

Saint Rita School Family Handbook 2023-2024

“...The Place to Be Where the Love of Christ Is Lived and Shared”

Mission Statement

St. Rita School inspires students in pre-kindergarten through grade eight to achieve academic excellence in a safe, nurturing, and faith filled Catholic environment.

We prepare students to be morally responsible, innovative thinkers who, in today’s technology-guided global community, live and share the love of Christ.



1601 Whitney Ave. Hamden, CT 06517

St. Rita School is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and by the State of Connecticut Board of Education



Catholic Schools Education for a Lifetime

Purpose and Vision For Catholic School Education

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford welcome students of all faiths, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The fundamental purpose of Catholic schools is to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing and secure environment in which students encounter the living God, who in Jesus Christ, reveals His transforming love and truth;
- Partner with parents to support students in their learning and in their search for knowledge, meaning, and truth;
- Create a Catholic climate that contributes to the formation of students as active participants in the parish community;
- Foster a culture of educational excellence through critical thinking skills, innovative and rigorous curriculum standards, a global perspective, and an emphasis on moral education, community, and service;
- Promote life-long learning that advances the development of the whole person-mind, body, and soul; and
- Graduate students prepared to become productive, virtuous citizens and church leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world.

Handbook

Saint Rita School

**When applicable the policies of the Archdiocese are noted as (ADH: ____) in the Family Handbook. All policies of the Archdiocese will be followed.*

All types in red are a change/newly added for 2023-2024.

Philosophy

St. Rita School is a community of students, parents, teachers, and ministers of the church. As a community, we strive to nurture Catholic Christian moral principles by providing a caring and positive environment. We believe that it is our responsibility to help students grow spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically, and to see that students' gifts and talents are recognized and enhanced.

Purposes and Objectives

Goal: To nurture Catholic principles.

1. To encourage students to develop a personal relationship with Christ.
2. To teach the basic elements of our faith every day.
3. To encourage our students to respond to the needs of others through service.
4. To prepare and celebrate Eucharistic liturgies and other opportunities for prayer highlighting the themes of the liturgical year.
5. To encourage students to resolve conflict based on gospel principles.
6. To guide students in their preparation for First Eucharist and First Penance and continue to support their reception of the sacraments.
7. To provide an annual retreat for 6th, 7th, & 8th grade students.

Goal: To recognize and encourage the growth of each child's talents and gifts.

1. To provide opportunities for students to participate in the performing arts.
2. To provide opportunities for students to enhance the community's prayer life through their participation in liturgies.
3. To offer students the opportunity to participate in various contests and competitions so that their gifts will be recognized by the greater public.
4. To provide opportunities for students to enhance their leadership abilities.
5. To encourage students to participate in co-curricular activities.

Goal: To create and promote opportunities for parents and parishioners to learn about and become actively involved in life after school.

1. To provide information to parents that will enhance and develop a partnership between home and school.
2. To provide opportunities for parents and parishioners to take part in various school sponsored activities.

Goal: To provide an academically challenging curriculum.

1. To periodically review and update textbooks.
2. To provide computer access.
3. To offer a comprehensive music, art and physical education program.
4. To provide opportunities for students to use the library.
5. To provide a band program for students in grades 4-8.
6. To offer a world language to students in grades preK 4-8.
7. To offer Algebra I or Pre-Algebra to students in grade 8.

History

To learn more about the history of St. Rita School, see a brief description on our website - <http://www.stritaschool.org>.

Role of the Parent/Guardian

It is the responsibility and sacred charge of parents/guardians to provide children with a good Christian education so they may become citizens of both earth and heaven. This education begins and continues each week with the expectation of family participation in the Eucharistic liturgy.

Because of the complex society in which we live, the success and responsibility of educating a child requires the sharing of ideas from both home and school. We encourage parents/guardians to take an active role in the education of their children through both Home and School Association activities and volunteering time and talent for the advancement and enrichment of the school community. Together we can encourage optimal growth.

Parents as Partners

As partners in the educational process at St. Rita School, we ask parents to set rules and limits so that your child:

- Get 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 breakfast, snack, and lunch every day.
- Abides by all rules, regulations, and procedures stated in the school handbook, posted in the classroom, or communicated in letters or notices.

We ask parents to:

- Complete and return to school any requested information promptly.
- Notify the school when the student will be tardy or absent.
- Actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences and parent meetings.
- Notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers.
- Meet all financial obligations to the school.
- Inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health.
- Read school notices and show interest in the student's total education.
- Support the religious and educational goals of the school and attend Mass regularly on Sundays.
- Support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.
- Treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.

- Pay for any damage to school books, school electronic devices, or property, due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student.

Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Rita School admits qualified students of any race, color, national and/or ethnic origin. All rights, privileges, programs and activities are made available at the school. While St. Rita School does not discriminate against students with special needs, a full range of services is not always available to them.

“Students with special needs will be given the same consideration as all applicants. However, prior to admitting a student with diagnosed special needs, a school shall make a determination as to whether or not it believes it can provide an appropriate education for that child. Each child must be considered on an individual basis...” (ADH 5:103)

“Catholic Schools shall accept and relate to students and all members of the school community, for the duration of their years in attendance at their respective schools, according to their God-given, biological sex as male or female consistent with the complementary nature of each, and maintain appropriate distinctions between males and females especially in issues of facilities use, athletic teams, uniforms, and nomenclature.

Catholic schools, and individuals employed with Catholic schools, shall not sponsor, facilitate, or host such organizations, events, or activities that would promote views contrary to Catholic doctrine regarding human sexuality and gender, either on or off campus, or through social media.

A pastoral approach consistent with Catholic Church teachings must be used in addressing matters of gender, including transgenderism and gender dysphoria.” (ADH Gender Policy)

St. Rita hires qualified individuals of any race, ethnicity, national and/or ethnic origin. Those hired receive all the rights and privileges entitled to the employees of the school.

Admission Policy

Students are admitted to St. Rita School on an annual basis. The administration of St. Rita School will determine who is qualified for admission and, if necessary, will also assign priorities for admission. An application deadline will be announced well in advance in the St. Paul VI Parish bulletin and in other local publications.

Prerequisites for admission are:

1. Satisfactory performance on the placement test for the appropriate grade which is administered to new students.
2. A satisfactory record from the previous school.

A family who makes an application to St. Rita completes the necessary forms and pays a non refundable application fee. Upon acceptance, a non-refundable registration fee is required which is paid in one installment. Students who meet these requirements will be admitted as openings occur. If space is limited, the following priorities will be assigned to applications received before the deadline. Late applications will be considered only if space is available.

Priorities for admission to Kindergarten:

1. A student enrolled in the pre-kindergarten program, a child of a member of St. Paul VI Parish (as determined by the pastor), or a sibling enrolled in St. Rita School.

2. A child of a member of another Catholic parish (as determined by his or her pastor).
3. Others

Priorities for admission to all other grades:

1. A child of a member of St. Paul VI Parish (as determined by the pastor) or a sibling of a student enrolled in St. Rita School.
2. A child of a member of another Catholic parish (as determined by his or her pastor).
3. Others

Each child who enrolls is admitted on one trimester probation. After one trimester, students will be considered fully enrolled in St. Rita School, unless otherwise notified.

Continuance at St. Rita School for each successive year is based on overall successful achievement of the student and is the decision of the school administration made in the best interests of the individual student. Education of each child is a partnership between parents and the school. If the administration determines that partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the withdrawal of the child. (ADH: 5.504)

Child Abuse and Neglect Laws

St. Rita School abides by all Connecticut child protection laws. CT Statutes chapter 319a - Child Welfare, Sec. 17a-101 identifies all school employees as mandated reporters. This law requires that when a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any child under the age of 18: 1) has been abused or neglected; 2) has had a non-accidental injury (or injury inconsistent with the history given); or 3) is placed at imminent risk of serious harm, the matter will be verbally reported to the State of CT Department of Children and Families (DCF) within 12 hours and that a form will be submitted to DCF within 48 hours. School employees must notify school administration if a report to DCF is going to be made. Failure to report a suspected case of abuse or neglect may result in a state fine, suspension or termination. (ADH)

Spiritual Life

Prayer

Prayer is vital to the St. Rita School community. The school community begins and ends the day with prayer; and each class within the school day also begins with prayer. (ADH: 4.109)

School Liturgies

Well-planned liturgical experiences in accordance with approved liturgical norms shall form an integral part of the religion curriculum of each grade throughout the school year. The celebration of the Eucharist will take place on Fridays and on Holy Days of Obligation during the school year (ADH: 4.112).

Each grade level is responsible for planning liturgies and all should participate. There are also other occasions for prayer as a community. These occasions usually focus on various liturgical seasons.

Sacramental Programs

Sacramental celebrations are parish celebrations and, as such, properly belong in the parish where the student and family worship each weekend. Students in grade 2 prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist through daily classroom instruction. In addition, students are expected to participate in special workshop days and the programs of celebration. Parent meetings in preparation

for these sacraments are an important part of this preparation, and all parents are expected to attend. Children who are not members of St. Paul VI Parish should have the permission of their own pastor to celebrate these sacraments at St. Rita Church (ADH: 4.113).

Times are also provided throughout the year for communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, either for individual classes or for the families in school through the parish.

Participation in any extracurricular activity at St. Rita School is a privilege, and students participating in the activity must be aware that they are representing St. Rita School. In order to be eligible for any extracurricular activity, a student must meet the requirements of the **Academic Life**.

Curriculum

St. Rita School follows the recommended curriculum guidelines of the **Center for Catholic Education & Formation** of the Archdiocese of Hartford in all major subject areas (ADH: 4.102). Grades 6- 8 have a departmentalized program. A more limited departmental arrangement is in place for grades 3, 4 and 5, while primary grades are more self-contained.

Academic Eligibility

Student must maintain an average grade of C- (70) or above in all subjects. A student who does not maintain this average or a student who does not represent him/herself in an acceptable manner may be suspended from participating in extracurricular activities or be placed on probation. The time of suspension/probation will be set by the administration.

Extracurricular activities that have by-laws (including Student Council and National Junior Honor Society) may have their own minimum academic requirements for participation or membership.

Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. School play.
2. Sports teams: Soccer, Baseball, Softball, Basketball, Cheerleading .
3. Student Council.
4. Yearbook.

Parents/guardians will be informed of suspension from extracurricular activities via letter from the principal. Written notification will also be given to the moderators/coaches of the extracurricular activities. Students on suspension may not participate in meetings, club/team sponsored activities, practices, and games.

Students who are suspended from participating in extracurricular activities will be allowed to TRY OUT for an activity. Acceptance into an activity does not automatically indicate full participation in that activity.

Computer/Internet Policy (*reference the Acceptable Use Policy at the end of this Handbook*)

Graduation Requirements

The expectation is that all eighth grade students will master their course of study. If an eighth grade student fails one or more subjects, a plan to guarantee mastery will be created and a diploma will be awarded only after the plan is successfully completed.

Homework

Homework shall be designed to serve a positive purpose, shall be assigned on a regular basis, and shall be closely integrated with class work * (ADH 4.105).

Homework **supports** independent learning and is closely integrated with class work. Homework is usually not more than thirty minutes for Grades 1-3 and usually not more than one hour for Grades 4 and 5.

5. Students in Grades 6-8 are encouraged to take responsibility for their studies by completing daily assignments as well as anticipating long-range assignments. *Students that miss a homework assignment will have one night to complete the assignment. Teachers will contact a parent via email/phone call. If the assignment is not completed by the next class period, the student will receive a zero. If the assignment is handed in late, the student will receive partial credit.*

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to support their child(ren) by providing adequate time for them to complete their homework assignments as well as to provide a suitable place for them to complete their homework. It is important, however, that each student complete his/her own homework independently since it is often used to assess the student's mastery of the material.

Honor Roll for Grades 6-8

To recognize academic achievement, an honor roll program is established based on the following criteria:

High Honors: All As

Honors: As & Bs

Merit: As, Bs and one C

"Schools implementing an honor roll system must include the following subjects when determining honors status: religion, language arts, literature, history/social studies, math, science/health, *world language.

*If taught fewer than three times a week, it need not be considered when determining honor status. (At St. Rita art, music, physical ed, and geography will not be averaged in determining Honors status).

Any grade lower than a B- in a major academic area or lower than an S in a 'special' shall negate honor roll status. In the event that a student receives one C in an academic area, but A's and B's in all other academic areas, the status of honorable mention may be awarded. Behavior must be a consideration in determining honor roll status." (ADH 4.134)

St. Rita School will abide by the above as noted in the Archdiocesan Handbook. If a student does receive one C in an academic area and A's and B's in all other academic areas, the status of Merit will be awarded.

Library

Students have the privilege of borrowing books from the school library. Once in the possession of the student, it is the responsibility of the student to care for the book and to return it to the library in good condition. If books are lost or damaged, the student will be assessed for the book's replacement cost.

Newsletter

A school newsletter is published weekly and is sent via email. A calendar of events and the newsletter may also be found on the school website (www.stritaschool.org).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not acceptable. It is the taking of another's work, ideas or creative ability without proper permission. Stealing another's work includes student to student plagiarism. Copying of student work is also not acceptable. If a student's work is found to hold plagiarized information s/he will receive a "0" for the given assignment. The student will redo the assignment and may earn up to 50% on the assignment. If a student plagiarizes, his/her parents will be contacted by the teacher. Repeated incidents of plagiarism may result in more serious consequences.

Progress Reports

Parents/Guardians of students in grades 4 – 8 may view their child's grades and achievement at any time during the school year. Progress reports will be distributed mid-trimester to those whose grades are below 70%. Parents also have the ability through the EduConnect Program to receive progress reports twice a month.

Teachers also contact parents/guardians regarding their child's progress more informally throughout the school year. Parents/Guardians may also request conferences with their child's teacher(s).

Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are held during the first and second trimester of the school year.

Promotion/Retention

Students are promoted once a year based on the student's satisfactory completion of the grade requirements (ADH: 5.302). This promotion indicates that they have mastered the curriculum for the given course of study. The failure to pass two or more subjects indicates that the student has not successfully completed the course of study. In this case, the student may be retained in his/her current grade level so that the curriculum can be mastered.

Teachers will be in frequent communication with parents/guardians regarding specific challenges to the student's learning. Parents/guardians will be notified about the recommendation to retain a student by the end of the second trimester. The administration reserves the right to make the final decision regarding a student's retention or promotion.

In some cases promotion will be given on the condition that a student attends summer school or engages a tutor and successfully masters a given curriculum area. Either the summer school or tutor must be pre-approved by the administration.

Report Cards

Report cards are distributed three times during the school year for grades K-8, and *twice* for Pre-K. The grading scale and frequency of distribution are established by the **Center for Catholic Education & Formation** of the Archdiocese of Hartford (ADH: 4.134).

The following grading scales are now in use:

Grades 1-3

5= Consistently exceeds grade level expectations for this term.

4= Consistently achieved developmentally appropriate skills and/or expectations for this term.

3=Approaching mastery of developmentally appropriate skills and/or expectations for this term. 2=

Approaching proficiency toward developmentally appropriate skills and/or expectations for this term. 1-

Difficulty meeting developmentally appropriate skills and/or expectations for this term. I-Incomplete work for this term

*O= Outstanding

*S= Satisfactory

*U= Unsatisfactory

* For use in subject areas that meet less than three times a week: Art, Music, World Language, and P.E.

Grades 4-8

A+ 100-98	C+ 79-72
A 97-94	C 76-73
A- 93-90	C- 72-70
B+ 89-87	D- 69-65
B 86-83	F Below 65
B- 82-80	Failing

For classes that meet once a week, an S for Satisfactory work, an O for Outstanding work, or a U for Unsatisfactory work is given. No specific grade is given for Library. Work done for this class is incorporated into other class subjects.

School Records

The official cumulative record of the Archdiocese of Hartford will be used at St. Rita School and kept on file in the school office. A duplicate record will be mailed to any school to which a student is transferred or promoted once a release form has been signed by the parent/guardian. All material in the student's file shall be treated as confidential and shall be accessible only to the Principal, members of the professional staff, and the parents/guardians (ADH: 5.404). Release to any others will require written permission of the parent/guardian or a court subpoena. If a parent/guardian wishes to review his/her child(ren)'s cumulative file, a request for review must be presented in writing to the school office at least 24 hours prior to the review.

Standardized Testing

St. Rita School follows the standardized testing program established each year by the Center for Catholic Education & Formation of the Archdiocese of Hartford (ADH 4.135). The NWEA MAP Test will be administered to Grades 1-8 three times a year starting in the Fall.

Daily Life

Absence

Excessive absences (60) or the equivalent of 60 days including tardies can be cause for a student to be retained. Students are to bring a written excuse explaining each absence. The note must be dated, and signed by the parent/guardian. Please indicate the day(s) of the absence. An absence of one half day causes a student to lose perfect attendance. Students ARRIVING AFTER 11:25 a.m. or LEAVING BEFORE

11:25 a.m. will be considered ABSENT for one half day.

Any student who is absent from school may not participate in any extracurricular activities on that particular day.

Students must make arrangements with their teacher(s) regarding the completion of assignments. In grades 5-8, it is the responsibility of the student to communicate with each of his/her teachers upon his/her return to school.

Parents/Guardians may request work from teachers if a child is out of school due to illness. Teachers must be given time to prepare the child's work. If a parent/guardian will be picking up work for his/her child, then it is necessary to check in at the office.

Asbestos

At the beginning of each school year in compliance with AHERA regulations, we are required to inform all those associated with St. Rita School of the Asbestos Inspection Report and Management Plan. A copy of the plan is available in the school office.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend school for 180 days according to Connecticut School Attendance Law and as reflected in the school calendar of the Archdiocese of Hartford. Parents/Guardians **must** call the office (203-248-3114) or send an email to office.stritaschool@gmail.com by 9:00 a.m. to report a child's/children's absence. This call/email assures the school that students are safe. The school office will contact parents/guardians who do not report absences.

When a child is absent, the parent/guardian must call the office by 9:00 AM each day of the absence. Parents may also send a note in advance, report the absence in person on the day of the absence or email the office.

If a student is absent for 5 consecutive days or more due to illness, a doctor's note for the absence is required upon the child's return.

Any child exhibiting symptoms of severe cold, fever, flu, diarrhea, or vomiting should be kept at home till the symptoms have been gone for 24 hours. **Parents must follow health protocol guidelines with regard to illness and travel.**

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times, so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility. Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignmentments will be given in anticipation of the vacation.

St. Rita School will make every effort to work with parents to address chronic absences and tardiness. If improvement in attendance does not occur, chronic absences or tardiness may be viewed as educational neglect and, as such, result in a report to Department of Children and Families.

Before and After Care Programs

St. Rita School has both before-school and after-school programs on site. All policies found in this handbook apply to the before- and after-school programs.

Before School

The Before-School Program begins at 7:00 A.M. (This includes days with a **delay** due to inclement weather). Children will enter school using the gym doors. A fee of **\$6.00** for K-8 students, and **\$8.00** for Pre-K students, is paid using the PayPal account set up on-line using the before and aftercare portal . This fee will be charged to any student who arrives prior to 8:00 AM. **The fee for delayed opening days will be \$20.00 for students K-8 and \$ 24.00 for Pre-K students as care is provided from 7:00 A.M. -10:15 A.M.**

After School

Supervision in the After-School program is provided from dismissal until, but no later than, 5:30 p.m. When families are late in picking up their child(ren) a late fee of \$50.00 per 15-minute period after 5:30 p.m. will be charged. Parents/Guardians are to register and pay for Before and Aftercare on-line by creating an account. A parent/guardian must sign their child(ren) out when picking them up at the end of the day. The fee for the program is **\$18.00 per day per child** in grades K-8 and **\$21.00** for a PreK student or **\$40.00** per day for a family of 3 or more children. The After School Program is also available during half-days unless designated otherwise in the weekly News and Notes. The cost for half-days is **\$40.00** per child K-8 and **\$40.00** for PreK students, or **\$84.00** per family of 3 or more children. There will be NO After School program on half-days prior to holidays. There will be no aftercare on early dismissal days due to inclement weather. Half-day after care is available from 12 noon until 3 pm

[Online Before & After Care link](#)

Bicycles

Students in Grades 5 – 8 are permitted to ride bicycles to school. They must walk their bicycles on school property, wear a helmet, and park and lock the bicycle in the designated bike rack. Anyone not following these rules will lose their bike riding privileges. St. Rita School is not responsible for damage to bikes on school property.

Busing

Free transportation is provided for all students who live in Hamden, more than one mile from the school. Bus regulations are compiled by the Town of Hamden and the Hamden Board of Education. The following rules apply to those students attending St. Rita School and riding on school buses furnished by the town:

1. The driver shall be in charge of the bus and report any misbehavior to the principal.
2. Students must not leave their seats until the bus has stopped. Upon entering or leaving the bus, no student shall injure or disturb other students.
3. No eating or drinking is allowed on the school bus at any time. The use of electronic devices is not allowed on a school bus. The transport of such items on a school bus may be *allowed only if the student has been requested to do so in writing by a teacher or school administrator*.
4. Only persons authorized by the Central Office will be allowed to ride any school bus.
5. Students are not allowed to ride on any school bus other than the one assigned unless they have received permission from the St. Rita School Office/Hamden Central Office and are residents of Hamden. Parents must contact the St. Rita School Office in a timely manner to seek permission.
6. Those things which are not appropriate on school property are not appropriate on a school bus.
7. The privilege of riding the bus may be denied to any student for inappropriate behavior. Such behavior is intolerable since it directly comprises the physical safety of our children.
8. Bus Incident Report
 - a. a **first** Bus Incident Report will result in the student's receiving a warning of suspension from riding the bus;
 - b. a **second** Bus Incident Report will result in suspension from riding the bus for a period of time;
 - c. a **third** Bus Incident Report will result in suspension from riding the bus for the remainder of the school year.
9. Any change in a child's normal transportation routine must be requested in writing by the parent/guardian and approved by the school administration.

Communication

In keeping with the church's principle of subsidiarity, problems should be resolved by seeking resolution with those who are involved with the conflict. Thus, if a difficulty arises between parent/guardian and teacher, the resolution must begin with these two parties. If the difficulty is not resolved, then the parent/guardian may contact the administrator to seek resolution. If matters remain unresolved, then the parent/guardian may contact the pastor to seek resolution.

To contact a teacher or administrator, the parent may send in a written note to the teacher/administrator, call the office to speak with a teacher/administrator, leave a voicemail for the teacher/administrator, or email the teacher's school email address. Parents should refrain from calling teachers/administrators at home.

Phone calls or emails will be answered within 24 hours, except for weekends or vacations. Emails

sent after 5:00 p.m. will be answered after 8:00 a.m. the following school day. All communication to or from students must go through the school office during the school day, as well as during the Before or After School Programs.

Crisis Plan/Safe Environment

An established crisis plan that contains building-wide safety guidelines in all areas is reviewed and updated each year. State law requires that all schools conduct a monthly fire drill. Lock down drills will also be conducted.

Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Other Personal Possessions

Users must adhere to local school policy regarding the use of electronic devices (ADH: 5.509). Students are not permitted to use cell phones/**smart watches** at any time in the school building during school hours. (This includes before and after school care). Cell phones/**smart watches** will be confiscated if seen or heard. Cell phones/**smart watches** or other technological devices will be handed-in to all homeroom teachers at the beginning of the school day and will be secured and returned to the students at the end of the day. Educators may check phones, emails, photos, messages, and other information on students' electronic devices while on school property when there is suspicion of inappropriate activity. Consistent disregard for this policy can result in losing the privilege of bringing a phone to school. Handheld game consoles, mp3 players, iPods, other music devices, trading cards, toys, etc., and any item that will detract from a learning situation are not allowed at school at any time.

Upon reasonable suspicion of inappropriate activity that may subject a student to any level of discipline, or in the interests of safety of students and staff, the principal and her designee may search students' desks, lockers, personal belongings, and anything brought onto school property including, but not limited to, handbags, briefcases, purses, backpacks, clothing, cell phones or other electronic devices and the content within such devices such as emails, photos, messages, or other information. The school administration may seize any such items and retain them until the end of the school day or longer. The school administration will have the prerogative to turn over any such items to the police if there is evidence of illegal activity. The local police, using drug detecting dogs, may be invited into the school on a random basis to search lockers as a proactive, preventative measure (ADH: 5:502).

For safety reasons, key chains, toys, dolls, trinkets, etc., will not be permitted on the outside of backpacks. Backpacks on wheels are not allowed. Items in violation will be confiscated and must be claimed by a parent/guardian in the office. The school administration will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of these items in the school.

The school is not responsible for the loss of any clothing or other personal possessions. There is a lost-and-found container on the first floor where items may be retrieved.

Field Trips

School-sponsored field trips are a privilege, not a right. They are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals. Transportation for field trips is arranged via private carriers. According to Archdiocesan Policy*(ADH 4.125), overnight field trips are not allowed. Individual teachers, in consultation with the administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct. A written official permission slip, signed by the parent/guardian, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. A completed permission slip received by fax is acceptable with parent/guardian signature. Verbal permission cannot be accepted. Students participating in the field trip must ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class. Students will be required to wear either their regular school uniform or the gym uniform. The final decision will be determined by the teacher. Cell phones may not be carried on field trips without the permission of the teacher. Parents/Guardians

who accompany a class on a field trip will be given Chaperone Guidelines to follow while on the field trip. All chaperones are responsible for following these guidelines. In order for parents to volunteer as chaperones, the Virtus Program (Protecting God's Children) must be completed and a background check must be on file.

Health Policies

St. Rita School is served by personnel assigned by the Hamden Schools Health Service. If your child is ill, you must call/email the school office before 9:00 a.m. to report it so that the nurse is made aware of any illness that may be communicable. We ask that parents give immediate attention to any notice sent home by the school nurse.

St. Rita School is required to follow state law concerning immunization requirements for students. All students must have required immunizations prior to being allowed to attend school, unless exempted by law. Exceptions are possible only if the child "...presents a certificate from a physician stating that, in the opinion of such physician, such immunization is medically contra-indicated because of the physical condition of such a child." The Catholic Church is fully in accord with the use of vaccinations. Therefore, it is difficult to justify a religious exemption in a Catholic school (ADH: 5.601). A physical examination by a doctor and immunizations are required for students entering Kindergarten, Grade 7, or those students from out of state who will be attending St. Rita School. *Health assessments for 7th graders must be completed between May of 5th grade year and the first day of 7th grade.* Each student's health records will be maintained in the health office in accordance with state and local regulations. Please provide a copy of COVID vaccine card, if vaccinated. When a student graduates or transfers to another school, the records will be sent to the receiving school once a release of records form is received.

Connecticut State Law requires a written order from a licensed physician and written authorization from a parent/guardian for the school nurse or, in the absence of the nurse, the administrator or teacher, to administer any medication, both prescription and non-prescription.

No medications (including over the counter medications) will be given to any student without a written order from a physician. No student may carry on their person a prescription or non-prescription drug without the explicit permission of the school nurse.

With respect to food, students are not allowed to share food at any time in school. All teachers and administrators are bound by law to inform the Department of Children and Families if abuse of any kind is suspected.

Lost and Found

Lost articles are placed in the lost and found bin found in the gym underneath the Home-School Bulletin Board. Parents/Guardians are asked to clearly mark their child(ren)'s possessions. After a period of time, if articles are not claimed, they will be brought to a charitable organization.

Lunch

Students have the option of bringing their lunch from home or purchasing hot lunch on a monthly basis. All lunch orders will be placed on-line using <http://stritaschool.hotlunches.net> and payment will be made via Paypal. All families must register and create an account to access the hot lunch program. Milk may be purchased on a yearly basis.

- Any beverage brought from home must be in unbreakable containers.
- Parents should not bring lunches from carry-out restaurants, nor should they schedule delivery of lunches from these restaurants directly to the school.
- To lessen the risk of causing an allergic reaction in students with food allergies, students are asked not to share food with anyone.

For students with food allergies, a specific table is provided for eating lunch. Parents/guardians in grades 3-8 may opt to have their child sit at lunch tables that are not specifically designated for students with food related allergies. A form for this option must be requested.

Parents are asked to refrain from bringing in lunches from fast-food restaurants for lunch.

Messages and Deliveries

All communications and deliveries for students and teachers must be made through the office. Messages for students and teachers will be delivered at times that do not disrupt classroom activities. Students are permitted to use the school phone for emergencies only and must have permission from the office. No calls by students will be permitted for forgotten gym clothes, homework, projects or Chromebooks.

No party invitations of any kind, in any grade, are to be given out in the classroom. They should be sent to family's homes.

Notification of Emergency Closing (including Inclement Weather Notifications)

Notifications of school closings due to inclement weather prior to the school day's start will be on local radio and TV. (Under normal circumstances if HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED due to inclement weather ST. RITA SCHOOL will be closed unless a phone call/email is sent changing the message). It is suggested to watch WTNH or other local TV or radio stations for information regarding school closings.

If it is necessary to close school due to unforeseen circumstances parents/guardians will be notified using the designated primary email address and primary cell phone numbers indicated by parents on the school portal. It is important that parents/guardians keep these numbers and email addresses current at all times. Parents may update their personal information at any time by logging on to the EduConnect parent portal.

Opening Exercises

Students in grades K-8 will go directly to their classrooms upon arrival at school. There will be morning prayer, pledge of allegiance and announcements.

Parking

Arrival: A morning drop-off area has been designated with a one-way entrance from Gillies Road and an exit onto Edgemere Road. A crossing guard is provided at the top of Gillies Road for the safety of the students. ALL ARE TO CROSS INTO THE SCHOOL GROUNDS WITH THE CROSSING GUARD.

For a child who needs adult assistance to exit your vehicle, park your car away from the building, turn off the engine, exit the car, take your child's hand, and walk your child to the entrance of the school. DURING THE SCHOOL DAY: Family cars are not permitted beyond designated areas in the school lot from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. unless special permission has been granted from the principal because of a student's incapacity.

Dismissal: At dismissal, family cars should be parked in the space provided in the church lot on the west side of Whitney Avenue. Parents/guardians should then walk to the schoolyard to meet their children.

Students who are walkers in grades Kindergarten through grade 8 will be dismissed alphabetically so that parents with more than one child will not need to wait. Middle School students will exit the building via the red doors. Grades Kindergarten through grade 5 will exit via the front doors. Bus students will remain in their homerooms till their bus numbers are called. Once their bus is called they will exit the building via the red doors.

- At 2:45, students with the last names ending in A-H will be dismissed. They will leave through the front doors. Two teachers will be stationed outside those doors monitoring children as they leave.

- At 2:50, students with the last names ending in I-P will be dismissed.
- At 2:55, students with the last names ending in Q-Z will be dismissed.

If students have not been picked up by 3:00, they will go to the After School Program and parents will be charged a fee.

Traffic cones are placed across the entrance to the school lot on Gillies Road to prevent cars from entering the lot while dismissal is in progress. A crossing guard is at the corner of Whitney Avenue and Gillies Road to assist in crossing the students.

Encouraging your child/children to cross between cars or away from the crossing guard is encouraging him/them to be careless and to disregard authority.

Please note: Do not park in areas designated as No Parking Zones. Police will enforce this directive.

Playground

The playground is part of the St. Rita School facility and is therefore private property. It is to be used only by current students in grades K-5. Due to safety concerns, the playground is not to be used by any child younger than kindergarten. During the school day, the playground will be opened for students to use during recess under teacher supervision. At the end of the school day, the playground will be locked and only the students in the After School Program will be allowed to use it under the supervision of the after school teachers. The playground will remain locked during the evenings and on the weekends.

Pets

For reasons of safety, no pets are allowed on the school grounds unless authorized by the administration.

Photo/Video Release

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must sign off on the last page of the handbook if they do not want their child/ren to be photographed and/or have their pictures posted in school publications. Photos may involve a particular school activity for use on the website or other publications, including Center for Catholic Education & Formation and the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools.

Release of Students from School

No student shall be released from school or leave the school grounds without the approval of the principal. A request for early dismissal must be in writing, and the student must be signed out in the main office. The person picking up the student is to wait in the office area. Early dismissal for extracurricular activities outside of school sponsored activities is discouraged. Exceptions can be made with permission.

Students will not be released into the custody of anyone other than a parent without a written authorization from the parent(s).

In the case of divorce, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide documentation if the non-custodial parent is to be denied access to his/her child.

Every effort should be made to arrange dental and medical appointments outside of school time. In the case of an emergency, parents or guardians will be notified. For this reason, emergency addresses and phone numbers of persons to contact must be on file in the school office and with the nurse. **The Parent/guardian is responsible for informing the school if there are any changes to emergency contact information.**

School Attire

Boys and girls wear uniforms from the first day of school to the last day.

Uniform Policy:

ALL STUDENTS IN PRE-K THROUGH GRADE 8 MUST BE IN COMPLETE UNIFORM at all times, including traveling to-and-from school. Uniforms may be purchased through [Dennis Uniform](#)

Pre-K:

Summer Uniforms are worn May - September

Winter Uniforms are worn October - April

Girls:

- Green Jersey Jumper or uniform shorts or pants
- Green knit shirt with the St. Rita logo
- Sneakers and socks are to be worn

Boys:

- Uniform Khaki shorts or pants
- Green knit uniform shirt
- Sneakers and socks are to be worn

Pre-K Boys and Girls can wear the Gym uniform

NO LIGHT UP SNEAKERS or SNEAKERS with WHEELS or that make NOISE

Girls Grades K-3

- St. Rita jumper
- White turtleneck or white peter-pan collar (long or short sleeve)
- Navy or green tights, knee-high socks or white crew or quarter socks
- Green cardigan sweater (optional)
- Khaki pants **optional in the Winter**

Girls Grades 4 and 5

- Uniform skort
- Uniform NAVY shirt with band bottom
- Navy or green tights, knee-high socks or white crew or quarter socks
- Khaki pants **optional in the Winter**

Girls Grades 6-8

- Uniform skort
- NAVY Uniform shirt with band bottom
- Uniform green pullover or cardigan sweater (OPTIONAL)

Boys Grades K-5

- Khaki pants with brown or black belt
- Green turtle neck with St. Rita logo
- Green knit long or short sleeved shirt with St. Rita logo
- Uniform green pullover or cardigan sweater (OPTIONAL)

- Navy, green or white crew or quarter socks

Boys Grades 6-8

- Khaki pants with brown or black belt
- Green knit long or short sleeved shirt with St. Rita logo
- Uniform green pullover or cardigan sweater (OPTIONAL)
- Navy, green or white crew or quarter socks

**St. Rita green fleeces are acceptable for all grades,
but not with gym uniforms.**

The length for the girls' jumper, skort, and all shorts must be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee. Girls and boys wear a black, brown, or maroon penny loafer, tassel loafer, or oxford style shoe. No Sandals, chunk style, stack or platform shoes are not permitted. Heels may be no more than one inch. All shoes must have backs.

Summer Uniform

K-8 for everyone:

- Khaki shorts
- Green/White shirt with St. Rita logo
- Crew or quarter white or khaki socks
- Gym sneakers or school shoes – Sneakers may not have wheels, light up or make noise.
- Brown belt

The summer uniform may be worn during the months of August, September, May, and June. 17

Gym Uniform

Gym uniforms with the St. Rita Crusader logos on them are purchased through [Dennis Uniform](#). Sneakers are to be worn at all times with socks. Sneakers may not have wheels, light up or make noise. A Middle School optional warm-up suit is also offered at Dennis Uniforms. This is the only attire allowed for gym. Failure to wear the appropriate gym uniform will keep the student from participating in Physical Education class that day. This may affect the student's grade. **No green fleeces are allowed to be worn with gym uniforms.**

Personal Attire and Appearance

All students are to be well-groomed during the school day. Uniforms are to be clean and neat and free of tears and holes. Your school uniform confirms your attendance at the school and is a symbol of unity within the school community. It minimizes distractions in the learning process. It is important that you take pride in your appearance by wearing your complete uniform, always remembering that by wearing it inside and outside the classroom and the school you are representing the school and your behavior should be a credit to both yourself and the school community.

Neatness in one's appearance and overall cleanliness is an indication of a healthy attitude and a positive self-image.

Girls and boys must wear hair styles that are moderate and sensible and adhere to the school guidelines.

Hair Styles

- Hair should be kept clean and neatly trimmed
- Hair styles cannot be extreme or distracting. (No Mohawks, shaved back and sides, etc.)
- Hair cannot be colored or dyed in extreme or unusual colors. Hair extensions must be in natural colors –
- No artificial reds, purples, etc.
- Hair ornaments, including beads, must be small, dark in color, and limited in number
- Boy's hair must be kept above their shirt collar and can be no longer than the middle of their ear.
- Hair must fall above the eyebrows.
- Ponytails are not allowed for boys.

Girls may wear scrunchies, hair clips, headbands, bows, etc. in the hair (not the wrist) and should be simple, without excessive ornamentation, and should be appropriate for school. Jewelry, when worn, must be simple and not distracting. Post-type, non-dangling earrings are the only ones permitted, one per ear, worn in the lobe. No choker-style necklaces are permitted. Boys are not to wear any type of earring in school. No other body piercing is allowed. No tattoos are allowed. Make-up is not to be worn in school.

On days when uniforms are not required, students will be given general guidelines for appropriate dress. Generally dress is to be modest at all times and neat in appearance. No inappropriate slogans or logos are permitted. If a student's apparel is deemed inappropriate, a parent/guardian may be called to bring a replacement for the inappropriate apparel. Please note that there should be a distinction between a dress-up day and a free dress day.

School Schedule

Pre-Kindergarten:

Half-Day session..... 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Full Day session..... 8:30 a.m -2:30 p.m

Kindergarten - Grade 8

Full Day 8:15 a.m. - 2:40 p.m.

Early Dismissal Day 8:15 a.m. - 12:00 noon

For students not in before- or after-school care, supervision of students in grades K-8 begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m.

School Office Hours are usually from 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Tardy Arrival

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the student arrives on time for school. Students in Grades K-8 not in their homeroom by the start of morning prayer and announcements are considered tardy and will receive a late pass to take to the homeroom teacher. Chronic tardiness will be dealt with by the principal and the teacher. If tardiness becomes frequent and the school judges that the child is in whole or in part responsible for the lateness, the school may take disciplinary action such as having the child serve detention to make up for the time missed. Whether or not the student is responsible for tardiness, if it has an adverse effect on the progress of the child, the school may require the student to make up for the missed time.

Lateness to class disrupts learning. Excessive lateness has a direct impact on a student's daily

academic performance. Students who are late begin the day with more anxiety and are less prepared to learn.

Service Learning

Global and community service is encouraged at St. Rita School from the earliest age. Children have opportunities to provide service to the community. Globally, they have reached out to help fund the *Clear Water Initiative* and to participate in *Homes for the Homeless* in Reynosa, Mexico, *Heart 2 Heart*...

Student Assignment Pad

The student assignment pad is to be used to communicate with the teachers in grades 2-8. It is the responsibility of the student to carry their assignment pad with them to all classes to record homework assignments. Parents should check their child's assignment pad for homework and communication. A teacher may require a parent to sign the communication or homework assignment.

Students in the Building After Hours

Students are not permitted to return to their classrooms once they have been dismissed nor to come to school on weekends to get forgotten materials. Students in the school for after-school activities will not be permitted to return to their classrooms. Students are given ample time to prepare their books and materials at the end of the day to take home. We encourage students to take home only the books necessary for daily assignments.

Students with Immobilizing Devices

Any student with an immobilizing device will be restricted from recess and Physical Education. This includes any practice or game with a school or team sport.

- If a student has a doctor's note, they will be restricted until such a time as the doctor sends a note clearing the student for physical activity or specifying limitations.
- If the note comes from a parent, the nurse has the discretion to recommend a doctor's examination for injury assessment and/or require a doctor's note to return to Physical Education/recess.
- Without a doctor or parent note, your child will be restricted from Physical Education/recess until further clarification regarding the injury is received. The school nurse has the discretion to recommend a doctor's examination and/or require a doctor's note to return to Physical Education/recess.
- If a student cannot attend Physical Education class for any reason, at the teacher's discretion, he/she will be responsible for an alternative assignment, such as a written assignment, in order to receive credit for the class he/she is missing.

Textbooks

All hard-cover textbooks are to be covered and kept covered throughout the school year. Book covers with adhesive backing should not be used. No marks should be made in the books. Any books damaged must be paid for by the student before a new book is issued. Textbooks will also be assessed for damage at the end of the school year and if necessary, payment for damages will be required. (This includes damages to chromebooks and tablets by those in the 1:1 chromebook and tablet programs).

Vacation Times

Vacations should be planned in accordance with the school calendar which is coordinated as much

as possible with the Archdiocese of Hartford and the Town of Hamden. Children who are absent for vacations at times other than those listed on the school calendar will not receive assignments to be done while they are away. A suitable amount of time as determined by the classroom teacher will be given for the completion of work missed. Once the time is completed, work that is unfinished will be graded as a "0". A student will be responsible for any tests taken by the class while he/she is away. Sufficient time will be given to prepare for the test(s).

Visitors to School

Visitors are welcome in the school. All visitors are required to sign in and sign out in the office.

Volunteers

All volunteers must be Virtus trained, vaccinated and have a background check on file in order to participate in school related events, including field day.

Discipline

General Behavior

For many reasons, discipline is necessary in all walks of life. Education requires a certain amount of it in order for a student to achieve success in the various areas of learning. In the early years of his/her life, a child should grow to appreciate the value of self-control, perseverance, responsibility, and courtesy. Discipline, therefore, is an essential part of the learning process as well as a result of it. One of the primary goals of a Catholic education is to teach the student how to create a Christian community based on the values of Jesus himself. Each student at St. Rita School must continually grow in self respect and respect for others. At the same time, the student must develop a special appreciation for those who are in a position of authority and responsible for his/her well-being. Thus, in order to foster good Christian behavior and study habits, appreciation for the environment and concern for the material goods of this earth, and to teach students to allow others the freedom to pursue this goal, rules and regulations are established. These set the direction for future decisions and the consequences which may result.

Lunchroom Behavior

Students in Grades K-8 eat in the lunchroom where they are expected to use good manners and courtesy toward each other, teachers, the adult supervisors, and kitchen personnel. No student(s) will be released from the lunchroom unless the teacher(s) on lunch duty has come to take them outside or to their classrooms for recess or a teacher(s) meets the student(s) to take him/her for a special assignment or project, etc., or a teacher has signed a note asking for students to come to a classroom during lunchtime.

St. Rita students gather daily at mealtime to eat and share pleasant conversation with classmates.

Failure to live according to this standard includes but is not limited to the following actions:

- a. Inappropriate table manners
- b. Throwing food ~ *requires clean -up*
- c. Taking food from another
- d. Disturbing another's food
- e. Loud, boisterous voices
- f. Carrying, eating food outside the lunchroom without permission

Schoolyard Behavior

It is expected that all students use good judgment when playing games by avoiding rough behavior. The teacher or other adult on playground duty will be the final decision-maker as to what constitutes harmful or unnecessarily rough behavior in the schoolyard. All students are to respect the teacher or other adult on duty in the morning, at lunchtime, or on bus duty. Any disrespect will result in suspension from the schoolyard for an appropriate length of time. No baseballs or bats, tennis balls or hard balls **or**

footballs may be used during recess time in the school yard.

Discipline Policies

Bullying

Bullying is prohibited in all Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Hartford (ADH: 5.513). It will not be tolerated during the school day or during any school-sponsored activities on or off the school grounds. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ. This behavior is against the fundamental tenet of "Love your neighbor as yourself," destroys respect for the dignity of the student, undermines the Christian atmosphere of the school, and deprives the student of a safe and caring learning environment. Bullying is defined as any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity. Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault, extortion, oral or written threats, (seriously, in jest, or online), teasing, putdowns, name calling, threatening looks, gestures or actions, cruel rumors, false accusations, and social isolation.

Location

Bullying in violation of school policy must occur on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity (which includes transportation services). Conduct that occurs off-campus, eg. harassment over the Internet, or physical intimidation in the community, is not bullying under the policy unless it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

Scope of Policy:

This bullying policy is to be applied to Kindergarten through Grade Eight at school. This policy will not apply to the preschool program. It is recognized that these children are very young and are learning social skills. Unkind acts that occur at the preschool level will be handled by the child's teacher. The teacher will work with the student, family, and principal (as needed) to address these situations. Any teacher or staff member who observes or becomes aware of acts of bullying shall report this to a school administrator. Parents may also report suspected acts of bullying to any teacher, who shall report the same to a school administrator, or directly to the school administrators. The administrator will enter reported incidents from parents, students, or those left anonymously into a "Bullying Logbook." All incidents reported shall be recorded in the bullying logbook and will include the name(s) of the victim(s), the individual(s) committing the bullying act(s), a description of the act(s) committed, and the date(s) of the incident. The "Bullying Logbook" will remain the property of the administration.

Any student who wishes to report an incident or incidents of bullying may do so through a teacher or through a school administrator. Students may also report any incidents of bullying anonymously to a teacher or a school administrator. These anonymous reports should be placed in a sealed envelope addressed to a school administrator and sent to the office in the office envelope. Anonymous reports received by teachers should also be put in a sealed envelope addressed to the principal with the teacher's name on an inner envelope.

Once a suspected bullying incident has been reported, a school administrator shall investigate the circumstances of the incident to determine if bullying has occurred. The school administrator will review the logbook to also see if a pattern is emerging and will use that as a tool of investigation. Investigation of bullying incidents may also include interviews and conversations with students (including witnesses, the victims(s), and the student(s) doing the bullying), parents, faculty, and staff. Family issues will also be taken into consideration. Parents of the children involved will be made aware of the incidents.

Once the investigation is complete, a school administrator will determine the consequences for the individual(s) on a case by case, age appropriate basis. The consequences may range from community service through suspension and expulsion. The school administrator will, in his/her discretion, consider the nature, frequency and circumstances of the alleged offenses. In addition, the age and grade of the

student will be considered. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of “bullying” will generally warrant disciplinary action against the student responsible for bullying, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action is a matter for the professional discretion of the principal. It is the goal of the administration, faculty, and staff to have the child achieves redemption, learns, and stops the bullying. Parents of all children who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents of students against whom such acts are directed, will be notified.

Depending on the severity of the incident, or series of incidents, the administrator may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan, separating and supervising the students involved, providing staff support for students as necessary, reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate, and developing a supervision plan with parents. Please note that bullying may take several forms:

Student to student

Adult to student

Adult to Adult

Harassment

St. Rita School does not condone any form of harassment. All individuals are to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment in any form is prohibited. The prohibition against acts of harassment applies to all individuals involved in the school.

- Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances.
- Verbal harassment includes derogatory comments, jokes, or slurs; it also can include belligerent or threatening words spoken to another individual.
- Physical harassment includes unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, and deliberate impending or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement. Visual harassment includes derogatory, demeaning, or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings, novelties, or gestures.

Any form of harassment (ADH: 5.511) (sexual, verbal, physical, visual) will not be tolerated. A student who harasses another student shall be disciplined and may be expelled from the school.

DETENTIONS:

Detentions may be given for the following infractions but are not limited to:

1. Disrespect to a teacher, staff member, student, or self
2. Inappropriate, foul language or gestures
3. Inappropriate interactions with students, including comments or actions that cause a person’s dignity to be compromised or diminished.
4. Technology infractions include but are not limited to; cell phones/apple watches out on school property and off-task use of electronic devices such as Chromebook or I-Pad
5. Insubordinations/defiance
6. 3 unexcused tardy arrivals, 8:15 is considered late, and in a trimester, is an automatic detention for students in grades 4-8.
7. 3 unexcused tardies in a trimester for students in K-3 warrants communication from the principal.1. Incomplete or improper wearing of the school uniform;

The consequences for the above infractions accumulate during the year and are carried from one

trimester to the next.

A detention requires 30 minutes after school on the day designated by the teacher on the detention form. The form must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school the next day in order for the student to remain after school.

Detentions are to be served as noted on the detention form. If there is a conflict, the parent/guardian is asked to contact the teacher to request rescheduling if possible.

If a student continues the unacceptable behavior s/he can be suspended from extracurricular activities.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

The following behaviors are serious infractions which could result in suspension or expulsion from the school:

1. Behavior which is seriously immoral, profane, vulgar, or obscene;
2. Physical violence;
3. Stealing, destruction of school property/the property of others, or vandalism;
4. Serious threat;
5. Bullying or cyberbullying;
6. Unauthorized absence or leaving the school premises or the classroom without permission;
7. Assault with or possession of a potentially lethal weapon or instrument;
8. Serious insubordination or defiance;
9. Use of the internet to demean, abuse, or put into a negative light, St. Rita School or any other group, organization or individual.
10. Outrageous or scandalous behavior at school or elsewhere which would reflect adversely on Catholic schools or the Catholic Church;
11. Sale of any material on school grounds without proper authorization.

The above list is not to be considered exhaustive.

Suspension (ADH: 5.207) is a temporary removal of a student from his/her regular school program for a specified period of time. Suspension will be considered in cases of serious offense or after lesser disciplinary measures have been ineffective. Grounds for suspension may occur on or off school property, while receiving or awaiting school transportation services, or at any school-sponsored activity. Parents will be notified of the reason for and length of the suspension before it takes place. One suspension will last no longer than five school days. When appropriate, in-school suspension will be imposed in preference to exclusion from school. Students on suspension (in-school or out-of-school) will be responsible for all work taking place in the classroom each day; this includes daily quizzes, scheduled tests, and projects which may be due during the time of the suspension. It is not the responsibility of the school to provide for the instructional time lost during the time of suspension.

Expulsion is the removal of a student from the school program and the transfer to another school. A student may be expelled from school when he/she has engaged in conduct which constitutes a serious violation of school policy; is seriously disruptive of the educational process, which endangers persons or property; or has engaged in repeated violations of school policies, rules and standards of conduct; and when other means of discipline have failed *(ADH: 5.208). Expulsion will be invoked when the student presents a danger to the moral and/or physical well-being of other students or is guilty of prolonged and open disregard for school authority. Expulsion will be considered only after all other measures have been tried and found to be unsuccessful. However, there may be situations which demand immediate removal of a student from the school. If the serious nature of the problem warrants it, expulsion may be the first punishment invoked against the student. A conference with parents/guardians will be held to discuss the seriousness of the student's misbehavior and the decision for expulsion. Working with the teacher(s) and pastor, the principal will communicate the final decision to the

parents/guardians. The Office of Education, Evangelization, and Catechesis will also be notified as soon as the process begins and before a final decision is made.

Conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school, including social media, may result in disciplinary actions including suspension, expulsion, or withdrawal from school.

Finances

Tuition

The tuition rates for each school year for grades PK-8 are established by the School Board with the approval of the pastor. The rates are published during the second trimester of the school year and are effective for the following school year.

Tuition Collection

During the registration process each year which is typically in the second trimester, Tuition Agreements, which explain the tuition plans, are given to each family. A non-refundable deposit of \$150 per returning child or \$250 per new child must accompany the Tuition Agreement in order to hold any seat for the child/children for any academic year. This amount is deducted from the total tuition payment owed to the School. Tuition payments are collected and managed by the Finance Office of the Parish/School through Blackbaud Tuition Management. Parents are expected to meet the demands of their payment choice through Blackbaud in a timely manner. Any family unable to meet tuition payments must notify the Finance Office immediately. The Finance Office, with the approval of the Pastor, will work with the family to create a mutually beneficial payment arrangement to bring the family current. This may require the family to sign an Amended Tuition Agreement. Any family more than two months delinquent without an Amended Tuition Agreement in place may be asked to remove their child/children until a payment arrangement may be achieved.

Once a family presents two non-sufficient funds (NSF) for payment per school year they will not be able to pay by personal checks for the remainder of that school year. Payment will only be accepted in cash or money order form.

The School will not forward any records for a student with an outstanding tuition balance. The final report card will not be sent to students with an outstanding tuition balance at the end of the year. Any outstanding tuition balances and/or fees owed after May 1st by a graduating student must be paid by cash or money order. Fees include fundraising, school events, class trips, athletics, etc.

Any family that exits any academic year owing a delinquent balance must first satisfy the past due balance and then in order to register for a subsequent academic year must pay in full via cash or money order. If this is paid in full the balance of, \$250.00 per child will be considered a non refundable balance.

Any family with a delinquent account may not register their child/children for the St. Rita School Summer Camp Program. The St. Rita School Summer Camp Program follows the same late pick-up policy as stated for the Before/After School Program. Refunds for the Summer Camp Program should be requested before the start of the second camp session. Any request for refunds after the second session begins will be at the discretion of the Pastor.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance applications are available through Blackbaud Aid online during the registration process annually, usually in the spring. Families will be notified of the date the online portal for applications will open and close. There is a nominal fee for applying for financial aid that is paid directly to SMART Aid. If a family is unable to afford the application fee they may appeal in writing to the Finance office for a waiver of the fee. Financial aid is given out on a first come first served basis during

registration as a limited amount exists each year. St. Rita School makes no guarantee of an award for all applicants. St. Rita School will maintain a waiting list as grants do occasionally become available throughout the year. Families that experience hardship during the year are encouraged to contact the Finance office proactively as soon as the hardship occurs regardless of a previous application for financial aid.

Parish Subsidy

St. Paul VI Parish subsidizes St. Rita School with an amount approved by the School Board and Parish Finance Council. Families from St. Paul VI Parish whose children attend St. Rita School are expected to be actively supporting members of the parish. They are expected to contribute to the regular offertory collection of St. Paul VI Parish. This must be done through the parish envelope system or the online giving program. This support is to the parish and is exclusive of donations made through the parish to other charitable causes (e.g. Mission Collection, Archbishop's Annual Appeal, etc.). Parents are asked to consider the principle of justice, especially as it pertains to the amount each parish student is subsidized by St. Paul VI Parish. A minimum of \$10.00 per week or the equivalent of \$520.00 per year is recommended. Families who fail to support the parish will be contacted and may be asked to pay the non-Catholic or unaffiliated rate of tuition.

Catholic parishes without schools, or with schools that have grades different from those at St. Rita School, are required by Archdiocesan regulations to subsidize St. Rita School for an amount set by the Archdiocese. Parishes have the right to refuse payment of this subsidy if the family does not actively support the parish, in which case the family does not have parishioner status.

Home & School Assessment

St. Rita School Association establishes an operating budget every year for its fundraising efforts. Included in this budget is an amount established through the operating budget of the school which is a subsidy to the school.

In 1981, the Home & School Association established a policy that each family is expected to support the school's fundraising activities. Parents are asked to be as generous as possible as all fundraising directly subsidizes the school's operating budget.

Parent/Guardian Organizations

St. Rita School Board

St. Rita School Board advises the administration of St. Rita School in matters pertaining to the general well being of Catholic education. It also assists in the determination of administrative and academic policies for the school. The Board is composed of 10 members:

1. Pastor
2. Principal
3. Ten members appointed by the pastor and principal in consultation with the board.

The ten members of the 2022-2023 School Board are:

- 1. Father Christopher Tiano, Pastor*
- 2. Patricia O'Neil Tiezzi, Principal*
- 3. Beth Smith*
- 4. Maria Cammarota*
- 5. Michael Conklin*
- 6. Sean Gleason*
- 7. Nicholas Grasso*
- 8. Theresa McKeon*
- 9. TBA*

St. Rita Home & School Association

The Home & School Association is the parent organization of the school. Its members are the parents or guardians of the students of St. Rita School in Grades Pre K-8. The purpose of the Home & School Association is to help parents and teachers acquire a profound appreciation for the ideals of Catholic Education, to promote clearer understanding of the mutual education responsibilities of the parents and teachers, and to help subsidize the school budget through fund-raising efforts.

The HSA Board members for 2023-2024 include:

President— Angela Farina

Past President— Kristen Amarone

1st Vice President— Rosa Sullivan

2nd Vice President —Mary Walsh

Recording secretary—Kelli Feiler

Corresponding secretary—Dave Gatto

Student/Parent Directory

The Home & School Association annually prepares a Student/Parent Directory as a means of fostering communication among its members.

Acceptable Use Policy – St. Rita School

(The following policy covers all electronic devices although the word computer is used throughout.)

Introduction

At St. Rita School, we believe that “... technology must be at the service of the human person ... in conformity with the plan and the will of God ... This is a precious resource when placed at the service of (humankind) and promotes integral development for the benefit of all.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2293, #2294).

At St. Rita School, we believe that the use of the school’s technological infrastructure, network and electronic information resources must be in support of education and research, consistent with the educational objectives of St. Rita School. With this in mind, it is important that we remember that our schools are founded for faith development and all tools that we use in the education process keep this fact in the forefront. At St. Rita School we further believe that the parent, student and school form a partnership, which embraces the ideals of the Catholic faith in word and action. By signing the following policy, the parent and students agree that the student will value the advantage of the Internet and all technological resources and not use them in any manner that violates these values and ideals.

This Acceptable Use Policy is consistent with Sections 4.200-205 and 5.510 of the Archdiocesan *Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*. It outlines the guidelines and behaviors that all users are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using any and all personally-owned devices on the school campus. It applies to privately-owned devices accessing private networks/Internet connections while on school property.

Purpose

We believe that technology is a vital means to assist those who carry out the educational ministry of St. Rita School.

We are pleased to offer students of St. Rita School access to our computer network, including access to the Internet. Access to the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with Internet users throughout the world. Even though our system has safeguards, families should be warned that some material accessible through the Internet

might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. While our intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

St. Rita School uses GoGuardian Teacher, a classroom management tool for Chromebooks. It allows teachers to see what is on the screen of every student in their classroom. They can see the active tab the student is currently looking at, as well as any other open tabs in the browser.

To gain access to the Internet, all students under the age of 18 must obtain parental permission. In addition, parents/guardians and students must BOTH sign and return The Family Handbook Agreement and Signature verification form found on the last page of this handbook to the school office by the designated date stated on the form.

St. Rita School Internet Use Policy

Students are responsible for good behavior on the school networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communication apply. Students may have email access for curriculum-related activities and communications under their teacher's direct supervision using a classroom account. The network is provided for students mainly to conduct research. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege and not a right. Access entails responsibility and individual users of St. Rita School's computer network are responsible for their actions. It is presumed that users will comply with school standards and will honor the agreements they have signed.

Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on any server or computer would be private. During school hours, teachers will guide students toward appropriate materials. Outside of school, families bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio, and other potentially offensive media. **The school cannot take responsibility for what is transmitted and accessed via the internet when students are off the school campus.**

Although not an exhaustive list of guidelines, the following are in effect:

1. Students will not use the computer resources for non-academic purposes. Students will not waste or take supplies such as paper, printer cartridges, and discs that are provided by the school. Students will keep the computer work area clean and will not eat or drink near any hardware.
2. Students will not make unauthorized copies of software, and will not give, lend, or sell copies of software to others. Students understand that they will not be allowed to bring software applications, games, or CD-ROMs from home to be used on school equipment without proof of licensure and prior approval of appropriate school personnel.
3. Students will not copy, change, read, or use files from another user without prior permission from that user. Students will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the school's system programs for computer equipment.

4. Students will not do anything that may disrupt or damage the school's computer system or electronic resources. Students will not bring in, or allow access to, materials or websites that may contain viruses.
5. Students will not use the school's computer systems and electronic resources to disturb or harass other computer users or use inappropriate language in my communications. Students will not use obscene, lewd, vulgar, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language when using the school's computer systems and electronic resources. Students will not harass or bully other individuals. Students will not use the school's systems to spread falsehoods or defamatory statements.
6. Students will promptly disclose to teachers or other school officials any messages received or viewed which are seen as inappropriate or which make one feel uncomfortable.
7. Students will not agree to meet anyone that they have met online without parental permission.
8. Students will not use the school's computer system or electronic resources to engage in any illegal act.
9. Students will honor the school's procedures for the storage of information. Students will realize that after prior notice has been given, files may be deleted from the system to protect the integrity of the network or because of space limitations.
10. Students will not use bulletin boards, chat rooms, or social networks for personal use when using the school's technological infrastructure, computers or handheld devices.
11. Students will not reveal personal information, home address, or personal phone number or those of students, teachers, or other staff members. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secrets. The use of the school's technological infrastructure, computers, hand-held devices, and networking resources for commercial activities is not permitted. Their use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.
12. Students understand that there is no expectation of privacy in the use of the school's network or computers. Students understand that school officials may search and examine student use of school computers and handheld devices at any time, and without notice.
13. Parents must realize that due to modern technology and despite all appropriate efforts of the school, children may encounter material on a network/bulletin board that the school does not consider appropriate (i.e., vulgar jokes, statements of belief that some might consider immoral, etc.) The student is responsible for not pursuing material that could be considered offensive and for informing a teacher or other responsible adult should this occur.
14. The use of the school's computers and network is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of these privileges. Vandalism or intentional modification of system settings will result in cancellation of privileges and/or school disciplinary action.

The school reserves the right to seek financial restitution for any damage caused by a student or other user. The system administrator will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decision is final. The administration, faculty, and staff of St. Rita School may request that the system administrator deny,

revoke, or suspend specific user privileges. Violations of the rules and code of ethics described above will be dealt with seriously.

TABLET CARE

All tablets are St. Rita School property and users will follow the Acceptable Use Policy. All tablets are to remain in school in the area designated by the student's teacher. Cords and cables are to be inserted carefully into the iPad to prevent damage.

Tablets and their cases must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, labels or other forms of personalization that are not the property of SRS.

- Tablets must always be within their protective case.
- Tablets are to be cleaned as designated by the teacher. (a soft, dry cloth or anti-static cloth, no cleaners of any type).
- Charging tablets is the responsibility of each teacher/student. Teachers may assign students to aid in charging tablets that remain in school, with supervision.
- Students are not to alter settings without permission (excluding personal settings such as font size, brightness, etc.).
- The device can only be synced with a school provided iTunes account by the school. Only teachers can download music to a student's tablet.
- All apps that teachers require for student tablets are to be authorized by the System Manager.

SRS will synchronize the tablets to contain the necessary apps for school work. Students will not synchronize tablets or add apps through a personal iTunes account. The software/apps originally installed by SRS must remain on the tablet in usable condition and be easily accessible at all times.

Periodic checks of tablets will be made to ensure that students have not removed required apps and/or synced to a personal iTunes account.

Chromebooks

Chromebooks will be used by students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will only be allowed to use the chromebooks in school. They will not be allowed to take the chromebooks home. All chromebooks are St. Rita School property and users will follow the Acceptable Use Policy. An additional addendum outlining proper procedures for the use and care of chromebooks will need to be signed and returned to the school before chromebooks can be issued.

USERS HAVE NO PRIVACY RIGHT TO ANY DATA RECEIVED OR DISSEMINATED ON THE NETWORK. BY UTILIZING THESE ST. RITA SYSTEMS, THEY CONSENT TO ST. RITA SCHOOL'S RIGHT TO AUDIT ALL COMMUNICATIONS, FILES AND DOCUMENTS. IF A USER ACTS INAPPROPRIATELY THROUGH THE COMMUNICATIONS AND/OR STORAGE SYSTEMS, ST. RITA SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REPORT SUCH ACTIONS TO ANY OUTSIDE AUTHORITIES AND/OR TAKE APPROPRIATE INTERNAL DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

As explained in the Acceptable Use Policy, all students are expected to adhere to and support these policies. Any student who does not follow the Acceptable Use Policy of St. Rita School will receive the following consequences:

First Offense:

- Students will have the device taken away for the remainder of the school day.
- A behavior warning will be given to the student.

- Parents will be notified.

Second Offense:

- Depending on the severity of the infraction, the student may receive a behavior detention or further disciplinary action.
- Depending on the severity of the infraction, the student may lose the privilege of the chromebook use for a period of time to be determined by the principal and the system administrator.
- A Parent will be notified.

Student Responsibility Agreement - 1 to 1 Digital Devices Program

Learning technology resources are available to all St Rita students. School email accounts are provided for each student for use in curriculum-related activities and communication with teachers. The smooth operation of the school computer network relies on the proper conduct of the users who must adhere to the following agreement.

As a responsible user I agree that:

The student's digital device, email accounts, blogs, personal web pages, or any other computer based systems provided by the school for student use are not private and may be viewed by staff at any time.

1. Looking after myself

- *Learning technologies at St Rita (including the Internet) are for learning related activities. I acknowledge that my device is **a learning tool and NOT for gaming, watching videos, or instant messaging, etc., while at school** or at home (grades 6-8). Any violation will result in the loss of my user rights and/or further disciplinary action.*
- *While at school, I will ONLY log onto the St Rita network, or school provided digital device using only my OWN username and password, provided by the school. I will keep my user information to myself and not share it with others.*
- *I will treat all learning technologies (iPads, devices, desktops and other technology) with respect and due care. Vandalism, graffiti, or any attempt to harm or destroy the data of others will result in the loss of my user rights and/or further disciplinary action.*
- *I will take care to check the source, accuracy and reliability of any information obtained from the Internet.*
- *I will not access or store offensive images, video or audio on the device, or any other digital storage device.*
- *I will immediately report to staff any inappropriate material that is accidentally accessed.*
- *I will regularly backup my work from my device to my Google Drive and/or other storage media.*
- *School email accounts and any computer-based material created in a school Google account is not private and may be viewed at any time by school staff members.*

2. Looking after others

- *I will abide by copyright law by not copying and redistributing another person's work, and will acknowledge the owners of copyrighted works when I use it.*
- *I will not use digital technologies to harass, bully another student or staff member, and will be respectful of others at all times.*
- *I will not access another's account, folders, files or work.*
- *I will not reveal personal information such as addresses or contact numbers over the Internet, including my own.*
- *I understand that I do not have permission to change/disable any administration accounts, passwords or network settings, or to disable any remote management, on any school supplied device and its software as these are managed by the School to allow access to the school network*

and the necessary learning materials.

- *I understand that engagement in online blogs or postings, such as, but not limited to, MySpace.com®, Xanga®, Friendster®, Facebook®, YouTube®, Instagram, etc., shall result in disciplinary actions, including expulsion, if the content of the student's blogs or postings includes defamatory comments regarding the school, a person's dignity, bullying, harassment, threats, or other inappropriate comments that are contradictory to Catholic teaching.*

3. Looking after property

- *I will properly store and fully charge my device each evening in preparation for the next school day.*
- *I will not leave my device unattended at any time.*
- *I understand that I am not to use my device outside (playground or walkways) during recess and lunchtime, unless specifically directed by a staff member to do so.*
- *I will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that my device is kept clean and not lost or damaged.*
- *I will not modify the application or operating system software provided on any school-supplied device without the permission of the Network Administrators.*
- *I will not knowingly introduce a virus or other harmful software.*
- *I understand as with any materials that are the property of St. Rita's, the care and maintenance of the chrome books, iPads, devices, desktops and other technology and related peripherals are the responsibility of the student while in their care. **If it is determined that student negligence contributed to the loss or damage of a chromebook, iPad, device, desktop, or other technology, the student/family will be responsible for the cost of repair or replacement.***

Right to Amend

The Administration reserves the right to amend the contents of this Handbook for just cause



**THE ST. RITA SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK AGREEMENT 2023-2024
AND SIGNATURE VERIFICATION FORM**

Please download/print/copy this form and return it to the school office by Friday, September 1, 2023.

When enrolling your child in St. Rita School, you are agreeing to abide by and be governed by the St. Rita Family Handbook. We have read and agree to comply with the contents of the Family Handbook. This includes the Acceptable Use Policy. Furthermore, I understand that some materials found on the Internet may be objectionable; therefore, I agree to accept responsibility for guiding my child and conveying to him/her the appropriate standards for selecting, sharing, and exploring information and media. I agree to hold St. Rita School and employees of the school system harmless for any misuse of access to the computer services networks that my child commits. I understand that once signed this agreement is legally binding on me.

Parent/Guardian Signature(s) :

Student(s) Signatures:

_____ **I do not** give permission for my child's/ren's pictures to be used in any public relations item that the school is issuing, including with the Center For Catholic Education & Formation, nor with the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools. This may include newspaper articles, advertising posters, brochures, school publications, videos, and websites.

FAMILY NAME (please print): _____

Date: _____