



**310 Orth Street  
Yoakum, Texas 77995  
Tel. (361) 293-9000  
Web Site: stj Catholicschool.com**

**PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**Pastor:** Rev. Matthew Huehlefeld  
**Principal:** Mrs. Susan Kelley  
**School Secretary:** Mrs. Sherry Pavlicek

# PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

2011-2012

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## **MISSION OF ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

St. Joseph Catholic School is a Catholic Elementary School educating students in a Christian setting that fosters character formation through scholastic excellence and physical, emotional, and spiritual growth.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

In order to meet the needs of the changing world and in keeping with the teachings of the bishops of the United States regarding the purpose of Christian education, the philosophy of St. Joseph Catholic School is stated as follows:

“Christian education is intended to make one’s faith become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction. The Catholic school is the unique setting within which this ideal can be realized in the lives of Catholic education and young people.” (*To Teach As Jesus Did*, #102)

St. Joseph Catholic School is dedicated to the spiritual, moral, emotional, intellectual, social, and physical growth of each student. Students are challenged to develop their greatest potential in order to fulfill their role as responsible individuals in today’s changing society. St. Joseph Catholic School embraces the call to be a community characterized by individuals who help each other in developing a positive self-esteem, recognizing their God-given talents and appreciating the gift of a Catholic education.

## **OBJECTIVES**

To implement the basic philosophy of St. Joseph Catholic School, we strive to meet the needs of each child by emphasizing the following objectives:

### **Religion**

- A. Sharing the value of both personal prayer and prayer as a community.
- B. Providing opportunities and challenges to develop spiritual values that are essential for the development of a well-integrated personality.
- C. Practicing our Christian faith through participation in religious ceremonies.
- D. Creating an environment conducive to the teaching and learning of Roman Catholic Doctrine.

### **Responsibility**

- A. Employing a style of discipline that encourages self-control, harmony, order, and a sense of purpose and by providing opportunities to develop maturity in decision-making.
- B. Demonstrating the ability to differentiate between acceptable behavior and inappropriate behavior.
- C. Seeking the active involvement of parents in the life of our school community.
- D. Recognizing St. Joseph Catholic School as an integral part of the life of our parish and our communities.

### **Respect**

- A. Developing our ability to work well with others for the mutual benefit of the group.
- B. Teaching respect for ethnic and cultural differences.
- C. Encouraging respect for properly constituted authority.
- D. Teaching respect for the Earth’s ecology.
- E. Developing a healthy self-image, and a good self-esteem.
- F. Developing an appreciation of democracy which can best be integrated through actual experiences in all school life

## **Academics**

- A. Providing a challenge for students with new opportunities to grow and learn by teaching deductive reasoning and critical thinking skills.
- B. Cultivating an appreciation of the value and benefits of knowledge as well as cultural heritage.
- C. Creating an atmosphere for a positive learning environment.
- D. Developing proficiency in the fundamentals of our basic core curriculum and encouraging each student to achieve the highest level of academic excellence.
- E. Preparing students academically for life in a technologically sophisticated and increasingly global society.

## **SCHOOL SPIRIT**

Students are encouraged to integrate the spirit of St. Joseph Catholic School in all aspects of life. Pride in our school will be reflected in all that we do, in how we act toward others, and how we will be seen in our community. We strive to have the Spirit of St. Joseph Catholic School be clearly evident in the faces and hearts of our students. Students are encouraged to wear their spirit shirts on days of Liturgy.

Our School Colors are **Blue and Gold**.

We are the **St. Joseph Tigers**.

**Alma Mater:**

**Hail to thee, our Alma Mater  
Hail to St. Joe's School  
Hail to thee, our Alma Mater  
Hail to blue and gold.  
Ever shall we give to thee  
Our true loyalty  
Hail to thee, our Alma Mater  
Hail to St. Joe's School.**

## **ORGANIZATION**

### **Bishop**

The bishop, as chief representative of the Church's teaching authority, is the head of the school system. His is the ultimate responsibility for educational policies. He delegates the administration of the school system to the Diocesan School Board and the staff of the Diocesan Schools Office.

### **Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED)**

The TCCED is a federation of all Roman Catholic dioceses with the See cities located in the State of Texas. The Superintendents' Department of the Division of Education is directly concerned with the schools. The superintendents meet periodically to discuss common issues and make recommendations to the Bishops. They are assisted by the Education Director of TCCED who is also the official representative of the dioceses in their relations with the Texas Education Agency.

The TCCED coordinates and supervises the accreditation of all Catholic schools in the State of Texas by the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission. The accreditation is reported to the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC), the joint association established to review and approves the principles, standards, and processes of various accrediting associations. Nonpublic schools accredited by a TEPSAC approved association are recognized by the Commissioner of Education as accredited schools and are listed in the official Texas School Directory published annually by the Texas

Education Agency (TEA). This acknowledgement ensures student credits earned in these accredited nonpublic schools and teacher service is recognized for salary increment purposes in Texas public schools. Accreditation of nonpublic schools under this arrangement became effective February 12, 1986. Accreditation of nonpublic schools directly by TEA ceased after May 31, 1989.

### **Superintendent**

The Superintendent of Catholic Schools is responsible for the implementation of the policies in the Diocese of Victoria. The Schools Office shall be under the direction of the superintendent who has immediate charge and control of the general administration and supervision of the Catholic schools in the diocese.

### **Advisory Council**

St. Joseph Advisory Council is the policy making body for the school. The council implements the policies of the Diocesan School Office and establishes additional policies to meet local needs.

The membership of the council includes the pastor, principal, PTC liaison and six elected members. The local council uses, as the basis for its Constitution and By-Laws, the model Constitution and By-Laws approved by the Diocesan School Office.

The Advisory Council meetings are open to the public unless certain situations may require the Board to conduct an "Executive Session". If the "Executive Session" is not in effect, then anyone may attend the meeting but may not voice their opinions unless they are officially put on the agenda. To be placed on the agenda, one must contact, in writing, the Principal or the President of the Council, seven (7) days before the next meeting.

Advisory Council minutes are approved by the Advisory Council members and signed by the president and secretary. A copy of the minutes is kept on file.

### **Pastor**

The pastor is the spiritual leader of the parish faith community and of the school. He is in a unique position to impress his parishioners with the importance of Catholic education, and to influence the quality of education in the parish school. As a member of the Advisory Council, he helps establish policy; working with the principal, he helps implement the policies.

### **Principal**

The principal is the chief administrator of the school and in this position administers policies set by the Advisory Council. Supervision of instruction, curriculum development, and the professional development of the staff through in-service programs are his/her most important duties. The principal takes care to develop good public relations with the local Advisory Council, the pastor, the parent and the neighboring public schools.

In accordance with the school's philosophy and values and in situations where policies and procedures have not been established, the principal has the authority to determine and invoke actions or disciplinary consequences regarding students, non-students and parents/guardians.

The principal has the authority to:

1. Amend, revise or change school practices, procedures, regulations and other guidelines. Changes are communicated through written notices sent through students and verbal announcements, when applicable.
2. Determine what is appropriate behavior or dress becoming a student or non-student. The principal is the final recourse in all matters of discipline and school related matters and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause at his/her discretion.

3. The principal is the final recourse and reserves the right to amend this handbook. Parents will be given prompt notification.

### **Assistant Principal**

The assistant principal assists the Principal with the responsibilities listed above.

### **Teacher**

The teacher is responsible for contributing to the educational system as a unit and to the growth of each student. The Catholic School teacher assists each student to develop skills to acquire knowledge, to realize his/her potential, and most importantly to help students see the relevance of a Christian value system in their daily lives.

### **ACCREDITATION**

**St. Joseph Catholic School is accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department.**

### **GENERAL POLICIES**

#### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

St. Joseph Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of religion, sex, race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admission policies, and scholarship programs, athletic or other school administered programs.

Additionally, in compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in St. Joseph Catholic School shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity except permitted under said Title IX.

#### **Admission**

The basic purpose of St. Joseph Catholic School is to assure that Catholic truths and values are fully integrated with the student's life and academic program. Parents should register their children only if they desire and intend to participate in the religious program of the school and are willing to abide by the policies and regulations of St. Joseph Catholic School.

A student is eligible for admission into Pre-K 3&4 if the student has reached the age of three or four years respectively on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school term. A student is eligible for admission into Kindergarten, if the student has reached the age of five years on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school term. A student is eligible for admission into First Grade if the student has reached the age of six years on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school term.

Exceptions may be made in the case of a student who has completed K-4 or K-5 in a different state where the entering age is lower, provided there is also a written statement from the Kindergarten teacher that the student is academically and socially ready for first grade.

Before a student's admission the following records are required:

1. Official State birth certificate
2. Baptismal certificate
3. Health record (Immunization data, illness record, permission for participating in the school health program)

#### 4. Social Security Number

#### **Acceptance Priorities**

1. Students of contributing parishioners with children currently enrolled in St. Joseph Catholic School grades Pre-K 3 through grade 8.
2. Students of employees of St. Joseph Catholic School.
3. Students of non-parishioners with children enrolled in St. Joseph Catholic School Pre-K 3 through grade 8.
4. Students of contributing parishioners whose other children have already graduated from St. Joseph Catholic School; students of former graduates of St. Joseph Catholic School.
5. Students of contributing parishioners.
6. Students of Catholic families who are non-parishioners.
7. Students of non-Catholic families.
8. Priorities of acceptance will not be in effect past the final day of official registration of each school term. Acceptance may not be determined until the end of May.

#### **Transfer Students**

1. The student must meet the academic standards of the grade or class section in which he/she will be placed as set forth by St. Joseph Catholic School.
2. Any student's academic position will be objectively established through the school transcript or by standardized test administered by St. Joseph Catholic School at the parent's expense. Transfer students will be on probation for nine weeks.

#### **Attendance**

State law mandates attendance of school age children at school. Accordingly, students are expected to attend school unless there are valid reasons for absence. Valid reasons, such as sickness, are considered excused. Invalid reasons, such as extra vacation, are considered unexcused and not tolerated. Parents should petition the school when unusual circumstances require a valid absence from school. In all cases, absence must be explained in writing by the parent upon the student's return to school.

**As a general guideline, a student may lose credit for a class or may be retained in the current grade level if the student accumulates more than 18 days of absence in one school year.** A student may be required to attend school on Saturday to make up excessive absences at the expense of the parent.

In all cases of absence, students are responsible for all work missed and are subject to the discretionary authority of the principal for additional disciplinary actions as required by the school.

Since both readiness and mastery of the subject matter are extremely important, parents are encouraged to have their child attend school regularly. It is the parent's legal responsibility to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school.

## **Tardiness**

The first bell rings at 7:55 a.m. Students who are **neither in their assigned seats nor ready to learn** when the tardy bell rings at 8:05 a.m. are considered tardy. Attendance is taken every morning by 8:15. Parents should send a note with the child stating why they are tardy or sign-in the child in the school office. Throughout the remainder of the day, students who are **neither in their assigned seats nor ready to learn** when the tardy bell rings between classes are considered tardy. Once a student receives 5 tardy slips he/she will be sent to the office and an after school detention will be assigned by the principal.

## **ABSENCES**

### **A. Excused Absences:**

1. Personal illness
2. Death in the immediate family
3. Dental/medical appointments (preferably scheduled outside school hours; doctor's note is required upon the student's return)
4. Other unavoidable absences, as determined by the principal  
Students are allowed two (2) days to make up school work for every day of excused absence after returning to school, unless the teacher and/or the principal extends this deadline for extenuating circumstances. (See also the section on "Make-up Work").

### **B. Unexcused Absences:**

Absences for all reasons other than those under "A" are unexcused. Students are responsible soliciting make-up work from teachers who may or may not provide makeup work after the student's return. When a student is absent without an excuse the student may not be eligible to practice and participate in any school activity the following day.

Students must have a note signed by a parent or guardian stating reasons for any absence and the note should indicate the days absent.

## **Checkout Policy**

If a student is leaving the campus before the end of the school day, the parent or guardian should sign the student out in the office before leaving. A note should be sent to the teacher requesting the student to be excused at a certain time.

At noon, students who leave for lunch on a regular basis must have on file a permission slip signed by the parent. Other students may leave the campus for lunch only with a family member.

A student may be released to either parent unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, statute, or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes this right. A copy of such document must be in the school file.

## **Withdrawal from School**

When a student intends to withdraw from school, **the parent/guardian should notify the office at least one week in advance**, stating the reason for the withdrawal. Textbook and tuition accounts must be paid before a report card can be forwarded to another school. The student's cumulative record will be sent to the receiving school upon request.

## **Visitor/Student Safety**

The welfare and safety of the students is a primary concern of the school. In order to ensure student safety, all persons coming onto the campus are to check-in at the school office and obtain a visitor badge. Teachers do not release students to anyone, including parents, who have not had clearance through the school office.

## **Insurance**

All students will participate in the student insurance accident program, as required by the Diocesan School Office. The cost is covered in the yearly educational materials fee.

## **Transportation**

Students who participate in Band will be transported by Yoakum ISD transportation services.

## **School Lunch Program**

St. Joseph Catholic School participates in the federal food and milk programs. The lunches will be prepared at Yoakum ISD and delivered and served to the students at St. Joseph School. Lunch prices are published at the beginning of each school year. The School “Lunch Menus” are published on the school web page, in the local weekly newspaper, and daily on radio KYKM FM 92.5.

## **REGISTRATION FEES AND TUITION**

There is an annual registration fee at St. Joseph Catholic School. The Advisory Council according to the total operational costs determines the amount for the current year. Registration fees are non-refundable.

## **Tuition Payment Schedule**

The F.A.C.T.S. program manages tuition. Any tuition questions may be directed to the principal or the secretary.

## **Financial Assistance**

A limited number of financial grants are available to families who qualify. Applications are available from the school office. Completed requests for financial assistance are due by May 1. Financial assistance is awarded for one school term.

## DRESS CODE

**RATIONALE:** St. Joseph Catholic School believes that appropriate dress and grooming are marks of self-respect and one's appreciation of the precious worth of the human individual. We also believe that a student's behavior is partly influenced by his/her manner of dress, grooming and appearance.

Item	Guidelines
Top	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spirit shirts will be required for all students Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Shirts must have a St. Joseph School logo. Yoakum Bulldog shirts will not be considered acceptable. Royal blue, gold or white solid polos are acceptable. The principal will have the final say on the acceptability of the shirt.</li> <li>• <b>Required Mass polos for weekday Liturgy. These shirts will be available at the beginning of each school year. Shirts are to be tucked in on Mass days.</b></li> </ul>
Bottom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slacks, Jeans</li> <li>• Wrap-around skirts, other skirts, dresses</li> <li>• Shorts               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Shorts, skirts and dresses must be no more than 4 inches from the top of the knee cap and /or longer than the middle fingertip when the arms are extended straight down by the side.</li> <li>❖ Pants and shorts must fit in proportion to the student's body (low-riders and tight-fitting jeans are not acceptable)</li> <li>❖ Words are not permitted on the backside of pants or shorts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Footwear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleats, flip flops, backless shoes or high-heels are not allowed. Athletic (tennis shoes) or shoes with backs are required.</li> </ul>
Hair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair must be neatly groomed.</li> <li>• The length of boy's hair must be such that it does not touch the eyebrows, ears, and shirt collar.</li> <li>• Any hair color or hair style worn by a student must not be of a distracting nature. No feathered or colored extensions are allowed.</li> </ul>
General guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ No attire will be permitted that affects the safety of the student or a distraction to other students, or is considered inappropriate by school personnel</li> <li>❖ <b>Shorts, capri pants, crop pants, or skorts are inappropriate for liturgical and other church-related celebrations.</b></li> <li>❖ Sun dresses, crop top, halter tops, spaghetti strap tops, tight or revealing clothing, body suits, low-cut blouses, or bike shorts are not acceptable attire.</li> <li>❖ Implied suggestive, or offensive lettering or slogans on any garment will not be tolerated, including tobacco, alcohol, drug, sexual, etc. No writing that draws attention to specific body parts will be allowed.</li> <li>❖ The principal or her designee will make the final determination of the appropriateness of the attire.</li> <li>❖ First period teachers daily will check dress code compliance.</li> <li>❖ <i>Modification of the dress code will be considered for special activities and events with the approval of the principal.</i></li> </ul>
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First violation: the student will be instructed not to wear the clothing again</li> <li>• In some instances the student will call home and the parent will be required to bring appropriate clothes to school.</li> </ul>

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

### **Curriculum**

St. Joseph School maintains a balanced curriculum, with the following subjects taught:

Religion	Mathematics	Social Studies	Technology
Computer Education	Science	Art	
Creative Dramatics	Music	Speech	
Language Arts	Physical Education	Health	

Upper grades are offered elective courses depending on needs of students and availability of teacher expertise. Students in Grades 6-8 may take Band at the public school during elective time if school officials at both schools are willing and can work out the time schedule. A reading improvement course is offered to students who are below the 40th percentile or 1 year or more below grade level in reading.

### **Religion Program**

Religious training is an integral part of the St. Joseph Catholic School program and environment. In addition to daily religion classes, students celebrate the Liturgy weekly with their classmates and the faculty. The three R's, "Religion, Respect, and Responsibility" are a focal point of all religious training at St. Joseph's.

### **Sacramental Program**

All Catholic students in Grades 2-8 who have not yet received the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are prepared for the reception of these sacraments. Sacramental Study is an integral part of the Religion Curriculum at St. Joseph Catholic School. Although academic preparation will take place at school, parent meetings and the celebration and reception of the sacraments occur within the parish community.

### **Family Life Program**

The Family Life Program supplements the Religion program. The published series is implemented in the religion and science classes for grades K-8. The program includes: Family Living, Personal Growth and Self Understanding, Respect for Life, Catholic Christian Sexuality, and Social Living. It guides students through activities, which encourage them to discover the Christian response to life situations and examine their actions. In Grades 5 & 7, the unit dealing with Christian Sexuality presents explicit biological content. Parents are provided with material so they can review with their children all-content to be taught.

### **Physical Education**

Participation in Physical Education (PE) is mandatory for all students in accordance with the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department and Texas Education Agency requirements.

Exemption for up to 2 days may be given only to those students who present a note signed by the doctor and/or parent. An additional 2 days will be given in extreme cases. For longer periods of time, a doctor's note will be requested.

### **Band Class**

Students in Grades 6-8 may enroll in a Band class at the public school during the designated period. This is an opportunity for students to earn credit in an elective other than those offered at St. Joseph Catholic School. The school will make an effort to provide transportation. Each student may be charged a fee for this service.

## **Homework Policy**

Homework assignments should be meaningful and fit the intellectual needs of the students; it is primarily a means of reinforcing and enriching classroom instruction. Parents should help by encouraging and developing good work habits, independence, and a sense of responsibility. The time allotted for homework will vary with the grade level. Persistent, excessive homework or no homework at all may often reveal faulty work habits, which need attention and correction. Parents are invited to consult with teachers should this problem arise. Students are responsible for class and homework assignments. Failure to complete an assignment may result in a zero. Reading and studying is a daily homework assignment.

## **Make-Up Work Policy**

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange with the teacher the time and place for make-up work.

Students are allowed two (2) days to make up schoolwork after returning to school. Students who do not make up work during the allotted time, or who have not made any other arrangements with the teachers, may expect to get a zero for missed work.

It is the responsibility of the students to turn in all make-up work in the specified time. Teachers are not required to seek out missed work. Long-term projects are due upon the return of the student.

If a student is absent for several days, parents should contact the office to obtain assignments from the teachers.

## **Heading On Papers:**

The following heading is used for daily assignments in Grades 3-8:

NAME	DATE
SUBJECT	ASSIGNMENT

## **Textbook Policy**

1. Textbooks are furnished by the school and are issued at the beginning of the school year. Students are to keep books covered, and covers are to be in good condition and free of graffiti.
2. Any student who loses or totally damages a book(s) must pay the full replacement cost of an identical volume(s).
3. Grades will be withheld until charges for lost or damaged books have been paid. When a student withdraws from school, his/her scholastic records will not be released until his/her book record is clear.

## **FIELD TRIPS AND OTHER SCHOOL SPONSORED OFF CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**

All field trips sponsored by St. Joseph Catholic School must have an educational purpose and serve to enhance learning. The school reserves the right to permit or deny a student the privilege of participation in a field trip. Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified in advance of such outings.

The following regulations apply to all field trips as well as any and all other trips for various school-sponsored activities:

➤ **Permission Forms**

Only students having signed permission forms will be allowed to participate. The school may accept a signed permission slip that has been FAXED from the parent/guardian. The school **may not accept** a permission slip that has been transmitted via electronic mail. Signed permission slips must accompany supervising personnel on field trips to provide information in case of an emergency. A copy of the signed permission slip will be retained at the school.

➤ **Chaperones and Drivers**

All Drivers must be at least 25 years of age and have a valid Texas driver's license.

All volunteers, including volunteer drivers, who accompany students on a field trip must comply with the Diocese of Victoria's safe environment regulations; specifically, individuals must have completed the *eApps* online application; the criminal background check; be approved by the Diocese of Victoria; and, completed the *Orientation to the Diocese of Victoria's Code of Pastoral Conduct* as well as be within the timeline for completing the required *Creating A Safe Environment Workshop*.

➤ **Use of Private Vehicles**

Whenever possible, bus transportation should be provided. When private vehicles must be used, the Volunteer/Driver Information Checklist and Volunteer Driver Information forms must be completed. Every private vehicle used must have a minimum insurance coverage of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per occurrence.

➤ **Use of School Bus**

All drivers must be at least 25 years of age.

When school buses owned by a diocesan institution are used, the driver must have a current Texas CDL license and have current bus driver certification from the regional Education Service Center as required by the State of Texas. These individuals must meet the requirements for Chaperones and Drivers as stated above.

When the school uses buses owned by the independent school district, the driver must meet the above requirements for the State of Texas, however the school must provide the appropriate number supervisory personnel that meet the requirement for Chaperones. In this case the bus driver need not meet this requirement.

➤ **Ratio of Adult to Student for Supervision**

For all trips other than interscholastic athletics, supervision of one adult per ten students is required. For trips with students in the early childhood program (3K, 4K, 5K) supervision of one adult per 5 students is required.

Teachers are encouraged to take their students on field trips that are related to the curriculum. These field trips must have an educational purpose and be approved by the principal. Parents are encouraged to participate in these field trips to help provide adequate supervision and discover what their children are learning.

Field trips are privileges afforded to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip. Field trips are privileges and students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements.

- The teacher must have a signed statement from the parent or guardian of each child participating in an educational field trip outside school, releasing the school from liability. Students who fail to submit a proper form will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. **No telephone requests will be honored in lieu of proper forms.**

## **Daily Schedule**

Classes begin daily at 8:00 am and end at 3:25 pm. A daily schedule is posted in each teacher's classroom and lesson plan book, and a copy is on file in the principal's office. These schedules follow the recommended guidelines for time elements and subject requirements from the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department, and allow for flexibility to meet new learning situations.

## **Faculty Meetings**

Faculty meetings are generally held on the third Friday of the month. Dismissal from school will be at 1:00 on these days. These dates are indicated in the monthly calendar.

## **Academic and Other Testing Programs**

Students in Grades K-8 are given a national norm referenced achievement test, according to the schedule set up each year by the Catholic Schools Office.

Students in Grades 2 and 6 are also administered an additional ability test.

Students in Grades 5 and 8 take the ACRE test, sponsored by NCEA (National Catholic Education Association).

## **Grading Standards**

Student progress in St. Joseph Catholic School is reported in number grades. Only number grades will be used on report cards, with the exception of Kindergarten and First Grade. All grades are given at 9-week intervals. In academic courses, grades are based approximately on 40% for daily work and homework and 60% for tests. In Religion, grades are based on 60% for daily work and homework and 40% on tests. Final Exams will be cumulative.

Students in Grades 4 through 8 will be eligible to receive the Honors Award if they attain an overall grade average of 90 or more in all core subjects. They will not be eligible for the Honors Award if a grade average below 85 is attained in any core subject.

Students in Grades 4 through 8 will be eligible to receive the High Honors Award if they attain an overall average of 95 in the core subjects. The student will not be eligible for the High Honors Award if a grade average below 90 is attained in any core subject. An unsatisfactory grade in conduct will disqualify a student from any award. The core subjects are considered to be Religion, Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Reading, and Spelling.

## **Library**

Library books are checked out for one week, but may be renewed for an additional week. The individual responsible for losing the book must pay for lost books. A fine of \$.05 (five cents) a day, excluding weekends and holidays, is charged for each overdue book. A quiet, studious atmosphere must always be maintained in the library while the students are checking out books and doing research.

## **Grading Periods and Marks Used**

1. All schools in the Victoria Diocese operate on a quarterly (nine weeks) grading period.
2. The following grading key is used for Kindergarten:  
S - Satisfactory Progress  
N - Needs Improvement  
If there is no mark, skill has not been introduced
3. The following grading key is used for Grade One (1).  
E - Excellent Progress  
G - Good Progress  
S - Satisfactory Progress  
N - Needs Improvement  
U - Unsatisfactory
4. The following grading key is used for grades 2 - 8:  
94 - 100          Excellent Achievement  
85 - 93          High Achievement  
75 - 84          Average Achievement  
70 - 74          Low Achievement  
0 - 69          Unsatisfactory
5. Conduct grades are indicated in the following manner:  
S - Satisfactory  
N - Needs improvement  
U - Unsatisfactory

## **Report Cards**

Report cards are generally issued to each student at the end of each nine weeks. They are to be taken home and returned the following school day with the signature of the parent or guardian. If a student loses the report card, a new one can be purchased for \$.50 in the principal's office. St. Joseph Catholic School uses a report card officially adopted by the Diocese of Victoria.

## **Student Records**

St. Joseph Catholic School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regarding access to student's records.

## **Promotion and Retention Policy**

The promotion or retention of a learner should be based primarily on the degree of achievement of the specific objectives of the grade or course. A learner who has not achieved satisfactorily in a grade or subject should repeat the subject or grade. To permit a learner to take a course for which he or she does not have the proper preparation is an injustice to him or her, to the other learners, and to the teacher. There may be cases in which ability, effort, interest, and other factors must be weighed. In such cases, the principal's decision will be final.

Parents shall be informed of possible non-promotion at the beginning of the second semester or as soon as

this becomes evident. If the learner is promoted conditionally, the parents shall make provisions for the learner to remove the condition through summer work. The principal shall approve these provisions.

### **Regulations for Promotion and Retention**

1. A student who has made satisfactory progress at one grade level will be promoted to the next higher grade.
  - Students in the first grade must have completed the primer level in reading and have at least a final average of N in Religion, Mathematics, and Reading in order to be promoted to second grade.
  - Students in grades 2-3 shall earn a final average of 70 in each major subject in order to pass the subject area. The major subjects for these grades are Religion, Reading, English, and Mathematics.
  - Students in grades 4-8 shall earn a final average of 70 in each major subject in order to pass the subject area. The major subjects in grades 4-8 are Religion, Reading, English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.
  - Students in grade 1 will be retained unconditionally if they fail Reading and Mathematics.
  - Students in grades 2-8 will be retained unconditionally if they fail two of the following subjects: English, Reading and Mathematics.
2. Students who fail two major subjects, provided that both subjects are not in the following areas (English, Reading, or Mathematics) shall be promoted on the condition that they receive remedial instruction during the summer and receive a passing grade.

### **Graduation**

St. Joseph Catholic School conducts two graduation ceremonies at the end of the school year: Kindergarten graduation, and 8th grade graduation. Kindergarten graduation is held at the end of the last school Mass. The 8th grade graduation is generally held during a parish Mass, and it is followed by a reception sponsored by 7th graders and their parents. All ceremonies are to be kept simple.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

### **Awards Programs**

Scholastic honors for the eighth grade will go to the two highest-ranking students (Scholastic Highest Honors and Scholastic Honors). Honors Awards will also be given to those students who have attained at least a 90 or above average in all core courses.

The Renken scholarship recipient will be selected by the faculty.

A student who transfers to St. Joseph's during the school year must attend for at least seven months in order to be eligible for scholastic honors. The same eligibility will apply for other awards.

### **Diocesan Eighth Grade Religion Award**

Any student in Grade 8 may achieve the award by meeting the following criteria:

- A. Score at least 85% on the Diocesan Test of Christian Doctrine.
- B. Must maintain no lower than an "S" (Satisfactory) in Conduct on his/her report card in all subjects throughout the year.
- C. Perform at least 15 hours of apostolic service. (This does not include school or family responsibilities.)
- D. Be able to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of various prayers and formulations. (A

- list of these will be given at the beginning of the school year.)
- E. A personal profile must be completed and submitted by March 1.

### **May Crowning**

In May an eighth grade girl has the honor of crowning Mary. The eighth grade class selects her with the approval of the faculty. The ceremony will be during a weekday Mass in May.

### **National Junior Honor Society Membership**

Membership in the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) is both an honor and a responsibility. Students selected for membership are expected to continue to demonstrate the qualities of scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. New members shall be inducted at a special ceremony.

The National Junior Honor Society member who transfers from another school and brings a letter from the former Principal or Chapter Advisor to the new school's Advisor shall be accepted automatically as a member in the new school's chapter. Transfer members must meet the new chapter's standards within one semester in order to retain membership.

### **Selection of Members**

To be eligible for membership the candidate must be a seventh or eighth grade student. Candidates must have been in attendance at the school the equivalent of one semester. They must have a cumulative scholastic average of at least 90 percent in the core subjects. (Religion, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies)

Candidates shall then be evaluated on the basis of service, leadership, character, and citizenship. No student should be eligible for NJHS if he/she has an overall conduct grade below an S (Satisfactory). Complete guidelines will be given to all seventh and eighth grade students.

### **Student Council**

The Student Council has been established so that students may assist in coordinating school activities that will reflect Christian initiative, participation, and leadership.

The objectives of this organization shall be:

1. To advance the spirit of St. Joseph Catholic School spiritually, intellectually, and physically.
2. To secure closer cooperation between faculty and students.
3. To promote harmonious relations throughout the entire school.
4. To sponsor worthwhile movements in the school.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Must be a student in Grades 4-8.
2. Must maintain an overall average of 85 with no grade lower than a 75 in any subject.
3. Must maintain a "Satisfactory" in conduct.
4. Must be willing to attend one Council meeting each month during activity period.

Grades 4-5 will elect one representative from their classes.

Grades 6-7 will elect two representatives from their classes.

Grade 8 will elect three representatives from their class.

Those seeking more information on the Student Council may obtain a copy of the Constitution of the St. Joseph Catholic School Student Council from the school office.

### **Athletic Participation Requirements**

In order to participate in Junior High athletics, pep squad or cheerleading, a student may not be failing more than one subject on week-to-week basis. Students must be present at least a half day before being allowed to participate in any athletic activities on that day.

### **Cheerleading**

Qualified judges will select cheerleaders. The cheerleading squad will generally consist of students from Grades 6-8. Cheerleaders must have been a member of the pep squad for at least one year prior to trying out for cheerleader.

### **Parties or Socials**

Parties and socials will be arranged between the homeroom teacher and room mothers at the beginning of the school year. These dates will be provided to all parents in the class.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

- National Junior Honor Society
- Student Council
- Sports: Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Track, and Softball
- Drama (Christmas play)
- Science Fair
- PSIA Academic Meets
- Red Ribbon Campaign
- Cheerleading, Pep Squad

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY AND PHILOSOPHY**

Discipline at St. Joseph Catholic School is designed to encourage responsibility, as well as spiritual and moral growth. Students are informed of the rules and regulations and of the consequences for failure to abide by these rules. Teachers will post in each classroom those rules necessary for the proper conduct of their classes. Teachers have a wide range of discretion in this area. Rules may vary from teacher to teacher, except in the case of specified school rules.

All adults performing official duties in or for the school - faculty, lunchroom staff, custodians, etc. are school officials. The principal has properly delegated the authority exercised by any one of them, and the students must follow them. Parents are expected to support school officials in matters of discipline and consequences. Parents will be informed regarding their child's repetitive inappropriate behavior in classroom or non-classroom settings.

Teachers must be in complete control at all times whether inside the classroom, on the campus, or at school sponsored activities.

Students failing to respect directives from any teacher in the system will be considered insubordinate and will be subject to disciplinary action. Students who work with any teacher in the St. Joseph Catholic School system are to show him or her proper respect.

The principal is the final recourse in all-disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause at his or her discretion.

## Behavioral Standards

A suspension or detention may be received for severe infractions. The students will be removed from the classroom and parents will be called. Examples of severe infractions include, but are not limited to:

1. Defacing, destroying, or damaging parish/school property.
2. Using abusive, obscene, or improper signs, language or gestures.
3. Leaving the school grounds without permission of the Principal.
4. Forging a signature.
5. Throwing or handling dangerous objects, which may cause injury.
6. Stealing.
7. Talking back to a teacher, school official, or other adult in charge.
8. Cheating. A grade of zero will be given.
9. Cell phone use during school hours. **Cell phones are not allowed at school. If a cell phone is found on school property during school hours it will be turned in to the principal and the parent will be notified. The phone will be returned to the parents for a \$25.00 fee. The second infraction will require that the phone remain in the office for one week and returned for a \$50.00 fee. St. Joseph School is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones or any other type of electronic device since such items are not allowed at school.** If a parent wants their child to have a cell phone for activities after school, the cell phone may be turned in to the office in the morning and returned to the child after school.

## Suspension

Suspension is defined as a temporary dismissal of a student from the classroom. Suspensions may be in-school or out-of-school.

St. Joseph Catholic School, realizing its obligations to the students, makes every reasonable effort to assist students to adjust to the social and academic requirements of the school environment. Decisions to suspend a student follow only after other means of motivation have failed and/or behavior or disruption necessitate this extreme action. In reaching such decisions, consideration is given to the welfare and Christian development of the individual, the common good of the entire student body, and the positive teaching/learning environment.

Students may be suspended by the principal for serious reasons, including but not limited to: conduct unbecoming a Christian student; incorrigible or persistent behavior which interrupts the learning environment.

## Expulsion

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter. Other possible solutions will be explored with parents/guardians. When expulsion becomes a consideration, the principal shall advise parents immediately and urge them to take advantage of assistance, which could help the student with his/her difficulties.

A student may be expelled after other means of discipline have failed. For very serious reasons, including, but not limited to, those listed under **Immediate Expulsion**, a student may be expelled after a single violation if, in the judgment of the principal, his/her continued presence in the school would seriously hinder the school in fulfilling its obligation to the other students.

Expulsion of a student is reserved to the principal, who shall observe the following procedures:

1. The principal shall consult with the superintendent before the release of any statement of dismissal.
2. Upon parent request, the principal shall present a written statement of dismissal to the parents within two days. This statement shall include the reasons for dismissal and a complete listing of dates and

efforts made to help the student to avert dismissal (unless reasons require immediate expulsion). St. Joseph Catholic School will attempt to assist the parents/guardians in placing the student in another learning environment better equipped to meet the child's needs.

3. The principal shall place a copy of the statement of dismissal in the student's file.

### **Immediate Expulsion**

Immediate expulsion can take place when a student:

1. Participates in disruptive activities by a group such as gangs.
2. Possesses, uses, or delivers narcotics, dangerous drugs or alcohol on school campus or school-sponsored activities.
3. Possesses, uses or conceals a weapon (any instrument which may produce bodily harm) on school property or at a school-related activity.
4. Threatens or causes bodily injury or harm to student/school personnel.
5. Assaults a student/school personnel with resulting serious physical injury.
6. Vandalizes school/parish property or the property of others.
7. Engages in chronic or repeated behavior, which disrupts the teaching/learning environment.

The disruptive, threatening, or illegal behavior of a parent/guardian may result in the expulsion of their child(ren).

### **Harassment**

Harassment is contrary to the Catholic faith and detrimental to the education process. Accordingly, harassment involving any student or staff member shall be investigated, and appropriate remedial action shall be promptly taken.

Harassment shall be defined as any conduct of an intimidating nature, which creates a hostile or offensive environment.

### **Threats**

Any threat of bodily harm or threat of the possession of a weapon shall be taken seriously. Students, parents, and staff shall be responsible to report to the administration any knowledge of verbal or written threats. Any such threats and any false reports of such threats may result in immediate expulsion.

A threat shall be defined as any verbal or written comments intended in jest or otherwise, which would cause alarm to the school and anyone in it.

### **Search and Seizure**

The school reserves the right to search any student locker when reasonable cause leads to suspicion that an item or items injurious to the student or others may be present. This practice also extends to the student, his/her materials, and items in his/her possession. Any searches will be conducted by an administrator in the presence of another adult. Parents may be notified if a search has been conducted.

NOTE: If the student refuses to cooperate with such a search, his/her parents will be notified, and he/she may become subject to suspension or dismissal.

## Discipline Management Plan

The St. Joseph Catholic School Discipline Management Plan is designed to protect the right of every student to learn in a safe environment most conducive to academic and spiritual growth. We will strive to protect and preserve the dignity of each child as we administer approaches that promote self-discipline. To encourage and recognize students who show good examples of constructive behavior we offer the following partial list of positive reinforcements: verbal praise and approval, positive notes sent to parents, access to continuation of privileges, and good conduct grades.

We also believe that parents are our co-educators. It serves the best interest of the child for parents and educators to speak with one voice in matters of school discipline.

Students are expected to follow directions and classroom procedures established by the teachers. Teachers will exercise full professional discretion, in dealing with day-to-day disciplinary matters within the bounds of school, diocesan and TCCED policies. Their responses may include but are not limited to redirection, conference with the student, change of seating assignment, lunch detention with the teacher, or after-school detention with the teacher or principal. The teacher will document infractions appropriately. The teacher will also contact the parents via telephone or in writing. Not following directions, off task behavior, not paying attention, dress code violations, tardiness, classroom disruption, incomplete work, disrespect for teacher (adult), disrespect for a student, no homework, excessive talking, or late work are possible offenses but not limited to these infractions.

Students who continue with the above listed offenses and/or are absent (unexcused) or absent excessively, cheat, steal, are defiant to school officials, emergency removal from class due to severe classroom disruption, inappropriate language, truancy, assault of another student or personnel, fighting, use/possession of drugs and/or weapons, and vandalism will be referred to the principal. The principal will contact the parents via telephone or in writing. The principal's range of responses may be a conference with the student, conference with the student and parent, detention (lunch/after-school), **in-school suspension with a monetary expense of \$75.00 to the student/parent** (loss of all school privileges and all extra-curricular privileges), out of school suspension (loss of privilege to be on school campus and all extra-curricular privileges), and with consultation with the pastor expulsion. Expulsion is only for extremely serious matters or after other means of discipline has failed.

## Cafeteria Behavioral Standards

All students must observe the following cafeteria manners as a mark of respect:

1. Carry on conversation in a low tone of voice.
2. Cooperate at all times with personnel.
3. Do not crowd or cut in line.
4. Return trays to the proper place and leave the cafeteria area clean so that others may use the tables. Milk cartons must be emptied in the proper container.
5. Students counted to eat in cafeteria will be charged for their lunches.
6. Any lunches brought in/delivered need to be at the gym by that student's lunchtime.

St. Joseph Catholic School is required to make sure that all students eat a nutritious lunch; therefore, students will be required to get a lunch tray from the cafeteria if a "brought-in" lunch is not at the gym by the beginning of the lunch period. Students will not be allowed to call a parent for a forgotten lunch.

## **Transportation Rules**

The safety of the students is a primary consideration during a trip. Observance of the regulations below on all trips will help ensure safety for every student.

1. All students must obey the driver.
2. Seat belts are to be worn at all times.
3. Nothing may be thrown out of the windows.
4. No student may sit in the driver's seat.
5. No shouting or screaming is allowed.
6. No food or drinks are allowed.
7. Students must pick up all trash before leaving the vehicle.
8. Before crossing the street, students must look both ways for oncoming traffic.
9. If a student continues to break regulations after two warnings, he/she may forfeit the privilege to transportation. His/her parents will be called to provide alternate transportation for the student.
10. Any toys, video games, music, etc. used during transportation must be approved by the teacher. Video games must be rated "E" for everyone. Movies rated "G" are always acceptable, but movies rated "PG" must be approved by all parents. Movies rated "PG 13" or "R" will not be allowed.

## **Playground Equipment and Area Rules**

Swings: No jumping off swings.  
No lying on stomach to swing.  
No twisting of the swing so that chain is twisted.  
Swing straight, no side-to-side swinging.  
Only one person to a swing.

Slide: Only one person at a time on the slide.  
Only slide down on the seat, not on the stomach.  
No rolling balls on the slide.  
No jumping off the slide.  
No climbing up the slide from bottom to top.

Bikes: No touching of bikes during recess, lunch play periods.  
No crawling into or jumping on the bike rack.

Playscape: NO RUNNING inside of the playscape area (playing tag etc.)  
No balls inside the playscape area.  
No jumping from the playscape area.  
No crawling on top of the playscape (Ex. Monkey bars are designed to "hang from" NOT to crawl on top of).  
Do not hang upside down from the monkey bars (use only your hands)  
Use monkey bars one at a time (i.e. do not skip from first one to the third one).

Church: Do not play on the steps or on the side of the Church.  
Do not bounce balls off the Church walls.  
Students may go in the Church to pray with permission from the duty teacher.

Area between Church, School, and Fence: This area is reserved for jump ropes. Balls are not permitted for use in this area at anytime.

## General Playground Rules:

- Students should not play so close to the rectory that balls would go onto the rectory lawn or into the area in front of the garage.
- No student should go in front of the garage, near the dumpsters, or play near the garage apartment steps.
- Students should not play in the alley road area between the gym and the playground area.
- Students should not play on the back steps of the Cafeteria-Gymnasium.
- Students may not bounce balls off the school building.
- Balls caught on top of the awning are to be left there. The custodian should be asked to get it down at his convenience.
- Students should not go after balls that go into the street without the permission of the duty teacher.
- Students should not go outside of the fence between the school and the church.
- Students should avoid walking on the grassy area around the front and side of the school building.
- Students playing ball should share the large paved area between the swings and the athletic field. Students may not kick the ball straight up into the air or kick balls with excessive force. Students may pass a football, but any kicking of footballs should be done only on the athletic fields.
- The athletic field may be used by any grade if the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> graders are not using it. The students should first ask the duty teacher for permission. The duty teacher may also direct students to go on the athletic field.
- No personal toys are allowed on the playground.
- **DO NOT pick up or play with sticks, roots from trees, etc.**
- The only balls allowed on the playground area are basketballs and volleyballs (NO footballs, baseballs, tennis balls, golf balls, small, bouncy balls, etc.)
- Volleyball and basketball are the only two **ball games** allowed inside the playground area.
- Kickball can be played either at the field or in the cemented area between the school and the playground (in front of the teacher's lounge entrance).
- Students will not be allowed to retrieve a ball bounced over the fence unless escorted by a teacher – NO EXCEPTIONS
- Do not bounce balls off the side to of the gym wall.
- No baseball bats inside the playground area.
- Students will not be allowed on the stairs or any part of the basement area leading into the gym.

- Food and drink items are allowed only in the covered pavilion.
- Pick up your own trash before leaving the playground area.
- Playground duty for trash will be scheduled as follows:
  - Monday – Kinder and 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Tuesday – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Wednesday – 4<sup>th</sup>
  - Thursday – 5<sup>th</sup>
  - Friday – 6<sup>th</sup>
- Do not hang on, or break limbs or bark from the trees.
- Do not touch or pick up bugs, lizards, snakes, etc.
- Do not dig in the dirt.
- Students will not be permitted to have any type of electronic devices/toys (ipods, psp’s gameboy, cell phones, etc.) at school. This includes **inside and outside** the school building. (See Transportation Rules) pertaining to use of these items on field trips.

## **PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Parental Cooperation**

In order to serve the best interest of all the families who attend St. Joseph Catholic School, we must expect a general cooperation between home and school.

On matters of school discipline, the school, its staff and administration will be the final arbiters of student conduct that occurs during school hours or on school grounds.

In cases of anything other than routine classroom management, parents will be informed. It is essential that the authority of both the school and its personnel be recognized and respected both by the children who attend St. Joseph Catholic School and by their parents.

Parental involvement in the life of the school is both desirable and encouraged. Parents are invited to seek clarification on matters regarding schoolwork and student discipline. The tone of such inquiry, however, should be in the spirit of cooperation and mutual support.

Personal attacks, badgering, harassment, intimidation, abusive or discourteous conduct, and threatening behavior against faculty or staff by parents will not be tolerated. Any such actions are not acceptable in a Christian environment. Such behavior will be grounds for dismissal of that parent's child(ren) from school.

Teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one’s life, health, or safety is at stake. Parents/administrators will be promptly notified of teacher concerns.

### **Conferences and Visits**

The principal and all of the teaching staff at St. Joseph will be happy to meet with the parents to discuss the needs of any student. If a need arises, the parent should first contact the teacher. For unresolved concerns, the parent should then contact the principal. The pastor should only be contacted if the parent still has a need for resolution after meeting with both teacher and principal. Due to the busy teaching schedule of each teacher, we ask that parents make an appointment prior to such a meeting. “Parking Lot” and “Drop In” conferences are discouraged, as the teacher is not prepared to give accurate reports without complete records. Any parent wishing to make an appointment with a teacher or the principal is asked to

call the school office at 293-9000 or to send a note with their child. Please respect the teachers' private lives after school hours. Avoid calling them at home.

*In the event that a parent/guardian must bring something to the school, he/she should leave it at the office. Neither student nor teacher should be disturbed during class hours.*

### **Parent-Teacher Council**

The St. Joseph Parent-Teacher Council (PTC) meets four times a year. Meeting dates will be listed on the school web site. All parents/guardians are members of the PTC and are encouraged to attend meetings.

### **APPEALS PROCESS**

Although the Diocese of Victoria endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within the schools, it recognizes that misunderstandings or differences of opinion sometimes occur. Ideally, a parent or guardian meeting with the immediate authoritative person to discuss the matter can resolve such matters informally. If, however, the matter is not then settled to the parent or guardian's satisfaction, and the parent or guardian believes the dispute to be a misapplication or misinterpretation of a school related policy, only then may the parent or guardian institute a formal grievance. A formal grievance must be in writing and must be received in five (5) working days following the occurrence of the event on which the grievance is based.

Please contact the principal for a copy of the Diocese's current appeals / grievance procedure for further details. Also, please note that the current policy supercedes and replaces all previous policies and statements regarding institution and processing of formal grievances within Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria.

### **SCHOOL HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY POLICIES**

#### **Immunization Policy**

Each student will be immunized in accordance with Texas State law. Specific immunizations and the periods of time for which they are valid are described in the School Health Manual for the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria.

Hearing and vision screening will be conducted annually for all students grades PK-8. Students in grades PK-8 will be measured for height and weight each year. Students in grades 5-8 will be screened annually for scoliosis. A health record is maintained on each student in grades PK-8.

#### **Medication Policy**

Before any medication can be given, a "parent permission" form must accompany the medication.

Only medication, which is necessary for a child to remain in school, will be given during school hours.

Authorized school personnel will administer only medication prescribed by a licensed physician or dentist and dispensed by a registered pharmacist during school hours.

Each student's medication must be in a properly labeled container with the following information:

Student's name, physician/dentist's name, date, name of medication, dosage, directions for administration, and duration medication is to be given. (TCCED Health Manual, p. 91).

## **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)**

Based on current opinion of the scientific and medical community, AIDS is caused by a virus known as HTVL-III/LAV which attacks and cripples the body's immune system, thereby leaving the body vulnerable to opportunistic infections. A person afflicted with AIDS suffers a variety of virus and/or fungus-caused illnesses, which debilitate the body resulting in a substantially high mortality rate within three years after diagnosis. The spread of the virus has occurred through the exchange of body fluids (blood, blood byproducts, or semen) between individuals, and no evidence exists to indicate the spread of the virus through casual contact.

Recognition of a student or employee with AIDS is not reason alone for expulsion. Each person should be evaluated and an individual case and exclusion from the school environment should be based upon the person's physical limitations, psychosocial activity patterns, and the opinion of a panel of responsible persons designated by the Superintendent of schools. In the case of a student, the panel shall be comprised of the student's parents, the school's physician, the school's nurse, student's physician, and the principal of the school where the child attends or will attend. The Superintendent may appoint additional persons if he/she deems it appropriate and necessary. In the case of an employee, the panel shall be comprised of the school physician, the school's nurse, the employee's physician, the principal of the school, and a representative of the Superintendent's Office.

If a child/student has been diagnosed as having AIDS and has any of the following conditions he/she shall be excluded from attending school:

1. Vomiting
2. Lack of toilet training
3. Tendency to bite
4. Open sores
5. Other medical conditions conducive to spreading of the virus.

## **Child Abuse**

St. Joseph Catholic School is committed to the physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and social well being of its students and to the promotion of the Christian family life concepts. Therefore, it is the policy to assist maltreated children and their families. St. Joseph Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services. St. Joseph School and the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office will:

1. Cooperate with official child protective agencies in identification and reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.
2. Provide Child Abuse Awareness in-service education, including legal requirements, for school personnel.
3. Encourage inclusion of appropriate child abuse awareness education in classrooms at all grade levels and.
4. Provide guidelines for reporting and follow up by school personnel.

## **Substance Abuse**

No student shall possess, use, or attempt to possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances on school premises during any school term or off school premises at any school related activity, function, or event:

Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate,

alcohol and any alcoholic beverage; any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other volatile chemical substance for inhalation; any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drug.

### **Definitions:**

“Use” means a student has smoked, ingested, injected, imbibed, inhaled, drunk, or otherwise taken internally a prohibited substance recently enough that it is detectable by the student’s physical appearance, actions, breath, or speech.

“Under the influence” means a student’s faculties are noticeably impaired, but the student need not be legally intoxicated.

### **Section I**

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action including expulsion.

### **Section II**

Lockers and other personal property may be searched by administrators for alcohol, drugs, and other controlled substances.

### **Section III**

A student who uses, in the manner prescribed, a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for the student’s use shall not be considered to have violated this policy.

### **Fire Drill & Tornado Drill Instructions**

Fire and tornado drills should be a serious matter with students and teachers. When a fire alarm is sounded, students should, under the direction of the teacher, immediately evacuate the building. All students will stay in line and refrain from talking. Teachers are to carry their grade books with them on the drill, take roll, and report to the principal when everyone is accounted for.

When the tornado alarm is sounded the student’s will, under the direction of the teacher, take cover in the hallway, away from the doors.

When a fire alarm is sounded, all students evacuate the building under the direction of their teacher and will pass quickly and quietly along their designated route. Doors should be closed before leaving the room and the building. Students should not run, but walk briskly in straight lines. A buzzer will be used for tornado and for fire drills. Students and faculty should learn the meaning of these signals:

### **Tornado Drills:**

**2 Long Signals** - Go into hallways away from doors and get in tornado drill position.

**1 Long Signal** - Return to classrooms.

### **Fire Drills:**

**3 Long Signals** - Evacuate the building

**1 Long Signal** - Return to the building

### **Emergency Closure of School**

Conditions due to inclement weather may necessitate the closing of school at some time. Our policy is to coordinate with Yoakum ISD. For more information in case of severe weather, listen to KRJH-1520, KYKM-FM 92.5 and/or KQRO-1600.

## **DELIVERY & PICK UP OF STUDENTS**

Playground parking lot will be closed except in case of bad weather. Parents are allowed to drop off and pick up children under the awning.

### **Morning Drop-Off**

1. There is no school supervision before 7:45 a.m. For increased safety of your child, if you arrive at school prior to the time of scheduled supervision, you are asked to **remain with your child until the time of supervision.** (This policy is to be followed in all drop off situations including before field trips, athletic practices, etc.)
2. Pre-K parents must not park in front of Pre-K building. This area is used for parallel drop-off of students. If you need to walk your child in, parking will be on Duke Street, and in front of the church or in other designated parking areas.
3. Parents must not drop-off children going west on Orth Street. Walking in front of and between cars puts them at risk.
4. Drop off will be allowed only in the following locations:
  - a. Behind the rectory in a semi-circle fashion
  - b. In front of the Church
  - c. On the school side of Orth Street
5. No vehicle is allowed to park on the school side of Orth Street.

### **Afternoon Pick-Up**

1. Pick up will be on the school side of Orth Street.

## **TECHNOLOGY POLICIES ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. Copyright**

It is the policy of the educational programs by St Joseph Catholic School that all employees, volunteers, and students will abide by the federal copyright laws. Employees, volunteers, and students may not copy print or non-print materials allowed by:

- 1) Copyright law
- 2) Fair use guidelines
- 3) Specific licenses or contractual agreements
- 4) Other types of permission

Employees, volunteers, and students who willfully disregard copyright law are in violation of school policy, doing so at their own risk and assuming all liability.

### **B. Internet**

It is the policy of educational programs governed by St. Joseph Catholic School to require the ethical use of the Internet and related technologies by all employees, volunteers, and students as set forth below in the Terms, Conditions, and Regulations for the use of Internet and related technologies. Access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action taken for any violations that is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense.

### **Internet Terms, Conditions, and Regulations**

- 1) Acceptable Use - The use of Internet and related technologies must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of St. Joseph Catholic School. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for these networks.

2) Unacceptable Use - Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or State Board is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted materials, threatening, violent, or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable.

Use for product administration, political lobbying, game playing, unauthorized “chat” or chain letter communication is also prohibited. Other examples of unacceptable information are pornography, information on bombs, inappropriate language and communication, flame letters, etc.

Acts of vandalism are prohibited. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or to damage hardware or software. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Unauthorized use of another’s computer, access accounts, and/or files is prohibited.

Blogs: Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com), [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student’s blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.

Cell Phones: If a student needs a cell phone after school due to walking home from school, entering a house where no one is home, or attending sport practices or games, he/she should bring the cell phone to the office upon arrival in the morning to park the cell phone in the off position for the day. The cell phone may be picked up by the student at dismissal. At no time during the day should a cell phone be in a student’s locker or in his/her possession.

Texting: Students should at no time be involved in texting during the course of the school day. Students involved in texting at school face detention, suspension and/or expulsion.

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

Virtual Reality Sites: Virtual Reality Sites such as, but not limited to, [www.there.com](http://www.there.com) and [www.secondlife.com](http://www.secondlife.com) pose a developmental and moral risk to the life of the student. Parents are cautioned to be aware of the online sites visited by their children, knowing that often predators are not living in a neighborhood, but within the home via a computer.

3) Privileges - The use of the Internet and related technologies is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in cancellation of those privileges. Each user who is provided access to Internet and related technologies will participate in a discussion with assigned staff person(s) concerning the proper use of the network. The faculty, staff, or parent/guardian may request the administrator or the designee to deny, revoke, or suspend a specific user’s access to the Internet and related technologies due to unacceptable use.

4) Warranties - The educational programs governed by St. Joseph Catholic School make no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing and will not be responsible for any damages users suffer. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet and related technologies is at the user’s own risk. The educational programs governed by St. Joseph Catholic School specifically deny any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. The student or parent/guardian will be responsible for any financial obligation incurred through the use of Internet and related technologies that are not approved as part of the local budget.

## **PRAYERS**

Each morning should begin with prayer (and the Pledge of Allegiance). The day should also end with an appropriate prayer in the student's last class. Prayers are not specified in order to allow for variety in individual and group prayer styles. Prayer, however, should be an integral part of our day as we strive to develop Christian community. Prayer in the classroom should also model various types of prayer, not only personal petitions.

## **MORALITY**

### **Pregnancy**

A primary purpose of Catholic Education is to guide students' growth in Christian values and moral conduct. Catholic teaching stresses that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and that the sanctity of family life is enhanced through the fulfillment of God's plan as expressed in a loving and permanent commitment. Premarital sexual activity is contrary to these values. However, when a pregnancy occurs outside of marriage, the total school community seeks to offer support to the pregnant student and/or the student father so that the pregnancy can be brought to term. The reality of the situation, in all its dimensions, is to be treated in a Christian and humane manner. All such students, be they father or mother, must be treated with fairness, compassion, discretion and prudence while arriving at decisions.

In order to insure the best interests of the student(s), parent(s)/guardian(s), the new human life that has been conceived, and the school community, the following guidelines will be implemented:

1. When the pregnancy is known to school personnel, by whatever means, the principal must meet with the pregnant student, her parents and/or guardians.
2. If the student is to remain in St. Joseph School, the parents will enroll the student in a school-approved counseling program within the school or with an outside agency that will address the student's psychological, emotional, and physical needs. If the father-to-be is identified, if he is a student in a St. Joseph School, the principal must meet with him and his parents and/or guardians. Likewise, he must be required to be involved in a counseling program similar to that provided the mother-to-be. Parents of the student(s) are encouraged to do likewise. Evidence of a student's compliance with this requirement must be presented to the principal.
3. The school will assist the pregnant student in completing her education either by allowing her to continue attendance or by referring her to an appropriate alternative program.
4. If the student and parents desire to have the student return to school after the birth of the child, St. Joseph School will facilitate her continuance only with appropriate documentation from a health care provider. Personal, family or school reasons may prompt school officials and/or parents to consider withdrawing the student. If withdrawal is proposed, school officials are encouraged to assist parents in finding an alternative school or program.
5. If and when it is decided that the student will not be in attendance at St. Joseph School, the school may suggest ways to assist the student academically, so that, if at all possible, the student will not be penalized with the loss of academic functions.

The condition of pregnancy, itself, should not automatically exclude the student from participating in the public school functions. However, the principal, in consultation with the superintendent, the parents and/or guardians, and in the case of parish schools, the pastor, must determine whether unique circumstances may necessitate the exclusion or diminished participation in such functions.

*NOTE: Allegations of sexual misconduct should be taken seriously and reported to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 800-252-5400 or online at [www.txabusehotline.com](http://www.txabusehotline.com) if the situation involves a minor. As mandated reporters, school personnel are required to file a report. Failure to do so is a Class B criminal offense and could result in punitive damages, monetary fines, as well as termination of employment.*

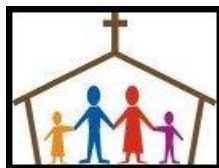
## **Abortion**

Abortion, which disregards innocent human life, is incompatible with and contradictory to the fundamental teachings of the Church, the mission of St. Joseph School and the values that ought to permeate Catholic education. Catholic teaching does not accept that anyone may justifiably arrange to procure an abortion for oneself or for another person, be forced or pressured into having an abortion of influence or coerce another person to have an abortion.

Therefore, the involvement of any student in procuring or assisting in the procurement of an abortion is cause for such student to be dismissed from school.

If it becomes known to any member of the school community that a student is contemplating or planning an abortion, all reasonable encouragement must be given to the student to save the life of her unborn child. As in the case of pregnancy, school authorities shall exercise sensitivity and confidentiality in all dealings on this issue and at all levels of those dealings. The school authorities are called to give witness to the Lord's compassion and to assist the student.

## PROTECTION FROM CHILD ABUSE



### *Creating and Maintaining a Safe Safe Environment for Youth*

Diocese of Victoria

### *How to Protect Children from Child Abuse A Parents Guide*

*We are all deeply concerned about the general welfare of our children. There are many challenges that confront today's youth and child abuse is one of these. Child abuse is a fact in our society and a matter of great concern for most parents. Fortunately, child abuse is preventable and parents can help their children master prevention strategies.*

#### *The "3 R's"*

*Three underlying principles to effective youth protection strategies:*

- 1. Recognize. The child needs to be able to recognize the situations that may result in abuse.*
- 2. Resist. The child needs to be able to assert the right to resist the abuser.*
- 3. Report. The child needs to be able to tell an adult when he or she has encountered abuse and to feel confident that the adult will take actions to prevent further abuse.*

#### ***Recognize Situations***

Traditionally, children have been told of the risks associated with strangers. As we have come to learn, child abuse is committed most often by a family member or person who is known to the child, often in a position of authority over the child. Therefore, if we teach only to be wary of strangers, we are not protecting our children as completely as we must. Children and youth need to understand that they have a right to refuse adults or persons in authority (i.e. baby-sitters, teachers, aunts, uncles) when they are touched on the private parts of their body or in ways, which make them feel uncomfortable or frightened. The exercises in this booklet will help to prepare your child to identify situations requiring caution.

#### ***Resist the Abuser***

Interviews with child molesters document that when children resist advances made by the molester, the molester will usually abandon further attempts with that child. A relatively low incidence of child molestation involves the use of physical force. Children need to be trained to say "NO" or "yell" and get away when inappropriately approached by anyone—friend, relative, or stranger.

#### ***Tell an Adult***

Children and youth need to be taught to tell their parent, teacher, or other trusted adult whenever they encounter questionable situations or attempted abuse. Since adults do not always listen when a child talks to them, the child needs to be told to keep on telling until someone listens.

Sometimes, a child may not be able to talk about what has happened, but will communicate in other ways. For example, the child may go out of the way to avoid being alone with a particular person, such as a babysitter. This is a kind of communication to which parents need to be sensitive as it may be an indicator of abuse.

### ***When a Child Discloses Abuse***

If your child becomes a victim of abuse, your initial reaction can be very important in helping him or her through the ordeal. The following guidelines may help you:

- ❖ Don't panic or overreact to the information disclosed by your child.
- ❖ Don't criticize your child or claim that your child misunderstood what happened.
- ❖ Do respect your child's privacy and take your child to a place where the two of you can talk without interruptions or distractions.
- ❖ Do reassure your child that you believe him or her that he or she is not to blame for what happened. Tell the child that you appreciate being told about it and that you will help make sure it will not happen again.
- ❖ Do report the incident to the police or Child Protective Services, and encourage your child to tell the proper authorities what happened. Try to avoid repeated interviews, which can be very stressful for the child.
- ❖ Do consult your pediatrician or other child abuse authority about the need for counseling to assist your child.

Finally, if abuse happens to your child, do not blame yourself or your child. Individuals who victimize children are not readily identifiable; they come from all walks of life and all socioeconomic levels. Often, they present a nice image—they may even go to church and be active in the community. The molester is skilled at manipulating children, often by giving a child excessive attention, gifts, and money. Most abuse occurs in situations in which the child knows and trusts the adult.

### ***Teach Your Child to Be Assertive***

It is important that your child understands the right to react assertively when faced with a situation he or she perceives as dangerous. When teaching your child self protection skills, make it clear that although some of the basic strategies involved seem to contradict the sort of behavior you normally expect of your child, these strategies apply to a situation that is not normal. When feeling threatened, your child must feel free to exercise the right to:

- ❖ trust his or her instincts or feelings.
- ❖ say "no" to unwanted touching or affection, say "no" to an adult's inappropriate demands and requests.
- ❖ withhold information that could jeopardize his or her safety
- ❖ refuse gifts; be rude or unhelpful if the situation warrants. Run, scream, and make a scene.
- ❖ physically fight off unwanted advances
- ❖ ask for help.

**It's important to remember that these are protective strategies designed to give youth the power to protect themselves.**

The following exercises will help to clarify when it is appropriate to apply these strategies.

#### ***Exercise 1: What If...***

In this exercise the parent sets up situations that the child should recognize as potentially dangerous. Once the parent describes a situation, the child tells what he or she would do if ever confronted in such a way. Suggested actions are listed with each situation.

#### ***Situations and Suggested Actions for Each***

1. What if you are home alone and the telephone rings; a voice on the other end asks if your parents are home. What do you do?

- a. Tell the caller your parents are busy and cannot come to the phone.
  - b. Take a message and the phone number of the caller.
  - c. If the message needs an immediate response, call your parent.
  - d. Do not tell the caller you are home alone.
2. What if an older child hangs around your school and tries to give pills to younger students. What do you do?
- a. Tell your teacher.
  - b. Tell your parent even if you told the teacher.
  - c. Stay away from the person with the pills.
3. What if you are home alone (or with your brother or sister) and someone knocks on the door and asks to read the electric meter. This person is not wearing a uniform or identification. What do you do? (Alternate situation: If the person were wearing a uniform, would the responses be different? Probably not.)
- a. Keep the front door or screen door locked.
  - b. Do not open the door to anyone without permission from a parent.
  - c. Tell the person to come back later when your parent can come to the door. Do not let the person know your parent is away.
  - d. Use the telephone to call a neighbor and ask for assistance.
4. What if someone comes to you and says that your parent is sick and you must go with him or her. What would you do?
- a. If at school, go to the principal or your teacher for assistance and verification.
  - b. If at home or somewhere else, call the emergency number-parent's employer, neighbor, close relative-for assistance and verification.
  - c. Do not go anywhere without verification from someone in authority whom you have been told to trust.
5. What if you are in a public restroom and someone tries to touch you. What do you do?
- a. Yell "STOP THAT" as loudly as you can.
  - b. Run out of the room as quickly as possible.
  - c. Tell your parent, a police officer, security guard, or other adult what happened.
6. What if you are walking to school in the rain. A car stops and the driver asks if you want a ride. What do you do?
- a. Stay away from the car. You do not need to go close to the car to answer.
  - b. Unless you have your parent's permission to ride with the person, say "No, thank you" If the driver persists, say "No!"
  - c. Tell your teacher when you get to school and tell your parent when you get home.
7. What if you are playing on the playground and an adult comes up to you and asks you to help find his or her lost puppy. What do you do?
- a. If you do not know the person, stay away and go directly home.
  - b. Even if you know the person, do not help. Adults should ask other adults for help. Before you assist, you must get your parent's permission.
  - c. Tell your parent what happened.

8. What if you are walking down the street and someone comes up to you and wants to take your picture. The person asks you to come to his or her house. What do you do?
  - a. Stay away from the person and say in a loud voice, "No, I don't want my picture taken!"
  - b. Do not ever go into anyone else's house without your parent's permission.
  - c. Tell your parent about the person.
  
9. What if an older child you know invites you to play a game, and to pretend that he or she is the doctor and you are the patient. This child tells you to take off your clothes so that the "doctor" can examine the "patient" What do you do?
  - a. Keep your clothes on.
  - b. If he or she persists, yell and get away.
  - c. Tell your parent.

### ***What-If Exercises for Older Children***

1. What if you get on a bus by yourself and a person sits down next to you and puts a hand on your thigh. What do you do?
  - a. State in a clear, loud, firm voice, "No. Take your hand off"
  - b. Move to the front of the bus near the driver.
  - c. Tell the driver and tell your parent when you get home.
  
2. What if, while collecting on your paper route, a customer offers you a beer, puts his or her arm around you, and says you have a fine body. What do you do?
  - a. Tell the customer, "I don't like that, take your arm off me" and get away.
  - b. Tell your parent when you get home.
  
3. What if a family friend offers you a ride home and, instead of taking you home, drives down a dead end street, parks, and starts rubbing your leg.
  - a. Tell the person "NO! STOP!" in a firm, loud voice.
  - b. Get out of the car, go to the nearest telephone (if you are too far away to walk home), and call your parent. Always carry enough money to make a phone call, or a cell phone.
  - c. Tell your parent what happened.
  
4. What if you are babysitting for a couple that your family does not know well and the couple returns home late at night. While driving you home, your employer makes suggestions that make you feel uncomfortable. What do you do?
  - a. Refuse to comply. Ignore the driver.
  - b. If the driver stops the car and makes inappropriate advances, say "NO", get out, go to the nearest phone, and call your parent or the police department. Again, always carry enough money to make a phone call, or carry a cell phone.
  - c. Do not baby-sit for these people again. It is much safer to baby-sit for people known to you or your family.
  - d. Tell your parent what happened.

### ***Exercise 2: My Safety Notebook***

This exercise will help your child be prepared to avoid situations that could lead to abuse or molestation. The safety notebook can be a loose-leaf notebook or pages fastened together with staples for which your child has made an original cover.

The safety notebook provides a place where your child can list emergency telephone numbers, including parents' work numbers and a neighbor or friend's number to be contacted when parents are unavailable. In addition, your child can list the safety rules that you have discussed together. Encourage your child to decorate each page with pictures and drawings that illustrate some of the rules. He or she may also want to list other kinds of safety guidelines, such as rules for bicycle safety.

"My Safety Notebook" is intended to be a fun activity for getting across some serious concerns. It is a personalized reference that can reassure your child in how to respond when confronted by a potentially dangerous situation.

### ***Exercise 3: Child Abuse and Values***

While we teach children the core values of respect, kindness and helpfulness, we must make it very clear that no child is expected to place himself/herself in potentially perilous situations. In addition to teaching and modeling the values children need to be prepared to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous situations. A few reminders:

- A. If a teacher, coach, or other youth leader, ever asks a child to do something he thinks is bad, the child has the right to say "No!" and tell his parent.
- B. Sometimes people who really do not need help will ask for it in order to create an opportunity for abuse. Children should be aware of the rules of safety so that they can recognize situations to be wary of; for example:
  - 1) It is one thing to stand on the sidewalk away from a car to give directions, and something else to get in the car and go with the person to show the way to go. A child should never get into a car without his parent's permission.
  - 2) It may be okay for a child to help a person when there are other people around, but he should never go into another's house unless he has permission from his parents.
  - 3) The child may be taught to be obedient, but a child does not have to obey an adult when that person tells him to do something that the child feels is wrong or that makes the child feel uncomfortable. In these situations, the child should talk with his parent or another trusted adult about his concerns.

### ***Exercise 4: Family Meeting***

The most important step a parent can take to protect his or her child from abuse is to establish an atmosphere of open communication in the home. A child must feel comfortable in bringing to his or her parent any sensitive problems or relating experiences in which someone approached the child in an inappropriate manner or in a way that made the child feel uncomfortable. Studies have demonstrated that more than half of all incidents of child abuse are never reported because the victims are too afraid or too confused to report their experiences.

It is important that your children be allowed to talk freely about their likes and dislikes, their friends, and their true feelings. One way to create open communication is through family meetings at which safety issues can be addressed by the entire family. (The "What If . . ." exercises could be done in the context of a family meeting, as could the development of the safety rules for "My Safety Notebook")

Modified, with permission, from How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse and Drug Abuse. A Parent's Guide, Boy Scouts of America.

As we address the basic rules for child safety, it is important to stress that traditional cautions about "strangers" are not sufficient to protect our children. Child abusers are usually known to the child. Therefore, a more appropriate protection strategy is based upon teaching children to recognize harmful situations or actions. Discuss the following safety rules with your child:

- If you are in a public place and get separated from your parent (or authorized guardian), do not wander around looking for him or her. Go to a police officer, a checkout counter, the security office, or the lost-and-found area and quickly tell that you have been separated from your parent and need help.
- You should not get into a car or go anywhere with any person unless you have your parent's permission.
- If someone follows you on foot or in a car, stay away from him or her. You do not need to go near the car to talk to the person inside.
- Adults and older youth who are not in your family and who need help (such as finding an address or locating a lost pet) should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.
- You should use the buddy system and never go anywhere alone.
- Always ask your parent's permission to go somewhere, especially into someone else's home.
- Never hitchhike.
- Never ride with anyone unless you have your parent's permission.
- No one should ask you to keep a special secret. If this happens, tell your parent or teacher.
- If someone wants to take your picture, tell your parent or teacher.
- No one has the right to touch you on the private parts of your body (parts which would be covered by a bathing suit,) nor should you touch anyone else in those areas. Your body is special and private.
- You have the right to say "No!" to someone who tries to take you somewhere, touches you, or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way.

These are some simple safety rules that can be approached in the same non-frightening manner in which you tell your child not to play with fire. They emphasize situations common to many child molestation cases.

## **COMPUTERS AND CHILD ABUSE**

If your child is alone with his computer - do not assume he is safe. Cyberspace can be dangerous. If your child uses a computer and talks on a network or bulletin board your child can be at risk of child abuse.

It is possible and often very easy for children to access pornographic pictures and stories on their computer. They can even download and print this material. Exposure to pornography is inappropriate for children of any age and can be harmful to their development.

Abusers are using the computer to reach children and make friends with them. When a child begins to feel comfortable with this new friend they may forget that their computer "buddy " is really a stranger. Abusers are very good at making friends with young children. While most computer users are trustworthy people, you cannot be certain who is on the information highway with your child.

You can prevent child abuse by computer if you caution your child not to give out any personal information over the network (such as full name or address). Tell them not to answer any personal questions about themselves. Instruct your child to inform you if someone requests personal information or makes comments that leave your child with uncomfortable feelings.

Know your child's friends, even their e-mail ones. If your child is going to meet someone face to face that they first met through a computer network - check it out. Go with your child. Be aware and supervise just as you would if they were meeting any other stranger.

Consider placing your home computer in a central location, such as the kitchen or family room so that the screen is openly visible. This aids in direct supervision of computer usage as well as deters a child from accessing inappropriate material.

Consider also limiting the amount of time your children and teenagers are allowed to spend solely with the computer. Psychologists warn us that children who spend excessive time with computer or video games may have increased difficulty in relationships with other persons. Pediatricians caution us that excessive sedentary time at computer and video based activities contributes to health and learning problems.

A word about reporting....

If you know or suspect that abuse has resulted from computer contact, you should immediately report it to your local police department. Because more than one geographical area may be involved, federal law enforcement authorities may also be contacted by the police. This new type of abuse requires special attention. Working together we can keep our kids safe.

### **Report Abuse or Neglect of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities.**

1-(800)-252-5400

- Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it.\*
- If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency.
- You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

### **What is Abuse?**

Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child

### **What is Neglect?**

Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

### **How do I make a report?**

1. Call the abuse and neglect hotline at 1-800-252-5400.
2. When you make a report, be specific. Tell exactly what happened and when. Be sure to record all injuries or incidents you have observed, including dates and time of day and keep this information secured.
3. Reports should be made as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before bruises and marks start to fade. It is important for the investigators to be able to see the physical signs.
4. Give the agency person any information you have about the relationship between the child and the suspected abuser.
5. Please provide at least the following information in your report.
  - Name, age, and address of the child
  - Brief description of the child
  - Current injuries, medical problems, or behavioral problems
  - Parents names and names of siblings in the home

### **Will the person know I've reported him or her?**

Your report is confidential and is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides for immunity from civil or criminal liability for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as your report is made in good faith. Your identity is kept confidential.

### **What if I'm not sure?**

If you have reason to suspect child abuse, but are not positive, make the report. If you have any doubts about whether or not it is abuse, call the hotline. They can advise you on whether the signs you have observed are abuse.

### **Right to Amend:**

*St. Joseph Catholic School reserves the right to change policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook. Parents will be notified of any changes.*

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

In compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), enacted in 1986, all schools, public or private, are required to have an inspection of all buildings, for asbestos-containing materials (ACBM), by accredited asbestos-trained personnel. All Catholic School facilities of the Diocese of Victoria, including Saint Joseph Catholic School in Yoakum, Texas were inspected in October 2005 for ACBM by personnel from EFI Global (EFI), an environmental consulting firm located in Houston, Texas.

EFI is accredited and licensed by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) to perform asbestos condition assessments of all suspect and identified ACBM. Building materials at Saint Joseph Catholic School were observed to be in undamaged condition, and/or present minimal hazards, if any, to building occupants. Periodic surveillance is also conducted semi-annually by Saint Joseph Catholic School personnel.

AHERA requires that this annual notification be posted or distributed to parents, staff, faculty, PTA, ect. indicating the AHERA Asbestos Management Plan will be available for review upon request. The 2005 AHERA Re-inspection report and the AHERA Asbestos Management Plan are on file in the administrative offices. Under federal law, the documents are considered "permanent archives" and may not be removed from the premises at any time. However, these records are available for review, upon request, at any time during normal school hours.

*The following page will be sent home as a hard copy on the first day of school. Please complete and return to school by Friday, August 26, 2011.*



310 Orth St.  
Yoakum, Texas 77995  
2011-2012

TO: PARENTS AND GUARDIANS  
FROM: Mrs. Susan Kelley, Principal  
DATE: AUGUST 10, 2011

This student handbook contains policies and regulations on the rights and responsibilities of students, the code of students' conduct and other items of importance to the students and parents or guardians.

Parents or guardians are asked to sign and return this statement to the effect that they have received and read the student handbook and code of conduct, acknowledge the responsibilities outlined in the handbook.

Please return the notice to your child's teacher by **Friday, August 26, 2011.**

If you would like to comment on any contents, please feel free to contact me about it.

Thank you!

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I have read the 2011-2012 Parent-Student Handbook and acknowledge the responsibilities the Revised edition outlines.

Parent or Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of oldest student: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of other students: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

THIS FORM SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE HOMEROOM TEACHER BY  
**Friday, August 26, 2011**