

# St. Francis of Assisi School



## STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024 School Year

This page intentionally left blank.

# St. Francis of Assisi School

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### § I School Administration

- Background and History
- Mission and Vision
- Beliefs and Philosophy
- Archdiocese of Baltimore
- Safe Environment Policy
- Accreditation

#### § II School Operations

- School Communication
- Admission and Registration
- Financial Matters and Tuition
- Attendance
- Before & After School Care
- School Schedule
- Student Records

#### § III Health & Safety

- Health Records
- Communicable Diseases
- Medication
- Compliance Statements
- Visitors and Volunteers

#### § IV Academics

- Course of Study
- Standardized Testing
- Progress Reports
- Promotion and Retention
- Student Accommodations
- International Baccalaureate

#### § V Student Life

- Dress Code
- General Policies
- Clubs and Activities
- Student Discipline
- Harassment/Bullying Policy
- Tech. Acceptable Use Policy

#### Parent/Guardian Signature Page

# FACULTY & STAFF 2023-2024

## Administration

Dr. Karmen Weaver - Principal  
Mrs. Kara Sherman - Director of Preschool/ BASC/Elementary Department  
Mrs. Tenaya Goode - Director of Enrollment/Marketing  
Lauren Duggins - Administrative Assistant  
Sharon Foley - Administrative Associate

## Instructional Staff

Lisa Bradford - Preschool 2  
Christina Hill - Preschool 2  
Barbara Waldt - Preschool 3  
Shamia Hodge - Preschool 3  
Kristin Watson - Preschool 3/4  
Branee Johnson - Preschool 3/4  
Melissa Flora - Pre-Kindergarten  
Katelyn Smith - Pre-Kindergarten  
Angelina Cramer - Kindergarten  
Caren Samuels - 1st Grade  
Kathryn Lowe - 2nd Grade  
Linda McCain - 3rd Grade  
Derek Carr - 4th Grade

Sean Hogan - 5th Grade  
Catherine Thibault - ELA/IB Coordinator  
Alex Gammon - Math/Soc. Justice/Envr. Sci.  
Fryan Escobar - Math/Science  
Paul Stone - Social Studies/Liturgy  
Mary Carol Lidinsky - K-8 Religion/Liturgy  
Doreen Williams -  
Art/Music/Library/Catechesis  
Nicholas Keppler - PE/Art/Science  
Milady Rivera - K-8 Spanish  
Julie Lin - Technology/Design/Art

## Adjunct Staff

Dave Rybczynski - Liturgy Coordinator  
Andy Bopp - Drama (6-8)  
Dave Pugh - Photographer

## Support Staff

Gail Gordon - School Nurse  
Alison Peters - School Counselor  
Amy Walsh - Learning Specialist/H.S. Adva.

*Staff member email addresses all follow the same pattern - [lastnameinitial@sfa-school.org](mailto:lastnameinitial@sfa-school.org). Please allow at least one full business day for replies.*



## A MESSAGE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Welcome to St. Francis of Assisi School! The entire school community pledges its support to you. May Jesus, the model of all teachers, be our encouragement in this important ministry of Catholic education. Surely, He who said, "Let the little children come unto me" (Mt 19:14) will bless the efforts in His name.

By enrolling a child in a Catholic school, a parent/guardian agrees to the following important responsibilities:

- To be a partner with the school in the education of the child
- To understand and support the religious/moral nature of the school
- To read all communications from the school and request clarification when necessary
- To know who the child's teachers are and observe parent-teacher conference dates and any special requests for meetings
- To discuss concerns and problems with the person(s) most directly involved, and the administration, before contacting legal authorities
- To be as actively involved in the life of the school and volunteer assistance as possible
- To promote the school and speak well of it to others, including social media, etc.
- To meet financial obligations in a timely manner and support the fundraising efforts of the school when possible
- To appreciate that Catholic education is a privilege that many people do not have
- To encourage the child to take responsibility for his/her school work

## PARENTAL SUPPORT/COMPLIANCE

In cases of serious or repeated noncompliance by a parent with school policies or procedures, the administration reserves the right to withdraw that parent's child/children from the school.

**St. Francis of Assisi School (SFA) is a co-ed elementary school for grades Pre-K (2) through 8th. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, or protected activity (i.e., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the complaint process). The school is not required to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with its religious or moral teachings. Requests for reasonable accommodations for a student with a disability may be directed to the Principal. Religion is required for each year a student attends St. Francis of Assisi School. All students enrolled in St. Francis of Assisi School must attend and be active participants in mass, prayer services, holy days of obligation, and religion classes.**

**The school reserves the right to deny attendance to anyone whose behavior is contrary to the teachings and ideals of the school or whose behavior or attitude is disruptive to the functioning of the student body. St. Francis of Assisi School reserves the right to amend the Parent/Student Handbook and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be notified of any changes made. This Parent/Student Handbook is an informative booklet for parents and students setting forth the rules and policies of the school and is not intended as an expressed or implied contract.**

## **§ I – School Administration**

### **BACKGROUND OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL**

We are a comprehensive co-ed Preschool, elementary, and middle school, partnered in ministry to provide a secure, caring, Christian community of learning for children. St. Francis of Assisi School offers a student teacher ratio of 1:9, experienced and well-trained faculty providing students with a vibrant, engaging and nurturing learning environment.

We are the first school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program. We have a strong curriculum in all subjects but have been recognized for our work to develop a rigorous and challenging program in this area that teaches students *how* to think, not just *what* to think. In all grades, we strive to teach cross-curricular lessons that involve the students in active inquiry learning.

#### **HISTORY**

Our story begins with the founding of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in northeast Baltimore. The one-story church was dedicated on May 15, 1927, and served the neighborhood of Mayfield and the surrounding communities for decades. Nestled between lake and woods, the parish became an anchor for the community that came to be known as a "hamlet in the heart of town."

After many years of growth, the decision was made in the early 1950s to build a new church next to the existing building, and to convert the original 1927 structure into a school. The new school opened in 1955 with four classrooms, an assembly hall, and an office in the building the church had vacated. Three Sisters of Saint Joseph staffed the new school with an enrollment of eighty-eight students in grades 1, 2, and 3. Mass of the Holy Spirit was celebrated in thanksgiving to God for blessings received and to ask God's care and guidance for the future. Archbishop Francis P. Keough blessed the classrooms during the first days in the new school.

During the summer of 1957, the second floor was added to the school. This gave the school eight classrooms, a library and an office. The first class graduated in 1961 with forty-two students.

In September of 1989, a preschool was established at St. Matthew United Church of Christ. Known as Mayfield Christian Preschool, it was originally co-sponsored by St. Matthew and St. Francis of Assisi and governed by the Mayfield Christian Preschool Board. As time passed, St. Francis gradually assumed operational responsibility for the program, and in the summer of 2008 the preschool was relocated to the first floor of our school.

In the summer of 1997 a third floor was added to our building. This expansion of the facility enhanced the learning environment and made a statement to the neighborhood that SFA is committed to this area and to the city of Baltimore.

The school was approved to offer the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program starting in 2015, and the Preschool achieved Level 5 recognition from Maryland EXCELS in 2018. The school is a very important part of the parish. May it continue to energize students and parents and continue to build Christ's Kingdom on earth!

## VISION STATEMENT//DECLARACIÓN DE LA VISIÓN

St. Francis of Assisi School seeks to be a joyful center of the New Evangelization that promotes active and engaged learning through faith, discovery, collaboration, and service.

La Escuela de San Francisco de Asís busca ser un centro alegre de la Nueva Evangelización que promueve el aprendizaje activo y comprometido a través de la fe, el descubrimiento, la colaboración y el servicio.

## MISSION STATEMENT/DECLARACIÓN DE LA MISIÓN

Drawing on the ideals of our patron saint, rooted in the neighborhoods of Northeast Baltimore, branching out to the wider world, and envisioning a future even stronger than our past, St. Francis of Assisi School forms children for a life of scholarship, spirituality, and service, rooted in the Catholic faith tradition:

- Scholarship developed through student inquiry, rigorous assessment, and dedication to lifelong learning;
- Spirituality reflected in a joyful relationship with God and compassion for others;
- Service creating a better and more peaceful world as students embrace cultural, ethnic, and social differences

*For more than half a century, "not just a school but a way of life."*

### Living the Mission

**S**afe - Promote safety and responsibility in our thoughts, words and actions.

**O**wnership - Take pride of ownership in our campus, our work, and our mission

**A**ctively engaged - Stay actively engaged in academics, faith, family, and community life.

**R**espectful - Encourage and model respect, peace, and kindness for all.

**LET YOUR SPIRIT SOAR!**

Basado en los ideales de nuestro santo patrón, radicada en los barrios del noreste de Baltimore, extendiéndose al resto del mundo, y aspirando a un futuro aún más fuerte que nuestro pasado, la Escuela de St. Francis of Assisi forma a los niños para una vida de conocimiento académico, espiritualidad, y servicio, enraizada en la tradición de la fe católica:

- Conocimiento académico desarrollado a través de investigación, evaluación y dedicación al aprendizaje
- Espiritualidad reflejada en una relación feliz con Dios y compasión por otros
- Servicio creando un mundo mejor y más pacífico, los estudiantes adoptan las diferencias culturales, étnicas y sociales

*Por más de medio siglo, "no sólo una escuela, una forma de vida."*

### Como Vivir La Misión

**S**eguro - Promueva la seguridad y la responsabilidad en nuestros pensamientos, palabras y acciones.

**O**rgullo de la propiedad - Tome orgullo en nuestro campus, nuestro trabajo, y nuestra misión

**A**ctivamente comprometido - Manténgase activamente comprometido en la vida académica, la fe, la familia y la comunidad.

**R**espetuoso - Alentar y modelar el respeto, la paz y la bondad para todos.

**¡DEJA QUE TU ESPIRITU SE ELEVE!**



## STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

As a Catholic school, St. Francis of Assisi is grounded in the principles of our faith. Among these principles is the belief that we are global citizens made in God's image and likeness. We believe in the power and necessity of diversity to achieve a greater richness of ideas and to foster an inclusive environment. Our diversity and inclusivity is reflected in many facets among individuals, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious belief, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, learning style and ability. Every student is endowed with inviolable dignity worthy of our respect. These are the core beliefs of Catholic social teaching. St. Francis of Assisi School, a Roman Catholic institution, believes in:

- Bringing to life, in the city of Baltimore, the values of St. Francis; namely, peace, love, forgiveness, joy, faith, hope, and understanding.
- Inspiring its students to live the Gospel message of Jesus through prayer and service.
- Preparing children for the academic challenges of high school.
- Offering an emotionally secure environment as an extension of the home.
- Embracing cultural, ethnic and social differences.
- Aligning its educational program to the dynamic world in which its students live.
- Affirming the value of a traditional, sequential educational approach.
- Welcoming the time, talent, and energy of parents and family members.
- Enjoying the active support and guidance of its multigenerational parish community.
- Allowing kids to be kids – fully and vibrantly experiencing childhood.

## PHILOSOPHY

In 1998, St. John Paul II released his papal encyclical entitled *Fides et Ratio* ("Faith and Reason"). He expressed the relationship between the human capacities for both faith and reason. As educators, we know divergent thinking requires a creative mind able to reach for the profound and the abstract, while convergent thoughts need rational grounding in facts and logic.

The SFA curriculum serves to engage its students in providing them with the problem-solving skills they will use in all academic areas. This education will provide students with an appreciation for the world God has given them by helping them to achieve a successful balance between their faith in God and their sense of reason.

This cross-curricular approach allows for a growing appreciation for the mathematical precision and beauty of Nature to blossom into creative expressions in the Humanities and Fine Arts.

Educating the whole child means balancing both types of thinking – convergent and divergent. While advancing student's need for intellectual progress, we also foster a desire to remain connected as branches to the "true vine" who is Christ. (Jn 15:1) In all cases, this model of teaching promotes academic discovery and student-centered inquiry. We believe that this helps guide the student to value the pursuit of Truth – the truth of the Gospel that speaks to us in matters of faith, the sciences, and the fine arts.

St. Francis of Assisi School is committed to preparing students for the world they will one day inherit. The workplace of the 21st Century is one that is increasingly reliant on a set of skills focused on technology, creativity, leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving.

SFA graduates go on to the finest high schools in the region and from there to great success in colleges and adult life. We build critical minds and compassionate hearts here – those are the hallmarks of an education at St. Francis of Assisi School!

## **LEARNING WITHIN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE**

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT - “It is the policy of the State of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:

- (1) Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
- (2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not:
  - (i) Discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;
  - (ii) Refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual’s race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or
  - (iii) Discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.”

The State of Maryland does not require a nonpublic school that is religiously affiliated to enroll, retain, or extend privileges to a student or prospective student who does not meet the usual and regular qualifications, requirements, and standards of the program or school or to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with the program or school’s religious or moral teachings provided that the denial, rule, regulation, or policy is not based on discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

Requests for reasonable accommodations for a student with a disability may be directed to the Principal or Learning Specialist. Religion is required for each year a student attends St. Francis of Assisi School. All students enrolled in St. Francis of Assisi School must attend religion classes and services. We will always teach and act consistent with the tenets of the Catholic Church.

STUDENTS - By insisting that students perform to their full potential, the Archdiocese affirms its belief in the dignity of the individual. The role of the student is an active one. Participation in the learning process enables each student to grow and acquire the skills necessary to identify immediate and long-range goals. It is the student’s responsibility to take advantage of opportunities, academic as well as co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. It is the student’s obligation to meet the demands these activities require, keeping in mind that at this time the

task is to be the best student he or she can be.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS - Parents/guardians are the primary educators who work in partnership with the school. Their involvement in their children's education is woven into the fabric of the education process. They support and assist teachers by placing academic and moral demands on students. Parents/guardians of students in a Catholic school make a financial and philosophical commitment to their children's education. This creates a unique role which accents the home's responsibility to oversee their children's academic development, by insisting that students perform to their potential. Parents/guardians provide family listening, direction, and support, and need to establish an environment for schoolwork. It is the parent who must encourage proper use of the student's time after school hours. Furthermore, parents enhance the academic and extra-curricular activities of students through guidance and presence at these functions.

THE CLASSROOM TEACHER - Teachers within the Archdiocese endeavor "to teach as Jesus did." The power of a teacher can never be underestimated; what is done in a classroom affects what is accomplished by the students. The classroom teacher, in the pursuit of excellence, is the facilitator of the learning process. Teachers play a key role in the education of students by insisting they perform to their full potential and by affirming the quest for growth, identity, self-worth, and knowledge. It is the teacher's responsibility to awaken intellectual curiosity, challenge the students to a deeper understanding of the subject, and transmit a genuine love for learning. The expertise of the classroom teacher lies in knowledge of the subject and care for the student. Classroom performance is enhanced by the interaction of the teacher and students at co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Such a teacher encourages the student to develop abilities and to practice skills. The effect of a teacher is far-reaching; what is done in the classroom influences the student for a lifetime.

PRINCIPAL - The principal is the master teacher who envisions the heights to which the teachers and students can climb. He/she has the responsibility for the spiritual development, physical safety, and academic growth of the school community. The principal strives to provide the means, both material and philosophical, to ensure that excellence is the hallmark of the school. It is his/her responsibility to make those decisions that will achieve this goal. Such decisions should be made collegially with those who share reflections, suggestions, and even disagreement. The principal is accountable to foster a climate in which curriculum growth, spiritual enrichment, and development can flourish. Curriculum development is nurtured by active involvement of faculty and positive support of families.

DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS - The Archdiocese of Baltimore Department of Catholic Schools, through the Superintendent's administrative team, has the responsibility to provide an environment in which the pursuit of excellence is ongoing and its achievement measurable. It is the Department's duty to challenge, encourage, and affirm the school communities of the Archdiocese.

The foundation for the pursuit of excellence rests firmly on the rock of accountability. The Superintendent's administrative team is accountable to the entire faith community to assure that academic excellence, professional development, and the investigation of new methods and techniques in teaching are central factors in providing quality education.

The Department of Catholic Schools believes academic instruction is built on the premise that the lives of our students must be enriched and enhanced. All of this is accomplished and brought about with the knowledge that God is the source of all gifts.

Archdiocese of Baltimore - Department of Catholic Schools Vision & Mission Statement

Vision: Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore nurture and sustain the God-given gifts of every person, especially students, to be used in service to the Mission of Jesus.

Mission: Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore provide a Christ-centered education that is academically excellent and empowers students to reach their full potential – spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and morally. Fostered through robust collaboration among all stakeholders, the mission is accomplished through accountable leadership at all levels, ongoing and coordinated strategic planning, centralized efficiencies, and financial sustainability.

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY: VIRTUS**

All staff members and all volunteers must complete the required VIRTUS training before being permitted to assist in classroom activities or attend field trips. This program, required by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, is intended for the protection of the youth. The training is conducted online. Contact the office for more information.

Volunteers who intend to drive children other than their own must complete an additional level of screening to include a driving-record check by the MVA.

## ACCREDITATION

St. Francis of Assisi School was established in 1955 and is accredited by Cognia through June 2027. In accordance with standards set by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, St. Francis of Assisi School met the requirements established by the Cognia Accreditation Commission and Board of Trustees and was thereby accredited by the SACS Council on Accreditation and School Improvement. The Middle School (Grades 6-8) received authorization in 2015 to offer the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program. The Preschool is fully licensed by the MSDE Office of Child Care, and was recognized in 2018 by the Maryland EXCELS program at Level 5, the highest level available.



## § II – School Operations

### SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

We consider the parent-school relationship vital to your child's academic and developmental success. Effective communication between home and school helps make that relationship a positive and productive one. The most effective means of assisting your child's academic growth are checking homework, reviewing tests, inquiring about projects, test results, school activities, etc. If there is an area of concern in regard to the school environment either socially or academically, please contact the teacher involved to discuss your concern. Your cooperation and support are necessary for effective guidance and discipline. Please be very careful not to make statements in your child's presence that would undermine what we are trying to accomplish together with you.

There is one regular communication from the school to all families: which is; "With One Voice," the regular email newsletter. Every other Wednesday, informational mailings are made available on the school website [www.sfa-school.org](http://www.sfa-school.org). Urgent or emergency communication will be made through the online emergency system. Phone calls and emails are sent to the main contact numbers for each family. Each fall, families are asked to update this information.

Whenever a situation occurs that causes concern, the concern should be addressed first at the level at which the situation arose. Therefore, the parents should first contact the teacher involved and then, if necessary, teachers and parents should go to the principal. **Staff should be seen by appointment only.** If a conference with the principal or teacher is needed, please call the office or send a note/email at least a day or two in advance of the conference date. In the best interest of students, the school welcomes and encourages verbal and written communication between parents and teachers. The most efficient way to reach school staff is through email. Voicemail is also available, but typically is checked only once or twice a day.

Parents whose phone numbers are unlisted must give the school either the unlisted number or a number where the parent(s) can be reached. It is essential that the school have this information in case of emergency. It will be kept in the strictest confidence. Any change of phone number or home address is to be given to the school office and homeroom teacher in writing within one week after the change is effective.

URGENT MESSAGES - If it is necessary for a parent to give an emergency message during school hours, please contact the office, and we will see that the message is delivered. It is essential that students and parents communicate through the school office.

CONFERENCES - Conferences can be initiated by parents or teachers at any time throughout the year. At the end of the first Trimester as indicated on the calendar published on the web, mandatory conferences will be scheduled with all parents from Pre-K - 8th grade. Sign up for conferences are done online via a link sent out using email. These mandatory conferences are in 15 minute increments and are meant to support communication between parents and teachers. Even if your child is not having difficulties, we encourage and require you to meet with your teacher so that there is open communication should difficulties arise in the future. In addition, there will be opportunity for conferences later in the year, with dates on the calendar online.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (HASA) - All parents are members of the Home and School Association, which meets three times a year and serves as a source of support to both the school and the parent community. A mandatory charge of \$5 will appear on each family's FACTS account in July for HASA yearly dues. The executive board consists of the President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer. Ordinarily these officers serve a term of two years. Elections for the executive board are held each spring. Parents are encouraged to speak to their Class Parent about issues such as classroom parties and special events.

STAFF PRIVACY - Staff members of SFA are very dedicated and they work long hours. We ask that you respect their personal time and do not call their home or cell phones for school business. Please also refrain from making connections with staff via social media in order to conduct school business. **Please note: Staff members are not permitted to drive students in personal vehicles under any circumstances.**

## **ADMISSIONS & REGISTRATION**

PRESCHOOL: Applications for Preschool are accepted through the online School Admin Portal ([www.sfa-school.schooladminonline.org](http://www.sfa-school.schooladminonline.org)) beginning at the October Open House. All applications for the waiting list received by a set date in November (the date of the Turkey Dinner) will be placed into a lottery for a position on the waiting list. After that date, names are added in chronological order. In January, after current families have had a chance to register, those on the waiting list will be offered the opportunity to register. Siblings of current students are placed at the top of the waiting list, followed by the children of active St. Francis parishioners. There is no admissions screening for Preschool; however, the Director may determine after a period of observation that the child is not yet ready for preschool. In most cases, a placement for the following year will be offered to students in this situation. Children are expected to be placed at the age level that will enable them to comply with Maryland state guidelines that students entering Kindergarten must be five years old by September 1. There is a **non-refundable** Application Fee for students seeking admission to St. Francis of Assisi School.

K-8: All children applying for admission to grades K-8 submit an application form and records from previous school(s) through the online SchoolAdmin Portal. Grades 1-8 participate in a shadow day after report cards and standardized testing (where applicable) are received. Students are evaluated, typically by testing and by observation in the classroom situation, to determine their eligibility for our school. Copies of report cards and standardized testing scores are required. Of those eligible, priority for acceptance is given first to siblings of current students, then to children of parishioners. Parishioners are those who are Catholic, properly registered in SFA parish, regularly practicing the faith by weekly involvement and participation in the sacramental life of the church, support to the parish financially according to household means, and actively supporting our parish and church activities.

Initial admission of the child to the school is for a probationary period of up to one year. If it is deemed that this school does not fit the child, the parents will be asked to find another school. **Registration is an implied contract renewed each year between the school and parent. The terms of that contract are subject to the policies in this Handbook.**

REGISTRATION - Registration for new students when they have completed an application, meet the requirements for admission, and have been accepted. In order to register for Kindergarten, a child must be five years of age by September 1 of the entry year. A baptismal certificate (unless the child is non-Catholic) and a birth certificate must be presented at the time of registration. In classes where there is a waiting list, families will be contacted when a space becomes available, and will ordinarily have five business days in which to accept the place and pay the **non-refundable** registration fee.

New students attending SFA do so on a 30 day probationary period beginning on the first day of school. During this period, transition into the school community will be assessed through observation on the following: fulfilling payment obligations, refusal to complete required forms, behavior by parent or child in which the faculty, students, and/or patrons are threatened or placed in threatening/dangerous circumstances. If the student is having difficulty adjusting to the school community, the parents will be informed that their assistance is needed. The parents will be required to assist with the student as deemed necessary by the administration. If after the probationary period the administration finds that the placement is inappropriate, the student will be withdrawn.

RE-REGISTRATION - Students abiding by the policies of St. Francis of Assisi School are invited to return for the next academic year. Re-registration requires that all financial obligations have been met and that the fees for the following year are paid. Fees are **non-refundable**. Re-registration begins in December for families already enrolled at St. Francis. SFA families will have exclusive opportunity to re-register for the following school year until the open registration period during Catholic Schools Week at the end of January. Applications for financial aid from the school require re-registration.

## **FINANCIAL MATTERS & TUITION**

Each family receives the tuition rates and schedule payment plans for the coming school year in January. The tuition policy is determined by the School Board. Parents wishing to apply for financial aid should follow Archdiocesan guidelines by submitting an application to the FACTS Grant-in-Aid Program. Financial aid requests are evaluated by FACTS and summary reports are issued to the Archdiocese and the principal. Ordinarily, families are notified of financial aid in April.

**Under the terms of the enrollment contract, after April 15th a penalty of 20% of the total net tuition is applied to withdrawals. All withdrawal notifications must be made to the principal by email or in writing by the April 15th deadline indicated on the enrollment contract.**

Upon acceptance of a student and execution of a tuition contract, the full year's tuition shall be considered payable. Unless the child/children listed above withdraw from the St. Francis of Assisi School by a letter sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by email and received by the School Principal on or before April 15th, I am liable for and agree to pay twenty percent (20%) of the applicable tuition and 100% and of the applicable fees for said child/children for the upcoming academic year. I further understand and agree that, if the child listed above attends the School for any day of the upcoming academic year, I am liable for and agree to pay one hundred percent (100%) of the applicable tuition and fees for said child/children for the upcoming academic year. Withdrawal, dismissal, expulsion, absences, or



illness of said child/children does not release any parent/guardian from any portion of this obligation.

All tuition refunds are contingent upon the school receiving written notice prior to the student's actual departure date and the refund amount will be determined based on the actual departure date. The school reserves the right to withhold all student records (with the exception of Health Records) until accounts have been paid in full. Since individual student accounts are invoiced on a family basis, these policies will affect each child in the family (If an out-going student leaves a balance due, the younger siblings will not be admitted to school until the outgoing student's balance is paid in full.) No enrollment will be permitted in any other Archdiocesan school while there are tuition and/or fees outstanding.

TUITION PAYMENT POLICY - SFA uses the FACTS Tuition Management System. St. Francis does not process tuition payments on site. All families are required to make their payments through the FACTS portal ([www.sfa-school.schooladmin.org](http://www.sfa-school.schooladmin.org)).

FACTS has two components. The first is the "agreement," which is a series of predictable, scheduled tuition payments (similar to a mortgage or car payments.) The second component is called "incidental billing." It is used for occasional billing for non-scheduled items such as drop-in Aftercare, field trips, or supplies. It is important to note that incidental bills must be paid within thirty day to avoid late fees.

If tuition for the upcoming school year is paid in full by May 31st, the family may avail itself of a 2% discount.

**SFA School reserves the right to withhold report cards and transcripts if a family has any past-due balance.** If an account is 30 days delinquent the student's attendance will be interrupted until the account has been brought up to date. This means the student will be excluded from school, excluded from school activities, and powerschool access will be turned off until the balance is paid in full and cleared. If an account is 60 days delinquent the student will be required to withdraw due to non payment. The penalty is not applied in cases of involuntary withdrawal.

**SFA accepts The Child Care Scholarship (CCS) (formerly known as Child Care Subsidy) Vouchers** which provides financial assistance with child care costs to eligible working families in Maryland. The program is managed through a centralized vendor called Child Care Scholarship Central (CCS Central). St. Francis does not deduct the scholarship amount from the FACTS account until the school physically receives the scholarship voucher. All families are required to make their payments through the FACTS portal ([www.sfa-school.schooladmin.org](http://www.sfa-school.schooladmin.org)) at the full tuition rate until the school has received the CCS voucher.

FUNDRAISING - In order to meet the needs of the school that are not covered by tuition or fees, the school sponsors a variety of fundraising opportunities. **Required fundraisers include the Turkey Dinner (\$15 per student) and the Race for Education (\$100 per family). As a requirement of the tuition contract, families who do not meet the minimum levels for Turkey Dinner raffle tickets (\$15 per student) and Race for Education donation (\$100 per family) will have the amounts charged to their FACTS agreement.** All families support these two events through

sales of raffle tickets, solicitation of donors, and through volunteering. Families are encouraged to support other fundraisers and events to the extent possible within their families.

In an effort to maintain our average of 60 events each year, each family is required to give a minimum of 20 service hours to the school in addition to participating in the school's two major fundraisers, which include the "Turkey Dinner" in the fall and "Race for Education" in the spring. Each family will start off with a charge on their FACTS account in the amount of \$400 (\$20 for every 1 hour) in July of every year. As the family completes volunteer service hours it will be credited to the FACTS account. In May of each year a final charge equivalent to the hours will be posted to your FACTS account, with the hopes of every family having \$0.

## ATTENDANCE

### PRESCHOOL:

Preschool is the ideal time to introduce children and families to the importance of consistent on-time attendance and to encourage strong attendance habits. SFA is a high-quality preschool program that can build early literacy and math skills, as well as develop the social and emotional foundation children need to persist in school. But preschoolers only receive the full effect of these benefits if they show up at school regularly. What happens in preschool and early education can lay the foundation for good attendance habits in kindergarten and elementary school.

All preschool students must be walked to the classroom and signed in by a parent or chaperone who has provided transportation that day. The school will not admit any preschool student in the building after 9:15 a.m. if the parent/guardian has not communicated with the school the day prior in regards to their lateness. If your child needs to leave school early for an appointment, reentry to school will not be allowed after 10:30 a.m.

Frequent tardiness will result in administrative intervention. Repeated lateness after intervention could jeopardize a preschool student's return to SFA the following year.

### K-8:

Regular attendance is considered essential for learning at St. Francis of Assisi School. Students need to develop the work habits and responsibilities required of all of us as we go through life. Students who are absent from school frequently with an inconsistent pattern of attendance (absence of 10 days in a trimester or 20 days or more cumulatively) will be flagged for intervention and possible retention in the grade at the discretion of the administration.

Attendance is submitted electronically by teachers during homeroom. Parents are required to contact the school between **7:30 and 8:30 AM** to report the absence of a child on each day of the absence or leave a message on the office voicemail or email. **The child must present a note or an email from the parent explaining the absence to the homeroom teacher on the first day he/she returns to school.** The school reserves the right to require a doctor's note for absences due to illness or injury or need for assessment/evaluation. A child may not return to school until he/she is well enough to participate in all school activities. If a student will be out of school for an extended period, whether continuous or intermittent., parents should consult with the administration regarding appropriate support of the student in fulfilling the school curriculum or alternative arrangements such as home and hospital services through the local public school district.

If a student arrives at school after 12:00 PM, he/she will be marked 1/2-day absent.

Absence from school during the academic year due to family vacations is strongly discouraged. Please note that for these types of inadvisable vacations, teachers will not supply work prior to an absence. Missed work may be obtained only upon return. When a parent requests such an extended absence for a child, the request, along with the school's recommendation, is placed in the child's cumulative folder to ensure proper maintenance of the student's permanent record. Students are required to make up all tests, class work, and homework after such absences. Students who are absent from school may not participate in any after school or evening school sponsored events such as sports, dances, etc.

### PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is essential in all grade levels. Students in grades K-8 are considered late if they are not in homeroom by **8:05 AM** for opening prayer. Any student K-8 arriving after that time must report to the office for a late slip, and must be signed in by a parent or chaperone who has provided transportation that day. Teachers will not admit students to their homerooms without this pass. Tardiness is entered on a student's permanent record. It is the responsibility of the student to check with the homeroom teacher to receive the necessary communication or work that may have been missed due to lateness.

Frequent tardiness may be cause for administrative intervention. Repeated lateness after intervention could jeopardize a K-8 student's return to SFA the following year.

St. Francis of Assisi School discourages early departures and requests that families arrange medical and dental appointments, etc. either after school hours, on Saturdays or during vacation periods. Check the calendar for days when school is not in session. In case of emergency, the student must submit a note to the office, signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s), on the day of dismissal. The note should include the reason for the request and the time the student must leave school. The parent/guardian must sign the student out from the office. A student will be marked 1/2-day absent if he/she leaves school prior to 12:00 PM.

The pursuit of perfect attendance is not a reason for a child to attend school while sick. Therefore, in the interest of promoting community health, perfect attendance is **not** recognized as a student achievement at SFA.

HIGH SCHOOL VISITATION POLICY - Eighth graders are required to schedule high school visitations on days which St. Francis is either closed or dismissed early. The student/parent must complete and submit the high school visitation form to the main office. A limit of three (3) days during fall semester only will be granted, which will be considered excused absences. Seventh graders are strongly encouraged to schedule high school visitations on days which St. Francis is either closed or dismissed early. The student/parent must complete and submit the high school visitation form to the main office. A limit of two (2) days during spring semester only will be granted, which will be considered excused absences. The parent should notify the office if a student will be visiting a high school. Students in other grades will not be granted excused absences for visiting other schools, including high schools. They will be marked absent if not present.

TRUANCY - Truancy is defined as a student absenting him/herself from school without parent/legal guardian permission, or leaving school grounds without permission during the school day. Truancy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or

expulsion. In addition, excessive lateness can be considered a form of neglect or truancy.

## **BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

The SFA Before and After School Care (BASC) Program provides licensed child care for children attending St. Francis of Assisi School in grades Pre-K through 8th grade. Before Care services are offered from 7:00 AM to 7:50 AM. Aftercare is available from dismissal to 6:00 PM. If you register for Child Care services, you are eligible to use the regular services for which you register and drop-in services as needed. Drop-In service will be available for emergency use. SFA Aftercare closes promptly at 6:00 PM. Fees for late pick-up (\$10 for the first minute past 6:00 pm; \$1 for each additional minute after that) will be enforced. BASC will not be available on selected days as noted on the school calendar. A surcharge may apply for drop-ins on early dismissal days.

Extended Care Inclement Weather Procedures: If the school opens late due to inclement weather, SFA Before Care (BSC) will be closed. If the school closes early due to inclement weather, SFA Extended Care will be closed as well. We ask that you make every effort to retrieve your child from school as soon as possible so that our staff can make it home safely.

Extended Care Requirements: All students enrolled in Before/After Care services (whether on a regular or drop-in basis) MUST have a completed registration form on file. Students registered for Aftercare services must submit a registration fee. Health forms are required from the State of Maryland for all children who attend Before/After Care programs at SFA. (These are the same forms required for Preschool admission, but are different from the medical forms required by the school for K-8.) All forms are available on the school's website.

Extended Care Payment Procedure: The number of contracted days is per week and not an average per month. If my child attends Extended Care less than the contracted number of days in any given week I understand the unused days do not carry over to be used in other weeks. Failure to pay charges by the due date will result in a \$10 late fee. In the event the bill is past due over 30 days the child will be removed from the Extended Care program. There is a charge of \$50 per child as a registration fee. There are no refunds given for unused days, a decrease in the Extended Care need, or a withdrawal from the Extended Care program.

Fees remain the same for each month, for a total of nine months (September to May). The last week in August and the first week in June are rolled into September and May, at no extra charge. The contracted amount is due each month, regardless of school holidays, family vacations, etc. Parents are required to pay the fee by the due date using the FACTS payment system. It is the responsibility of the parents to notify St. Francis in writing of withdrawal from the program or of any change in the level of attendance. Payment of fees must remain current to ensure the child's continued enrollment in the program.

Before Care: Before Care is billed on a drop-in basis. Families using Before Care are billed at the end of the month for that month's actual usage.

Drop-Ins: Emergency childcare is available if there is enough space, to families who have registered for child care and have filled out the appropriate forms. Drop-in charges are billed at the end of each month for that month's actual usage.

## SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Students may arrive at school starting at 7:50 AM and should line up with their class on the Whitetop. (Students who arrive prior to 7:50 AM will be sent to Before Care.) The school day begins at 7:55 AM with the Pledge of Allegiance on the Whitetop, except for Trimester 2 and during inclement weather when students directly enter the building at 7:50 AM. **Students entering the school building after 8:05 AM will be marked late and will be required to have a parent sign them in at the school office.** Class periods in grades K-8 range from 45-120 minutes long. PK-8 students have recess every day. Preschool students are dismissed at 2:30 PM; Grades K-8 are dismissed from the blacktop at 3:00 PM. Parents must walk up to the blacktop to pick up their students. Any student not picked up by 3:00 PM (K-8) will be sent to aftercare and charged the daily drop-in rate. Before Care begins at 7:00 AM. Aftercare ends at 6:00 PM.

7:00	Before Care Opens
7:50	Whitetop Lineup & Carline
7:55	Pledge & Enter the Building
8:00	Carline Ends & Doors Close
8:05	Late Bell & Opening Prayer
2:55	Closing Prayer & Dismissal
3:00	Pick-Up on Whitetop
3:00	After Care Begins
6:00	After Care Ends

SUPERVISION BEFORE & AFTER THE SCHOOL DAY - The school is not responsible for supervision of students before or after the arrival and dismissal times stated in this Handbook. The school is not liable for any injuries or accidents which may occur before or after the times stated in this Handbook. Parents/guardians are required to follow the times stipulated when dropping off or picking up students. If the student is participating in a scheduled, supervised activity before or after the hours noted above, specific arrangements must be made for drop-off and/or pickup at the designated times. If children are participating in before or after school care, parents/guardians must comply with the rules established by the program for drop-off or pickup.

### WALKER POLICY

All parents who wish for their middle school student to walk and/or ride their bike to and from school either crossing Chesterfield Avenue or Harford Road are required to sign a "Release of Liability form". This is only limited to 6, 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. If middle school students have younger siblings the agreement will address that the younger siblings will be released to the parents/guardian on school property.

### RIDESHARE POLICY

SFA has an obligation to ensure student safety. All rideshare services are prohibited for all students.

## PARKING LOT PROCEDURES

Parents of students in grades K-8 are requested to utilize car line or park on the street for drop off. Parents will not be able to drive onto the parking lot while dropping off students in the morning. Staff members will be available to assist students out of cars until 8:00 AM. During this time, parents are not permitted to park in the school parking lot. Orange cones will be placed on the parking lot to indicate where cars are eligible to pass. As a courtesy to other parents attempting to drop off, the disembarking process should take as little time as possible, and the departing automobile should exit using the alley. Please be aware that residents of Chesterfield and Pelham Avenues also use this alley. **Appropriate speed and caution should be taken when exiting using the alley.**

Parents of Preschool students are required to park and walk students to their classroom in the morning. ALL students arriving after 8:00 AM, must be accompanied by a parent into the building. Any parent wishing to enter the school before 8:00 AM must park on the street to allow easy access of traffic for parents dropping off.

During the day, the parking lot is used as a recess area and the parking lot will be closed due to student safety. **Parents arriving at the school during the day are asked to park either on Chesterfield or Pelham Avenues.** Parents must park on the street and walk up to the door to pick up their child. At the end of the day, all parents must park and walk up to the blacktop to pick up their children. Parents are permitted to park in the parking lot after 3:15 PM for afternoon pick up. Preschool students will be dismissed at 2:30 PM. Students in grades K-8 will be dismissed starting at 3:00 PM. For the safety of all of our students, we ask that parents pick up children promptly. Students who have not been picked up 10 minutes past their dismissal time will be taken to Aftercare and parents will be responsible to pay a drop-in Aftercare rate.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

SFA is located in Baltimore City, but pulls a significant percentage of its students and staff from Baltimore County. **Therefore, when inclement weather occurs, SFA follows BOTH Baltimore City AND Baltimore County Public Schools for closings, late openings, and early dismissals. SFA will always follow the more restrictive travel restriction of the two jurisdictions.** For example, if Baltimore County Public Schools are closed, and Baltimore City Public Schools are two hours late, then SFA will be closed for the day. Parents will be notified through our blast email, voice, and text system. Announcements will also be posted on social media.

Whenever City or County schools close or dismiss early for heat, SFA will remain in session as normal because all the classrooms are air-conditioned. Whenever school is closed or if school is dismissed early, all after school activities are also cancelled for that day. Weekend activities will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Parents/guardians always retain the right to not send their children to school if they feel travel conditions are unsafe. However, children will be marked absent or tardy if they are not present or are late to school, respectively.

## **STUDENT RECORDS: Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

St. Francis of Assisi School complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. In general, FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to education records. (The rights granted to parents under FERPA automatically pass to the student on turning 18 or enrolling in college.) These rights and related procedures of St. Francis of Assisi School are as follows:

- Parents have the right to inspect and review the student’s education records maintained by the School. Parents should submit to the Principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School will make arrangements for access and notify the parent of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- Parents have the right to request that the School correct records they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. Parents who wish to request an amendment of the student’s records should write to the Principal and clearly identify the part of the record they believe is inaccurate or misleading and the information they believe should be included in a corrected record. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested, the School will notify the parent of the decision and the parent’s right to request a hearing.
- Parents generally have the right to consent in writing to disclosures of information from a student’s education record. However, there are certain exceptions to the consent requirement, including disclosures under the following conditions:
  - To School officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information. A school official is a person employed by the School or the Archdiocese as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff); a person or company with whom the School has contracted to provide a service (e.g., attorney); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibilities or duties to the School.
  - To other schools to which a student is transferring.
  - In connection with financial aid under certain circumstances.
  - To specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
  - To organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school.
  - To accrediting organizations.
  - In order to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
  - To appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies.

The School also may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent unless a parent objects in writing. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include this type of information in certain publications. Examples of such publications include a playbill, showing the student’s role in a drama production; the annual yearbook; honor roll or other recognition lists; graduation programs; and sports activity sheets.

The School has designated the following as directory information:

- Student’s name
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph

- Honors and awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level

Parents who do not want the School to disclose the above directory information without their prior written consent must notify the Principal in writing before the start of the school year. A log must be maintained of each request for access to and each disclosure of educational record information other than disclosure to parents or students 18 or older or school officials. The log should contain the name of the person(s), the date, and the legitimate interests the person had in requesting or obtaining the information.

Parents have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by [insert school name] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Dept. of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8520.

PARENT CONTACT INFORMATION - In the best interest of students, the school welcomes and encourages communication between parents and teachers. Whenever a situation occurs that causes concern, the concern should be addressed first at the level at which the situation arose. Teachers are seen by appointment. Please contact them directly by email or phone to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet. Parents whose phone numbers are unlisted must give the school either the unlisted number or a number where the parent(s) can be reached. It is essential that the school have this information in case of an emergency. It will be kept in the strictest confidence. Any change of phone number or home address is to be given to the school office and homeroom teacher in writing within one week after the change is effective.

Regarding information in the annual school directory, notifications in past years or to individuals other than the Principal cannot substitute for a new notification. You must notify the Principal each year if you wish to have information restricted.

CHANGE IN NAME OR FAMILY STATUS - If there is a change in family status and/or the change of a child's legal name, it is important that the school be informed promptly of the change. In case of a change of custody, a copy of the court order that names the custodial parent must be on file with the school. SFA will use the student's legal name on all official records.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT - Emergency card information for each child is to be kept current. Children will only be released to the person(s) designated on the emergency form, unless otherwise instructed by the custodial parent/guardian. Non-custodial parents are welcome to review their child's records unless there is a court order or legal agreement prohibiting such access. The school may notify the custodial parent of this request to review records. St. Francis of Assisi School does not allow a non-custodial parent physical access to his/her child during school hours or on school premises unless the custodial parent has consented or the school has a court order permitting access.



## § III – Health & Safety

### HEALTH RECORDS & PROCEDURES

Parents are required annually to complete a Health Form listing any allergies, serious medical conditions, medication, and emergency contact information. The school must be notified of any changes that occur during the school year. Completed health records and immunization reports are kept on file in the school office. A public health representative reviews the health/immunization records yearly. A complete, updated record must be in the school office. If a child is absent because of a contagious disease, he/she must bring a doctor's note to the office upon return. (Please review the regulations under *Attendance*.)

ALLERGIES & MEDICAL ISSUES - Parents must notify the school of their child's allergies, including food allergies. Likewise, parents must notify the school of other chronic conditions impacting the student's learning environment, safety, and overall well-being. **School medication orders must be renewed each year by the physician and the order must be signed on or after July 1st.** If the student carries an EpiPen, the physician's order must state this requirement.

EMERGENCY FORMS - Emergency information for each child is to be kept current. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY FORM FOR EACH CHILD AND THAT THE SCHOOL IS INFORMED IMMEDIATELY OF ANY CHANGE IN ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER. Children will only be released to the person(s) designated on the emergency form, unless otherwise instructed by the custodial parent/guardian. The school may ask for identification from individuals picking up a child.

HEAD INJURY - If any injury to the head or any other serious injury occurs to a student, then school staff will call the parent and send home a report. The report is to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school. If the parent/guardian or alternative contact person cannot be reached in an emergency, the school will contact police/ambulance for assistance.

INSURANCE - SFA provides parents the option to purchase health insurance for their children.

### MARYLAND STATE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS & IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

A child may not enter school unless he/she has submitted an official immunization record or other appropriate documentation of immunization status. The immunization record must have the month, day, and year of each vaccination. It must be signed by a physician or health department official, and be approved by the school. A parent/guardian must show a medical contraindication signed by a doctor for his/her child to be excused. **In the case of religious objection or medical contra-indication, form DHMH 89, must be submitted and kept on file and be approved by the school.** Exempted students are to be excluded from school if there is an outbreak of the disease for which they are not immunized.

All students in Catholic schools, grades K-8 are immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, hepatitis B, and varicella. For Preschool, Hib and prevnar (PCV7) are required. **If no immunization documentation is received by the first day of school, the child is not in compliance with the law regarding immunization; therefore, the**

**child will be excluded from school.** For missing doses or incomplete information the child has 20 calendar days from the first day of school before exclusion begins.

The school follows the directives of the Baltimore City Health Department and responds to parents'/guardians' requests for individual vision and hearing screening. The testing is usually done for all students in Pre-K, any K not previously screened, 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> as well as for new students in all other grades.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Parents must call the school if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. The school must notify the Health Department. All reports are confidential unless required otherwise by applicable law.

The following communicable diseases/conditions need to be reported:

measles (regular or German [rubella])	whooping cough (pertussis)
meningitis	Rocky Mountain spotted fever
hepatitis	human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV/AIDS and all other symptomatic infections)
food poisoning	animal bites/rabies
mumps	influenza (flu)
pertussis or adverse reactions to vaccine	coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19)
Lyme disease	
chicken pox (varicella)	
tuberculosis (T.B.)	

Any student with drainage from the eyes associated with conjunctivitis (pinkeye) must be kept at home until treated by a doctor and has received three doses of the prescribed medication. Students who have chicken pox are excluded from school until all lesions are scabbed over. Students are excluded from school for head lice. A child may return to school when he/she is free from lice and nits. A child must be examined by staff before he/she can return to class.

## **SUDDEN ILLNESS**

Parents/guardians may not send a child to school if he/she has vomited, had diarrhea, or a fever (100.0 F) within the past 24 hours. If a child has been sent home from school for any of the above reasons, he/she should not return to school for at least 24 hours or has been symptom-free for 24 hours. Parents/guardians should not send a child to school until his/her temperature has remained normal for a full 24 hours without medication. Students should not be dropped off to school if they are exhibiting any signs of illness or problems.

## **MEDICATION PROCEDURES**

As of August 2021, St Francis of Assisi has adopted a policy allowing the availability of stock epinephrine in the health suite for use in the event of an anaphylactic emergency. This epinephrine is for emergency use during normal school days and is not dependent on allergy history. It is not available outside of normal school hours or on field trips. Students with a known history of severe allergies are still expected to maintain emergency action plans, medical orders, and their own supply of emergency medication.

The administration of medication in school is discouraged. However, if a student's physician recommends that the student receive prescription or over-the-counter medication

during the school day, a written order from the physician is required. St. Francis of Assisi School provides a full time nurse on campus, while also providing multiple Certified Medication Technicians (CMTs) who are authorized by a delegating nurse to distribute medication under certain procedures.

Medication can only be dispensed with a written order from the student's physician, specifying start and stop date. **No medication will be administered in school without parent/guardian authorization and physician's written orders.** The original medication container or box for inhalers must be brought to the school. These containers or boxes should include the following: name of medication, directions for use, time for dispensing, name of doctor ordering the medication, date of prescription, expiration date as stated by the pharmacist, strength of medication/dosage, and student's name and grade.

Students may not possess, dispense or distribute medication on their own. Under special circumstances, individual students may be authorized by their physician to carry and administer emergency medications (e.g. inhalers, epipens). In this case the school office must be consulted. All medication must be delivered to school by a parent/guardian.

Regarding medication and prescriptions, parents should note the following procedures:

1. The medication, properly labeled by a pharmacist, must be hand-delivered to the school by the parent/guardian in the original container. The Health Department or school personnel will not administer medication brought to school by the student.
2. 1st DOSE OF A NEW PRESCRIPTION MUST BE STARTED OUTSIDE SCHOOL.
3. The parent is responsible for submitting to the school in writing from the physician any change in dosage or time of giving medication.
4. The school/health personnel will not administer nor be responsible for any medication not prescribed by a physician.
5. Medications must be distributed per doctor's orders. SFA cannot provide increased or reduced dosages based on parent request without documentation by a physician.
6. THE PARENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TEACHING THEIR CHILD THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION REGARDING THE MEDICATION: Name, Color, Amount to take, Time to be taken
7. For Preschool students, over the counter medication may only be administered 1 time per illness with written consent from the parents and physician.

## **COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS**

St. Francis of Assisi School maintains compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws/regulations, as well as Archdiocesan and parish policies.

ASBESTOS PLAN - In October 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings and implement response actions in a timely manner. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on inspections, re-inspections, response actions and post-response action activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or in progress. The plan is kept in the principal's office and may be viewed on request during normal business hours.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS - A complete Bloodborne Pathogens Standard Exposure Control Plan is established and staff trained accordingly. The plan is on file in the office.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - Maryland law requires that all educators and other school employees, including volunteers, report suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities in order that children may be protected from harm and the family may be helped. Our school policy supports Maryland laws in this regard and requires that all school staff report suspected abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services, Protective Services Division, and/or the local police department, as well as to the Principal.

CRISIS INTERVENTION PLAN - In the event that St. Francis of Assisi School is faced with a crisis, such as a bomb or gun threat, environmental hazard, or public safety issue, a crisis intervention plan has been formulated and is on file in the Principal's office.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY -

In the case of a medical emergency and the school is unable to reach a parent, the administration will utilize the best judgment and contact 911. The decision to transport is made by EMS personnel after they have arrived at the scene, assessed the incident, and, as appropriate, consulted with other medical personnel. As such, the subjective judgment of the school nurse or principal to call 911 is not determinative with respect to emergency transport, and emergency calls will be made to always err on the side of caution.

DRUG-FREE SCHOOL ZONE - SFA complies with the Drug Free School Zone & Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988.

EMERGENCY DISMISSALS - Early dismissals, including those for inclement weather, will be announced via the emergency system for email and phones. SFA does not close for heat.

EMERGENCY DRILLS - Drills for all emergency circumstances are conducted according to city/state guidelines. These include fire, intruder, severe weather, and building evacuation.

**VISITORS**

In order to provide a safe environment for your child, all school doors will remain locked during the school day. All visitors must report to the office and may not visit other parts of the school building without a visitor's pass generated by the Raptor System. A government-issued photo identification card must be presented at first sign-in with the Raptor System for each visitor to the building. Subsequent or repeat visits do not require presentation of the ID again. Visitors should note that we are a smoke-free environment campus-wide.

**VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are needed and appreciated as playground supervisors, room parents, classroom helpers, office assistants and various school program helpers. Under Archdiocesan requirements, **ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST COMPLETE requirements for VIRTUS training,**

including completion of the Archdiocese of Baltimore Volunteer Application and review a copy of the “Statement of Policies for the Protection of Children & Youth” of the Archdiocese. If a volunteer will have substantial contact with children, then the volunteers must undergo a background check in addition to providing references and also complete a video training session online. It is important to know that until the above requirements are met any volunteer activity will be delayed. Volunteers who intend to drive children other than their own must complete an additional level of screening to include a driving-record check by the MVA.

## § IV – Academics

### ACADEMIC COURSE OF STUDY

Detailed and up-to-date information on our Course of Study and special programs can be found on the school's website: [www.sfa-school.org](http://www.sfa-school.org). We follow the Archdiocesan Course of Study with enhancements where appropriate. Spanish classes are offered to all grades from Pre-K 4's through Grade 8.

HOMEWORK - Homework is periodically assigned to support full scholastic development and for reinforcement of skills learned in the classroom. Students should spend appropriate time depending on their grade level and teacher expectations. Homework may include study/review as well as written assignments. In addition, students are expected to read nightly. Students are also expected to drill math facts on a regular basis. Each student in grades 2 to 8 uses a special Homework Book in which assignments are copied so that parents may see the nightly requirements. In addition, homework is posted online. Parents/guardians are expected to see that their children fulfill their homework responsibilities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION - Physical Education is required for each year a student attends St. Francis of Assisi School. All K-8 students enrolled must attend physical education classes twice per week. Gross motor play for our preschoolers is incorporated into lessons and daily schedules and children go outside to play for a minimum of 45 minutes per day.

RELIGION CLASS - Religion class is required for each year a student attends St. Francis of Assisi School, regardless of the student's personal faith affiliation. All students enrolled must attend religion classes and services, including Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for designated grade levels.

PROGRAM FOR FAMILY LIFE - SFA participates in the required Archdiocesan program on human sexuality. The program provides age-appropriate instruction in family life topics from a Catholic perspective. Materials for the program are specified between those written for a parent audience and those for the age group being taught. Student materials are distributed during class time. Parent materials are made available through the Main Office to inform families of the content of these lessons. Parents may opt-out of the program after review of the materials by presenting notice to the administration in writing.

TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS - Consumable workbooks, materials, and educational technology services are paid for through the annual Materials Fee. The materials fee is a mandatory non-refundable fee. This fee can not be included in tuition or spread out beyond the 2 months given to pay it. Most hardcover and online textbooks are purchased with funds from the State of Maryland and are the property of the State of Maryland. Lost or damaged textbooks must be replaced by the family.

ABILITY GROUPING - Students of all ability levels are welcome at SFA. Most classes are heterogeneous, although as students begin to diverge in their demonstrated classroom

proficiencies, an effort is made to tailor the curriculum accordingly. This ensures that all students receive engaging instruction with opportunities to learn from good models and interact with all ability levels. Small, flexible groups provide opportunities for enrichment, remediation, or special interests.

EXAMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL - At the end of the year, students in grades 6-8 will take their final exams. A special schedule will be distributed with the order of the exam administration. Students have graded exams reviewed with them in class; however, they are not sent home. Parents can review the exams by setting up a time to view them at school.

### HONOR ROLL FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

Students in grades 6-8 who demonstrate high academic achievement and who positively impact the learning environment are placed on Honor Roll based on the following criteria:

- Principal's Honor Roll – All A's or better in major subjects (Religion, ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies), all special classes, and no N's or U's in any standards, effort, and conduct including unstructured time. All IB standards in all subjects must be 5 or better.
- Second Honors – All A's & B's (with more A's than B's, meaning a minimum of 3 A's) in major subjects (Religion, ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies), and B or better in all special classes, standards, effort, and conduct including unstructured time. All IB standards in all subjects must be 3 or better.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM - Preschool uses the Creative Curriculum in addition to thematic play-based learning. The Creative Curriculum is an approved curriculum by the Maryland State Department of Education for Preschool programs. The Creative Curriculum is broken up into several learning themes which will be used throughout the school year. For more information, parents can refer to the following website: [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com).

SPECIAL STATEMENT ON "SCREEN TIME" FOR PRESCHOOL - Screen time, including television, computers, tablets, or other media devices for Preschool students will be limited to use only in facilitated learning experiences. Screen time will be limited to less than once per day in Pre-K-2's classroom and will be interactive (touch screen, dancing with music, etc.)

### STANDARDIZED TESTING

SFA follows the Archdiocese elementary school standardized testing program. All Archdiocesan schools administer the achievement test designated by the Department of Catholic Schools in prescribed grades. Elementary school students in grades 2-8 are administered the MAP Assessment three times a year to measure growth. Pre K and Kindergarten students are administered the BRIGANCE developmental screenings. Parents are given feedback as to how their child is scoring at the end of the year. SFA uses the results of these tests to analyze pupil progress, develop the curriculum, and determine effective teaching strategies. Results of the tests will be communicated to parents/guardians and results will be affixed to each child's cumulative records. Copies of test results are sent home and should be kept for high school admissions. Students in grades 5 and 8 complete the Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education (ACRE) exam annually. Parents/guardians will be informed of the testing dates and are asked to not schedule any outside appointments during this week of

testing.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are issued three times a year, at the end of each academic trimester for Pre-K through 8th grade. Averages are determined by tests, quizzes, projects, homework, class work (which includes notebooks) and participation. Throughout each trimester, parents may view grades in PowerSchool by way of the online “Parent Access” tool.

Marking system for Grades 3-8 as determined by the Archdiocese of Baltimore:

ACADEMIC GRADES		EFFORT/CONDUCT		STANDARDS PROGRESS	
A+	97-100	O	Outstanding	I	Independent/Proficient
A	93-96	G	Good	V	Very Good Progress
B+	89-92	S	Satisfactory	P	Progressing
B	85-88	N	Needs Improvement	S	Satisfactory
C+	80-84	U	Unsatisfactory	N	Needs Improvement
C	75-79			U	Unsatisfactory
D	70-74				
E	0-69				

- Number grades are rounded off to find the letter grade. Examples: 96.5 rounds up to 97 and equals an A+, while 96.4 rounds down to 96 and equals an A.
- Letter grades are used for Religion, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies in grades 3 to 8 and for World Language in grades 6 - 8. Standards Progress codes are provided in other subjects.
- **For PK through 2nd Grade**, I (independent), P (progressing), E (emerging), N/A (not assessed at this time) are used for all subjects.
- **Middle School** uses the International Baccalaureate program for determining proficiency for curriculum standards. Grades K-5 use the Standards Progress codes.

Interim reports are issued at the halfway point in each trimester. If a student is failing or in danger of failing, an interim report will be sent home, which must be signed and returned.

## PROMOTION & RETENTION

PRESCHOOL PROMOTION: Successful completion of a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (Brigance, MSDE approved) administered in the Spring as well as readiness and maturity, as evaluated by the classroom teachers and the Preschool Director, are the primary indicators for moving to the next level classroom. Placement into the 3/4's class will be determined by the Director in consultation with the Principal and parents.

K-8 RETENTION - Students are promoted to the next grade upon successful completion of all subjects in a given year. Students who do not complete the required educational program may be retained at the current grade. This decision is made by the principal in consultation with parents. If a student in Grades 3-8 fails two major subjects (Religion, ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies), the school recommendation of retention may be enforced if the child is to remain at SFA. Summer School or approved tutoring may be required by the school if there is a failure in



only one major subject. Students at any grade who are absent from school frequently with an inconsistent pattern of attendance (absence of 10 days in a trimester or 20 days or more cumulatively) may be required to attend summer school or repeat the grade. Students who receive multiple suspensions may be disallowed from repeating a grade. Students who do not successfully complete the required educational program may be retained at the current grade level. This decision is made by the principal in consultation with the parents after following the timeline described below. Teachers should communicate with parents on a regular basis regarding the child's progress. By mid-February, the teacher, principal, parents, (and student) review the student's work performance to date and discuss his/her educational needs for the remainder of the year and the possibility of failure and/or retention. This meeting is followed by a written communication to the parents reviewing the content of the meeting, including the educational plan.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS - Students in Grade 8 must pass the following subjects in order to graduate: Religion, Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. A student with a failing grade in any one of these areas will be expected to attend summer school or be tutored by persons approved by the administration. A certificate of successful completion must be presented to the principal of the high school and the principal of St. Francis before school reopens. Although the student may attend the formal graduation ceremony, the official St. Francis of Assisi School Diploma will be withheld until all of the above has been accomplished. Diplomas will be issued to those students who have successfully completed eighth grade requirements. The 8th Grade may not be repeated at SFA. Students in 8th grade who successfully complete the course of study as outlined by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, will be awarded a diploma at the end of the school year. An 8th grade student must be in good academic, financial and behavior standing in order to participate in the end of the year graduation activities.

## STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS

SFA attempts to meet the educational needs of all students. If a student appears to have learning differences or other special educational needs, the parent is obliged to have professional educational assessments completed and to supply the documents as a condition of continued enrollment. SFA will attempt to provide the modification of services that are recommended, dependent upon our personnel and facility restrictions.

## EVALUATION PROCESS

If a child is not progressing academically, the school may ask the parents to initiate, or the parents may initiate on their own, the process to request professional assistance from their local public school system, typically through their zoned public school. The evaluative process is generally called the IEP Process (Individual Educational Plan) and begins when a parent/guardian calls "Child Find". Following the initial phone call to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) Child Find, parents/guardians are given an initial meeting date within 30 days. At this initial meeting, parents/guardians and school faculty are invited to share their concerns, present information, and discuss whether an evaluation will take place. SFA school staff, in particular the student's teacher, are a vital part of the process.

If an evaluation is deemed warranted and takes place, recommendations and an academic plan are developed and given to the parents/guardians at the summative meeting following the academic evaluation. If such a plan is developed and the test results determine that there is a need for accommodations and/or modifications within a student's learning environment, the school administrator will consult with the parents/guardians to determine what accommodations, resources, plans, and school placements may be implemented. When appropriate a Student Accommodation Plan is developed.

### STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PLANS (SAPs)

If a child has an academic services plan (IFSP, IEP, or 504), parents are to notify the school during the admissions process or for current students, as soon as the evaluation process begins so that the school can work closely to provide accommodations or modifications suggested by the plan to support the student's learning. The school staff will work with the family using the documentation to develop a formal Student Accommodation Plan (SAP). A copy of all plans will be kept in the Principal's office for privacy. In this instance, the SAP is the governing document for the school's support of the student, and not the previous academic services plan or any psychoeducational testing.

**St. Francis of Assisi School cannot provide academic accommodations or modifications to any student without supporting documentation from an outside professional source. This policy includes extended time on assessments and standardized testing.**

Guidelines for Documentation of Learning Needs: Documentation to support a need for requested accommodations must:

- State the specific disability as diagnosed, using the most recent DSM classification.
- Be current (in most cases the psycho-educational evaluation, IEP or 504 Plan should be no older than three years).
- Provide a complete educational, developmental, and relevant medical history.
- Describe the comprehensive testing and techniques used to arrive at the diagnosis.
- Provide the professional credentials of the evaluator(s).
- Describe the functional limitations supported by the test results and how these limitations affect learning and testing.
- Describe the specific accommodations or modifications recommended.

If accommodations are required due to a medically-treated issue [e.g. injury, vision impairment, deafness, paralysis, ADD/ADHD (treated with prescriptions), a psychological condition or a physical disability], a letter from a medical doctor may be submitted.

STUDENT ADVOCACY TEAM (SAT) - A Student Advocacy Team (SAT), led by the school's Learning Specialist, and including school administration, representatives from each grade division, and the School Counselor, meets on a monthly basis to review all student academic progress, with a particular focus on those students currently working from or potentially in need of a Student Accommodation Plan (SAP). SAPs will be reviewed and updated at least annually by the SAT in consultation with parents/guardians, administration, and classroom teachers.

OTHER SPECIALIZED NEEDS - Parents/guardians of a student who has specialized needs not otherwise covered in this Handbook should contact the Principal to determine what reasonable accommodations can be made so that the student may be a part of our community. For example, subject to the conditions outlined by the school administration, SFA supports the use of one-to-one instructional assistants or the appropriate use of service animals.

# INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

Our International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP) informs the overall SFA approach to teaching and learning by emphasizing an inquiry-based approach. Rather than isolating subject areas from one another in the curriculum, instructors are to guide students to apply the content and skills taught by engaging students in inquiry-driven learning activities that allow them to investigate real-world issues and solutions to problems. (For example: the connection between the role of government and the natural world; the use of math and art skills in engineering design projects; the science behind changes in Earth's landforms. Genuine connections exist between social studies and science when it comes to environmental issues concerning laws and civic responsibility.) It is necessary to keep fresh the awareness and use of the many connections evident across all the subjects in the curriculum.

## IB-MYP ASSESSMENT POLICY

PHILOSOPHY OF ASSESSMENT - The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program is guided by three core principles: holistic learning, intercultural awareness, and communication. In essence, assessment is simply a form of communication. The word itself is derived from the Latin *ad sedere*, meaning "to sit beside." Effective assessment is a tool that promotes learning by providing guidance to the learner.

During the learning process, the feedback students receive is called *formative assessment*. It answers the question "How am I doing so far?" The teacher takes on the role of a coach, providing quick, direct, and useful information to the student about his or her learning and growth. In addition, peers can respond and give feedback, and the learner will reflect upon his or her learning in journals or discussions. This information can be used by the student to get better at the task and to deepen and refine his or her understanding of a concept. The IB-MYP places great value on formative assessment, which could also be termed "assessment *for* learning."

*Summative assessment* refers to a judgment that is made about a significant, culminating demonstration of learning. A summative assessment looks to see whether a student can show growth in understanding, awareness, and application of skills. If formative assessment is like athletic coaching, then summative assessment is the sport/game itself. It could also be termed "assessment *of* learning." Both types of assessment are important in IB instruction.

COMMON PRACTICES IN ASSESSMENT - In designing MYP units of study, teachers "begin with the end in mind." In other words, they determine what it is that students should know and be able to do at the end of the unit. Then they design activities and create rubrics to guide students in understanding the qualities necessary for a successful demonstration of learning. Teachers refer to these rubrics throughout the unit. **A final project may take the form of a presentation, an essay, a design project, a research paper, or other significant activities that allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the essential concepts and content of the unit.**

Formative assessment throughout the unit will help students understand what needs to be improved so that they can demonstrate their understanding successfully. Knowledge of content (such as vocabulary) and skills (such as math calculations) will be assessed by the teacher through tasks such as quizzes, tests, and short writing assignments throughout the unit of study.

Students will also monitor their own progress through activities such as journal reflections and peer critiques. The most significant assessment will be a rubric-based summative judgment regarding the major project that completes each unit. Researching, designing, creating, and reflecting on major projects are distinguishing elements of the IB. Through guidance in development of IB approaches to learning (ATL), teachers help students develop the skills necessary to become independent learners, such as organizing/completing tasks, demonstrating knowledge, and using task-related techniques.

RECORDING AND REPORTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT - There are several audiences to whom assessment information should be communicated. First of all, assessment should serve the student: it is a tool to help students understand their own learning so that they can assume greater responsibility and become more independent. Secondly, assessment must serve parents and other teachers: their role as caring adults is to support student learning, and in order to do so, they need to understand where strengths and weaknesses lie. Third, assessment must communicate clearly and efficiently to outside entities, such as the school district and high schools, about levels of achievement.

Assessment structure is consistent across subjects. Each area has four main objectives. Subject groups must address all strands of all four objectives at least twice in each year of the MYP. In all IB subject areas, an 8-point scale is used to make judgments about the level of a student’s achievement on a particular task, in light of the specific criteria for that subject area. The scale is separated into bands. Generally, they are as follows:

0	The student does not meet a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	The student shows a limited or partial understanding.
3-4	The student shows adequate or satisfactory understanding.
5-6	The student shows solid understanding.
7-8	The student’s work is successful at the highest levels of challenge.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore requires that grades also be reported on a traditional scale. When assignments are graded at St. Francis, the 8-point IB scale translates as follows:

8 = 100%	4 = 80%
7 = 95%	3 = 75%
6 = 90%	2 = 70%
5 = 85%	1 = 65%

In the form of rubrics, this grading scale will be used frequently, on both minor and major tasks in all subject areas, so that students, parents, and teachers become very familiar with its meaning and purpose. The percentages will be recorded in PowerSchool for those assignments that are graded. Summative assessments will be weighted more heavily than formative assessments. Some formative assessments are simply communication tools and will not be included in PowerSchool.

Three times a year, midway through each trimester, the students and teachers will assess student progress towards independent use of skills and self-management strategies. These narrative reports will supplement the traditional Archdiocesan report card. The reports will be organized around the five broad categories of the Approaches to Learning: Communication Skills, Social Skills, Self-Management Skills, Research Skills, and Thinking Skills. Student self-reflection can play a role in these reports, with increasing prominence as students progress through the grades. For example, 6th graders' reports will be written by the teachers, and 7th graders' reports will be written by teachers but will draw upon the students' own reflections. In 8th grade, students initiate the reflection narrative and teachers build upon their statements.

IB grades are incorporated into the Archdiocesan Report Card. Summative assessments for each IB unit are scored according to the eight point rubric for one or more criteria for that subject. The scores, ranging from 0-8, are recorded as Standards on the report card. The final grade for each standard is assigned by the teacher at the end of each trimester. The teacher considers progress throughout the trimester to determine a "best fit", not an exact average. In addition, the score for each summative assessment is converted to points and entered as an assessment that is linked to the traditional final grade.

Other formative assessments, such as homework, drills, and quizzes, are also entered into Powerschool and linked to the final grade. Formative assessments are given less weight than the summative assessments. The final trimester grade will be in the format of A+ to E.

CONCLUSION - The content of courses is directed by the curriculum standards of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The design of the units of study, including the formative tasks and the summative projects, is the responsibility of the teachers in collaboration with the IB Coordinator. Teachers will meet regularly to share assessment strategies so as to achieve consistency of expectations across disciplines.

Assessment in the Middle School at SFA aims to conform to IB Standards while also meeting the assessment expectations of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. To be successful in the IB program, students must be able to "recall, adapt, and apply knowledge and skills to new questions and contexts" (*From Principles Into Practice, 2014*). Hence, according to IB expectations, assessment in the MYP aims to:

- Support/encourage student learning by providing feedback on the learning process.
- Inform, enhance, and improve the teaching process
- Provide opportunities for students to exhibit transfer of skills across disciplines, such as in the community project and interdisciplinary unit assessments
- Promote positive student attitudes towards learning
- Promote a deep understanding of subject content by supporting students in their inquiries set in real-world contexts
- Promote the development of critical and creative thinking skills
- Reflect the international-mindedness of the program by allowing for assessments to be set in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts
- Support the holistic nature of the program by including in its model principles that take account of the development of the whole student. (*From Principles Into Practice, 2014*)

## IB-MYP HONESTY POLICY/PHILOSOPHY

St. Francis of Assisi School forms children for a life of scholarship, spirituality, and service. As stated in the school handbook the school strives to: 1) develop the strong character and sense of responsibility based on Christian ideals; 2) establish an atmosphere that will enhance all aspects of growth and learning in the child; and 3) provide a supportive climate that will promote the welfare of the individual and the school community.

Academic honesty promotes integrity in all aspects of learning and teaching. It is supported by several of the IB Learner Profile traits:

- **Inquirers:** The students nurture their curiosity and develop their skills for research. They know how to learn independently and with others, giving credit for each contribution.
- **Communicators:** They express themselves confidently and collaborate effectively when appropriate. They cite information gathered from other sources correctly.
- **Principled:** They act with integrity, honesty, and a strong sense of fairness. They take responsibility for their own actions and give credit to the contributions of others.

EXPECTATIONS - The students will learn and practice academic honesty as they develop their ATL (Approaches to Learning) skills. The students will acknowledge the source of their data, works of art, illustrations, photographs, maps, etc. The students will follow the guidelines given by their teachers in citing information, appropriate for their grade level. Citations will include the author, title of the source, date of publication, and page numbers as applicable. Middle school students will cite the source even when the material is paraphrased.

The students will collaborate on activities when directed and reflect on the contribution of each student in that collaboration. The students will also work independently when requested, supported by their teachers and parents in developing academic integrity. All assignments must be authentic - based on the student's individual and creative ideas, with the ideas and work of others fully acknowledged (*From Principles to Practice 76*).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT - Academic misconduct is any behavior which results in a student gaining an unfair advantage over another. It includes:

- Plagiarism - representing the work of another as one's own, without acknowledging the source of the information. This includes copying another student's work or using information from another source, even when paraphrased, without citing the source.
- Collusion - allowing one's work to be copied by another
- Duplication of work - use of the same work for different assessment components
- Any other behavior that gives an unfair advantage to a student or affects the results of another student (*From Principles to Practice 94*).

## ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

The school will communicate this policy on the school website and will revisit this policy annually to update as needed. The teachers will ensure that students understand the honesty policy and will provide instruction in the ATL skills needed to enable the students to paraphrase and quote information using appropriate citation formats. The school will address incidences of academic misconduct. Consequences may include notification of parents, disciplinary action up to and including suspension. Details are found in the ***Student Discipline*** section of this Handbook. This policy will be reviewed annually by the IB Planning Committee in June.

Suggested revisions will be submitted for approval by the principal. New faculty members will be updated on the policy in August.

## **IB-MYP LANGUAGE POLICY**

LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY - “Crucial for the success of the programmes is a rich development of language and literacy for all learners. The ability to communicate [...] in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes intercultural understanding”. (*Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes, 2008*.)

St. Francis of Assisi School provides language instruction along a continuum. Initially students learn basic literacy skills. The child learns to read and use language as a communicative tool. The child is then able to transfer understandings and concepts when learning another language. (*Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes, 2008*)

The second stage of language instruction is using language to learn. Language is used to develop new meanings and to construct knowledge about the world. Literacy becomes increasingly important in doing this as more abstract learning takes place through dense academic texts in school. The ability to access the language of these texts is referred to as a cognitive academic language proficiency or CALP by Cummins (1979, as quoted in *Learning in a Language Other than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes, 2008*).

Third, the student’s instruction culminates in learning about language. The student gains insights into the various genres used by writers to communicate in a purposeful way. The student also makes effective choices in choosing the best genre for the writing task.

LANGUAGE PROFILE - Approximately 90% of the population of St. Francis of Assisi School speaks the English language as the “mother tongue.” The school has a culturally diverse population, with about 20% of our student and faculty community either first or second generation immigrants. Among the countries of origin are Argentina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, China, India, Pakistan, The Philippines, Sierra Leone, Singapore, and France. Several students are bilingual, but none are bilingual in Spanish, which is our second language of instruction. All students Pre-K to 8th grade are offered Spanish as a second language. Students in the IB MYP receive a minimum of 50 hours of Spanish instruction per year.

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION (ENGLISH) - Since language is central to learning, all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication. The teachers meet regularly in their departmental groups (primary and middle) to create a dynamic framework to ensure the articulation of language acquisition skills across subject areas and grades. This includes phonetic and structural analysis skills; vocabulary development; factual, inferential, and critical comprehension skills ; and language expression.

The school follows the Archdiocesan Course of Study. At the middle school level this curriculum is integrated with the IB MYP units of study.

“All IB programmes value language as central to developing critical thinking, which is essential for the cultivation of intercultural understanding, as well as for becoming internationally minded and responsible members of local, national and global communities. Language is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development and cultural identity, and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development. The six skill areas



in the MYP language and literature subject group—listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting—develop as both independent and interdependent skills. They are centred within an inquiry-based learning environment. Inquiry is at the heart of MYP language learning, and aims to support students’ understanding by providing them with opportunities to independently and collaboratively investigate, take action and reflect” (*Language and Literature Guide, IBO, 2014*)

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS NOT PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH - St. Francis of Assisi School uses an inclusion approach to instruction. Students with learning differences progress with the support of a Learning Specialist, Title I services, and through differentiation, accommodations, and modifications of lessons within the classroom. Adjustments may include the following:

- the use of a pocket translator, translation software
- allowing more thinking time to plan a response
- elaborated input - the provision of more explanation in simpler language
- modeling and reinforcing language
- recasts - restating a response with correct language
- questioning to guide students’ thinking and expression
- increased use of student to student verbalization to allow the student the opportunity to practice language skills
- assessment accommodations - reducing assigned material breadth or length of response

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SPANISH) - The IB MYP requires the study of at least two languages to support students in understanding their own cultures and those of others. The study of a second language is essential for the cultivation of intercultural awareness and the student’s identity as a member of local, national, and global communities. The acquisition of a second language greatly contributes to the holistic development of students and to the strengthening of lifelong learning skills.

At St. Francis of Assisi the second language of instruction is Spanish. In addition to developing proficiency in Spanish, the students gain an understanding of cultural heritage. The instructor encourages an awareness and understanding of the perspectives of people from one’s own and other cultures, leading to involvement or service in one’s own and other communities. A final instructional goal is to foster curiosity and an interest in lifelong learning.

Students Pre-K to 5th grade receive Spanish instruction once a week. Middle school students receive instruction a minimum of two times and up to three times per week.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the IB Planning Committee in June. Suggested revisions will be submitted for approval by the principal. New faculty members will be updated on the policy in August.

## **IB-MYP INCLUSION/SPECIAL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY**

At SFA, students are formed for a life of scholarship, spirituality, and service. Scholarship is developed through inquiry, rigorous assessment, and dedication to lifelong learning. Students create a better and more peaceful world by embracing cultural, ethnic, and personal differences as they serve others. It is our expectation that all middle school students will be fully involved in the IB program. Teaching and learning enables students to become actively responsible for their own educational development. We offer accommodations to students with learning differences to enable them to fully participate in instructional activities. This policy is reviewed annually by the IB Planning Committee in June. Suggested revisions will be submitted for approval by the principal. New staff are updated on policy in August.

**IB-MYP STUDENT SUPPORT** - As teachers develop units of instruction, attention is given to strategies to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of learners. Examples include scaffolding instruction, rephrasing directions, chunking material, varying the reading level of instructional material, the use of cooperative learning, the use of technology for note taking, and the provision of copies of notes. Test accommodations include the use of extended time, chunking or decreasing the amount of material, and varying requirements for written responses.

Students with special needs are provided services through multiple means. A Learning Specialist is on staff to support Reading and Math instruction in the classroom, and Title I for educational support in small groups. In addition, when a child has been evaluated by a professional diagnostician, a Student Accommodation Plan (SAP) is developed to spell out accommodations and/or modifications based on the needs of the student. Support is also offered for students for whom English is not the mother tongue. (See ***IB-MYP Language Policy***.) This may include the use of a pocket translator, modeling language, the provision of coach classes, and assessment accommodations and/or modifications.

**IB-MYP STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS** - When a potential learning difference is identified, the student may be referred for an evaluation through the zoned public school or a private diagnostician. Results are shared with teachers, recommendations are discussed, and accommodations and/or modifications are agreed upon in a Student Accommodation Plan (SAP). Assessments are stored in a secure location in the Principal's office. The school's Student Advocacy Team (SAT) meets monthly for ongoing review of all SAPs and provides regular updates to teachers on the needs of their students.

**COORDINATION OF SERVICES** - After a SAP is developed, meetings are held to discuss the student's progress and learning expectations. Parents and staff both take part in analyzing student strengths and needs. The Learning Specialist leads in developing documents summarizing recommendations of the team. Title I also prepares a report regarding student progress to accompany the school report card sent home each trimester.

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT** - Professional development is available through Title II funding. In addition to weekly IB planning, staff meetings are held several times a month, with information shared regarding such topics as inclusion, executive function, and ways to scaffold instruction.

## § V – Student Life

### DRESS CODE & SCHOOL UNIFORMS

St. Francis maintains a dress code because we believe it fosters school identity and pride in one's self; it minimizes fashion competition and distractions; it teaches the value of appropriate dress; and it is an economical solution to expensive clothes.

Students are to be in full uniform when school is in session. Uniforms are to be worn to and from school. Uniforms should be clean, free of holes, and should fit properly. Parents will be asked to update or replace uniforms that do not fit properly. **The standard uniform may be worn year-round. Summer options (listed below) are permitted during Daylight Savings Time.**

A student who is out of uniform for a legitimate reason must bring a note from a parent or guardian. Students who do not abide by the dress code will receive a uniform slip, and repeated offenses may result in disciplinary action. When students are attending field trips they will be expected to wear their uniforms unless otherwise instructed.

**Preschool students do not wear uniforms.** They should wear comfortable play clothes that do not interfere with full participation. Shoes that fully enclose heel and toes are required.

#### OVERALL DRESS CODE GUIDELINES:

- Uniforms should be neat and clean and shirts are to be tucked in at all times.
- Shirts worn underneath must be plain white, short-sleeved, and tucked into slacks/skirts.
- Clothing must not be tight or revealing. Undergarments should not be seen.
- Hats, bandanas, hair decorations are not permitted. Simple headbands may be worn.
- Colored and artificial nails are not permitted. Only clear nail polish is acceptable.
- Tattoos, makeup, and body piercings are not permitted.
- Navy blue or white tights are optional with the standard uniform.

### STANDARD UNIFORM

#### ALL K-8 STUDENTS

- Plain Navy Blue or Plain White Socks (no logos) which must cover the ankles.
- Brown Tie Buck Shoes (Light OR Dark Brown permitted)
- (Optional) Navy Blue sweaters with the school's logo, which must be purchased from Flynn & O'Hara or Lands End only. Three options are available. Sweatshirts or jackets may not be worn in the classroom.

#### KINDERGARTEN TO FIFTH GRADE

- **Girls** - Uniform Jumper (knee-length) OR long khaki dress slacks from Flynn & O'Hara or Lands End with a white Peter Pan collared blouse. Black or brown belt. Shirt must remain tucked into the pants.
- **Boys** - Navy blue pants from Flynn & O'Hara or Lands End with a white buttoned down collared shirt. (School Logo is not required on the white shirt, but no other logos are acceptable.) Black or brown belt. Shirt must remain tucked into the pants. Navy blue ties are required (except for Kindergarten).

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

- **Girls** - Uniform skirts (knee-length) OR long khaki dress slacks from Flynn & O'Hara or Lands End with a white buttoned down collared blouse. Black or brown belt. Shirt must remain tucked into the pants or skirt.
- **Boys** - Navy blue pants from Flynn & O'Hara or Lands End with a white buttoned down collared shirt. (School Logo is not required but no other logos are acceptable.) Black or Brown Belt. Shirt must remain tucked into the pants. Navy blue ties are required.
- A class tie, approved by the school, may be included for both boys and girls in 8th grade.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORM (Worn all day on assigned PE days):

- Green PE shirt and shorts, both with SFA logo
- Plain White socks (no logos) and tennis (athletic) shoes
- (Optional for weather) Green PE sweatpants and sweatshirt with the SFA logo
- Spirit Wear, including SOAR Shirts, are allowed on spirit days **only**, not for PE
- **NOTE:** If students do not bring the PE uniform appropriate to the weather and the planned activities for that day, they may be kept indoors.

### HAIRSTYLES -

- St. Francis recognizes that particular hairstyles are often part of racial, ethnic, spiritual, and cultural identity and practice.
- Hair should be of natural coloring with no dyes or tints, simple, neat, clean, and out of the eyes.
- Hair grooming should not take place during school hours.
- Hair accessories should be functional, and should not interfere with learning. Simple headbands, such as uniform plaid or plain dark colors, are preferred.
- The administration has sole discretion in determining whether something not listed here is appropriate for a Catholic school.

### JEWELRY -

- Students may wear one stud earring on each ear. Dangling earrings/hoops are not allowed. Other piercings are not permitted above the neck.
- Bracelets and necklaces are not permitted. A small religious symbol may be worn around the neck but must be worn underneath the shirt. One simple ring is permitted.
- A watch is permitted. Electronic devices worn as watches are subject to the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) found elsewhere in this Handbook.

### SUMMER UNIFORM OPTIONS

During Daylight Savings Time, which ends the 1st Sunday of November and begins again on the 2nd Sunday of March, students may exercise the following options:

- Khaki walking shorts, purchased from Flynn & O'Hara or Lands End, may be worn in place of the dress uniform by both boys and girls. Black or brown belt. Shorts must fit properly and come to the top of the knee or longer.
- White, short-sleeved polo (SFA logos are not required but no other logos are permitted.)
- Standard uniform pieces may still be worn during the warm weather months, including

mix/match with summer options. (e.g. Summer polo with regular blue pants is allowed).

## **GUIDELINES FOR OUT-OF-UNIFORM OCCASIONS**

Occasionally, students are permitted to attend school or school events in casual attire. Even when out of uniform, clothing must reflect the values of SFA.

- All restrictions on jewelry, hair, and make-up remain in effect for dress down days.
- Some accessories may be permitted in line with the theme of the dress down day.
- Teachers reserve the right to tell a child to take off accessories that are impeding learning.
- Students may wear jeans, pants, sweats, or capri pants. Skirts, dresses, shorts must go to the knee. Leggings must be covered by a skirt or dress that goes to the knee.
- Shirts must fully cover the stomach and chest areas.
- Clothing should not be snug-fitting or revealing. No tank tops, spaghetti straps, or bare midriffs are permitted. Leggings and tight jeans/pants are not permitted unless layered under other clothing, in which case, the top layer must reach the knee.
- Clothing should not have holes or tears, even if that is part of the design.
- Shoes worn for dress-down must be closed-toed with a heel of no more than one inch.

## **GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES**

**BOOK BAGS** - All students must carry books to and from school in a book bag. Parents are responsible to replace lost or damaged book bags or tote bags.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are considered an integral part of the school's educational program and a valuable learning experience for students. Educational field trips are scheduled at various times during the school year. In advance of the trip, a permission form, required by the Archdiocesan Department of Catholic Schools, is sent home. A student will be able to attend the trip **only** if the permission form is signed by a parent/guardian and returned by the specific date.

All students are expected to participate in field trips as they are planned as part of the instructional program. If, for some extraordinary reason, a student is unable to participate, the student is expected to attend school on that day and fees must still be paid since the rates we are quoted reflect total participation. Work will be assigned by the teacher(s), and the student will be assigned a place to work under the supervision of a staff member. If a student is unable to attend because of illness, we cannot promise a refund. The teacher must be notified if a child will not participate in the field trip experience.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate as chaperones on field trips as the need arises. However, because of safety and liability factors, preschool siblings and other school-age siblings are not allowed. We do not permit parents not selected as chaperones to join the group at the trip destination as this creates confusion. Chaperones are required to complete the VIRTUS procedures established by the AOB Office of Child & Youth Protection, which can be found on <http://www.virtusonline.org>. Required forms can be found on our website and through the office. **There are absolutely no exceptions to this rule.** If parents will be driving students, an additional driving clearance must be completed at least two weeks prior to the trip.

PLAYGROUND RULES - We are happy to be able to provide our primary students with access to a playground facility built on the school property. Children in Pre-K to grade 2 will be able to play on the playground or on the white top during their regularly scheduled recess period. Older children may play on the whitetop or blacktop. When the children are outside on the playground or the white top they are expected to adhere to very specific playground rules. The playground equipment may only be used by students being supervised by teachers during school activities. It is not to be used after school, even by school families. A public playground is available for that purpose at 3400 Norman Avenue.

ROOM PARENTS - Room parents are a very essential segment of our school life. Ordinarily, each class has 1-2 parents who take special responsibility for aiding the teacher in any way possible. This assistance may take the form of helping in the organization of class trips, planning small in-room parties, assisting in receptions for school functions, or other needs that may arise. All activities are cleared with the principal/classroom teacher before planning.

LUNCH - Students should bring a nutritious lunch and snack to school which do not require refrigeration, cooking, or reheating. (In Preschool, refrigerators and microwaves are used.) We encourage fresh fruits and vegetables. Since we do not have lunchroom facilities, it is necessary for the children to eat lunch in their classrooms. Each child should come provided with a cloth tea towel/napkin to be used as a placemat on the desktop. Hot lunch is provided via outside services on an announced schedule. Parents are responsible for all communication with the vendor and financial arrangements are made exclusively through the hot lunch provider. 1% Milk is offered at all snacks/lunch for Preschool students. Scheduled opportunities are provided for special lunches with the support of parent volunteers. Under no circumstances can parents or students have food delivered (Door Dash, Uber Eats, etc.) to the school for lunch purposes for the child.

## **CLUBS & ACTIVITIES**

STEM CLUB - STEM Club is offered weekly after school to students in grades 4-8. Activities include Legos, simple machines, robotics, drones, and more!

DRAWING/ART CLUB - Younger students can participate in regular drawing/art club sessions to help create imaginative works of art!

GREAT BOOKS CLUB - Younger students can join the Great Books Club to explore the world of literature together with like-minded students and teachers!

WRITING CENTER - The Writing Center is open weekly after school for help on their written assignments. Students who are talented in writing may also offer to help other students.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY (NJHS) - SFA sponsors a chapter of the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS). Students in 7th grade will be introduced to the organization and informed of the academic and service requirements for acceptance. Students must have a cumulative 3.0 GPA across at least 4 trimesters of middle school in order to be invited to apply.

The administration and a committee of middle school teachers review the applications and select the candidates. Students are evaluated for the qualities of character, scholarship, leadership, service and citizenship. An induction ceremony for the new NJHS members will be held in the fall for the school, families, and guests. NJHS members contribute service regularly to the school community, particularly through peer tutoring of younger students. Students who have disciplinary action taken may be removed from NJHS as a consequence. Students who do not maintain at least Principal's List for Honor Roll may also be removed from NJHS.

STUDENT COUNCIL - The Student Council has the responsibility of helping to encourage school spirit by sponsoring projects and helping with school activities. Students exhibiting exemplary behavior in grades 5, 6, 7 & 8 may apply to be members of the Student Council. From among these members the student body (grades 5-8) elects a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. All members attend meetings during which projects are presented and discussed. Students are guided by moderator/s. Students who have disciplinary action taken may be removed from the Student Council as part of their consequences.

SAFETY PATROL - Students in upper grades may join the Safety Patrol to help with Carline, Arrival, and the raising/lowering of the American Flag.

DRAMA - Middle school students participate in a weekly Drama class as part of their IB Fine Arts program. Multiple times throughout the year dramatic performances are produced and performed. Extra rehearsal time sometimes occurs after school.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHOIR - The Young People's Choir is a parish ministry supporting liturgies throughout the year. There are regular rehearsals by announcement from the Choir Director.

#### ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

The St. Francis of Assisi Athletic Association (SFAAA) is a ministry of the parish supporting the athletic interests of the community. Students from SFA School, as well as children from the parish and its neighborhoods, are able to participate in SFAAA programs. Currently available sports include Outdoor Soccer, Indoor Soccer, Cross Country, and Track & Field. The provisions of this Handbook apply to all school students participating in SFAAA activities. All coaches are required to be VIRTUS-trained and background-checked volunteers.

CLUBS MAY BE ADDED OR SUBTRACTED BASED ON INTEREST AND RESOURCES.

# STUDENT DISCIPLINE

## PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE & CHRIST-CENTERED BEHAVIOR

SFA strives to develop responsible, courteous, self-disciplined boys and girls whose pride in themselves, their parents, their school, and their community is reflected in their behavior. The development of such young people requires a consistent practice of thoughtful, responsible behavior during these formative years. Students are made aware that they are an integral part of the faith community and that their actions affect themselves as well as the entire community. The ultimate purpose is to develop true Christian character and a sense of responsibility to establish an atmosphere conducive to academic excellence and to protect the welfare of the individual, as well as the school community.

In Catholic education, the student is ready to take his or her place in society in view of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Each child is an integral part of the school community that fosters the growth of Christian character. Therefore, school regulations must be followed by students in order to foster a sound educational climate. Discipline is administered in a manner consistent with Christian principles. Catholic schools' personnel do not use corporal punishment. All disciplinary policies are corrective in nature rather than exclusively punitive.

The policies of St. Francis of Assisi School aim to help students assume responsibility for their actions as members of a community. When all individuals freely accept this responsibility, discipline exists. Good discipline, administered equitably, is not an end in itself. Its ultimate purpose is to:

- Develop students' character and a sense of responsibility based on Christian ideals
- Establish an atmosphere that will enhance all aspects of growth and learning in the child
- Provide a supportive climate promoting the welfare of individuals and the community.

## PUBLIC DEPARTMENT

Students may be disciplined for conduct that occurs on school premises or at school/parish-sponsored events, or for other conduct that adversely affects the interests or reputation of the school regardless of where the conduct occurs. This includes online behavior.

## SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS & REGULATIONS

To maintain a positive learning environment and standards consistent with a Christian philosophy, it is essential students exhibit a sense of responsibility and respect for themselves as well as others. Listed herein are behaviors deemed acceptable and not acceptable.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

It is expected that students act with respect and courtesy toward teachers and fellow students at all times. Conduct, whether inside or outside school, which is detrimental to the school, is prohibited. Each student is to assume responsibility for complying with school regulations and for caring for school property. Conflicts are a normal and healthy part of living and growing. SFA encourages students to handle conflicts in a non-aggressive, verbal manner and not to avoid them. The goal is reconciliation with each other, a reflection of what God seeks for each of us with Him. The administration will implement acceptable conflict resolution techniques to work toward a solution as needed. SFA asks that each student accept the



responsibility for conduct rightfully expected of a student attending a Catholic school. When that does not occur, formal consequences may follow as appropriate.

### BEHAVIOR FACILITATION IN GENERAL

Any infraction of a school regulation including, but not limited to, those listed in this handbook may be reason for disciplinary action as outlined. Teachers in grades PK through 2 retain the right to impose alternative disciplinary actions deemed to be developmentally appropriate for students involved. Parents who have questions regarding a discipline issue are to begin with the teacher who issued the violation to initiate a respectful conversation concerning the incident. Administration may issue consequences or confiscate inappropriate attire that must be picked up by parents and not worn to school.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

SFA students are to foster and maintain honesty, trust, responsibility, and academic excellence. All members of the school community, including students, parents, and faculty, must be dedicated to this vision. This policy is established to create a positive learning environment and help build students' moral character. The community of St. Francis of Assisi School expects a commitment of academic integrity from all students. Students should produce and submit their own work and refuse to allow or ignore when they are aware that others do not produce and submit their own work. If a student believes an act of cheating or plagiarism has occurred, the student is encouraged to talk to the teacher directly and promptly.

The following actions are considered examples of academic dishonesty:

- Discussing test questions or answers with someone who has yet to take the test
- Using unauthorized aids such as notes or a "cheat sheet" on a test or quiz
- Giving assistance to another student during a test or quiz
- Copying another student's work or allowing another student to copy your work
- "Recycling" work from another course
- Copying information from a source without giving proper citation
- Paraphrasing information from a source without giving proper citation

Every effort will be made to ensure that testing situations are set up in such a way that dishonesty is less of an option. On homework assignments, the teacher will make it clear to parents what the expectations are regarding parental involvement. Increasingly, there are assignments that emphasize collaboration rather than isolated individual performances. It is important to help students distinguish between times when they must work alone, and times when their work involves contributions from others.

We do not give academic penalties (such as lost points) for cheating or other misbehavior during tests. Instead, the incident will be handled as a discipline infraction and referred to the administration. The teacher may remove the questionable assignment and require it be re-taken.

***See the IB Academic Honesty Policy for more detail relevant to Middle School students.***

## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION & SUPPORTS (PBIS)**

The Archdiocese of Baltimore has implemented an evidence- and research-based anti-bullying program, Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a comprehensive framework in which schools focus on our Christ-centered teachings and values to create nurturing, safe, positive, and supportive learning environments. Consistent school-wide expectations are visible throughout the school and students' positive behavior is acknowledged and celebrated. The PBIS framework adopts behavioral interventions into an integrated curriculum that is designed to enhance academic and behavioral outcomes for every student.

Positive behavior support is increasingly being recognized as a strategy that meets these criteria. By changing stimulus and reinforcement in the environment and teaching the child to strengthen deficit skill areas the student's behavior changes in ways that allow him/her to be included in the general education setting. The three areas of deficit most directly affected by this approach are: (1) communication skills, (2) social skills, and (3) self-management skills. Positive behavior support is successful in the school setting because it is primarily a teaching method. All teachers actively participate in and support the incentive-based program developed by the PBIS Team at SFA. Students are publicly recognized achievement in 4 value areas:

- **S**afe - Promote safety and responsibility in our thoughts, words and actions.
- **O**wnership - Take pride of ownership in our campus, our work, and our mission
- **A**ctively engaged - Stay actively engaged in academics, faith, family, and community life.
- **R**espectful - Encourage and model respect, peace, and kindness for all.

SFA Students are encouraged always to "Let your spirit **SOAR!**" Incentives are provided for varying levels of achievement and key benchmarks for behavior.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT & CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

The following are standard classroom policies. Teachers may have other regulations not listed here. Students are bound by both the following rules and by the teacher's rules.

- Students are to be in their seats when class begins.
- They are not to leave their places in the classroom without explicit permission.
- Each student is to have all the necessary materials for the class.
- Students are to be attentive to the teachers and to participate actively in all class activities assigned by the teachers. They are not to do work for another class or read other-than-class-materials, unless given explicit permission to do so by the teacher. Materials for another class or for non-class activities should not be on the desk.
- Each student is to refrain from talking without permission and from talking to others while instruction is going on or study periods or tests are underway.
- Students are to avoid any action that is distracting to the learning procedure underway in the classroom, especially harassing other students.
- Derogatory statements, including, but not limited to racist statements, will not be tolerated.
- Students are responsible for the cleanliness around their chairs, in their desks, etc. Students should dispose of any trash around their desks at the end of the day.
- Students are to refrain from insulting expressions, overt demonstrations of disapproval, and all other behavior disruptive to the classroom situation; they are not to argue about tests, grades and punishments during the class, but rather they should see the teacher

after the school day in order to resolve such difficulties.

- The location of desks, the condition of windows, blinds, and lights, etc. are the teacher's responsibility; students are not to regulate these unless directed to do so by the teacher.
- Students should always enter and leave a classroom quietly.
- Eating or drinking must take place only unless permission is granted by the teacher.
- Chewing gum is prohibited throughout the school at all times.
- Any other types of behavior, not specifically stated in this handbook, but which the administration considers to be acts of serious disruptive behavior will be addressed.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

When inappropriate behavior occurs, the PBIS framework calls for intervention based on the severity and intent of the behavior. Two tiers of intervention are used, with supports and consequences that will vary depending on the circumstances. Each student has a responsibility to adhere to school regulations at all times. The violations outlined should not be viewed as a total list since it is impossible to predict all possible rule infractions. The school reserves the right to discipline students for infractions not specifically identified in this section but which the school feels creates a safety concern, disruption to the learning process, a hostile environment for other students, or that violate the spirit of the stated rules.

### **TIER ONE SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS FOR MINOR INFRACTIONS**

This level of support is generally handled by the classroom teacher, as the actions of the student most directly affect the classroom setting. Students may be given referrals for inappropriate behavior, including, but not limited to, failure to comply with teacher instructions; failure to follow procedures; uniform violations; or for lack of respect towards fellow students or staff. **Referrals are a warning system used to provide intervention at the Tier One Level, and they are cumulative over the course of each trimester. Students are provided the consequence of detention after accumulating three (3) referrals over the course of the trimester.** Detentions are at times set by the school, and may include service to support the community.

### **TIER TWO SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS FOR MAJOR INFRACTIONS**

This level of support is generally handled by the administration, as the actions and behavior patterns of the student may affect the overall school. **Once a student has obtained a 4th referral or more it automatically becomes a major infraction which results in an automatic suspension.**

### **TIER THREE SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS FOR MISSION INFRACTIONS**

This level of support is handled by the administration, as the actions of behavior patterns of the student are fully incompatible with the mission of the school. In cases deemed necessary by the gravity of the circumstances or the well-being of the school. **Once a student has obtained 3 suspensions within a school year the administration will employ expulsion as a remedy.**

TIER ONE BEHAVIORS: MINOR INFRACTIONS	INTERVENTIONS/ CONSEQUENCES
---------------------------------------	--------------------------------

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not following procedures/regulations the teacher has established for his/her classroom.</li> <li>2. Not showing respect or courtesy.</li> <li>3. Distracting another student by talking at inappropriate times, writing notes, texting, or email.</li> <li>4. Chewing gum or eating food at inappropriate times.</li> <li>5. Not following the dress code.</li> <li>6. Using inappropriate or vulgar language.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Verbal Warnings</li> <li>● PBIS Referral</li> <li>● Parent Contact</li> <li>● Detentions</li> <li>● Check-In/Out</li> <li>● Reparations</li> <li>● Counseling</li> <li>● Conflict Mediation</li> </ul>
<b>TIER TWO BEHAVIORS: MAJOR INFRACTIONS</b>	<b>INTERVENTIONS/ CONSEQUENCES</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Received 4 minor infractions</li> <li>2. Threats, bullying, harassment, or racist statements toward students and/or staff.</li> <li>3. Smoking/vaping on school/parish grounds.</li> <li>4. Vandalism or theft of others.</li> <li>5. Blatant or repeated disrespect to others.</li> <li>6. Truancy or leaving the property without permission.</li> <li>7. Conduct which damages the school's reputation.</li> <li>8. Not reporting dangerous behavior/objects.</li> <li>9. Engaging in fighting or antagonistic behavior.</li> <li>10. Academic dishonesty, including allowing others to engage in academic dishonesty from your work.</li> <li>II. Other dishonesty, including forging another's name.</li> <li>12. Possession/distribution, indecent literature, language, or pictures either on paper or electronically.</li> <li>13. Violating Technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Suspension &amp; Parent Conference</li> </ul>
<b>TIER THREE BEHAVIORS: MISSION INFRACTIONS</b>	<b>POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Received 3 major infractions</li> <li>9. Repeated Tier 2 behaviors, or of grave impact to the community at-large.</li> <li>10. Possession or use any illegal substance in any form on the premises or at any community activity.</li> <li>II. Bringing dangerous objects to school. SFA reserves the right to designate if an object is dangerous.</li> <li>12. Violations of public law or other actions that bring discredit to the reputation of the school.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parent Conference &amp; Withdrawal/Expulsion</li> </ul>

## **SUSPENSION**

Suspension at SFA means that a child will not be able to attend classes for a period of one to three days. Suspensions will be noted on a student's attendance record in his/her permanent file. Suspensions will be served out of school.

While suspended, the student is responsible for missed work. During a suspension, he/she will forfeit the right to go on field trips and all other school activities including evening events with the class. Multiple suspensions from class will result in disallowing re-registration for the following year or possible expulsion.

The school may recommend or require (as a condition of continued enrollment) psychological evaluation in cases deemed appropriate by the student's behavior.

## **EXPULSION/INVOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL**

The school reserves the right to expel or require the involuntary withdrawal of any student at any time when his/her conduct warrants it. Any expelled student forfeits all privileges of the St. Francis of Assisi School student. The expulsion will be noted in the permanent records retained at SFA. The administration reserves the right not to re-admit an expelled student at a later date. In addition, any student found guilty of violating a public law (i.e., shoplifting, cyberbullying) may be suspended or expelled. This includes activity online or via electronic devices.

The disciplinary policy of St. Francis of Assisi School is cognizant of the overall philosophy and goals of the school. The policy is meant to serve the Christian community and stems from a loving, accepting attitude toward the child as a person of dignity. The following objectives constitute guidelines for implementing the policy:

- The school is obligated to maintain a safe and acceptable learning atmosphere for all students.
- Parental involvement will be sought early in disciplinary procedures.
- Disciplinary action will emphasize developing the student's responsibility for his/her own conduct.
- The establishment of disciplinary rules and regulations is the responsibility of the school administration consistent with the policies established by the school.

The Principal will make any decisions regarding expulsion, in consultation with the Pastor and the Department of Catholic Schools. The decision to expel or suspend will be communicated to the parent/guardian of the student immediately. If a parent/guardian chooses to appeal a decision to expel, he/she must contact the appropriate Associate Superintendent and submit all relevant written documentation.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

St. Francis of Assisi School reserves the right to search school property (e.g. desks), a student's belongings (e.g. bookbags), and areas under the student's control in order to enforce school policies, rules, regulations, or to preserve a safe and orderly learning environment.

## **CANNABIS USE**

There have been significant legislative changes at the state level around the use of cannabis in recent years. This year, the Maryland General Assembly enacted legislation that will allow individuals 21 and older to purchase cannabis products legally from a licensed dispensary, beginning on July 1, 2023. However, it is important to keep in mind that, despite these changes, cannabis continues to be classified as a Schedule 1 controlled substance under federal law, and its use remains illegal under federal law.

The policies and regulations set forth by the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act apply directly to the use of cannabis in schools, including childcare facilities located in schools, even if such use might be permitted under State law. All employees, contractors, volunteers, and visitors are required to comply with this law and may not distribute, possess, use, or be under the influence of cannabis while in schools or during working hours, including but not limited to while transporting students or attending school-sponsored activities.

# **HARASSMENT/BULLYING POLICY**

## **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Archdiocese to prohibit discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, or protected activity (i.e., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the complaint process) in its education programs and activities. Each Catholic school shall adhere to this policy with respect to students. (Employees are similarly protected from harassment by a separate Archdiocesan policy.) A school is not required to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with its religious or moral teachings.

This policy applies to all students in Archdiocesan elementary, middle and secondary schools. The Archdiocese neither condones nor tolerates harassment of students at school, at school-related activities or functions, or in any school-related setting. Harassment of students, whether engaged in by other students, teachers, administrators, or others, is prohibited. Violation of this Policy is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or suspension or expulsion from school, depending on the nature and severity of the offense and the individual's disciplinary record.

## **PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

For purposes of this Policy, "harassment" means verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, or protected activity, that: (i) Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment; (ii) Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance; or (iii) Otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, handicap or disability, gender identity or expression. "Sexual" harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for educational decisions or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

## **PROCEDURE**

1. Any person who believes that a student is being subjected to harassment must immediately report the harassment to any of the following individuals: the student's teacher, the principal of the school, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.
2. Individuals are encouraged to report harassment early, before it becomes severe or pervasive, so that preventive action can be taken. All complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially, and will remain confidential to the extent possible.
3. Any retaliation, reprisals, or intimidation, whether by the alleged harasser or from another source, directed toward the complaining party or anyone else as a result of the

filing or investigation of a harassment complaint is considered a serious violation of this Policy and should be reported immediately.

4. Once the investigation is complete, the school will take immediate and appropriate corrective action when it determines that this policy has been violated. The complaining party and the complained-of party will be advised. A report of the findings may be forwarded to the Department of Catholic Schools.

## **BULLYING POLICY STATEMENT**

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation (as defined below) of any student is prohibited in all Archdiocese of Baltimore Schools. Retaliation or reprisal against anyone who reports such behaviors or participates in an investigation of a report is also prohibited. Such behaviors are contrary to school life in a Christ-centered community, which respects the dignity and uniqueness of all of God's children. To foster a school environment where all students are educated in a safe and caring atmosphere, all Archdiocesan schools will follow established procedures for bullying prevention, intervention, and response.

Discrimination and harassment of students on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, are also addressed under the Archdiocesan Student Harassment Policy in the Code of Conduct. Suspected abuse or neglect of students is addressed under the Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth.

***"Bullying, harassment, or intimidation"*** means intentional conduct, including written, verbal, or physical conduct or an intentional electronic communication, that:

- a. Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance or with a student's physical or psychological well-being and:
  - i. Is motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or
  - ii. Is sexual in nature; or
  - iii. Is threatening or seriously intimidating; and
- b. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus, or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

***Electronic technology*** means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, pager, etc. ***Retaliation*** means an act of reprisal or revenge, i.e., getting back at a person for an act he/she committed (such as reporting misconduct). Reporting forms are located in the main office and on the school's website.

## **MANDATED REPORTING**

In today's social climate, students who are the victims of harassment or bullying have been known to react emotionally or with retaliation to situations they encounter with their peers. Should a child express him-/herself either verbally or in another manner that could be construed as violent or dangerous, or any time a student presents a threat to others SFA is obligated to report it to local authorities. Verification that a student is not a danger to



him-/herself or others may be required by the school administration before the student returns to a classroom setting.

Appropriate consequences will be absolutely given to anyone involved in bullying or harassing another student. However, we must also report behavior that presents a danger to anyone in our community.

Bullying/harassment victims who express threats in any form (verbal, online, etc.) need our love and support, but also likely need counseling and licensed professional support from outside the school. When warranted, the school may require documentation from a licensed mental health professional indicating the student is not a danger to him-/herself or others. This absence will be recorded as a Medical leave unless circumstances dictate otherwise. The Pastor and the Department of Catholic Schools will also be informed of the circumstances.

## TECHNOLOGY - ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

### EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Technology skills are necessary to ready our students for their future. Access to the Internet and technology tools (including software tools, web-based applications and services, computer equipment, and other personal electronic devices) allow students to conduct research, produce digital content, and communicate with classmates and teachers. The Internet and technology tools put enormous power at the fingertips of users. As such, they also place a great deal of responsibility on users.

It is imperative that technology resources be used to build community, encourage critical reflection, and foster readiness for future learning. Developments in technology at the School are to be used ethically, legally, and responsibly. As in other areas, our students are expected to make good choices with regard to their behavior.

Individual users are responsible for their activity on the Internet and technology tools, including the material stored and information shared. In order to protect private and personal information, unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information is prohibited. The School reserves the right to edit Internet accounts for child-only configurations, and to run filtering software for students' protection.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student users (and their parents) recognize the limitations the School imposes on the use of the Internet and technology tools and that they understand the standards of behavior the School expects of users.

All users of the SFA domain, network, and technology tools, **whether on a SFA-owned or personal device**, are responsible for adhering to the following guidelines for acceptable use. Disciplinary action may follow for violations of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

Acceptable uses of the Internet and technology tools are for authorized academic and school-related activities that support learning and teaching and:

- Respect the privacy, dignity, and property rights of others and well-being of the School;
- Remain consistent with Roman Catholic values and morals;
- Treat technology tools and computer equipment with respect.

Unacceptable uses of the Internet and technology tools include but are not limited to:

- Violating the rights or privacy of others, including by photographing or filming an individual without consent;
- Posting/distributing videos/images without consent of persons depicted and the School;
- Using technology to send profanity, obscenity, or other offensive or harmful language
- Unauthorized copying, downloading, or installation of content, software or applications (including plagiarism or “pirating” music);
- Sending false information or sending messages to the School community that fail to identify the sender (including anonymous messages or messages using a pseudonym);
- Using any program designed to disrupt network performance or breach network security, such as software designed to capture passwords or break encryption protocols;
- Revealing personal information beyond what is required for login while using Internet or web-based resources;
- Responding to inappropriate messages from others (which should be reported to staff);
- Downloading or copying information onto disks or hard drives without prior approval;
- Accessing, downloading, storing, or printing files or messages that are inappropriate or may be offensive to others (including pornography and other inappropriate images);
- Sharing of passwords or attempting to discover another’s password (passwords should be changed frequently);
- Using or accessing another’s account (network accounts are to be used only by those for whom the account has been established);
- Intentionally writing, producing, generating, copying or introducing dangerous codes or programs designed for harm, including, but not limited to: viruses, bugs, ‘worms’, etc.;
- Intentionally damaging, altering, or tampering with any hardware, software, printers, keyboards, speakers, etc.;
- Accessing/searching files, directories, folders for which one does not have authorization;
- Intentionally erasing, renaming, or disabling of anyone else’s files or programs;
- Accessing social media, email, or other off-task websites or apps during School without explicit permission of a teacher or adult supervisor, including streaming music/video;
- Violating other SFA rules or civil/criminal law.

Harassment/cyber-bullying of others online, whether against a student, non-student, or employee, is serious, is prohibited, and is contrary to the School’s policy and values. Harassment/cyber-bullying **whether it is initiated on campus or off campus, online or in person**, should be reported immediately to a faculty member, and may lead to disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution under Maryland’s law prohibiting the Misuse of Interactive Computer Service (“Grace’s Law”).

Parents are responsible for:

- Reviewing and discussing this policy with their child as well as supporting enforcement
- Partnering with the School in monitoring their child’s technology use
- Modeling appropriate Internet behavior for their child
- Reporting any concerns regarding this policy or their child’s use of the Internet or technology tools to School personnel.

Failure to adhere to the policy guidelines may result in revocation of Internet access and other technology privileges and disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion for students, or possible disciplinary action up to and including termination for employees.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Electronic devices, whether owned by the school or the student, are a privilege and a responsibility. The devices, the school network, and the school domain (sfa-school.org) may only be used at the direction/permission of a staff member, and may only be used for academic purposes. Electronic games other than those prescribed by staff are not permitted for use.

Students may bring cell phones or other electronic devices with them to school, but only for the purpose of emergency use after school. Every classroom in our school has a phone and there will never be a need for students to access their cell phone during school hours. If you feel your child requires a cell phone, you must send a letter to the office “registering” the phone. The child must keep the phone in his/her backpack during the day, and the phone must be turned off. If any of these policies are broken, the child’s phone will be confiscated and only returned to the parent. The school reserves the right to confiscate any electronic devices in use at inappropriate times.

## **SCHOOL EQUIPMENT**

SFA students are provided the best technological equipment available. It is expected that students will treat all SFA equipment with the care and responsibility it is due. SFA reserves the right to suspend privileges to equipment for chronic misuse, and/or to replace leading-edge technology with lower grade equipment when it is determined that a student has failed to demonstrate the proper care the equipment requires. **Damage or negligence to SFA equipment will result in a damage fee being assessed to the student’s FACTS account in order to replace the broken equipment.**

The following guidelines must be followed regarding SFA equipment:

- Always get permission before installing, attempting to install or storing programs of any type on the computers.
- Damaging, disabling, or otherwise harming the operation of computers, or intentionally wasting resources puts work at risk, and will cut time with equipment.
- Only use the computers for educational purposes. Use of equipment by anyone other than the student of the school is not appropriate.
- Always check files brought in on removable media (such as storage devices) with antivirus software and only use them if they are found to be clean of viruses.
- Always check mobile equipment (e.g. laptops, tablet PCs) with antivirus software and ensure they are clean of viruses before connecting them to the network.
- Protect computers from spillages by eating or drinking well away from equipment.
- Always remove/return equipment to its storage space with appropriate care/concern.

## **SCHOOL NETWORK & DOMAIN**

St. Francis of Assisi has a very active computer network. Email use, file storage, and Internet access are all privileges offered to students to empower them in providing a top-notch educational program to them. This digital space is considered the property of SFA.

### **SECURITY & PRIVACY**

- Protect your work by keeping your password to yourself; never use someone else's logon name or password.
- Never use your SFA email address or network password when signing up for Internet Resources. Use a public email address, like Yahoo or Gmail, and a different password. This helps to protect the integrity of our network resources and limits unwanted junk mail and spam from coming into your SFA email account.
- If you walk away from your computer, lock the screen. This prohibits others from accessing your account and files.
- Always be wary about revealing your home address, telephone number, school name, or picture to people you meet on the Internet.
- Users should be respected and should not be harassed, harmed, offended or insulted.
- To protect yourself and the systems, you should respect the security on computers; attempting to bypass or alter the settings may put you or your work at risk.
- With due cause, the school has the ability to review your files and communications to ensure that you are using the system responsibly.

### **INTERNET**

- Students access the Internet only for academic purposes and at the direction of SFA staff.
- Only access suitable material; to download, send, print, display or otherwise transmit or gain access to materials which are unlawful, obscene or abusive is not permitted.
- Practice safe surfing by entering ONLY trusted websites. Do not enter unknown sites.
- Respect the work and ownership rights of people outside the school, as well as other students or staff. This includes abiding by copyright laws.
- Due to bandwidth constraints, downloading of streaming media should be limited to content that is necessary and pertinent to the curriculum. When possible, video media should be downloaded to the computer first and then played.

### **EMAIL**

- Only open attachments to emails if they come from someone you already know and trust. Attachments can contain viruses or other programs that could destroy all the files and software on your computer.
- If you receive an email containing material of a violent, dangerous, discriminatory, or inappropriate content, always report such messages to administration. Sending or receiving an email with content likely to be unsuitable for school is strictly forbidden.
- Keep your inbox clean by deleting unwanted and unnecessary email on a daily basis.

## **WEB-BASED SERVICES**

SFA uses Google's G-Suite for Education as well as other web-based education tools, sites, and services ("web-based services") to provide students with important web-based educational experiences and enhanced opportunities to communicate and share collaboratively with one another. As part of students' use of web-based services, certain educational records

may be created, collected, or stored. Directory information, such as a child's name, email address, grade/age, and enrollment status, may also be shared with web-based services. The School may access, monitor, and review children's use of web-based services and Internet use and children shall not have any expectation of privacy with respect to any communications or activities through such services.

Use of web-based services is for educational purposes only and subject to the conduct and acceptable use guidelines set forth in this Handbook. A list of the School's web-based services and corresponding privacy policies are available upon request. By enrolling a child in the School, the parent consents to the child's participation in the School's academic activities and programs, including the child's use of and access to web-based services as described in this Handbook. In order to withhold or withdraw consent for the use of web-based services, parents must contact the School principal in writing.

## **DISTANCE LEARNING**

When required by appropriate government mandate, Archdiocesan directive, or public health necessity, St. Francis of Assisi School may move students, cohorts, grade levels, or the entire student population to distance learning. This distance learning may include the relocation of the student's learning environment to the home or to another location on school property (physically separated from the instructor but still under appropriate adult supervision). Under a distance learning model, certain policies or procedures may be adapted, waived, or supplemented based upon the circumstances. Parents/guardians will be notified of all applicable changes. Every effort will be made to maintain continuity of learning for all students regardless of what the circumstances are requiring a move to distance learning.

## **GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

Students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade are not permitted to use Generative Artificial Intelligence (including, but not limited to the use of ChatGPT). Once teachers receive professional development training on how to support students utilizing Generative AI; this policy may change in the future.

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

---

Print Student Name

Having read the SFA Student Handbook, and sought clarification where necessary, I agree to accept responsibility and act in accordance with all the information included in this handbook.

---

Student Signature

---

Date

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date

**DISCLAIMER:** This handbook does not constitute an express or implied contract of any kind. St. Francis of Assisi School reserves the right to amend, withdraw, or modify the policies, procedures, and benefits described at any time. The handbook provides general information on a number of topics but is not intended to be all-inclusive. Any questions regarding this handbook and/or the policies in the handbook should be directed to the school administration.

*Please sign this agreement and return it to the office during the first week of school.*