

## **PURPOSE AND USE OF HANDBOOK**

This handbook exists to foster the efficient operations of St. Ambrose School. To meet this objective, the school administration is given flexibility and the ability to exercise discretion. In appropriate circumstances, the principal has the discretion to take actions other than those specified in the handbook. This handbook is not intended and should not be considered to create any additional rights for students or parent/guardians.

The contents of this handbook and policy guide are a legally binding contract between the parent/guardian and the school. The handbook represents the rules, policies, and procedures of St. Ambrose School, which must be followed and adhered to at all times by student and parent/guardian.

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE HANDBOOK**

This handbook is subject to change at any time when determined to be necessary by the school administration. If changes are made to the handbook, parents/guardians will be notified promptly.

## **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

The faculty of St. Ambrose School believes that the purpose of a Catholic School education is to develop in our children the desire to discover new ideals and to live productively within our society. To live productively in the society children must develop a sense of values to guide them in their future years. Only through a diversified education will children realize their full potential. There must be a relationship between that which we teach and that which we are, thus enabling the students to meet with confidence the challenges and responsibilities encountered in total community living. One of these challenges is for the students to become aware that they were created for a purpose in order to give meaning to their lives. Through creative thinking, and acceptance of responsibility and alert, active and articulate leadership, teacher and student become conscious of their call to live the Gospel values of message, community and service.

## **OUR MISSION**

The mission of St. Ambrose is to cultivate confident and reflective life-long learners, whose personal goals and achievements are rooted in a foundation of Catholic doctrine, social self-awareness, and engaging academic experiences. The students of St. Ambrose are inspired to be dynamic members of our community; supporting each other while embracing the challenges of today with a positive and assured mindset.

The nurturing and accredited educators of St. Ambrose ignite a passion for learning with innovative differentiated instructional strategies, and encourage opportunities for meaningful peer collaboration. Our teachers foster a supportive, faith-based, environment built upon the principles of social-emotional learning and a “growth mindset” approach. Our curriculum is designed to incorporate technology-infused applications & project-based learning that align with our data-driven standards of excellence for academic achievement. We rank in the in top 15<sup>th</sup> percent nationally in Mathematics and Language Arts.

## **Admissions Policy**

Admission to St. Ambrose School is open to members of the parish. Other children will be accepted as space permits. St. Ambrose School strives to open its doors to as many children who seek an education with us. The school reserves the right to determine maximum class size in order to accommodate the many families that seek a quality education at our school.

Priority of admissions and enrollment go in this order: 1) Students already attending the school, 2) New families that wish to register in this school and are currently active members of the parish, 3) Families that wish to register students as active parishioners, 4) Parents of students who come from another Catholic school, and 5) Final priority goes to transfers from public school systems.

## **Non-discrimination policy**

St. Ambrose School admits students of any race, color national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. St. Ambrose School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. In accepting new student to St. Ambrose, preference will be given to brothers and sisters of those currently attending St. Ambrose, and to those genuinely committed to Catholic education.

St. Ambrose School will adhere to the cut-off date of the sending district. In Old Bridge, the cut-off date is October 1<sup>st</sup>. Therefore, for Old Bridge residents:

- Children must be 3 years old by October 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to Pre-K3
- Children must be 4 years old by October 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to Pre-K4
- Children must be 5 years old by October 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to Kindergarten

A diocesan approve screening test may be administered prior to admission to the kindergarten program.

**Any student who is not behaviorally, socially, or academically prepared will be asked to leave the program. All students entering pre-kindergarten are required to be bathroom independent.**

## **Transfer Students: Grades 1 through 8**

Students that transfer to St. Ambrose School from other schools for grades 1 through 8 enter the school will meet with the teachers to assess the transfer student's academic and social progress. Any student who is not behaviorally, socially, or academically prepared for the program will be asked to leave the school.

## **Service Hour Requirements**

Each family registered at St. Ambrose School is responsible for completing service hours during the year broken down as follows:

Minimum nine (9) bingos completed between July 1 and June 30

Minimum one (1) shifts at the annual carnival

Minimum one (1) shift at another major fundraising event

Families registering after the annual carnival, and families unable to complete their carnival obligation will be required to complete one additional bingo for a total of (10) bingos for the year.

Failure to comply with the service hours requirements will result in a tuition assessment equal to \$100.00 per incomplete service event. Families of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students must have their service completed by May 31<sup>st</sup> or their child may not be permitted to participate in year-end 8<sup>th</sup> grade activities. Monthly reports are distributed so that families may plan and complete service hours before the end of the school year. Failure to submit a bingo sign-up form at the time of registration will result in your tuition agreement being assessed for the corresponding buy-out. Service hours must be scheduled with the appropriate chairperson for each event. You may also opt to “buy out” of your service hours by adding \$1,100.00 to your family tuition agreement.

Parents that are single through death of a spouse or current military deployment are only obligated to complete one half of the service hours described above. All other families are required to complete the full service described above. If there is a special circumstance for which you believe you would qualify for a single parent family exemption, please contact the school business manager to discuss.

### **Active Parishioner Status**

Active parishioner status is determined by faithful attendance at Mass each Sunday. The student's baptismal certificate must be submitted in order to be registered at the prevailing Catholic family rate. Additionally, to be considered an active parishioner, and to receive the prevailing base tuition rate, the envelope system must be used each time you attend Mass at St. Ambrose. Please note, that there is no minimum dollar amount that needs to be contributed via the church collection in order to be considered an active parishioner. Please be as generous as your means and circumstances allow. Receiving an envelope on a weekly basis will determine your eligibility as an active parishioner. You must note your envelope number on your registration form. Out of parish Catholics will be given the in parish rate once your faithful participation is verified with the pastor of your parish. For non-Catholics, the out of parish tuition rate will apply.

### **CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT**

The re-registration process for enrolled families begins during Catholic Schools Week. ***Your students will be automatically reenrolled for the upcoming school year.*** Registration forms will be sent home with your child. If your child will not be returning to St. Ambrose the following year, you must notify the school in writing by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Tuition agreements will be finalized by the end of March. Early registration incentives are available as follows:

- Families returning all registration forms by February 28<sup>th</sup>, will be billed the current year's published tuition rate. The registration fee will be automatically billed to your FACTS agreement on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

- Families returning all registration forms returned after February 28<sup>th</sup> will be billed the upcoming year's tuition rate. The registration fee will be automatically billed to your FACTS agreement on March 20<sup>th</sup>.
- After February 28<sup>th</sup> the registration fee increases to \$250.00. This amount will be billed to your existing FACTS management agreement on April 5<sup>th</sup>, unless you notify us in writing that your child will not be returning to St. Ambrose.
- After July 31<sup>st</sup> the registration fee increases to \$500.00.

### **Admissions Requirements**

1. Birth Certificate
2. Immunization record

#### **Entering Pre-K3 and Pre-K4**

DTap	4 doses
Polio (IPV)	3 doses
MMR	1 dose
Varicella	1 dose
HIB	2 doses (1 given after 1st birthday)
Pneumococcal	2 doses (1 given after 1st birthday)
Hepatitis B	3 doses

#### **Entering Kindergarten**

Dtap	5 doses
Polio (IPV)	4 doses
MMR	2 doses
Varicella	1 dose
HIB	2 doses (1 given after 1st birthday)
Pneumococcal	2 doses (1 given after 1st birthday)
Hepatitis B	3 doses

#### **Entering 6th Grade**

Meningococcal and Tdap     1 dose (after 11th birthday)

**An applicant whose immunization record is incomplete will not be admitted.**

3. New student physical
4. Baptismal and any other sacramental certificate.
5. IEP or SP (if applicable)

Students transferring into St. Ambrose must present a transfer card, most recent report card, and standardized test scores. Children, who have been evaluated by a child study team, should present the team's most recent evaluation, IEP or SP. Acceptance will be contingent upon fulfillment of these requirements.

In the event that a child is transferring from a Catholic school within the diocese, a public school, or private school, the principal of the last school may be contacted for an evaluation of the student.

All students in addition to review of records must have a **personal interview with the principal upon enrollment. Any student who is not behaviorally, socially, or academically prepared for the program will be asked to leave the school.**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Prompt, regular attendance is absolutely essential to academic success. The parent/guardian is expected to foster these good habits in the student, both for the benefit of the student's current academic achievement.

Ample vacation time is available during holidays and religious holy days. Please arrange family vacations to coincide with these days. If a parent must take a student out of school on days other than the holiday listed in the calendar, parent must present a note to the homeroom teacher. **A teacher is not required to provide work prior to the trip, nor is it their responsibility to make up lessons. It is the child's responsibility to obtain all missed work and to complete it by the date indicated by the teacher.**

### **School Hours**

School hours for students in grades K-8 are 7:45am-2:15pm. Children need to be aware of the necessity for being on time for school. **Students are expected to be in school no later than 7:40am for prayers, and announcements.**

### **Late Policy**

Any student that arrives after 7:45am is to be accompanied by their guardian to the main office for a late slip. After three (3) late slips in a single quarter, the student will be required to meet with the Dean of Students to discuss a corrective action plan. If the lateness persists, the parent will be asked to meet with the Dean of Students to discuss possible resolutions. Five late slips in a single quarter may result in recess reflection time. Parents will be notified of the date and time of this meeting in advance.

Students who are late due to a doctor's appointment must present a note from the doctor's office upon arrival at school. Please make every effort to schedule appointments outside of school hours.

Please be aware that a student must be in attendance for a minimum of four hours in order for him/her to be marked present **and to be able to participate in any after school activities (i.e. sports competitions, clubs, etc.)**

## **Student Absence**

A parent/guardian must call the school no later than 8:00am to report a student's absence. If no call has been received, the school nurse will make a reasonable effort to reach a parent/guardian by phone to verify the legitimacy of the absence. These procedures represent a mutual effort to account for the presence of students during school hours. Requests for missed work must be requested at the time of the **initial phone call**. The requested work will be available to be picked up after 2:15pm **on the day of the absence**. Please allow teachers 24 hours to provide work for pick-up.

When the student returns to school, he/she must present a written note from a parent/guardian, stating the student's name, date, and reason for the absence. In addition, an absence of three or more consecutive days **requires a doctor's note**. Students may only return to school if they have been fever free for 24 hours **without medication**.

**Please ensure that your emergency contact form includes at least one adult that is on-call for immediate pick-up.**

If a student is absent from school because of illness or disciplinary actions, he/she will not be permitted to take part in extracurricular activities that day. If a student is absent from school for a reason other than illness or disciplinary actions, the school reserves the right to make a judgement regarding same-day extracurricular and athletic participation.

The Diocese will be notified of a child's chronic absenteeism. A student who is chronically absent will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Excused Absence**

According to the policy of the Diocese of Metuchen, there are only a few instances where an absence may be excused:

- 1) Student attends the funeral of an immediate family member
- 2) Freshman for a Day visit (one allowed for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders only)
- 3) Documented court appearance
- 4) Take your child to work day. Written notice must be submitted to the student's teacher **prior to the absence**, and a written statement from the employer must be given upon the student's return the next day.

All other absences and illness of any form are considered unexcused and will count against perfect attendance. A student in attendance for less than 4 hours is considered absent.

Please be aware that all absences must be reported on PowerSchool. Excused absences will not count toward perfect attendance.

In case of absence from class, the student is responsible to:

- Make up any work missed during the time of absence. Students are allotted 24 hours per every day absent to submit work to their teacher.

Take all tests and hand in projects at teachers discretion.

### **Transportation**

School bus transportation is provided to students as determined by the Old Bridge Board of Education Transportation Department. Children who do not adhere to bus rules will be excluded from bus service. It will then be the responsibility of the parent to transport the child. Children cannot switch busses to ride home with a friend. No arrangements may be made with the bus drives for special drop offs. If you have questions or concerns regarding transportation, you must call transportation or your student's bus company directly:

Old Bridge Transportation – 732-360-4502

Durham – 732-577-1000

Shamrock – 732-787-1113

Wehrle – 732-566-2634

### **Bus Behavior**

The following rules have been established in order to ensure the safety of all students who ride the bus:

- Use only the bus and bus stops assigned
- Orderly behavior is required at the bus stop
- Remain seated and facing front when the bus is in motion with seatbelt secured
- Talk quietly and make no necessary noise
- Do not talk to the driver unless it is absolutely necessary
- Keep head and arms inside
- No eating or drinking on the bus
- Serious and persistent violation of bus rules and procedures could lead to a loss of bus service
- Homework is not to be done on the bus

Students transported by car are to follow the traffic lines around the side of the school to the auditorium entrance. Parents are not permitted into the building for morning drop off or afternoon pick-up.

Students must submit a note to homeroom teacher to inform them of any change in the end of day plan. **This must be in writing.** Please see dismissal form attached. Please refrain from last minute changes to your child's dismissal procedure. Every effort is made to deliver these messages to the teachers, however any other form of communication regarding transportation changes may not be timely communicated to the necessary parties.

### **Early Pickup**

If early pickup is necessary, parent or emergency contact person must sign child out to prevent his/her exit with an unauthorized person.

The school will permit only the custodial parent, or his/her designee (designated in writing), to pick up the child during the school day. The non-custodial parent will not be permitted to remove the child from school during or at the end of the school day unless there is written authorization from the custodial parent, or such rights are expressed in submitted legal documents.

### **Communication with School Personnel**

Parents who wish to meet with the principal are asked to call the office to arrange a mutually convenient meeting time. Parents wishing to communicate with teacher or other school personnel are asked to send-a-note, e-mail or phone the office to request an appointment.

### **Cell Phones and Phone Messages**

**Cell phones must be turned off and stored away. Student use of a cell phones is not permitted during the school day.** Necessary phone communication to and from parents will be communicated through the school office. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in confiscation of cell phone followed by parent contact.

### **Visits to the School during School Hours**

**VISITOR'S WILL NOT BE PERMITTED INTO THE SCHOOL WITHOUT HAVING A SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT.**

### **Visits to the School Building after School Hours**

Parents requesting a conference must contact teacher or call the office to make an appointment. Parents may meet with teachers by appointment only. Children are permitted to remain in the building for extended care, tutoring, music or other prearranged events but must remain with the adult in charge. **Students in extended care or any other student involved in after school activities are not permitted back into their classroom after dismissal. Parents and students are not permitted back into the building after school for forgotten items.**

### **Students Bringing Money to School**

Money that is sent to school for a specific event or purpose should be placed in a sealed envelope and identified with the child's name, grade, amount enclosed, and its purpose.

### **Home School Association**

Saint Ambrose School has an active HSA. All parents are encouraged to participate in HSA sponsored activities and regularly scheduled meetings. Important events and items are discussed at these meetings. Parents attendance at "Back to School Night" in September is mandatory.

### **Court Orders**

If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. The custodial parent shall supply the principal with the “custody section” of the divorce decree if it contains information which may be useful to the school in fulfilling its obligations.

### **Academic Policies**

Every opportunity is provided to enable each student to perform satisfactorily in all subject areas. However, should the student receive a failing grade in any subject area, the following will apply:

Failure to successfully complete the curriculum for each grade may result in retention. **If a student fails two major subjects on the final average grade, retention in that grade is possible.** In the event that summer tutoring is required, certification from the tutor of the child’s satisfactory progress must be presented to the school. Tutoring must come from either a certified teacher or recognized tutoring program. An evaluation may be made by current and former teachers to see if promotion will occur in September after the summer tutoring has occurred.

### **Religious Education and Religious Services**

Non-Catholic students are welcomed at Saint Ambrose School. The non-Catholic student is expected to understand and agree that the school exists to educate in the framework of Catholic values. Non-Catholic students must participate in daily religion classes and weekly liturgical services that are scheduled for students during the school year.

### **Homework/Projects/Assignments**

Homework is a vital part of Catholic education. It reinforces lessons taught in class and acts as a strengthening factor in mental creativity.

- Assignment pads are required of all pupils in grades three through eight. These assignment pads are purchased from the school.

Any projects assigned during absence are to be completed by a date to be determined by the teacher. Parents are to see that homework is completed on the day it is required for class. Late homework must be completed.

Any student who does not adhere to the above should expect that grades would be averaged according to the number of assignments to the entire class. Failure to successfully complete the curriculum for each grade may result in retention.

All written work/assignments must be completed in blue or black ink (pencil for math) from 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Homework should have a proper heading and be neat. Teachers may refuse to accept assignments that don’t meet specified guidelines.

### **Power School**

All student attendance records, grades, test scores, and project work shall be recorded on Power School. Parents may access this information via the internet at any time. Power School is administered by the Diocese of Metuchen.

Parents are responsible for keeping track of their passwords and usernames for their accounts. **Parents are responsible for keeping abreast of the child's academic performance, and are encouraged to visit the site often.**

### **Report Cards**

Report cards will be issued four times each year for grades 1 through 8. Kindergarten will receive three report cards on a trimester schedule. Report cards are not issued for Pre-K students. The teacher instead provides a daily formative assessment. Parents should carefully examine their child's progress and the reasons checked in each area.

### **Honor Roll**

We at Saint Ambrose School are proud of the achievements of our students. In this spirit we shall recognize them with Honor Roll certificates. Certificates are given to students who have earned them in grades 3 through 8. Students who put forth their best effort will receive honorable mentions. Students who achieve high academic standards must also maintain high standards of personal behavior. Any student with two or more checkmarks for deportment on their report card will not be eligible for any form of honor roll.

### **Most Distinguished Honors**

"A+" - (100-97) in **each** major subject

### **Distinguished Honors**

"A" - (96-93) or higher in **each** major subject

### **First Honors**

A (96 to 93) or higher in at least three major subjects, one B+ is permitted.

### **Second Honors**

B+ (92-89) or higher in at least three major subjects, one B is permitted.

### **Effort Award**

Any student who has made consistent efforts to improve their grades may be considered for this award. This award is given at the sole discretion of the subject area teacher.

**Exams:** Final exams will be administered to students in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **After School Activities and Sports Program Policy**

Students who receive a grade of F in any major subject area will not be permitted to play in any after school or sports activity. Students who receive a D in any subject are to be put on a probationary period for the remainder of the marking period. If grades do not improve above a D, the student will not be permitted to attend any after school club or sports activity.

**Students who have an unexcused absence during the day are not permitted to return to school for an after-school activity or sports event.**

### **Records and Transcripts**

A parent/guardian has the right to review his/her student's a) academic record, b) academic standardized test results, c) health records, and d) emergency sheet (emergency phone numbers, etc.). These records can be made available upon request. Transcripts of academic and health records may not be given directly to the parent/guardian in the event of a transfer. A request for transfer must be made in writing.

### **Parental Rights to School Records**

Saint Ambrose School abides by the provisions of applicable law with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, and upon request, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the student's essential academic records

### **Policy on Field Trips**

On occasion, St. Ambrose School will sponsor and conduct field trips for the educational enrichment of the students. Participation in field trips is a privilege. No student may participate in a field trip unless a signed parent/guardian permission slip for the specific event is submitted to the school. The school provides the permission slip. Since mature behavior is expected on field trips, student behavior in school can become a factor in denial of field trip privileges. If a student is deemed ineligible to attend a certain field trip, parents will be notified.

### **Saint Ambrose Disciplinary System**

A spirit of Christ-like charity, respect for authority, and mutual cooperation are essential elements of the learning environment at St. Ambrose School. Students are expected to act with courtesy and respect toward one another and toward all members of the staff. They must take seriously their obligation to develop lifetime habits of self-control and concerns for the well-being of others. Home and School will work together to help students learn and live the qualities of responsible behavior and the elements of good citizenship.

We invite parents to work in partnership with us in guiding and directing students toward standards of good conduct. It is therefore expected that parents/guardians support and work with the school in preventative and corrective disciplinary measures regarding their children.

St. Ambrose School is dedicated to establishing the best possible environment for teaching and learning in school. Conduct expected of a student at St. Ambrose is: respect for others and of

property, obedience to authority, cooperation with other, orderliness and age appropriate behavior reflective of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Failure to meet these standards of conduct shall result in a meeting with either the teacher(s) and/or the principal to discuss a corrective action plan. **It is essential for the school and the parents to work together for the benefit of the child.** Please note that all conduct referrals are cumulative for the academic year. In special cases, at the principal's discretion, a history of prior referrals from other academic years may be considered when implementing appropriate discipline policy. Also note, that the existence of any Service Plan, or IEP does not permit or excuse any form of misbehavior that may occur in school.

**All infractions apply to school, parish, and grounds at all times.**

Actions that violate the law, threaten or cause harm to other students or staff members, disrupt or impede the welfare and progress of the school community, or bring discredit to the school will not be tolerated. Such actions or other severe violations of school rules may result in immediate expulsion. If a student persists in violating the basic obligations of courtesy, consideration, respect, cooperation or safety, a teacher/parent/student/principal conference will be scheduled. All subsequent discipline, counseling, consultation, and corrective action plans will be viewed as positive home-school efforts to help the student improve behavior. If these cooperative efforts of parents and school staff prove ineffective, the student will be subject to expulsion or may be denied re-admittance to the school.

### **Code of Student Conduct**

It is our expectation at St. Ambrose School that every student will:

- Maintain standards of socially acceptable behavior
- Respect school property and the property of others
- Avoid any type of behavior which will prevent others from learning
- Obey all adult authority and respond to those in authority
- Follow classroom rules regarding behavior in class, walking through halls, behavior in church, etc.

### **Electronic Devices**

- Students are to keep such devices in their lockers/backpacks. Violation of this rule will result in confiscation of the device for parent pick up.

### **Cafeteria Behavior**

- Students are to proceed and remain in areas designated for their class
- Students will be called for their lunch and snack
- Screaming, fighting, pushing, running, and yelling are forbidden
- Appropriate table manners are to be observed at all times
- Tables must be cleaned before dismissal

### **Classroom Recess Behavior**

- Students must remain in their own classroom

- Students are to show respect to lunch parents
- Recess is a privilege, which can be revoked due to misbehavior
- Appropriate behavior is expected of students during inside recess

### Outdoor Recess

- Recess shall be held every day when the temperature is acceptable
- Students are to remain in assigned play areas
- Running, pushing, fighting, and other inappropriate behavior are forbidden
- When the bell rings children are to walk to their lines
- Parents must have a doctor's note excusing students from recess for a valid reason.

### AM Arrival

- **Students should arrive at school between 7:30am and 7:45am**
- Students should enter the cafeteria via the auditorium door (#13) and report to their designated area and wait for their teacher. Students are to line up to participate in morning prayers and to hear important announcements.

### Dismissal

- Bus riders will be dismissed first between 2:05 and 2:10pm, and between 11:45 and 11:50am on half days.
- Students are to walk quietly through the halls with their classes
- Walkers will be dismissed at the door closest to the nurse's office (#5) after the busses have left the premises
- Parents are to remain outside in the fences area until their student(s) come outside.
- Bus riders will proceed through the cafeteria to the door near the church (#11) and proceed to their bus line. Attendance will be taken as the students board the bus.

### Locker Expectations

- Quiet must be maintained at the lockers. Doors are not to be slammed
- Halls, floors, and windowsills must be kept clean and free of debris.
- Lockers are to be kept clean and orderly
- No food is to be left overnight in any locker
- Lockers may be inspected at any time at the discretion of the teacher or principal

### Medication

#### **Policy on Administration of Medication**

If it is essential that a student receive medication while under school supervision, the following procedures apply:

- A. A parent/guardian should come to the school and personally administer the medication
- B. If this arrangement is not possible, the school nurse will administer the medication under the following conditions:
  - The medication must be given to the school nurse by the parent/guardian
  - The medication must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container

- The parent/guardian and the student’s physician must complete and sign an “Authorization to Administer Medication in School” form. This form is available from the school nurse.
- All of the above requirements apply to prescription as well as nonprescription medication
- **No child may carry medications to or from school.**

Students will be permitted to self-administer medication only for life-threatening illnesses or conditions. The parent/guardian must schedule a conference with the school nurse to discuss in detail the need for the medication. The parent/guardian and the student’s physician must complete and sign an “Authorization for Self-Administration of Medication in School” form. This form is available from the school nurse.

The school nurse is available to us on from 8:30am-1:30pm. State law forbids staff to dispense any kind of medication to any student in her absence unless a substitute nurse has been provided. First aid may be given, but in a serious matter, a parent will be notified immediately.

### **Health and Safety**

Parents/Guardians of children in grades K-8 are required to call school by 8:30am on any day when a child is absent. **A note explaining the absence and specifying the exact dates of the absence is required on the day the student returns to school. An absence of three days or longer requires a doctor’s note upon the child’s return to school.**

Please do not send children to school when they have symptoms of an illness, or if they are not fully recovered from an illness. Also, students must be free of an elevated temperature without medication. Parents are asked to keep their children home when they exhibit severe cold symptoms, e.g. Runny nose, persistent cough, heavy congestion, and sore throat. The nurse may send children with such symptoms home after evaluation.

**Any child with a temperature of 100 degrees or more will be sent home and may not return to school until 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided without medication.**

Any child with a skin rash may not come to school without a physician’s note of explanation. Children with any undiagnosed skin rash will be sent home.

**All athletes in all grades 6 through 8 are required to have an up-to-date sports physical on file prior to participating in any sports. This includes, interscholastic, intramural, and club sports.**

### **Nutrition**

- Each child is to be provided with a nourishing breakfast before leaving home each morning
- Children are to eat an adequate lunch every day. Carbonated beverages are not permitted in school.
- Children are not permitted to use the soda or snack machines between the hours of 7:30am-2:15pm. They may use these machines during extended care and after school activities.

- Fast food lunches are discouraged.
- If a child forgets lunch, it will be provided to them. No child will ever miss lunch because it was left at home.

### **Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

New Jersey State law requires that any person, who has reasonable cause to believe that a child may have been subjected to abuse or neglect, must make a report to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF).

The school follows a policy of early detection when any form of abuse is suspected.

### **Memorandum of Agreement**

St. Ambrose School is legally required to follow the rules, policies, and procedures as determined by the Memorandum of Agreement made with the local law enforcement agencies. The school will comply with any requests made by an appropriate legal law enforcement agency.

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

In accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) and Federal Regulation 40 CFR Part 763, we are required to notify you that an Asbestos Management Plan (APM) is currently in place. The APM file contains all necessary documents insuring compliance, covering activities such as, periodic surveillance and 3 year re-inspections. The APM file is available for your review at any time. It is located in the school office.

### **Dress Code**

#### **PreK-3 & PreK-4 (boys & girls)**

- Navy blue gym shorts or gym pants with logo
- Gold t-shirt with logo
- Navy blue sweat shirt with logo
- White athletic socks (not colors or patterns)
- Sneakers must be tied or fastened securely

#### **School Uniforms – Girls**

##### **K-3**

- Blue plaid jumper or navy blue uniform slacks (BELT MUST BE WORN)
- Light blue Peter Pan collar blouse
- Navy blue cardigan with school logo
- Navy blue tights or knee high socks
- Navy blue, or black, lace up, or buckle shoes (no ballet flats) with rubber soles, no heel.
- Navy blue shorts or skort for spring
- Light blue polo (golf) shirt for spring

- Simple hair accessory (no large bows, flowers, etc.)

#### 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>

- Blue plaid kilt – **skirt should come to the top of the knee** or navy blue uniform slacks  
**4<sup>th</sup> Grade may continue to wear the jumper with Peter Pan blouse**
- Light blue oxford shirt (button down blouse)
- Navy blue v-neck pull over sweater or navy blue vest – with school logo
- Navy blue pants (purchased from Flynn and O’Hara only) may be worn for a winter uniform
- Light blue polo (golf) shirt for spring
- Navy blue shorts or skort for spring
- Navy blue tights or knee-high socks
- Navy blue or black lace up or buckle shoes with heel no higher than one inch.  
(NO BALLET FLATS OR SLIP ON SHOES)  
Blouses are to be tucked in at the waist. Rolling or blousing at the waist is not permitted.

#### School Uniforms - Boys

##### K-2

- Navy blue pants – properly fitting
- Navy blue shorts for spring
- Light blue polo/golf (long or short sleeve) Tie is no longer required in K-2
- Navy blue or black crew socks
- Navy blue cardigan with school logo
- Navy blue or black socks
- Black rubber sole lace up or Velcro close shoes

##### 3-8

- Navy blue pants – properly fitting
- Navy blue shorts for spring
- Light blue polo/golf shirt for spring
- Light blue Oxford Shirt with tie
- Navy blue vest or pull over v-neck sweater with logo (**3<sup>rd</sup> grade boys may continue to wear the cardigan sweater**)
- 4-8 Black rubber sole lace up shoes – **NO LOAFERS OR SLIP ON SHOES**
- Navy blue or black socks

Baggy pants are not permitted. Pants are to be worn on the waist, properly fitted, with the pant legs meeting the shoes. A black or navy belt is to be worn at all times. The belt is to be the proper length, threaded through the riders. The strap end is not to hang down the front of the pants. Shirts are to be tucked in.

The spring uniform may be worn on the first day of school until October 15<sup>th</sup>, and from April 15<sup>th</sup> till the last day of school. Since weather is hard to predict, the school office will announce if the day to switch uniforms will be changed. The spring uniform consists of walking/shorts or skort with the light blue polo shirt with the school logo.

8<sup>th</sup> graders may wear the light blue polo shirt as a “8<sup>th</sup> grade privilege”, year round

## Physical Education Uniforms – Boys and Girls – All Grades

- Navy blue shorts with logo – **(no more than four (4) inches above the knee)**
  - Navy blue sweat shirt with logo
  - Navy blue sweat pants with logo (or mesh shorts in warmer weather)
  - Gold t-shirt with logo
  - Sneakers must be tied or fastened securely
  - WHITE athletic socks (no colors or patterns)
  - Navy blue shorts with or logo
- No team shirts, including St. Ambrose teams, may be worn for gym classes. St. Ambrose gym uniforms are mandatory. The students are allowed to wear this uniform on their designated gym day only. Sweat pant legs must be pulled down below the ankle bone.

### Miscellaneous Uniform Items

- Girls may wear only one pair of stud earrings at a time. Hoops and dangling earrings are never permitted. Boys may wear one small stud earring in one ear. Religious medals may be worn as long as they hang inside the shirt and cannot be seen. Short choker style neck chains are not permitted. Simple wristwatch may be worn. Rings and other jewelry are not permitted. School is not responsible for lost/misplaced items.
- Make-up and nail polish are **never** permitted. Only natural hair color is permitted.
- Hair must be neatly groomed and out of the eyes. Boy's hair must be above the collar.
- Hats, bandanas, or any other form of headgear may not be worn in the building.
- "Hoodie" tops and sweatshirts are not permitted to be worn in the building
- Any form of body piercing, modification, or tattoos (temporary or otherwise) are not permitted on any part of the body.

### Spirit Wear Days

Spirit wear days will be specified as they arise. However, the following items are never permitted:

- Tank tops
- Bike Shorts
- Midriiffs or halters
- Make-up and nail polish
- Jewelry
- Open toed shoes

### Violation of Dress Code

A verbal warning will be given to a student on the first offense. Students who violate the dress code a second time will be sent home with a notice and parents will be contacted.

If the problem is not remedied after the notice has been sent home, parents will be called to discuss the violation and consequence (i.e., after school detention and/or loss of privilege). Dress code violations are a distraction and often disturbing to other students.

## **Miscellaneous Regulations**

### **Tuition Collection Policy**

Parents, families, or responsible parties are expected to pay tuition in a timely manner. All families are required to pay tuition through the FACTS Management Company, regardless of payment plan selected. Late fees apply for any tuition account that is more than 15 days in arrears. If a family neglects to pay school tuition or fees, a student may be dismissed from the school prior to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> marking period with a formal written notice. If a student is dismissed, he or she will receive a grade of “incomplete” for all of their classes. Multi-child family discounts apply to sibling residing in the same household. Extended family such as cousins, nieces, nephews, etc., is considered a separate family for the purpose of tuition collection and service obligations, even if residing in the same household.

Families of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students must have all financial, service, and fundraising obligations completed before the commencement of final exams. Failure to be in compliance at that time will result in your child not being able to sit for final exams, and therefore a grade of “incomplete” will be forwarded to the receiving high school.

St. Ambrose School is not compelled or required to re-register a student for the next academic year if a family owes the school money for tuition and/or other related fees from the prior year. The school reserves the right to cancel registration of any student whose family fails to meet tuition payments to the school. If a family finds it necessary to withdraw their student from the school for any reason, 60 days written notice is required, and tuition payments are to be made up until the conclusion of the 60 day period, even if the student is not in attendance during this time.

### **Graduation Fee**

Specific expenses related to 8<sup>th</sup> grade activities and graduation is not included in tuition. Each year, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade fee is due no later than the January 15<sup>th</sup>. This fee includes items such as diploma, cap and gown, yearbook, teen outreach, etc. Failure to pay the fee by the due date may result in your child not being able to participate in 8<sup>th</sup> grade activities beginning with Catholic Schools Week.

### **Care of Books**

Textbooks are on loan to the children. All children are responsible for the proper care of them throughout the school year.

- All books must be covered at all times.
- No writing or drawing is permitted in books, on book covers, and on notebooks
- If a book is lost or destroyed, payment for it must be made to cover the cost of the replacement. Report cards will not be given unless the book has been paid for.

- All workbooks are to be cared for in the same way
- All students must have a book bag to carry books back and forth to school

### **Care of School Property**

Children are responsible for the proper care of their desks and all school property. There is to be no writing on student desks or chairs. Any child who defaces school property will be responsible for cleaning that item. In the event of physical damage to school facilities, the child's family will be responsible for the cost of all repairs.

In the event of such damage, the child risks the possibility of suspension or expulsion.

### **Teams/School Clubs and Good Sportsmanship – Student and Parents**

**Students that have an unexcused absence during the school day may not participate in a team/school clubs that day.** Joining any school club, team, or activity is a privilege that can be revoked at any time for reasons relating to poor academic performance, the existence conduct referrals, or issues of poor sportsmanship.

In the event of poor student sportsmanship, the coach or principal may remove a student from any team sport if it is deemed that a student is acting in a manner not appropriate or sportsmanlike.

Parental attendance at sporting or any school event may be limited or restricted if a parent conducts improper unsportsmanlike behavior at school events. All students are supervised by adults under the direction of the coach, and parental coaching at sporting events is not required unless specifically noted or requested by the administration. Parents, students learn a great deal of their behavior at home. Please model good behavior at all times.

### **Change of Address or Phone Number**

Every change of address or phone number must be reported to the school office immediately. Up to date records are essential in handling emergency situations.

### **Crisis Management Preparedness and Response**

St. Ambrose School works very hard to prepare students for any emergency or crisis that may happen in a school setting. On a monthly basis the school prepares students by practicing various crisis drills. Teachers will direct students in the event of a real emergency. In the event of a lock-down, no parent shall be allowed into the school building. In the event of any other emergency the local police or similar agency will make the final decision as to what must take place. Until local authorities arrive, the school will practice the policies designed to help maximize student safety.

False bomb threats are a federal offence punishable with a penalty of up to 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. 18USC 884(e)

## **Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy**

### **Conflict vs. Bullying**

Conflict is different than bullying. Not all disagreements and fights are bullying. Conflict is a normal part of human interaction and arises frequently in our day to day lives. Part of learning to be independent and grown up is learning how to deal with and respond appropriately to conflict at home, at school, and in your community. Recognizing the difference between conflict and bullying will help students, parents and teachers know how to respond.

#### **Conflict is:**

- A disagreement; an argument
- All parties have equal power to solve the problem
- All parties have an equal interest in the outcome and are equally involved
- All parties are of relatively equal size, age or status
- A conflict can be resolved by talking or working things out together or with help from an adult.

#### **Bullying is:**

- Not a disagreement, the behavior is one-sided
- A repeated form of mistreatment where the victim cannot defend him/herself
- An imbalance of power – usually one person is either bigger or older than the other or has a higher social standing (is more popular) and uses this against the other person
- Usually involves repeated acts of harassment, harm or humiliation
- Causes a change in the school climate for the student who is the victim

### **Differences in Addressing Conflict and Bullying**

Conflict is an important part of growing up but bullying is not. Conflict teaches children how to give and take, how to come to an agreement and how to solve problems. When it comes to conflict, children need to learn conflict resolution and resiliency skills. These skills promote listening and working together to come to an agreement or plan to move forward.

Bullying is different. It is about the bully making a choice to intentionally hurt another person with the goal of exercising power over them. When bullying occurs, the bully is fully responsible for

the situation. And the bully bears all the responsibility for change. Bullies usually do not negotiate with others. They want power and they blame others for their actions. Even if an adult can get them to apologize, bullies will often retaliate when no one else is around. As a result, it is crucial to recognize the difference between conflict and bullying.

The most common form of student incidents is identified as teasing: which is intended to provoke or make fun of someone in a playful way. Teasing can turn into verbal bullying or taunting. This behavior is intended to distract, disturb, offend, sadden, anger, bother, irritate, or annoy the recipient. Because it is hurtful, it is different from joking and is generally accompanied by some degree of social rejection. This behavior will be addressed under the same guidelines as bullying.

The School prohibits any act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student or staff member. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like any other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate students in a safe environment.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means any gesture, written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication that:

- Can be reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or mental, physical or sensory disability; or
- Takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, social media or on a school bus that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or rights of other students; and
- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group of students; or
- Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with the student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

## **REPORTING**

All acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be reported verbally or in writing first to the classroom teacher as soon as possible. The teacher will then report the incident to the Principal or designee as soon as is practicable from when the school employee, vendor, student or volunteer witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. Students may also use Stop!t, a mobile application provided by to anonymously report such acts. The school principal or designee shall immediately initiate an investigation. If the reporting took place verbally or in writing the school principal or designee will create a Stop!t incident.

A school employee who promptly reports an incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying, to the appropriate school official designated by the school's policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from the reporting of the incident or any failure to remedy the reported incident.

The school's employees, students or volunteers are prohibited from engaging in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness, and one with reliable information or any other person who has reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying or who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation shall be determined by the principal after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act.

## **INVESTIGATION**

The Principal or designee will interview the students who made the accusation and the student who is accused of committing the act(s) as soon as the report is received. Additionally, the Principal will interview any adult who was or may have been present when the act(s) took place. The Principal, as part of the interviews, will inquire as to the names of any witnesses to act(s) and interview them. If there is any documentary evidence (i.e. text messages, social media, photos) the Principal will request copies. The Principal will keep written notes of the interviews.

Confidentiality for all students involved will be maintained to the extent possible. The students involved or staff involved will be instructed not to discuss the incident in order to preserve the integrity of the investigation. The parents, police and any other appropriate agency shall be informed by the Administration if the accusation meets the criteria for reporting to law enforcement and deemed exclusive of pastoral discretion.

Parents shall be notified verbally and in writing within 48 hours of the start of an investigation. The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible, but no later than 10 school days from the date of the report of the incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Upon completion of the investigation, the principal will determine consequences of the incident report. All statements and evidence of the investigation will be updated and/or attached to the Stop!t incident report.

The parents will be advised verbally and in writing of the completion of the investigation and the conclusion reached. No parent will be advised as to the discipline of any child other than their own. The Principal's decision is binding.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT**

The administration and faculty will provide ongoing support for students who are subject to harassment, intimidation, and bullying, including some or all of the following:

1. The student(s) will meet with the School Counselor and/or Principal to discuss the incident and explore any feelings or concerns;
2. The School Counselor and/or Principal will assist the student in returning to the classroom;
3. Grade and homeroom teachers will be asked to closely monitor the student and provide support as needed;
4. The school environment will be altered as needed, such as changing seats or assigning cafeteria seats;
5. The School Counselor and/or Principal will provide social skills, including empowerment skills and responding in the moment;
6. The student will be provided with assistance in reading or interpreting social signals, building self-esteem or identifying friends and classmates who can offer support;
7. The administration may increase positive contact with adults in the school who can provide future support;
8. The administration may encourage positive peer relationships and support; and
9. The Counselor and/or Principal will be available to speak with and provide support to the students, parents and family. If necessary, encouraging professional help from community mental health providers will be recommended.
10. Parental involvement.
11. Counseling/conflict resolution.

### **NOTIFICATIONS**

If the Principal, or his or her designee, determines that Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying or Retaliation has occurred, he/she shall:

- notify the local law enforcement agency if called for by the Memorandum of Agreement with Law Enforcement;
- notify the parents or guardians of the Aggressor; and
- notify the parents or guardians of the Target.

The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the Aggressor will not be disclosed to the parents or guardians of the Target.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Once the investigation is complete, the Principal, or his or her designee, shall determine the consequences for the Aggressor(s) on a case-by-case, age appropriate basis. Harassment, intimidation

or bullying can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the Target and other students. While conduct that rises to the level of a violation of this policy will generally warrant disciplinary action against the students responsible, whether to impose disciplinary sanctions and what sanctions to impose in a particular case are matters within the professional discretion of the Principal, or his or her designee. It is the goal of the school to have students achieve redemption, learn, and stop the conduct. If the Principal, or his/her designee, deems that expulsion is the appropriate consequence, the Principal must first contact the Office of Schools.

Disciplinary action for children in preschool and kindergarten, first and second grade will generally be handled by the child's teacher working with the student, the student's family and the Principal (as needed). These children are very young and are learning social skills. Only in exceptionally severe circumstances will conduct of a young student be referred to law enforcement.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

The following list of consequences and remedial actions is provided as a guide and by no means limits the school from implementing other additional consequences and remedial actions consistent with the requirements of this Policy.

### **Student Consequences may be one or more of the following:**

- Loss of a privilege;
- Completion of letter of acknowledgement of action, with apology to the Target (after reviewed by the Principal and not in a case of sexual harassment or intimidation);
- Detention;
- Reparation to Target in the form of payment for, or repair of damage to possessions;
- Reassignment of seats in class, cafeteria or bus, or removal from the bus or extended care;
- In-school suspension;
- Out-of-school suspension;
- Extended suspension;
- Expulsion.

### **Remedial Actions:**

- Parent/Student Conference;
- Counseling with licensed counselor or psychologist at the parents' expense;
- Education about the effects of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying;
- Behavioral agreement;
- Cooperation with a behavioral management program developed in consultation with a mental health professional and the Principal.

## **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

**Note: Signing this handbook agreement indicates that you have read, understand and agree to abide by the provisions of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy.**

Students are only permitted to use the internet under the direct supervision of a teacher. The school takes great measures to assure that students do not access inappropriate material. Elaborate firewalls and other protection systems are used to help prevent students from accessing inappropriate websites. Students that misuse the internet or any other technology can receive a conduct referral, detention, suspension, or even possible expulsion depending on the severity of the misuse.

The use of technology is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of the user's privileges. The administration has the right to monitor all communication on the network.

The user will not upload, download, or bring into the school, material deemed inappropriate. This would include, but not be limited to any material that contains profanity, vulgarity, obscenity or violent content. Materials that are racist, abusive, degrading, and demonic or promote intolerance, prejudice, harassment, or insult any individual, ethnic, or religious group are unacceptable.

Transmission of material, information or software in violation of any church, school, local, state, or federal law is prohibited.

The user will not meet in person any individual whom he or she made contact through the school technological resources.

As a parent or guardian you understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. However, you recognize it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial materials and you will not hold the school responsible for materials acquired on the network or any unauthorized actions of your child.