught during the school day. The homework assigned provides parents insight into the material covered in class. Homework assignments also allow teachers to assess students' understanding of a skill/concept and its application. Students are encouraged to record assignments in a planner daily.

As a general rule for homework, teachers use the guideline of 10 minutes for each grade level in addition to reading each night.

| | |
|---|---|
| Grades K and 1 | 10 minutes |
| Grade 2 | 20 minutes |
| Grade 3 | 30 minutes |
| Grade 4 | 40 minutes |
| Grade 5 | 50 minutes |
| Grade 6 | 60 minutes |

| | |
|---|---|
| Grade 7 | 70 minutes |
| Grade 8 | 80 minutes |

Reading is critical to overall success in school, and practice is needed nightly. Studying is also part of weekly homework. Beginning in the fourth grade, students are assigned long-term projects in addition to daily homework. It is important that they learn to break long-term projects into manageable pieces and spread the work out over a period of time. At times, group projects are assigned, which involve student collaboration to bring a project to a successful conclusion. This, too, is an important life lesson.

Generally, teachers do not assign homework on the weekends for students in the elementary grades, K-5. Middle school students, however, must work on long-term projects, read independently, and study for upcoming tests and quizzes. The faculty has agreed not to assign significant weekend homework, recognizing that students need time for family activities and extracurricular pursuits.

Students are expected to complete assigned work, bring it to school, and hand it to the teacher on the due date. They are also expected to have the proper supplies for each class. Students are expected to follow the appropriate assigned due dates and times assigned by their teacher. Late homework assignments will be given a zero and not accepted. All other assignments (projects, essays, reports...) will be given a late penalty of 10 points per day.

If circumstances arise, e.g., sickness, family emergency, etc., points will only be deducted if the assignment is not turned in at a time and day mutually agreed upon by the teacher and student.

Please note that students cannot call home to ask a parent to bring an assignment or supplies they have forgotten.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for the grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major assessments, projects, and all other assignments.

## School Materials/Textbooks

Classroom textbooks, novels, and chromebooks are school property and should be respected and cared for appropriately. Students are required to cover their textbooks according to the guidelines set by their teachers. **The student will be held financially responsible if a textbook or chromebook is lost or damaged**.

## Midterms and Finals

In Grades 6 through 8, students are given midterm and final exams in their core subject areas: language arts, math, religion, science, social studies, and Spanish. Exam grades are reported separately on the report cards. The semester exams count as a test grade and also are weighted according to the following weight table:

| | |
|---|---|
| Grade 6 | Exams count as 4% of the semester grade. |
| Grade 7 | Exams count as 6% of the semester grade. |
| Grade 8 | Exams count as 10% of the semester grade. |

## Report Cards

Report cards are issued three times during the school year, at the end of each trimester. They are sent home with the students. Parents are asked to sign and return the report card envelope promptly. End of the year report cards for Middle School will be mailed home.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences take place in October with an optional conference in the spring. In addition, parents or faculty can request a conference at any time. These can be arranged at a mutually agreed-upon time.

## Retention

*Students shall be promoted once a year based on their satisfactory completion of the grade requirements. If the principal and teacher agree that it would best suit the personal and academic development of the student, a student may be retained in a grade for a second year, but only with the prior approval of the Office of the Superintendent.*

*A student may be retained only once in grades K through 8.*

*All K through 8 homeroom teachers are required to sign or initial each student's report card, certifying that the student was promoted to the next grade or retained in the current grade, defined as follows:*

● *Promoted means that the student has completed the grade's work and has attained a minimum of a "D" average in all major subject areas.*

● *Retained means that the student has failed two or more major subjects on the final average.*

*Major subjects include religion, social studies, math, science, and language arts.*

*The final decision to promote or retain a student is made by the principal, based on the student's academic performance and best interests. It should be made after discussion with the parent, teacher, and student.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.209 - Promotion/Retention Revised: September 1, 2019***

## Standardized Testing/Assessments

Standardized testing is one way to assess our students' progress. A Cognitive Ability Test will be administered to varying grades per year. ARC Assessments are administered in Grades 5 and 8. iReady Assessments are administered three times a year in Grades 1–8. In addition, students in Grades K–3 will have a DRA reading assessment administered three times a year by the classroom teachers.

## Field Trips

*Participating in a school field trip or school-sponsored activity is a privilege and not a right. All field trips must have the enrichment of the curriculum as their core purpose and must be carefully planned as an extension of the classroom experience. The cost of field trips and activities should be such that all students have the ability to participate.*

*All grades do not always have the same number of field trips. At least one field trip and a maximum of three field trips per student are recommended.*

*When traveling with a school on a Sunday or Holy day of Obligation, students are expected to attend Mass in the Roman Catholic Rite.*

*Trips to amusement/water park areas must have an educational rationale and must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools. An abundance of caution must be used in any event or trip that may involve swimming. In all cases, a certified lifeguard must be present at all times, and there must be separate shower rooms and changing areas for adults and minors. Proper swimming attire must be worn at all times.*

*Overnight field trips must be approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.*

*The principal must approve any school-sponsored social activity. These activities must have a clear purpose, be carefully planned, and be well supervised by staff. For such activities, all the areas of responsibility should be clearly defined.*

*The principal is responsible for the coordination of all activities of the school, including student activities outside the school building or school day. If delegated, it should be clearly stated to whom the responsibility for the event is delegated.*

*The principal is responsible for establishing clearly defined procedures to be used by student organizations for management of their funds. All funds must be deposited in the school account.*

*The principal reserves the authority to exclude students from field trips for school sponsored activities due to discipline issues.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 3.115 Field Trips and School-Sponsored Activities Revised: September 1, 2019***

Field trips are scheduled for educational and cultural purposes and must be approved by the principal. These off-campus trips are considered an extension of the school day; therefore, all school rules apply. Students may be denied participation if they fail to meet the behavioral expectations set by the faculty. Parents may refuse to permit their child to participate in a field trip by stating so on the permission slip. **Students who do not attend will remain at home and be marked absent for the day.** Each field trip will require a specific permission form signed by the student's parent or guardian. Entrance and transportation fees are the student's responsibility, although the school will try to keep these costs to a minimum. There are no "traditional" field trips. If a class goes to the same place for a few years, it does not make it a tradition to follow for years to come.

All field trip chaperones must be Virtus trained and will be selected at random unless there is a medical situation. Chaperones will be provided guidelines of expectations to ensure a safe trip for all.

Field trip fees are nonrefundable.

# Catholic Faith Formation

## Spiritual Life

As a Catholic school, the formation of our students in the tenets of our Catholic faith is the very reason for our existence. Prayer is a regular part of the school day. In addition, students participate in weekly Friday Masses, Holy Day Masses, the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Adoration, and other prayer services throughout the year. Students are given opportunities to participate in School Masses, prayer services and daily prayer. Mass participation strengthens our community in faith and is an integral part of the school's spiritual life. Knowledge of the Catholic faith is fundamental for sacramental preparation and participation in Church life.

Regardless of their faith, all children are welcomed members of Saint Catherine of Siena School. Non-Catholic students are required to participate in religion classes, as are all students. They are also expected to attend liturgies and other paraliturgical prayer services. They will not participate in receiving the sacraments.

## Liturgy

*All students, regardless of religious affiliation, are instructed in the teachings of the Catholic Church. The religion program shall present the central doctrines of the Catholic faith in keeping with the norms set by the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the National Directory for Catechesis.*

*The religious education in the schools of the diocese must conform to the Religion Curriculum Standards provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. Catholic social teaching shall be integrated into the curriculum. Teachers shall emphasize Catholic morality as an integral part of the religion curriculum in each school.*

*Every faculty member, regardless of the teacher's subject area, is considered a minister of the faith and is responsible for fostering the religious and moral growth of students.*

*All students, Catholic or non-Catholic, are required to attend Mass and other religious services with classmates. However, they shall not be required to participate in such services.*

*Academic marks for religion shall be based on the student's knowledge of course content and not on any kind of assessment of the student's practice of faith or personal behavior.*

*No awards or prizes shall be given under any circumstances for observance of religious practices.*

*–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.304 - Student Expectations Regarding the Faith Revised: September 1, 2019*

## Sacraments

The Rite of Reconciliation is received in Grade 2. The Sacrament of Holy Communion is received for the first time in Grade 3. The Rite of Reconciliation is made available to all students for Advent, Lent, and periodically throughout the school year. Grade 8 receives the Sacrament of Confirmation in the spring. Eighth-grade students spend the year preparing for this Sacrament and must complete several community service hours determined by the parish. For a child to receive any of these Sacraments, he/she must be baptized and ready emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. If the teachers, in consultation with the principal and the Pastor, deem that a child is not ready, the child will receive another year of preparation before receiving the Sacrament.

# Health

## Health Office and School Nurse

*All students attending schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport shall comply with Connecticut state law (School Health and Sanitation, Chapter 169, Sec. 10-2014a) regarding immunization requirements for students.*

*All students must have the required immunizations prior to the beginning of school.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.400 - Health***

*The school nurse shall be responsible for the health records of the students and will provide medical treatment as approved by the local public school district.*

*In the absence of a school nurse, the principal can administer and log medication.*

*At no time may a school nurse promote or entertain any medical treatment that would be contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.401 - School Nurse Revised: October 14, 2015***

A full-time nurse is provided to SCSS by the Town of Trumbull. We follow CT state guidelines for immunizations and health policies and procedures. The school nurse gives students hearing, vision, and scoliosis testing. All health-related questions should be directed to the School Health Office: 203-377-7041. Students should not email parents during the day to pick them up if they are not feeling well. Students should report to the school health office and explain the symptoms to the nurse, who will communicate with the parents.

If your child has any **contagious disease** (COVID-19, Strep throat/scarlet fever, pneumonia, whooping cough, pink eye, impetigo, molluscum, fifth's disease, measles, ring worm, meningitis, coxsackie, MRSA, mumps, rubella, breakthrough chickenpox, or any type of flu), please report them to the school nurse ASAP. If your child has started an **antibiotic** for an infection/communicable disease, he/she must be on the medication for **at least 24 hours** before returning.

Sick children must stay home from school. If your child has a temperature of 100 degrees or above, he/she may not attend school. Any child showing signs of illness, including congestion, sore throat, cough, chills, shortness of breath,

headache, loss of taste or smell, fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle or body aches, hives, or rash, should not attend school.

Students should be without a fever, and without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Students who have had strep throat should remain home for 24 hours after beginning a course of antibiotics. **Any absence due to illness for three or more consecutive days requires a doctor's note to return.**

The Diocese of Bridgeport is in close communication with the State Health Department and the Fairfield County Health Department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning the health of our students during flu season. Parents will receive updated information as it becomes available.

Students' attendance in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport shall be in accordance with the general statutes of the State of Connecticut. All absences must be reported on the online form, "Report Absence", under Quick Links on the SCSS website. Upon the child's return to school, a note is requested stating the date the child was absent and the reason for the absence. The school nurse monitors the health of our community and will notify parents if any patterns of illness merit their attention.

## Health Records

*A current health record for each student shall be requested annually and is to be kept active and up to date.*

*Health records shall be kept in files separate from student records.*

*The school shall follow policies of related health immunizations and screenings as directed by local and state statutes as long as they do not violate Catholic moral teachings.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.402 - Health Records Revised: October 14, 2015***

## Medication

*Administration of medication by school personnel should be in compliance with the city/town in which the school resides.*

*The school nurse shall administer medication which is necessary for a student to remain in school during school hours. In the absence of a school nurse, the principal or teacher (but not teacher's aide) can administer and log medication. Students are not allowed to carry any medication, prescription or non-prescription, on their person unless authorized in writing by a physician.*

*Students requiring prescription and/or over-the-counter medications in school must present a physician's authorization and written parent(s)/guardian(s) permission. Proper medical authorization forms must be used.*

*All medications must be provided by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and must be in their original pharmaceutical container labeled with the student's name. Each student's medication must be in its original container clearly labeled with the following information:*

1. *Student's name*
2. *Physician/dentist's name*
3. *Date*
4. *Name of medication*
5. *Dosage*
6. *Directions for administration*
7. *Frequency and duration of administration*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.404 - Medication Revised: October 14, 2015***

State law requires that all medication must be brought to school in its original container and kept with the school nurse. The medication must be accompanied by an authorization-to-administer form signed by the doctor. Please note that, according to Connecticut State law, cough drops are medication and cannot be taken without the proper authorization. Parents are asked to deliver any medication directly to the nurse, but must make an appointment to do so. Students are not permitted to have medication in their possession at school. At

the end of the school year, all parents need to pick up all medications; no medication can be kept at school during the summer.

## Health Exams

Students entering preschool and Kindergarten must have a health examination and proof of required immunizations prior to the first day of school. Subsequent health examinations in Grades 3 and 6 must be performed as required by law, and all immunizations must be kept up to date. All new students must submit a health form before beginning school. This physical must be dated within 365 days of their first day of school.

## Allergies

The school nurse should be made aware of all food and environmental allergies. Emergency plans will be made for each student individually. **Saint Catherine of Siena School is sensitive to nut/peanut/sesame allergies**, so students are not permitted to bring food containing nuts/peanuts/sesame to school. All EpiPens with the proper medical authorization forms are kept in the health office. To keep all our students with food allergies safe, we ask that no food be brought into the classrooms for celebrations without speaking to the school teacher.

## Head Lice

Head lice is not a serious medical condition, although it is an annoying one. Lice flourishes with no regard for age, race, or socioeconomic status. They are tiny insects that live on the human head and feed on human blood. They do not survive longer than 24 hours away from their human host. Unlike dandruff, lice cannot be washed or blown away. Students suspected of having head lice will be referred to the Health Office for an inspection by the nurse. Parents will be notified and will be given instructions on the appropriate lice treatment. Students will be reevaluated the next school day and again ten days after the initial treatment.

## Physical Education (PE) Exemptions

A written note is necessary for a child to be excused from participating in PE class. A note from a parent will only be accepted for a child to miss one class period. If an injury prevents a student from participating in PE for more than one period, he/she must provide a note from a physician. After an extended excused absence from PE classes, a physician's note will be required to return to class.

# Student Behavior

## Code of Conduct

The Saint Catherine of Siena Student Mission Statement sets the tone for student interactions with peers and adults. The school day begins with morning prayers and the recitation of the Student Mission Statement**:** ***"As a student of St. Catherine of Siena School, I will do my best to learn about God and live my faith, to work to the best of my ability, and to treat others the way I want to be treated."*** Students are taught to respect others and are held accountable for behavior in keeping with Catholic values. Students take pride in themselves and their school. Our code of conduct aims to provide a safe learning environment for all students of Saint Catherine of Siena School and foster the development of academic and personal responsibility.

## Behavior

Students are expected to abide by and cooperate with school rules and regulations. **Failure to do so will result in detention, possible suspension, or expulsion.**

Teachers will send home grade specific behavior policies.

Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to,

- Classroom disruptions
- Inappropriate hallway, bathroom, recess, or lunchtime behavior
- Gum chewing during the school day
- Dress code violations, including jewelry, inappropriate hair length on boys, makeup
- Violations of any items listed in the school handbook set forth as rules
- Fighting or any form of physical aggression

- Lying
- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Stealing
- Disrespect of authority
- Inappropriate language, gestures, or racial degradation, either written or oral
- Abuse of school property or the property of others
- Misuse of technology
- Cell phone/electronic device use during school hours, including Smart Watches
- AI
- Placing a harmful/toxic substance into one's own or another child's food and/or drink with the intent to consume it

## Grades K–3: Expectations

Students in the primary grades are developing their sense of right and wrong and behavior expectations for different social settings. Moving away from age-appropriate egocentricity, students are developing compassion and an understanding of how their words and actions impact others. When students need reminders about appropriate behavior or consequences for inappropriate behavior, the classroom teacher addresses this. Students are taught to take responsibility for their behavior, acknowledge wrongdoing, and learn from their mistakes.

## Grades 4–5: Expectations

There are clear expectations for student behavior, and emphasis is placed on meeting academic requirements. There are clearly defined consequences for not meeting the academic expectations set forth by teachers and for behavior that runs contrary to school values and negatively impacts the learning environment for others. Parents will be notified of academic and behavioral concerns.

## Grades 6–8: Expectations

Middle school is a time of growing responsibilities. Among these are making good choices about classroom behavior and meeting academic expectations, knowing that one's behavior has consequences. Adolescents need guidance to make good choices, clear parameters, and consistent consequences. Each student must recognize that his/her behavior impacts the learning environment created for the whole class, and respect for this learning environment is expected. Middle school parents and teachers must have open communication. Students may receive an infraction in one of two areas: academic or behavioral.

## Vandalism

Our school and school equipment are private property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property is cause for immediate suspension and possible expulsion. The school requires that the damages be paid for before a student is allowed to return to class. If a student accidentally causes damage, she/he should report it to a teacher immediately.

## Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Weapons

The use or sale of alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled substance on the school campus or buses is strictly forbidden. The possession of weapons or the inappropriate use of an item as a weapon is also strictly forbidden. Violating this rule will cause expulsion and be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

## Off-Campus Conduct

The administration of Saint Catherine of Siena School reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with the behavioral expectations of its students during the school day. This off-campus behavior includes, but is not limited to, cyberbullying. Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, social media postings, or website postings. It is also recognized that the author (posting or sending material) is often disguised (logged on) as someone else.

## Detention

Detention is used in the middle school grades as a consequence for repeated or more serious behavioral or academic infractions. A student may receive a detention for reasons including, but not limited to, accumulation of three or more missing homework assignments, persistent classroom disruptions, disrespectful behavior, or continued failure to follow the school's uniform policy (typically after three uniform infractions). Detentions are held after school and serve as a time for reflection, accountability, and restoration. They will be held at the teacher's discretion from 2:20 pm to 3:00 pm. Parents will be given a minimum of one day's notice for detentions. The goal of detention is not punitive, but formative—to support students in making responsible choices and upholding the expectations of the school community.

## Suspension

*The principal has the right to suspend students whose presence in the school becomes a serious impediment to the school's operation. Students may be suspended if their offense is of a severe nature or if prior disciplinary actions have proven ineffective. Suspension may result from actions (physical, verbal, or virtual) occurring in or out of school or on or off school property.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.318 - Suspension Revised: October 14, 2015***

## In-School and Out-Of-School Suspension (all grades)

In addition to the possibility of receiving an in-school suspension, a student may receive an out-of-school suspension, due to serious offenses, at the administration's discretion. The principal will determine the length of the in-school or out-of-school suspension.

When a student is given an **In-School Suspension**

- The student is removed from all classes and placed in a designated area of the school for a duration of time determined by the principal.
- The student is held responsible for obtaining and completing all schoolwork assigned during the suspension and all classroom/homework assignments given during the period of suspension. The student is responsible for taking all missed tests the day he/she returns to class.

When a student is given an **Out of School Suspension**

- The student is removed from school and remains at home for a duration determined by the principal, who reviews the determination with the parents.
- The student is responsible for obtaining and completing all schoolwork assigned during the suspension and all classroom/homework assignments given during the period of suspension. The student is also responsible for taking all missed tests the day he/she returns to class.
- The principal may require a student to receive professional counseling before returning to the school environment.

## Probation

Probation is a final consideration if all other means have failed to resolve a behavioral issue. The purpose is to allow the student to improve the behavior in question. The principal will determine the length and conditions of the

probationary period and will communicate this information to the parents, students, and teachers in a meeting. The student's behavior during the probationary period will directly affect continued enrollment at Saint Catherine of Siena School.

## Expulsion

*Expulsion of a student from school should only follow a period of suspension, unless the situation calls for immediate action. Expulsion shall only be considered as a last resort, if other means of discipline have proven ineffective and/or the continuation of the student in membership of the school is considered to be a hindrance to the welfare and progress of the school. Expulsion may result from actions (physical, verbal, or virtual) occurring in or out of school or on or off school property. Some reasons for expulsions include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- *Unauthorized absence or continued tardiness;*
- *Disobedience, insubordination, or disrespect for authority;*
- *Language or behavior which is immoral, profane, vulgar, or obscene;*
- *Conduct which constitutes repeated violations of school policies, rules, and standards of conduct;*
- *Use, sale, distribution, or possession of drugs, alcohol, or any other legally controlled substance;*
- *Injury, endangerment, or harm to persons or property or serious threat of same;*
- *Assault with, or possession of, a lethal instrument or weapon;*
- *Serious theft or dishonesty;*
- *Outrageous, scandalous, or serious disruptive behavior;*
- *Habitual lack of effort leading to academic failure in classroom work;*
- *Conduct at school or elsewhere which would reflect adversely on the Catholic school and/or the Church;*
- *Consistent disrespect for other students such as sexual harassment of another student;*
- *Incident of physical or virtual assault, such as bullying or verbal abuse (threats, extortion, or violence);*
- *Violation of Internet code of ethics; and/or*
- *When other means of discipline have failed.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.319 - Expulsion Revised: October 14, 2015***

Expulsion is the most serious means of addressing a discipline problem. Suppose a student's behavior presents a serious threat to the physical, spiritual, or moral

well-being of any member of the school community. In that case, the child may be expelled from school under the direction and authority of the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport. In addition, if a student's behavioral choices do not change as a result of infraction notices, detentions, suspension, and/or probation, the student may be expelled under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Examples of behavior that may result in **immediate school suspension, probation, or expulsion** include, but are not limited to,

- Violent behavior
- Harassment, bullying
- The possession, sale, or use of illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons, ammunition, or tobacco products

# Harassment

*The schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport do not condone any form of harassment. All individuals are to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment in any form is prohibited.*

*Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when*

*1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly;*

*2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of decisions affecting such individual; or*

*3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interference with an individual's work performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment.*

*Verbal harassment includes derogatory comments, jokes, or slurs. It also can include belligerent or threatening words spoken to another individual.*

*Physical harassment includes unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, and deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement.*

*Visual harassment includes derogatory, demeaning, or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings, novelties, or gestures.*

*A student who harasses another student shall be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.311 - Harassment Revised: October 14, 2015***

Harassment is defined as any unwanted and unwelcome behavior that interferes with a student's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment. Harassment includes physical, visual, verbal, and sexual forms of behavior. Students engaging in harassment or bullying may be subject to the following:

- A meeting of the parents, students, teachers, and principal
- An in-school suspension

- Expulsion (at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport)

In keeping with the diocesan policy, Saint Catherine of Siena School strives to maintain an educational environment free from all forms of harassment. Harassment will not be tolerated. Complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and in a confidential manner.

# Technology and Electronic Devices

*Technology is an essential educational tool whose use must be grounded in the values and mission of Catholic education. All users, faculty, staff, administrators, and students are expected to exhibit high standards of behavior at all times when using the Internet, email, and other technology. Technology use should recognize and support the unique Catholic mission of the school by speaking, acting, and instructing consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.*

*The use of the school's network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. The use of computer systems and the Internet at school must be in support of the educational mission and objectives of the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools. Inappropriate use may result in cancellation of those privileges. Based upon the Acceptable Use Policy guidelines in this document, as well as all applicable policies, handbooks, guidelines, and rules as determined by the school, the school administrator(s) will deem what is inappropriate use, and his/her decision is final. In addition, the school administrator(s) has/have the right to close an account at any time. The administration, faculty, and staff may request the school administrator(s) deny, revoke, or limit specific user access. Additionally, the cost of any repairs caused by inappropriate behavior will be the responsibility of the student and his/her family.*

*Transmission of any material in violation of any United States or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secrets. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited unless approved by the administration.*

*Non-academic activities on devices during school hours are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, downloading music, games, video clips, and personal material. Students may not be on websites that are unrelated to schoolwork during school hours. A violation of this rule may result in disciplinary measures determined by the school administration based on the offense.*

*Prior to being given access to the school's devices and Internet, all students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must return the signed Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy. These agreements will be completed every year.*

*Students in Grades PK-8 will use school accounts only to access Google Apps and other software applications used by the school.*

*System users at school have no right to privacy and should have no expectation of privacy in materials sent, received, or stored in school-owned devices or systems. All communications (including email) and information accessible via the network is school property. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to authorities. The technology coordinator or system administrator supervises the use of the network by students and school personnel. He/she has access to all files and email and may authorize access as necessary. Security for our computer system is a high priority. Anyone with reason to suspect a security problem on the school network must notify an appropriate school authority.*

*At school, the faculty and staff blend thoughtful use of computers and the Internet throughout the curriculum and provide guidance and instruction to students in their use. The school provides controls and filtering protection on the school's network. However, no tool is foolproof, and users may accidentally or incidentally encounter inappropriate material. If this does happen, the user must end the connection immediately and report the incident to a teacher or school administrator.*

*Outside of school, families bear responsibility for the education and monitoring of their students in Internet and computer usage. Neither the child's school nor the Diocese of Bridgeport is responsible for inappropriate materials that may appear on the Internet.*

*Each student will receive a full copy of the Diocesan Acceptable Use Policy and the Bring Your Own Device Policy (where applicable) from their school. This must be reviewed and signed by both student and parent before students use school devices and/or network.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 3.301 - Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)***
***Revised: September 1, 2019***

Technology is a valuable and real-world educational tool. School computer equipment and Internet access are for educational purposes only. Our goal is to integrate technology with the curriculum to enhance teaching and learning. Technology helps encourage critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Technology assists in the evaluation of and synthesis of information. We will assist students with digital citizenship, Internet safety, and the creation of a positive digital identity. We will also provide our students with a variety of technology-based tools and related technology skills.

At the beginning of the school year, each student will be asked to sign an Acceptable Use Policy, agreeing to abide by the school rules regarding technology and Internet usage. Failure to do so will result in the suspension of Internet privileges and disciplinary action. This includes usage during class time. No other Internet tabs may be open during class. If this occurs, the use of the technology privilege will be immediately lost for that class period.

A second form is the Acceptable and Unacceptable Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The school recognizes the benefits of AI but delineates and communicates to teachers, students, and families the acceptable uses (educational enhancement, research assistance, creative inspiration), from unacceptable ones (completion of assignments or tests with AI, data fabrication, and impersonation of any kind using

AI). Misuse of AI in academic work is considered a violation of academic integrity and will be addressed by the administration. Discipline will be decided by the administration. Each student will sign the Acceptable Use Policy for AI, which will be kept on file for the school year.

To ensure that instruction time is not disrupted, cell phones, apple watches, fitbits, and other electronic devices may not be used before dismissal and exiting the school building. If students bring these items to school, they will be collected by the homeroom teacher and placed in a designated area in the classroom until dismissal. Any violation of this policy will result in temporary confiscation of the device in question, which the principal will hold until a parent or guardian can come to the school to retrieve the item.

Personal items that can take and/or transmit electronic images cannot be used to take or transmit images while on school grounds or when students are participating in school day activities. The transmission and displaying/sharing of inappropriate images are subject to disciplinary and legal action. Students are not permitted to take pictures or recordings of other students in school.

## Privacy

*All material, including electronic mail, which is electronically stored on a school's computer, is the property of the respective school.*

*The principal/president and the superintendent or his/her designee retains the right to access, review, edit, and delete all user files and any material stored on any system.*

*Catholic school administrators have the right to monitor student use of school computers and computer-accessed content.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 3.302 - Rights of Access and Review Revised: October 14, 2015***

## Bullying and Cyberbullying

*Bullying is prohibited in all Catholic schools within the Diocese of Bridgeport.*

*Bullying is defined as the repeated use of unwanted, aggressive communication or behavior by one or more students to another student that*

● *Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;*

● *Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;*

● *Creates a hostile environment at school for such student;*

● *Infringes on the rights of such student at school; or*

● *Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.*

*Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or a physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.*

*Bullying must not be tolerated during the school day or during any school-sponsored activities on or off school grounds. Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.*

*Any behavior deemed by the school administration to be considered as bullying shall result in disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.*

*Any student who retaliated against another student for reporting bullying may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.*

*<u>Clarification of terms:</u>*

*"Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone, or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.*

*"Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing communication between two or more individuals.*

*"Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by Internet, cellular, fiber, wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic, or photo optical systems.*

*"Hostile environment" means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.*

*"Outside of the school setting" means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school.*

*"School climate" means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.310 - Bullying Revised: October 14, 2015***

This behavior is against the fundamental tenet of "love your neighbor as yourself," destroys respect for the dignity of the student, undermines the Catholic atmosphere of the school, and deprives the student of a safe and caring learning environment.

Bullying is defined as any unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. In addition, bullying behavior includes any overt acts by a student or groups of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the other students while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity where acts are repeated against the same student over time.

Students may report acts of bullying anonymously. Every anonymous report received will be investigated. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying may be subject to the consequences listed below and outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Upon learning about a bullying or harassment incident, the administrator or his/her designee shall thoroughly investigate the circumstances. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents, and school staff, reviewing school records, and identifying parent and family issues.

Bullying incidents that demand in-school/out-of-school suspension shall be reported to the respective Associate Superintendent (elementary schools) or Superintendent (high schools).

If it is concluded that an act of bullying or harassment has occurred, the parents/guardians of the student who committed such acts and the

parents/guardians of students against whom such acts were directed shall be notified. Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the result of the investigation and may include a parent conference, professional counseling, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident or the series of incidents, the administrator may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan, separating and supervising the students involved, providing staff support for students when necessary, reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate, and developing a supervision plan with the parents.

# SCHOOL COMMUNITY

## Volunteer Opportunities

Parents, guardians, and other friends and relatives of our students are invited to participate in the life of our school. There are many opportunities where parents and other family members can volunteer in support of our mission to educate children in a faith-filled learning environment. However, every adult over the age of 18 must meet specific criteria designated by the Diocese of Bridgeport before he/she may do so. The Diocese requires that all volunteers attend a Protecting God's Children seminar, read and acknowledge both the Diocesan Policy against Abuse and the Code of Conduct, and authorize a background check. Recertification is required every five years to maintain an active status in volunteering. To create an account and register for the seminar, go to www.virtusonline.org. All requirements must be met for volunteers to be in a current active status with their VIRTUS Safe Environment training in order to volunteer in school classrooms or participate in any school-sponsored event or activity with Saint Catherine of Siena students.

## Extracurricular Activities

Saint Catherine of Siena School offers its students various after school activities. After school activities are led by SCSS staff, parent volunteers, and independent program leaders. Information about after school activities will be sent out in September and throughout the school year.

## Athletic Program

The Saint Catherine of Siena Athletic Program is a school-based program that exists to ensure that the students in our school have access to Catholic Christian-based competitive athletics. Boys and girls are invited to participate in basketball, track and cross country. Volleyball is offered to girls.

Basketball is available to students in Grades 3–8. Students in Grades 5–8 may participate in Track and Cross Country. Girls in Grades 5–8 may join Volleyball.

The athletic program's leadership consists of dedicated parent volunteers and staff. Their leadership guides the students not only in athletic skill development but also in the development of good sportsmanship, leadership, and team play. Student-athletes are taught respect for their coaches and fellow athletes, the importance of cooperation, and to win and lose with grace. Student-athletes are held to academic and conduct requirements in keeping with the SCSS mission and the teaching of the Catholic Church. Additional information about the sports program can be found in the SCSS Athletic Manual. All athletic-related questions should be directed to the Athletic Director.

## After School Crusaders Club

The After school program is available Monday through Friday from 2:25 pm until 5:30 pm. The program is not held on early dismissal days. It provides a safe, structured, and fun option for after school hours. The program aims to reinforce the values of the school and enrich the lives of its students. Time is set aside for outdoor play, free play, arts and crafts, and supervised homework. Students may attend the After School Program on a regular basis or occasionally. Please see the *After School* tab found on our website, under Admissions, for additional information.

# SECURITY

## Emergency Protocols (Evacuations, Fire Drills, and Lockdowns)

There are three levels of evacuation: building, school, and campus. A building evacuation is the primary level of evacuation and the default. Building-level evacuations are rehearsed as fire drills on a monthly basis. A school evacuation is necessary when remaining near or in the building is not deemed safe. The school principal or emergency personnel will make and communicate this judgment to those affected and designate where they are to be relocated. Groups will then proceed, as directed, either to the Church Hall or the Family Center. A campus evacuation involves removing the students from the Saint Catherine of Siena Church and School grounds. The decision to evacuate the campus will be made by the principal or emergency personnel and communicated to all.

School lockdowns are rehearsed three times a year. A lockdown is necessary when there is an active threat within the walls of the school. Anyone feeling that there is an imminent threat to the safety and security of the students and staff will alert the building to go into lockdown. A lock down is necessary when there is a potential threat or incident outside the building. All students will be brought into the building from outside (gym, recess, etc.). No one will be allowed in/out of the building until all is clear and safe to do so.

## Building Security and Visitors to Campus

The school building is kept locked during the school day. Surveillance cameras are installed at each entrance to the building for security purposes. Teachers are not permitted to open the building doors to any parent or visitor. Parents or visitors must ring the bell to notify the office and wait for the office to let them into the building. For everyone's safety and accountability, parents must wait to be allowed admittance from the office. All visitors must state the purpose of their visit. They will then be asked to sign in upon entering the building, wear a visitor's badge, and may only enter through the front doors of the building. Parents who come to school to pick up a child outside of dismissal hours must notify the school office and classroom teacher before arrival and sign their children out. The children will be brought to the front door for dismissal. **All early dismissals must occur before 1:45.**

# Admissions

*Preference in admission shall be granted to practicing members of the Catholic faith as well as siblings of currently enrolled students.*

*The Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic schools may not be able to provide an appropriate education to all students with special needs due to their limited resources.*

*The age of kindergarten and Grade 1 admission shall be determined by the State of Connecticut Department of Education (Connecticut General Statutes, Sec 10-15c). Schools may not admit students who are below the age established by the State of Connecticut without approval from the Superintendent of Schools. Entrance into the pre-kindergarten program must reflect kindergarten guidelines.*

*No student shall be permitted to repeat a grade level already successfully completed without approval from the Superintendent of Schools.*

*By applying for admission to a Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic school, parent(s)/guardian(s) acknowledge and agree that they will support the school's mission and commitment to the Catholic faith.*

*Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall enter into a tuition agreement and agree to be bound by the policies and procedures of the school. The Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic schools admits qualified students of any race, color, religion, and national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ancestry, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, and scholarship and loan programs.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.100 - Admission Revised: September 1, 2021***

Families interested in joining our school community should contact the school's Manager of Enrollment to make an appointment for a school tour. Prospective students will be invited to shadow for part of the school day in our classrooms for Grades 1-8. For more details on applications and enrollment, please see the admission section of the website.

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

# Inclement Weather Closings

Saint Catherine of Siena School follows the Trumbull Public Schools for weather-related closings, delays, and early dismissals. The decision is made by the Superintendent of the Trumbull Public Schools. If you see that Trumbull Public Schools are closed or delayed, we will follow suit. For delays or closings, the town will make a decision by 5:45 am.

Please check our website and your email for information on weather-related closings. When there is a delayed opening on a scheduled half-day of school, we will cancel for the day. We will use our emergency alert text/email system to notify you if there is an unexpected delayed opening, unexpected early dismissal or closure (e.g., if bad weather occurs during the day while school is in session).

The decision for early dismissals is usually made before 11:00 am.

The emergency alert system will also be used for unusual or extraordinary changes to the schedule or alerts on other urgent school-related topics. It is tied to the phone numbers and emails you provided at registration. **The emergency alert system will not be used for expected snow delays or closings.**

## Virtual Days

The principal will give one real snow day to play outdoors and enjoy a typical old-fashioned snow day; this may not necessarily be the first day of cancellation. On other days when school is canceled for inclement weather or issues beyond our control, students will participate in a virtual day. Virtual learning days will be a combination of Zoom or Google Meet and independent work at home.

In order to be considered present, all students must log on to Google Meet or Zoom, with screens turned on, at a designated time for homeroom attendance. Afterward, they will then have work assigned to complete in their other classes.

# Dress Code/Uniforms

*The principal shall establish a uniform dress code that will promote cleanliness, health, safety, and the development of Christian values. Every effort should be made for reasonable requirements and costs. Comparable dress codes must be established for both boys and girls.*

***–Diocese of Bridgeport Policy 2.303 - Uniform Revised: September 1, 2019***

Students adopt the school dress code out of respect for the community and our common educational goals. A classmate's clothing should not cause a distraction in the classroom for peers or teachers. Our school colors and school logo are also visible indicators of our significant school pride. Students are expected to dress modestly and in a manner consistent with our Christian values that allow the focus of the day to be on academics and spiritual growth during school hours and at all school events and functions.

Saint Catherine of Siena School believes that a neat, modest, and unified appearance fosters respect for self and others, supports a focused learning environment, and reflects our Catholic identity. Students are expected to wear the uniform with respect and pride at all times. Parents are asked to check each morning that their child is in compliance and be sure all sweaters, sweatshirts, and jackets are labeled.

The dress code is designed to

- Cultivate self-respect and school pride
- Encourage consistency and collaboration between home and school

Saint Catherine of Siena School will be transitioning to a new school logo on uniforms. Students who currently have uniforms with the existing logo may continue to wear them during the transition period. However, **beginning in September 2027, all students should be fully transitioned into uniforms with the new logo.** In addition, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, boys will no longer be required to have the school logo embroidered on their white uniform shirts.

## General Expectations

- The principal has final authority on all dress code matters.
- Weather or health needs may warrant temporary exceptions at the principal's discretion.
- All clothing must be clean, properly sized, and free of rips, stains, or cuts.
- Polos and oxfords must remain tucked in throughout the school day.
- Undergarments must never be visible. Midriff, cleavage, and back must be covered whether sitting, standing, or bending.
- Clothing and accessories may not display language, slogans, or images contrary to Catholic teaching.
- Hats and hoods are not to be worn inside.
- Individual medical exceptions require a doctor's note.
- No visible tattoos.

## Modesty and Length

- The hem of all dresses, jumpers, skirts, skorts, and shorts must be no higher than 2 inches above the kneecap under all circumstances.
- Shorts and skirts may not be excessively tight.

## Hair

- Hair must be clean, neat, and of natural color.

- No dyed tips, shaved designs, mohawks, wraps, or feathers
- Boys' hair must be above the shirt collar.
- Simple barrettes, bows, or headbands that complement the uniform are allowed.

## Nails

- Nails must be short, clean, and natural in shape.
- Sheer nail polish colors are allowed; no black or dark shades.
- No acrylics, gels, or other artificial nails.

## Jewelry

- Jewelry must be minimal and nondistracting.
- Only single ear piercings for girls are allowed, with small post earrings preferred.
- No multiple, dangling, or hoop earrings.

## Footwear

- Solid, nonmarking rubber soles are required (Sperry, Merrill, Mary Jane styles suggested).
- Younger students are encouraged to wear Velcro shoes.

- Shoes must be worn properly on feet.
- Shoelaces must be tied.
- Rain/snow boots must be changed to school shoes upon arrival.
- For safety, the following are **not allowed**:
    - Heels over one inch
    - Backless slides, clogs, moccasins, or slippers
    - Work boots or shoes with lights
    - Sandals, flip-flops, or boots of any kind during the school day

## Casual (Dress-Down) Days

- No tank tops or spaghetti straps.
- Casual dresses, skirts, and shorts must be no higher than 2 inches above the kneecap .
- Shoes must follow the same rules as uniform days.
- T-shirts/sweatshirts must be appropriate and nonoffensive.
- Clothing should not be tight-fitting.
- No wearing of costumes.

## Birthdays

Students may enjoy **one dress-down day for their birthday** (or half-birthday if in summer) with teacher approval. Dress-down attire must still meet these standards and may not be scheduled on a school Mass day.

## Middle School Privileges (Grades 6–8)

- **Wednesdays:**
    - Girls may wear any socks (except on Mass days).
    - Boys may wear any tie, belt, or socks (except on Mass days).
- **8th grade:** May wear their **8th grade gym t-shirt** and **class sweatshirt** year-round in place of sweaters or fleece. However, sweatshirts are not allowed to be worn on Mass Days.

## Girls Standard Uniform

Allowed all year

### Grades K - 5

- Plaid navy & evergreen jumper – no higher than 2 inches above the kneecap
- White-collared button-down shirt – a peter-pan collar is suggested – No logo is required
- ***Optional*** *navy cardigan sweater or half-zip fleece with formal logo*
- ***Optional*** *cartwheel shorts worn under the jumper*
- ***Optional*** *full-length navy leggings worn under the jumper on* ***cold weather days, weather must be under 32 degrees***
- ***Optional*** *khaki pants*

### Grades 6 - 8

- Plaid navy & evergreen skort
- White-collared button-down shirt
- Navy V-neck sweater, vest, or half-zip fleece **must be worn every day**
- ***Optional*** *full-length navy leggings worn under the skort on* ***cold weather days, weather must be under 32 degrees***
- ***Optional*** *khaki pants*

## Girls Spring/Fall Uniform

Allowed the Monday after April break and until Tuesday after Columbus Day.

### Grades Kindergarten - Grade 8

- Navy unisex short or long-sleeved polo with formal logo on the left chest
- School-approved **plain** khaki skort - no higher than 2 inches above the kneecap
- ***Optional*** *school sweater, vest, or fleece with the formal logo on the left chest*

- ***Optional*** *khaki pants*

## Socks and Shoes for all grades with either of the above uniforms

- White knee socks for special school events – advanced notice will be given
- navy or white socks above the ankle or tights
- Plain black, brown, tan, or navy shoes, with nonmarking rubber soles

## Boys Standard Uniform

Allowed all year

### Kindergarten

- Long or short-sleeved navy polo with logo can be worn all year.
- Traditional plain khaki pants, plain or pleated front, no cargo pants

### Grades 1 - 5

- White oxford
- School-approved traditional plain khaki pants, plain or pleated front, no cargos
- Brown or black belt
- Plaid navy & evergreen clip-on tie

### Grades 6 - 8

- White oxford
- School approved traditional plain khaki pants, plain or pleated front, no cargos
- Brown or black belt
- Solid navy tie

## Boys Spring/Fall Uniform

Allowed Monday after April break and until Tuesday after Columbus Day.

### Grades Kindergarten - Grade 8

- Navy unisex short or long-sleeved polo with formal logo on the left chest
- School-approved traditional khaki walking shorts, plain or pleated front. No cargo shorts, extra buttons, or buckles
- Brown or black belt (no belt needed for kindergarten)
- Optional school sweater, vest, or fleece with formal logo can be worn

### Socks and Shoes for all grades with either of the above uniforms

- White crew socks for special school events – advanced notice will be given
- Navy, black, or white crew socks
- Plain black, brown, tan, or navy shoes, with nonmarking rubber soles

# Celebrations

## Parties and Other Social Gatherings

Please help your child to be sensitive to his or her peers' feelings about attending birthday parties and other social gatherings. All efforts should be made to be as inclusive as possible when invitations are sent to classmates. Invitations should not be brought to school unless the whole class is invited, nor is it appropriate to bring birthday gifts to the school.

## Birthdays in School

Birthdays are acknowledged each morning during announcements and posted on the school monitor weekly. Student birthdays may be acknowledged in their classrooms at the discretion of the teacher and in accordance with classroom policy. Due to allergies, food may not be brought to school for birthday celebrations. Parents may be permitted to visit the classroom for birthday celebrations at the discretion of the teacher and in accordance with classroom policy. If permitted to visit the classroom, parents must be VIRTUS trained. All students may dress down on their birthday, except on Fridays when there is Mass or during other special school events. If the birthday falls on a weekend, the student may choose to dress down on Monday. If the student has a birthday during summer vacation, the birthday will be celebrated on their half birthday.

***Canon (Church) Law governs Catholic schools. Therefore, Catholic schools have much wider latitude in developing policies and rules than their public counterparts.***

***National Catholic Education Association***

**In addition to the general policies in the Handbook, there are policies specific to individual grades, academic areas, and other areas of the school's overall program. Students and parents are responsible for reviewing and abiding by these policies.**

**While it is recognized that no handbook can cover every eventuality, we have provided an overview of the policies of Saint Catherine of Siena School. The administration reserves the right to determine additional policies should the need arise.**

# 2026 - 2027 Parent - Student Handbook Policy Agreement Form

The family and each child enrolled in St. Catherine of Siena School are bound by the policies in this Handbook. The principal and/or his/her designees have the right to amend and update the Handbook as needed throughout the year.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the *Saint Catherine of Siena School Parent-Student Handbook*. I understand that the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the handbook are designed to promote a safe, respectful, and faith-centered learning environment. I have reviewed the handbook with my child(ren), and we have discussed its contents together.

As a parent/guardian, I agree to support the school in upholding these expectations. I also understand that the administration has the discretion to make decisions in the best interest of the school community, including in situations not explicitly addressed in the handbook.

***This form must be signed and returned to the school by October 2, 2026***

Student Name(s) and Grade(s):

_____ _____

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Signature(s) (Grades 2 and up):

_____ _____

_____ _____

Date: _____