

**FAMILY
HANDBOOK
2023-2024**



ST. MATTHEW
THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

MISSION

As a Catholic school community of believers who know, love, and serve Jesus Christ, we celebrate the sacramental life of the Church, proclaim the saving message of Christ, and share the love of the Lord through academic rigor, self-discipline, and service to others.

BELIEFS

1. Our Catholic identity is realized through a Christ-centered environment where the growth and knowledge of our entire school community is built on the Gospel message and the traditions of the Catholic Church.
2. A Christ-centered education is committed to academic excellence and challenges all students to reach their full potential-spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and morally. Every student in our school is a child of God whose unique abilities and needs are appreciated and respected.
3. Our community nurtures and sustains the God-given gifts of every person, and helps them grow into faithful and faith-filled disciples who joyfully practice the charity of the Lord in all circumstances of life, especially with their classmates, teachers, family, as well as the least, the poor and the suffering.
4. Within the parish community, students, staff and parents participate fully in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.
5. As primary educators, parents are expected to take an active role in the educational and sacramental formation of their child.
6. St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School strives for effective communication to ensure a safe environment, positive relationships, and mutual respect among parents, students, teachers, staff, and pastor.

This Parent/Guardian & Student handbook should help provide a guide that the faculty, staff, parents/guardians and students can use to achieve a successful school environment. The specific diocesan policies identified in this Handbook are summaries only. For complete copies of the policies referenced, refer to the Office of Catholic Schools Administrator's Manual for the Diocese of Columbus. In the event of any conflict between the summary and the complete policy, it is the Administrator's Manual that governs. Please keep this handbook accessible as it contains answers to many frequently asked questions. The following information and regulations are pertinent to St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School.

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ST. MATTHEW
THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

DIRECTORY

FATHER THEODORE SILL, PASTOR
614-471-0212

SCHOOL OFFICE
614-471-4930

JOHN RATHBURN, PRINCIPAL
JRATHBURN1@CDEDUCATION.ORG

REGANN NOWALK, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
RNOWALK@CDEDUCATION.ORG

JENNIFER LISTON, RN SCHOOL NURSE
JLISTON@CDEDUCATION.ORG
614-478-4584

ROBIN KUHNS, CARE PROGRAM DIRECTOR
RKUHNS1@CDEDUCATION.ORG
614-532-0655

KITCHEN OFFICE
614-532-0604

FAMILY OF FAITH OFFICE
614-532-0620

GAHANNA BUS GARAGE
614-751-7581

RIGHT TO A CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Catholic schools exist to collaborate with parent(s)/guardian(s) to foster spiritual growth and the educational development of each child. Catholic schools also serve the community, particularly the Catholic community of the diocese.

Catholic schools of the Diocese of Columbus shall be open to children of parent(s)/guardian(s) who seek the religiously oriented education which Catholic schools can provide.

Schools shall recruit and admit students of any race, color, gender (except those schools supporting a single gender according to their mission) or ethnicity to all its rights, privileges, programs, and activities. In addition, the school shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, English proficiency, or disability (medical or academic) in the administration of its educational programs and extracurricular activities.

Preference shall be given to members of Catholic parishes. Others shall be welcomed on the basis of availability of space at the discretion of the pastor and/or principal.

Pastors and principals shall exercise discretion in judging admission of pupils. Pastors and principals must refuse admittance to anyone who, in their opinion, seeks to enroll for the purpose of circumventing the law.

Catholic schools are schools of choice. Any parent who wishes to have a Catholic education for his/her child agrees that the parent and child will abide by the policies and regulations of the school. If the policies and/or regulations are not adhered to, or if the school determines that attendance by a student will not be continued, the child may be asked by the principal and/or pastor at the elementary level and the principal and/or superintendent at the high school level to leave the school.

GENERAL INFORMATION

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School is an integral part of St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Parish Community. The school provides religious as well as academic instruction for students in Pre-K through eighth grade. This school is part of the Diocese of Columbus school system and as such, is under direction of the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, the pastor of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish and the principal of St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School. All teachers are carefully chosen and meet the certification standards of the Ohio Department of Education. The school is accredited by the state of Ohio and meets all state curriculum requirements. Classroom teachers attend special religious education classes and are certified in religious instruction through the Diocesan Department of Religious Education.

SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS: 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

K-8 SCHEDULE

Before-School CARE childcare (Pre-K-8th grade)	7:00 a.m. - 7:25 a.m.
Building Opens for Student arrival	7:30 a.m.
Instructional School Day Begins	7:45 a.m.
Dismissal	2:25 p.m.
After-School CARE childcare (Pre-K-6th grade)	2:25 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

ENROLLMENT/ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School offers instruction to students in Pre-kindergarten through grade 8. There are two classes per grade level (1-8) with a maximum of 35 students per classroom. We offer a full day kindergarten program. Kindergarten students must be five years old by September 30th of the upcoming school year in order to be eligible. St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School recruits and admits students of any race, color, gender, national origin or ethnic origin to all its rights, privileges, programs, and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate on the basis of national origin, race, color, gender or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational programs, athletics/extra-curricular activities.

ADMISSION PRIORITIES

1. Children from families with siblings already attending St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School.
 - Current Pre-K students transitioning to Kindergarten will have first priority for incoming Kindergarten class.
 - This is not applicable to mid-year transfers with siblings on waiting lists.
 - For example: A family that has registered children on our waiting list and one child gets in, that does not give a sibling priority over a student of a parish member already on the list.
2. Active, contributing and volunteering parish members of St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church or Church of the Resurrection. Children of parishioners (St. Matthew or Church of the Resurrection) that have reached school age, who are baptized and who are in good standing with the church.
3. Children from families newly moved into the parish (St. Matthew or Church of the Resurrection) whose children have been in Catholic schools where Catholic schools were available will be subject to a personal interview with the principal.
4. Catholic students from other parishes, from parish schools that are closing, or from parishes that do not offer full Pre-K-8 programs or if offered, are full. Children of families from other parishes may be admitted, but will be subject to a personal interview with the principal.
5. Non-Catholics: Children of another faith or any other student transfers in grades Pre-K-8 may be admitted but may be subject to a personal interview with the principal.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to apply in a timely manner. There is a non-refundable application fee of \$100.00 per family. This one-time fee shall not be applied toward tuition obligations.

Please Note: Class size is limited to following number of seats per grade:

Pre-Kindergarten: 50 seats	Kindergarten: 69 seats	Grades 1-8: 70 seats
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APPLICATION

The application period for new students who wish to enroll for the upcoming school year occurs during the first two full weeks of February. Applications of students transferring during the course of the current school year may be accepted if space is available in the desired grade level or if a family wishes to be placed on the waiting list for that grade level. In all cases, families applying for the first time will be required to apply through FACTS and pay a non-refundable application fee of \$100.00. The application process follows the "Admission Priorities" outlined in the section above. At the time of initial application, the following items must be uploaded:

- Baptismal Certificate: Original or Photocopy. *This must be supplied only if the child was not baptized at St. Matthew The Apostle Parish.*
- Birth Certificate: Original or Photocopy.
- Social Security Number: Must be entered in FACTS.
- Custodial Documentation: A certified copy of any child custody order or decree pertaining to the child must be presented at the time of admission or if custody status changes after a child is admitted.
- Report cards and standardized test scores are required for 1st-8th grade applicants.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial assistance is available through the Diocese of Columbus Tuition Assistance Program. Applications must be submitted to the diocese by March 15. Other hardship matters should be discussed with the pastor or principal, who can defer or alter tuition payments as required by a family's financial condition. All families must submit an application to FACTS Grant and Aid to be eligible for diocesan or parish assistance; the school communicates deadlines well in advance. Families in arrears will be notified by FACTS. Agreements for the next school year may not be offered to families in serious arrears. More information about diocesan tuition assistance can be found at: <https://education.columbuscatholic.org/tuition-assistance>

EMMAUS ROAD SCHOLARSHIP

Established and certified by the Ohio Attorney General in December 2021, the Diocesan Education Corporation (***dba Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund***) is a scholarship granting organization (SGO) of the Diocese of Columbus that was formed to capitalize on a new tax credit passed into law by the Ohio Legislature.

What is an SGO? Simply, it is a religious or non-religious non-profit organization exempt from federal taxation that receives contributions from donors to be used primarily for academic scholarships to attend K-12 primary and secondary schools AND prioritizes scholarships for low-income students.

The law allows for a dollar-for-dollar credit on your 2023 Ohio income tax liability – up to \$750 per person, or \$1,500 if married filing jointly – effectively allowing YOU to make a choice about how YOUR Ohio tax dollars are utilized.

This program creates much-needed scholarship dollars for Our Catholic Schools to make a Catholic education accessible and affordable for all while giving donors the power to put their tax dollars to work to support our efforts to lead children to an encounter with Christ.

To donate to the Emmaus Road Scholarship please visit: <https://emmausroadscholarship.org/gift>

EDCHOICE UNIVERSAL SCHOLARSHIP

All K-8th grade St. Matthew students, except for those who have accepted the Jon Peterson Scholarship, are eligible to participate in the EdChoice Universal Scholarship program. Families whose income is at or below 450% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines are eligible for a maximum EdChoice scholarship of \$6,165. All families whose income is above 450% of the Federal Poverty Guideline will be awarded a prorated amount of the scholarship as displayed in the graphs linked [here](#).

The following documentation is needed to apply:

1. Ed Choice Request Form – one for each K-8 child.
2. Proof of Address – a utility bill showing both the service and billing address (no cell phone bills). Only one per family is needed.
3. Copy of Each Child's birth certificate (photo is acceptable) - one for each child.
4. Income verification – Completed online through the ODE portal. Only one income verification is necessary per family.
5. All documents from this list, except for the income forms, need to be emailed as separate files to edchoice@cdstmatthew.org

Please read this [fact sheet](#) for more information. Applications must be submitted by October 14, 2023.

TUITION

Tuition is necessary to guarantee the continuation of the high quality education St. Matthew provides. St. Matthew the Apostle Parish and Church of the Resurrection Parish provide financial grants for active parish members.

Active participation in religious life is the highest priority and best complement to the values learned daily in Catholic school. It is important to attend Sunday Mass on a weekly basis with your children. Also, active participation is defined as support of the parish through the use of offertory envelopes or online giving and volunteering in parish/school ministry(s). The non-grant or non-Catholic tuition rate will be charged to families who do not belong to a supporting Catholic parish or who do not meet their parish standards as an "active member." Members of parishes other than St. Matthew may obtain a tuition grant form from the school office. The pastor of the parish of which they are a member must sign the form.

Re-enrollment for existing families occurs in May through FACTS. A deposit of \$200.00 per family is required at this time. This deposit is deducted from the tuition total and is required to hold each student's place on the roster. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to complete the re-enrollment process by the required date.

Enrollment/re-enrollment after the due date may result in spots being forfeited to the next family on our waiting list. New families must register through FACTS to enroll and select a payment plan.

Annual, semi-annual, quarterly, or monthly payment plans are available. Payments are due between August 15th and May 15th for the monthly payment plan.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

Should a change in payment plans be needed or financial difficulty arises, please contact the pastor or the principal. Families in arrears will be notified by FACTS. Student report cards may be withheld for lack of timely payment. Tuition Agreements for the next school year may not be offered to families in serious arrears.

WITHDRAWAL

Students who withdraw during the school year must have all fees paid in full. Tuition will be prorated on a daily charge. Student academic and health records will be released to the receiving school upon receipt of the written release form signed by a parent/guardian. The school may choose not to release permanent records until any outstanding financial obligations to the school are met.

FACTS

Our school utilizes FACTS, an online billing and student information system. It is used for paying tuition, CARE, field trip fees, and other miscellaneous fees. Grade cards are published quarterly through FACTS. The completion of important forms and medical records are required at the start of the academic year through FACTS as well. New and existing families must have an up-to-date FACTS account for student enrollment.

The [link](#) to FACTS can be found at the bottom of the school website homepage.

CONTACT INFO

Parents/guardians are required to notify the school office of any change in home or work address, email address, and/or phone number; please update those changes in FACTS as well so you do not miss important communication from the school. If your family changes parishes, please notify the school office.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Each school year, classroom assignments are carefully made based upon students' needs in light of teacher input. Administration has the final decision on class lists.

MASS

Students in grades K-8 attend Mass weekly. Typically, grades K, 3, 4, 5, and 8 attend Mass on Tuesdays and grades 1, 2, 6, and 7 attend Mass on Wednesdays. All School Masses will be held on certain holy days and feast days. Those dates will be identified on the Mass schedule at the beginning of the year and linked [here](#).

For regular, weekly Mass, students are permitted to wear the uniform they have for that particular school day. PE, warm weather, dress uniform etc. are permitted for regular, weekly Mass. Track pants must be worn over gym shorts if attending weekly Mass in the PE uniform. The dress uniform must be worn on All School Mass days.

FACULTY MINISTERS

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School faculty in their vocations will uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church and personally exemplify the characteristics of Catholic living as models for the children and young adults we serve; teaching in a Catholic school is a ministry of the Church, and our faculty are ministers of the faith. Our teachers perform a critical and unique role in creating and maintaining the religious, educational environment. The National Directory for Catechesis states, "The Catholic school should strive to integrate the Catholic faith into every aspect of its life. It seeks to relate all human culture to the news of salvation, so the life of faith will illuminate the knowledge that students gradually gain of the world, of life and of humankind. In Catholic schools, children and young people can experience learning and living fully integrated in the light of faith."

INSTRUCTION

CURRICULUM

Instructional programming at St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School aligns with Diocesan courses of study. Courses of study are reviewed and updated by the Diocese of Columbus every seven years, and when state standards are updated and approved, whichever comes first.

Diocesan Courses of Study have been developed in all areas of the curriculum. The objectives to be taught are reviewed on a regular cycle and aligned to the standards with the subject area. Teachers align instruction in this way.

Instructional materials/resources are a complement to the curriculum and are selected from the approved Diocesan list of quality, approved resources. Specific curriculum information may be obtained from your child's teacher or by contacting the school administration.

RELIGION

In addition to daily religious instruction, the school staff strives to integrate Christ's teachings into all aspects of the school day. An attempt is made to nurture the students' moral growth with a strong foundation in the Catholic faith. All students are enrolled in and receive religious instruction on a daily basis. The curriculum for religion classes is based upon the goals and objectives in the Diocesan Religion Graded Course of Study.

Students have opportunities to pray often during the school day and participate in prayer services and paraliturgies. Students attend Mass weekly. Reconciliation services are scheduled three times during the school year: the beginning months of school, during the Advent Season and during the Lenten Season. Second grade students celebrate First Reconciliation in December and First Holy Communion in April. Students in eighth grade receive the sacrament of Confirmation in May. Sacramental preparation meetings are scheduled by the Family of Faith and Confirmation coordinators and must be attended.

COMPREHENSIVE ARTS

The comprehensive arts include music and visual arts. Art education is an important element in the development of the whole person, enriching the student by fostering creativity, competence and discipline. All students in kindergarten through eighth grade receive instruction in vocal and general music on a weekly basis. They also receive instruction in visual arts each week as guided by the Diocesan Course of Study.

MEDIA CENTER

A certified Media Specialist assists students in book selection as well as instruction in library and media skills for the 21st Century to students at all grade levels. The Media Specialist, with the assistance of the classroom teachers, reviews and selects appropriate media to enhance instruction. A variety of current reference materials are available to students for special projects and assignments. Students in each grade level have the opportunity to visit the media center. Students are responsible to return borrowed items by the due date and in good condition. Students may be billed for lost or damaged items.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology instruction is scheduled into the comprehensive arts schedule and is woven into various learning opportunities with other subject areas in the classroom. St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School has a multitude of resources available for students. Our school has a 1 to 1 technology to student ratio. Purposeful use of technology during the instructional day creates diverse opportunities for collaboration, project-based learning, and the development and refinement of necessary

technology-based skill-sets. Students are responsible for appropriate behavior when using the Internet just as they are in a classroom or hallway. Students are expected to abide by the accepted rules of network etiquette. Parents are required to sign the Diocesan Technology Acceptable Use policy and the [St. Matthew Acceptance of Financial Responsibility for Technology Policy](#) each school year through FACTS. The Technology teacher reviews this policy with his students on the first day of class.

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Health instruction is offered to all students; the curriculum is determined by the Diocesan Course of Study. All students in kindergarten through eighth grade receive instruction in Physical Education weekly. The Physical Education curriculum is also determined by the Diocesan Course of Study. Physical Education (“gym”) uniforms are required for students in grades K-8 and must meet the guidelines specified in the Dress Code. The Physical Education schedule will be communicated by your child’s homeroom teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Any student who has a physical or health-related restriction *must have a written excuse from the treating physician, stating the level of participation that is acceptable for the student.* If the condition is temporary, a written release from the parent or physician is required when the student may return to full activity.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The State of Ohio provides auxiliary funds for non-religious instruction to Catholic schools through the local public school system. These professionals work with individuals or small groups of students in modular classrooms located at the back of the school's property as well as in the main building. The following professionals provide services for our students: Intervention Specialists; Reading Specialists; Instructional Assistants; an Occupational Therapist; Spirit of Peace Counselors; and a School Nurse. The school nurse conducts hearing and vision screenings, updates health records and addresses sickness or injury daily.

JON PETERSON

As a provider of the Jon Peterson Scholarship, St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School provides instruction in both general education (inclusion) and resource settings. We determine individual student services based on the strengths and needs of each student as specified in his or her ETR and IEP documents. Services are provided by Intervention Specialists and General Education Teachers, with the assistance of Instructional Assistants and Teacher Assistants.

Primarily, services are provided in an inclusive setting in the general education classroom. Individual

and small group instruction is provided, as mandated on each student's IEP. Specially designed instruction can include direct skill instruction through scaffolding, modeling, guided practice, individual practice with corrective feedback, conferencing, etc. in the following areas:

- Reading: decoding, fluency, comprehension
- Written Expression: mechanics (usage, grammar, spelling) and expression (organization, vocabulary, elaboration, concept application, and citations)
- Math: fluency - computation, calculation, and problem solving
- Speech Services
- Social Emotional and Behavioral Needs

Our school Intervention Team & classroom teachers provide accommodations for assessments as documented by IEP Sections 7 and 12.

HOMework

Homework is designed to provide reinforcement of skills taught in the classroom, since it is through continued practice and review that a student masters new content. In the upper grades, homework expands the student's learning process by encouraging research of subject matter beyond the material presented in the classroom. Reasonable expectations for homework will be given by each teacher in his/her opening letter and at the Meet the Teacher Night. Concerns regarding the amount of homework or time spent doing homework should be addressed with the teacher.

AQUINAS PERIOD & THE SAINT ALBERT PROGRAM

The Aquinas Period provides students in grades 3-8 with dedicated academic intervention and enrichment time. During this period, students may receive assistance from teachers, intervention specialists, instructional assistants, teacher assistants, and/or peers. Students may work on executive functioning skills, receive help with homework, work on projects and/or extension opportunities, etc.

The Saint Albert Program offers students opportunities to pursue higher level academic challenges in grades K-8. Students qualify for this opportunity through a combination of academic performance and teacher recommendation. The St. Albert groups are fluid, as this is not an accredited gifted program.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTING

GENERAL STUDENT PROGRESS FEEDBACK

Teachers communicate academic progress with students and parents/guardians in a variety of ways. The procedures used at various grade levels are communicated to parents/guardians through beginning of the year letters and at the Meet the Teacher Night in the fall. Teachers also explain their policies for absence work, late work, low grades, etc. If you are unsure of a policy, please contact your child's teacher for clarification.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Paper progress reports are provided to students mid-way through each quarter. All students receive a progress report mid-way through the 1st quarter. Only students in need receive progress reports in the following quarters. A quarter is typically a nine-week period.

Report cards are emailed to parents/guardians identified in FACTS at the end of each quarter.

6th-8th grade teachers maintain a live gradebook that can be accessed through FACTS at any time.

STANDARDS BASED GRADING (SBG) & PROGRESS CODES

Students in grades Kindergarten through eight (K-8) receive standards-based grades. The standards based progress report informs the parents/guardians of the specific knowledge students have mastered using the following codes: E, M, W, N, or INS. Those codes are defined below:

E- Exceeds the Essential Standard The student exceeds the essential standard by consistently demonstrating an advanced level of understanding and/or the ability to apply knowledge at a higher level. For example, the student synthesizes information and makes connections between concepts to apply the knowledge in new and unique ways or to apply the concepts to solve real problems.

M- Met the Essential Standard The Student has consistently mastered the essential standard taught and assessed.

W- Working toward Meeting the Essential Standard The student is working toward mastery of the essential standard or is inconsistent in his/her demonstration of mastery when assessed.

N- Not Meeting the Essential Standard (at the grade-level) Student has not demonstrated mastery of the essential standard. This is usually given to students that are at the beginning stages in learning a new concept or students who are working below grade level.

INS- Insufficient Evidence There was insufficient evidence provided for demonstration of mastery. Students will be given the opportunity to provide sufficient evidence by the end of the next grading period.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Renaissance Star Math and Reading tests are administered online a minimum of three times per year to assess learning and progress. Teachers utilize Star scores to form groups, make instructional decisions, provide intervention/enrichment, and assess progress toward learning goals.

GRADUATION

A Baccalaureate Mass and graduation ceremony is held at the end of the school year for students who have successfully completed the eighth grade. Any other events in conjunction with graduation are communicated from the school in the Spring.

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, & RETENTION

Promotions in the elementary schools shall be based upon the welfare of the students. Every student shall be placed where he/she can work to his/her best ability. Parents/guardians must be notified in writing by the end of the third quarter if retention is being considered. A teacher of a student, who may be retained, will notify the parents/guardians according to Diocesan guidelines. While parents/guardians are consulted and involved before retention is recommended, the decision is the responsibility of the principal. In some cases, instead of retention, a student may be placed rather than promoted to the next grade level or may be passed conditionally on attending summer school, acquiring summer tutoring, or other requirements communicated by administration. The school must receive documentation of the student's work for the tutoring, summer school, or other requirements for placement or conditional promotion.

STUDENT RECORDS

No data shall be released about students without the written consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a minor student or of the student who is 18 years of age or older. Those who are permitted to view an individual student's records are: School personnel; Parent(s)/guardian(s) of a minor student; the student who is 18 years of age or older; Non-custodial parent of an individual minor student (unless denied access by a court order); Officials of other schools to which the student transfers.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of an individual minor student or a student 18 years or older may request a copy of any item in the file. All others are denied access unless they have a subpoena or the written permission of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a minor student or of the student who is 18 years of age or older. School personnel may release information concerning students for research and statistical purposes as long as the individual student's identity is protected.

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE & VISITS

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School students feed into three Catholic high schools: Bishop Hartley, St. Charles Preparatory (all boys), and St. Francis DeSales. If a student is choosing one of those schools, his/her residential address does not dictate their high school choice. If a St. Matthew student chooses public high school education, he/she must attend the high school determined by their residential school district.

8th grade students visit the available Catholic high schools in the fall. The boys visit St. Charles Preparatory High School and the entire class visits Bishop Hartley and St. Francis DeSales High Schools. If students choose to do an individual visit (“shadow” day) at one of the Catholic high schools, or a public high school, they must have their absence approved by St. Matthew administration.

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, ATTENDANCE

ARRIVAL

The school day begins promptly at 7:45 a.m. with announcements then instruction. Students should not arrive before 7:00 a.m. Child care before school through A.M. CARE begins at 7 a.m. All students in the building between 7:00 AM and 7:25 a.m. will be directed to CARE for supervision if they have not made prior arrangements with a teacher for additional academic help, tutoring, etc. If a student is directed to CARE, a standard fee of \$4/day per family will apply. Students arriving after 7:25 a.m. will not be charged for CARE and should report to the Noble Center (grades 3-8) or the HUTTA gym (grades K-2). Students will remain in these spaces until they are escorted to class. For safety, parents and guardians are not permitted inside the school during arrival.

DISMISSAL

We want to ensure a safe, efficient dismissal for students. Students are not to play or loiter in the parking lot, playground or in front of school entrances; running in and out of school is not permitted. The only students remaining in the building after dismissal are those participating in the CARE program, or another supervised activity. Students may not remain on school grounds to wait for a later scheduled sports practice. For safety, parents and guardians are not permitted inside the school during dismissal. Details regarding dismissal procedures will be shared in depth by school administration at the start of the school year.

Families who pick their children up will select either the front or back car line and must use a school-provided identification tag or else will be asked to show ID at the office and/or to administration. No parents or guardians may walk into the building to retrieve their child during regular dismissal time. Families may also make use of bus transportation (if your residential public district offers it) as detailed in this handbook.

Any students remaining in the building after the dismissal procedure is complete at 2:45 p.m. will be directed to the Childrens Afterschool Activity and Recreation Experience (CARE) for supervision. In this event, the student is a drop-in CARE participant, and a fee of \$35.00 per child will be charged. Similarly, students who are not picked up from their after-school activities after 15 minutes will be directed to CARE for supervision and the same \$35 charge will apply.

WALKERS & CAR RIDERS

Walkers and car riders are dismissed after all buses have left the school grounds. The car lines will not move until the parking lot is clear of children. Parents/guardians of car riders are asked to participate in the car line, to prevent child(ren) from crossing the parking lot. Details regarding dismissal procedures will be shared in depth by school administration at the opening parent/guardian meetings. The procedures will also be posted on the school website.

BICYCLES

Students are permitted to ride bicycles to school. Bikes must be parked in the rack behind the school and must be locked. Bikes are not to be ridden on school grounds during the school day. St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School is not responsible for damage, loss or theft. Students should wear appropriate safety gear (helmets, etc.) and follow all state bicycle laws.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The Gahanna Transportation contact phone number is: 614-751-7581 and the website is: <https://www.gahannaschools.org/District/DistrictTransportation.aspx>

Gahanna-Jefferson School District: Students who live in Gahanna-Jefferson School District are transported by the Gahanna-Jefferson School District buses. The bus schedule can be found by using the district's [Transfinder website](#) or the Here Comes the Bus Mobile App.

If you reside outside the Gahanna-Jefferson district, please contact your local school district to inquire about bus transportation. If your district does not provide this service, you can apply to the transportation office directly where you reside for funds in lieu of service.

Students may only ride the buses of the public school district in which they reside.

If a student needs to ride a different bus or get off at a different stop within the Gahanna- Jefferson School District for one day, a note requesting this change must be sent to the school office for approval by the principal from the child's guardian who will get off at a different stop and the guardian/responsible party where the child will get off. Long-term bus changes within the district require a specific form to be completed by parents/guardians, submitted to the St. Matthew School principal, and forwarded to the Gahanna-Jefferson Transportation Department for approval. Contact the school office for this form.

It is strongly encouraged that families inquire with the public district's transportation office regarding services if weather is inclement and St. Matthew is in session but the public district is not.

Any questions parents/guardians may have concerning bus transportation should be directed to the appropriate public school district. St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School is not responsible for arranging the bus schedule or routines.

ATTENDANCE

Parents/guardians must notify all absences and tardies to the school office by 8 am on the day of the absence. Please do not have a child's sibling report the absence to the school office. Achievement and attendance are highly related. Classroom attendance is essential for a student to progress academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. The Diocese of Columbus sets forth in compliance with state law a required number of days for school in the Diocese. Parents or guardians are legally responsible for a student's attendance in school. The parent or guardian of any student is responsible for unexcused absences. According to Diocese policy we are justified in refusing credit for the year to any student who misses 28 or more days. An exception to this policy would be a student who is hospitalized or suffers from an extended illness and is able to make up work through tutoring or some other type of approved home learning situation.

When a student reaches 15 days of absenteeism, the parent or guardian will be notified and a conference with the principal will be scheduled. During the conference, chronic absenteeism will be discussed and goals to eliminate the absenteeism will be established. Referral to counseling will be provided if deemed appropriate.

Attendance Codes

ARRIVAL		DISMISSAL	
Tardy	7:45 - 9:10	Half Day	9:45 - 1:15
Half Day	9:11 - start of lunch	Full Day	7:55 - 9:45
Full Day	After lunch - 2:25	Nothing	1:15 - 2:25

EXCUSED ABSENCE

Excused absences are those that are included as reasons for absence according to Chapter 3321 of the Ohio Revised Code. These reasons are:

- Personal illness
 - The principal may ask for a statement from a physician if he/she deems it advisable.
- Medical appointment
- Death of a relative
 - Absence arising from this condition is limited to a period of three days unless a reasonable cause may be shown by the applicant child for a longer absence.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

An unexcused absence, whether resulting from truancy or other unacceptable reasons, precludes the child from fully engaging in essential learning happening at St. Matthew the Apostle School. Students are required to complete assignments in order to remain current. Opting out of a designated school activity/event is considered an unexcused absence. Disciplinary action may result from excessive unexcused absences.

TARDINESS

Students must report to their classroom by 7:45 a.m. A warning bell rings at 7:40 and the final bell rings at 7:45 when instruction begins. Tardies are issued until 9:10 a.m. before it becomes a half-day absence. If students arrive at their classroom later than 7:45 a.m., they must report to the school office to obtain a class admittance slip. A late bus will not result in a tardy nor will morning medical appointments. When punctuality is affected by unforeseen circumstances such as but not limited to: inclement weather conditions or traffic accidents impacting a large amount of our student body, the administrative team will use discretion in issuing tardies.

Students who exceed three unexcused tardies per quarter are considered to have an excessive tardiness problem. At the third tardy, a letter of documentation is mailed home notifying parents/guardians that the child has accumulated three tardies and the next tardy in the same quarter will result in an after-school, tardy work session supervised in the detention room. Consequences for tardies are at the sole discretion of the administration; as these unexcused tardies accumulate during a given quarter the following penalties may be charged:

- **Fourth tardy:** After-school tardy work session supervised in the detention room 2:30–3:30 p.m.
- **Fifth tardy:** After-school tardy work session supervised in the detention room 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- **Sixth tardy:** Conference with administration and/or counselor and/or Pastor to discuss habitual tardiness problem

EARLY DISMISSAL

It is strongly recommended that doctor and dental appointments be made after school hours. If this is not possible, a note from the parent/guardian stating the type of appointment and time for dismissal must be sent to the school office for approval. Whenever a student leaves school grounds during school hours, the parent or responsible party must sign the student out at the school office. If a student will be leaving school and returning within the same school day, the parent or responsible party must sign the student out and back in upon returning.

REPORTING ABSENCE

If your child will not be in school because of illness or other reason, please call the school office (614-471-4930) before 8:00 a.m. In accordance with Ohio law, we must follow-up any unreported absences with a phone call to parents/guardians by 9:00 a.m. When your child returns to school following absence or tardiness, please send a note to his or her teacher bearing the reason for absence, the date(s) of absence, and the signature of a parent or legal guardian.

ILLNESS WHILE AT SCHOOL

Students who become ill during the day must report to the nurse's office and the parent/guardian will be notified. The student must be signed out in the office by the responsible person and then dismissed. The 23-24 Sick Policy is provided at the end of this document.

FAMILY VACATIONS & PARENT/GUARDIAN TRAVEL

Taking your child out of school for several days because of family vacation plans is *strongly discouraged*. Starting with the 21-22 school year, a form must be completed for families to schedule a vacation during the academic calendar. Administration will approve or deny the form. Teachers are not required to prepare work ahead of time, though a request can be made. Any vacation scheduled during academic school days is considered unexcused absence.

CODE OF CONDUCT

In general, St. Matthew students are required to follow these rules at all times:

- Be Kind, Loving, and Compassionate
- *Make a Difference* each day in the lives of others
- Always try to do your best!
- Treat everyone with respect and courtesy (this includes students, staff, volunteers and visitors)
- Move through the halls safely and quietly
- Take proper care of all school property
- Be in correct uniform every day
- No gum chewing before, during, or after school
- No tackling games
- No fighting
- No food outside the lunchroom without permission
- No name calling, bad language or inappropriate gestures
- Students may not bring toys, electronic games or other electronic devices from home unless given special permission from a teacher or the administration (including but not limited to cell phones, **watches**, tablets, iPads, etc.).
- Students may not bring tobacco or paraphernalia typically associated with it, e-cigarettes, vapes, alcohol, or drugs (including over-the-counter medication) to school
- No threatening behavior or harassment of anyone verbally or through digital forms of communication

PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY USE

Students may not use cell phones in the school building or during school activities. If a student needs to call home, he/she must use a school phone with adult permission. Students who need to have their cell phone due to after-school activities must keep the device turned off and stored in the backpack or locker during the school day.

Watches are not permitted. If a student needs a watch for after school use, it must be kept in his/her backpack until he/she leaves the school building.

Students using personal technology in the school building or during a school activity will have the item confiscated and a parent/guardian must claim it from the principal's office.

TECHNOLOGY/INTERNET USE

Students are expected to use technology for educational purposes, in an appropriate manner, and in line with the St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School Code of Conduct and [Diocesan Technology Acceptable Use Policy](#). Students are responsible for appropriate behavior when using the Internet and/or technology devices. Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of

network etiquette. Parents and students are asked to sign a Diocesan Technology Acceptable Use and the [St. Matthew Acceptance of Financial Responsibility for Technology](#) policies each school year. The policies are available to all families at the start of school through FACTS. Students are expected to review the policies with their parents. They will also review the policies the first week of school with administration and the technology teacher. Students will be charged for intentional damage to any school-owned technological device, per the St. Matthew Technology Acceptable Use policy.

PLAGIARISM AND AI TECHNOLOGY

Students are not authorized to plagiarize or cheat. This includes the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT and other platforms to pass AI generated content as a student's own. Disciplinary action for plagiarism and/or using AI technology will be at the discretion of the administration.

SAFETY

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS & DELAYS

School closings and delays due to hazardous or inclement weather conditions will be announced through an automated call and text from the school. It is also reported on the local news channels. St. Matthew the Apostle School is closed/delayed whenever the Gahanna-Jefferson Public School District declares a weather emergency.

If your bus transportation is arranged through a public district (other than Gahanna-Jefferson) who is *not* having school due to inclement weather but St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School is in session, it is your responsibility to arrange other transportation for your child. Parents/guardians should make transportation decisions based upon safety. On a delayed start day, the lunch menu is subject to change.

DRILLS

Regularly scheduled drills are executed throughout the school year in preparation for a variety of emergency situations should they unexpectedly arise. Fire Drills are performed once a month, tornado drills occur three times per year, and internal/external lockdown threats are also executed three times per year.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT/CRISIS PLAN

This plan has been developed for various circumstances that may arise and has been compiled with the help of local community responders such as the fire department and police department. The plan is on file in the school office and with the Diocesan Office of Catholic Education. In the event of a crisis the school will communicate with families as soon as possible.

FRANKLIN COUNTY RED THREAT LEVEL

The sixteen public school districts of Franklin county, including the Diocese of Columbus have joined together to establish a common protocol to follow in the event that a “red alert” is declared by the United States Department of Homeland Security. As defined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, a Threat Level of Red is declared when there is a severe risk of terrorist attacks. Under most circumstances, the Protective Measures of a Severe/Red condition are not intended to be sustained for a substantial period of time.

If the Franklin County Red Alert School Team, composed of the Superintendents from Columbus Public Schools and Gahanna-Jefferson City Schools, determines that the threat is a potential danger to Franklin County, the following procedures will be followed.

- If a Red Alert is issued before or after school hours then normal school operations will cease based upon the Red Alert School Team's recommendations and will remain closed until advised by the Red Alert School Team to reopen. All school activities and events scheduled will be canceled until notice by the Red Alert School Team.
- If a Red Alert is issued during school hours then school buildings will be secured and remain open until regular dismissal time unless otherwise advised by the Red Alert School Team. Students will be sent home by normal transportation means or released to parents pursuant to district policy. All after school activities and events will be canceled, unless otherwise advised by the Red Alert School Team

ASBESTOS

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School follows diocesan and state protocols regarding the documentation of existing asbestos on-campus and inspection compliance. An electronic document is available online detailing its presence on the school campus.

DRESS CODE

The purpose of a dress code is to minimize influences that distract from the goals of the school and to forestall competition among the students. Catholic schools realize that the changing culture and the surroundings shape our students. The dress of our students should reflect the dignity and worth of each person in light of Catholic principles. Therefore, we expect each student to dress and groom him or herself in a manner that is modest, clean, and appropriate to a Catholic school learning environment. St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School students are expected to adhere to the following dress code:

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Accessories: Religious necklaces appropriate for a Catholic school are permitted. Crosses no larger than 2" in length are permitted, as long as they are not a disruption/distraction to learning. No cords, ribbons, wires, strings, etc. are permitted. Only one necklace may be worn. One bracelet or wristband is permitted if it does not distract from the educational process. Rings are not permitted. Female students may wear one set earrings to school. Earrings should not extend below the ear lobe. Multiple sets of earrings are not permitted. Male students may not wear earrings to school. No other body piercings are permitted. **Watches are not permitted.** Students will be asked to remove any jewelry or accessories that are offensive or distracting.

Hair: Hairstyles and cuts are to be neat and clean. Hair should not obstruct vision in any way. Male students' hair must be off the ear, above the collar and above the eyebrows. Male students are to be clean-shaven. All hairstyles should be conservative with a natural hair color: no extreme styles or colors. Female students may wear hair accessories that complement the uniform. Accessories must be solid gray, maroon, black, white or school plaid. No embellishments are permitted. Hair accessories are not permitted for male students. *Final decisions regarding hair are left to the sole discretion of the administration.*

Perfume/Cologne & Make-up/Fingernail Polish: Perfume, cologne or body spray is not permitted. It is distracting in the classroom and some students may have allergies to fragrances. No makeup is permitted in PK-5. Female students in grades 6-8 may wear minimal makeup that is in good taste: no lipstick may be worn. Lip gloss is permitted in neutral shades, clear, or pale pink. For all female students PK-8, nail polish must be clear or pastel in color. Neon shades, design decals, glitter, and artificial nails are not permitted.

Tattoos: Visible tattoos, including ink and rub-on temporary tattoos are not permitted.

Hats, Outerwear: Hats and boots may be worn to school when necessitated by weather. Students must change into acceptable shoes upon arrival. Hats, coats, hooded sweatshirts and jackets (other than the St. Matthew Fleece Jacket) are not permitted to be worn in the building.

Sweaters or Vests: Hip-length cardigan, pullover or sweater vests may be worn. No hoods. Sweaters or vests must be solid gray, maroon, navy or white; these can be from any store if

consistent with the noted color and style. Shirt collar must be visible. Track jackets may only be worn with the gym uniform. Please see the Gym Uniform section for specifics.

Socks: No socks are permitted that call undue attention. Small logos are permissible on athletic-style socks. School spirit socks may only be worn with the gym and/or warm weather uniform. Please see specific sections in the continued pages of the Dress Code for additional detail.

Fleece: The uniform fleece may be worn with the gym and dress uniform.

Spirit Wear: Spirit wear that is sold through the Athletic Association or School Days is not approved as part of the school uniform.

Undershirts: Only solid, plain white short sleeved or tank-style undershirts may be worn. Undergarments should be worn when appropriate and should not be visible at any time.

**No brand logo may be visible on shirts, undershirts, sweaters, vests, pants, shorts, or accessories

Mass Attire (Weekly Attire vs. All School Mass Attire)

For regular, weekly Mass, students are permitted to wear the uniform they have for the school day be it the PE, Warm Weather, Dress uniform, etc. Track pants are to be worn over gym shorts if attending weekly Mass in the PE uniform.

The standard dress uniform is required for All School Masses - pants, jumpers, dress shoes.

STANDARD MALE DRESS UNIFORM

Slacks & Belts: Solid, navy uniform-style dress pants in twill or corduroy. Pants must be hemmed and not elastic at the ankle. Uniform slacks that are not purchased through School Days must match the sample slack in both style and material (not dry fit). Cargo style pants are not permitted. A belt is required with uniform pants. Belts must be leather or cloth, and visible at all times; belts may be black, brown or navy with a conservative buckle.

Shirts: Shirts can be short or long sleeved: polo-style (not dry fit) shirts can be solid white or solid maroon in color and may have the St. Matthew logo, tailored oxford-style dress shirts are also acceptable. Shirts may be short or long-sleeved with a collar and may have the St. Matthew logo. Shirts must be buttoned up to the second button from the top and shall remain tucked in at all times.

Ties in Grade 8: Male students in grade eight may wear ties to school; ties are required for grade eight on Mass days, religious celebrations and special activities throughout the school year. Ties are to be worn with button down, oxford-style shirts. The knot of the tie must cover the top button of the shirt. All buttons on the shirt must be buttoned including the top button when wearing a tie. Only solid maroon ties or maroon & black striped ties purchased from the School Days Uniform store are permitted.

Socks: Solid gray, black, maroon, navy or dark colored must be worn. Socks must cover the ankle with the dress uniform.

Shoes: Solid colored black, navy, dark brown, gray or tan dress shoes. Shoes must be leather, flat, oxford, or loafer styles. No athletic-style shoes, boots, slippers, moccasins, cloth tennis shoes, sandals, Vans, or Crocs. If shoes have laces, they must be tied and should match the predominant color of the shoe. Heels/soles of shoes may not be greater than 1". Sperry's, Hey Dudes, or similar boat-shoe styles are permitted.

STANDARD FEMALE DRESS UNIFORM

Jumpers: Jumpers must come within 2" of the knee cap. Females students in grades Kindergarten through five wear the School *plaid* jumpers. Female students in grades six through eight wear *solid maroon* jumpers.

Slacks & Belts: Solid, navy uniform-style dress pants in twill or corduroy. Pants must be hemmed. Uniform slacks that are not purchased through School Days Uniforms must match the sample slack in both style and material. Cargo styles are not permitted. A belt is required with uniform pants. Belts must be leather or cloth, and visible at all times; belts may be black, brown or navy with a conservative buckle.

Shirts: Polo-style shirts are permitted with the plaid jumper in grades K-5. Polo-style shirts are also permitted with slacks and shorts (warm weather uniform). Polo shirts can be solid white or solid maroon in color and may have the St. Matthew logo.

A Solid white, tailored, oxford style dress shirt can be worn with all jumpers but *must* be worn with the maroon jumper in grades 6-8. Shirts can be short or long-sleeved. Shirts must have a collar (rounded or pointed) and may have the St. Matthew logo. Shirts must be buttoned up to the second button from the top and shall remain tucked in at all times.

Socks: With Jumpers, tights, mid-calf, or knee socks are to be worn and are only permitted in solid gray, maroon, navy or white. No embellishments or logos are permitted. With slacks, solid gray, maroon, black navy or *dark colored* must be worn. Socks must cover the ankle with the dress uniform.

Leggings: Black leggings may be worn under the jumper during cold weather. Socks must be worn under leggings.

Shoes: Solid colored black, navy, dark brown, gray or tan dress shoes. Shoes must be leather, flat, oxford, or loafer styles. No athletic-style shoes, boots, slippers, moccasins, cloth tennis shoes, sandals, Vans or Crocs. If shoes have laces, they must be tied and should match the predominant color of the shoe. Heels/soles of shoes may not be greater than 1". Sperry's, Hey Dudes, or similar boat-shoe styles are permitted.

WARM WEATHER UNIFORM

The warm weather uniform is permitted from the first day of school through September 30th and again from May 1st to the close of the school year; it is at the administration's discretion to consider weather conditions and extend the seasonal uniform dates accordingly. In this event, school communication will clearly outline the extension so that families may plan accordingly. Students have the option to wear the standard dress uniform or the warm weather uniform during the warm weather uniform time frame. The warm weather uniform may be worn to weekly Mass with shirts tucked; however, the Dress Uniform must be worn on All School Mass days.

Shorts: Solid navy uniform-style, twill walking shorts. Short length must come within 2" of the middle of the knee cap. Shorts may not be beyond the middle of the knee cap. Shorts must be hemmed. Uniform shorts that are not purchased through School Days Uniforms must match the sample short in both style and material. Cargo styles are not permitted.

Belts: A belt is required. Belts must be leather or cloth, and visible at all times; belts may be black, brown or navy with a conservative buckle.

Shirts: Polo-style shirts are permitted with the plaid jumper in grades K-5. Polo-style shirts are also permitted with slacks and shorts (warm weather uniform). Polo shirts can be solid white or solid maroon in color and may have the St. Matthew Logo.

A Solid white, tailored, oxford style dress shirt can be worn with all jumpers but *must* be worn with the maroon jumper in grades 6-8. Shirts can be short or long-sleeved. Shirts must have a collar (rounded or pointed) and may have the St. Matthew logo. Shirts must be buttoned up to the second button from the top and shall remain tucked in at all times.

Socks: Solid black, gray, neutral, or white socks must be worn. Socks must be visible and should not call undo attention to themselves. Small brand insignias are permitted on athletic-style socks.

Shoes: Athletic shoes are permitted with the warm weather uniform. Shoes must be predominately white, solid black, solid gray or solid navy and may include understated accent colors. No lights or wheels. If shoes have laces, they must be tied and should match the predominant color of the shoe or be solid black or solid white in color. Heels/soles of shoes may not be greater than 1". No sandals, flip flops, slippers, Crocs, or moccasins. Sperry's, Hey Dudes, or similar boat-shoe styles are permitted.

GYM UNIFORM

All Gym Uniform items must be purchased at School Days or the Used Uniform Sale (newer style). No brand logos may be visible with the exception of a small insignia on athletic-style socks. Students will wear the seasonal warm weather PE uniform or cold weather PE uniform (with track pants) that was purchased. The gym uniform may be worn to weekly Mass with track pants over the gym shorts. The Dress Uniform must be worn on All School Mass days.

Shorts: The length of gym shorts must be within 2" (above or below) the middle of the knee cap.

Pants: Solid gray or solid maroon sweatpants are permitted. Maroon track pants from School Days Uniform Store that coordinate with the track jacket are also permitted.

T-Shirts: T-Shirts must be solid gray with the Saint Matthew gym logo on the left chest. Shirts may be short or long-sleeve.

Sweatshirts: Sweatshirts must be solid gray with the Saint Matthew gym logo on the left chest. Sweatshirts with an embroidered solid or plaid "M" logo are also acceptable.

Track Jackets: Track jackets from School Days Uniform Store (that coordinate with the track pants) may *only* be worn with the gym uniform.

Socks: Solid black, gray, navy, neutral, or white socks must be worn. Socks must be visible. St. Matthew Spirit Socks sold by the Athletic Association are acceptable with the gym uniform. No socks are permitted that call undue attention. Small logos are permissible on athletic-style socks.

Shoes: Athletic shoes must be predominately white, solid black, solid gray or solid navy and may include understated accent colors; they should be understated and should not call undue attention to themselves. No lights or wheels. If shoes have laces, they must be tied and should match the predominant color of the shoe or be solid black or solid white in color. Heels/soles of shoes may not be greater than 1".

CATCH THE SPIRIT UNIFORM

If students are wearing Catch the Spirit wear on a regularly scheduled Mass day, they are permitted to wear it to Mass.

Pants: Jeans may be worn provided they do not have holes, are not ripped or torn, or are not too form fitting or low rise (fitting lower than slightly below the waist line). No cutoffs, cargo-style pants, baggy jeans or jeggings. Gym shorts, track pants, or sweatpants as outlined in the gym uniform are also acceptable.

Shirts: Catch the Spirit T-Shirts are provided by the Home and School Association.

Shoes: Shoes can be gym/warm weather uniform shoes, or any other shoe that complies with the Standard Dress Code Guidelines.

DRESS DOWN DAY GUIDELINES

Students must wear sweatpants, jeans, or other acceptable pants or their school gym shorts with an appropriate top on designated dress down days. No spaghetti straps, tank tops, crop tops, tight-fitting, or sheer tops permitted. The school gym shoe policy applies on dress down days.

DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

We expect that all children adhere to the uniform guidelines established in this handbook. Cleanliness and neatness are expected at all times. In situations where discrepancies or disagreements exist with the Dress Code guidelines as to whether attire is appropriate, *the administration shall make the final decision*. The following consequences will be assigned per quarter for students out of uniform:

1st Violation: Communication of expectation by teacher (warning)

2nd Violation: Lunch detention and electronic communication sent home via FACTS

3rd Violation: After school detention and school will contact parent/guardian by phone

4th Violation: In-person meeting with administration and parent/guardian will be scheduled

Some infractions may warrant additional discipline or action to be determined by the administration on a case-by-case basis. Parents may be asked to bring a change of clothing. If hair is not appropriate, students may be asked to go home with a parent/guardian and correct the problem.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

OUTDOOR RECESS CONDITIONS

During cold-weather months, outdoor recess continues unless the temperature is below 25 degrees with wind chill taken into consideration. Final decisions are made by administration. It is important for students to come to school with appropriate hats, coats, and gloves on cold days. Administration pays close attention to changing conditions and makes the determination for recess to be indoor. Rain conditions may also require recess to be indoor. **On cold days, teachers are encouraged to take students outside for recess for at least 10 minutes because research suggests that “daily doses of fresh air and sunlight increase circulation, Vitamin D, boost immune systems, and promote overall wellness.”** (Fitzgerald, M. (2022, October 30). *Why being outdoors in winter is so very good for kids*. Tinkergarten. <https://tinkergarten.com/blog/why-being-outdoors-is-essential-for-wellness-even-in-winter>)

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

The principal's newsletter will arrive via email. This is a one-stop source of information regarding up-coming events and important information from the St. Matthew community. Parents/guardians should read this information weekly to stay abreast to the most up-to-date information. Items of interest parents/guardians would like included or attached for publication must be submitted in writing or via email to the principal for approval. Inclusion of items in the newsletter is at the discretion of the principal.

CONFERENCES

Conferences between parents/guardians and teachers are typically scheduled twice per school year, after Quarter 1 and again after Quarter 3. Should parents/guardians feel a need for a conference at any other time, they are encouraged to contact the teacher directly or the school office; the appropriate teacher will return the call or email to arrange a suitable meeting time.

RAISING A CONCERN

Parents/guardians who have questions regarding a teacher or staff member's decision, classroom rules, homework, etc. should contact the teacher to discuss the specific concerns. If after discussion with the teacher, the issue is unresolved, parents/guardians may contact the principal to schedule an appointment.

SCHOOL VISITORS

To provide a safe environment for all students and staff, all visitors, parents/guardians, and volunteers must sign in/out at the office. In an effort to limit classroom disruptions and interruptions to instruction, parents/guardians are required to drop off/pick up items at the office. Visitor identification tags will be worn.

For safety reasons, parents will not be permitted to walk students to class in the morning. Additionally, parents will not be permitted to come into the school at the end of the day to pick up their child. Students in grades K-8 are required to exit cars in the car line and enter the school. School personnel will assist students each morning and afternoon in the parking lot.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Classroom observations, reserved to parents/guardians, are welcome; please coordinate a day/time with your child's teacher at least 48 hours in advance and sign in with the office upon entering the building.

Any parent desiring to observe a classroom must contact the classroom teacher and principal for a scheduled date and time prior to arrival.

CUSTODIAL/NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT POLICY

The custodial parent is required to provide the principal or the person in charge of admission with the most current certified copy of any child custody order or decree pertaining to a student. The child custody order or decree pertaining to the student should be submitted to the school within 2 weeks of enrollment. Child custody order or decree changes pertaining to the student should be submitted to the school Principal within 2 weeks of changes taking effect.

A copy of the entire decree bearing the case number, the custody of the children and the relationship with the school, and the final page bearing the judge's signature are to be submitted to the principal. Unless the decree indicates otherwise, school communications will be sent home to the custodial parent.

Unless the divorce decree specifically limits the non custodial parent's right to access records, the noncustodial parent has a right to the same access to student records as the custodial parent. We will, unless instructed by a court order, release such records upon request to the non-custodial parent. "Records" include official transcripts, report cards, health records, referrals for special services, and communications regarding major disciplinary actions. It does not include daily classwork and papers, or routine communications sent through the children to the home or residence. In these cases, the custodial parent is asked to cooperate with the school and share this information directly with the non-custodial parent. Furthermore, unless restricted by a court order, any non-custodial parent has the right to attend any school activity of their child which includes sports activities and class programs.

In cases of "joint custody" (shared parenting agreement), it is assumed that one copy of communications and information will be sent home with the child and that this will be shared by and between the parents/guardians.

Regarding parent conferences in all custody situations: It is preferred and will be the general procedure that one conference appointment be scheduled "jointly" if both parents/guardians wish to be present. A joint conference ensures that both parents/guardians are given the same information at the same time, thereby avoiding misunderstandings and misinterpretations. In cases where joint conferences are neither possible nor desirable by all parties involved, alternate arrangements may be discussed with the principal, subject to the approval of both parents/guardians. Every effort will be made to keep communications open with both parents/guardians while at the same time avoiding duplication of services and excessive demands on the teacher's time.

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Social media provides wonderful opportunities for St. Matthew families to network and develop relationships as well as to see up-to-date posts about the wonderful work of our students, faculty, and community on Facebook. Social media, however, also has the potential to damage the partnership between the school and our community. We ask that members of our community ensure that posts about St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School are kept positive and consistent with our Catholic mission, especially with regard to its students, parents/guardians, teachers, administration and other

staff members. Parents/guardians or any member of the school community who post, whether in public or private groups, defamatory, threatening, or offensive statements will be asked to remove the offensive material immediately and/or withdraw his or her child from the school. This includes the use of social media for such purposes that may prove detrimental to the common good, threatening, harmful or offensive to other parents/guardians, student, staff, and administration or is of such a nature as to jeopardize the good name of the school.

Should a parent/guardian or member of the St. Matthew the Apostle community have a complaint or inquiry about an issue at school, please speak directly to the school administration about the matter rather than discussing it in a public forum.

PHOTO & VIDEO RELEASE

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School has the unlimited right to use and/or reproduce photographs, likenesses, or the voice of students in any legal manner and for the internal or external promotional or informational activities at school. Students may be interviewed and/or photographed by representatives of the news media or organizations in relation to any and all coverage of the school in which they are involved. Students' work and/or photographs may be published.

Parents guardians who do not agree with the above statements should indicate as such on the photo/video release form available digitally in FACTS so that St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic school will accommodate your child/family accordingly.

USE OF NAME/BRANDING

Attaching St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School's name, logo or other insignia to an event, activity or publication implies a close connection with the school, usually sponsorship or endorsement. Involvement by individual faculty, staff, students or parents/guardians is not, by itself, sufficient basis to title an activity, program, or event as "school" sponsored. The school must take institutional responsibility for the activity, program, or event.

Faculty members, staff, students, parents/guardians, and parish members may use or authorize the use of the school name, logo, or insignia (alone or in conjunction with the name of a specified organization or activity) *only with the written approval of the pastor and principal in parish schools*. No individual, company or organization may seek to use the school name, logo or insignia for any commercial benefit *without the written approval* of the pastor and principal in parish schools. In appropriate cases determined by the pastor/principal, permission for ongoing events, activities, or publications requiring approval under this policy may be given.

ADVISORY BOARD

This organization is an advisory organization subject to the pastor and principal and to such regulations and policies that are promulgated by the Catholic Schools Advisory Commission of the Diocese of Columbus.

Parents/guardians of children attending St. Matthew or active members of the parish are elected, or can be appointed by the Pastor. Their duties may include long-range planning, committee work, operations, budget preparation, tuition determination, and making suggestions to the school principal on important issues. The School Advisory Board typically meets on the fourth Monday of the month during the school year. Meetings are held in the Library/Media Center beginning at 7:00 p.m. These meetings are open. Parents/guardians are invited and encouraged to attend.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (HSA)

The HSA organization promotes a close relationship between parents/guardians, teachers and students. The Home & School Association meets monthly on the second Tuesday. These meetings are open to all parents/guardians interested in getting involved with their child's school. Fundraising projects are sponsored during the year to raise money for special programs not possible in the regular school budget and to reduce the grant required from the parish. Home and School is also responsible for organizing classroom parties to celebrate special occasions (Halloween, St. Nicholas Day and St. Valentines Day) and activities on the last day of school. Home and School relies heavily on volunteers to facilitate their activities. It is an excellent opportunity for parents/guardians to become acquainted with other parents/guardians while working on projects that benefit the school.

VOLUNTEERISM

There are many opportunities for parents/guardians to volunteer. We rely heavily on the work of our volunteers to enhance the educational and faith-based experience at St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School.

For the safety of our children, all volunteers must have on file a BCI background check, digital fingerprints, and attend a mandatory, one-time "Protecting God's Children" training session. These three things are required according to policy, "no matter how much or how little contact they have with children or youth, no matter if volunteering for the school or parish, and no matter what time of the day or night volunteering". The training session will help volunteers learn the signs of child sexual abuse, understand offenders' methods and will help volunteers to learn ways to help prevent child sexual abuse as an advocate for the safety of all youth. Sessions are offered throughout the diocese, often in conjunction with the fingerprinting/background check process which both paid faculty/staff and volunteers must attend; please inquire with the office staff for details regarding this policy and to register. The Safe Environment coordinator for the school and parish will answer any and all questions and be glad to assist you with this process and outlined at:

<https://stmatthew.net/protecting-gods-children>

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Volunteers in the St. Matthew the Apostle Community:

- work collaboratively with the pastor and/or other parish/school personnel to faithfully represent and practice the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- respect confidentiality, are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their roles and responsibilities.
- recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
- serve all people without regard to gender, creed, national origin, age, marital status, socioeconomic status or political beliefs to ensure all persons have access to the resources, services, and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.
- are accountable to the pastor or other appointed representative to exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding fiscal matters placed in their trust.
- adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure concerning the reporting of neglect, suspected abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
- support the rights and roles of parents/guardians while ministering to the needs and concerns of minors. Therefore, they will sustain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power. Physical, sexual, or romantic relationships between an adult volunteer and a minor are unethical, unlawful and prohibited. Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with minors are unethical, unlawful and prohibited.
- are attentive to the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect and are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling; therefore, make appropriate referrals when necessary.
- are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

FIELD TRIPS

When a student participates in a school sponsored field trip, the student must leave school and return to school with the class. Field trip participation is at the discretion of the building principal should a discipline, behavior or other issue arise. A permission slip along with any required fees must be completed/paid prior to attendance. *St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School cannot accept*

responsibility for such trips without written parental consent using the school's permission form. Should cost be prohibitive, please contact the principal. Chaperones for field trips must be Safe Environment certified as referred to in the Volunteerism section; as well, chaperones are expected to follow the Volunteer Code of Conduct outlined in the Volunteerism section. Parent/guardian chaperones are asked not to bring siblings or additional children on the field trip as chaperones need to be available to monitor the students and their group. **(Volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Code of Conduct form each year.)**

HEALTH SPECIFIC POLICIES

STUDENT HEALTH RECORDS

All parents/guardians of *Pre-K students, kindergarten students and students new to St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School* shall complete school health forms via FACTS.

Online medical forms must be completed by the parent/guardian before the first day of school.

Proof of immunization from a physician must be in the office within the first 30 days of school. Please refer to this [link](#) for required immunization for school attendance in Ohio. A school health report from a physician of a transfer student will be accepted if it has been completed within one calendar year prior to entering St. Matthew School.

For Pre-K students, the completed physician form must be in the office by the first day of school and must have been completed within 12 months of the beginning of school. The State of Ohio requires that the physician form be updated every 13 months after the date of the first physical form.

Parental cooperation is asked in keeping the medical records and information up to date and accurate in FACTS. Immunization and other medical forms are available on the school website under Departments—>Nurse's Station: <https://cdstmatthew.org/nurses-station>

HEALTH-RELATED SCREENINGS

Students receive vision and hearing screenings in grades K, 1, 3, 5 & 7. A scoliosis screening is given to students in grades 5 through 8, annually. All eighth grader students have their blood pressure checked. Parents/guardians will be advised if further medical attention in any of these areas is necessary.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY PRE-K

Pupils enrolled in the Pre-K program are required to provide written proof that they have received the immunizations required by the state of Ohio:

- DTaP, DT, or DTP: 4 doses of the Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis preparations, as determined by the health care provider
- POLIO: 3 doses of IPV
- MMR:(measles, mumps, rubella): 1 dose of live virus

- Hepatitis B: 3 doses of the Hepatitis B vaccine. The second (2nd) dose must be administered at least 28 days after the first dose. The third (3rd) dose must be administered at least 2 months after the second dose and at least four (4) months after the first dose.
- Varicella (chicken pox): 1 dose administered on or after the first birthday.
- Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib): 2 or 3 doses Hib vaccine primary series (2-6 months) and a booster #3 or #4 (12-18 months)
- Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV 13): 4 doses-1 dose at 2, 4 and 6 months and 1 dose (4th) at 12-18 months (total of 4 doses)
- Rotavirus: 3 doses from (2-12 months)
- Hepatitis A: 2 doses - First dose should be given between 12-23 months of age. Second dose should be given 6 months after the last dose.

For additional information, please reference this document provided by the state of Ohio included in this [link](#).

Students who are not in compliance are to be excluded from school attendance no later than the 15th day after admission. Given Ohio Statute, 3313.671, in the case of a Legal Immunization Exemption, the school office must have an official waiver exemption form on file.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY K-8

Pupils enrolled in Pre-K through eighth grade are required to provide written proof of the immunizations required by the State of Ohio: [Ohio Immunization Summary for School Attendance](#)

MEDICATION DISPENSATION

All official forms mentioned in the policies below can be obtained from the school or the school website. All medication must be brought to the nurse in the school office by an adult.

POLICY: ADMINISTRATION OF OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS NOT PRESCRIBED BY A PHYSICIAN OR DENTIST

The only “over the counter” medications that may be given by school personnel, without a physician's order, will be acetaminophen, ibuprofen and cough drops. Acetaminophen, ibuprofen and/or cough drops will not be administered to a student unless the nurse receives an official, completed and signed parent authorization form that includes the following information:

- the name and grade of the student
- Name of the medication
- specific time medication(s) are to be administered
- period of time medication will be needed
- specific instructions (if any)

The parent authorization form for administration of over the counter (OTC) medications not prescribed

by a physician or dentist will be effective for the year. For students in K-5, the parent will be notified before the child is medicated. For middle school students, they may request and self-administer the OTC medicine, kept in the nurse's office, under the supervision of an adult. Students are not allowed to carry medication, unless specified by the physician (i.e. asthma inhaler).

POLICY: ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS PRESCRIBED BY A PHYSICIAN OR DENTIST

Prescribed medication (any medication other than acetaminophen, ibuprofen or cough drops) will not be administered to a student unless the nurse receives the following:

- completed parent authorization form, signed by the parent/guardian
- completed physician's authorization form signed by the physician or dentist who prescribed the medication and includes the following information:
 - the name and address of the student
 - class in which the student is enrolled
 - the name of the medication and the dosage to be administered
 - the times or intervals at which each dosage of the medication is to be administered
 - the dates the administration of the drug is to begin and cease
 - any severe adverse reactions that should be reported to the physician
 - one or more phone numbers at which the prescribing physician dentist can be reached in an emergency
 - Special instructions for administration of the drug, including sterile conditions and storage

The parent/guardian must resubmit all applicable forms (parent authorization and physician authorization) to the principal if any of the information provided by the physician/dentist changes, or if a change of physicians/dentist occurs.

Physician and parent authorization forms for the administration of prescription medications must be resubmitted at the beginning of each new school year. Authorizations from the previous school year *cannot be carried over to the next year.*

MEDICATION DISPENSATION CONT.

It is strongly urged that all medications be administered at home whenever possible. Please consult the prescribing physician or dentist to ascertain if a medication can be administered at times when a student is at home. When it is not possible to administer medication at home, it will be administered at school under our policies for medical dispensation with the proper documentation on-file in the health office. All medications to be administered at school are to be brought to the school office in the original container. If it is a prescription medication, please request that the pharmacist provide an additional labeled container so the entire prescription need not be sent to school.

DISPENSATION OF MEDICATION ON FIELD TRIPS

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School teachers receive medication and medical procedure training for all medications and emergencies that may arise on a field trip. Teachers are responsible for obtaining students' medication and supplies to be taken on the field trip. Only St. Matthew teachers or the student's parent/guardian are sanctioned to administer medications to students. Students who have life-threatening conditions or require that a medication be administered, must be with the teacher or that child's parent AT ALL TIMES. Only St. Matthew teachers or the student's parent/guardian can assume responsibility to monitor blood glucose levels or other procedures as ordered by the physician and parent. St. Matthew teachers must have all proper authorization forms completed by parents/guardians and physicians with him/her at all times during the field trip. Should the field trip occur outside of regular school hours and the student requires medication, the teacher must secure additional authorization forms completed by the parent and physician. The parent must send the additional medications to be taken. Students with life-threatening conditions who do not have completed authorization forms from the parent and physician and who do not have the medication available to take on the field trip will not be permitted to participate in the field trip activity.

GUIDELINES FOR FOOD ALLERGIES

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School strives to provide a safe environment for students with life-threatening food allergies. St. Matthew will follow Policy 5141.3 of the Office of Catholic Schools, Catholic Diocese of Columbus. We will use the Food Allergy Action Plan developed by the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network and adopted by the Diocese in regulation 5141.35.

Parents/guardians should notify the school nurse and homeroom teacher of any life-threatening food allergy on or before the first of each school year or as soon as a food allergy is diagnosed. Each school year, parents/guardians and physicians will be required to complete, sign and return a "Food Allergy Action Plan" specific to the student with life-threatening food allergies. This plan can be found on the Nurse's Page on the school website. The school nurse will review all allergy information with the appropriate teachers and staff. Parents/guardians will provide the school with the medications and the completed physician order forms. The child may self-carry as long as the "self-carry" form is completed and signed by parents/guardians and physician. Medications will be kept in the Nurse's office or with the student as specific needs dictate.

The parents/guardians of a student with a life-threatening food allergy will provide a supply of "safe" snacks for their child. Parents/guardians of children with life-threatening food allergies are responsible for notifying bus transportation providers with information regarding their child's allergy.

The cafeteria procedures for students with life-threatening food allergies are as follows:

- The student's account is tagged with allergy status.
- Special arrangements can be made for students with allergies that choose to purchase hot lunch, i.e. tacos made without cheese. However, students with severe, life-threatening allergies

are encouraged to pack their lunch.

- When using an allergy product, such as peanut butter, all equipment and tables must be wiped down with soap and water, aprons must be changed and separate dish cloths used.
- Students may have special seating assignments in the lunchroom depending on the severity of the allergic response and sensitivity of the student.
- Allergy badges can be provided to be used at lunch and for class parties with permission of parents/guardians.

ANNUAL FACULTY & STAFF HEALTH TRAINING

- Epipen administration: information, demonstration and practice for teachers and teacher assistants
- Blood Borne Pathogens: a program presenting the reasons for BBP procedures and a demonstration of Universal Precautions will be presented to staff
- Medication administration: office staff and teachers are trained in preparation for field trips
- CPR/AED training: may be provided as determined by the administration across various grade levels and areas of the building

Any other necessary training as determined by administration in conjunction with the school nurse.

WELLNESS POLICY

Catholic Schools recognize that it is essential to educate the whole child, spiritually, academically, physically, socially and emotionally. Similarly, wellness education must be multi-dimensional and encompass all the same areas to promote ultimate health. Catholic schools aid this emphasis on total wellness by embracing the reverence for life, self-respect and respect for others. A wellness team headed by the school nurse, principal, teachers, cafeteria manager and parents/guardians works to provide education to students in nutrition education and guidelines, physical education, school-based activities, and parent information in areas of healthy living.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Students of St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School shall not knowingly possess, use, sell, give or otherwise transmit, or be under the influence of any drug or counterfeit (look alike) controlled substance, the possession of which is prohibited by law. This rule is in effect during any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned activities, in transit to or from a school sponsored or school-sanctioned activity, and at any activity off school grounds that is sponsored or sanctioned wholly or in part by St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary measures outlined in the Discipline Policy section of this handbook. The complete copy of

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School's Substance Abuse Policy/ Diocesan Substance Abuse Policy is on file in the school office.

TOBACCO POLICY

Students shall not have in their possession items such as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, e-cigarettes, vapes, chewing tobacco, matches, lighters, or other paraphernalia normally associated with smoking. This rule is in effect during any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned activities on school grounds, in transit to or from the school-sponsored or school-sanctioned activities, and at any activity off school grounds that is sponsored or sanctioned wholly or in part by the school.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary measures outlined in the Discipline Policy section of this handbook. The complete copy of St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School's Tobacco Policy Diocesan Tobacco Policy is on file in the school office.

THREATS TO WELFARE & SAFETY

No student shall use, possess, handle, transmit or conceal any object that is or can be considered a weapon or instrument of violence. Objects that are explosive or incendiary in nature, or any objects reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety or security of any person, are prohibited on school premises, and at school-related functions. If a student is in violation of this policy, disciplinary action will be taken based upon the severity of the offense. This could be detention, approved school/community service, in-school or out of school suspension, referral to Juvenile Court and/or other appropriate law enforcement agency, expulsion following suspension and/or a diversion program (Diocesan Policies 5140.11, 5140.12).

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is training that inspires and strengthens as opposed to a program of punishment. The ultimate goal of any discipline program is to change behavior.

At St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School, discipline is based on the following:

- Treating each other with kindness, compassion, and love
- Personal investment in each student
- Encouraging respect for adults, classmates, and property
- Preparing lessons for maximum student participation
- Refraining from threatening, harmful comments
- Overlooking minor misbehavior on occasion
- Conferring individually with a student who requires correction

Respect is required by all members of the faculty and student body. The discipline policy will be enforced in all areas of the school and during all school related activities.

Overall, classroom discipline continues to remain at the discretion of each teacher. Teachers present classroom rules at the beginning of the school year including the classroom behavior management system and positive behavior incentives. The rules are posted in the classroom for reference. For those students unable to abide by the rules, the following consequences may be applied based on the severity of the infraction:

- Redirection
- Lunch detention
- Parent contact
- After school detention
- Meeting with administration
- In-school suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Expulsion

Serious infraction of any school rule may result in an immediate suspension or expulsion..

BEHAVIOR OFF CAMPUS

Conduct at school or away from school that is inappropriate to Christian moral standards, conduct that is violation of the law, conduct that is detrimental to the common good, threatening, harmful, or offensive to other students or staff or conduct that is of such nature as to jeopardize the good name of St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School, may subject a student to discipline. Discipline for such conduct shall be at the discretion of the school.

DETENTION

After-school detention occurs on Wednesday from 2:30-3:30.

Parents/guardians will be contacted on the same day of any major incident and prior to scheduling an after-school detention per school policy. Contact will be made by telephone and/or email. Conduct that may result in a detention is habitual in nature, disrespectful and/or counter to the code of conduct in our Catholic school, conducive to learning and personal growth.

SUSPENSION AND/OR EXPULSION

Suspension and/or expulsion may be assigned for serious conduct "...which disrupts the academic atmosphere of the school; threatens the safety of or endangers fellow students, teachers or school officials; damages property; or flagrantly or repeatedly violates regulations or policies of the diocese or school." In the event of a suspension or pending expulsion, administration will meet with parents/guardians and complete the school's disciplinary paperwork.

For such serious conduct the principal or administrator in charge may immediately suspend the student from school. The student may be sent home during the day provided that the students' parent/guardian has been notified. Expulsion shall not take place except as a result of the suspension procedure. It is St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School's intent to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation so that a Catholic learning environment may be maintained.

BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

In accordance with Diocesan Policy, bullying shall not be tolerated on school grounds or at any school activity on or off school grounds whether these actions are committed in person, written, or electronically transmitted. Bullying is a pattern of abuse over time and involves a student being "picked on" repeatedly. Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault, extortion; oral or written threats; electronically transmitted acts; teasing, put-downs, name-calling; threatening looks, gestures or actions; cruel rumors, false accusations; and social isolation. Students and parents/guardians who become aware of an act of bullying on school grounds or at any school activity on or off campus are asked to report it to the school principal for further investigation. The principal will contact the parents/guardians of the aggressor and the victim. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents, guardians, teachers, school staff and the reviewing of video/records. Consequences for students who bully others may include counseling, parent/guardian conference, detention, suspension and/or expulsion depending on the results of the investigation.

HARASSMENT POLICY

The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Columbus shall maintain a working and academic environment, in all programs and activities, free of all forms of harassment and intimidation. No student, teacher, other staff member or volunteer (male or female) should be subject to harassment in any form, and specifically not to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, whether verbal, physical, or electronically transmitted.

REPORTING

To report child abuse in the parish or school, contact both the county child protective agency and the Diocese. A confidential email can be sent to the diocese at helpisavailable@columbuscatholic.org or contact: Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at 614-221-2251 or 866-448-0217.

LUNCH

HOT LUNCH PROGRAM

A government hot lunch program is available to students daily. The hot lunch program is optional – students may purchase a hot lunch from the cafeteria or bring a lunch from home. If students prefer to bring lunch from home, milk may be purchased for a nominal fee as well as items from the a la carte menu. Students may not purchase soft drinks for lunch. A monthly menu is posted on the school website at the start of the month. The price of a hot lunch includes milk. A la carte items are available for students in grades 1-8. Prices are posted in the cafeteria. Lunch fees are debited from individual student accounts through <https://www.myschoolaccount.com/>. Cash or checks can be sent to the cafeteria for deposit into a student's account. Checks should be made out to St. Matthew Cafeteria. The website, <https://www.myschoolaccount.com/>, allows parents/guardians to deposit money directly to the account with a credit or debit card. There is a fee for electronic deposits. Lunch IOU's are available to any student who may forget his/her lunch or lunch money. Payment of the IOU should be sent directly to the cafeteria. Additional info is found on the school website under [Departments—>Cafeteria](#).

FINANCIAL LUNCH ASSISTANCE

The application for free or reduced lunch is available online at <https://cdstmatthew.org/cafeteria>. Please contact the office for more information. All information is confidential.

ON-CAMPUS LUNCH RULE

Students must remain on school grounds during the lunch period unless permission has been requested in writing by a parent/guardian and is approved by administration.

LUNCH VOLUNTEERS

The success of the hot lunch program relies heavily on volunteers. Please carefully read the guidelines for volunteering at St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School under the section entitled Volunteerism in this handbook as well as the Volunteer Code of Conduct outlined in this handbook.

PARISH-SPONSORED PROGRAMMING & ACTIVITIES

School-Aged Childcare, CARE PROGRAM

Childrens Afterschool Activity and Recreation Experience (CARE)

School age childcare program (CARE) offers before school childcare for students in grades Pre-K-8, and after school childcare for students in grades Pre-K-6. There are standard fees for CARE and separate drop-in CARE rates. Additional info can be found on our school website under [School Information—>CARE](#).

The CARE program is designed to provide a loving, safe, supportive, affordable and enjoyable environment for all students. A variety of activities will be available to meet the child's individual needs. Activities will include, but will not be limited to: outdoor play, arts & crafts, table games, contests, drama, read aloud, special guests, sharing, and special events.

Child care availability coincides with the school calendar. Services begin on the first day of school in August and are provided each school day until the last day of school in June, with the exception of a few days for staff development/staff activities. Parents/guardians are notified well in advance of the dates that CARE is not available.

Before-school care runs from 7:00 a.m. until 7:25 a.m. for students in grades Pre-K-8. If students arrive between 7:00 a.m. and 7:25 a.m., they will be sent to before-school care for supervision. The cost is \$4.00 per family. Students dropped off between 7:26 and 7:35 or after will not be charged the standard CARE fee. After-school care will be provided from 2:25 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. for students in pre-kindergarten through grade 6 at the following rates:

1 Child, \$25.00 (2 day min)

2 Children, \$35.00 (2 day min)

3 Children, \$38.00 (2 day min)

Drop-in care, \$35.00 per child per day

Morning Care is \$4.00 per day per family

Failure to pick up a child by 6:00 p.m. will result in an automatic \$25.00 late charge (per family) for every fifteen minutes the parent is late. More than three late pick-ups may result in dismissal from the program. Any late fee must be paid in cash within 24 hours of the late pick-up. If, for any reason, a parent is not able to pick up his/her child by 6:00 p.m. the parent/guardian should call the person designated for emergency pick up. A \$30.00 non-refundable registration fee per family is required.

Parents/guardians are billed in FACTS for at least two days each week regardless of attendance.

For further details contact our CARE Director, Robin Kuhns, at rkuhns1@cducation.org

SPORTS PROGRAM

Parish sponsored sports programs are available to St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic School students and active parishioners. Information regarding these programs appears in the Sunday bulletin or on the school website under [Departments—>Athletics](#). The St. Matthew Athletic Board oversees the operation of the sports teams. Funds to operate the teams are raised through registration fees and fundraising events. **A separate Code of Conduct for athletics will be distributed each year for participating students.** Please contact Tim Timmons at ohtsquared@gmail.com with questions about athletic participation and the collaboration of the academic and athletic programs at St. Matthew.

ALTAR SERVING

Male and female students in grades five through eight may elect to be an altar server. These students assist at regularly scheduled masses offered at St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church parish. Training is scheduled and made available for interested students; training sessions date(s) are published through parish and school communication.

SCOUTING

Information is sent home at the beginning of the school year concerning registration for the various scouting programs offered in our area. These programs are available for both male and female students.

HANDBOOK ADDENDUMS & ADDITIONS

The Handbook seeks to thoroughly explain and clarify policies and structures of our school so that our Catholic mission can be brought to fruition. That being said, this handbook is simply a well-organized list of our guiding principles; it cannot hope to address all of the unique and sometimes unpredictable situations that may arise in any given academic year. Therefore, the administration reserves the right to make needed amendments, additions, or addendums to this handbook throughout the year. Statements in this handbook are subject to change with or without notice. The school principal will attempt to keep the school families informed of all changes as soon as possible. Some changes might have to be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.