

2017-2018 Parent/Student Preschool Handbook

***ST. MARK* Catholic School**
A 2015 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

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Growing in Faith, Knowledge, and Service
www.stmark.org/school

Table of Contents

I.	PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION/MISSION STATEMENT	1
	Diocesan Philosophy of Catholic Education.....	1
	Diocesan Mission Statement.....	1
	School Mission Statement/Philosophy	1
	Student/Parent Handbook	1
	Parental Role.....	2
	Non-Discrimination Clause	3
	Non-Catholic Children.....	3
II.	CURRICULUM	5
	Supplies and Materials	6
	Assessment.....	6
	Parent-Teacher Communication	6
	Scheduling and Other Conference Information	6
	Progress Reports	7
	Retention/Promotion/Placement	7
III.	ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES.....	8
	Admissions.....	8
	Diocesan Initial Admission Requirements.....	8
	Class Placement	10
	Attendance	11
	Absence/Tardiness/Leaving School.....	11
	Attendance/Reporting Procedures.....	11
	Transferring to Another School	12
	Lunch/Milk Program.....	12
	Arrival and Dismissal	13
IV.	GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES.....	15
	Administrative.....	15
	Child Custody and Guardianship	15
	Access to Records	15
	Retention of Records.....	16
	School Visitors.....	16
	School Communications	16
	Telephone Use	17
	Inclement Weather/School Closings.....	17
	Photos and Other Media.....	17
	Library.....	18

	Field Trips	18
	Parent Organizations	18
	FundRaising	19
	Transportation/Parking	19
V.	FINANCES	20
	School Tuition Policies	20
	Tuition and Other Fee Schedules	20
VI.	CHILD RESPONSIBILITIES & BEHAVIOR	23
	Code of Conduct	23
	Discipline	23
	Use of Disciplinary Action	23
	Specific Disciplinary Policies	24
	Suspension	24
	Dismissal.....	24
	Expulsion	24
	Regulations and Procedures	25
	Care of School Property	25
	Dress Code	25
	Dress Code Requirements & Other Pertinent Information	25
	Playground Regulations	25
	Lunchroom Regulations	26
	Show & Tell	26
VII.	HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE.....	27
	Student Health, Safety & Welfare.....	27
	Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse.....	27
	Wellness Policy.....	27
	Accidents and First Aid	28
	Illness	28
	Medication Administration Overview	28
	Specialized Student Care Needs	30
	Use of Crutches.....	30
	Use of Microwave Oven	30
	Life Threatening Allergy.....	30
	Infectious/Communicable Diseases	31
	Lice.....	32
	Bloodborne Disease	32
	Fire/Emergency Drills.....	33
	Sexual Harassment - Students.....	33
	Bullying.....	34
	Asbestos Mandatory Yearly Notification.....	35

Video Surveillance Cameras	35
VIII. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	37
IX. PROGRAM INFORMATION	38
Licensing Information	38
Crisis Management/Emergency Preparedness Plan	39
Over-the-counter Skin Products	39
Insurance	40
Tax Information	40
Parental Involvement	40
X. APPENDICES	41

Diocesan Form – All Diocesan forms are available on the school website:
<http://www.stmark.org/school>



ST. MARK Catholic School

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Dear *ST. MARK* Families of our Youngest Lions,

On behalf of our Faculty and Staff, it is my pleasure to welcome you to a new school year, and our second year under the “Blue Ribbon School of Excellence” banner. Please know that we share your concern for your child’s happiness, safety, and success. At *ST. MARK* Catholic School, nothing occurs without first considering what is in the best interest of the students.

By educating the whole child, we teach the foundations of moral living as well as academics. Our hope is that learning opportunities at *ST. MARK* will provide our students with a mind and heart rooted in faith, knowledge, and service to others.

As a Catholic School, we seek to share with you the richness of a Catholic education. As we progress through the liturgical year, we invite our students, families, and friends to experience the rich faith traditions of the school and parish, and thus deepen their own faith life.

I invite you to become actively involved in our community and ask you to reach out and share your gifts of time, talent, and treasure with our school and parish.

Thank you for choosing *ST. MARK* Catholic School and for partnering with us as we educate our students to become caring individuals “growing in faith, knowledge, and service.”

ST. MARK the Evangelist, pray for us!

Mrs. Darcie Girmus, Principal
ST. MARK Catholic School

I. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION/MISSION STATEMENT

DIOCESAN PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...
Teaching them to carry out everything I have commanded you.*

Matthew 28:19-20

These words of Christ addressed to the apostles at the Ascension bestowed on the Church the office of teacher. Obedient to this divine challenge, the Church provides education permeated with the spirit of Christ and dedicated to promoting the full development of the human person.¹ The two-fold goal of Catholic schools is to provide an environment which will foster rich religious training as well as solid academic education in a Catholic value-oriented manner.

¹Declaration on Christian Education #3

DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENT

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Arlington are an essential component in the educational ministry of the Church. Our schools are committed to providing an education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ where Catholic doctrine and values and academic excellence prepare each student for a life of faith, service and integrity.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY

ST. MARK Catholic School, an extension of our Parish, is a Christ-centered community, welcoming God's children to continually grow in grace and wisdom. Recognizing the dignity and uniqueness of each child, we promote academic excellence through a faith-based education. By developing a Catholic foundation rooted in faith, knowledge, and service, we send forth our students on their journey through life to share the light of Christ.

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

Each school shall utilize the OCS template to develop and distribute a handbook for students and parents. All local policies and procedures must be in conformity with Office of Catholic Schools policies, guidelines and regulations.

A committee, representative of the total school community, shall be involved in the development and periodic revision of this handbook.

All parents are required to sign a form stating they have read the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook and they agree to abide by those rules (Appendix AG-3). This signature form will be given to students when they receive a copy of the handbook and the form must be signed and returned as soon as possible. Failure to have a signed form on file will not prevent the school from enforcing its policies, but could result in disciplinary action being taken and/or prevent a student from enrolling (or continued enrollment) in the school.

Faculty and staff members shall be given copies of all school handbooks.

Handbooks and all subsequent changes are subject to prior written approval by the Diocese. To the extent any local handbook or policy statement therein may be inconsistent with the policies, guidelines or regulations of the Office of Catholic Schools, the Office of Catholic Schools policies, guidelines or regulations shall be of controlling force and effect.

PARENTAL ROLE

Since parents have given their children life, the Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary and principal educators of their children. The Catholic parents' promise at baptism to raise their children as Catholic supports this premise. The Catholic school exists to assist parents in the Christian formation of their children.

In this Handbook, the term parent refers not only to a child's natural or adopted parent, but to a student's non-parent legal guardian or to any person or agency authorized to act in place of parents.

The Diocese of Arlington Catholic Schools respects the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. Since the school is a continuation of the education children are receiving at home, Diocesan schools should demonstrate respect and support for the parents in their important and challenging task.

Parents are expected to support the school's mission and commitment to Christian principles; support the school policies as outlined in school handbooks (i.e., annually sign the school's Handbook Agreement Form). One of the conditions for initial and continued enrollment at the school is receipt of this signed form indicating the parent's support of the school's philosophy, policies, and regulations. In the event a parent desires to discuss a problem with his/her child's teacher, the parent should make an appointment for a private meeting with the child's teacher. Teachers welcome the opportunity to discuss a matter of concern with parents before it becomes an actual problem. Any parent who wishes to speak with the principal/director may do so, but after an initial meeting with the classroom teacher.

If a parent repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students, or displays disrespectful, disruptive or harassing behavior toward teachers or toward school, parish or diocesan staff, the school may take corrective action. Such corrective action may include, at the discretion of the principal/director (and, for parish

schools, the pastor of the parish) the following: imposition of particular rules or procedures the parent must follow in interacting with the school and its students and staff; restriction or termination of the parent's access to school or parish property; dismissal of the parent's child(ren).

The school may impose other appropriate corrective action, without prior recourse, based upon the nature of the parent's conduct and the surrounding circumstances.

As foundation for a faith-community, parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the school's celebration of prayer and Liturgy.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the programs, which are developed for the education of their children. The wide spectrum of this involvement includes volunteer work, participation in parent-teacher conferences, attendance at meetings and seminars designed to help parents assist their children at home and active involvement in the school's Parent-Teacher Organization.

NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

Catholic Schools, administered under the authority of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, comply with those constitutional and statutory provisions, as may be specifically applicable to the schools, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, marital status, disability, national origin or citizenship in the administration of their educational, personnel, admissions, financial aid, athletic and other school administered programs.

This policy does not preclude the existence of single sex schools, nor does it conflict with the priority given to Catholics for admission as students. This policy also does not preclude the ability of the school to undertake and/or enforce appropriate actions with respect to students who advocate on school property or at school functions any practices or doctrines which are inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Catholic faith.

NON-CATHOLIC CHILDREN

The presence of children from other faiths provides a wonderful diversity to the school. However, the presence of non-Catholic children in the school shall not alter the primacy of Catholic religious formation as an integral component of the educational program in the school. As such:

- a. Non-Catholic children are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of the school.
- b. Non-Catholic children must participate in liturgies, retreats and other religious functions incorporated within the program.
- c. Non-Catholic children may not be exempted from the catechesis held during the school day.
- d. While Catholic teaching respects the various faith traditions of the children attending

the Catholic school, parents must be aware that it is the Catholic position that will be taught.

In light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues that arise, the faculty and administration reserve the right to address and to take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this manual. In addition, in view of the unique and essential religious mission of the school, it is expressly understood that the school may take actions in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the school, the Catholic Diocese of Arlington or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the school to perform its religious mission or to effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the school and the Community of Faith.

This handbook may be modified by the school after reasonable notice to the parents of the effective date of any changes. Any section headings are for convenience of use, and shall not affect the interpretation of any provisions. If the school should elect not to take action in a particular situation, this shall not be construed or interpreted as a waiver or preclude the school from acting in a subsequent situation of the same or similar kind.

II. CURRICULUM

The curriculum is not just the goals of the program and the planned activities but also the daily schedule, the availability and use of materials, transitions between activities and the way in which routine tasks of living are implemented. Young children are expected to learn through active and positive manipulation of the environment and concrete experiences that contribute to concept development.

Without limiting the rights of the school under section VIII of this handbook, modifications may be made in the environment and staffing patterns for children with special needs.

The daily schedule is intended to provide a balance of activities with attention to the following dimension of scheduling:

- a. Daily outdoor play, weather permitting
- b. Alternating periods of quiet time and active play
- c. A balance of large muscle and small muscle activities is provided.
- d. Various small group or large group activities through most of the day
- e. A balance of child-initiated and staff-initiated activity is provided. The amount of time spent in staff-initiated, large group activity is limited.

Developmentally appropriate materials and equipment that project heterogeneous, racial, gender and age attributes are selected for use.

The school will use media, such as television, films, videotapes and computers, that have been previewed by adults prior to use. Another option for activity is always available. No child is required to view or interact with the program; and the staff discusses what is viewed with children to develop critical viewing skills. Technology is incorporated as an integral part of the day.

The goal of the school is to emphasize concrete experiential learning and to achieve the following goals:

- a. foster positive self-concept;
- b. foster spiritual development;
- c. encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment;
- d. develop social skills;
- e. encourage language development;
- f. enhance physical development and skills;
- g. encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety and nutritional practices;
- h. encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts;
- i. respect cultural diversity.

Staff provides materials and time for activities, but children choose from among several activities that the teacher has planned or the children initiate. Staff respects the child's right to choose not to participate at times.

Children are not always required to move from one activity to another as a group. Unregimented transitions are also used as a vehicle for learning.

Planned or routine activities may be changed according to the needs or interests of children, and/or to cope with changes in weather or other situations that affect routines without unduly alarming children.

Routine tasks such as toileting, eating, dressing and sleeping are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children's learning, self-help and social skills. Through complimentary actions at home, parents are expected to assist and cooperate with staff to make feeding and the development of other independent skills a positive experience for children. Provision is made for children who are early risers and for children who do not nap.

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

Needed supply lists are posted on the school website at:

<http://www.stmark.org/school/current-families/student-supply-list-2014-15/>

Parents are asked to bring requested supplies to school on Sneak Peek days, held prior to the first week of preschool. If supplies were pre-ordered, they will automatically be delivered to the school. Because all written correspondence will be sent home via students' backpacks or tote bags, please remember to send a backpack or bag in with your child each day.

ASSESSMENT

The school's program is intended to assist staff and administrators in a systematic evaluation of the program, to diagnose children's strengths and weaknesses and to aid in revision of the curriculum and planning of instruction.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Teachers are available to parents throughout the school year to keep the lines of communication open in the best interest of the children. Parent-teacher conferences can be scheduled throughout the school year if necessary. Parents should first privately contact a teacher with any concerns about a child or class situation before seeking intervention of the director or school administration.

SCHEDULING AND OTHER CONFERENCE INFORMATION

A parent teacher conference for each student will be scheduled in November. In addition, if you would like to schedule a time to speak with your child's teacher, please send them an e-mail to schedule an appointment.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Evaluation of the child must be based on teacher judgment, observation, daily performance, class participation and effort.

A written observation report for each student will be provided two times each year, mid-year and at the end of the year.

RETENTION/PROMOTION/PLACEMENT

A major goal of the school is to assist children to complete each year satisfactorily. Retention is recommended only when it is deemed necessary and advantageous to the particular needs of the child.

- a. The final decision to promote or retain a child is based on the child's developmental performance and best interests, as determined by the principal/director.
- b. Parents will be kept informed about the inability of their child to progress satisfactorily.
- c. Children who would not benefit from being retained may be "placed" in the next level; however, the school may prepare and implement an Intervention Plan for the child as a condition of placement.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS

DIOCESAN INITIAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Children who desire an educational experience founded on the Catholic philosophy of education and who fulfill the age, health and behavioral requirements are eligible for admission to the school.

Eligibility

The school sets registration procedures and admission policies. The availability of space and the order of preference for admission are determined by the school according to the following general criteria:

- a. Children from the parish
- b. Children from parishes without schools
- c. Children from parishes with schools (for sufficient reason)
- d. Children from non-Catholic families

If approved by the pastor, and where practicable, the siblings may receive special consideration.

General Requirements for Preschool Admission

There is no testing for pre-school admission. However, readiness assessment may be utilized to determine the developmentally appropriate placement in the pre-school program. The following list of documents/information is required:

- a. Presentation of an original birth certificate (schools are expected to keep a copy of the certificate on file)
- b. Baptismal certificate for Catholic students
- c. Proof of custody where applicable
- d. Progress reports (if available)
- e. Completed Diocesan Application Form (Appendix J)
- f. A non-refundable application fee
- g. A fully executed MCH-213G Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Form or equivalent, which stipulates the following must be submitted prior to the student beginning school:
 - i. Proof of exact dates of immunization as required by the Code of Virginia
 - ii. Current Certification of Immunization
 - iii. Physical examination covering all required aspects as mandated on the MCH-213 G, within 12 months prior to entering school for the first time. Equivalent school entrance physical forms from another state may be acceptable. (Note: A preschool physical does not take the place of the required kindergarten entry physical unless it is completed within 12 months prior to kindergarten entry.)

- h. Proof of satisfying tuition requirements at any former Diocesan school if previously enrolled in a Diocesan school.

General Conditions of Admission

A child is admitted to the school on the premise the child intends to learn the Catholic religion and be educated in a Catholic environment. In certain cases, a child may be admitted on a probationary basis subject to the child successfully completing one or more subsequent interim evaluations. A child with academic or other needs (i.e., behavioral), which cannot be reasonably addressed by the school may be denied admission.

School application forms may request disability-related information. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not prohibit a school from asking questions about a student's disabilities provided that information does not discriminate (automatically prohibit a student from applying).

MINIMUM AGE

To be admitted to *ST. MARK* Catholic School, Preschool students must be three years of age or older on or prior to the first scheduled day of preschool.

TRIAL PERIOD

At *ST. MARK*, the first eight weeks of preschool will be considered a trial period. If, after this amount of time, the student has not shown that he or she is ready for the program, the parents will be asked to remove the child from the program and re-enroll for the following school year. Parents will be informed of their child's progress and parent-teacher conferences will have taken place in advance of this situation.

TOILET TRAINING

In addition, all preschool students must be toilet trained. That said, we recognize that children have accidents from time to time. If two or more accidents occur within a week, for two weeks in a row, the parents will be asked to keep the child home for a week and to work diligently on toilet training, and to then attempt preschool. If this does not resolve the problem, the parents may be asked to remove the child from the program and to re-enroll for the following school year.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Diocese of Arlington endeavors to remain certified by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to admit F-1 Non-Immigrant students. The school, therefore, adheres to the following policies for enrolling non-U.S. persons:

- A. International students who apply for admission to a Diocese of Arlington Catholic school will be considered for admission, upon meeting the following conditions:

- a. Meets Diocesan admission requirements as stated in Policy 601.2;
- b. Currently holds or is in the process of obtaining an F-1 (Non-Immigrant) student visa;
- c. Resides at the same U.S. address as the guardian;
 - i. Guardian cannot house more than two international students;
- d. Pays tuition in full upon school admission;
 - i. There is no refund given for registration, tuition or other related fees;

The F-1 (non-immigrant student) status applies to those aliens who are in the United States for the purpose of attending school. Once a student is determined to meet the school's requirements for admission, the family must contact the Office of Catholic Schools or other "designated official" to process the Certificate of Eligibility for Non Immigrant (F-1) Student Status form for eventual admission and stay in the United States as an F-1 student. International students who enroll in a school in the Diocese for the first time must provide documentation they are free from communicable tuberculosis.

For students who hold a visa other than F-1, refer to Appendix AJ (*Nonimmigrants Who Can Study*); International students who are currently in B-1, B-2, F-2 or M-2 status cannot begin their studies prior to approval of their change to F-1 (Non-Immigrant) student. Obtaining a change of status is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

- B. Any student applicant whose passport, United Nations travel document or other Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) documents indicates that the student is a refugee, asylee, parolee, lawful non-immigrant¹ or permanent resident may be admitted to the schools of the Diocese of Arlington under normal requirements for admission. This policy would also include undocumented children.

ST. MARK Catholic School does not enroll international students in preschool, aside from those living with their parents.

CLASS PLACEMENT

The principal/director and faculty reserve the right to place a child in a class to ensure the best interests of the child.

¹ Appendix AJ for a listing of lawful non-immigrants who may attend school.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCE/TARDINESS/LEAVING SCHOOL

Regular attendance in the program is strongly encouraged for setting the groundwork for a successful school experience. Neither the school, the Diocese, the Office of Catholic Schools, nor any of its employees/staff are responsible for ensuring actual attendance; this is the responsibility of the child's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Except in cases of emergency as determined by the principal/director and/or a staff member (as applicable or necessary), a child may only be released from school to another authorized adult with the prior written or verbal authorization of the child's parent. The adult will be required to produce identification before the child is released.

ATTENDANCE/REPORTING PROCEDURES

Absence

If your child is unexpectedly absent, please call the *ST. MARK* Catholic School office at 703-281-9103 and leave the requested information by 9:00 am, or e-mail attendance@stmark.org. If your child is not reported present and we have no record of notification, we may call you to verify the child's absence.

Tardiness

A student who is tardy should report to the principal/director's office or attendance office.

Frequent cases of tardiness should be brought to the attention of the principal/director so that the parent may be contacted.

At *ST. MARK*, it is crucial that children NOT be dropped off in front of the doors to the ELC once carpool has finished and the employees and patrol have gone inside.

The door to the Early Learning Center is locked after 8:45 am. If no one answers at the door, please press the buzzer and wait until an adult arrives to greet your child.

Medical Excuses

At *ST. MARK* Catholic School, medical and dental appointments should be made on non-school days, or before or after school if possible. If such arrangements are not possible, parents should report to the office and the receptionist will call the child to the office for pick-up.

A student must not return to school until at least 24 hours after an illness. Temperatures should be

normal for twenty-four hours and other symptoms must have subsided. If a student is not well enough to go outside for recess periods, they should not be in school. The student should remain at home until he/she can follow the regular school schedule.

Students who are absent for more than three consecutive days need to have verification of the illness from the attending physician as well as his or her recommendation that the student return to school.

Anticipated Absence

In preschool at *ST. MARK* Catholic School, if a student's absence is known in advance, parents are asked to give this information to the teacher or director, along with the expected date of the child's return to class.

Teachers do not provide make-up work for preschool students.

Release of Children

Parents must sign in/out their children when arriving late or being released outside of regular school hours.

At *ST. MARK* Catholic School, students will only be released to parents or authorized individuals. This information must be given to the preschool director in writing, and the individual's identification will be verified before the student may be released.

TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER SCHOOL

The school must be notified in writing by the parent(s) of a child regarding a decision to transfer a child to another school, including the last day the child will attend classes at school. All school-owned materials must be returned to the school and all fees paid before leaving. Scholastic information will be sent to the new school upon a "Release of Student Records Form" from the new school. All Fees and Tuition MUST BE PAID prior to the release of the child's records.

LUNCH/MILK PROGRAM

Rules for acceptance and participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs are the same for all children without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA related activity should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC, 20250.

SNACK PROGRAM

Parents are asked to provide requested snacks for the classroom on assigned dates. The snack assignments will be communicated by the teachers.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

PLEASE NOTE: PARKING LOT SPEED LIMIT IS 10 MPH!

For Morning Drop-off: For grades preschool and kindergarten and students carpooling with them, vehicles enter church property from Vale Road and travel around the perimeter to the third row of the back parking lot. Drivers proceed down this row to the drop-off area in the back of the church. At 8:15 am, faculty, staff and safety patrols will assist students from their vehicles to enter the school.

If students in grades 1-8 are also present in the car, the driver is to merge back into the carpool line and drop those students off in front of the Christian Formation Center. **At no point may students be dropped off without faculty members present.**

Please drop off students at the Early Learning Center BEFORE dropping students in grades 1-8 to avoid creating traffic issues in the main carpool line caused by making a left turn in front of the gym.

Drivers wishing to walk their preschool students into the classroom may park in the fourth row of the back parking lot. The preschool student is to be walked to his or her classroom between 8:15-8:30 am, when faculty members are present. Departing drivers will safely merge back into the carpool line until reaching the mailbox. At that point, they will either proceed toward the Christian Formation Center to drop off older students, or leave the line and proceed to Vale Road.

For Noon Pickup: Morning preschool students must be picked up by a parent/guardian or designee at the child's classroom door. Preschool drivers should park in the back parking lot, walk in and pick up the child at 12 noon.

For Full Day Pickup: Drivers of full day students will enter the property and stay to the right when traveling behind the rectory (form two lanes). Once past the white shed, drivers of preschool students will proceed to their assigned parking spot in the back. Cars must be shut off. If a grade 1-8 student is in a carpool with a preschool student, that child will be walked over to the ELC prior to 3:30. Students will be walked to their cars at 3:30 pm and secured in car seats by their drivers. Please note that faculty members cannot secure car seats.

Cars not in place by 3:30 pm will have to wait for the first round of cars to be released. A faculty member will signal when the entire line is released. Cars will leave in order, merge into the gap in the main line, and leave the property once they have passed the mailbox.

If a child is in an HOV-5 carpool, that preschool student will be escorted to the HOV-5 lot.

Because the teachers have other responsibilities following the conclusion of preschool, the school reserves the right to charge \$1 per minute late fee and to attach it to the family's FACTS tuition management account.

IV. GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

ADMINISTRATIVE

CHILD CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP

At the time of school entry or at any other time where a change in custody status/arrangements occurs, it is the responsibility of the parent(s) to provide the principal/director with a true and correct copy of the legal document for any child for which there is a legal custody agreement or for any child not residing with his/her parent.

School communication with the appropriate guardian is essential. Accordingly:

- a. Custodial parents should identify in writing other adults who may have access to information regarding their child.
- b. Non-custodial parents may receive information (when requested) regarding the child unless specific documentation to the contrary is provided in the legal custody agreement.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Parents have a right (unless prohibited by the courts in a custody agreement) to the timely inspection of the educational records (cumulative and confidential) of their child during school hours. The school shall respond to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records.

If the educational records of a child contain information on more than one child, the parents are limited to the specific information about their child only.

Student records shall be open to authorized school personnel only (principal, director, assistant principal and those to whom they extend access within a given year.)

The school administration may elect to provide, at cost, photocopies of a child's educational records to parents, but documentation is to be stamped "unofficial."

Parents are obligated to share educational/psychological testing results and any resulting plan with the school. If a student has a documented disability, a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Services Plan (ISP), 504 plan, and/or Student Assistance Plan (SAP) should be maintained in the student's confidential file. The refusal to provide such information is a ground for terminating enrollment in the school.

Confidential records for dis-enrolled students are merged with the students' cumulative files.

RETENTION OF RECORDS

The following student records are to be retained indefinitely:

Permanent record card (to include transcripts, attendance record and standardized test results)

The following student records are to be retained for 25 years:

- a. IEP/ISP or 504 Plan
- b. Student Assistance Plan
- c. Eligibility Minutes
- d. Student Assistance Team minutes

The following student records are to be retained for 7 years or age 25 whichever is greater:

- a. Application
- b. Counselor notes
- c. Discipline notes
- d. Court Documents
- e. Psychological reports

SCHOOL VISITORS

All persons other than school staff and currently registered children must first report to the school office immediately upon entering school grounds, sign in, and wear an identification tag when visiting the school.

At *ST. MARK* Catholic Preschool, a major goal is to help children develop independence; therefore, volunteer opportunities in the preschool classroom are quite limited. In the case where volunteers are allowed, all volunteers are required to be FULLY Virtus Compliant.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

Principal/ Director's Communication

Communication with parents is a priority of *ST. MARK* Catholic School. Every effort will be made to provide parents with any news items, messages of importance, changes in schedule, etc. as the year progresses.

Thursday's Thoughts from the Principal will be sent home electronically each Thursday of the school year. Emails will be sent for more immediate, important or emergency information. It is crucial that parents read *Thursday's Thoughts* to know what is going on in the school. To this end, it is essential that the school have a correct email address on file. Please be sure to communicate any change in e-mail addresses or personal information to the Main Office, as well as the Preschool Director. If you do not have email access, please let the school know this and a hard copy will be provided.

The preschool director also sends home a monthly newsletter detailing upcoming events, and the preschool teachers provide frequent updates on curriculum and specific classroom information. Please take the time to read these thoroughly to stay informed on what is happening in your child's classroom.

Take-Home Communication

All materials prepared by parents for release to the parish or school community must be approved by the principal/director or his/her designee.

At *ST. MARK*, birthday party or other invitations may be delivered through school means **ONLY IF** all children in the class are invited; if not, invitations will be returned to the parent/guardian.

TELEPHONE USE

Preschool children will not be using the telephone and may not have cell phones or other electronic devices with them.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSINGS

If Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS):	<i>ST. MARK</i> Catholic School:
is closed due to weather conditions.	is also closed due to weather conditions
is delayed 2 hours.	morning preschool will be open for 1.5 hours, from 10:30-12:00 P.M. Attendance will be optional.
is delayed 2 hours on an early dismissal day.	full day preschool will be open from 10:30-3:30 P.M.
is closing early with after school activities canceled.	is closing early with after school activities canceled and students picked up from EDC as soon as possible.
is not in session, but <i>ST. MARK</i> Catholic School is in session, and conditions force a delay, cancelation or early release.	electronic communications will be sent to parents.

Announcements of changes to the regular school schedule will be made via the School Messenger System.

PHOTOS AND OTHER MEDIA

Parents may opt out their children from participating in videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography or participation involving the Internet. When a parent decides to exercise this right, the parent is required to complete the *Waiver/Right to Object* form (Appendix N) and submit it to the school. All student or parental publications are subject to review and approval by the school administration prior to publication.

LIBRARY

All books chosen for classroom reading in Diocesan schools must be appropriate for students not only in age level and reading ability but also for the moral development which we are working to foster. All books shall conform with Diocesan policies and guidelines regarding Catholic education.

Parents or teachers who object to reading or audio-visual/computer materials must complete an Objection to Content Form (Appendix K) and submit it to the school principal/director. A review committee (to include an Office of Catholic Schools member) will subsequently discuss the objection and decide the disposition of the challenged material. The parent or teacher initiating the review should be personally notified of the results of the review.

FIELD TRIPS

Preschool students are not taken on outside field trips, unless it is a “family field trip” when we meet students and their parents at a designated site.

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

Parent-teacher (and/or home-school) organizations are sponsored by the school to promote a cooperative effort at meeting certain needs of the child. The parent organization is subject in all respects to the control of the school. All parent organization activities and all materials prepared by parents must be submitted to the principal/director for approval prior to implementation and/or distribution.

All PTO monies must be deposited in the parish or school account as designated by the pastor. In consultation with the principal/director, the PTO officers should prepare a budget and submit it to the pastor and principal/director for approval.

Persons nominated to serve as a PTO board member must receive the approval of the pastor and principal/director.

Every school should have an effective Parent-Teacher Organization. An effective Parent-Teacher Organization should strive to provide support and assistance to the principal/director regarding advancement of the school’s mission and legislative issues concerning the school as directed by school leadership.

Every school should have a representative on the Diocesan Council of PTOs.

The *ST. MARK* Catholic School’s parent organization is known as the Parent-Teacher-Parish Organization (PTPO). Parents are encouraged to become involved and to support this organization.

FUNDRAISING

Any program of generating additional revenue should have the approval of school leadership (pastor, principal, director). These activities should be organized and executed so that the school program is not interrupted.

Students may participate in and cooperate with worthy collections and fundraising projects conducted by a school or parish, provided such activities have been approved by the school leadership (pastor, principal, director).

ST. MARK restricts fundraising out of respect to the parish and financial resources of the community. Fundraising and other types of material collections may not be undertaken without the permission of the principal and the pastor. *ST. MARK* Catholic School will be having a spring auction as the fundraiser for the 2017-2018 school year. All families are encouraged to participate.

TRANSPORTATION/PARKING

Please see “Arrival and Dismissal” information, above.

V. FINANCES

SCHOOL TUITION POLICIES

Good stewardship of financial resources has been and continues to be the goal of *ST. MARK* Catholic School. Tuition amount is determined on a cost-based assessment. Financial aid is available for qualified applicants through the diocese and parish.

If any student account exceeds thirty days in arrears, the school may begin procedures to withdraw the student for non-payment. Therefore, any family finding themselves in financial difficulty should speak directly to the Principal or Parish Office Manager. All such matters are treated with confidentiality. We recognize the sacrifice that a family makes in providing a Catholic education for their child/children.

TUITION AND OTHER FEE SCHEDULES

Application Fee:

A non-refundable application fee of \$50 for one part-time preschool student, or \$100 per full-time preschool student and/or family is due at the time of application.

Deposit:

Once a child has been accepted, a deposit of 10% of anticipated tuition for the upcoming school year is due within three weeks following the mailing of the acceptance letter. If the deposit is not received within three weeks, the spot will be reopened for another student. This deposit is non-refundable.

Tuition:

ST. MARK Catholic School tuition is “cost-based,” meaning the tuition per child is based on the actual cost of educating that child. Through good fiscal management, *ST. MARK* works to keep expenses low.

Financial Assistance:

Preschool does not qualify for financial assistance; financial assistance is offered for grades K-8 only.

In-Parish and Out of Parish Rates:

ST. MARK distinguishes between in and out of parish in regards to tuition. The expectation is that, as Parishioners, families will contribute to the Sunday collections. The Parish reserves the right to confirm a family’s financial commitment and to adjust tuition for those who are not contributing to the Parish on a regular basis.

To qualify for the *ST. MARK* in-parish rate, a family must be registered as *ST. MARK* parishioners as of February 1 of the previous school year. For example, to qualify for the in-parish rate for the 2016-2017 school year, a family must be registered in the parish prior to February 1, 2016 OR must be moving to the area from outside of Fairfax County.

In-Parish Tuition per student for 2017-2018 school year:

5 day <u>full day</u> pre-kindergarten M-F, 4 year olds	\$6,850
5 day <u>half day</u> morning pre-kindergarten, M-F, 4 year olds	\$4,620
3 day <u>full day</u> preschool, MWF, 3 year olds	\$5,380
3 day <u>half day</u> morning preschool, MWF, 3 year olds	\$3,010
2 day <u>full day</u> preschool, T-Th, 3 year olds	\$3,760
2 day <u>half day</u> preschool, T-Th, 3 year olds	\$2,150

Our **out-of-parish per family fee is \$2,000** in addition to regular tuition. The out-of-parish fee is \$1,000, if the family is only enrolling one child in part time Pre-school.

RE-REGISTRATION

Priority re-registration for current Preschool students either continuing in Preschool or moving into Kindergarten will be open January 3.

If there is a possibility that the Preschool-aged child(ren) will not be attending *ST. MARK* Catholic School for the following school year, parents must contact the Director of the Early Learning Center by January 5. If the Preschool-aged child(ren) will definitely not be attending *ST. MARK* the following year, parents must notify the Director of the Early Learning Center in writing of their desire to not continue their child’s education at *ST. MARK* by January 5.

Parents of returning students will be given the choice to either send in a check for the deposit or to have it charged to the family’s FACTS account.

If a returning family is not up to date with tuition payments by February 1, they could jeopardize their child(ren)’s spot(s). If the family’s FACTS account is not up to date by May 1, and a payment plan is not worked out, the child(ren) will not be allowed to attend *ST. MARK* Catholic School the following year. Therefore, it is imperative that parents/guardians speak with the principal or parish office manager if they are experiencing difficulty meeting their tuition obligations.

WITHDRAWING A STUDENT

It is our hope that each enrolled student will graduate from *ST. MARK* Catholic School as an Eighth Grader. We realize, however, that family circumstances may change or the needs of a particular child may change during the course of his time in school.

In the event that *ST. MARK* Catholic School recommends a change in school for your child and initiates this process, teachers and administrators will discuss this directly with parents, and will assist in the transition.

If a family chooses to withdraw their child prior to or during the school year, and is making ten equal tuition installments, the first installment is non-refundable as it covers the cost of supplies incurred per student. Payments two through ten correspond with attendance during the calendar

months of September through May. An entire month's tuition is due for any month or part of a month that a child attends.

Therefore, any family who has paid their tuition in full by the start of the school year or has spread the tuition over 12 months will have their tuition prorated in the same manner. The total tuition will be divided into ten equal portions. One portion will be to cover the cost of supplies incurred per student with the subsequent portions corresponding to the months of September through May, as outlined above. An entire month's tuition is due for any month or part of a month that a child attends.

Because faculty are hired based on the number of anticipated students, once collected, deposits are non-refundable.

VI. CHILD RESPONSIBILITIES & BEHAVIOR

CODE OF CONDUCT

In all areas of learning, discipline must be considered in the development of children. The Code of Conduct is based on the Gospel message of Jesus. Growth in self-discipline, a responsibility for Catholic moral values and a loving respect for the rights of all persons is encouraged and nourished by the Code of Conduct. To achieve these ends, parents, staff and children work together to create a Catholic school environment. Based upon the Catholic moral values and loving respect for others taught by Jesus, children:

- a. will be truthful.
- b. will be respectful and courteous toward all teachers and adults.
- c. will refrain from harassment of any kind.
- d. will use appropriate language.
- e. will speak respectfully to and about others.
- f. will respect all school and personal property.
- g. will play only in assigned playground areas with good sportsmanship and cooperation.
- h. will bring to school only appropriate show & tell items from home.

The school observes this Code of Conduct because it is built on fundamental Catholic social teachings. The role of the principal/director and staff is to work with the children and parents to assist the children in developing a strong Christian attitude toward life.

DISCIPLINE

Classroom rules are designed to protect persons and property and to promote pro-social behaviors, such as sharing and taking turns. If problems arise, the children in question will be reminded of acceptable behaviors and redirected to more positive activities.

USE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

In cases where a child is continually disruptive of others or in the case of a single serious disciplinary infraction, the teacher will apprise the principal/director of the situation. They will assist in the development of a course of action to be taken to correct the situation.

Children who lack self-discipline or who violate the rights of others can expect disciplinary action. Each offense will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the age of the child, the nature of the infraction and the severity of the case. Repeated infractions can result in more serious consequences, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion, but there is no requirement for progressive discipline.

SPECIFIC DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

SUSPENSION

Suspension may be imposed as determined by the principal/director. Once the principal/director suspends a child, parents may be required to sign a behavioral contract in which they signify their understanding of the problem and agree to work with the school in correcting the situation.

The failure of the parents to execute the above referenced agreement shall preclude the child from returning to the regular program.

DISMISSAL

Conduct which is disruptive to the learning atmosphere and/or contrary to the school's Code of Conduct is justification for a principal/director to dismiss a child at the close of the school year.

Children who are dismissed may apply for readmission to any Diocesan school after one full year.

EXPULSION

Expulsion may be resorted to when one or all of the following are present:

- a. a serious infraction of school rules occurs;
- b. the child has demonstrated continuing disregard of school rules for which other means of discipline have proven ineffectual;
- c. the child's continued presence in the school is considered by school officials to be a serious hindrance to the safety or welfare of the school community;
- d. a parent repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students or displays disrespectful, disruptive or harassing behavior toward teachers or toward school, parish or diocesan staff.

If the principal/director believes it necessary to expel a child, the principal/director will notify the child and the child's parents about the child's action and provide them with an opportunity to respond in accordance with the school's disciplinary hearing process before making any final decision on the matter.

A parent whose child is expelled may appeal this decision in writing to the Superintendent of Schools within 5 working days from the time of written notification.

During the pendency of any appeal, the expelled child shall be removed from the school community in compliance with the expulsion notice unless otherwise directed in the discretion of the principal/director.

Children who have been expelled from any Diocesan school may not apply for admission to that school or another Diocesan school for a minimum of one (1) year from the date of expulsion.

REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Privacy of individual children must be balanced against the need to protect the health, welfare and safety of other members of the school community. The principal/director or his/her designee has the right to protect the health, welfare and safety of school patrons by searching a child's person and/or personal property on school grounds or at school activities. Lockers and desks are school property and are subject to searches by school personnel.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Children are to care for school property in a respectful manner. Children who deface or damage school property or the property of others will make financial restitution.

DRESS CODE

The dress code provides a standard for our children that fosters an environment conducive to learning and respectful behavior.

Final decisions regarding the school uniform rest with the principal/director.

DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS & OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

Children should be dressed for class in durable, casual and washable clothing. All clothing should be easy for children to manage themselves. Please mark all removable clothing with the child's name. Rubber soled, closed-toe shoes are best for indoor and outdoor play.

Hair must be of a natural color and in a style that is not disruptive to the learning environment.

Preschool students are not allowed to have electronic devices on their person. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, GPS trackers, and smart watches. If parents feel it is necessary to send such an item with the student, it must be kept in the backpack in the "off" position during the school day.

PLAYGROUND REGULATIONS

Children using the playground must follow the teachers' playground rules at all times. A copy of the playground rules will be given to parents at Sneak Peek.

LUNCHROOM REGULATIONS

Given the risk of potential harm, students' access to and use of microwave ovens are prohibited. Student meals provided by parents must not be heated in microwave ovens by school personnel and/or school volunteers.

The only preschool children who stay for lunch are those in the all day program. Those children must bring a lunch each day. Lunches will occasionally be available for order. Information regarding ordering preschool lunches will come from the Director.

SHOW & TELL

Children are allowed to bring toys from home for the purpose of Show and Tell only. Weapons (whether real or toys) of any kind are not appropriate Show and Tell items, and shall not be brought to school for any reasons. If weapons of any kind are brought to school, the child shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action which may include but not be limited to expulsion.

VII. HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE

STUDENT HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE

Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for the health and well-being of their children. School health services supplement, rather than substitute, for parental care and concern for the health of the students.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND/OR CHILD ABUSE

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse generally applies to all clergy, all employees and all volunteers.

It is the policy of the Diocese that sexual misconduct and/or child abuse while performing any work or activities under the auspices of the Diocese is contrary to Christian principles and outside the scope of any authority, duties and/or employment of any clergy, employee or volunteer.

Any clergy, employee or volunteer with the Diocese who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that an incident of child abuse or illegal sexual misconduct has been perpetrated by any individual, including clergy, employee or volunteer with the Diocese,

- a. must comply with applicable reporting and other requirements of state and local law;
- b. must report the incident to the Moderator of the Curia of the Diocese of Arlington.

Virginia law imposes upon school personnel the legal responsibility of reporting to the local child protective services agency any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect.

School personnel who suspect the abuse or neglect of a student must report the matter directly to Child Protective Services and to the school principal/director who in turn will call the Moderator of the Curia. At that point, confidentiality must be respected.

According to the *Code of Virginia*, (Section 63.2 – 1518) *Authority to Talk to a Child or Sibling*, “Any person required to make a report or conduct an investigation or family assessment, pursuant to this chapter may talk to any child suspected of being abused or neglected or to any of his siblings without consent of and outside the presence of his parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis or school personnel.”

WELLNESS POLICY

The Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools Wellness Policy (2006) meets minimum federal standards and establishes goals for physical education, nutrition and healthy environments in schools. All schools must develop, and continue to evaluate, local school wellness policies. The local policies create a framework for increased student activity, staff wellness, safe and healthy environments and the elimination of foods of minimal nutritional value, during the school day. All schools have wellness committees to implement, sustain and evaluate the local wellness program.

ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID

The parents of an injured student will be notified of the accident/injury by the principal/administration or the principal/administration's designee as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the student.

If an incident results in a medical condition or injury which can be reasonably known to the appropriate supervisory faculty/staff member and/or the principal/director, the school and/or its staff are authorized to render reasonable basic first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion of the school, serve to minimize the severity of the injured person's condition. In addition, staff may secure professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion of the school, appears to be reasonably warranted. The school and school officials shall be expressly held harmless from any liability costs or expenses associated with the professional diagnosis and/or any treatment or first aid provided (including but not limited to the cost of transportation), such costs or expenses being the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

ILLNESS

Each school will provide a health office or comfortable space, apart from the student population, where children who become ill or injured can be cared for following *Virginia School Health Guidelines*.

Children with fevers, contagious or infectious diseases will be sent home promptly and excluded from school while in that condition, per Virginia Department of Health regulations. Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable illness by a healthcare provider or is fever free/symptom free for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school, afterschool and extracurricular activities.

When a student is requesting a waiver from participating in Physical Education classes and/or recess, parents are required to submit a written statement from their child's physician which states any activity restrictions with regard to participation in Physical Education classes and/or recess. The statement is expected to include a specific time frame for the activity restrictions.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION OVERVIEW

All school clinic, administrators and staff are required to administer medication within the framework of the procedures outlined in Diocesan policy and summarized here.

All prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications may be administered during the school day under the following conditions:

- a. When the need for administration of medicines during school hours has been confirmed by the school nurse/health assistant (or the school administration);

- b. After the first dose of any medication has been given at home;
- c. When the parent/guardian provides and transports the medication to and from school and the medication is given directly to the school nurse/health assistant or a senior member of the school administration;
- d. When there is a health care provider's written order signed by the parent/guardian requesting the school to administer medication or to permit the student to self-administer the medication;
- e. When the medication is brought to the school in its original container stating the name of the student, the dosage and method of administration prescribed by a physician. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to notify the school of any changes to the original prescription. The new prescription must also be brought to the school in the original container as stated above;
- f. When the appropriate medication authorization form (Appendix F-6) has been completed, signed and accompanies the medication;
- g. For any medication, parents must document the number of tablets or dosages to be secured for administration by authorized school personnel. If tablets are to be divided, the parent or guardian is responsible for dividing the tablets that are to be divided in order to achieve their child's proper dosage.
- h. Herbal and homeopathic medications will not be given in Diocesan schools without written authorization by a LHCP that shall include desired and adverse effects. Protein supplements will not be administered unless directly requested by a physician with a health treatment plan.
- i. Under no circumstances are medications to be shared by other students.
- j. Picc Lines, Heparin/Saline Locks, and Central Venous Lines may be present in students with specialized health care needs. Dressing changes, heparin flushes, and other medication administration via these lines are to be done at home and should not be done at school.

All OTC and prescription medications are to be kept locked in the clinic/school office and be administered by the school nurse, clinic aide, principal/director or trained designee. No student is to carry/possess medications, without appropriate medical authorization. No medication will be administered unless the school has received a signed copy of the Medication Authorization Form (Appendix F-6). OTC medications do not require a health care provider's signature unless the medication is required for four (4) or more consecutive days.

It shall be the student's responsibility to come to the clinic/school office at the appropriate time for medication unless a health care provider or parent indicates in writing that the student cannot do

this.

Students are NOT permitted to self-medicate. The school does not assume responsibility for medications taken independently by the student. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis for students who demonstrate the capability to carry and self-administer emergency life-saving medications (e.g. inhaler, Epi-pen).

Within one week after expiration of the effective date on the order, or on the last day of school, the parent/guardian must personally collect any unused portion of the medication. Medications not claimed within that period will be destroyed.

SPECIALIZED STUDENT CARE NEEDS

The parent of any student on a continuing regimen for a non-episodic condition shall inform the school principal/director/administration and identify in writing the student's supervising health care provider. If necessary, and with parental written consent, there may be occasions when the school needs to communicate with the health care provider regarding possible effects on the pupil's healthcare management, special emergency procedures or behavior at school.

USE OF CRUTCHES

An order from a Licensed Healthcare Provider is required to use crutches at school. If a student arrives at school on crutches without a doctor's order, the parent will be called to take the student home.

USE OF MICROWAVE OVEN

For preschool and elementary schools only; given the risk of potential harm, students' access and use of microwave ovens are prohibited.

LIFE THREATENING ALLERGY

Schools will utilize current resources and reputable materials such as; Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) and the CDC's *Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs* to develop allergen management communications for student handbooks, classrooms and parental publications.

All schools must provide an annual in-service for school faculty and staff to educate on the policy. Training will include minimizing the risk of exposure to life threatening allergens in the school setting as well as anaphylaxis recognition, medical management and incident reporting.

Schools will utilize the policy to develop allergen management communications for student handbooks, classrooms and parental publications. Schools will select and train staff to be utilized as anaphylaxis response teams responsible for managing an allergic crisis.

Parents and guardians of students with a life threatening allergy must inform principal/director

and school health personnel of any allergies and provide schools with fully executed Diocesan documents. Parents/ guardians are expected to supply schools with any emergency medications as prescribed and may additionally provide the student with “safe” foods for classroom celebrations involving food. Schools will utilize Diocesan documents to formulate an emergency care plan for the student and will share this care plan with those involved with the student including, but not limited to teacher(s), food service, bus driver, and janitorial staff.

ST. MARK Catholic School is not “NUT FREE,” and students in the preschool do eat in their classrooms. Teachers in the preschool classroom will designate a table as “NUT FREE.” Students with nut allergies are required to sit at this table unless parents specify otherwise in writing. If you are a parent of a child with nut allergies, and you are not comfortable with this policy, please schedule an appointment with the school nurse or Director of the Early Learning Center. The school will arrange for another eating location for your child.

INFECTIOUS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

DISEASE

Parents must notify the school within 24 hours if their child or any member of the immediate household has developed a communicable disease. Parents must notify the school immediately if the disease is life threatening. Parents must pick up their sick or injured child in a timely manner when contacted. If the parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child.

The protection and welfare of each individual student is of importance in the schools of the Diocese of Arlington. In an effort to enhance protection of students:

- a. No daycare/preschool student may attend class without documentary proof of adequate immunization in accordance with Virginia Department of Health’s school entry requirements (or modified schedule as approved by licensed health care provider) on the Virginia School Entrance Health Form (MCH-213G).
 - i. Parents or guardians who object to the administration of immunizing agents for their child on the grounds that this conflicts with their religious tenets or practices must produce a notarized Certificate of Religious Exemption CRE-1 form, which will be retained in the student health record.
 - ii. Students who have traveled or resided in a foreign country for five months or more during the last three years are required to provide documentation of a recent tuberculosis skin test result prior to school entry.
- b. Children with fevers and/or contagious or infectious diseases will be sent home promptly and will be excluded from school while in that condition, according to Virginia Department of Health regulations. Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable illness by a health care provider or is fever free/symptom free for 24

- hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school.
- c. School health personnel will follow the Virginia Department of Health Communicable Disease Chart, found in the Virginia School Health Guidelines, when referring suspected cases of communicable disease to the local health department for excluding or readmitting a student.
 - d. The Diocese of Arlington has comprehensive guidelines for school/parish based influenza vaccination clinics. The liability associated with the vaccination of children is great. The Diocese of Arlington does not promote school based vaccination clinics, for children during school hours and in the absence of the parent, with the exception of a state or federal emergency. Any school wishing to offer an onsite school influenza vaccination program must comply with all aspects of the Memorandum of Agreement (Appendix F-18). Vendors wishing to serve as vaccinators must be fully vetted by the Office of Risk Management prior to the consummation of any contract for services.

LICE

All students determined to have an active case of lice will be excluded from school until they receive treatment. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide appropriate and adequate treatment for the student and home environment as recommended by their health care professional. Readmission to school is determined by the school nurse/administration based upon re-inspection and the effectiveness of treatment. Follow up treatment is expected and verified by the school nurse/administration. Classroom contacts may be inspected.

At *ST. MARK* Catholic School, in the case of a confirmed lice infestation, all students in that home room and/or grade level will be checked for lice by the nurse or principal's designee. Parents of the students in that home room and/or grade level will be notified by the nurse that a case of lice exists. If the child is in an Extended Day Care (EDC) Program, families of children who attend EDC will be notified as well. This information will be sent home via a letter with no child's name given. Please respect the privacy of the child and family.

Before readmission to school, the nurse (or in the nurse's absence, a school employee appointed by the principal) must re-inspect the child's hair. If the child is found to have active lice or nits (eggs), the parent/guardian will be required to take the child home to retreat the infestation. The child will not be readmitted until free of all lice and nits.

BLOODBORNE DISEASE

The Christian community is called to respond to the sick in our midst with compassion and justice. The diocese recognizes its obligation to protect the rights of individual students infected with Hepatitis and HIV to provide a safe environment for students, staff members and the public. Students who are infected with bloodborne Hepatitis, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or HIV-related conditions must be provided the opportunity to receive a Catholic school education

in a regular classroom unless the student's health interferes significantly with school performance.

Since it is known that bloodborne Hepatitis and HIV are not transmitted through casual contact, any student who is infected will continue education in a regular classroom assignment unless his or her health status requires otherwise. It is the intent of the Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools to follow the recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health which state that, most bloodborne Hepatitis and HIV-infected children be allowed to attend school in an unrestricted setting and that decisions regarding school attendance be based on the medical condition of each child and the expected type of interaction with others in that setting.

Persons involved in the implementation and monitoring of this policy shall maintain confidentiality of records in compliance with federal and state law and diocesan policy. All diocesan schools shall also maintain a program of information and training for school staff members to ensure a consistent and accurate understanding regarding prevention of exposure to bloodborne pathogens. This includes training related to the proper application of universal/standard precautions.

FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

- Fire drills are held regularly, according to state and local regulations. Diagrams showing the exit routes are posted in all classrooms. Upon hearing the fire alarm, students are to maintain absolute silence and calmly, but quickly, exit the building following the teacher in charge. Students should form a line in number order at a designated area so attendance can be taken. Students will remain outside until given the signal to return.
- Tornado and lockdown drills are practiced annually.
- Other emergency plans are available for parental review in the school office.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT - STUDENTS

Sexuality affects all aspects of the person, including in a general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Arlington endeavor to provide for their students an atmosphere free from sexual harassment.

No student is to sexually harass another member of the school community. Any student who engages in sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. "Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" includes, but is not limited to, "the deliberate, repeated making of unsolicited gestures or comments, or the deliberate, repeated display of offensive, sexually graphic materials via any media source which is not necessary for school purposes."

BULLYING

Bullying is defined as any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. “Bullying” includes cyber bullying. “Bullying” does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- a. Physical intimidation or assault
- b. Extortion
- c. Oral or written threats, including text messaging
- d. Malicious teasing
- e. Putdowns
- f. Name calling
- g. Threatening looks
- h. Gestures or acts of aggression (Overt and Covert)
- i. Cruel rumors & false accusations
- j. Social Isolation
- k. Cyber-bullying

School personnel will not tolerate any bullying on Diocesan school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity (on or off school grounds). In addition, the Office of Catholic Schools expects students and parents who become aware of an act of bullying to report it to appropriate school personnel (e.g. principal/director, teacher, school counselor). The Office of Catholic Schools expects staff members who become aware of an incident of bullying to take appropriate steps to intervene unless intervention would be a threat to staff members’ safety. If a staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report the bullying to the school principal/director for further investigation.

In cases of reported bullying, the principal/director or designee shall interview all students involved (i.e. the aggressor(s) and the victim(s)) and investigate, as appropriate. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying may be subject to appropriate consequences.

Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include:

- a. Counseling
- b. Parent conference
- c. Detention
- d. Suspension and/or Expulsion

Depending on the severity of the incident(s), the principal/director may also report incidents of bullying to law enforcement if appropriate.

ASBESTOS MANDATORY YEARLY NOTIFICATION

The *ST. MARK* Early Learning Center does not contain asbestos. All asbestos was abated when the Early Learning Center was renovated in 2003. The Christian Formation Center has never contained asbestos.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

School leadership at each individual school may elect to install video surveillance cameras in order to maintain a safe and secure environment.

- a. In the discretion of the principal/director or his or her designees, video surveillance cameras may be placed in public locations deemed appropriate. Such locations may include, without limitation, school entrances/exits, lobby areas, hallways, classrooms, cafeterias, athletic areas, gathering spaces, and outdoor grounds, as well as school buses.
- b. Restrooms, changing rooms, private offices, nurse's offices and locker rooms are excluded from security camera use.
- c. It is recognized that it will not be possible to monitor all building areas, rooms and grounds, or to monitor any location at all times.

Schools making use of video surveillance cameras will provide notice to staff, students, and parents/guardians, by means of inclusion of this policy in their respective handbooks, that video surveillance may occur on school property. In addition, school leadership may elect to install signs at building entrances or other locations deemed appropriate to inform visitors and invitees that video surveillance may occur.

To the extent video images may be deemed to create student records or personnel records, the school shall comply with any applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance, retention and disclosure.

Video images obtained by the school shall be viewed by authorized school and diocesan personnel as necessary. The school and the diocese may rely on the images obtained by the video surveillance cameras in connection with the enforcement of diocesan or school policies, regulations, codes of conduct, building rules and other applicable laws or rules, including but not limited to use of such images in student and staff disciplinary proceedings and matters referred to

local law enforcement agencies in accordance with applicable law. Video images may become part of a student's educational record or a staff member's personnel record in accordance with applicable law.

All video recordings shall be stored in a secure place. Recordings will be saved for no less than 30 days, and may be retained longer if deemed appropriate. All video recordings are the sole property of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington. Release of such videos will be made only with the permission of the diocesan Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

ST. MARK Catholic School utilizes video surveillance.

VIII. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Catholic school recognizes the beauty and potential inherent within each child. In an effort to foster continued growth, the school embraces the challenge to provide assistance and programs to serve children with special needs according to the resources available within/to the school. Parents are considered an integral part of the process.

In order to accommodate a child who has been evaluated for special learning needs, parents are obligated to share educational/psychological testing results and any resulting plan with the school. The refusal to provide such information is a condition for negating enrollment in the school. A child may be admitted on a probationary basis with dates and criteria of evaluation clearly established in writing.

If a child has a documented disability, a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Services Plan (ISP), 504 plan and/or Student Assistance Plan (SAP) should be maintained in the child's confidential file. Children who have a documented disability but do not qualify for services through the local public school may be eligible for accommodations through a Student Assistance Plan written at the Catholic school.

When a student qualifies for special education services through the public school and will not receive services, an Individualized Catholic Education Plan can be written following the information in the Guidelines for Serving Students with Special Needs.

Failure of the parent to sign the Student Assistance Plan or Individualized Catholic Education Plan does not prevent the implementation of the plan.

Children with disabilities are expected to follow the school's policies and honor code.

IX. PROGRAM INFORMATION

LICENSING INFORMATION

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.1, Chapter 10 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exemptions to licensure, licensed programs include child day centers, family day homes, child day center systems and family day systems. The state may also voluntarily register family day homes which are not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, a ratio of children per staff member, equipment, program and record keeping. Criminal record checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

Three types of licensing may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program to allow up to six months for the program to demonstrate compliance with the standards. A regular license is issued when the program substantially meets the standards for licensure. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to comply with the standards. Operating without a license when required constitutes a misdemeanor which, upon conviction, can be punishable by a fine of up to \$100 or imprisonment of up to 12 months or both for each day's violation.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Regional Office of Social Services closest to you.

Fairfax Licensing Office
3701 Pender Drive, Suite 125
Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 934-1505

Northern Virginia Regional Office
320 Hospital Drive, Suite #23
Warrenton, VA 22186
(540) 347-6345

Central Regional Offices
1604 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 130
Richmond, VA 23229-5008
(804) 662-9743

Verona Licensing Office
Post Office Box 350
Verona, Virginia 24482-0350
(540) 248-9345

Eastern Regional Office
Pembroke Office Park
Pembroke Four Office Building, Suite 300
Virginia Beach, VA 23452-5496
(757) 491-3990

Piedmont Regional Office
Commonwealth of Virginia Building
210 Church Street, S.W., Ste. 100
Roanoke, VA 24011-1779
(540) 857-7920

Abingdon Licensing Office
190 Patton Street
Abingdon, VA 24210
(540) 676-5490

CRISIS MANAGEMENT/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

A Crisis Management/Emergency Preparedness Plan has been developed and approved. All employees have been trained accordingly. The plan is available for viewing in the main school office.

OVER-THE-COUNTER SKIN PRODUCTS

All non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall not be kept or used beyond the expiration date of the product.

For all over-the-counter skin products:

- a. written parent authorization noting any known adverse reactions shall be obtained;
- b. shall be in the original container labeled with the child's name;
- c. does not need to be kept locked but shall be inaccessible to children under five years of age;
- d. any center-kept sunscreen shall be hypo-allergenic and have a minimum SPF of 15;
- e. children nine years of age and older may administer their own sunscreen if supervised.

When insect repellent is used, a record shall be kept that includes the child's name, date of use, frequency of application and any adverse reaction. Manufacturer's instructions for age, duration and dosage shall be followed.

INSURANCE

The program is covered by public liability insurance through the Diocese of Arlington and the Catholic Mutual Relief Society of America. Student insurance must be provided by the family through their own policy or purchased through an independent school insurance provider.

TAX INFORMATION

Because the Internal Revenue Service requires identification of care givers in order to claim a credit for child and dependent care expenses, the school will complete and return to the parent any W-10 that is sent in, provided Part II is already completed by the parent.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In compliance with state regulations for state licensed programs, a custodial parent shall be admitted to any child day program. Such right of admission shall apply only while the child is in the child day program (63.2-1813 of Code of Virginia).

X. APPENDICES

Diocesan Forms

All Diocesan forms referenced in the handbook are available on the school website:
<http://www.stmark.org/school>