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PARENT-PUPIL-VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

St. Joseph Catholic Elementary & Montessori Preschool

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The Mission of St. Joseph Catholic Elementary & Montessori Preschool

St. Joseph School is established to form the entire child: spirit, mind, & body. Our philosophy is to incorporate Christ's teachings into everyday living and to nurture each child's potential by providing a quality academic education, in an inclusive family atmosphere that values relationships, and welcomes diversity within a Catholic environment. St. Joseph Catholic School serves the Catholic community and is affiliated with the Diocesan Roman Catholic Church of Amarillo.

Preface

St. Joseph Elementary School, originally established in September 1954, now serves Montessori students and traditional Pre Kindergarten ages 3-5 and Grades K-5 respectively. This booklet is your guide to the policies, rules and practices of St. Joseph's School. As a member of our school community every family is very important to us. We are a team working together to educate your children, our students, spiritually and academically, challenging them to achieve their maximum potential in all areas. Parents and teachers are called to mutual support and cooperation to achieve this end. We are a TEAM, and each must do his/her part to reach this objective.

In addition, please keep and post both the monthly calendar and the "Weekly Note" each Friday. These will include important dates and events to keep you completely informed of school events and happenings. Memos from the Principal and/or School Advisory Board are sent home as needed. Please check with your children daily regarding homework assignments and any note(s) from the School regarding upcoming or other events that might need your attention.

We invite your constructive input regarding any aspect of St. Joseph School, its policies, programs, or operation. Such suggestions should be made known to the Principal, who will consult with Faculty, Pastor, and/or School Advisory Council as appropriate to initiate action, if needed, on voiced concerns. We want to hear your concerns, anything that can be done to improve our school is important to us! In return, we ask your support and cooperation in our efforts to achieve what is best for the common good.

St. Joseph School & Montessori Preschool

Celebrating sixty years of spiritual and academic excellence, St. Joseph Catholic School was founded by St. Joseph's Parish under the direction of its first pastor, Father Edmund Hartigan. Dedicated in September 1954, by Amarillo Bishop Lawrence J. Fitzsimon, the first day of school was September 8, 1954. Two Benedictine Sisters from Fort Smith, Arkansas, were on the first staff, and the Benedictine Sisters continued to serve St. Joseph's School until 1996. In 1999, the School Sisters of St. Francis committed to serve St. Joseph School.

The School opened with an enrollment of 97. By the next year the enrollment increased to 125, requiring additional space and staff. In 1959, six additional classrooms and a science laboratory were added, and in 1960, the School had an enrollment of 280 in Grades 1-8. In December 1964, Bishop Lawrence DeFalco dedicated another addition to the school, a brand new gymnasium and parish hall on the north side of the school. This was a proud day for the parishioners of St. Joseph's, as they had given of their time, treasure, and talent to voluntarily construct the new building. The school was first accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference in cooperation with the Texas Education Agency in 1966. Since that time the

school has had three additional accreditation visits in 1987, 1995 and 2007. The school has remained fully accredited since 1966.

In January 1996, St. Joseph's added a Montessori Preschool for children ages 3 through 5. This program has been well received and enrollment has steadily increased.

Beginning in 2000, and ending in the summer of 2001, St. Joseph School was remodeled through the generosity of the parish and with the willing and able hands of many parishioners who gave of their time and talent.

In the spring of 2007, a 4-year-old transitional Pre-Kindergarten class was opened to prepare our Montessori children for a traditional Kindergarten setting. In 2011, we began offering parents a choice between our Montessori Program and our Prekindergarten program, both excellent choices.

St. Joseph Elementary School and Montessori Preschool primarily serve the families of St. Joseph's Parish; however, many students come from other parishes throughout the diocese and Amarillo.

Committed to teaching doctrine, building community, and providing service, St. Joseph School, since it's founding, has provided and continues to provide a quality education both spiritually and academically. The liturgy of the Eucharist is not only the foundation of faith for our students but the foundation for our school as well with the students attending three times weekly. Students are regularly involved as acolytes, lectors, song leaders, and gift bearers at Holy Mass. All students engage in service learning activities, which are planned to help them experience the joy of helping the poor, the elderly, or anyone else who may have special needs. While deeply committed to academic excellence and community service, total Christian formation is our overarching curricular goal and it is at the heart of all we do.

"Great Beginnings Last A Lifetime"

St. Joseph Montessori Pre-school

The Montessori Method allows children to learn the way they learn best and easiest – by doing things themselves. Basically, the children teach themselves with the help and assistance of their teacher, in a disciplined environment that allows all to progress.

Under the guidance of the teacher, the children can choose work that appeals to their own inner interests. They can exercise their sense of freedom and spontaneity. They feel joy and enthusiasm in learning because they are doing what they want to do instead of what someone else tells them they must do.

In a Montessori school, the children teach themselves through their use of the specially designed Montessori materials. These are attractive, generally simple, child-size and are self-correcting: that is, if a child makes an error he can see it by looking at the material itself. In this way, no adult is needed to point out his/her mistakes and perhaps injure his/her self-esteem.

The children learn to work alone and with others in a Montessori school. They usually make their own choices. A child learns to follow the class "ground rules" and may often remind other children to follow them as well.

The practical life area is used especially by the very young children (up to 3 ½) and teaches them how to care for themselves and their environment. Here, the children learn to dress themselves by using the dressing frames (button, snap, zip, buckle, etc.), to pour (grains and water), to wash a table, to polish silver and to properly wash their hands among other things.

The sensorial area allows children to use their senses to learn about the world. Here, a child will learn to judge different heights, lengths, weights, colors, sounds, smells, shapes, and textures.

The Language, Math, Geography, and Science areas provide the child with aids for their intellectual development. Exercises in body movement assist their physical development and awareness of the body and what it can do.

Music, art, dancing, sewing, woodworking and foreign languages may be added at times to further enrich the child's total development.

St. Joseph PreKindergarten

Our PreKindergarten class is a more traditional classroom and is more structured like a Kindergarten environment. Students spend much of their educational time in a structured, teacher-guided atmosphere where they are given opportunities to interact with other students in subjects such as Religion, Math, Language and Literacy Development, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Computer/Technology and others.

1. ADMISSION

St Joseph will admit students on a first-come, first-serve basis, with Students, whose families are presently patrons of St. Joseph School, i.e., have children presently enrolled at St. Joseph School being placed first on the list.

To be admitted to St. Joseph School, copies of the following documents must be submitted. Failure to submit the documents by the first day of school may prevent the student from attending classes.

Baptismal Certificate/Record
Immunization/Health Records

Birth Certificate
Social Security Number

For admission to the Kindergarten Program or to the First Grade in St. Joseph School, students must meet the age requirements as set by the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission. An exception can be made for students, when the sending school in a state outside of Texas has an age limit that differs and the School provides evidence that the child has successfully completed the grade in the respective school. A student transferring from another school must present the above mentioned documents plus:

1. Transfer notice
2. Report card
3. A statement that all financial obligations have been cleared at the previous Catholic School.

St Joseph will admit children ages 3 and 4 by September 1 into your choice of Montessori or PreKindergarten.

Probationary Period:

In addition, all students transferring from other schools will be enrolled at St. Joseph School for a nine-week probationary period. When the probationary period has expired and all previous school records have been received, a decision will be made to determine continued attendance at St. Joseph School if there is question regarding the student's probability of success in our setting. The principal and classroom teacher will review the student's academic and behavioral progress reports. Consultation with the parents/guardians regarding the student's ability to meet the School's program expectations will take place if deemed necessary. The School retains the right to place the student in the grade deemed appropriate for the individual student.

Students who have been suspended or expelled from a school may be admitted to St. Joseph School under the following conditions:

- The student displays a positive attitude toward school;
- The student's family is willing to communicate and work with the school
- Resources to help the student are available to the school if needed.
- The student's family is willing to cooperate with the school's recommendation for appropriate counseling
- The Principal in consultation with the Pastor and/or School Advisory Council as necessary has reasonable expectation of success in meeting the needs of the applying student.

A student expelled from St. Joseph School may petition for re-admittance during the subsequent school year subject to the above conditions.

In the case of students who have attended non-accredited schools and who are seeking admission, proper documentation must be submitted to the school for purposes of evaluation and placement including but not limited to:

- Portfolio of student's work
- Report Cards
- Recommendation from previous schools
- Curriculum used with the child
- Grade level/Subject testing

In addition, standardized testing or other testing measures as determined by the School may be required prior to admission. If required and not available at the time of application, the School or another agency approved by the School will administer the test at parent expense.

St. Joseph School is committed to equal opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, handicap, national or ethnic origin, or sex in the educational programs and activities it sponsors.

Privacy Notice

St. Joseph’s Elementary School recognizes the importance of your privacy. St. Joseph is committed to protecting your privacy and developing technology that gives you the most comprehensive communication with the school while maintaining the integrity of your private information. In accordance with federal and state regulations, we do not collect any personal information about you unless you voluntarily choose to provide it to us by sending emails, completing forms, or filling out surveys, either online or in person. St. Joseph Elementary School will use reasonable efforts to prevent the disclosure or use of your personal information. We will not sell, share, or rent your information in any way without your prior written permission. For more information regarding the collection, use, and security of personally identifiable information, please contact the school administration.

Unique Needs Students:

In considering individual applications for admission, the School follows the guidelines adopted by the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission. Students with unique needs will be granted admission to the School provided the School has the resources to adequately meet the individual educational needs of such students.

Official Enrollment:

Students are considered officially enrolled and will be admitted to classes when tuition/fees are paid, all necessary documents are received, and when the Handbook Receipt Statement is signed and returned to school.

Communication through Flocknote:

Flocknote is our way of keeping parents updated on all of our activities. We use Flocknote to send out information on different events going on within the school, to send out our weekly Friday Note, weather closure information, classroom events and more. Flocknote allows us to get information to you quickly. We encourage all of our families to check their emails frequently for Flocknotes. Settings can also be changed to receive the Flocknotes by text instead of email or both. You have the option to decide how you receive the messages.

2. ATTENDANCE

School hours:

The length of the school day is regulated by the Texas Education Agency. In accordance with Texas Education Code requirements, the school day at St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School and Montessori Preschool begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 3:35 PM. **Parents must call in by 9:00 a.m. when their student is absent or tardy for any reason.**

A tardy bell will ring at 8:05 a.m. Any student(s) who arrive/s after 8:05 a.m. will be considered tardy and must:

1. Be checked in at School Office by a parent or guardian.
2. The office fills out the tardy slip for the student to present to the teacher to gain admittance to class.

Tardiness:

All tardies are considered unexcused unless due to unavoidable circumstances (repeated tardiness due to the same circumstances are not normally considered unavoidable). Excessive tardies is defined as more than two tardies within a six-week period.

On the second tardy the parents will:

- Receive a letter reminding them of the above information and 2 tardies have been received. The letter will also state the next tardy will result in a conference with an administration unless they sign the letter waiving their right to a conference. Parents will also be notified that 3 tardies=1 absence, therefore, a student can't be considered for perfect attendance after three tardies.

On the third tardy parents will:

- Be contacted for a conference with the administration unless they waived that right by signing and returning the above letter.

On the fourth Tardy:

- A charge of \$1 per minute will be assessed on the parent's bill for the fourth tardy and any tardies received after until the end of the six-week period when the count starts over.

Excused and Unexcused Absences:

When a student must be absent from school, the student must bring a note, signed by the parent, explaining the absence within three days after returning to school. In addition to this, the parents/guardians must call the day the student is absent by 9:00 am. If the student does not bring a signed note, the absence will be considered an unexcused absence. When a student will be absent for a longer period, such as a family emergency, the permission of the principal should be obtained for the absence to be considered excused. Without permission, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. Family "outings" will not be excused except in extreme circumstances. All work must be completed within a week of his/her return to school, and will be completed at the direction of the teacher. For consecutive unexcused absences (2 days or more) the student may be placed in ISS until all make up work is complete. Work may be considered late.

Arrival and Dismissal:

The School provides supervision of early arrivals beginning at 7:30 AM in the school gym. Students are to be picked up or leave the School premises within 20 minutes of the dismissal of the student at the end of the student's scheduled day. Full day students are normally dismissed at 3:35 PM and half day students are dismissed at 11:30 AM. When a half day is scheduled, students are dismissed at 12:00 PM. Parents will be notified well in advance of any changes to student dismissal times. A "Late pick-up fee" will be charged at a rate of \$1.00 per minute after the 20 minutes of the student's dismissal. In the case of an unavoidable emergency, the late fee may be waived.

Early Dismissal of Students:

Students will be excused from classes for medical appointments, when the parent(s) or guardian(s) "sign the student out," by putting the name of the child, the date, and the purpose for the early dismissal. If a student returns to school after a medical appointment, he/she will be counted as "Present," and will be given reasonable time to make up missed work. Students may be released only to parents/guardians or to other person/s authorized to pick up students. Names of such authorized persons must be on file in the School Office. The School should be notified immediately in writing regarding changes of such authorized persons.

Minimum Attendance for Class Credit:

The Texas Education Code (Section 25.092a) requires that "a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered." Both excused and unexcused absences count against your child for this law. For those who are absent more than 10 percent of the days offered (18 days absent out of 180), credit for work may or may not be given according to the circumstances of the absence. This may result in your child's being held an additional year in his/her present grade level. Extenuating circumstances of student absences will be evaluated on an individual basis by teacher/s and the administration. When such an emergency arises, it is imperative that the school is contacted in advance or as soon as possible.

Make-up Work:

For any absence, the teacher should be consulted as to required work and homework that must be done for the student to maintain satisfactory academic standing. In the event of a lengthy illness (3 or more days), make-up work should be picked up daily.

Bad Weather - Natural Disaster School Closing Procedure:

In the event of school closure due to weather conditions or natural disasters, the Diocesan Catholic School Superintendent will make the decision for all City Catholic Schools and will contact TV and Radio Stations to relay the necessary information. We normally, but not necessarily, follow Amarillo Public Schools’ decision in this area.

School Boundaries:

The school boundaries extend to and not beyond the parking lot of Holy Cross Catholic Academy on the north, the Parish Office and Church on the south, the playground fence on the west, and to Bonham Street on the east.

3. CAFETERIA

Menus:

Lunch menus are emailed weekly through Flocknote or by request at the office. Grade A hot meals are available every full school day for \$3.25. Those bringing their own lunch may purchase milk. There are designated family lunch days such as a Thanksgiving meal and during various special days of the year. However, visitors are welcome to eat with their children whenever they wish. Adult lunches are \$4.50 each or priced according to event. To ensure preparation of the proper amount of food, parents/guardians should call the office by 9 AM when planning to eat with students in the cafeteria.

Payment:

School lunches will be billed on your monthly statement and are due upon receipt of your statement. Meals eaten in one month will normally be due by the tenth day of the following month. Students do not pay for their lunch or items purchased through the cafeteria on an individual basis. Items will be added to the family’s account. Statements are sent home the first week of the month. Students have the opportunity to purchase snacks after they finish their meal in which the costs are added to the student’s lunch bill. Parents should clarify with their child on whether they are allowed to purchase snacks and are responsible for contacting the cafeteria manager by phone or by letter if their child is NOT allowed to charge snacks.

Free and Reduced Lunches:

Applications for free and reduced lunches are offered to all parents at registration, and are available in the School office thereafter. They are evaluated on the basis of household income in accordance with Federal Lunch Program Standards.

PLEASE NOTE: St. Joseph School is qualified to receive from the Amarillo and Canyon Public School districts free services such as tutoring, teacher training and student testing and evaluation. The amount of free services received is based solely on the number of families qualifying for free and reduced lunches. In order to help St. Joseph School receive these services, PLEASE apply for free or reduced lunches. The information you submit is confidential and will not be seen by any member of the school or parish and you need not use the free lunches. This is an opportunity to direct some of your school tax money to support your school choice.

Food Allergies:

A physician’s note is **required** to be on file in the office and cafeteria stating any food allergy a student may have. A note written by a parent is **not** sufficient documentation for the State of Texas.

4. CURRICULUM

St. Joseph School, along with the Amarillo Diocese, has adopted the Diocese of Dallas Curriculum. The Diocese of Dallas curriculum follows the curricular and instructional areas of focus as specified by the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission. The academic curriculum includes Religion, Language Arts (Reading, English, Handwriting, and Spelling), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Fine Art, Technology, Physical Education, and World Language.

The Montessori Preschool program follows guidelines of the TCCAC and the Montessori Method of education. The entire curriculum is based on Judaeo-Christian philosophy and includes primary emphasis on Catholic Christian formation and good citizenship.

How to live our faith is integrated/correlated with all other academic subjects to enable teachers to Teach as Jesus Did, to foster in students the practice of living in the Presence of God at all times, and to foster the internalization of religious truths by students. Message, Community, and Service, goals of the Church's Universal teaching authority, are our primary goals as well.

Mass Attendance:

All students attend Liturgy three times a week with the homily directed to the students' level of understanding; students regularly serve as lectors, acolytes, gift-bearers, and song leaders.

Montessori Preschool:

The Montessori Preschool Curriculum includes Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Science, Music and Art activities. Parents may choose 5 half or full days for their child/ren.

Pre Kindergarten:

In our Pre Kindergarten program, children are prepared to enter the traditional Kindergarten program by experiencing a traditional teaching structure and environment. Parents may choose 5 half or full days for their child/ren.

Curriculum:

Reading - Grades K-5 enjoy participation in Reading Incentive Program and in the use of on-line Lexia Software. A Reading Club is also available on designated days for designated grades. We follow the Balanced Literacy philosophy where language arts is taught as a whole and not divided up into spelling, phonics, grammar and reading.

Math- Grades K-5 utilizes Primary Mathematics Program based off the Singapore method. Singapore Math offers success in the area of mastery based off their unique method of teaching the CPA (Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract) method. Parents are encouraged to supervise the students' homework, but not to help them with the problems because of the unique way math is taught. If a student struggles on a problem, a parent simply initials the student attempted the problem but needs further help from the teacher.

Science and Social Studies, including **History**, are correlated and integrated with other subjects. Students utilize a newspaper for Social Studies entitled *Social Studies Weekly*. The newspaper follows the curriculum standards and is supplemented by projects. Science uses many science experiments and hands-on learning fun in the science lab and is also supplemented with a textbook.

With the benefits of departmentalization, St. Joseph has incorporated this idea into the 2-5 grades. Our 2nd and 3rd grade class switch once a day with one teacher focusing on Language Arts & Social Studies for both grades and the other focusing on Math, Science & Social Studies for both grades. Our 4th and 5th grade class switch once a day with one teacher focusing on Language Arts & Social Studies for both grades and the other focusing on Math, Science & Social Studies for both grades. A few benefits of departmentalization include;

- Better continuity of material and delivery of material
- Knowing students and their learning styles
- Less time at the beginning of the school getting to know students and their learning styles
- Higher achievement test scores
- Less anxiety for students learning a new teacher
- Teachers have a smaller area of focus and can teach in the subject of strength

Spanish, Fine Art, & Physical Education:

These classes round out the curriculum. Spanish is taught to all grades and strongly encouraged in all schools by the State because of our rapid change in our culture. **Music** classes emphasize basic musical concepts, and singing skills. **Art** instruction incorporated into the other subjects; **PE Classes** are structured and follow a prescribed curriculum that emphasizes exercise as a means of maintaining good mental and physical health. Each class participates in at least one dramatic skit or play each school year.

Computer Instruction:

Computer instruction is integrated into the regular curriculum and is an important tool in the enrichment of any of the curriculum areas. Each classroom and the library have Internet access. Teachers supervise students' work on the Internet.

School Library:

St. Joseph's Library contains a collection of over 6,000 volumes and serves as a resource for both research and reading enjoyment

Testing:

The Iowa Basic Skills Test, a nationally standardized test, is administered in the fall so teachers can use the results of the testing to help understand the classes and individual student's weaknesses and strengths. The testing is just a snapshot of a child and helps for better understanding and to see growth in a child.

Sacramental Preparation:

Instruction for the reception of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion is the responsibility of the child's parish not the parochial school. Only registered and active members of a given parish are admitted in the Sacramental Preparation classes. A one year membership at a parish, regular attendance at weekend liturgies and at least one year of participation in parish CCD Program or Religion class in the parochial school is *required to be admitted* into the Parish Sacramental Program. This normally is done during the Second Grade and is carried out in accordance with Church Law, Diocesan policy and pastoral considerations.

School Year Book:

A yearbook is published yearly under the supervision of assigned faculty members, parent volunteers, and fifth grade students.

Private Schools Interscholastic Association – PSIA:

With 19 contest categories covering a wide range of disciplines, PSIA is an exciting opportunity for private school students in grades 1 through 5 to engage in academic competition with their peers throughout the state of Texas. Students have the opportunity to participate in the District 5 PSIA competition in the spring. District winners will advance to State Competition later that season. Parents are encouraged to help coach or tutor the teams for Service Hours. For more information on PSIA you can visit www.psiacademics.org

5. ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Year:

St. Joseph School's academic year is divided into six six-week reporting periods. For grades K-5, parents have access to grades 24-7 through RenWeb. Progress reports are no longer sent home, but at three weeks, an email is sent home reminding parents it is halfway through the grading period and encourages parents to log on and check their students grades if they have not done so already. Report Cards are sent home as a hardcopy. The first report card is given to the parent at the Parent Teacher Conferences held the following Wednesday of the closing of the first six-week period. The remaining six-week periods, report cards are sent home the following Wednesday of the closing of the grading period with students. Parents are expected to sign and return the report cards promptly. A final copy will be mailed at the end of the year when the account is in good standing. Again, grades K-5 may check grades and assignments on-line through RenWeb. Instructions on how to sign up to login will be emailed to you in late July or August.

Grading Criteria:

A=93 and above

B=85-92
C=77-84
D=70-76
F=69 and below

In addition to our reading curriculum, we are using the reading program Reading A-Z to track and improve student’s reading progress through reading levels. For students in first grade and younger, their reading level will comprise 50% their reading grade. For students in second grade and older, their reading level will comprise 30% their reading grade. A copy of the different reading levels and their grade correlations will be sent home at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the school year.

Montessori and PreKindergarten students will receive 3 report cards throughout the year: at the Parent Teacher Conference, at the beginning of the new calendar year and again after Spring Break. A final copy will be mailed at the end of the year when the account is in good standing.

Homework:

Homework assignments will be given in all grades as necessary and such work is to be turned in promptly by the due date.

Suggested Time Guidelines Per Day

Grades K-1	15-30 minutes	Grades 3-4	45 min. - 1 hour
Grade 2	20-45 minutes	Grade 5	1 – 1.5 hours

Times may vary according to curriculum requirements and teacher assignments. Students in Grades 3-5 may be required to keep an assignment book.

Promotion:

A student is promoted on the recommendation of the teacher and the principal. When making an evaluation of the student’s academic progress, the teacher also considers the student’s social, emotional, physical, and moral development.

Promotion and Graduation:

A promotion ceremony is given for Fifth Grade and a graduation ceremony is given for Kindergarten. Dates are available on the yearly calendar.

6. SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE

In order to provide a safe school and a favorable learning environment for all, St. Joseph School in accord with Amarillo Diocesan policy is “Weapons Free,” and “Drug Free,” and has developed a Crisis Management Plan. St. Joseph School reserves the right to ask parents/guardians and students and/or other individuals to leave the School and its premises when behavior on school grounds and/or at a school function is deemed improper or dangerous. Following state guidelines, our school participates in fire drills and seasonal tornado drills. In the event of a natural or man-made disaster, parents/guardians or other authorized persons will be notified to arrange for the safe pick up of the student(s).

In compliance with diocesan policy all students participate in safe environment training at their level and all employees and volunteers receive background checks and participate in safe environment training.

Secured School:

In order to provide a safe environment, all doors leading into the school are locked at all times. All visitors must enter the school through the main entrance on the east side. Upon entering the building, all visitors shall check in at the School Office and receive a “Visitor’s Badge.” During special parties or events, the doors will be propped open and parents should stop by the office and sign in but do not need a badge.

7. DISCIPLINE

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. As such it is inseparable from the goals of Catholic education. On a continuing basis, St. Joseph's teachers strive to nurture self-discipline and guide the growth of students in Christian attitudes, values, behavior, and learning.

The immediate purpose of school discipline, however, is to create a climate conducive to optimum learning. It is presupposed that teachers have genuine love for their students, expressed in an atmosphere of firm yet loving discipline. Teachers have profound reverence for the students as present and future participants with them in extending the Kingdom of God.

Behavioral Guidelines for Students:

All students are expected to adhere to School Rules as outlined by their teacher in the classroom, and in all areas of the school, particularly in Church at Holy Mass. In addition, students are expected to obey any and all teachers who are responsible for them at a given time anywhere on the school premises. Students are expected to practice good manners at all times, showing respect and responsibility to clergy, teachers, staff members, and other students.

Diocesan policy requires that school discipline shall have as its aim the creation of an environment favorable for learning. Corrective measures shall be diagnostic and remedial rather than punitive. Corporal punishment, ridicule or sarcasm shall not be employed. Teachers shall ordinarily solve their own discipline problems, referring only exceptional cases to the principal.

Classroom teachers and staff members set their own boundaries and classroom rules to guide the class. The teachers and staff also recognize that each student is unique and needs to be handled in diverse ways. Each teacher has a system of communicating expectations and behavior issues to parents. This will be outlined in their letter home to you and also explained to the students.

Violations of school/classroom rules will be handled primarily by the supervising teacher or other staff member observing the inappropriate behavior. Repeated minor offenses will be reported to their parents by their teacher. All serious infractions will be referred to the office for action by the principal. If a detention is given, the following is the guideline that will be used:

Detention:

For Montessori – 1st grade, a "Lonely Lunch" detention will be given.

For 2nd – 5th grade, detentions will be served after school.

Detention will be served from 4:00 – 4:30 after school on the day specified on the detention slip which will be sent home to the parents and is expected to be signed and returned the following day. Parents should notify the school if the detention cannot be served on the designated day. Other arrangements will then be made. Any teacher and the principal may place a student in detention. Detention time will be used in a productive manner, for example: straightening classrooms, cleaning or assisting around the campus.

In-School Suspension (ISS):

For serious infractions, the student will serve an ISS. In-School Suspension is a temporary dismissal of a student from the classroom for serious and/or habitual infraction/s of Classroom or School Rules. It is ordinarily served in school, and may be for either a 1/2-day or a whole day. All work assigned for ISS will receive a maximum grade of 85. St. Joseph School, recognizing its obligations to the students, makes every possible effort to assist students to adjust to the social and academic requirements of the school, but will also take appropriate measures to assist student growth in these areas.

Expulsion – Suspension Policy:

Suspension - A student or students may be suspended for a period of one or more days, up to five days, and may be expelled from school for serious and habitual infraction/s of Classroom or School Rules. If a student is suspended, he or she is expected to keep up with school work, but will receive a maximum grade of 70. Some circumstances that may warrant Out-of-School Suspension or permanent expulsion are:

- A. Consistent inappropriate behavior that results in repeated In-School Suspensions. Any student who is in ISS more than 4 times will be suspended for 1 day and risks the possibility of expulsion.
- B. Involvement in violent behavior or the use or possession of any weapon.

- C. Utilization or possession of any illicit substance or alcohol.
- D. Grave disrespect to anyone in authority.

Expulsion is defined as the permanent dismissal of a student from school. When a student's behavior is deemed harmful to the Catholic school community or to individuals, **expulsion**, with or without the parents' or guardians' agreement may be invoked. Due to the gravity of the consequence of expulsion, it is essential that the principal not act unilaterally. Consultation with the faculty as appropriate may take place, and consultation with the Pastor/Council President is required prior to the initiation of this process. Expulsion is such a serious penalty that it is invoked rarely, and only as a last resort.

In reaching such decisions, consideration is always given to the welfare and Christian development of the individual student and the practical, common good of the entire student body. If a parent cannot be reached, the student may be kept out of class until the parent is reached. Parents of the student expelled may appeal their case, following the grievance procedure of St. Joseph School.

Appeals to Decisions:

Any decision regarding discipline can be reviewed through the grievance process. See grievance section pg. 16.

Positive Consequences for Choices Well Made:

Of equal importance is our program of positive reinforcement where by students are recognized and given positive attention for their outstanding behavior and effort. This program includes but is not limited to Angel of the Month.

Angel of the Month:

For the months of September-March, two "Angels" will be chosen – one from Montessori – 1st grade and one from 2nd – 5th grade. These Angels are chosen in recognition of their good deeds, generous and loving spirits, good citizenship and demonstrating their faith life in Christ.

8. FIELD TRIPS

Field trips, off-campus educational privileges afforded to student(s), which are planned by the teacher(s) or school and pre-approved by the Principal. Each activity is carefully planned with an educational objective however; students must meet academic or behavioral requirements for any scheduled planned activity. During registration, parents/guardians are given a blanket permission slip to be signed in the registration process.

Prior to a scheduled field trip, a notice will be sent home explaining the nature of the field trip. Parent(s)/guardian(s) have the options in confirming (permitting or restricting) their child(ren) to participate.

Personal money brought by students is not allowed nor needed, any expenses will be noted.

Field Trip Drivers:

The school bus will normally be used for Field Trips when feasible and when this is not feasible, parents are encouraged to volunteer to drive. The Diocesan requirement for volunteer drivers is that they follow its Vehicle Safety Policy. Drivers are required to have on file, a current copy of insurance coverage for a Private Vehicle and is maintained at the office.

Service Hours for such trips are available and must be verified by the teacher or Principal.

9. FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS, OTHER EMERGENCIES

Fire and tornado drills are held regularly as required by state law. Procedures for student and personnel evacuation and safety in the event of a fire, tornado, or other emergency or disaster are on file in the Principal's office and are posted in each classroom as well as in corridors. All school personnel are trained regarding the location and operation of the fire alarm and emergency signal. All volunteers working in the building should familiarize themselves with these rules and ask for any clarification or concern.

School Safety:

All outside doors are locked to secure the safety of all students; we have in place a security plan that can be implemented should a situation arise. If you believe your personal safety or the safety of other students is in jeopardy, contact one of your teachers, they will take the necessary steps to secure safety.

10. FEES/TUITION/SERVICE HOURS

Fees:

A registration fee is applicable for each student and is payable upon enrollment of student(s). August tuition is due at Registration in late July, or no later than the first day of school.

Tuition Payment Policy:

Tuition is due the 1st of every month and considered late after the 10th of the month. A 10% charge will be added to your account on the 11th of the month if tuition is not paid. If the entire amount of tuition and fees are paid by the first day of school, the tuition for the month of May will be waived. The Registration Fee is non-refundable. Patrons may also earn a 10% credit on tuition/fees by referring a new family to the school. The new family must stay at least one full year and their account in good-standing to receive the credit.

If tuition is not paid after 30 days and no written request for deferred payment has been submitted and approved as outlined below, student(s) may be suspended from school until the bill is paid. The School will so inform the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Deferred Payment:

The success of the school depends on accountability, if a tuition payment goes beyond the 1st day of the following month, a tuition pay plan can be arranged. There will be no interest or late payment fees if arrangements in writing have been submitted to the Principal for approval by the Principal and Pastor.

When no real effort has been made to keep account current, the School may turn the account over to a professional collection agency, with approval from the Pastor or Advisory Council.

Scholarships:

Scholarships are given at the end of each school year to students who plan to return to St. Joseph School. One scholarship is given to a fifth grader who is enrolled at HCCA for the following year. The St Joseph Parish Altar Society gives scholarships to Montessori and PreK students entering Kindergarten and to returning Montessori or PreK students. The amount of the scholarship is determined by the Altar Society as well as guidelines for receiving the scholarships.

Adopt-a-Student:

Families are invited to apply for school tuition assistance from this program by filing an application with the school by application deadline. Families applying for tuition assistance shall supply the necessary documents with their application. Required documents will include the previous year's Federal Income Tax return form (1040), the application form, and other expense documents deemed necessary by the committee. Deadline for submitting applications will be one week before the first day of school. Approval for tuition assistance from the school fund will be made by a three-person committee. The total amount of tuition assistance from all sources may not exceed 50% of the family's tuition commitment.

Note: An exception may be made to accept applications during the school year for approval for families that have undergone an unforeseen emergency and life changing event.

Service Hours:

Parents or guardians working on behalf of the school help strengthen and increase our spiritual and scholastic environment. Students will perform at a higher level when parents are actively involved in their

children’s school. The 25 required service hours per family contribute to the success of St. Joseph School. It is this link between tasks necessary to operate our school and the ever-increasing demands of our budget. Ways to obtain service hours throughout the year that are a constant are as follows;

- Carnival Committee
- Lunchroom monitor
- Room parent
- Morning duty
- School Advisory Board Members
- PTO Board Members
- Classroom volunteers
- Boy/Girl Scout Leaders

There are many other ways to obtain service hours and parents are notified by email of these opportunities. Five of the contracted 25 service hours must be worked at the Fall Carnival **OR** the Spring School-A-Thon.

Recording Service Hours:

Hours served must be verified by the person in charge of an approved service project or by the Principal. Service Hours Report Forms will be given at registration and may also be obtained in the School Office. This form should be turned in **to the School Office** immediately after hours are worked.

Hours shall be worked by adults (age of eighteen and over) by the last day of school, and hours not worked will be billed at \$25 per hour.

If you reach 25 hours before the year is over, please do not stop recording your hours, it is important to record all hours and hours may be donated to other families.

11. HEALTH

Immunizations:

The State required immunization schedule can be found in the office or online at

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm#schools>

Medication:

Only medication, which is necessary for a child to remain in school, will be given during school hours. Over-the-counter medication and prescriptions (acetaminophen, ointments, cold tablets, cough syrups, throat lozenges, etc.) will not be given unless prescribed by a licensed physician and labeled by a licensed pharmacist with proper directions, **or** by written permission from parents. All medicine (over-the-counter and prescriptions will be kept in the Nurse’s office. Students who must carry inhalers with them must provide a written request from a physician **and** parent/guardian allowing him/her to do so. Only properly labeled medication will be administered with a signed permission form from the parent or legal guardian. (Form available in Office) The principal may refuse to accept responsibility for administration of medication to a student.

Labeling of Medication:

Each student’s medication must be in a properly labeled container with the following information: Student’s name, Physician’s Name, Date, Name of Medication, Dosage, Directions for administration, and Duration medication is to be given.

Contagious Illnesses:

To protect other students from contagious or communicable illnesses, students infected with certain illnesses are not allowed to come to school while contagious. These sicknesses include, but are not limited to: chicken pox, infectious mononucleosis, any illness accompanied by fever and/or vomiting, influenza, bacterial meningitis, head lice/nits (must be cleared completely), mumps, strep throat, pinkeye, or ringworm.

Child Abuse:

The Diocese of Amarillo and St. Joseph School is committed to the spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, and social well being of students and to the promotion of Christian family life concepts.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Amarillo Catholic Schools System to pursue all reasonable measures to assist any abused children and their families. St. Joseph Faculty members are given guidelines to follow in the event of suspected child abuse and are required to report it to proper authorities.

Food Allergies:

A physician's note is **required** to be on file in the office and cafeteria stating any food allergy a student may have. A note written by a parent is **not** sufficient documentation for the State of Texas.

12. CLASS PARTIES

There are three scheduled school parties for each class: Advent, Valentine's Day and Easter. Room Parents are in charge of planning and coordinating the refreshments and in planning games and activities. A room parent orientation is given in August to outline these responsibilities.

Special permission may be given by the teacher to distribute birthday treats during the school day. Invitations given out on school grounds for a private birthday party must include all class members, or all the girls, or all the boys. Otherwise, they must be mailed or hand-delivered away from school.

13. PERSONAL AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

All students are expected to respect the personal property of others as well as that of the school. Students' items of clothing and apparel and school supplies, etc., should be marked or labeled with the student's name clearly printed or written. ***No toys or playthings are allowed in school.*** Trading cards are not allowed in school, unless the teacher approves them. Student cell phones and pagers are not allowed. If these things are brought to school, they will be taken by the classroom teacher and returned to the parents only.

Library Books:

Students must bring checked-out books back before checking out others. Books not returned to the library must be replaced or purchased, and will be billed on the family's school account.

Office Phone:

Students must obtain permission from the Secretary, Principal, or a teacher before making any telephone calls.

Damage to School Property:

If a student has intentionally done damage to school property because of carelessness or with the intent of doing damage, the parents/guardians will be responsible for paying for the expense of having the damage repaired or having the item replaced. The Principal and Pastor will determine when such instances warrant the application of this policy.

Playground Policy:

St. Joseph School Playground may only be used during school hours, or during School or Parish functions.

14. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Scouts:

Boy Scout activities are an important part of extracurricular activities at St. Joseph’s. Leaders are needed for all age groups. Service Hours may be earned for by parents for these activities. Inquire at the School Office for information.

Extra-Curricular Sports:

St. Joseph’s School students may participate in Kid’s Inc. baseball & T-Ball, basketball, cheer leading, soccer, track, volleyball and other sports. Teams may use the name “St. Joseph’s” when they are registered in a “Recreational” league, rather than in a “Competitive” league. (Policy adopted January 2000.) Coaches are needed for these teams, and parents are encouraged to volunteer. Service Hours may be earned for these commitments.

Parents/Guardians are advised to limit involvement in extra curricular sports when a student’s academic standing or progress would be adversely affected.

15. CONFERENCES - PARENT/TEACHER

Mandatory Conferences:

One parent/teacher conference is scheduled during each school year. Students will be dismissed at 12:00 PM to allow for these conferences.

Conferences as Needed:

Teachers are available for conferences at other times by appointment when there is a need. Teachers are not allowed to leave their classes for an unscheduled conference. Normally, any school matter should be handled between 8 AM and 4 PM. Parent requests to view Student Records must be made in writing to the teacher and the Principal 24 to 48 hours in advance.

16. OPEN HOUSE - VISITS TO SCHOOL

“Meet-the-Teacher” Event:

“Meet-the-Teacher” is scheduled the Sunday before the first day of school in August for all classes and is in conjunction with our annual “Drop-in and Drop-off” event. This event includes a presentation of policies in this handbook for new parents and includes any changes from last year’s handbook.

Open House:

In addition, Open House nights are held several times during the year. This is an excellent opportunity for **1)** children to “show-off” their work to their parents, **2)** for parents to positively affirm their children’s efforts, **3)** to get to know your child’s teacher better, and **4)** to get in touch with teacher expectations, classroom procedures and homework requirements.

Visits to School: www.stjosephschoolamarillo.com

We welcome parents to visit our school, but in consideration of the safety of our students, and in respect for class work in progress, all visitors are required to check in at the School Office, and receive a “Visitor’s Badge” before going to a classroom. Visits to the child’s classroom for an extended period may be arranged on an individual basis, with the express approval of the teacher and/or the principal. The principal must approve service as a volunteer teacher-aide or librarian.

17. GRIEVANCES

Mutual respect, cooperation and communication between parents and the School is vital to students' spiritual, emotional, social and intellectual development. Should a grievance occur, it is expected that it will be resolved at the lowest possible level of authority. The following procedure is to be followed. (If this procedure is not followed accordingly the parent will be redirected to the appropriate party):

- 1) Parent - Teacher Conference
- 2) Parent - Teacher - Principal Conference
- 3) Parent - Teacher - Principal - Pastor Conference

The ultimate authority lies with the Pastor. All parties will adhere to his decision.

Any grievance concerning the Cafeteria will follow the same procedure:

- 1) Parent - Cafeteria Manager Conference
- 2) Parent - Cafeteria Manager - Principal Conference
- 3) Parent - Cafeteria Manager - Principal Conference - Pastor

The ultimate authority lies with the Pastor. All parties will adhere to his decision.

18. SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

No handbook can cover every situation regarding uniform code. The school administration has the final decision as to what is or is not a violation of the St. Joseph Uniform Code.

General Appearance

- All students must keep themselves clean and neat at all times.
- Shirts are to be tucked in at all times.
- All uniforms must be kept clean and neat and must be of appropriate length and size.
- Tattoos and face painting are not permitted.

HAIR

Girls:

- Excessive, large, or distracting accessories, beads, and extreme or fancy hair styles are inappropriate during the school day.
- Accessories should be appropriate and should be primarily made of colors found in the uniforms.
- NO EXTREME styles are permitted. Extreme styles include (but are not limited to): any visible sculpting with a razor or scissors, other than trimming and tapering around the natural hairline, tails, unnatural coloring or bleaching.
- Hair spray, gels, and other styling products are prohibited on school premises.

Boys:

- It should be worn at an appropriate length. Appropriate length is considered not less than 1/8", not so long that it is in the boy's eyebrows; cover more than half of the ear, or below the top of his shirt collar.
- NO EXTREME styles are permitted. Extreme styles include (but are not limited to): any visible sculpting with a razor or scissors, other than trimming and tapering around the natural hairline, tails, unnatural coloring or bleaching.
- Hair spray, gels, and other styling products are prohibited on school premises.

UNIFORMS

Shirts:

- St. Joseph blue or gold polo will be worn Monday-Thursday and **no visible undershirt is allowed unless purchased through the St. Joseph Office.**
- St. Joseph Spirit t-shirt or any other t-shirt associated with St. Joseph School or Parish must be worn on Fridays.
- The St. Joseph blue or gold sweatshirt is to be worn over the polo and Spirit shirt in winter months Monday-Friday.

- Boy Scout shirts may be worn the day of meetings with the uniform pants.

Khaki Slacks/Shorts/Skort:

- Khaki uniform slacks/shorts or skorts will be worn Monday-Friday. Plain brown or black belts are to be worn at all times if the slack/pant/short has belt loops for grades K-5.
- Shorts/skort are to be fingertip in length when arms are relaxed at side.

Shoes/Socks:

- Sneakers or tennis shoes and white socks are a required part of the uniform for both boys and girls.
- Tennis shoes **need to be secure & cover the entire foot**. Tennis shoes that come off too easily are a safety concern and parents will be asked to purchase tennis shoes that fit securely.
- **NO boots, dress shoes or sandals** are to be worn.
- Socks should be solid white and cover the ankle.
- Knee socks and tights **purchased through French Toast** are allowed.

Belts:

- Plain black or brown belts are required for both boys and girls.

Outerwear:

All students are encouraged to wear appropriate outer clothing (boots, coats, hats, gloves, rain gear, etc.) to and from school. However, only the above described uniforms are allowed in the classrooms.

Out of Uniform or Free Dress Days:

On out of uniform, or free dress days students are allowed to wear clean (no holes, frayed edges or baggy) shirts, pants, dresses, skirts and shorts, tennis shoes, sweaters, t-shirts, sweatshirts (**no tank tops, or inappropriate logos/pictures/or slogans**). Bottom of shorts, dresses or skorts must be finger-tip in length when hands are relaxed at their sides. Hair code standards are the same, tennis shoes must be worn and bare shoulders, backs, and midriffs are not allowed.

JEWELRY:

Girls:

Earrings that hang below the bottom of the ear lobe, more than one earring per lobe or excessive jewelry is not permitted for safety reasons.

Boys:

Necklaces may be worn with a cross or Catholic medal. Earrings, bracelets, or any other jewelry is not permitted.

Make Up:

Make-up is not permitted. Nail polish is permitted, but must be removed when it begins chipping or if it becomes a distraction.

Enforcement of the School Uniform Policy:

The School Uniform Policy will be enforced from the first day of school, except in the case of new students, who will be extended a grace period. **All articles of clothing should be marked or labeled with the student's name.** The School is not responsible for lost or misplaced items of clothing. Students will be checked daily for the correct uniform.

Khaki uniform pants/shorts/skort may only be purchased online at:

www.frenchtoast.com Be sure to put in our source code: **QS46CYR** so that you only purchase approved styles! We also receive credit for all purchases made after a \$2000 limit is met.

Bottoms may also be purchased locally at Amarillo Screen Graphics located at 2715 Civic Circle. Please be sure to ask for approved styles for St. Joseph so you do not purchase a wrong style.

19. VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a necessary and valued part of our school. Required SERVICE HOURS may be earned for activities as detailed on the Tuition Contract. For the protection of our students, Diocesan Policy requires that anyone who fulfills such a role in the presence of children is required to be clear of criminal conduct. A Criminal History Background Check may be required of any such individual. If a volunteer will be working or conducting volunteer work in the presence of children, it is required that the volunteer be trained with Safe Environment Training through the Diocese of Amarillo. Opportunities for the training with certified trainers are conducted throughout the year, and the certification is good for five years. The diocese does not allow for exceptions in the Safe Environment training.

20. CHILD CARE - EXTENDED DAY

Extended Day Care:

St. Joseph DayCare Center operates an after school program from 3:45-6:00 PM. Children have supervised free-play time with a variety of games, toys, etc. for their use. Other age appropriate activities including snacks and study time are provided daily. Contact the Development Center, 353-7043, for rates and additional information.

The St. Joseph DayCare Center is **open all year** - including summer and school holidays. It is closed on major holidays.

The St. Joseph DayCare Center is licensed by the Texas Department of Human Services, and it provides appropriate play experiences that contribute to the spiritual, physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic development of the child.

21. ADVISORY COUNCIL

The St. Joseph Advisory Council is a consultative/advisory council that supports and assists the Pastor and principal in policy-making. Long-range planning includes recruitment, plant maintenance, and marketing and development. This Council meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month in St. Joseph Church Meeting Room. Meetings are open to any interested patron. To place a concern on the Council meeting agenda, patrons may address their request to the School Administrator, the Pastor, or the Council President. By-laws require that this be done at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. Council Membership is open to Catholic parents of students enrolled, and to registered members of St. Joseph's Parish. Elections for this Council are held the last Sunday of January or first Sunday of February of each year. The Council has nine elected members with three being elected each year on a rotating basis.

Anyone interested in serving on this Council should contact the School or Parish Office in early December. Prospective candidates must be willing to invest the time required for this membership, and will receive orientation material to assist them in discerning their ability and expertise to serve the school in this important ministry.

22. PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

All families are members of the PTO. The PTO is a supportive parent organization that affords parents the opportunity to become actively involved in working with the administration and faculty. One of the responsibilities is to aid in fundraisers to help provide much needed financial and service assistance for the School. The yearly budget of the organization is available at the first PTO meeting in September. Dues of the PTO are \$25.00 per family +\$5 per additional student, and the Dues are payable by the first week of school.

Fund raising activities of this organization include, but are not limited to, the Fall Carnival (Sept/Oct), School-A-Thon, Wonderland Park Night (End of April/Early May). Each family is required to sell a minimum of \$100 in raffle chances for the Carnival and actively participate in all school activities. The Spring School-A-Thon is also put on by the PTO where each family is required to bring in \$75 of pledges.

PTO Officers Meeting

The PTO officers meet the first Tuesday of every month in the school to plan and coordinate the organization's activities.

23. HANDBOOK CHANGES

The School reserves the right to amend the Parent-Pupil Handbook for just cause. Parents and/or guardians will be promptly informed of any and all amendments, additions, or deletions.

*Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection
is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God.
I place in you all my interests and desires. Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your
powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine Son all spiritual
blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

*Oh, St. Joseph, I never weary
thinking of you, and Jesus asleep in your arms. Press Him in my name and kiss
His fine head for me and ask him to return the Kiss in my times of need.*

*St. Joseph, Patron of school,
pray for us.*

Amen.