

# SAINT RITA SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK 2021-2022

*“..The Place to be where the Love of Christ Is Lived and Shared”*

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## 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.



ST. RITA  
SCHOOL  
*of Divine Mercy Parish*

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.***

***NOTE: All policies and procedures in the Return to School Plan supersede anything in this handbook until further notice.***

### PHILOSOPHY

Saint 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 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> 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 the 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 that 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:

- Gets to bed early on school nights
- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
- Is dressed according to the school dress code
- Completes assignments on time
- Has a nutritional 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 to show interest in the student's total education
- Support the religious and educational goals of the school and to 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 to all rights, privileges, programs and activities 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, color, 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 Divine Mercy 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 Divine Mercy 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 Divine Mercy 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)

## **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 ordinarily take place on the first Friday of each month and on Holy Days of Obligation during the school year (ADH: 4.112). Each grade level is responsible for planning one Liturgy 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 Divine Mercy 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.

## ACADEMIC LIFE

### CURRICULUM

St. Rita School follows the recommended curriculum guidelines of the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis 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

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 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. Students in Grades 6-8 are encouraged to take responsibility for their studies by completing daily assignments as well as anticipating long-range assignments.

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:

<b>High Honors:</b>	<b>All A's</b>
<b>Honors:</b>	<b>A's &amp; B's</b>
<b>Merit:</b>	<b>A's, B's and one C</b>

"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](http://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 an **after school detention**, a "0" for the given assignment. The student will **have the option to** 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 bi-monthly progress reports.

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 Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis 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
A	97- 94
A-	93- 90
B+	89- 87
B	86- 83
B-	82- 80

C+	79- 77
C	76- 73
C-	72- 70
D	69- 65
F	Below 65, 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 in 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 Office of Education, Evangelization, and Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Hartford (ADH 4.135). Ordinarily the Iowa Test of Basic Skills is administered to Grades 3-7 in the spring. Grades 2, 5 and 7 also take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAt). Normally it takes 4-6 weeks for the test results to be sent to the school. Parents are mailed the test results of their children. If parents/guardians wish to discuss their child's test scores they are encouraged to contact their child's teacher.

## **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](mailto: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.

## **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL 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 \$4.00 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 \$15.00 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 \$10.00 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 \$15 per day per child in grades K-8 and \$18 for a PreK student or \$35 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 \$30 per child K-8 and \$36 for PreK students, or \$70 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.

[Online Hot Lunch/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. On 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 in writing by a teacher or school administrator to do*

- so.
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.
  6. 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.
  7. 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, ELECTRONICS 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 at any time in the school building during school hours. (This includes before and after school care). Cell phones will be confiscated if seen or heard. Cell phones 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 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.

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**

**All policies and procedures in the Return to School Plan supersede anything in this handbook until further notice.**

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://www.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.

## **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.

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

## **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**

**MORNING:** 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.

A chain is drawn 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 The Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis 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 POLICIES**

**All uniforms must be purchased at the Dennis Uniform Store. [Dennis Uniform](#)**

Pre-K Uniform - Girls and Boys must wear the gym uniform. As an option, the girls may wear the green jersey jumper or the uniform shorts or pants with the green knit shirt with the St. Rita logo. Boys may also wear the uniform khaki shorts or pants with the green knit uniform shirt. Sneakers and socks are to be worn. Sneakers may not have wheels, light up or make noise.



Girls Grades K-3:

White turtleneck or white peter-pan collar long- or short-sleeve shirt  
Green cardigan sweater (OPTIONAL)  
Navy or green tights or navy, green knee-high socks or white crew or quarter socks  
Khaki pants (optional in the winter) worn with belt

Girls Grades 4 and 5:

Uniform skort \*  
Uniform shirt with band bottom (navy)  
Uniform green pullover or cardigan sweater (OPTIONAL)  
Navy or green knee-high socks or white crew or quarter socks  
Khaki pants (optional in the winter) worn with belt

Boys Grades K-5:

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

Girls Grades 6-8

Uniform skort  
Uniform shirt with band bottom (white or navy)  
Uniform green pullover or cardigan sweater (OPTIONAL)  
Navy or green knee-high socks or white crew or quarter socks  
Khaki pants (optional in the winter) worn with belt

St. Rita fleeces are acceptable for all grade levels.

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.

## **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.

## **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. No designs can be shaved on the head. 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 p.m -2:45 p.m

Kindergarten - Grade 8

Full Day	8:15 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.
Early Dismissal Day	8:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

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 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. on a half day before a Holiday: 8-1:00 pm.**

**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 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 the time missed. After the fifth tardy in any one marking period, the student may receive an after school detention. 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 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 iPads by those in the 1:1 chromebook and iPad program)

## **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** All policies and procedures in the Return to School Plan supersede anything in this handbook until further notice.

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.

### **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 may be used during recess time in the school yard.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

### **BULLYING**

Bullying is prohibited in all Catholic schools of the Archdiocese (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 achieve redemption, learn, and stop 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:

1. Excessive tardiness defined as five times or more within a grading period;
2. Incomplete or improper wearing of the school uniform;
3. Chewing gum;
4. Eating outside of the lunchroom during school hours;
5. Coming to class unprepared (no books, homework, pens/pencils, special materials, etc.);
6. Excessive talking during class;
7. Classroom disruption;
8. Improper behavior in bus lines or while boarding buses.
9. Disrespect - physical, verbal, or obscene language or gestures to faculty, staff, or peers
10. Cheating; (this includes plagiarism)
11. Fighting;
12. Repeatedly disregarding the uniform policy;
13. Insubordination;
14. Destruction of property;
15. Dangerous behavior such as pushing, shoving, tripping;
16. Inappropriate behavior in the lunchroom;
17. Inappropriate bus behavior (reception of a bus referral).

The consequences for the above infractions accumulate during the year and are carried from one marking period 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. The use, sale, distribution, or possession of "controlled substances" such as alcohol, marijuana, or any other illegal substances at school or school-sponsored activities;
2. Smoking at school or at school events;
3. Behavior which is seriously immoral, profane, vulgar, or obscene;

4. Physical violence;
5. Stealing, destruction of school property/the property of others, or vandalism;
6. Serious threat;
7. Bullying or cyberbullying;
8. Unauthorized absence or leaving the school premises or the classroom without permission;
9. Assault with or possession of a potentially lethal weapon or instrument;
10. Serious insubordination or defiance;
11. Use of the internet to demean, abuse, or put into a negative light, St. Rita School or any other group, organization or individual.
12. Outrageous or scandalous behavior at school or elsewhere which would reflect adversely on Catholic schools or the Catholic Church;
13. Cheating or plagiarism;
14. 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 publicized 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 SMART Tuition Management. Parents are expected to meet the demands of their payment choice through SMART 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 with registration via cash or money order. Of this paid in full balance, \$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 SMART 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

Divine Mercy Parish subsidizes St. Rita School with an amount approved by the School Board and Parish Finance Council. Families from Divine Mercy 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 Divine Mercy 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 Divine Mercy 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 members of the 2021-2022 St. Rita School Board are:**

**Monsignor Joseph DiSciacca, Pastor**

**Patricia O'Neil Tiezzi, Principal**

**Ben Amarone**

**Maria Cammarota**

**Diane Dinehart**

**Sean Gleason**

**Nicholas Grasso**

**Tom Kiely**

**Chris Ponzio**

**Michael Raymond**

### **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 2021-2022 include:**

**Kristen Amarone – president**

**Kelly Mulhern – 1st vice-president**

**Angela Farina - 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president**

**Antonia Baroga – treasurer**

**Mary Walsh – recording secretary**

**Kathleen Brennan – corresponding secretary**

**Megan Giaquinto - past president**

### **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.

**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 e-mail 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 **2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8**. Students in grades **2, 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 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.

2021-2022

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

Please download/print/copy this form and return it to the school office by Friday, September 3, 2021.

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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 Office of Education, Evangelization, and Catechesis, 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: \_\_\_\_\_



**ST. RITA**  
**SCHOOL**  
*of Divine Mercy Parish*

# **School Reopening Plan**

## **August 2021**

*Our school re-opening plan must be fluid to respond to new information and evolving events. School administration will actively renew protocols and policies and modify the instructional plan as necessary. For the most current information, please refer to the school website.*

**St. Rita School**

**Hamden, Connecticut**

**Return to School Plan**

**August 2021**

For the 2021-2022 school year, this updated Plan reflects new guidance from local officials. For Fall 2021 in response to CoVID-19, St. Rita School in consultation with the OEEC, Town of Hamden, and following local Health departments and CDC guidelines, worked diligently to develop our return to school plan. Our plan allowed students to return to campus in a manner that reduced health-related risks while maintaining an environment in which we focus on the education of the whole child.

For the 2021-2022 school year, St. Rita school will provide on-campus learning with the necessary campus and classroom modifications needed to support students' safe return to school beginning on August 31, 2021. This plan is very fluid and will be updated regularly based on guidance from local and state health officials.

St. Rita School will be open for in person instruction 100% capacity Monday through Friday during normal school hours. After Care and Before Care programs will be in place. There is no remote learning initiative available for the 2021-2022 school year.

1. **Quarantine** - We will be following any travel restrictions per the CDC and the Governor.
2. **Face Masks** - Face masks will be required for all students in grades Pre-K-8, teachers, and staff members. Periodic mask breaks will be provided throughout the day. Masks will be supplied by families and may not contain pictures or words which are deemed offensive, derogatory or controversial. Each classroom teacher has a supply of disposable facemasks for students who may have forgotten theirs. Restrictions regarding mask wearing may relax throughout the school year in response to changes in public health data.
3. **Handwashing** - Students will be instructed to wash hands upon entering the school building, after using the bathroom, before and after eating, after recess, and outdoor time. Students will be instructed on proper hand washing techniques. Hand sanitizing stations are also available at school entryways and in each classroom.

4. **Sick Child or Staff Member** - We are depending on our families to play an active role in helping to monitor and support the health of their child. Parents are requested to take their child's temperature daily prior to the start of school in the morning. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or above is not allowed to attend school and will be sent home if feeling ill during school hours. Depending on what additional symptoms the student exhibits their siblings may also be sent home as a precaution. A doctor's note or negative COVID 19 test will be required prior to return to school. Anyone with a temperature or who feels ill should stay home to maintain a healthy school.
5. **Vaccinated students & staff:** Students and staff do not need to quarantine (if asymptomatic). Students seated at least 3 ft. away from a case do not need to quarantine, if exposure was limited to the classroom (assuming contact is asymptomatic with consistent correct mask use).
6. **Cleaning and Disinfecting** - St. Rita School contracts with Limpiex's Cleaning Services for our day porter and nightly cleaning crew. All Limpiex employees have been trained in COVID-19 cleaning protocols. Cleaning of high-touch areas and bathrooms will be conducted throughout the day. Classroom spaces, including students' desks, will be sanitized at night. Staff will be provided with the necessary cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing materials to clean desks, classroom equipment, and supplies throughout the day. Filters have been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized in our ductless A/C units. There will be continuous maintenance of these units throughout the upcoming fall season. Additional hand sanitizing stations have been installed at all entryways and in all classroom spaces.
7. **Strategic Social Distancing** - Students will be following recommended 3 foot social distancing guidelines in classrooms. Classroom seating will be arranged to maximize social distancing. Lunch will be eaten in the lunchroom. Additional lunch waves have been added to limit the number of students in the lunchroom. Outdoor classroom spaces will be utilized frequently to maintain reduced capacity within the building. Additional time may be scheduled to allow students to have movement breaks and to allow time without face coverings. Students will have their own supplies which will not be shared. Arrival, dismissal, Before Care, and After Care procedures have been modified to help ensure strategic social distancing.
8. **Communication** - Ongoing communication with our students, families, and staff is a key element of any effective educational system. We are committed to on-going communication with our students, parents and faculty especially at this time. We will

concentrate on two areas of on-going communication-school wide and classroom communication.

9. **Academic Learning** - Students will spend the year on campus in September with expectations that specific health and safety procedures will be followed.
10. **Visitors and Volunteers** - Visitors will not be permitted on campus during the school day other than the front office. Volunteers in our school **will be limited to those who have been vaccinated. Proof of vaccination will be required for coaches, library volunteers, HSA events etc.**
11. **Mass, Large Gatherings, and Sporting Events** - **Students will attend First Friday Mass in person. Masks are expected to be worn. Pews are roped off to allow for social distancing.** All athletic events will adhere to OEEC/AIAC guidelines. Large gatherings on campus, inside or outside of the school building, **will be decided on an event by event basis.**
12. **Social Emotional Well-Being** - This has been a potentially stressful year for students and families. Some students may be experiencing some level of anxiety as they return to school. We are also **continuing our** social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. The Friendly curriculum will be **utilized** in all grade levels and is aligned with our Catholic faith.
13. **Car Drop Off** - In an attempt to lessen the traffic jam during morning drop off for students in grades K-8 we have modified the drop off area. Parents are asked to enter the school driveway in two lanes and drive to the front door/steps. Our morning traffic monitors will assist your child in crossing to the front steps. Parents are asked to continue past the traffic monitors and follow the traffic flow in order to loop around and exit onto Edgemere Road. PreK parents will park and walk their child to the bottom of the PreK ramp.
14. **Dismissal** - Pre-K students will keep to their regular dismissal schedule and dismissal procedures. Students in other grades who have a sibling in Pre-K will also be dismissed at 2:40 (same time as Pre-K students). Dismissal for students in grades Kindergarten through grade 8 will be done alphabetically so that parents with more than one child will not need to wait. Parents are asked to pick up their child/ren and immediately exit the school property.

- At 2:45, students with 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 last names ending in I-P will be dismissed.
- At 2:55, students with 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.

15. **Busses** - St. Rita School students will follow the protocol established by the Town of Hamden and First Student Bus Company.

**STUDENTS WILL BEGIN THE SCHOOL YEAR ON A MODIFIED SCHEDULE AS FOLLOWS:**

Families will be notified of their child's class assignment **Friday, August 27th after 5 P.M, 2021**

- Monday August 30, - is our Soft opening. Parents are asked to drive their child to school that day for their designated time.
- Tuesday, August 31,- First Full day of school. Please have students at St. Rita for 8:15 A.M. and dismissal is at 2:40 P.M
- Wednesday, September 1 - Full day of school
- Thursday September 2,- Full day of School
- Friday, September 3 - All students in Kindergarten through grade 8 in school from 8:15-12:00 and **PreK 3 and PreK 4 will be in school 8:30-12:00**
- Monday and Tuesday 5th and 7th **NO SCHOOL**
- Wednesday, SEPTEMBER 8 - St. Rita School will be in session for the full day for ALL STUDENTS..

**Before Care and After Care will begin on Tuesday, August 31**

## Health & Safety

The Hamden Public School system provides St. Rita School with full-time nursing coverage. As such, St. Rita School will follow all the guidelines established by the Hamden Public Schools regarding the nursing services for our students. Our school principal, Mrs. Tiezzi and our school nurse, Mrs. Palma will serve as a COVID-19 Health and Safety Liaisons responsible for engaging with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions and share information about COVID-19 health and safety requirements. All school staff and families should know and have the contact information for the designees (ptiezzi.stritaschool@gmail.com or lpalma.stritaschool@gmail.com). The Principal will have the authority to address compliance issues.

The school nurse and Principal will assist in establishing and reinforcing a culture of health, safety, and shared responsibility by:

- Providing training to teachers, staff, students, and parents/guardians prior to school opening, especially concerning:
  - Social distancing
  - Frequent handwashing
  - Use of face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth
  - Respiratory and cough etiquette
  - Enhance cleaning /disinfection of surfaces
  - Starting each day with a morning message to the entire school reinforcing good health practices
  - Creating and displaying signs around school as reminders of rules, roles, and responsibilities
  - Holding weekly and monthly all-staff meetings on COVID-19 to evaluate control strategies
  - Sending out weekly reports and reminders to parents and students of their respective roles and to highlight good behaviors.
  - The Principal and School Nurse should meet weekly to review best practices, share challenges, discuss staff and student training, and refine messaging to families, staff, and students.



## **Masks and Face Coverings**

At this time, due to the Executive Order, this plan mandates the use of face coverings for students in grades Pre-K-8 and staff when they are inside a school building. Masks are an essential component of the prevention of transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory ailments. Many people may not manifest symptoms yet still be able to infect others. Saint Rita staff will:

- Provide a mask to any student or staff member who does not have one.
- Classrooms will incorporate “mask free” time during the day.
- Teach and reinforce use of face coverings.
- Remind individuals not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently.
- Provide staff, students, and students’ families information on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
- **Masks do not need to be worn outside of the school building.**

### **Exceptions to mandated face covering are listed below:**

- For anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance, face coverings and masks are not required, per CDC guidance.
- For anyone who has a medical reason making it unsafe to wear a face covering, and has a doctor’s note verifying the medical reason.
- For students, while eating, drinking, during Physical Education, or when students are outside, and effectively practicing social distancing and any other possible mitigants.
- For teachers and staff, while teaching as long as they are properly socially distancing or remaining static behind a physical barrier , while eating, drinking, or when outside and effectively practicing social distancing and any other possible mitigants.

### **Health Office Guidelines**

- Nurses will monitor with building custodians the availability of adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.
- Staff must call the health office (or main office) before sending a student. Staff may also call or text the nurse.
- If possible, the nurse will go to the classroom to assess a student for minor problems.
- Teachers will be provided with bandaids and cleaning cloths for minor problems where an older child may administer self- care.

- Must maintain social distancing
- Markings on floor and outside the health office to maintain 3 feet distance when waiting to see the nurse.
- **Nebulizer treatments will be allowed.**

## Immunizations

- **COVID Immunizations for those students eligible are strongly recommended, and may be required for students to participate in varsity sports. Please be sure the school nurse has a copy of the COVID vaccination card.**
- There is no waiver for immunizations; parents must provide up-to-date immunizations.
- Flu shots will become available in August; parents are encouraged to have their child immunized by the end of October. **All PreK students are required to have a flu shot before January 1, 2022.**
- Parents should begin to contact their pediatricians for Med Authorization Forms if their child will require medication in school. Due to changes in office visits there may be delays.

## Health Assessments

- For students who are enrolled (7th grade): Parents to schedule a new assessment as soon as possible; students who have not met this requirement will not be excluded as long as they have an assessment on file at the school and are up to date on all mandated vaccines. Health assessments for 7th grade must be completed by Nov 1st.
- For new enrolled students (Pre K and Kindergarten): A physical must be completed by a physician within one year of entry into school for the coming school year. If a student does not have a physical within one year, the most recent assessment must be handed in to the health office. Students must have a new assessment completed by November 1st. However, **all immunizations must be up to date in order to begin in person school.**

## Infection Control Plan

### Identification and Monitoring

- Parents will conduct a Daily Health Assessment (see below)

Students , families, and staff must inform the school nurse if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, particularly if they had a known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also had contact with the school population.

- As of the date of this document, CDC guidance provides that schools are not expected to screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19. CDC considerations for schools:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

- The Health office with the assistance of the school administrative assistants will actively monitor staff and student absenteeism and track the reasons for their absences to identify any trends that would suggest spread of illness such as COVID-19.
- The school will create a communication system for staff and families for self-reporting of symptoms, and for families to notify the school of known or presumed cases consistent with applicable privacy and confidentiality laws.

Indicators for possible COVID.

- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Difficulty breathing -rapid respiratory rate, accessory muscle use, decreased oxygen saturation.
- Cough
- Appears ill (teacher reports unable to attend work)
- Abdominal pain and/or diarrhea
- Loss of sense of taste and/or smell

#### **Containment procedures for a student or staff member suspected of being ill with COVID-19**

- Staff members who suspect they are ill with COVID-19 should contact the school nurse and may be directed to leave the school immediately. Staff must report a positive COVID-19 test to the school nurse.
- The school nurse must be notified by school staff for any student whom staff suspect may be ill with COVID-19
- The school nurse will call the parent to determine a timeline for pickup. Parents should be providing at least two emergency contact numbers in addition to the parents work and cell numbers in order to allow for immediate pick up.
- Custodians will be directed to clean the health office upon the students dismissal.
- The school will consult with QVHD around the signs and symptoms exhibited by students or staff that would require their immediate dismissal from school
- QVHD will receive notification of a positive COVID-19 test result for a student and will notify the principal.
- Procedures to guide the school in identifying and addressing staff members and other students who had close contact (within 6 feet of distance for 15 minutes or more) with an individual who has been confirmed as having COVID-19 will be developed by QVHD and the District Medical Advisor.

## Returning to School or Work

Guidelines concerning a return to school or work by students or staff members are continuing to be developed by QVHD and the District Medical Advisor. Initial guidelines are if a student or staff member was suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, they could be asked to stay home (with remote learning or work options) until the appropriate criteria are met as described below:

- They have been medically cleared by a physician
- An individual who manifests symptoms should stay home for at least **24** hours after resolution of fever. (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms).
- Otherwise, if the individual tests positive in a diagnostic COVID-19 test but did not manifest symptoms, they should stay home **for a 10 day quarantine.**
  1. They may return to school/work once they have been medically cleared by a physician
    - The above should be medically documented

**Daily Student Health Assessment**

Assess your child each morning before school.

Important questions to consider:

- Have you or your child been in contact with anyone who was diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Is anyone sick in your household?

Symptoms of concern:

- Trouble breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Confusion or difficult to arouse
- Blue coloring of the lips or face

If these symptoms occur, contact your child's pediatrician or go to the Emergency room.

OR

When in doubt, or if your child is not improving call the pediatrician.

- Cough- how often does the cough occur, does anything come up with the cough?
- Trouble Breathing-does your child appear to be breathing faster than usual, is their chest pulling in when they breathe, do their nostrils flare out with breathing, are they having trouble talking?
- Chest discomfort-does your child complain that their chest feels tight, hurts or feels funny? Is your child more irritable, difficult to soothe or difficult to awaken?
- Does your child not want to play or interact with others?

- Does your child appear dehydrated-no tears when crying, dry mouth, no urine for 8 hours.
- Stay home and avoid contact with anyone outside of your household.
- Do not play with anyone outside of your family.
- If your child must go out, wear a face mask.
- Provide a healthy diet and adequate liquids (milk or water)
- Establish a schedule for school work (if home) and play
- Enforce bedtimes
- Cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your face, avoid hands in the mouth, and avoid rubbing eyes.
- Clean high touch surfaces daily with soap and water, followed by a household cleaner.

## **Future Musicians, LLC**

### **Covid 19 Guidelines & Procedures**

St. Rita School partners with CT Future Musicians to provide instrumental music lessons to students in grades 4-8. We will continue to provide this service for our students for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year. In order to address any questions parents may have, these protocols will be followed by Mrs. Hernandez, our Future Musicians instructor.

#### **Ct Future Musicians teachers will:**

- Sanitize all chairs and music stands after each lesson.
- Teachers will wear a mask at all times. Students will wear masks when not playing their instrument.
- Stand 6 feet from students as much as possible and space students 3 feet apart. Students will all sit in straight lines facing the same way.
- Teach 30 minutes small group lessons of not more than 5 students.
- Students will be grouped by their cohort class if required by the school.
- Hold instrumental demos in the classroom for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades.
- Hold parent meetings through the zoom platform or send home packets of enrollment materials if not able to hold in person.
- If a teacher needs to look and touch a student's instrument, they will sanitize their hands before and after touching a student's instrument.
- Will not allow any sharing of instruments, books or music.
- Follow individual school COVID 19 guidelines and procedures.
- Hold band rehearsals where and when possible.
- Hold Christmas Concerts where and when possible. May have to shift to recording the school band and put recordings up on the school Facebook page. Hold a virtual concert.

#### **National Association for Music Education (Nafme) Fall 2021 Guidance for Music Education**

[https://nafme.org/wp-content/files/2020/06/NAfME\\_NFHS-Guidance-for-Fall-2020.pdf](https://nafme.org/wp-content/files/2020/06/NAfME_NFHS-Guidance-for-Fall-2020.pdf)

Additional questions regarding our instrumental band program can be sent to Jill Hernandez at [marioandjill@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marioandjill@sbcglobal.net)

## Frequently Asked Questions

These questions were asked in our return to school parent survey.

- 1. Will teachers assist students with putting on masks, tying their shoes, zipping their coat, opening their juice box/snack etc?** As much as we would like to have our students as independent as possible based on their age, we understand that some students will need assistance with various tasks. Teachers will most certainly assist their students with any task that is needed ensuring that all safety precautions are in place. We would encourage our parents to work with their child on various self-help skills including hand washing, toileting, mask placement, etc. that will lead to independence.
- 2. Will there be an option for remote learning?** There will be no daily option for remote learning. Should a child/class be quarantined due to a COVID exposure provisions will be made for remote learning.
- 3. Will there be mask breaks during the school day?** Teachers will incorporate masks breaks numerous times throughout the day. Masks will not be worn outside. When children are working quietly at their desks masks may be removed.
- 4. How will the children be able to interact?** Students will be given the opportunity during the school day to interact with their peers in class. These opportunities include snack breaks, recess, lunchtime, morning opening, group activities, etc. Teachers will provide opportunities for community building activities with their students. Classes will also have the opportunity to use outdoor spaces on the school campus (weather permitting).
- 5. Will COVID-19 testing be required of the students and faculty?** Currently there is no requirement for students or staff members to be tested unless they are experiencing symptoms.
- 6. Will temperature checks be taken daily?** Currently daily temperature checks are not mandated, however we strongly request that parents check their child's temperature before sending them to school.
- 7. Will my child be transported daily despite the schedule of the public schools?** The Town of Hamden has agreed to transport our students to and from school based on our school calendar and schedule.
- 8. What are the cleaning protocols of the bus company?** First Student Bus Company will follow the disinfection protocols established by the Town of Hamden.

9. What additional safety procedures will be in place within my child's classroom? Desks will be spaced 3 ft apart. Each classroom will also be equipped with a sanitation station. Several of our classes have a sink located within the classroom space.
10. What is the protocol if a teacher (of a specific cohort of students) tests positive? At this time faculty and students who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine unless they are experiencing symptoms. In the event an employee or a student tests positive or is exposed to someone who tests positive they will be quarantined for 10 days or be tested on the 7th day. SRS will immediately contact the Quinnipiac Valley Health District (QVHD) and the Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis (OEEC). At that time, the situation will be reviewed, and the appropriate level of response and notification will be activated which may include:
- Immediate isolation of employee or student
  - 10-day quarantine of staff, student(s) or test on day 7
  - Deep cleaning protocol of classroom/program space and bus (if applicable;)
  - Notification of possible exposure to employees and classmates.
11. What professional development will SRS and the OEEC coordinate to ensure teachers are well-prepared for remote learning at their grade level? All teachers will receive professional development days on health and safety protocols from our school nurse. There will be continuous opportunities for webinars and virtual conferences throughout the school year to provide professional development for teachers and administration
12. How will communication be accomplished? St. Rita School will continue to send out our Sunday briefs and Tuesday Newsletters via Constant Contact. Our website will include a link specifically for COVID 19 information and any updates to our plan. In addition we will continue to utilize our School Messenger and Educonnect systems for email, text or phone updates. Finally, we will be launching a new school based app - St. Rita School. More information regarding this app will be shared once it is active. Communication with your child's classroom teacher will be done directly through email, phone call, through Google Classroom, or on Google Meet, through our new school app, or other apps used by the individual teacher.
13. Will students be moving between classrooms this year? Yes, students in grades 3-8 will be moving between classrooms. Also students will move to the art room, lunchroom, gym, music room, and library for classes.

Please contact Mrs. Tiezzi at [ptiezzi.stritaschool@gmail.com](mailto:ptiezzi.stritaschool@gmail.com) or at 203-248-3114 if you have any additional questions or concerns.



