



# 2024-2025

## PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

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St. Francis Catholic School

45 Beach City Rd

Hilton Head Island, SC 29926

Phone: 843-681-6501

FAX: 843-689-3725

<http://www.sfcshhi.com>

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to St. Francis Catholic School! In choosing St. Francis, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of St. Francis for the 2024-2025 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of St. Francis Catholic School during the 2024-2025 school year.

The faculty and staff of St. Francis look forward to working with you in nurturing your child(ren)'s spiritual and intellectual growth in an authentically Catholic community committed to academic excellence.

Let us commit to praying together, that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

Sincerely in Christ,

Andrea Smith, M.Ed, LPC, NCC  
Principal

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# FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

## TAG LINE

28 Years of Growing Together in Faith and Knowledge

## MISSION STATEMENT

To nurture students' spiritual and intellectual growth in an authentically Catholic community committed to academic excellence.

## VALUES

We value faith formation.

We value quality academics.

We value community.

We value a nurturing and disciplined environment.

We value a variety of opportunities and enrichment activities for our students.

## OBJECTIVES

In order to implement our mission statement, we strive:

- 1) To help children grow and mature in their faith-life through participation in the sacramental life of the Church.
- 2) To teach authentic Catholic doctrine in accordance with the Magisterium of the Church.
- 3) To provide each student with a solid academic background, using the best available teaching methods, materials, and technology.
- 4) To encourage each student to become self-disciplined through a consistent, fair, and structured environment.
- 5) To help each child to develop intellectually in order to meet the demands of society and to make valid choices based on truth.
- 6) To instill in each child a concern and awareness for the oppressed and needy, motivating him/her to action and service.

Our hope is that every graduate of St. Francis Catholic School is a person of

**FAITH, INTEGRITY, and SCHOLARSHIP**

## GRADUATE PROFILE

**S – Success** - An individual who strives to reach his or her full spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical potential while understanding his or her strengths and limitations.

**F – Faith** – An individual who understands the principles of Catholic moral and social teaching while participating in the sacraments.

**C – Commitment** – An individual who appreciates his or her God-given talents and positively contributes to his or her community.

**S – Service** – An individual who has a sense of compassion for those in need and actively participates in bettering his or her community through service work or projects.

## **ALMA MATER**

Sing a song of thanks and honor,  
for the school we hold so dear,  
For our parents, teachers, mentors,  
who by faith have brought us here.

May we always, with thanksgiving in  
our souls the Lord to rule,  
And let our hearts be ever grateful,  
God gave us St. Francis School.

## **HISTORY**

### **The Early Years**

In 1996, SFCS opened with two grades: Pre-K and Kindergarten. Initial enrollment was 45 students. The School was located in what is now the Family Center, having been completed a year earlier.

The School initially was scheduled to open on September 9<sup>th</sup> but due to Hurricane Bertha and an evacuation of Hilton Head Island, classes actually began a few days later.

The seeds of SFCS were planted when then Bishop of Charleston, Bishop David Thompson, asked a priest who had started a Catholic School in Beaufort (St. Peter's) to establish the first Catholic School on Hilton Head due to its expanding population. That priest was Father, now Monsignor, Martin Laughlin. The Pastor at that time was Father Michael McCafferty.

In 1997, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades were added, virtually doubling enrollment to 95 students. More space was needed to add more grades. Thus, a new school building was constructed, opening in 1998, at which time 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades were added. The following year, 6<sup>th</sup> grade was added, the year after that the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and finally in the 2001 school year, the first class of 8<sup>th</sup> graders began classes.

These years were most fortunate to have the leadership of Kay Sutcliffe, and then Mary Fallon as the school's first and second principals. The former provided tremendous professional direction in the school's earliest years. The latter brought inspiration and encouragement leading to the school's growth and expansion. In honor of St. Francis of Assisi's love of animals, The "Wolves" (named after the Wolf of Gubbio that terrorized that Umbrian city until St. Francis took the wolf in and tamed it so as to act on behalf of God) were on their way.

## **The Middle Years**

The highlight of this period in SFCS's history was the addition of the Gym/All-Purpose Building and the Fine Arts Center. This came about in 2008, having a huge and positive impact on the school and its students.

Athletics expanded and additional sports were added to the roster. More significantly, SFCS became a host for various sports contests. This led to greater exposure and appreciation of SFCS by others. The building also has come to serve as a facility for a range of other events such as lectures, galas, musical performances, plays, and a venue used for Mass. Overall, the building has dramatically enhanced the general appeal of SFCS and contributed to the school attracting additional students.

The Fine Arts Center added a different and equally important dimension to SFCS. Known as the Polhamus Building, this additional amenity has provided a dedicated space for expanding students' cultural awareness. They have discovered new aspects of life and a deeper understanding of their respective talents. High ceilings and skylights are conducive to creating art, backdrops for school musicals are designed here, and the music room is full of instruments to learn.

Another notable highlight of the middle years was the addition of Dominican Sisters to the faculty for a few years. Under the tutelage of then Principal Mike Rockers, the Sisters came here from Ann Arbor, MI in 2006, first three of them and then four the following year. Subjects they taught included science and religion, complementing lay faculty for five years as the staff grew.

More recently, in 2018, the long-standing need for a new playground was met. The original playground's equipment had become dilapidated, and the ground worn down. New equipment and artificial turf were installed. Better security fencing was put in place. More activities and separation between the younger and older classes have resulted.

## **SFCS Today**

As we celebrate our 28th Anniversary, our leadership team is strong. Principal Andrea Smith, M.Ed, LPC, NCC and Assistant Principal Lisa Kessinger will guide our school.

We have over 200 students who are supported by two dozen faculty and staff. Numerous extra-curricular activities, clubs, and service projects are an integral part of the school. We are excited for our second year of clubs, the House System, and the new Leadership Academy for the Middle School.

A particular point of pride is how SFCS coped with the Covid-19 pandemic. The school greatly upgraded its technology infrastructure with high-speed internet throughout the entire campus, has increased the amount of one-to-one devices in the school, and successfully offered a blended learning atmosphere. Improvements in sanitation efforts and air filtration were also made throughout the entire campus. All of this has been done

with the on-going priority of ensuring a safe, organized, well-structured, healthy environment for all concerned.

“A variety of opportunities and enrichment activities” has been cited as one of the school’s values. Representative examples are: Beta Club, Science Fair, Book Club, Baking Club, and a range of sports including Cross-Country, Equestrian, Volleyball, Basketball, Baseball, Soccer and Golf. Exploring additional interests is integral to life at SFCS.

### **Partners Through the Years**

A hallmark trait of SFCS has been widespread participation by many parties committed to the school’s success.

Most prominent has been the FSA (Family School Association), whose motto is “Embracing our children’s future through Faith, Fellowship and Fundraising”.

Their most prominent activity has been the Annual Gala, which has been going on since the school’s very first academic year. Throughout the school year, they organize and conduct numerous other events as well. Widespread parental involvement throughout the years has been one of SFCS’s greatest blessings, and a true differentiator.

Other organizations contributing to SFCS, often in the way of scholarship monies, include the Women of St. Francis, the Knights of Columbus, and the St. Francis Thrift Shop.

Another volunteer organization assisting SFCS is SAC (School Advisory Committee). It consists of numerous subcommittees devoted to enhancing critical aspects of the school to optimize success. Among these subcommittees are Finance, Technology, Enrollment, Facilities, Safety, Catholic Identity, and Development.

There are many other partners through the years for which SFCS is most grateful.

### **The Next 25 Years**

Our goal is to perpetuate the extraordinary spirit and accomplishments of SFCS for the next 25 years, and beyond. We will continue to inculcate our students with a sound moral foundation, strive for academic excellence, and foster respect for others. Our hope is every graduate is a person of faith, integrity and scholarship.

With exceptional attention from our remarkably dedicated faculty and outstanding commitment from students’ parents, we are confident the next 25 years will be even more successful.

Critical, also, will be financial support. Thus, we invite participation in the SFCS Endowment Fund and Planned Giving Programs.



## FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

### ADMINISTRATION

Pastor St. Francis by the Sea: .....	Rev. Michael J. Oenbrink
Parochial Vicar: .....	Rev. Ray Nacino
Pastor Holy Family: .....	Rev. Christopher Loester
Principal: .....	Andrea Smith
Assistant Principal: .....	Lisa Kessinger
Office Manager: .....	Jennifer Kelly
Office Assistant/Campus Health Coordinator .....	Megan Drescher
Maintenance: .....	Dave Klub
Extended Care Director: .....	Betty Fick
Extended Care Assistant: .....	Barbara Gloven

### FACULTY AND STAFF

Pre-Kindergarten (PK-4): .....	Kelley Burke
PK-4 Teacher Assistant: .....	Jillian Gloven
Kindergarten Teacher: .....	Tara Anderson
Kindergarten Teacher Assistant: .....	Ashley Byrd
1st Grade Teacher: .....	Diane Wolfkiel
1st Grade Teacher Assistant: .....	Lesley Witkowski
2nd Grade Teacher: .....	Karlya Gaherty
2nd Grade Teacher Assistant: .....	Natalie Schoeppe
3rd Grade Teacher: .....	Lee Nickles
4th Grade Teacher: .....	Kris Watson
5th Grade Teacher: .....	Lesley Brewster
Middle School English: .....	Lisa Kessinger
Middle School Social Studies: .....	Michael Adair
Middle School Science: .....	Marilyn Gagliardo
Middle School Math: .....	Susan Hudgins
Middle School Religion: .....	Amanda Keefer
Fine Arts: .....	Lisa Sweeney
Spanish Teacher: .....	Adriana Curry
Media Science: .....	Amanda Keefer
Physical Education Teacher: .....	Erica Kristan

SFCS does not hire provisional or temporary employees that are not fully background screened through the Diocese of Charleston.

#### School Office Hours

Monday through Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

## **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)**

Rev. Michael J. Oenbrink.....	Pastor
Rev. Christopher Loester.....	Pastor, Holy Family
Andrea Smith.....	Principal
Connie Killeen.....	Facilitator
Alan Wolf.....	Member
Bob Gregory.....	Member
Jim Platt.....	Member
Eleanor Bell.....	Member
Lois McCue.....	Member
Thom Hill.....	Member
Don Creamer.....	Member
Mandy White.....	Member
Bertha Camposano.....	Member

The SFCS School Advisory Council enables representatives of the school community to work cooperatively with school administrators in the affairs of Catholic education as advocated in several declarations of the Second Vatican Council, and supported in numerous articles of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The purpose of the Council is to advise the administration and to promote effective programs of religious, intellectual, cultural, social and physical education for the students of St. Francis Catholic School. The Council is not responsible for administration or the details of administration.

The function of the Council is:

- 1) To promote the Mission of the school and that of Catholic education to the St. Francis Catholic School community and the Hilton Head Island area.
- 2) To develop, define, and recommend policy to the administration for the Pastor's approval.
- 3) To create and recommend a long-range plan to the administration for the Pastor's approval.

## **FAMILY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (FSA)**

Laura Clare.....	Co-Chairperson
Jarren Kostrzewski.....	Co-Chairperson

The primary purpose of the FSA is to support the ongoing mission of Saint Francis Catholic School. Through coordinating, directing, and participating in the St. Francis Catholic School activities, social functions and fundraisers, the FSA will promote open communication among all segments of the St. Francis School family, affirm and support relationships in our school community, provide opportunities for family faith development, and provide financial assistance to the school. The FSA is a forum for exchanging thoughts, expressing ideas and sharing experiences. Parents pay a yearly membership amount of \$100.00. Parents are asked to attend the FSA meetings and participate in FSA sponsored events.

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

St. Francis Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of any race, religion, color, sex, national origin, or disability in administration of educational policies, admission policies of local programs, athletics, and school administered programs.

### **APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION PROCEDURE**

- 1) Application for Admission: Applications must be completed in full and submitted to the school office.
- 2) Application Fee: An Application Fee of \$100.00 per child is due when the application is submitted. This fee covers administrative costs, is non-refundable and does not, in the case of acceptance, apply toward tuition.
- 3) Records Transfer Request Form: A Records Transfer Request Form must be signed by a Parent/Guardian for any student applying for grades one through eight. This form will be faxed to the school that the student was previously enrolled in.
- 4) Parish Verification Form: To be eligible for the "Parishioner Rate" the parent(s) of the student(s) must be *active* parishioners of St. Francis by the Sea and/or Holy Family Catholic Church. The active parishioner status will be verified with a completed Parish Verification Form at the time of initial acceptance.
- 5) Birth Certificate: A copy of the child's birth certificate must be provided.
- 6) Baptism Certificate: (Catholic Only) A copy of a Baptism Certificate is required. Please inform the School Office if your child was baptized at St. Francis by the Sea Catholic Church.
- 7) Immunization Record: The most current copy of your child's South Carolina Immunization Certificate must be provided. Religious Exemptions are not accepted for admittance to schools in the Diocese of Charleston.
- 8) Visit/ Tour: All prospective families are encouraged to tour the school and/or attend one of our admission activities.
- 9) Meet & Greet with the principal: Parents and students requesting a transfer to SFCS are required to have a meeting with the principal.
- 10) Academic Screening: A brief screening play-session will be scheduled to students applying for the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten program. An academic screening will be scheduled for students applying for 1st through 8th Grade.
- 11) Financial Aid: Applications for Financial Aid are handled separately from Applications for Admission. Financial Aid is available only to the children of active parishioners of St. Francis by the Sea Catholic Church or Holy Family Catholic Church. Children must be accepted to SFCS in order to apply for Financial Aid.
- 12) Divorced or Separated Parents: Divorced or separated parents must provide a copy of the custody section of the divorce decree with the school office. The school must have a copy of any court order involving a school child in matters of custody and contact.

## **2025 – 2026 ENROLLMENT**

Re-enrollment Packets with the tuition rates for the 2025 - 2026 school year will be sent to the parents of present students and their siblings on or before January 5, 2025. These forms, including the \$500.00 Re-Enrollment Fee per child and \$100.00 FSA dues per family are to be returned to the school office no later than January 31, 2025, for priority re-enrollment. All fees are nonrefundable at point of payment. Beginning February 3, 2025, open enrollment will begin with students from families new to St. Francis Catholic School being accepted for the 2025-2026 school year. The regular Admission Priority described underneath the Admission Policy will be followed for all students once the Open Registration period begins.

## **OPEN REGISTRATION SCHEDULE**

Open Registration for the 2025-2026 School Year will begin on **February 3, 2025**. Applications for the 2025-2026 school year may be submitted before that date but tuition rates and other school policies may change from the time the application is submitted and when the Open Registration period begins. Students new to St. Francis Catholic School will not be accepted until the Open Registration period begins and the Re-Enrollment period for returning families has concluded.

## **ADMISSIONS SELECTION PROCEDURES**

Students registering for Pre-Kindergarten (K4) must be 4 years old by September 1st of the school year for which they are registering. Students registering for Kindergarten must be 5 years old by September 1st of the school year for which they are registering. For grades 1 through 8, students will be eligible for consideration for admission based on proof of successful completion of the previous grade. Eligible students will be selected and placed in the school based on the maximum capacity of students in each class as set by the principal and according to the following categories in order of preference:

1. Current students of SFCS.
2. Siblings of current students.
3. Children of current school/parish employees.
4. Catholic children of active parishioners who are siblings of a graduate of SFCS.
5. Catholic children of active parishioners.
6. Catholic children of non-active parishioners who are siblings of a graduate of SFCS.
7. Catholic children of non-active parishioners.
8. Non-parishioner Catholic children.
9. Non-Catholic children.

Within categories numbered 1 through 3 above, priority will be given according to the date on the student's Application for Admission

Within categories numbered 4 through 5 above, priority will be given according to the date on the student's Application for Admission.

Within categories numbered 6 through 9 above, priority will be given according to the date on the student's Application for Admission.

## **ACCEPTANCE**

Students from families that are new to SFCS must pay the \$500.00 Registration Fee per child and \$100.00 FSA dues per family within two weeks from the official date of acceptance. The official date of acceptance is the date recorded on a student's official acceptance letter.

## **WAITLIST**

Students not selected for admission to SFCS will automatically be placed on a wait list. If an opening becomes available, students on the wait list will be given priority for those openings in the same order of preference as detailed above. The wait list will exist from year-to-year only, and the wait list for each school year shall be established after the selection process for the upcoming school year has ended and shall terminate when that school year ends.

## **TRANSFER AND NEW STUDENTS**

The principal will be especially sensitive to the effects a new student may have on the culture and climate of each class. Students who wish to transfer into the school from other area schools will not be accepted unless they are able to make a positive contribution socially and academically to their specific grade and the school as a whole. Therefore, a student expelled from another private or public school may not be considered for enrollment until one year after the expulsion date and then only at the discretion of the principal in consultation with the Pastor. Students will not be accepted to SFCS for the current school year after the Open Enrollment Period for the next school year begins. Exceptions to this policy will only be granted for an extenuating circumstance that has been approved by the principal or pastor.

All new students will be given a trial period of one semester (two quarters) in which to prove himself/herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period there are any disciplinary or academic problems, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at St. Francis Catholic School. The recommendation and decision of the school is final. St. Francis Catholic School is limited in its human capital resources and will make reasonable accommodations for learning differences when possible.

## **NON-CATHOLIC STUDENTS**

Non-Catholic students whose parents accept the mission, vision and objectives of St. Francis Catholic School will be accepted on a space available basis. Non-Catholic students are expected to attend all religious observances and be respectful of Catholic teaching, rituals, and tradition.

## **ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS**

St. Francis Catholic School strives to accommodate students with physical, emotional, social, or learning challenges. However, families must fully disclose the nature and known extent of such challenges at the time of registration. SFCS has limited resources to meet certain challenges and may recommend educational alternatives that may better serve the needs of some students. It is always a top priority at St. Francis Catholic School for all students to be successful. If after admission, the educational and/or behavioral needs of a student exceed what would be considered reasonable, the student may need to be separated from St. Francis Catholic School. This decision will be made in order for the student's educational and/or behavioral needs to be

fully met in another educational setting. If the decision to separate the student from St. Francis Catholic School is made by the school, the student's tuition due would be prorated.

## **FEES**

Fees for each student in Grade Pre-Kindergarten (PK-4) through Grade 8:

Application Fee	\$100.00 per child
Registration Fee	\$500.00 per child
FSA Dues	\$100.00 per family
Technology Fee	\$100.00 Middle School students only

Application fees, Registration fees and FSA dues are non – refundable at point of payment.  
Registration fees must be paid within two weeks of dated letter of acceptance.

## **TUITION – GENERAL**

Inability to pay full tuition is never a reason in and of itself to keep a child from St. Francis by the Sea Parish from attending St. Francis Catholic School. Need-based tuition assistance is available to active parishioners of St. Francis by the Sea Catholic Church. The process for receiving tuition aid is explained in full under Financial Aid.

If a family does not apply for tuition aid, they are expected to pay full tuition. If a parent knows they will be late in providing tuition, they should contact the Parish Administrator to inform them of such. Parents who are more than 30 days in arrears may be sent a certified letter informing them of that fact.

Students attending St. Francis Catholic School from families who have unpaid tuition bills, including fees, of more than 60 days may be barred from further attendance at St. Francis Catholic School and/or may not participate in any extracurricular activity including but not limited to sports, clubs, field trips, etc. A child's dismissal from school is viewed as a grave consequence and is only done after there is evidence that the parents have decided not to pay tuition on time, have decided not to work with the parish administration in making other arrangements, and have been notified of the consequence of such decisions. A child will be dismissed from school due to unpaid tuition, including fees, only after the pastor gives final authorization to do so. In the event that the parish refers a tuition bill for collection, the cost of the collection will be billed to the parent/responsible party and must be paid in full to return that family to "good standing." The school will not mail, email, fax report cards or permanent records for families who have unpaid tuition and/or fees. Records will be available to be picked up from the Parish Office in person from the individual who is listed as responsible for tuition payments in the student application for admission.

## **PAYMENT OPTIONS**

FACTS Management Company coordinates all tuition and incidental payments. Tuition plans and payments must be established through FACTS Tuition Management by the parent. The following are the two payment plans that are available and listed in FACTS:

- Payments ending in May (10 equal payments).
- Payment in full by August 20<sup>th</sup>

## **STATE OR CITY ORDERED SCHOOL CLOSURES**

If school is closed due to weather or a public health concern, parents/guardians will still be responsible for payment of tuition. The education of each student will continue with virtual/remote/e-learning. Teachers will continue to plan standards-based lessons and evaluate student work. Report cards will be distributed at the end of each grading period. If a parent/guardian cannot make the regular tuition payment, the principal should be notified as soon as possible to create a payment plan.

## **ACTIVE PARISH MEMBERSHIP**

Active Parish Membership is determined by four criteria:

- (1) Being properly registered in St. Francis by the Sea the Parish or Holy Family Roman Catholic Church for at least six months. If moving from another parish a letter from that parish needs to be provided by the pastor confirming active membership.
- (2) Faithful attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.
- (3) The student applying is up to date on his or her sacramental preparation or actively working towards it. The Religious Education Office that is assisting the student in his or her preparation may need to be contacted for verification.
- (4) Being active in at least one parish or school program, ministry, or organization.

Active Parish Membership is determined at the time of initial registration and may be determined on an annual basis with re-registration. Active Parish Membership will be confirmed by the Pastor's signature on the Parish Verification Form. A copy of the Parish Verification Form is distributed with the registration and possibly with re-registration. The Pastor is the final authority when determining Active Parishioner Status.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

Need-based tuition assistance for St. Francis Catholic School is available to the children of active parishioners of St. Francis by the Sea Catholic Church and Holy Family Catholic Church. Financial Aid is available for children of non-active parishioners, but the amount awarded will be no greater than the tuition rate of an active parishioner. Parents must apply for Financial Aid through FACTS by May 1st of each year.

## **MULTI-CHILD DISCOUNT**

Parents of multiple children are eligible to select the Multi-child Discount. The 3rd child's tuition will receive a 25% discount based upon their parishioner status. All children after the 3rd will receive a 75% tuition reduction. Parents will still be responsible for all fees and charges for special services (i.e., Extended Care). All children must be currently enrolled in St. Francis Catholic School at the same time to receive the Multi Child Discount. Parents may select to not receive the Multi Child Discount and apply for Financial Aid.

## **CASH PAYMENTS**

No cash payment (currency and/or coin) over \$50.00 can be sent to the school office via a child. Any cash payment of over \$50.00 must be brought to the office by a parent or guardian who will wait for issuance of a cash receipt from the office staff.

## **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Families must notify the school in writing if a student is withdrawn from the school. If a student withdraws from St. Francis Catholic School at the family's request during the first semester, and payments are monthly, families are liable for tuition through the month of December. If a student withdraws from the school at the family's request during the first semester and payment has been made in full, a refund for tuition only covering January through May will be refunded. To be eligible for a refund in January, parents must notify the Principal in writing by December 15, 2024 that the student will be withdrawing. If at any time during the school year a student is expelled, a student's admission is revoked, or the student withdraws voluntarily or involuntarily due to disciplinary action, tuition and fees will not be refunded. Families on monthly payment plans are still liable for any unpaid tuition and fees. The school will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance.

## **IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

Pupils in grades Prekindergarten through 8, unless otherwise exempted, must be immunized against certain diseases by type of vaccine and number of required doses. The pupil submits written evidence that he/she meets or exceeds the minimum immunization requirements, on the official South Carolina Immunization Form within 30 calendar days of enrollment.

No student at the time of his/her initial entry or at the beginning of each school year shall be permitted to remain in school for more than 30 calendar days unless he/she presents written evidence that he/she has been immunized or is in the process of compliance; or he/she presents a physician's statement that immunization may be detrimental to the student's health. Upon termination of 30 calendar days or the extended period, the principal shall not permit the student to attend school unless he/she has submitted the official and current South Carolina immunization form duly authorized. Immunization records are open to inspection by the local health department and/or DHEC representative.

If more time than 30 calendar days is needed to receive the required vaccines at medically approved intervals, a physician or local health department must provide a written documentation attesting to this need and stating the clinic appointment dates when remaining doses will be administered on the appropriate form.

Students previously admitted under the "in process of being immunized" provision or a student, who has not presented a written statement by his /her physician, shall be excluded from school on the 30th day. Any student excluded shall be readmitted upon written evidence of compliance. Religious Exemptions are not accepted for admittance to schools in the Diocese of Charleston. In the case of a school epidemic situation, the CSO should be notified prior to excluding those students who have not been vaccinated against the epidemic cause. These students should be excluded for a two-week period after the last reported case in the school or surrounding area. SFCS will enforce all public health epidemic regulations, especially local, county, or state regulations regarding exclusion.

SFCS must follow the directives of the local health departments regarding screening where the incidence of disease or other epidemiologic information indicates that it is necessary. SFCS is



required to remain updated on, and comply with, any changes in the South Carolina Immunization Requirements for students in their school's grade configuration.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

### **REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

The school term at St. Francis is divided into four marking periods. Report Cards are issued at the end of each quarter. Progress Reports are provided at the mid-point of each quarter for students in grade 3 through 8 with an average of 77% or lower in any subject.

### **CODES FOR MARKING**

Grades Prekindergarten through 1st

M	=	Meeting grade-level expectations
P	=	Progressing toward grade-level expectations
S	=	Progressing with support toward grade-level expectations
N	=	Not meeting grade-level expectations at this time
X	=	Not assessed at this time

Grades 2 through 8

A+	=	98 – 100	C+	=	80 - 82
A	=	95 – 97	C	=	77 - 79
A-	=	92 - 94	C-	=	74 - 76
B+	=	89 - 91	D	=	70 - 73
B	=	86 – 88	F	=	Below 70
B-	=	83 - 85			

### **BEHAVIOR SUB-HEADING FOR EACH SUBJECT**

- 1 – Outstanding
- 2 – Good
- 3 – Capable of Better Effort
- 4 – Serious Lack of Effort
- X - Indicates the need for improvement

### **HONOR ROLL**

Honor Roll Awards will be provided at the end of each quarter. Grades for enrichment classes must be “A” or a “B”. Grades for core curriculum areas must average the following to qualify for honor roll awards:

- Principal's Honors - 97% - 100%
- Honors - 92% to 96%
- Merit Awards - 86% to 91%

### **PROMOTION & RETENTION**

Advancement to the next grade in St. Francis Catholic School is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level.

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

Children may be retained in a grade if the child has not adequately completed the grade work (has failed 2 or more major subjects for the year), has accrued 10 or more unexcused absences, or for developmental concerns. The principal, in consultation with the student's teacher, will be the final authority in determining retention. Students may also be promoted to the next grade.

### **ACADEMIC PROBATION**

A student is placed on Academic Probation if he or she has a failing grade (F or less than 70%) on their latest academic report (Progress Report or Report Card) and/or has earned lower than a B in any enrichment class. The principal is the final authority when it comes to placing a student on Academic Probation and/or determining a student's probationary status. A student placed on Academic Probation will meet with the principal to discuss the reasons for the failing grade. Academic Probation is one, two week (10 school days) period during which a student works to improve his or her grade(s).

During the two week probationary period the student is able to fully participate with all athletic and non-athletic extracurricular activities (clubs, class field trips, assemblies, field days etc.) At the end of the two week probationary period, if the student is passing all subjects, then he or she will no longer be on academic probation. In the event that the student does not increase his or her grade to a passing level after the first probationary period, then he or she will serve another two week probationary period.

During the second two week probationary period the student may not participate in any athletic and non-athletic extracurricular activity (clubs, class field trips, assemblies, field days etc.). If at the end of the two week probationary the student is passing all subjects, then he or she will no longer be on academic probation and may fully participate with any athletic or non-athletic extracurricular activity (club, field trip, assembly, field day etc.)

In the event that the student did not reach a passing level after the second probationary two-week period then he or she may not participate in any athletic or non-athletic extracurricular activity (clubs, class field trips, assemblies, field days etc.) until the next quarterly report card lists a passing grade for each subject.

The principal has the right to waive a probationary status or make an exception for a specific activity, especially if it serves an academic purpose.

### **HOMEWORK**

It is the policy of St. Francis Catholic School to give homework. The purpose of homework is to foster habits of independent work-study and to reinforce learning that has taken place in school. It is the student's responsibility to keep an account of homework.

Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted.

Suggested time allotments are:

PK-K	As teacher decides.
Grades 1 and 2	20 minutes/day
Grades 3 – 5	30 minutes/day
Grades 6 – 8	Varies due to class levels and course curriculum requirements.

If homework assignments cannot be completed because of sickness or serious circumstances in the home, a written explanation from the parent is required for the student to be eligible to receive full credit for late homework assignments. Technology related excuses such as “my printer broke” are not acceptable. Students will receive an equal amount of days to do homework for each day out due to an excused absence. However, long-term assignments assigned prior to an absence due to a trip or vacation may be required to be turned into their teacher on or before the assignment due date. Teachers are not required to give work in advance of a pre-planned vacation. However, if work is given in advance, the expectation is that student(s) return to school with work completed on their first day back.

## **PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent/Teacher conferences will be scheduled at the conclusion of the first quarter. Dates are on the school calendar. These conferences are an integral part of providing a quality education for your child and your attendance is expected at the appointed time. Out of respect for your child and his/her teacher(s), please do not schedule vacations during parent/ teacher conference dates. Conferences can be scheduled individually with the teacher at other times throughout the year. Such conferences should be scheduled directly between the teacher and parent.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

Students will take the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessments in Kindergarten through 8th Grade. Testing occurs over a two-week period three times a year (fall, winter, and spring). Please check the school calendar for dates.

The Diocese of Charleston currently utilizes the Assessment of Religious Knowledge (ARK) test in the subject area of religion. ARK is to be administered annually to all students in grades 2-8 within the window defined by the Catholic Schools Office.

Please avoid scheduling vacations during testing weeks. Students who are out sick during testing will have an opportunity to make up an assessment if they return to school during the testing window

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are designed to stimulate students’ interest and provide an effective means to accomplish school’s objectives. To be educationally beneficial, a field trip requires advanced preparation of the class and opportunities for children to assimilate the experience during and at the conclusion of the field trip.

Any student going on a class trip must have an official school Field Trip/Activity Permission form signed by a parent. A telephone call in lieu of the signed permission form is unacceptable. Children on field trips must be adequately supervised. Field trips will be canceled if there are an insufficient number of chaperones. Non-SFCS students siblings and/or siblings in other grades that are SFCS students are not allowed on field trips. A student's attendance at a field trip may be refused for any reason deemed appropriate by the principal.

Parents, please be aware that you can be held personally liable in the event of an accident or injury while on a field trip. Parent volunteer drivers must have been cleared to drive children with the completed volunteer background screening.

## **CHALLENGING MATERIALS**

Faculty, staff, and parents have a right to challenge the selection of books and other materials. The principal shall review the challenge in the first instance. The faculty member, staff member or parent may appeal this initial decision. This appeal must be in writing to the pastor and copied to the School Advisory Council facilitator. The appeal must include a statement of why the material is inappropriate and what action the challenger requests. At the next School Advisory Council meeting after the challenge has been received, the challenge will be discussed by the council and a recommendation to the pastor will be made by the council. Notification will be made to the challenger by the pastor and will include acknowledgement of the challenge and the decision that was enacted by the pastor. Challenged materials will remain available until final decision by the pastor is made.

## **SERVICE HOURS**

All students in grades 6 through 8 grades are required to complete a minimum of 10 service hours per school year. Required classroom service projects and other group service projects required by a school club or activity will not be counted toward the 10 service hour requirement. Service hour logs are available in the School Office and need to be turned into the School Office once 10 hours have been accrued by the student on or before the first Friday of May that school is in session. Students in Beta Club are required to complete additional hours as designated by the organization.

## **MATH PLACEMENT IN 7<sup>TH</sup> AND 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

### **Grade 7**

At the end of Grade 6 students will be placed in 7th Grade Accelerated Pre-Algebra, if the following criteria have been met:

- 1) Final average of at least 92% in 6th Grade Math.
- 2) Students should achieve a RIT Score of 230 or above on their 6th Grade Spring MAP Assessment.
- 3) Recommendation from teacher indicating the student has demonstrated a strong work ethic, consistently completed homework, and displays the ability to master Algebra course material.

Students not eligible to take 7th Grade Accelerated Pre - Algebra according to the criteria outlined above will be placed in grade level Pre - Algebra I.

## Grade 8

At the end of Grade 7, students in 7th Grade Accelerated Pre-Algebra will be eligible to take 8th Grade Honors Algebra I if the following criteria have been met:

- 1) Final average of at least 92% in 7th Grade Accelerated Pre-Algebra.
- 2) Students should achieve a RIT Score of 235 or above on their 7th Grade Spring MAP Assessment.
- 3) Recommendation from teacher indicating the student has demonstrated a strong work ethic, consistently completed homework, and displays the ability to master Algebra course material.

Upon meeting the criteria listed above, students will be placed in 8th Grade Honors Algebra I in their 8th grade year. This placement is probationary and contingent upon ongoing acceptable performance in the 8th Grade Honors Algebra I class. This is a high school level course taken for high school credit. This course brings with it an elevated expectation of time and effort.

Students not eligible to take 8th Grade Honors Algebra I according to the criteria outlined above will be placed in grade level Pre-Algebra II.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Students participating in any SFCS extra-curricular activity (athletic team, club, special activity) must be in good standing according to the school policies regarding academic expectations and student behavior. Please refer to the policies of Academic and Disciplinary Probation in this handbook.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION AND REGULATIONS**

School Opens.....	7:30 AM
First Bell.....	7:55 AM
Tardy Bell.....	8:00 AM
Morning Announcements.....	8:00 AM
Dismissal Pre-K – K.....	2:40 – 2:55 PM
Dismissal 1st & 2nd Grade.....	3:00 – 3:10 PM
Dismissal 3rd – 8th Grade.....	3:00 – 3:15PM
Extended Care Dismissal.....	5:30PM

**Students who are not picked up by the end of their dismissal time will be sent to Extended Care and there will be a charge for a day of Extended Care.**

## **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

When a student is absent from school, a parent should call the office by 9:30 AM each day of the absence. If the office does not receive a call, a parent will be contacted. This policy is for the protection of the SFCS students and is aligned with the state statutes of the state of South Carolina.

Students must be fever-free and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever will not be allowed to return to school the

next day as this would not allow for the 24 hour protection of the entire school community.  
Students must be fever-free without the help of a fever reducing medication.

A written statement giving reasons for the absence must be brought to the school office upon the student's return. These notes/letters will be retained in the office for one year. Should absence for any reason other than illness seem imperative, parents are requested to consult with the principal and present a written reason for the absence.

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Please do not schedule vacations during the academic year as it disrupts the student's learning.

Students who are absent have one day for each day of absence to make up the missed assignments, quizzes or tests. For example, a student who was absent three days would be given three school days to complete the missed work.

When a student is absent a parent may call the school office after 9:30 AM to arrange homework assignments. Homework assignments may be picked up at the school office between 3:00 PM – 3:30 PM. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school.

Arrangements for regular classroom tests missed because of an absence are to be made with the individual teachers. These tests must be taken within one week of the original test date. Due to the educational advantage of returning graded tests to students in a timely manner, some missed tests may not be made up.

Excessive absences, 10 unexcused or unlawful days absent, can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year. Any absences over 10, the student and parent(s) will be required to meet with the principal to discuss absences. The student may be required to attend Summer School. This is a Diocesan Policy. The academic performance of a student who has accumulated 10 or more days of unexcused absence is to be reviewed to determine if the student is ready for the academic work of the next grade. The principal, in consultation of the child's teacher, will be the final authority in deciding retention.

Lawful (excused) Absences are defined as:

- 1) Students who are ill and whose attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others may be temporarily excused.
- 2) Students in whose immediate family there is a serious illness or death.
- 3) Students may be excused for recognized religious holidays of their faith.
- 4) Students may be excused for a family obligation approved by the principal.

Unlawful (unexcused) Absences are defined as:

- 1) Students who are willfully absent from school without the knowledge of their parents/guardians.
- 2) Students who are absent from school without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parents/guardians. If a cause of absence is deemed to be unacceptable by the administration, then the parent will be notified of such.

## **ABSENCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

Students needing medical appointments during school hours require a written note by the parent. If the child returns to school during the same school day, he/she must be signed back into school in the office. Students who are away from school for an appointment for 3 ½ hours or more will be counted as absent for ½ a day.

The person picking up the child MUST come to the office and sign the child out. This applies to students in middle school also. No child is allowed to leave the school grounds for any reason without the permission of the principal. Students may leave school only with a parent/guardian or other adult on the parent's approved pick-up list. Proof of identification must be supplied if a child is to leave school with someone other than a parent.

Students who are absent from school may not participate in afterschool activities without the permission of the administration.

## **TARDINESS AND EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students are late if not in the school at 8:00 AM. Students are dismissed early when they are required to be picked up in the office prior to 2:50pm for PK & K, 2:55pm for 1st & 2nd Grade, and 3:00pm for 3rd through 8th Grade.

Any late students must come to the office to receive a "tardy slip". Should a student arrive from an appointment after the tardy bell has rung, then they must have documentation from their practitioner, otherwise it will be considered an "unexcused" tardy. The principal will also excuse tardiness in the event of inclement weather, a known accident causing a traffic backup on the bridge or for any reason deemed necessary. The principal is the final authority when determining whether a tardy should be excused or unexcused.

Parents of students who have accrued 5 or more unexcused tardies will be notified by email. A copy of the email will be filed in the student's cumulative record. Parents will also receive an email for each unexcused tardy after 5 tardies have been accrued.

Regular tardies impact the office staff as students need to be escorted to class by the office staff when they are late. Additionally, frequent tardies interrupt instructional time. Excessive tardies will result in a meeting with the principal.

## **HEALTH GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines are in effect:

- 1) If a child is running a fever, has been vomiting, has diarrhea, has a communicable disease, or requires an antibiotic for a bacterial infection, students are required to wait a 24-hour period prior to sending the child back to school. The child also needs to be symptom free. If a child has a contagious or communicable condition, this must be reported to the school health office with a doctor's note.
- 2) A student that is found to have lice or nits will be sent home. The school's health office designee must examine the student prior to returning to class. SFCS holds a "no-nit" policy.

- 3) It is expected that the parents follow-up with their own doctor for any injury occurring at school. Parents will be notified of significant injuries when they occur.
- 4) Please make arrangements to pick up your child as soon as possible after notification that they are sick and should leave school.
- 5) Diocese of Charleston policy forbids us from providing any medication to any student unless the Diocesan Medication Permit Form is filled out and signed by the parent and the physician. All medicine must be prescribed by a doctor or dentist and must be in the original container and labeled with a current pharmacy prescription label. All medication, even over the counter, must be brought to the office. Antibiotics will not be given at school by school personnel.
- 6) If your child is a frequent user of over-the-counter medication, such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Motrin, Allergy Relief, and/or Stomach/Digestive Relief, please send medication of your choice in with supplies at the scheduled supply drop of time. Make sure to label the medication with your child's name and grade, and any instructions for the Campus Health Assistant.
- 7) In the event that a student needs immediate emergency care 911 will be called. The child's emergency contact will also be called immediately. If a child needs treatment in the Emergency Room, then they will be transported by ambulance or by his or her parent. School employees will not transport students to the hospital.
- 8) St. Francis Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of South Carolina. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

## **ALLERGY POLICY**

St. Francis Catholic School recognizes that an allergy is an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with allergies.

This school encourages children with allergies to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by school staff and pupils. Teachers and new staff are also made aware of the policy. All staff who come into contact with children with allergies are provided with training on allergies from the Campus Health Assistant, who has had specialized training. Training is updated as needed.

### **1) Asthma/Allergy Medication**

Immediate access to reliever inhalers and Epi-Pens® is vital. Children are encouraged to carry their reliever inhaler/ Epi-Pen®. Parents are asked to ensure that the school is provided with a labeled spare reliever inhaler/Epi-Pen®. All inhalers/Epi-Pens® must be labeled with the child's name. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make sure that all medications are unexpired.

### **2) Record Keeping**

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



### **3) The School Environment**

The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favorable to children with asthma or allergies. As much as possible, the school does not use chemicals in science and art lessons that are potential triggers for children with asthma or allergies. Students are also asked to not bring in items that are potential triggers for children with asthma or allergies. St. Francis Catholic School makes no claim to be an allergen or peanut-free school.

### **4) Food Allergy Policy**

St. Francis Catholic School recognizes that life threatening food allergies are an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with food allergies. In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening allergic reactions, St. Francis Catholic School will maintain a system-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions and maintain an Emergency Action Plan for any student(s) whose parent/guardian, and physicians have informed the school in writing that the student(s) has a potentially life threatening allergy. Peanut products will be served in the cafeteria. Every effort will be taken by the faculty reduce the possibility of food exposure during school lunch for students with food allergies.

### **5) Classrooms**

Teachers must be familiar with the Emergency Action Plan of students in their classes and respond to emergencies as per the emergency protocol documented in the Emergency Action Plan. In the event of a suspected allergic reaction (where there is no known allergic history), the Campus Health Assistant will be called and the school's Emergency Response Plan activated. The emergency medical services will be called immediately.

The classrooms have easy communication with the Campus Health Assistant. Teachers on playground duty can contact the nurse via two-way radio on the playground. Information will be kept about students' allergies in the classroom and in the substitute emergency folder, accessible by teachers, substitutes, or other responsible adults.

All teachers and substitutes will be educated about the risk of allergies by the school nurse.

A parent or guardian of a student with food allergies is asked to provide optional classroom snacks for his/her own child. Snacks will be kept in a separate snack box or chest provided by the parent or guardian.

Tables will be washed with soap and water following any food related events held in the classroom. Proper hand cleaning techniques will be taught and encouraged before and after the handling/consumption of food.

### **6. Field Trips**

Students with allergies who participate in school sponsored field trips may face challenges to their physical health. St. Francis Catholic School will make reasonable accommodations for all students and will inform field trip chaperones regarding a student's allergy issues. Every effort will be made to provide a safe learning experience

for all students. A field trip generally occurs in a less controlled environment where allergen triggers may be present. If a parent is concerned about a child's presence on a field trip due to his/her special health needs, a parent may choose to keep their child at home on the day of the field trip.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Student cumulative records are kept in the School Office in a secure and locked file cabinet. Parents may request a copy of a student's cumulative record with a 24 hour advance notice. SFCS will not release student records unless there is a signed permission directly from a parent.

## **DROP OFF PROCEDURES**

Students may begin entering the building at 7:30 AM. Please do not let students leave their car and wait on the front porch. Students in grades 1 – 5 will need to report to the lunchroom. At 7:45 a.m. students may go directly to their classroom. PreK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be dropped off at the main entrance.

Please be attentive to any students who are riding their bikes. Students who ride his or her bike or walk to school will need to have a permission form completed and turned into the school office by a parent or guardian.

Please do not park your car anywhere in front of the main entrance or in the loop during morning drop off.

We discourage parents from walking students to the front door. Please do not attempt to conduct business with the school office personnel until after drop off has concluded. This typically is about 8:15am.

Please do not pull out of line and pass cars on the left-hand side. This is to ensure the safety of the students who are exiting from the left side of their cars. We recommend that all students exit from the right if possible.

Please do not drop your students off at the side of the school and continue straight by passing the loop. We would like you to drop your child(ren) off in the loop closest to one of the Drop Off volunteers or faculty member.

Please drive slowly and patiently. If you are feeling pressed for time or running late, we would rather have everyone be safe than have an accident. Do not talk on your cell phone during Drop Off. We all are very aware of the distraction this causes and the increased potential for an accident. Do not park in the Fire Lanes at any time during or after school. We cannot prevent a ticket being given even if it is just for a few minutes.

The tardy bell for all students is 8:00 AM. Parents must walk students who are tardy into the main office and sign them in. If you do not see any faculty members standing outside, then you will know that you are tardy.

## DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

The school office will provide family name card for students who are being picked up. Please have the card displayed on the right side of the dashboard so that faculty members know who you are picking up. Make sure that anyone that is allow to pick up your child(ren) are listed on you Pick Up List provided by the office. If a card is not displayed, then it is the responsibility of ANY faculty member to ensure that the person picking up your child has permission to do so. If a card is not displayed and/or a faculty member does not know the person picking up your child(ren), then a faculty member may ask the driver to either park and pick the child up from the office or provide identification verifying the driver's identity and confirm that they are on the student's Pick Up List. Any change to a Pick Up List regarding who is allowed to pick up your children needs to be made in writing in the main office.

Please be attentive to any students who are riding their bikes and/or walking home.

Students who are not picked up by the end of their grade level's dismissal time will wait on the Front Porch.

Please do not pull out of line and pass cars on the left-hand side unless directed to do so by a faculty member. We do not want any accidents. All students will enter vehicles from the right-hand side.

Do not talk on your cell phone during Dismissal. We all are very aware of the distraction this causes and the increased potential for an accident.

Do not park in the Fire Lanes at any time during or after school. We cannot prevent a ticket being given even if it is just for a few minutes.

Picking up students in Pre-Kindergarten through 2nd grades: Turn into the main entrance of the church and stay in line to the far right of the road and up to the school sign. A teacher will put your child(ren) in the car. If you have no other children to pick up, turn left and proceed back to the main entrance and exit on to Beach City Road. If you have children in other grades proceed to the next line heading to the front of the school.

Picking up students in 3rd through 8th grades: Turn into the side entrance of the church parking lot (closest to the retirement home) and stay in the lane along the side of the K classroom and proceed to the front of the school. Exit onto Hospital Center Blvd.

Please make sure that you are familiar with the car seat safety guidelines and laws. It is for the safety of your children.

If you have an appointment or obligation right after dismissal that may cause you to be in a rush we ask that you park in one of the parking lots and walk to the sidewalk to pick up your child(ren). Students will not be dismissed from the sidewalk into the parking lot by a faculty member.

Students who want to walk or ride a bike home must have a parent/guardian complete a Student Walk-Home Permission Slip and Indemnity Agreement form. This form will be kept in the school office and needs to be completed on an annual basis. Students who walk or ride a bike home must report to the school office prior to leaving for the day.

## **EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM**

St. Francis Catholic School has an Extended Care Program. It is established to provide a service to the parent/guardian(s) of our children. The Extended Care Program will operate only on days when school is in session for a full day. Extended Care will not be offered when there is an early dismissal, unless specifically stated by the principal.

### **EXTENDED CARE ATTENDANCE**

Each parent who plans to have, or potentially have, their child(ren) use Extended Care will be asked to complete and sign an Extended Care Registration Form for the year. This form allows the School Office and the Extended Care Director to properly and safely plan and staff Extended Care. In the Extended Care Registration Form the parent will be asked to provide an annual projection of which days their child(ren) will be using Extended Care. Parents may also be asked by the Extended Care Director to complete a Monthly Projection Form when they pick up their child(ren) during the last week of the month. This also allows the Extended Care Director to accurately staff and plan for the number of students. The School Office must be informed by 1:00pm of any changes or cancellations regarding a child's attendance in Extended Care. The only time the School Office doesn't need to be informed is when a child is absent from the regular school day. Children may not attend Extended Care if they did not attend school that day.

There may be instances when a parent needs to have their child(ren) unexpectedly attend Extended Care. In these cases we ask parents to notify the school office by phone by 1:00pm. If the Extended Care Director does not have an Extended Care Registration Form on file then the parent will be asked to complete one when they pick up their child.

SFCS understands that immediate and unexpected emergencies may occur. But if your child(ren) has attended Extended Care more than 3 times without the School Office or Extended Care Director being properly notified then an additional \$10.00 charge will be applied for each occurrence thereafter. Proper notification means that you indicated that your child(ren) will attend either on the Extended Care Registration, Monthly Projection Form, and/or by phone call to the School Office by 1:00pm on the day of attendance. If your child(ren) is scheduled to attend Extended Care and they are absent without proper notification, as defined above, then the day will be included as a day of attendance and will be applied to student's monthly total of days attending Extended Care. This will occur after the 3rd occurrence of a parent failing to properly notify the School Office or Extended Care director in advance of the cancellation.

Parents/guardians whose child(ren) are picked up after 5:30pm, based on the school clock, will be charged a \$15.00 late fee per child for each day there is a late pick up.

In the event of an emergency, if a parent needs to reach the Extended Care Director after the School Office has closed at 3:30pm then they must dial (843)681-6501, wait for the message prompt to begin, then dial \*287.

### **EXTENDED CARE FEE SCHEDULE**

- Plan A: 15 or more days a month = \$160.00 per month/ per child
- Plan B: 10 – 14 days per month = \$115.00 per child/ per month
- Plan C: 5 – 9 days per month = \$85.00 per child/ per month
- Plan D: 4 or fewer days per month = \$20.00 per day/ per child

Invoices for the previous month will be sent through FACTS. Charges will be uploaded into FACTS on the first Tuesday of the month that school is in session. Payments will be due 15 business days from the first Tuesday of the month. The months of August/ September and May/June both will be joined into one billing period.

There is no Financial Assistance for Extended Care. If your family experiences a change in your financial situation during the school year, please speak to the principal. Failure to do so may result in your child not being able to attend Extended Care.

### **EXTENDED CARE STUDENT CONDUCT**

All students are expected to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school which are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility. This requires courtesy in all personal relationships, promptness in fulfilling obligations, concern for the environment, and many other factors which the students' sense of appropriateness will indicate to them. Students are expected to follow all the rules described in the Discipline section of the SFCS Parent/Student Handbook during Extended Care.

The Extended Care Director, in collaboration with the principal, reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of a disciplinary action if any doubt in a student's conduct arises. The principal reserves the right to suspend or expel any student from attending Extended Care.

Students participating in the Extended Care Program should at no time be making calls, texting, taking photographs, playing games, listening to music, or watching videos on their own personal electronic devices. This includes, but is not limited to: cell phones, I-Pads<sup>®</sup>, gaming systems, etc. Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) by the Extended Care Director on the first occurrence. If there is a second occurrence, then the Extended Care Director will turn in the electronic device to the principal. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may pick up the device from the principal the following day.

### **EXTENDED CARE EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

The School Office will provide all emergency information for a student (Pick Up List, Emergency Card Info, Allergy info, etc.) that was provided at the beginning of the year to the Extended Care Director. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to keep this information current in the Main Office.

## **CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE**

In accordance with the stated philosophy of the school, which emphasizes deep respect for the human dignity and uniqueness of every individual, each student will be considerate of the rights of others in all interactions. All students are expected to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school which are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility. This requires courtesy in all personal relationships, promptness in fulfilling obligations, concern for the environment, and many other factors which the students' sense of appropriateness will indicate to them.

### **CORE SCHOOL RULES**

- 1) Respect yourself, others and school facility.
- 2) Contribute positively to the learning environment.
- 3) Listen and follow directions, classroom rules and school procedures.

### **ITEMS NOT PERMITTED ON CAMPUS BY STUDENTS**

Items such as, but not limited to, questionable books and pictures, vaping products, alcohol, knives, guns, matches, cigarettes, toys, playing cards, laser lights, cellphones, iPads, hand-held gaming systems, personal laptops, cameras, fidget spinners, or anything else that will detract from a learning situation are not allowed at school at any time unless approved by the principal. Key chains and toys should not be attached to student backpacks and students may be asked to remove such items.

Anything deemed to not be necessary or add value to a student's education and learning may be confiscated by a faculty member and turned into the principal. The school administration will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of these kinds of items in the school.

### **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

Students who possess or use drugs, tobacco and/or alcohol, including any related paraphernalia, at school, at any school function and anytime off campus will face suspension and/or expulsion. This includes vaping and any vaping related paraphernalia. Students who are suspected of using drugs or alcohol may have their locker and bags searched without permission.

### **CHEATING/ PLAGIARISM**

Cheating and plagiarism of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. Teachers review what qualifies as cheating and plagiarism in a classroom.

### **GIFTS**

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture only creates hurt feelings among other students.

Invitations for birthdays and other parties must be sent direct to the parents of students unless an invitation is being given to every student in the entire grade or to every student of the same gender in a grade.

## **GUM**

Students may not chew gum at school at any time that they are at school. This includes before school, during school, and after school. Students who chew gum are subject to disciplinary consequences.

## **HARASSMENT**

Harassment, including bullying, of any type is not tolerated. The principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

## **OFF-CAMPUS CONDUCT**

The administration of SFCS reserves the right to discipline students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the school day. This off-campus behavior includes but is not limited to cyber-bullying.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying/Harassment and Expulsion Policy for the Diocese of Charleston Schools

### *Definitions*

1. Harassment- Harassment is any unwanted behavior, physical or verbal (or even suggested) that makes a reasonable person feel uncomfortable, humiliated, and/or mentally distressed.
  - a. It is the intentional act of annoying, threatening, intimidating, or causing fear in another person.
  - b. Harassment happens when someone is targeted because they belong, or appear to belong to a *protected* class, including socio-economic status, and when the conduct is so serious that it creates a *hostile* environment.
  - c. Harassment is considered a form of discrimination and is punishable by law.
  - d. This includes:
    - Intimidating
    - Teasing
    - making improper propositions
    - verbal abuse such as name calling, slurs, taunts, insults (including visual insults)
    - graphic or written statements, demeaning comments, cartoons, pictures
    - physical assault, including physically impeding or blocking behavior
    - threatening or discriminating against a person due to race, religion, age, gender, physical appearance, socioeconomic status or academic pursuits.
2. Bullying- bullying, including cyber-bullying, is a conscious, repeated, hostile, aggressive behavior of an individual or group abusing their position with the intention to harm others or to gain real or perceived power.
  - a. Bullying is a repeated behavior which can be defined and not limited to the following behaviors:
    - Fighting, threatening, name-calling, teasing, or excluding someone repeatedly and over time

- Creating an imbalance of power (i.e., size or popularity)
  - Causing physical, social, and emotional harm
  - Hurting another person to get something
- b. Bullying is NOT:
- Not liking someone
  - Being excluded for a single event
  - Accidentally bumping into someone
  - Disagreements or difference of opinion between two or more people or groups
  - Single act of telling a joke about someone or their interest
  - Expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others
  - Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behavior, intimidation, or meanness.

### *Steps for Dealing with Bullying*

Important Note: If the principal views a bullying occurrence to be of an extreme nature, the offense may be deemed a third step offense and automatic suspension or expulsion may occur.

#### First Offense:

The principal will conduct a parent conference in which a clear explanation of the bullying offense will be discussed. The principal may assign an age-appropriate consequence.

#### Second Offense:

The principal will conduct a parent conference to discuss the second offense of bullying. A next level consequence may be issued as deemed appropriate by the principal.

#### Third Offense:

If bullying has occurred a third time, the principal may deem more serious consequences need to be in place, such as suspension or expulsion. The principal will meet and discuss such situations with the pastor.

#### SFCS Bullying Prevention Guidelines/ Rules:

- 1) We will not bully others
- 2) We will try to help students who are bullied
- 3) We will try to include students who are left out
- 4) If we know someone who is bullied, we will tell an adult at school and at home

## **CYBER-BULLYING**

Cyberbullying is defined as tormenting, threatening, harassing, humiliating, embarrassing, or otherwise targeting others using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, or mobile phones. Information posted on, but not limited to, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, or any other Internet sites, including digital gaming and texting, may be permanently on the Internet and may do lasting harm. Therefore, any obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening and/or disrespectful messages are considered cyberbullying, as is any posting of information that could cause damage, danger, or disruption of the educational process for a person. Personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory remarks, and knowingly or recklessly posting false or defamatory information about a person



also constitutes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is not tolerated at SFCS. Students proven to be engaged in Cyberbullying may face immediate suspension and/or expulsion. Students who bully other SFCS students on or off campus will not be tolerated. This includes social media and is subject to disciplinary consequences. Parents will also be notified of any bullying situations.

## **SCHOOL PROPERTY**

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. Textbooks provided to the student must have a proper book cover. No writing in textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented. Students are also subject to disciplinary consequences. This includes any destruction of property that occurs during a field trip or school sponsored event.

## **SEARCH**

The school reserves the right to search lockers, backpacks and any other item brought on school property. This includes cell phones and other electronic devices. Students may be asked to empty their pockets to conduct a search. SFCS may also contact a representative of the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office to conduct a K9 search at any time.

## **DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES**

A violation of a core school rule or a specific conduct policy may result in a disciplinary consequence. Disciplinary consequences are communicated through the completion of Disciplinary Referral by the faculty member supervising the student. Any Disciplinary Referral assigned will be turned into the principal or assistant principal. The principal or assistant principal will assign a disciplinary consequence to a student earning a Disciplinary Referral. The disciplinary consequence will be noted on the Disciplinary Referral form. The type of disciplinary consequence assigned to the student will vary depending on the severity or frequency of the violation causing a Disciplinary Referral.

## **CLASSROOM RULES/ DISCIPLINE**

All teachers create their own set of classroom procedures and rules that align with the core school rules. Teachers may assign in-class disciplinary consequences prior to assigning a Disciplinary Referral. Teacher classroom procedures and rules will be communicated and made available to parents and students at the beginning of the school year by the teacher.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROBATION**

A student who is assigned a Disciplinary Referral by a faculty member may be placed on Disciplinary Probation. The principal is the final authority when it comes to placing a student on Disciplinary Probation and/or determining a student's probationary status. A student placed on Disciplinary Probation will meet with the principal or assistant principal to discuss the reasons for the Disciplinary Referral. Disciplinary Probation is one, two week (10 school days) period during which a student works to improve his or her conduct.

During the first two-week period, the student is able to fully participate with all non-athletic and athletic extracurricular school activities (clubs, class field trips, assemblies, field days etc.) At the end of the two week probationary period, if the student did not earn another Disciplinary Referral, then he or she will no longer be on disciplinary probation. In the event that the student earns another Disciplinary Referral during the first probationary period, then he or she will serve another two week probationary period.

During the second two week probationary period the student may not participate in any non-athletic and athletic extracurricular activity (clubs, class field trips, assemblies, field days etc.). If at the end of the two week probationary period the student did not earn another Disciplinary Referral he or she will no longer be on Disciplinary Probation and may fully participate with any athletic or non-athletic extracurricular activity (club, field trip, assembly, field day etc.)

In the event that the student earned a Disciplinary Referral during the second probationary two-week period he or she may not participate in any athletic or non-athletic extracurricular activity (clubs, class field trips, assemblies, field days etc.) until the student has been free of earning a Disciplinary Referral for 45 school days.

A student may be assigned multiple disciplinary consequences for a Disciplinary Referral in addition to being placed on Disciplinary Probation.

A student who has earned three Disciplinary Referrals in a 45 school day period, regardless of current probationary status, will not be allowed to participate in any athletic or non-athletic extracurricular activity until he or she has been free or earning a disciplinary referral for 45 school days thereafter.

The principal has the right to waive a probationary status or make an exception for a specific activity especially if it serves an academic purpose.

## **DETENTION**

Detention may be issued after school, before school or during lunch for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. For repeated disciplinary issues, Saturday school may be issued. Students who attend Saturday school will be charged \$75.00 per Saturday school occurrence. Parents are provided with a Referral Form as written notification of the detention. The parent(s) will also be contacted via phone call or email to be informed of the disciplinary issue. The day, date, and time of the detention are at the discretion of the principal who monitors or designates someone to monitor the detention. Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, tutoring, ballgames, etc.

## **SUSPENSION**

Students who are given an in-school suspension will be required to report to school each day. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will not be allowed on campus during the time of their suspension. Students must complete all class work and tests from the days of suspension.

## **EXPULSION**

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter. Students who pose a threat to themselves or to others may be expelled from St. Francis Catholic School. Students who have been expelled will not be allowed to return to the school without prior permission from the principal. Any student expelled or asked to leave the school for disciplinary reasons will not be eligible for re-enrollment, may not participate in or attend school-sponsored activities, and may not enter school property without the permission of the principal.

The reason for expulsion or withdrawal may be shared with other Catholic schools in the diocese of Charleston upon request by that school.

### *Offenses that May Merit Expulsion:*

- Possession of a weapon while at school or at any school activity
- Threats of violence, injury, or death against the school, students, and/or school personnel.
- Assault of another student or school personnel.
- Repeated violation of academic integrity expectations.
- Selling, giving, delivering, or otherwise transferring any illegal drug or controlled substance.
- Damage to school property
- Repeated bullying or harassment of another student
- Multiple offenses of a lesser nature that consistently disrupt the learning environment or good order of the school (a corrective action behavior plan and/or contract may be in place prior to expulsion)
- Any behavior that is not consistent with the Catholic mission of the school.

Students whose parents have violated the Parents as Partners agreement in this handbook may also be excluded from St. Francis Catholic School.

## **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

Corporal punishment is forbidden in the Catholic Diocese of Charleston and is viewed as inconsistent with our school's mission.

## **PRIVACY**

When there is an instance of inappropriate student behavior, staff members may only discuss resulting disciplinary consequences with the parents of the individual student receiving the consequence and may not share disciplinary information with the parents of any other student regardless of that student's role in the underlying event.

## **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

St. Francis Catholic School is pleased to offer the students and faculty access to our computers, computer network and the Internet. SFCS maintains a content filter, provides lessons on the correct use of the computer, and provides rules for student use. Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network just as they are in the classroom or

anywhere else in the school. The students are advised never to access, keep, or send anything that they would not want their parents or teachers to see.

Consequences for misbehavior during school using computers or other digital devices may include loss of computer use privileges, suspension or, in the case of a serious offense, expulsion.

Rules for the Internet at SFCS are as follows:

- 1) Illegal copying – Students should never download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks, unless they have written permission from the school computer technologist or principal.
- 2) Inappropriate material or language – The access or use of any profane, abusive, rude or sexually explicit language or pictures is strictly forbidden. Should students encounter such materials by accident, they should report it to a teacher immediately.
- 3) Personal information – Students are forbidden to access social media websites. Students are forbidden to use instant messaging, email or any other computer-related communication method without permission from their teacher or the principal. Students are never to reveal personal information to anyone on the Internet.
- 4) Privacy – Student computer use may be monitored at any time during the school day. The history of a student’s computer use may be checked at any time without notice. Student files may be viewed at any time to maintain system integrity and ensure that students are using the system responsibly. Students may not delete their search history.
- 5) Use of school computers and school issued computers are for educational purposes only. If any such device is used for anything deemed as a non-educational by the principal, then the student may be subject to either being banned from using any school issued technology equipment or face another disciplinary consequence.

Guidelines for students include:

- 1) Use the computers and any computer programs/ applications only with the permission of a teacher.
- 2) Do not save information without the teacher’s permission.
- 3) Stay away from all folders and programs that you do not have permission to use.
- 4) Do not bring personal programs to school. If you wish to donate a program to the school, see the School Technologist. Copyright laws are very specific.
- 5) Do not install anything on a computer located at St. Francis Catholic School.
- 6) Take care of the computers, network, and printers. Do not misuse or abuse them. Ask for help if needed.
- 7) Do not use the computer to hurt or harm others and/or their work.
- 8) Notify an adult immediately if, by accident, you encounter material that is inappropriate.
- 9) Flash drives or other storage devices used in the school setting or brought to school may contain only appropriate material relevant to curricular or extra-curricular concerns.

# MIDDLE SCHOOL LAPTOP

## ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Technology resources at St. Francis Catholic School are provided for the purpose of supporting the educational mission of the school. The goal in providing technology is to promote educational excellence by providing resources for learning and encouraging innovation, research, creativity, and communication.

For the 2024-2025 school year, the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students will be issued laptops. Use of this technology is a privilege that carries a responsibility and behavioral expectation consistent with all school rules and policies. It is understood that members of the SFCS community will use all types of computing devices and the school's network in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner at all times. Filters have been purchased to assure that students do not access inappropriate material while using school-issued devices.

A \$100.00 Laptop Fee is due prior to the laptop being issued to a student. The fee includes a protective case and 1 laptop repair for damage caused by any unintentional act. The principal is the final authority to determine whether the damage to the laptop was the result of an unintentional or intentional act. The charge for a replacement charger is \$40.00.

St. Francis Catholic School retains sole right of possession of the school issued laptops. The laptops and related equipment are issued to students according to the guidelines set forth in this Student-Parent Handbook. St. Francis Catholic School retains the right to collect and/or inspect the laptop at any time and to alter, add, or delete installed software, hardware, or other content. If a student loses a school-issued laptop, the parent will be charged the full cost of replacement. A list of fees is included in the Rules of Conduct section of this policy.

## LAPTOP CARE AND STORAGE

### BATTERY

It is the responsibility of the student to see that the laptop is charged every school night so that the laptop is fully charged as the student arrives at school. Recharging of batteries during class sessions may be done only at the discretion of, and with permission from, the classroom teacher. A student will be considered unprepared if his or her laptop is not sufficiently charged resulting in a possible disciplinary consequence.

### CLEANING

Laptops must be turned off and all power cords disconnected before cleaning. Use a lint-free cloth to wipe the screen clean of dust, smudges, and fingerprints. To clean the exterior, use a damp, soft cloth. Avoid getting moisture in any opening. Never spray liquid onto the laptop.

### FOOD OR BEVERAGES

Food or beverages should not be placed or consumed near laptops. After eating, students must clean their hands before touching any electronic device.

## **BACKPACKS**

Students are to provide their own backpacks. These should be sturdy enough to protect laptops. They must be packed in such a way that they are not overfilled, resulting in damage to the device. Nothing that can spill or do damage to electronic equipment should be placed in the backpack.

## **SKINS, COVERS, STICKERS**

Skins or stickers on the surface of laptops are not permitted. Barcodes and/or nametags used for identification purposes are not to be removed.

## **STORAGE AND GENERAL CARE**

Students are expected to place laptops on desks or counters with care. They should never be put on floors. Damage to laptops which occurs due to student carelessness will cause parents to be charged the cost of repair or replacement. While students are at school, laptops must always be in the student's possession or stored in a locker or other approved location. Laptops found unattended will be delivered to the School Office. Students are expected to take laptops home with them each night. They may not be left in lockers overnight.

## **IN-SCHOOL USE**

Students use their laptops for reading, research, study, homework, and projects. They may also use them for tests and quizzes. In class and study periods, students may not check email, connect with social media, surf the internet, or play games (unless they are educational games used under the direction of an instructor). Students are prohibited from visiting gaming sites, social media, entertainment streaming platforms, shopping websites, or any content deemed inappropriate by the administration. YouTube may be used only for educational purposes determined by the teacher. Students may not "chat" on Google Docs or Microsoft Teams. They also may not "hack" educational games. Students must charge their computers at home. Devices may not be charged at school. Students will face disciplinary action if they are found using technology frivolously during school hours. Failure to comply with these rules will result in a lunch detention for the first offense, an after-school detention for the second offense, and the third offense will result in Saturday school as well as a \$75.00 charge.

Homework assignments may be submitted through a teacher-monitored portal (school website, OneNote, or Google Classroom.). If a hard copy is required, students should print assignments at home. The school printers should be used rarely and only at the direction of a teacher. Students should not expect to be able to print throughout the school day or to have printed materials delivered to them.

## **LAPTOP RULES OF CONDUCT**

### **CYBER - BULLYING**

As described in the SFCS Parent-Student Handbook, no form of bullying which occurs through the use of electronic devices is tolerated.

## **EMAIL**

Students do not have access to school email. Additionally, they may not check personal email on their school laptop. Checking or sending personal email is considered inappropriate behavior and disciplinary consequences may apply.

## **EXTERNAL STORAGE DEVICES**

Flash drives or other storage devices used in the school setting or brought to school may contain only appropriate material relevant to curricular or extra-curricular concerns.

## **GAMES**

As indicated above, students may play only school-related computer games with the direct permission of a supervising teacher during school hours. Study hall is not a permissible time to play games.

## **HEADPHONES, EARBUDS, MUSIC**

Approved headphones or earbuds are used only with a teacher's permission. Students may not access or use music for recreational or leisure purposes during school hours. Storing inappropriate music with profanities or explicit labels on school-issued devices is prohibited.

## **INTERNET**

The internet is a resource for research, news updates, and many educational materials. Students may not access the internet for inappropriate purposes. Filtering systems block a significant number of sites. Students may not use school devices or the school network for instant messaging or any other personal purpose.

## **LOST OR DAMAGED LAPTOPS**

The assistant principal or principal must be notified immediately in the case of loss or damage to a laptop. Parents will be charged the complete cost of replacement in the case of a lost device. Damages to devices must be diagnosed by the Information Technologist, who is the only person authorized to remove batteries, memory, hard drives, etc. Laptops which are damaged due to student negligence will incur a charge to parents for the cost of repair or replacement. Parents will be billed by the school and the student will not receive a replacement device until payment has been received. School-issued devices should never be taken to a computer shop or other outside vendor for repair. The school has contractual agreements for repair and replacement.

## **PASSWORDS AND PASSCODES**

Students are responsible for protecting the confidentiality of their passwords and passcodes. If passwords or passcodes are shared, others will be able to log in and possibly add or delete files.

If there is an issue with a password or passcode, students must see the assistant principal.

## **PHOTOS, VIDEOS, SCREEN SAVERS**

Laptop and iPads may not be used to create or display inappropriate material. Permission is required before photos or videos may be made of students or teachers. Screen savers which students use or create must be tasteful and appropriate. It is understood that the school has a right to remove any inappropriate or unauthorized material from a student's device and to apply disciplinary measures.

## **SHARING LAPTOPS**

Students are not allowed to borrow laptops or power cords from other students. They are prohibited from accessing faculty laptops. School issued devices are not to be made available to family members for personal use.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Students are not permitted to post pictures that show SFCS clothing or logos. Comments or groups should not be created which communicate about other students or teachers. Videos or photo galleries related to SFCS or completed as an assignment may only be uploaded to the internet with the approval of the principal.

## **SOFTWARE/ APPLICATIONS**

Educational software and apps may be loaded onto the SFCS laptops only with the prior permission of the Information Technologist.

## **CELL PHONES – OTHER DIGITAL DEVICE**

While SFCS understands the need for students to have a cellphone at school, student cellphones must be off during the school day. Students must deposit their cellphone in a cellphone garage, located in each middle school grade level homeroom. Students may pick up their phone during dismissal. If a student is spotted with a cell phone out, faculty members have been instructed to confiscate the cell phone and turn it into the school office. Any faculty member has the right and permission to ask a student suspected of having a cell phone on their person to empty their pockets. Faculty and staff may also search a locker if a cellphone is heard or seen in a locker. If a student's cellphone is confiscated a second time, they will receive a lunch detention and will be charged \$25.00. Students with a third offense for cellphones will receive an after-school detention and be charged \$50.00. An additional offense will result in Saturday school and a \$75.00 charge. Students may also lose the privilege of bringing their cellphone to school. Students are also prohibited from wearing Apple watches and using Air pods during the school day.

Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate messages and/or photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices may face suspension and/or expulsion. Cell phones and other digital devices that are brought to school also apply to the school's Lost and Found/Liability Policy.

Parents are also asked to avoid unnecessarily talking and texting on a cell phone while in the school. Talking and texting on a cell phone in a classroom with students present is not permitted.



## **ONLINE BEHAVIOR**

Engagement in online sites and social media such as, but not limited to, Facebook®, Snapchat®, Instagram®, TikTok® etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's or parent's sites include defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish.

Parents are cautioned to be aware of the online sites visited by their children, knowing that often predators are not living in a neighborhood, but within the home via a computer. Students whose avatars depict other students, teachers, or parish staff in a defamatory light face detention, suspension, or expulsion.

## **TEXTING**

Students should at no time be involved in texting during the school day. Students involved in texting at school face detention, suspension and/or expulsion. Parents should not text their students during the day. If parents need to speak to their child, please call the school office and it will be arranged.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT SCHOOL**

St. Francis by the Sea Parish and St. Francis Catholic School has instituted a Safe Environment Program to assure the safety of the children in our community. Employees of St. Francis by the Sea Church or School, volunteers in the church or school who have contact with or are around children and Extraordinary Ministers to the Sick must:

- 1) Complete a Safe Environment Education course, Safe Haven: It's Up to You.
- 2) Successfully complete a background screening.
- 3) Sign a volunteer/employee code of conduct.
- 4) Sign an acknowledgement of receipt of the Diocesan Policy on Handling Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse.

The Diocese of Charleston Sexual Misconduct abuse report form is located in the School Office.

In our ongoing effort to provide a safe environment for our children, please be advised that any parent/guardian known to a diocesan or parish school who is a parent or guardian of a child who is enrolled at one of our schools and is listed on a sex offender registry is required to sign an agreement restricting that individual's access to our campus. A list of those sex offenders, known to the school, whose child is enrolled, may be reviewed at the school office during normal school hours.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

### **COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL**

It is the desire of the faculty and staff of St. Francis Catholic School to maintain effective communication with the parents. It is the full responsibility of the parent and/or legal guardian to inform the school office of any change needed to be made for contact information regarding their child(ren). This includes all emergency contacts, people granted permission to pick up their child(ren), grandparents, etc.

Each parent will be provided a FACTS SIS account. The FACTS SIS parent webpage provides a current school calendar, location for important school documents, and an online directory for other school families. Parents are asked to check with their children for news items each day, but especially when we send home information from the School Office. When information is sent home from the School Office it will be provided to the youngest child of the family to be given to a parent.

Please communicate directly with the teacher or principal via email or phone whenever a parent wishes to discuss a matter. Call the school office at 843-681-6501. Please allow teachers 24 hours to respond to emails.

Parents may request in writing, with a 24 hour advanced notice, to view the student's official school records (academic transcripts, health records, etc.).

If you have a concern, speak to the person with whom you have the concern. If it is a concern related to the classroom, address the concern with your child's teacher first. If the concern is not resolved, then make an appointment with the principal and/or assistant. If your concern is regarding an administrative action or decision, contact the principal and/or assistant principal first.

If SFCS administration is unaware of a issue, we cannot partner with you to resolve it. We welcome and encourage parents to come forward with any concerns.

## **DIVORCED OR SEPARATED PARENTS**

Divorced or separated parents are asked to file a copy of the custody section of their Divorce Decree with the school office. The school must have a copy of any court order involving a school child in matters of custody and contact. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address.

The school will not take sides in domestic disputes but will follow any court ordered procedure. The school's primary concern is the well-being of the child. If called to testify in a domestic dispute, staff members will first notify the principal prior to responding to a subpoena or giving testimony. All testimony will be objective without a bias to either parent. Be advised that if a teacher, staff member, or principal is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.).

## **EMERGENCIES**

SFCS has a complete Safety and Emergency Response Plan which includes safety guidelines to prevent injury caused by accidents, acts of nature, acts of violence, and precautions to prevent

the spread of disease. A copy of the plan is in the school office and may be viewed by parents at any time. Fire drills, intruder alert drills, tornado drills, and earthquake drills are held regularly.

### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARD**

Children must have an Emergency Information Card completed and returned to their teacher. This card is distributed at the beginning of each school year and should be completed and returned immediately.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING**

In the event of inclement weather St. Francis Catholic School will many times follow the same schedule as the Beaufort County Public Schools. Listen to local radio and TV stations for announcements about our school closings.

In the event of an extreme emergency during the school day which causes the school to vacate the premises, we will release the students from the Hospital Commons. If possible, an email blast or text alert will be sent to parents telling of the emergency and the scheduled release of students.

### **LOST AND FOUND / LIABILITY**

The school assumes no responsibility for lost items. All items belonging to children should be labeled. If lost articles are found they should be sent to the office. They will be returned to their owner, if labeled. We encourage you not to allow children to bring money or valuable articles to school. Parents will be billed the replacement cost for any school library or textbook that is lost or severely damaged.

### **LUNCH PROGRAM**

The school does not have a hot lunch program set up for this school year. Parents should avoid bringing late lunches and under no circumstances bring in lunches from fast food or other restaurants. Sodas are never allowed. Please limit the amount of candy sent in with your child's lunch.

### **SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS**

St. Francis Catholic School recognizes that attempting to maintain the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors to our school is implemented with a multifaceted approach. To the extent that modern technology provides tools to maintain safety and security, the use of video surveillance cameras may be in place in the school and on school property. Cameras will not be permitted in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

### **UNIFORM POLICY**

Uniform Policies are located at the end of this handbook for each grade level. Please label all uniform items with your child's name. Students who violate uniform requirements will face disciplinary consequences. For the first offense, the student will receive a warning and a pink slip will be sent home. For a second uniform violation, students will receive a lunch detention. Third offenses will need to serve an after-school detention and fourth offenses will need to serve

a Saturday school detention and will be charged \$75.00. **Students at SFCS may NOT wear hoodies.**

Clothing worn to school or school events must be modest, clean, and in good taste. Pants/jeans are not to be excessively tight or form-fitting. Students are prohibited from wearing torn jeans, shorts/dresses/skirts that are more than 2 1/2 inches above the knee, or crop tops. Students may not wear hats, bandanas, or sunglasses in the school building. They are prohibited from having hair that is not their natural color. Students may wear one religious necklace only.

**Female Students:**

Girls may have one ear piercing only and wear small stud earrings. If a student has a second piercing, they will need to take it out during school hours. Bracelets and rings are not permitted. Students may not wear makeup.

Female students who have a skirt that is higher than 2 1/2 inches above their knee will be sent home for the day. Students who repeatedly violate this rule will be required to have a meeting with the principal and assistant principal, as well as face disciplinary consequences.

**Male Students:**

Hair must be clean, natural, and styled so that the hair does not cover ears or eyes and is above the shirt color; no extreme or trendy hairstyles are permitted. Sideburns may not extend more than halfway below the top of the ear. If a male student is notified by their teachers or the administration that they need a haircut, students have the weekend to get one. For example, if told on a Thursday they would need to have a haircut by Monday morning. Students who do not comply face disciplinary consequences.

**VISITOR POLICY**

Visitors to the school are required to report to the School Office. Parents and visitors will be required to sign in and wear a visitor nametag. Visitors will be asked to present his or her driver's license to conduct an immediate background screening. This policy will be enforced to ensure the safety of our children and staff.

No dogs, cats or other pets or animals are allowed to visit the school unless prior permission is granted by the principal.

**VOLUNTEERS**

The principal will approve all volunteers. Diocesan Policy mandates that all regularly scheduled volunteers must complete the Safe Haven webinar, pass the diocesan screenings, and read and sign the "Policy Concerning Allegations of Sexual Misconduct or Abuse of a Minor by Church Personnel" and "Code of Conduct." Due to safety and other concerns, young children should not accompany parents while volunteering. Appropriate dress is required. Workout or beach clothes are not suitable attire when volunteering at our school.

**WEB PAGE SAFETY**

Photos of students will be published on our school web page. Names of students will also be on our web page. However, no individual or group photograph of students in which a student or

students are individually identified will be published on the school web page without a parent/guardian's consent.

## **PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

As partners in the educational process at SFCS, we ask parents:

- 1) To set rules, times, and limits so that your child.
  - Gets to bed early on school nights.
  - Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day.
  - Is dressed according to the school dress code.
  - Completes assignments on time.
  - Has a nutritional lunch every day.
  - Takes prescribed medications.
- 2) To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- 3) To fulfill an annual 10-hour volunteer requirement for parents with any school related activity.
- 4) To see that the student pays for any damage to schoolbooks or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student.
- 5) To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy.
- 6) To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers.
- 7) To meet all financial obligations to the school.
- 8) To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health.
- 9) To complete and return to school any requested information promptly.
- 10) To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education.
- 11) To support the religious and educational goals of the school.
- 12) To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example.
- 13) To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.
- 14) To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.
- 15) To not post negative comments about students, teachers, or the administration on social media.
- 16) To use "Group Me" or similar classroom app for positive communication to parents regarding classroom news – not to gossip.
- 17) In an e-learning environment, the daily support of a parent/guardian is critical to providing students with continued quality education through e-learning. Specific guidelines will be provided to parents/guardians with detailed information regarding the e-learning schedule.

Diocesan Catholic school communities, regarding all school-related matters, should communicate within a prescribed sequence, based on levels of responsibility consistent with canon law and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity:

- Student/parent
- Teacher
- Principal
- Pastor

- Superintendent

Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

## **A PARENT'S ROLE IN EDUCATION**

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

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

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

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

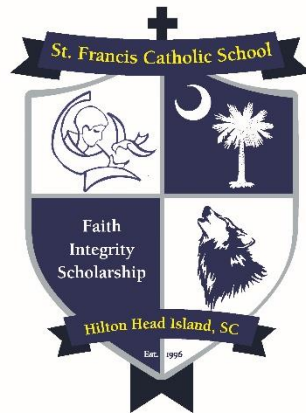
It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. Parents are encouraged to let their child experience a logical consequence for an inappropriate action or behavior. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

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

## **CLOSING STATEMENT AND RIGHT TO AMEND**

This handbook is intended to describe the philosophy, services, and structure of the school's educational program. St. Francis Catholic School reserves the right to make changes and/or additions to this handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent and available to parents through email communication.

**INFORMATION IN THE 2024 - 2025 SFCS HANDBOOK, IS FOR THE PRIVATE USE OF MEMBERS OF THE ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND ARE NOT TO BE USED FOR MARKETING PURPOSES.**



**2024 - 2025 STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT**  
**S t. Francis Catholic School**

Return this page to the school office.

**I HAVE READ THE 2024 - 25 ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC  
SCHOOL PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK. I AGREE TO  
COMPLY WITH ITS POLICIES AND REGULATIONS.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name