

Parent & Student Handbook
St. Sylvester School

2023-2024 School Year

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2023-2024 Handbook

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Welcome and Intro

History of St. Sylvester School

Located across from Palmer Park along the historic boulevards of Chicago, St. Sylvester School has been a community fixture for more than a century. The school formerly stood on the parish grounds east of Humboldt Boulevard from its founding in the late 1800s. The current school building was opened in the late 1950s. It is a hallmark of the Palmer Square and Logan Square neighborhoods. The Logan Square neighborhood in which the school stands was once the home for the nouveau riche of Chicago and mansions along the boulevards testify to this history. The population then was primarily Eastern European and considered the St. Sylvester Parish to be their second family here in the United States.

As the Logan Square population changed over the last century, so have the dynamics of the St. Sylvester School community. Today the school enrollment is made up of a beautifully diverse student body. Our present enrollment is largely Latino with a wonderful and inclusive mix of students who are bi-racial or multi-racial, Caucasian, African-American, and Asian. St. Sylvester School's diversity is one of its strengths. The influx of new ethnic groups has filled St. Sylvester with new lifeblood, bringing with it new families and new traditions. The educational initiatives and school mission seek to maintain the long-standing pride and success of St. Sylvester while fostering and showcasing its cultural diversity.

Throughout this century of change and development, however, several aspects of the school remain unaltered. The school community has always maintained a Catholic character. The Catholicity of the school is demonstrated by the countless students who have received sacraments at St. Sylvester Church, the school liturgies and class instruction, the faithful lay people, and the devoted priests, nuns, and laity who have served as its leaders.

St. Sylvester School is distinguished by its progressive and accomplished academic programs. The academic and extracurricular programs serve as models of success for all Chicago Catholic schools. Since 1899, St. Sylvester Parish and School have stood as sentries in the Logan Square community. The school always has and will continue to serve the neighborhood, city, and the Archdiocese of Chicago as a vital educational community.

St. Sylvester Parish and School Mission Statements

St. Sylvester School committed to forming the whole child through faith formation, academic excellence, and social emotional learning.

St. Sylvester is a Catholic Elementary School for children from Preschool through eighth grade. It is dedicated to providing academic excellence and spiritual development within a safe and nurturing community. The students, teachers, and families of St. Sylvester demonstrate Christian values by respecting the dignity of all persons.

As an integral part of the parish community, St. Sylvester School extends the parish mission through its dedication to enhancing children's potential, by providing a quality Catholic education. The school aims to educate the whole child within a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment that embraces both Christian values and the diversity of the community.

Root Beliefs

At St. Sylvester School we believe:

1. Excellence happens on purpose.
2. We are always learning.
3. Every person has dignity and deserves respect.
4. Every voice counts.
5. We're all in this together.
6. God is good, always!

Our root beliefs serve as the foundation of who we are, what we do, and why we do it. These beliefs guide our own behaviors and our expectations of others. It is this set of root beliefs that will allow us to work together continuously to ensure the success of our students

Family Expectations

The involvement of parents and guardians is vital to the success of a child's education at St. Sylvester School. The interest that families show in the life of the school and the support that they give at home and in the classroom stimulates the child's motivation to achieve. While entrusting the school with their children, we recognize parents and guardians as their child(ren)'s first teacher. We invite you to be partners with us in your child's education by monitoring homework, attending parent-teacher conferences, demonstrating to children that education has great value, and by supporting the goals of the school through their attitudes and actions.

The participation of parents and guardians is expected both inside and outside the classroom. Parents assist in the classroom in many ways, for example:

- reading to students in the primary grades,
- leading a learning center,
- supervising the lunchroom and recess lot,
- assisting in the computer lab,
- helping with typing or translating,
- assisting with class projects,
- chaperoning field trips,
- leading after school clubs,
- coaching sports teams,
- general office work,
- and/or cleaning

Parents and guardians can support the school by:

- Working in partnership with the principal, classroom teacher, and all staff members
- Enforcing standards, rules, policies, and procedures of the school
- Participating in Parent Teacher Conferences
- Paying tuition and fees on time
- Checking and/or helping with the homework
- Enforcing good study habits and homework completion
- Responding in a timely and accurate manner to correspondence and/or other administrative instructions, requirements or requests
- Completing the family service hour requirements
- Not tolerating or causing tardiness or absenteeism
- Enforcing the dress code as it is written

To become more involved in school activities, please contact the school office to discuss how you might be able to help.

Each family is invited to become involved in the St. Sylvester Parish Community. One way in which to do this is to attend Sunday Mass. In this way, the family reinforces values taught at school during the week and also acknowledges the importance of God in the family's life. The family agrees to act in accordance with Catholic values and attitudes at all times. Failure of a family member to act in accordance with these values and attitudes or to fully cooperate with St. Sylvester Parish School could result in the removal or non-registration of the family member attending the school.

2023-24 Handbook

In addition to the policies and procedures detailed in this 2023-24 Family Handbook, St. Sylvester School also follows the policies, procedures, and guidelines featured in the Office of Catholic Schools Policy Handbook.

Handbook Policy Amendments: St. Sylvester School reserves the right to make amendments to its policies at any time. These changes will be made to the handbook and will be communicated to all school families via the Tuesday letter.

Handbook Acknowledgement Form: All families must sign and return a Handbook Acknowledgement Form stating that they have received and read the 2023-2024 Family Handbook.

Academics

Teachers

Our teachers are graduates of some of the country's top colleges and universities including Northwestern, Loyola, Notre Dame, and Boston College. The educational background of the teachers and the continual professional development they undertake has helped create a culture of academic excellence at St. Sylvester.

Current school families consistently refer to the high quality instruction that their children receive. Each classroom teacher is to develop a close working relationship with his/her students and their families. They should develop and challenge each child's intellect and educational growth. Teachers are in constant communication with students' families and log innumerable hours offering extra help and guidance.

Instructional staff shall have their performance monitored throughout the school year. This will include both formal and informal visits and observations from administration and from peer staff members, leading to overall performance evaluations. Formal evaluations will take place at least once every two years, but will typically be done annually.

Students

The students at St. Sylvester have diverse backgrounds, talents, and interests. The entire staff at St. Sylvester helps each individual student to utilize his/her natural abilities and challenges that student to reach his or her potential. With low student to teacher ratios and an average class size of 21, students know that they will get close personal attention from their teachers. Students as a whole are immensely happy at St. Sylvester. They know that they are in a safe, welcoming, yet challenging environment.

About 70% of K-8 students participate in one of the many after school clubs or sports. The after school clubs involvement plus our Buddy Program and school-wide field trips and assemblies help

students develop friendships across grade levels and create a real sense of community and family within the school.

Though most graduates are sad to be leaving St. Sylvester after 8th grade, we are proud of the high schools they go on to attend. Recent graduates have been accepted to and attend some of Chicago's best high schools, including St. Ignatius, Northside College Prep, Walter Payton, Whitney Young, Notre Dame for Boys, DePaul College Prep, Lane Tech, Resurrection, Josephinum, and Trinity High School.

Core-Curriculum

Each classroom works at a pace and curricular level that is grade-appropriate and fit to the needs and abilities of the students in the class. Teachers can explain their classroom's specific curriculum in greater detail. Listed below are general notes about the curricular expectations and focal points. In each of the subject areas described below – except in foreign languages and at designated stages – classroom instruction is provided in English.

Reading/Language Arts

St. Sylvester will use Lucy Calkins Reader's and Writer's Workshop to build student capacity in *skills* related to reading, writing, and language arts. Students in Kindergarten-8th grade work with both fiction and nonfiction texts and research-based writing strategies to improve their ELA content mastery.

Math

Students at St. Sylvester develop strong mathematical skills. Across all grade levels, math instruction emphasizes conceptual understanding, procedural skills and fluency. Regular use of math manipulatives, math writing and discussion help students build that deep understanding of math concepts. Examples of manipulatives include place-value blocks, fraction pieces, 3-D objects, and other hands-on items.

Science

There are 4 main areas of our science curriculum: life, earth, space, and physical science. Students explore each area in depth and teachers complement the classroom instruction with experiments, research projects, field trips, and educational videos. The school staff has benefited from our unique partnership with the esteemed Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum and its extensive professional development and research-based lessons.

Social Studies

St. Sylvester's social studies curriculum has many goals. Our students grow to understand and appreciate the many communities around them and fully understand the central elements of American history and geography. World history, map skills, government, sociology, economics, and other topics are also featured in the curriculum. The study of all of these topics is enhanced by numerous field trips, internet research, whole-class projects, and school assemblies.

Civic and state requirements: St. Sylvester provides instruction in American patriotism, the principles of representative government, as enunciated in the American Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States of America, and the Constitution of the State of Illinois, and the proper use and display of the American flag. The school requires students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance daily. Social Studies instruction shall take place weekly for an amount of time consistent with OCS standards. No child shall graduate from St. Sylvester until he or she has received instruction in these subjects and has successfully passed an examination that specifically covers the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Illinois, revealing comprehensive knowledge of this subject.

Technology

St. Sylvester has a highly developed technology program and prides itself on its student's knowledge and advanced technological usage. While keyboarding and general software skills are certainly a feature of the curriculum, students are able to further their studies by performing more complex projects. Students as early as first grade utilize podcasting technology to create reports and videos. In addition to multiple computers and internet access in every room, we have a state of the art computer lab with over 30 Mac computers, Smart Boards, digital cameras, and a class set of iPads with wireless internet access. These iPads are used in every classroom regularly from our Preschool program through eighth grade.

In addition, students in Kindergarten-8th grade will participate in a 1-to-1 Chromebook program. Students in these grades will each receive their own Chromebook to be used both during regular classroom instruction and at home to reinforce what was taught during the school day. Specific guidelines and expectations for these Chromebooks are outlined in the school's Device Loan Agreement which all students and families must sign before being issued a Chromebook.

Religious and Spiritual Formation

The spiritual growth of each child is of great importance. Hence, there is a particular emphasis on religious education. Religion is not considered merely a subject to be studied, or text to be read on occasion, rather, religion is seen as a way of life, a set of attitudes, values, and beliefs. Because of this, religion is not simply taught for one period each day. The children are exposed to a religious atmosphere for all their hours at school so that they may know God, love Him, and serve Him in building up His Kingdom on earth. It is with this aim in mind that the religious program is designed.

Religious Education

During formal classroom periods and through the day, each child is given the opportunity to learn and internalize the basic beliefs and practices of Catholicism. Conversion of non-Catholic students is not a goal of our educational program. Rather, we seek to promote understanding and to propose and inform the faith lives of all students.

Classes begin and end each day with prayer. Students attend a religion class on non-Mass days. Students in Grades K-8 are fortunately able to participate in weekly Mass. It is an opportunity to ask the Lord for His blessings upon our families, our parish, the world, our benefactors and ourselves. It has proven to be a wonderful opportunity to grow in the love of God and His Church. Classes will take turns in preparing and presenting the weekly school liturgies.

Weekday Masses are not intended to take the place of Sunday participation. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the Sunday liturgy. Weekly mass attendance is obligatory (see below) for students who are preparing to receive a sacrament. Catholic non-parishioner families are not required to attend St. Sylvester church but should attend Mass at their chosen parish.

The sacramental program involves a special time of preparation for the reception of the Sacraments. The classes taking part are as follows:

- 2nd Grade – Sacrament of Reconciliation – March
- 3rd Grade – Sacrament of Eucharist – May
- 8th Grade – Sacrament of Confirmation – April/May

We hope that families and students demonstrate a genuine desire to participate in the life of the church throughout their preparation to receive the sacraments. **Students who are undergoing sacramental preparation classes are required to attend Mass at a minimum of three times per month during the school year of preparation.** The method for tracking this attendance involves Mass stickers that will be placed in students' Tuesday folders. Inattention to this requirement will lead to the

child not participating in the sacrament. Transfer students often must complete one year of instruction before receiving the sacraments. Baptismal certificates must be on file in the school office.

Departmentalization

Grades 4-8 are departmentalized:

4th & 5th grade students rotate between two teachers: an ELA & Social Studies teacher and a Math & Science teacher. Students' homeroom teachers will also teach religion.

6th-8th grade students rotate between three different middle school teachers, each of whom teaches a different core subject (math, science, social studies/language arts). These students also participate in novel-based reading groups that are taught by each of the teachers in the middle school department.

Department Visions:

Physical Education

PE classes are held at least twice each week for all grade levels. Students who are unable to participate in this class for health reasons must bring a note from their physician if applicable. Also incorporated into the overall physical education classes is instruction in health and wellness. This includes but is not limited to personal hygiene, nutrition, sexual health, and health habits. The curriculum of the health education portion of this curriculum is informed by the school's Wellness Policy.

Class Size

St. Sylvester School believes in maximizing student development through effective class sizes and low student to teacher ratios. The Office of Catholic Schools limits class sizes to no more than 35 students in a classroom and an ideal maximum of 30. While St. Sylvester School maintains the right to increase the class sizes up to that limit, every effort shall be made to limit class sizes to a maximum ratio of 28 students to one instructor in Grades 1-4 and 28 students to one instructor in grades 5-8. Kindergarten will have a maximum of 25 students while preschool classrooms will be limited to a 10:1 students to staff ratio.

Grading and Academic Achievement

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Reports are given six times per year in grades K-8 – three report cards and three progress reports. Two of these reports are given out as part of the mandatory family conferences. This year they will take place in the first and third trimesters. In grades 1-8, report cards feature letter grades that are earned using the scale below. The points following the below grades are used when determining a child's GPA. The school does not formally compile GPAs for any child but will occasionally need to present this information to high schools or other organizations.

A = 93% - 100% = 4 Gr. Pts

C = 75% - 84% = 2 Gr. Pts.

B = 85% - 92% = 3 Gr. Pts.

D = 74% - 67% = 1 Gr. Pt.

Middle School (5th through 8th) Grading Scale

A+ = 99% - 100%	C+ = 83%-84%	U = 68% and below
A = 95% - 98%	C = 79%-82%	
A- = 93%-94%	C- = 77%-78%	
B+ = 91% - 92%	D+ = 75%-76%	
B = 87%-90%	D = 71%-74%	
B- = 85%-86%	D- = 69%-70%	

3rd through 4th Grading Scale

A+ = 93% - 100%	D = 67% - 74%
B = 85% - 92%	U = 66% and below
C = 75% - 84%	

1st through 2nd Grading Scale

A = 90% - 100%	D = 60% - 69%
B = 80% - 89%	U = 59% and below
C = 70% - 79%	

Honor Roll-Grades 6th – 8th

For many students an honor roll is a way to recognize high achievement. Students may attain high honors, second honors, or honorable mention. Students are recognized with a certificate of achievement. Letter grades of “D” or “U” will also prevent the child from receiving honors. Recurring tardiness may also keep a child off the Honor roll.

Standardized Testing

At St. Sylvester School, we will have students in grades 3-8 take the OCS-mandated standardized test. This test is usually scheduled to be administered in April. Results of this testing are given to parents in early fall. Students are tested for general ability to learn in basic academic areas, as well as for their overall achievement in core subjects studied in classes.

Promotion/Retention

Notice of possible retention will be made no later than the date of 2nd trimester report cards. Teachers will note on final year-end reports whether a child has met the grade level requirements and is to be promoted, placed, or retained in/to a certain grade level. Final decisions regarding promotion and retention are made together between the school staff and the child’s parents/guardians. Discussion concerning possible retention should be held as early as possible in the school year.

Homework

Homework is an important part of the academic program. It is assigned regularly in all grade levels except preschool. Assignment notebooks are required in grades 1-8. Students are expected to turn in homework on time. Homework must be quality material in order to be accepted. Missed assignments may be given an extension by the teacher. Exceptions must be worked through with the classroom teacher, knowing there can be a reduction in the grade received for the late work. Homework policies are explained in writing to parents during our Back to School Night events. Parents are encouraged to check student homework notebooks. Parents should not do the work for their child, but can check over their child’s work.

Field Trips

Each class may select and conduct educational field trips during the year. Field trips are designed to be learning experiences outside of the school or parish environment and will, in most cases, require bus transportation. Parents and guardians are asked to act as chaperones. Parents who chaperone must meet all the Safe Environment Requirements. * Please see the Safe Environment Requirement section of this handbook.

Parents or guardians will be asked to provide written permission for students to participate in field trips. Students will not be permitted to participate unless written permission has been granted. The school will take every precaution to ensure each child's safety during field trips. However, the school cannot accept liability for any accident or injury that may occur during such trips. By granting permission for a student to participate on a field trip, the parents thereby release the school from any and all liability.

At any time the teacher may speak with the principal about not allowing a child to attend the field trip due to discipline issues experienced in the classroom. The principal in consultation with the classroom teacher/s will make the final decision.

Due to the fact that all trip costs are figured on the number of students attending at the time of the field trip reservation, the cost of the trip cannot be refunded.

Field trips are expected to be learning experiences and children are expected to behave in the same manner as they would in class. Buses must be left in the same condition they were in when the students first boarded.

Parents who chaperone on field trips are not allowed to bring younger children with them. They must also refrain from using cell phones while supervising the children unless it is for emergency purposes. All chaperones are expected to give full attention to the students under their care.

St. Sylvester School recognizes that parents can potentially go to the site of the field trip independently, but only the approved chaperones for a specific trip may accompany the class. The teachers do not have the ability to welcome other adults into the school group.

Chaperones must accompany the class for the entire trip, including transportation to and from both the school and the site.

Admissions

St. Sylvester School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex and/or national origin. There are certain age and class size restrictions which could at times limit the school's ability to accept a student. Per state regulations, children enrolling in preschool must be three years old by September 1st of the entrance year.

The following documents are needed for registration:

- A completed registration form and fee (completed online at www.stsylvester.org)
- An original birth certificate is shown to the school office (a copy is made for the child's school folder)
- Copies of health and immunization records
- A copy of the dental examination (new students and those entering Kindergarten, 2nd, and 6th grade)
- A copy of the most recent vision exam (for new students, excluding Preschool)
- A copy of the Baptismal certificate and other sacraments (if applicable)
- A record of completed past tuition/other payments (if applicable)

- Transfer forms (if applicable)
- Records from previous school

If a space is not available for all who wish to enroll in St. Sylvester School, a waiting list will be established. Priority will be given to families who already have children attending St. Sylvester School, members of St. Sylvester parish, or those who are transferring from other Catholic schools. To secure a space for the opening of the school year, the registration form must be completed online and registration fee paid through <https://factsmgt.org> upon completion of setting up a FACTS account. This payment is non-refundable as it helps the school to plan for the hiring of personnel and setting up classrooms for the numbers of students who are expected to attend school in the fall.

Transfer Students

Transferring In

All incoming students should be screened before acceptance. If applicable, the former school will be called and questions regarding attendance, academics, discipline, parental cooperation, parental involvement, special needs, finances, etc. will be asked. This will be the responsibility of the principal and possibly extended out to the child's prospective teacher(s). Registration will not be considered complete until this process has been followed through. Those students who show promise of making the needed adjustment to follow the rules and policies of St. Sylvester School will be admitted.

The first 4-5 weeks of a new student's time at St. Sylvester will be technically a probationary enrollment. Successful completion of the obligations and expectations outlined in the New Student Contract will indicate a successful transfer and the transition from probationary to standard enrollment.

New Student Contract

As part of a successful transition into St. Sylvester School, students entering grades 3-8 will be asked to sign a New Student Contract with their families. This form sets out the expectations for the student. Inability to adhere to the contract can mean that the new student will be unable to remain at St. Sylvester School. The contract is reviewed with the student and his/her family upon the new student's arrival to the school.

Transfer Procedures

Students Transferring Out

Parents who intend to withdraw their children from the school should notify the school principal at least two weeks prior to withdrawal. This two week notice is necessary to ensure St. Sylvester School staff has time to prepare transfer paperwork, collect school property, and help the child and their classmates prepare for this change to the class community. A charge of \$5 is necessary to cover the expenses of paperwork and postage for records forwarded to the new school.

Parents/Guardians will be asked to complete a transfer form containing information regarding the transfer. A transfer will be issued and records will be sent only after all financial obligations have been met and all books are returned to the school. Transfer papers will be issued after a three-day turnaround period. School records are normally mailed to the school receiving the child.

St. Sylvester School will help its graduates by forwarding one set of records without cost. Each additional set of records requested will be charged a \$5 fee. Again a three day turnaround time is needed.

Children with Disabilities

St. Sylvester School strives to meet the academic, social, emotional, and cognitive needs of as many students as possible. St. Sylvester offers evaluation support, implementation of Individualized Service Plans, social-emotional supports such as counseling, and academic tutoring.

Occasionally, it may be the professional opinion of the school staff that our school is unable to meet the needs of a particular student and that the child would make significant progress if placed in a different environment or special program. In such an event, the school will work cooperatively with the parent to find adequate placement for the student.

Parental Cooperation & Parent/Guardian Conduct

Since parental cooperation is absolutely essential for the success of our school program and student achievement, a lack of parental cooperation or inappropriate parent/guardian conduct may result in a student/family being asked to leave St. Sylvester School.

Parents/Guardians are expected to conduct themselves appropriately during interactions with all faculty and staff. Parents/Guardians are prohibited from swearing at and threatening staff members as well as prohibited from using acts of physical intimidation or aggression in their interactions with staff. Staff members are held to this same expectation. Any adult who violates these expectations will be asked to leave school property and may be placed on suspension which would prevent them access to school grounds at the principal's discretion.

Catholic Identity

Parents/guardians are expected to conduct themselves appropriately and professionally on school grounds, at school events, and in their communication with all staff members (both written & verbal). Failure to do so may result in a student/family being asked to leave the St. Sylvester community.

Attendance

Attendance and Absence

Daily student attendance in school is important to student success and development and it is required by the state of Illinois. Except in cases of illness, students should attend school consistently and without absence.

If a student in any grade level is sick and unable to come to school parents or guardians are asked to contact the school before 8:30 a.m. to report an absence. Parents/guardians should email their child's homeroom teacher to inform them of their absence. For extended absences, the parent/guardian should call in advance if possible. A voicemail message may be left at anytime during the day or night. A note of explanation from the parents should be given upon the student's return to class.

Class work and homework may be requested when you contact the school before 8:30 a.m. to report the student's absence, but it is not guaranteed that work will be available that same day. Please allow 24 hours for materials to be gathered and put together for pick-up. Assignments may be picked up from the office at dismissal time. If a parent or guardian wishes to have another child in the family or a neighbor bring the assignments home, he or she should notify the office of this when requesting the assignments.

Requests for extended absences that are not caused by illness are permitted, though not encouraged. Absences of this kind are considered unexcused. Furthermore, students who are absent will not be permitted to participate in remote learning (i.e. Zoom into lessons for the day) as remote learning will not be happening concurrently with in-person learning. We understand that occasionally special circumstances arise but ask in these cases that the family shares this with the teacher and principal in advance. Please note that teachers can do so, but they are not obligated to assign homework

in advance for vacations taken during school time. Make-up work and deadlines will be left to the teacher's discretion. Incomplete assignments may impact grades. St. Sylvester school has the right to declare a child truant after 18 absences. If a student meets this maximum number, he/she may not be able to advance to the next grade level.

School Entrance/Exit

Arrival

St. Sylvester School is happy to offer a Morning Care program to families starting at 6:30a.m. Families who wish to drop their children off before the official start of the school day will enter the school through the gray doors located in the school's parking lot.

At 7:30a.m., all students being dropped off will enter through the main office doors located at the front of the building directly across from Palmer Park. ***Please note that families will NOT be charged for morning care if they drop off their child any time after 7:30a.m.*** This change in arrival procedures is to allow for a steadier and more manageable flow of traffic by creating a longer window of time for student drop-off ***and*** to give us the opportunity to meet in intentional prayer and faith formation as a school community at the start of each school day. Side doors on Whipple St. and on the Humboldt Blvd. emergency access road will no longer be open during morning arrival. All students arriving to school after 7:30a.m. will enter through the front doors.

The school's main entry doors located directly across from Palmer Park will open at 7:30 a.m. The bell signaling the start of the school day will ring at 8:00a.m. Students arriving after 8a.m. will receive a yellow tardy slip to note they are late. **No families or students should be going to the classrooms before 8:00 a.m. unless they have received prior notice and permission from the classroom teacher.**

No supervision is provided outside the school building in the morning before school begins, or in the afternoon after the classes have been dismissed.

Parents/guardians are welcome to stay for the school's morning assemblies and then exit through Schwinn Hall doors. To build student independence, to allow the teacher to focus on students and for security reasons, parents/guardians may not walk their child(ren) to the classroom.

Dismissal

St. Sylvester School will have a staggered dismissal schedule. PK & K students may be picked up from 2:45-3p.m. via the pick-up lane located in the front of the school. 1st-4th grade students may be picked up from 3-3:15p.m. via the pick-up lane located next to the playground on Humboldt Blvd. 5th-8th grade students may be picked up from 3-3:15p.m. via the pick-up lane located on Whipple St. Families must have their pick-up placard displayed visibly on their dashboard and must remain in their vehicles while waiting for their children. School staff will use radio communication to call for students to exit the building and will help them get into their cars. Those who wish to walk and pick-up their children should find legal parking in the school's parking lot or along Palmer Square.

Parents of children in preschool through 2nd grade must complete the Student Release Information Form indicating the names of people who are authorized to pick up their children after school. These individuals may be asked to produce a legitimate form of identification when picking up a child from school. Anyone who is not on this list that comes to pick up a child will not be permitted to do so unless the school receives written or verbal confirmation allowing it. The school must be notified of any changes to the Student Release Information Form's information.

Students in grades 6-8 who are allowed to walk home or leave the school grounds after dismissal on their own are required to have a permission slip affirming this privilege. This permission slip gives express consent for the child to leave school grounds and acknowledges that the school is no longer responsible for their supervision. Families will receive this slip early in the school year. Families or school personnel can amend or revoke it at any time.

The school may take disciplinary action if students leave the school without permission or if they do not leave school property when they should.

Students may not purchase food from vendors outside and bring it back to the school to be eaten during extended day care. Students who do so will be asked to throw these food items away and are subject to disciplinary action.

Students in each grade will be dismissed in the following locations:

~**Preschool and Kindergarten: Front steps located outside the main office doors**

~**1st-4th grade: East doors at the corner of Palmer and Humboldt Blvd.**

~**5th-8th grade: Western doors on Whipple Street**

Early Dismissal

In cases where a student must be picked up from school before the normal dismissal time, you are asked to please contact the office in advance. This dismissal will take place from the front entrance by the office. No student can be released from school without a parent or guardian signing a release form that is kept in the school office.

In the event of an early dismissal, students will be sent to the office. Parents/Guardians should not go to the classroom to pick up their child(ren). Early dismissals are permissible for the following reasons: health-related appointments or family emergencies. Exceptions may be made upon discussion with the school principal. Early dismissals will not be granted after 2:15p.m.

For the policy on getting make-up work, please see the section on attendance on page 11.

Parking: Arrival/Dismissal

The safety of our children during arrival and dismissal times is of paramount importance. All families are asked to do their part to ensure a safe arrival and dismissal to/from school. Please be careful and drive slowly when entering and exiting the school parking lot and the area in front of the school. Parking in pick-up/drop-off lanes is prohibited because it causes traffic congestion. Families who wish to walk their child to school in the morning or walk to pick-up their child in the afternoon must find legal parking in the school's parking lot, on Whipple St. or along Palmer Square.

Tardiness

Students are tardy if they enter the building after the 8:00 a.m. tardy bell. It is a family's responsibility to make sure children are in school on time and ready to begin class. Tardiness impacts a student's ability to get started with his/her work and can negatively impact student learning while also disrupting the normal morning flow of the classroom. Excessive numbers of tardiness (5 tardies) within 1 trimester will result in contact from the school for students in grades 1-8.

Child Custody Issues Regarding Arrival/Dismissal

In cases where a child's parents are legally divorced, separated, or otherwise not together, the school assumes that both parents/guardians have permission to drop off/pick up the child and will dismiss the child to either guardian except in cases where documentation of a court order preventing such custody has been presented to the school. St. Sylvester School must have documentation for protective orders/court orders regarding custody agreements. Should there be an issue, St. Sylvester School will contact local law enforcement to resolve the issue.

Visitors

All visitors to the school must enter through our front entrance on Palmer Sq. Visitors should then check in with our front office before going any further. This includes current school parents/guardians/family members. Parents/guardians will be allowed to attend the school's morning assemblies, but may not walk their child to the classroom.

Communication

Maintaining strong communication is a key to student and school success. There are several systemic procedures that the school has put in place to facilitate strong communication between school and home. At St. Sylvester School, we believe in the power of respectful communication and it is our expectation that all stakeholders will conduct themselves professionally when communicating a concern.

Tuesday Letter and Folder – General School Information

Every Tuesday, an email will be sent home to each family. This email may contain some or all of the following:

- Weekly letter from the principal
- Monthly calendar
- Tuition statements
- Extended Day Program statements
- Fundraising information

Families may request a *Tuesday Folder* where the oldest child brings a hard-copy of the Tuesday letter information home. The folder then needs to be signed and returned to the school. Families who would like a hard-copy should reach out to Ms. Vazquez.

Classroom News

All classrooms will have a form of communication to keep families informed of classroom activities. Teachers will share specific classroom news with parents/guardians via a weekly or biweekly newsletter, classroom email blast, or by posting on a classroom blog. Links to blogs may be found on the school website.

In addition to these larger scale announcements and information, teachers will also contact families individually about specific classroom topics or individual child issues. Teachers will have their own format and plan for doing so and this information will be shared at Back to School Night and in all introductory classroom outreach.

PowerSchool Access

St. Sylvester School parents/guardians will have access to the PowerSchool, the school's grading system at all times. This access will take place of the weekly Responsibility Reports that used to go home every Friday in grades 3-8. This change is in response to feedback the school has received regarding the need for more specific information about students' academic progress between report cards. Parents/guardians will now be able to see in real time if their child is struggling, missing work, or needs additional support. While teachers will do their best to email families regarding their child's progress, PowerSchool will be families' main source of academic progress information between reporting periods.

Progress Reports

Progress reports depicting academic and behavioral progress are sent home with each student mid-trimester. Parents/guardians or the classroom teacher may schedule a conference to discuss a student's progress. These reports must be signed by a parent/guardian. This signature indicates that you have read and understood the information contained therein.

Report cards

Report cards in 2023-2024 will be managed through the PowerSchool student information system. This will change the way that report cards are read and given out. There will continue to be three trimesters in the school year in which report cards are assigned for grades PK-8. Reports can only be given to families that are current with all of their financial obligations.

Parent-teacher conferences

Conferences are a great way for families, students, and teachers to discuss a child's progress and to set goals for future development. Conferences are required and will take place twice a year. On conference days students will be dismissed at 11:30am and conferences will begin at 12:30pm. Please note there is no extended day care in the afternoon on conference days. Families or teachers may request additional meetings as needed throughout the year to discuss a child's progress.

Recommendation Letters and Referrals

Personal recommendations and referrals are often requested by students and families. Teachers are welcome to offer this service and commonly do so freely. It is important to note that no staff member is obligated to write or give a referral or recommendation and when they do so it is done of their own volition and generosity. Furthermore, most staff members will request a period of time to complete the referral - 1 day beforehand is typically insufficient. Staff members may make the recommendation/referral public and viewable if they wish. However, it is standard practice to keep most referrals and recommendations private and sealed so as to guarantee their authenticity.

Other Communication

In addition to these systemic communication formats, it is understood and appreciated that much of the communication between schools and families is done informally (i.e. during arrival/dismissal, via email, etc.). Here, the general expectation is that all questions, issues, celebrations, concerns, etc. are always brought up at first to the person most closely tied to the topic. There are times that a parent/guardian may be redirected to speak first with another staff member if he/she is best suited to address the issue at hand.

Family to Family Communication

The school hopes to facilitate means of general communication between school families. A family contact list is produced and disseminated for this purpose. It is the school's expectation that this family to family communication will be used to support the school in its mission to educate all children.

To protect the privacy of every child, the school does not generally set up meetings with more than one family at a time and is not obligated to do so.

Family to Staff and Staff to Family Communication

Family members and staff members are the adults in this community. As such adult communication should model the communication we hope to see from our students as they grow and develop under our care. All stakeholders are expected to conduct themselves professionally in their written and verbal communication. Individuals who do not conduct themselves respectfully and appropriately in their written or verbal communication may be asked to leave the school property or incur a suspension for disrespectful conduct.

While this may seem harsh, it is essential that we assume positive intentions, ask questions, seek to understand and remember that we are all in this together.

Discipline & Safety

Part of St. Sylvester School's mission is to develop the whole child and to support the development of his/her conscience and self-discipline. The school aims to administer discipline that is born out of love. To do so means to operate thoughtfully and to have a future vision.

To maintain a proper learning environment for staff and students, St. Sylvester School has implemented classroom and school rules and expectations. This handbook lists those here in a general way. Classrooms can add or amend specific rules in order to best fit that specific classroom setting. Student conduct, whether inside or outside the school (or program), which is detrimental to the safe environment or reputation of the school can result in the school administering disciplinary measures.

There are times when incidents in school are not completely clear and staff members must use their best judgment based on what is observed or known to make a disciplinary decision. In these situations and at all other times too, staff members are called to act thoughtfully and as justly as possible and to implement a set of consequences that will lead a child to positively change his/her behavior.

Student Behavior & Discipline

Students should endeavor to make St. Sylvester School a Christian community through behavior that reflects the standards of the Gospel. The faculty and staff of St. Sylvester School are called to model these standards and treat each child with love, care, and support.

A primary goal of our school is to assist and guide children in becoming responsible and respectful persons. A climate of mutual understanding, respect, and trust based upon faith in the worth and dignity of each child, promotes self-worth and self-discipline. Every child in attendance at St. Sylvester School will be treated with respect and dignity. No child shall degrade or exclude another from classroom or other school activities. All children are expected to conduct themselves in a Christian manner at all times.

St. Sylvester School's code of behavior is appropriate for each child's age and represents the shared expectations of the school and the community to lead young persons to Christian responsibility in all their actions. The following is a list (not fully inclusive) of general behavioral expectations and facts for all students at St. Sylvester School:

Interact with others in a respectful manner at all times.

Speak respectfully to all school personnel.

Use only appropriate language, speak respectfully to others, whether adults or other students.

Follow all classroom rules.

Obey directions given by school employees.

Arrive on time to school.

Complete assignments on time.

Speak with honesty in all manners. Lying will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism and cheating will be disciplined.

Courtesy is to be followed at all times.

Walk and speak softly in hallways, being careful not to disturb others.

Treat materials and equipment in the school with care.

Follow the school dress code.

Refrain from chewing gum in the building or on school grounds.

Promptly deliver all school communication (to parents and from parents to the school).

Have the approval of the teacher for any reading materials or art presentations used in school.

Students will not throw objects (balls, snowballs, etc.) on or near the school grounds.

Serious negative behavior may be grounds for suspension in or out of school and/or expulsion, may automatically exclude the student from any class event, school event, or field trip, and will require a conference between the principal and the parents/guardians of the offending child.

Examples of such behavior are:

- inappropriate language, swearing, and/or cursing
- fighting or disruptive behavior on school grounds
- biting
- harassment, either physical or verbal, such as threatening behavior, racist insults, derogatory ethnic slurs, unwelcome sexual advances or touching, sexual comments, jokes or gestures, or physical or mental abuse
- bullying of any degree
- any incident or report of sexual intimacy among students or possession of pornographic material
- gang-related activity, wearing of any gang symbols
- having or possessing controlled substances, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, etc. in or around school
 - * Please see handbook section on “Substance Abuse”
- smoking at any time in and around school grounds
- bringing any type of weapon to the school grounds or to any school sponsored event or activity
 - * Please see handbook section on “Weapons”
- threatening others

Discipline Procedures

St. Sylvester School will be using a responsive classroom framework for school-wide and classroom behavior management. As such, responsive classrooms are characterized by an instructional behavior management framework in which teachers take the time to teach students specific behaviors and skills that help them follow procedures and expectations. While the specific behavior management plans will differ in each classroom, all behavior management will follow responsive classroom recommendations for ensuring safe, secure, respectful, and productive classroom environments.

Our school’s guiding principles for success are as follows:

1. Be respectful.
2. Be responsible.
3. Be resilient.
4. Be ready to learn.

All students, staff, families, and community members will be expected to conduct themselves in a manner that supports these principles. Please refer to your child’s teacher and his/her specific management plan to understand the mild, moderate, and severe behaviors that will result in different behavior consequences.

Tier I

Teacher/Staff Engage in Restorative Practices

Teachers discipline the child in an age appropriate manner. This can vary from classroom to classroom depending upon the specific offense and the individual classroom plan and teacher style. Teachers will first implement restorative practices at this level: take a break, restorative conversations, sessions for students to practice expected behaviors, behavior reflections, etc. If restorative practices are unsuccessful at supporting changes in student behavior, continued behaviors from this category will progress to Tier II.

Examples of Tier I behaviors include but are not limited to:

- calling out during class
- disruptive movement around the classroom
- rough play
- antagonistic behavior

- dishonesty
- misuse of classroom materials

These are behaviors that students should quickly change with teacher redirection and a conversation about expectations for behavior. The philosophy around behaviors that fall into Tier I is that these are behavior infractions that can be turned into teachable moments that help students embrace our core values; to help them see themselves as the kind of people who can learn from mistakes and become better learners and better classmates. Students will receive logical consequences with opportunities to practice expected behaviors.

Tier II

Teacher/Staff Issue Disciplinary Action

Teachers may continue to employ restorative strategies in Tier II, but these restorative practices will be coupled with disciplinary action such as lunch/recess detention or before school detention.

Examples of behaviors that fall into Tier II include but are not limited to:

- continued Tier I behaviors that are disruptive to the learning environment
- vandalism of school property, profanity
- inappropriate/rude/disrespectful comments made to or about another member of the school community (classmate, teacher, staff member, family member, etc.)
- pushing, hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, etc.
- noncompliance with teacher directions that disrupt learning or pose safety concerns

Families will be informed of behaviors that fall in Tier II and will be expected to support school discipline in this category.

Restorative practices may continue to be used in conjunction with disciplinary action. For example, a student who vandalizes a desk may receive an after school detention *and* be required to clean desks in the classroom.

Lunch/recess detentions and before school detentions can be assigned to the student.

St. Sylvester School holds detentions for Tier II and Tier III behavior infractions on Thursday mornings at 7a.m. in the principal's office. Families will be notified the day of their child's behavior infraction with the following information via email:

- The nature of the infraction.
- The name of the teacher issuing the consequence and their contact information.
- The date and time of their child's detention.

If students do not attend an assigned detention or do not arrive on-time (by 7:05a.m.), families will incur a \$25 charge on their FACTS account. Furthermore, their child will need to make-up the detention the following Thursday. Families will continue to incur a \$25 fine for each missed detention until the detention is served.

Note: Any violations of these policies may lead to a mandatory parent-teacher conference.

Tier III

Teacher/Student/Parent Involvement

For repeated offenses and serious situations, parents, teachers, and students should meet to discuss problematic behaviors and work towards the elimination of the problem. Examples of Tier III behavior include but are not limited to:

- continued Tier I or Tier II behaviors
- excessive missing/failing work
- damage to school property
- disrespectful behavior toward staff
- gossiping or spreading rumors that damage another person's reputation

The student will be placed on a check-in/check-out system to track student behavior and required to attend weekly meetings with a trusted adult (in the school) of the student's choosing to discuss progress, challenges, and goals. The teacher, student, and family will determine tracked behaviors, intervention strategies, and benchmarks for improved behavior. If benchmark goals are not met after four weeks of CICO intervention strategies, the student will progress to Tier IV.

Tier IV

Principal Involvement

Tier IV behaviors are serious in nature either because they are repeated Tier I, II, or III behaviors that are disruptive to learning, they are behaviors that pose a threat to students' physical or psychological safety, or they violate school expectations around drugs, alcohol, firearms, etc. Examples of Tier IV behaviors include but are not limited to:

- continued Tier I, II, or III behaviors
- bullying
- threats of violence
- use of racial slurs or racially charged language
- sexual harassment (verbal or physical—i.e. unwanted touching)
- sexual conduct on school premises, at school functions, or school-related events
- physical harm to others
- physical displays of anger (throwing/kicking/hitting/slamming objects, flipping or knocking over school furniture, raising voice at a classmate, teacher, or staff member, etc.)
- conduct which endangers the lives or health of others
- using or carrying a weapon on school premises
- stealing
- carrying, using, or dealing controlled substances or "look alike substances" and/or alcohol on school premises
- smoking or having possession of smoking materials on school premises or at school functions or school-related events
- carrying a weapon on school premises, at school functions, or school-related events
- repeated disrespect toward teachers, staff members, adults in authority, or other students

When a student's behavior in school deviates too far from the limits of acceptability, or the student's conduct is such that it endangers the property, health, safety, or well-being of others, action may be taken to restrict the privileges and rights of attendance at St. Sylvester School. Such action may be probation, suspension, exclusion, or expulsion.

Probation - A behavior contract that outlines expectations for student behavior and consequences for violations of the contract.

The school may place a student on probation. Involved parties will prepare a written contract specifying both behavioral and academic expectations. After conferences are held with the student's parents or guardian and relevant school personnel, the principal sets conditions for release from the probation. The principal's decisions are final.

Suspension - A temporary termination of enrollment until stipulated conditions are met.

Suspension is justified only in unusual circumstances and can be carried out inside or outside of school. Prior to suspension, the student must be advised of the reason for the proposed suspension. The parent or guardian of a suspended student is given prompt notice of the suspension and the reasons for the action. Parents/guardians and the student will have the opportunity to respond.

A suspension is normally given for one or two days. However, it may extend beyond that amount of time. The principal may extend the suspension as he/she sees fit. Suspensions are given to students involved in fighting, causing harm to another person, drug related activities, improper sexual conduct, and anything deemed serious by the administration.

Exclusion— A termination of enrollment for an extended period of time.

In the event a student threatens to harm themselves or others, the school will require the student to undergo a mental health evaluation before being allowed to return to school. The student will be excluded from school until the mental health evaluation is completed by a mental health professional.

Expulsion - A termination of enrollment permanently.

Expulsion will be considered a rarity and used only as the very last measure. Expulsion results from repeated refusal or neglect to obey school rules or conduct which endangers property, health, or safety of others, and is deemed to be in the best interest of the school.

The principal makes expulsions after consultation with the pastor and other officials as needed.

Search and Seizure

School personnel are charged with protecting the health and safety of all students. Fulfillment of these duties may conflict with a student's right to and need for privacy. The interest of the individual student in securing personal privacy must be balanced against the interest of society in protecting students against disruptive or illegal conduct.

While lockers, desks, and other storage areas are provided to students by the school, the school retains control and access to all lockers, desks and other storage areas. These areas are assigned to students for their use on the condition that they will be used in a manner consistent with the law and school rules. School personnel may conduct inspections of these areas at any time, with or without the student present, in order to fulfill their responsibility of maintaining proper safety, control, and management of the school.

Searches of School Property

All of the property of the school, including student desks and lockers, as well as their contents may be searched or inspected at any time, without notice. Authorized school personnel have an unrestricted right to search these structures as well as any containers, book bags, purses, or articles of clothing that are left unattended on school property.

Searches of Student's Person and Personal Property

The search of a student's person or personal property is permissible when there is any suspicion that the student may be carrying contraband. Contraband is defined as any weapon, dangerous object, illegal drug, drug paraphernalia or other item prohibited by law or by school policy.

Conducting the Search

- When a search is conducted, at least one other authorized school personnel will be present. Where possible, one person will be of the same gender as the student.
- The principal will always have another school authority present when a search is conducted.
- If a weapon or other substance is suspected, the school shall contact the local police department immediately.
- If a weapon or illegal drug is actually seized, the school authority will contact the local police department to report the incident and secure the contraband until the police arrive.
- Parents or guardians will be informed of the situation as soon as possible.
- If a student refuses to voluntarily empty their pockets or to open his/her book bag or purse, the student will be detained under supervision until parents are contacted and have arrived.

* Please note: The Search and Seizure Policy described is in full accordance with the Archdiocesan Policy Handbook

Bullying

It is important to define bullying behavior. According to stopbullying.gov, “Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.” This kind of behavior can take many forms and can occur both in and outside of the school. Actions or words that fit this definition of behavior are a serious problem that must be addressed. Much of the responsibility regarding bullying lies with the families of the involved students.

Accusations of bullying will be taken seriously. Any accusations must be made in a timely and substantiated manner. To the degree that the school can inform and help resolve the situation, all involved parties will be consulted and the school will work to ensure that the situation does not continue to impact the education or development of the affected students.

Disciplinary action may be appropriate for situations of bullying even when the bullying is cyber in nature or takes place outside of school grounds and/or hours. All families must sign a technology consent form. This form may be cited in instances of inappropriate or bullying behavior that takes place via technology.

Cell phones and other Mobile Technology

Technology that permits students to message or communicate with one another in an unauthorized manner within school is not permitted. Personal cell phones, smart phones, airpods ***and smart watches*** must be turned off and they may not stay on a student’s person during the school day. This technology may not be used during school hours and may never be used to take pictures while on school grounds. Students found to have a cell phone or smart phone on their person are subject to the consequences listed below.

Furthermore, students will not be permitted to use their cell phones or other forms of technology after school in Extended Day Care.

First offense: Phone is confiscated and held by teacher or principal until student picks it up from school at conclusion of the school day

Second offense: Phone is confiscated and held; family member must pick up phone

Third offense: Phone is confiscated and held for 24 hours, family member must pick up phone; mandatory family conference

Cyber Bullying (& other forms of online/phone harassment)

Bullying or harassment through various forms of media (including texting, posting to social media sites, etc.) demonstrates poor judgment and a lack of respect. It is an unacceptable form of behavior and reflects poorly on the student(s) involved. As with other forms of bullying, the primary responsibility in resolving the issue may reside with the families of the involved students. The school can in some instances try to inform and aid the resolution. If any of this behavior is found to originate in school or impact the daily life of students here, the school may take disciplinary measures as determined by the principal and school staff. Although the school can not request a student's social media login and password, the school may require the student to show or share social media content.

Students are strictly prohibited from using any school technology to make, send, or in any way participate in messages or behavior that is unacceptable or can be understood as bullying. Disciplinary measures can include loss of technology privileges, detentions, exclusion from particular programs or activities, suspensions, or expulsions. These determinations will be made by the teachers, principal, and pastor.

Gang Activity

Gang-related activities are contrary to Catholic Social Teaching and have no place in a Catholic school. Intimidation and/or disrespect of any person is unacceptable. The following may be subject to disciplinary action: intimidation and threat of physical harm of others; symbols that may be gang-related in the manner displayed, including but not limited to jewelry, jackets, sweatshirts, caps, or other forms of clothing; display of signs/symbols on school property, paper, notebooks, textbooks, and other possessions that may be gang-related; conduct on or off premises that may be gang-related.

Parents/Guardians will be notified when their children are either suspected of being in gang-related activities or are a victim of gang-related activity. Gang activity may result in probation, suspension, and/or expulsion. The principal has the authority and responsibility to investigate and report suspected gang activity to local law enforcement.

Harassment

The pastor, administration, and staff of St. Sylvester School believe that all students and employees are entitled to work and study in school-related environments that are Christ-centered and free of harassment.

The school will treat complaints of harassment seriously and will respond to such complaints in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. True harassment of any type will not be tolerated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension, expulsion, or termination.

Law Enforcement

There are certain offenses or situations in which the school's chief administrator is mandated to immediately contact local law enforcement officials to make a report. This includes:

- ~ any firearm incidents at the school
- ~ any verified incidents of illegal drugs
- ~ any written complaints from school personnel concerning instances of battery committed against school personnel at the school

The chief administrator will notify local law enforcement officials of these incidents via the Illinois State Police's School Incident Reporting System.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct. Employees or students who engage in any type of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline, including suspension, termination, or expulsion.

Retaliation in any form against an employee or student who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary action.

Any employee, student, or family member who knowingly makes false charges against an employee or student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse, or embarrass that individual shall be subject to the sanctions for misconduct set by the archdiocese of Chicago.

Public Scandal

Behavior by students, school families, or other related parties that brings undo and negative attention or scandal to St. Sylvester School are subject to exclusion from the school community. This is an Archdiocese of Chicago policy.

All of those associated with the school are expected to demonstrate respectful, responsible behavior and avoid engaging in public scandal. The school and the parents are partners in the education of children/adolescents. If, in the opinion of the administration, that partnership is no longer viable, the school reserves the right to require the parent to withdraw the student from the school.

Regarding Use of School Name, Logos, and Motto

The school and its administrators have a right to restrict the use of the school, parish, or program's name to only those authorized by the principal or other administrator. No one may use the school name, logo, or motto on any type of social media or in any other way (e.g. putting the name on t-shirts) without the express written permission of the principal or pastor.

Weapons

To uphold the dignity of the human person, the sacredness of human life, and to provide a safe, secure environment, students shall not carry, possess, or use weapons in school, or on school grounds. Weapons include, but are not limited to, knives, handguns, brass knuckles, "billy clubs", bats, pipes, sticks, and any other object that causes bodily harm. School authorities have the right to inspect and search lockers, desks, parking lots, and school property. Parents/guardians of the students involved shall be notified as soon as possible. Students who violate these directives are subject to suspension and/or expulsion. School officials are required to report weapon violations to the local police. The weapon is then turned over to the local police jurisdiction.

Safety Issues

Feeling safe and secure in school is vital to a student's well-being and their chances to develop academically. All students will be under the care of their assigned teachers/staff members while attending school. All doors to the school are to be locked during the school day, and all people must enter through the front doors under the supervision of the office staff and report to the front office right away. Visitors to the school may be asked to wear a tag or lanyard identifying themselves to the school's staff and students.

It is vitally important that the school has the most up to date contact information for every student's family in case of emergency.

The school is currently crafting a new and advanced safety response policy and set of procedures to address any and all possible safety issues.

For safety issues regarding health or medical situations please see the handbook section entitled “Health Issues”.

Extended Day Program

The Extended Day Program is an important aspect of St. Sylvester School and provides a vital service to parents who need dependable care for their children before and after school. For an additional fee, parents know their children are in a safe and supervised environment. In the morning, all students – regardless of grade level – stay in the school cafeteria, Schwinn Hall.

After dismissal, students in grades 1-8, who are not picked up yet, go to Schwinn Hall. Remaining preschool and kindergarten students go to the school basement gym where they stay under separate supervision until 4:15 p.m. At that point, any remaining preschool and kindergarten students are led to Schwinn Hall and rejoin the rest of the student body.

Students in grades 5-8 are given the independence to walk from the classroom to extended day care without a staff guide. Students who do not make appropriate choices and do not go immediately to the extended day program risk consequences and the loss of that independence.

Expectations

Parents/guardians cannot stay in extended day care once a child is dropped off.

Extended Day Fees

There is a \$20.00 non-refundable registration fee per child that is paid before school begins. The cost of the program is **\$5.00** per hour per child. Families are billed for extended day care through Incidental Expenses on FACTS. Students may be excluded from the program for nonpayment. The cost is prorated for time spent in the program (i.e. a half hour costs \$2.50).

Late fees for late payments do apply and will be shown on the weekly invoices. **It is important to note that students who are picked up late (after 6:00 p.m.) are subject to a late charge of \$5.00 per minute. This cost is purposefully steep and is meant to ensure that all students are picked up before the close of the program and that the extended day staff is able to leave by 6:00 p.m.**

The Extended Day Program is meant to be a service to our school children and their parents. An occasion may occur when a family has a crisis and needs to leave a child in the program that does not normally participate. This can be organized by calling the school office. The hourly rate will be applied. A non-refundable registration fee of \$20.00 will be applied if a child attends the program more than twice.

Extended Day Hours

Before our school day starts at 7:50 a.m., supervision is available in Schwinn Hall starting as early as 6:30 a.m. It runs until the start of the school day, but parents/guardians are allowed to drop-off children without being charged at 7:30am. as this is part of our new arrival procedure to alleviate traffic issues from the past.

After school supervision is available from dismissal until 6:00 p.m. The Extended Day Program will not provide services to students on non-school days. If going to the morning care program, students must be dropped off via the school parking lot and enter Schwinn through the door closest to the kitchen (closest to the playground). When picking-up students parents/guardians should enter through these same doors. In the afternoon, parents are asked to enter the building and sign their child out.

Students should not leave the building and attempt to reenter the Extended Day Program unless permission for this procedure has been previously communicated in writing to the school staff.

Removal From the Extended Day Program

Students will be removed from the program for unacceptable behavior to staff or other students or for damage to school property. Students may also be removed for not being current with financial matters related to this program.

After School Clubs and Teams

After school clubs and teams are a vital part of our school's overall program and help students foster extracurricular skills and talents. It is the school's aim to provide a diverse array of clubs and teams for students of all ages. The clubs and teams will normally be led by a teacher or school staff member. Offerings vary throughout the year. Participation in all clubs and sports is dependent on a child's positive behavior, good grades, and attendance at practices and planning sessions.

Registration, Cost, and Attendance

Forms will be sent home in the Tuesday letter listing club/class/team opportunities, dates, times, and other information. Parents/guardians must return the required forms in order to register their child for clubs, classes, or teams. Students are expected to follow the same rules and policies as during the regular school day. Student participation in a club, class, or team will be dependent upon the staff member or volunteer who is leading the particular group.

The cost of different clubs, classes, or teams may vary. Payment must be received by the indicated due date or it will be subject to a late fee. The cost will be detailed in the listing of club offerings in the Tuesday folder. After school club and team fees are non-refundable.

Students who register for a club, class, or team are expected to attend the sessions, practices, games, etc. Failure to do so may mean that the child is no longer part of the club or team.

Club, Class, or Team Volunteers/Coaches

In order to work with students as a coach or volunteer, adults must complete the requirements detailed in the "Safe Environment Requirements" section found at the end of this handbook. Coaches and volunteers are expected to uphold the same professional and Christian standards that are expected of our school employees when dealing with children. Coaches and volunteers must have prior acknowledgement and permission to participate from the appropriate school staff, most notably the school principal.

Some recent after school club/team examples:

Sports Teams– Boys and Girls Varsity and Junior Varsity Basketball teams, Co-ed Flag Football, Co-ed Softball, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, and Co-ed Volleyball

Clubs – Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Arts and Crafts, Fitness, Gardening, Girls on the Run, Chess, Cooking, Perler Beading, High School Prep, Student Council, Yoga, and Test Prep

Federal/State Laws and Acts

Asbestos Compliance

St. Sylvester School is in compliance with all regulations of current law regarding asbestos. The school has been re-inspected, and a copy of the inspection and the management plan is on file in the school office. An annual report is sent home each fall notifying parents of any changes in status that have taken place.

Child Abuse Reporting

Under Illinois law, all school personnel are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any suspected physical or sexual abuse and neglect. Neglect may include failure to provide necessary food, shelter, medical care, or school attendance. Reports are made to the Department of Children and Family Services. No school employee is obligated to first contact a family member before contacting DCFS. Persons from this department must follow up the call by visiting the child's home. At times, they will ask and will be given permission to speak with the child at school.

Crisis Management and OSHA

A Crisis Management Plan and OSHA policies and procedures are in place to protect the safety of all in the school. Parents/Guardians have the right, if they choose, to schedule a time to see these OSHA policies and plans.

Custody and Court Ordered Restriction

Any custody arrangements or court ordered restrictions regarding your child should be made known to school officials before the first day of school. Each parent has all rights to their child unless an official court order limiting these is on file in the school office. Changes or restrictions that a court places on these rights of visitation and custody by both parents must be presented to the school office immediately. The school cannot make independent judgments in the absence of court-ordered alterations.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

St. Sylvester School abides by the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parents with access to academic records and to other related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that no information be given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

Health

Students should not be sent to or remain in school when seriously ill with a fever or contagious sickness. To do so is not only injurious to that student, but also endangers the health of others. If a student has been absent due to a contagious disease, they must have a note from a physician in order to return to school. Students who show signs of illness during the night or are sick when they wake up should not come to school. If a student is found to be ill upon arrival, parents/guardians will be asked to take their child home.

Illinois State Law requires that each child have a physical and dental examination before entering into Preschool, Kindergarten, Grade 2, and Grade 6. Every student must be immunized against measles, smallpox, tetanus, diphtheria, poliomyelitis, and pertussis and must have a series of three hepatitis B (HB) shots. In extraordinary circumstances, the principal may make exceptions to the immunization requirements. Immunization records are always due when a child registers for school. These forms must be signed by the parent and the physician or dentist and returned to school promptly. Failure to comply will result in a child's exclusion from school until the requirements are met. Medical records are due September 30 at the latest. These forms become part of a permanent file that is kept in each student's Health Record. County and State health personnel visit the school periodically to check these files.

Medications

Medications that need to be taken during school must be brought to the school office by an adult for safekeeping and dispensing. Medications must be in the original containers and be clearly labeled with the student's name, classroom, exact times when the medication is to be taken, and the exact

amount to be taken. The parent must fill out a parental medication consent form before any medication may be given. Forms are available in the school office. No student may keep any form of medication in his or her possession at school.

Administration of Medical Cannabis

Students are not to be permitted to use or possess cannabis in our schools except in accordance with the law and school policy. Illinois state law states that if a parent/guardian of an elementary/secondary students who demonstrates his/her son or daughter is a “registered qualifying patient” and has an individual who is a “registered designated caregiver,” both of whom hold medical cannabis registry identification cards, then the parent/guardian or registered caregiver must be permitted to administer a medical cannabis product to the student (non-smoking/non-vaping form) at school.

A parent or guardian or other individual may not administer a medical cannabis product in a manner that, in the opinion of the school, would create a disruption to the school’s educational environment or would cause exposure of the product to other students.

Mental Health Support

St. Sylvester School teachers engage in daily social emotional lessons with students to ensure they have opportunities to practice the skills they need to grow into emotionally and spiritually balanced adults. Additionally, St. Sylvester School offers counseling support to students through Student Savvy. Families, teachers, staff members and students themselves can make referrals to see the counselor.

St. Sylvester School takes all indications of self-harm, suicidal thoughts and other significant mental health concerns seriously. When there is a threat to others, the school's discipline policy will be followed. When we have concerns about a student’s emotional well-being, we will ask for the student to receive a mental health assessment from a licensed mental health professional (licensed clinical professional counselor, licensed clinical social worker, licensed psychologist or licensed psychiatrist) prior to the continuation of academics and co curricular activities at St. Sylvester School

Below are the steps parents/guardians follow when a student displays a threat of harm to themselves or others :

1. Require the child undergo a crisis mental health assessment in the community by a licensed mental health professional as soon as possible. The school can help provide referrals to clinicians, agencies, hospitals and services who may be able to assess the student.
2. Parents/guardians are expected to follow the recommendations provided by the clinician, which may include outpatient therapy, partial or inpatient hospitalization, and/or medication management.
3. Parents/guardians are expected to sign a consent for release of information, and arrange for the clinician to share the recommended treatment plan with the school to determine the student’s reentry.
 - a. Treat information received from the student/family/treating medical provider confidentially.
 - b. All documentation should be faxed or emailed to the attention of the principal or school designee.

Post-Assessment Follow Up

1. If the assessment and recommended treatment plan result in an immediate return to school, please see Step 3.
2. If the assessment results in a recommended extended absence, defined as more than five days (or as designated by the school), the parent/guardian should contact the school

- principal or designee to communicate the preliminary treatment plan as outlined by the treating clinician. The principal or designee will communicate with any treatment facility and school faculty to collaborate on the therapeutic and academic needs for the student. The principal or designee will coordinate the provision of necessary information for the student's return to school in a sensitive and confidential manner. The principal or designee should utilize the assessment information to determine whether the school has the resources available to meet the child's needs and, if it is able to do so, to begin drafting the student support plan that will be finalized at the reentry meeting.
3. Reentry back to St. Sylvester School academics and cocurricular activities requires the following written statements from the evaluating clinician, which can be shared via fax or email to the principal and/or designee.
 - a. Evaluation date and crisis mental health assessment results, including a statement indicating the provider is informed of the reason for the assessment; e.g., suicidal ideation, threat to others.
 - b. Safety statement: The student is not at risk of self-harm or of harming others, and it is appropriate for the student to return to St. Sylvester School.
 4. Upon receipt of documentation, the principal or designee will review the documentation of assessment and any relevant treatment plans to determine if the school has the resources to provide a safe learning environment for the student based on their demonstrated needs. If additional information is needed to make this determination, the school will obtain such information from the treating mental health professional.
 5. If the school determines it has sufficient resources to support student, schedule a meeting to discuss the student's potential return.
 - a. The purpose of this meeting is to review the recommendations from the assessment and treatment plan and to inform the family whether it has the resources to meet their child's needs. If it does, a draft student safety plan will be shared with the family. If necessary, this plan will include a plan to make up missing homework, tests, and other academic supports. The school may, but is not required to, revise this plan based on information presented by the parents during the meeting. The parents/guardians must indicate their approval with the plan by signing it and committing to implementing the plan as a condition of continued enrollment. If the parents/guardians agree with the school's student safety plan, a date will be scheduled for the child's return to school. If the school does not have the resources to meet the child's needs, the child will be excluded for such reason.
 - b. Once all aspects of the reentry meeting are accomplished and meet expectations, the student will be authorized to return to classes and cocurricular activities.
 6. Following the child's return to school, the principal or designee will schedule a meeting to review the student support plan and determine what, if any, changes are necessary.

If after following the Mental Healthy Protocol outlined above, St. Sylvester School staff feel the student needs support beyond what can be provided at the school, the principal/designee will contact faculty from the Office of Catholic Schools for consultation. In some cases, it may be determined that St. Sylvester School is not the best fit to support the student and the school will then help the family find another school with the resources the student needs.

Missing Persons

The school will notify local law enforcement of any requests for records for any current or former students that are reported as a missing person by the Illinois State Police.

Non-Discrimination

St. Sylvester School admits students and hires qualified employees of any race, color, sex, national, and ethnic origin.

School Visitation Rights Act

The School Visitation Rights Act permits employed parents and guardians who are unable to meet with educators because of a work conflict, the right to an allotment time during the school year to attend necessary educational or behavioral conferences at the school their children attend.

Forms

Photo Release Form

This form grants the school permission to use and/or display photographic images of a student in published materials (ex. school website, brochures, advertisements). Class newsletters and other internal documents/materials do not require such permission.

Technology Acceptable Use Agreement/Device Loan Agreement

In order for students to use the school's technology resources and take advantage of the internet access, the school must have a signed agreement form in which students and families acknowledge that the students must follow specific guidelines regarding their computer usage.

Student Permission to leave school grounds after dismissal: (Grades 6-8)

After dismissal, students in grades 6-8 who have permission to leave school grounds on their own must have a signed permission slip from a parent/guardian allowing such action and acknowledging that the school is no longer responsible for the child's supervision. These students are obligated to leave school grounds after dismissal or go to the in-school extended day program. Students may not remain on school grounds or leave the school grounds and then return to the school. Once a child has left, the school no longer has the ability or responsibility to supervise that child.

Field Trip Permission Slips

All class field trips require a separate and specific permission slip that must be signed by a child's parent/guardian.

CANTS Form & Code of Conduct Form

These forms are part of the requirements under the Safe Environment Requirements detailed at end of this handbook.

Student Release Information Form

This form lists the names and contact information of people who have authorization to pick up students in Preschool through 2nd grade. It will be kept in the front office and should be updated if things change. People who are not on this form do not have your permission to pick up your child. In a situation where an unlisted individual comes to pick up a child, we must get written or verbal consent from the parent in order to release the child to this unlisted individual. Families should be sure to include all potential family and friends who may pick up a child in order to prevent delays at the end of the day.

Health Issues

Illness and Attendance

Children should not remain in school when they have a rash, lice, nits, fever, ringworm, pink eye, sore throat or other infectious illnesses. Doing so would not only be injurious to the child, but could endanger the health of others. If a child has been absent due to a contagious disease, they must have a note from a physician in order to return to school.

Students who have shown signs of illness during the night or are sick when they wake up should not come to school. It is unacceptable to drop a student off at school when a parent/guardian knows his/her child is ill. Parents will be contacted immediately to pick up their child.

Illness and Emergency

If a child becomes ill during the school day, parents/guardians will be contacted and that child will need to be picked up. An emergency file is kept for each child containing up-to-date information on where they can be contacted during the day. Besides having the telephone numbers of parents, at least two other contact persons should be noted. It is the responsibility of each family to be sure that the school has the correct and current emergency contact information. The office must be notified immediately of any changes to addresses or telephone numbers; this includes cell phone, home, and work numbers.

Potty Training in Preschool

All students must be fully potty trained before attending St. Sylvester School. St. Sylvester reserves the right to suspend or ask a family to leave if students consistently have accidents or if there is sufficient evidence that a student is not potty trained.

Head Lice

Head lice in children are a common phenomenon. While they are a cause of itching of the scalp, head lice are not the cause of serious health concerns or the result of poor hygiene. However, because they are easily transferred from one person to the next, students who are found to have head lice in school must be picked up by a parent or guardian and taken home so that he/she can be treated. A letter will be sent home to the families of children in that classroom notifying them of the situation so that they too can check their own children. To prevent the spread of head lice, it is imperative that families do not send their child to school if the child has or shows any signs of head lice or nits. A child who is found to have head lice must be completely treated and cleared in order to return to school. If this is done outside of school, it is the responsibility of the family to notify the school and to supply proof of the treatment. If a child has repeated incidents of head lice in a short period of time then the school will require professional notification affirming that the child is cleared and OK to return to school.

Upon any child's return to school after a head lice incident, he/she will be checked by a school staff member before being allowed to return to the classroom.

Requirements: Immunizations

Every student must be immunized against measles, smallpox, tetanus, diphtheria, poliomyelitis, and pertussis and must have a series of three hepatitis B (HB) shots. In extraordinary circumstances the principal may make exceptions to the immunization requirements. Immunization records are always due when a child registers for school. The family has until mid-September to make sure all medical records are in. Failure to comply will result in a child's exclusion from school until these requirements are met.

Requirements: Physical, Vision, and Dental Examinations

Physical examinations (which will include the immunizations) as prescribed by the Department of Health are required of all students who are new to St. Sylvester School as well as students entering preschool, kindergarten and 6th grade.

Vision Examinations are required by state law of every student that is new to St. Sylvester School plus all students entering Kindergarten.

Dental examinations are required of all new students entering St. Sylvester School plus students entering kindergarten, 2nd, or 6th grades.

All immunizations and examinations must be up to date. Failure to comply may necessitate excluding the child from school. Forms are distributed to the students. These forms must be signed by the parent and the physician or dentist and returned to school promptly. These forms become part of a permanent file that is kept in each child's health folder. County and state health personnel visit the school periodically to check these files.

Sharing Information

All information concerning a child's health or medical history is private and all involved professionals must act with discretion concerning that information.

It is equally important that all families share all known and relevant health information with the school. School administration and a child's teacher(s) should all be aware of particular concerns or issues that relate to one of the student's health. Examples include food allergies, skin rashes, etc.

School Lunch Program

Hot Lunch Program

St. Sylvester School provides a government-sponsored hot lunch program daily. This program provides a nutritious lunch for students. It is free and open to all families. Families should select if they would like to opt in for lunch for the upcoming month. A link will be shared in the Tuesday Newsletter for families to select this option.

Fast Foods and Beverages

At St. Sylvester we promote healthy eating/drinking and a healthy lifestyle. As mentioned, the school provides a healthy lunch 100% cost free for all families. Students who opt not to participate in the school's Hot Lunch Program must bring their own lunch. Delivered and fast foods (ie McDonalds, Subway, White Castle, etc.) are not permitted to be sent to the school for safety reasons, minimizing the amount of outside visitors/vendors during the school day; in addition, it creates an interruption for staff personnel in maintaining a successful learning environment. Students will need a doctor's note that expresses a specific health reason for such instances. A note expressing that the child is a picky eater will not suffice. Sugary beverages such as soda and Prime are not permitted in school due to their potential to cause distractions among the students. The high sugar content can lead to spikes in energy levels followed by crashes, affecting students' ability to focus and participate in classroom activities. Additionally, these drinks can pose cleanliness issues, as spills and sticky residue may attract pests and create hygiene concerns within the school environment. We encourage all students to hydrate with water throughout the day. Students are welcome to bring water in a reusable drinking container. Departments have the autonomy to determine beverage container policy. If there is a breach in policy, departments will follow a responsive protocol. Gum is not allowed as it has a tendency to create an unclean learning

environment for students and can create health concerns within the facilities of the school. Students are not permitted to share foods/goodies with other students due to allergies and health protocols.

Snacks

Students in preschool through 2nd grade have time designated each day for a healthy snack. Examples of snacks include: small vegetables, fruit, crackers, a juice box, water, etc.

A schedule for providing snacks to the whole class in the preschool classrooms is provided by the preschool teachers at the beginning of the school year. While 1st and 2nd grade classes will often designate a set snack time during the day, it is not mandatory that students in grades 1 and 2 get time for snacks or that each child eats a snack. It is highly recommended though that children do eat a healthy snack at this time.

Teachers will pass out to families, in the beginning of the school year, a list of suggested snacks and prohibited items. Families will also be advised of any known food allergies within the classroom.

Allergies

If students have any specific food allergies or other item-specific allergies it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to present written proof to the school office so that the proper accommodations can be made. The family must then also share this information with the classroom teacher.

If a child with an allergy must have an epi-pen, it is the responsibility of the family to provide the school with this epi-pen and to demonstrate, on an annual basis to the classroom teacher, how it is to be used.

Tuition & Financial Matters

The school does an incredible amount of work to secure donations, scholarship funding, and outside fundraising to help keep tuition rates as low as possible. Even still, student tuition makes up a vast amount of the total revenue needed to operate the school. It is vital that families meet their financial obligations in order to sustain the school. The tuition obligation each family undertakes represents a tangible commitment to each child's education and holistic development. Should a family need financial tuition assistance, please complete Financial Aid through Facts. This allows the school to proceed with financial aid determinations.

All school families must sign a tuition contract that outlines their financial obligations to St. Sylvester School. This contract must be signed and returned to the front office.

Registration

Each child must be registered in order to attend St. Sylvester School. To be registered the school must have submitted the online registration form and the registration fee. For the 2023-2024 school year the fee is \$180. The registration fee is non-refundable.

Tuition

The tuition is almost always the largest of the financial obligations that a family has towards the school. The 2023-2024 tuition for each child in preschool is \$6,700 and for each child in Kindergarten through 8th grade it is \$6,000.

Schedule: Tuition is customarily paid through regularly scheduled payments. The default plan is 10 equal payments from August through May. When families create their account with FACTS they can select which payment plan schedule they wish to use during the year – a 10, 11, or 12 month payment

plan. Any deviations from this must be agreed upon with the principal and must be confirmed in writing.

Payment Methods: Families must indicate on FACTS how they wish to make their payments. All families will be required to create an account with FACTS through which families can choose to have payments withdrawn from a debit card or their checking account. Please note that cash or check payments will no longer be accepted in the main office unless otherwise agreed upon by the principal and confirmed in writing.

Late Fees: Late tuition payments induce a \$30 late fee from the school and are also subject to additional late fees from FACTS. This FACTS late fee is normally \$30. Requests for extensions must be made at least one week in advance.

FACTS – Tuition Collection Company

For the 2023-2024 school year, tuition accounts will be managed through a third-party company called FACTS. School families will create an account with FACTS through which they can review and monitor their balance. Families set the terms of their tuition through FACTS in that they select the payment schedule (10, 11, or 12 payments), due dates (the 1st, 15th, or 17th), and method of payment (debit card or checking account). Families can make payments through this account and get in touch with FACTS staffers at any time. Participating families must abide by the terms and conditions of FACTS. These terms, relating to types of payment options, late fees, insufficient funds fees, and more, are displayed on the FACTS website and available for review at any time.

Late Fees

St. Sylvester School is under no obligation to waive late fees for missed payments. Families must pay close attention to due dates and email communication from FACTS (as well as weekly Tuesday letters) regarding due dates for tuition, fundraising, volunteer hours. It is the responsibility of each family to stay current and up-to-date with their FACTS account.

Fundraising

Fundraising fees are an additional part of a family's overall enrollment contract. Each family is expected to participate in fundraising activities to help pay for staff salaries, additional programs, the purchase and maintenance of school equipment, etc. Unless otherwise indicated by the school principal on tuition contracts, the amount required for fundraising fees for each family is \$300.00. Families receiving significant financial assistance from the school may be asked to raise more money through these fundraising opportunities. The school will provide different opportunities throughout the school year to help families meet the fundraising requirements. Families enrolling during the school year will have their fundraising commitment prorated. Deadlines are issued for each of the fundraisers. In most cases, the fundraising obligations should be completed by mid-May.

All fundraising obligations not met by the final deadline in May will be added to a family's tuition on FACTS.

Important note: To pay for all associated costs, all fundraising activities have a percentage assigned to them. This means that families who participate in that particular activity receive credit for a certain percentage of their total sales, purchase, etc. (As an example, the Football Mania fundraiser is a 75% activity so if you sell \$80 of tickets you will get credit for \$60 of fundraising.)

Service Hours

At a minimum, each family signs a commitment to at least 14 hours of service to St. Sylvester School as part of the tuition contract. Opportunities for service can include chaperoning a field trip, assembling Tuesday folders, helping clean the classrooms, helping set-up or work a school event, etc. These opportunities are offered throughout the year. Forms are signed in the office to document the time spent helping the school. Unsatisfied service hours result in a charge of \$10 per incomplete hour. (See back of handbook's "Safe Environment Requirements" for more information on requirements for chaperones and volunteers who seek to work directly with children.)

Any volunteer hours that have not been completed by the deadlines communicated by the school will be added to a family's tuition in FACTS.

Please Note – Anyone who is signed up to volunteer for an event and fails to either show up or notify the school will have that number of hours they have missed added to their balance on the second (2nd) occurrence.

Fees

Fees can be applied for field trips, graduation (Kindergarten and 8th grade), extended day registration, any late payments, and canceled or bounced checks.

Outstanding Payments

Families who are not current with all financial obligations will not receive report cards, diplomas, or transfer records until all obligations are met. In cases of large outstanding amounts, families may receive an exclusion letter stating that students may not attend school until the financial obligations have been met. This may also result in a family not being allowed to re-enroll.

Refunds

Refunds for paid tuition may be given to families who transfer out of St. Sylvester School. In order to receive a refund, the family must meet with the school principal to discuss the situation and to determine (on a prorated basis) the amount of the refund. Refunds are only given in cases where all other balances (lunch, extended day, etc.) are currently paid in full. The amount of time enrolled in the school will determine the amount to be refunded.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance with tuition is available to families who demonstrate authentic financial need. In most cases, this tuition assistance is provided by the school itself and represents a loss of tuition income. Consequently, there is a limited amount of tuition assistance available and it is balanced in many cases by an increase in service hours or fundraising fees.

Families seeking financial assistance must complete the required Financial Aid Application through FACTS. Each family that qualifies for financial aid will be asked to pay a portion of the cost. No family will receive a full tuition scholarship from the school.

The obligations for families receiving financial aid will be detailed in the Tuition Contract that each recipient must agree to and sign. This form explains that families must comply with school rules and regulations regarding attendance, academics, school codes, and discipline codes. It further details that tuition assistance is a private matter and all recipients are required to keep their individual aid package private. Discussing or sharing the details of one's financial aid package can be grounds for amending or revoking the aid package.

Families receiving financial assistance are expected to fully participate and volunteer in school projects and programs. Those families receiving tuition assistance must cooperate with St. Sylvester School in applying for scholarships to outside charitable foundations. Scholarships received from charitable foundations will help cover the cost of the St. Sylvester School Tuition Assistance Program

for all families with financial need. Those families unwilling to cooperate or who do not stay up-to-date with payments may forfeit their child's scholarship. Students who receive scholarship money from outside foundations will be expected to fulfill all obligations of that particular foundation.

All students who receive financial assistance must sustain a satisfactory academic performance and perform to the best of their ability in school. They must also demonstrate good conduct. A student with poor academic performance or poor behavior may forfeit financial assistance.

Unless otherwise stipulated by the principal, financial aid must be applied for annually.

Uniforms and Appearance

Dress uniforms are worn every day that school is in session with three exceptions: 1) it is designated as a "Dress Down Day", 2) a "Dress Up Day", or 3) it is a gym day. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to follow the year and monthly calendars to adhere to these days and to be sure that the uniform regulations are upheld. All students are expected to follow the strict outline of the uniform code.

We are not under an exclusive contract with any uniform vendor so uniform articles can be purchased through any store or site that sells the correct articles of clothing. We do have an account set up with FrenchToast.com which lists out the required uniform articles and sells them at reduced prices. The source code for Frenchtoast.com is QS45JMN. Zensky's is also a popular vendor for our uniforms.

Decisions on the appropriateness and/or acceptability of school uniform compliance will be made by the school's teachers and principal.

Expectations of All Students

- Students should present a neat and clean appearance at all times.
- Uniform pieces must fit appropriately (i.e. not too small; not too large)
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- Students must enter and leave the school grounds in complete school uniform.
- St. Sylvester students may wear jewelry that does not distract from the learning environment.
- Students can wear all black sneakers or all black dress shoes on a regular uniform day. Both are acceptable.
 - The visible sole of the shoe must also be black. Any part of the shoe that is visible must be black. The part of the shoe that touches the floor (what is not visible) does not have to be black.
- The soles or heels of school shoes may not be more than one inch.
- Sandals may not be worn as school shoes.
- Shoes and sneakers must be tied at all times
- 'Roller/wheelie' shoes may not be worn in school.
- Shoes or gym shoes that include constant or flickering lights can be distracting and should not be worn.

Preschool Uniform

Children in preschool must wear the school gym uniform at all times. This includes any two pieces of the four-piece gym uniform set. Substitutions are not allowed. Parents should purchase enough pieces to launder them frequently. Gym shoes must be worn. These shoes can be white, black, or gray. All children should wear solid white, black, or gray socks. If students do not wear the uniform on a consistent basis, parents/guardians will be contacted and called in for a conference.

Girls' Daily Dress Uniform - Grades K-8

Bottom: Skirt, Jumper, & Tights / Pants or Shorts

- Knee length maroon plaid jumpers or maroon plaid skirt
- Gray pant slacks and a black belt may be worn by girls in place of the jumper or dress
- Gray dress shorts are permitted. The standard top, socks, footwear, and belt must be worn with the shorts on these days.
- No leg warmers or slacks may be worn in school at any time under the dress or jumper
- Girls may wear warmer pants under their dress or jumper when coming to school on cold mornings but they must be then removed by the start of the school day.
- Girls may wear tights or leggings under their skirt or jumpers. These tights can be solid white, gray, black, or maroon

Top: Blouse, Polo, & Sweater

- Long or short sleeve, button down, pink, maroon or white school blouses/polos
- Blouses must be worn tucked into the skirt, slacks, or jumper
- Any undershirts that girls wear below their blouse must be solid white and be free of writing.
- White turtlenecks may be worn during the winter months only
- The school gym sweatshirt may be worn instead of the sweater on regular school days
- Only the uniform school sweater or school sweatshirt may be worn

Footwear

- Black leather shoes with soles that are less than one inch in height. Black ballet flats are also acceptable.
- Gym shoes are only to be worn on gym days
- Students may choose to wear black “dress”/ankle boots as part of the uniform. Knee-high boots are not permissible. (*Note: During winter months, students may wear winter boots to school but must change into acceptable footwear before school begins*)
- Socks must be worn.
- Acceptable colors of socks are solid white, gray, black, or maroon

Other

- Purses, if necessary, are permissible for girls in grades 3-8; they must be small in nature
- Hairstyles must not distract from the learning environment (principal discretion)

Boys’ Daily Dress Uniform - Grades K-8

Bottom: Pants

- Students must wear dress-type gray slacks (Slacks must be similar to those purchased through the FrenchToast.com uniform company)
- Pants must fit neatly – no overly baggy or overly tight pants should be worn.
- Corduroy gray pants should not be worn
- Pants should not have extra side pockets (i.e. no cargo or carpenter pants)
- Gray sweat pants are not to be worn as an alternative to the gray pants
- A solid black, brown, or gray belt must be worn whenever there are belt loops
- Boys may wear gray dress shorts. The standard top, socks, footwear, and belt must be worn with the shorts on these rare days.

Top: Shirt & Sweater

- Long or short sleeve white or maroon knit shirts must be worn
- At all times, shirts must be tucked into pants
- Any shirts worn under the knit dress shirt must only be solid gray or white and be without any writing

- White turtlenecks may be worn during winter months only
- Maroon, solid-color cardigan sweaters may be worn
- The school gym sweatshirt may be worn instead of the sweater on regular school days

Footwear

- Black leather shoes or all may be worn. Boots may be worn to get to/from school but not during school
- No gym shoes or gym shoe look alike may be worn with the school dress uniform
- Socks may be solid white, black, or gray and must reach the ankle.
- No ‘Wheelie’ shoes may be worn

Gym Uniform – All students

On days when students are scheduled for physical education class, students should wear the gym uniform all day. Students not wearing the proper gym uniform could lose physical education privileges and/or can receive a “U” for that day. This could furthermore result in a low quarterly grade.

These uniforms may be purchased through the school. Out of consideration for the school office staff, please give at least one day’s notice about the need for new gym uniform items.

- Students must wear any two pieces of the four-piece gym uniform to be considered in full uniform.
 - ~ One or both top pieces: school gym t-shirt or school sweatshirt
 - ~ One on the bottom: school gym shorts or school sweatpants
- Footwear must be gym shoes; they may be any color or design but they must be suitable for athletic activity. (Shoes should be tightly laced and tied)
- Socks should be one solid color (white, black, or gray) and at least reach the ankles
- No ‘Wheelie’ gym shoes may be worn
- Proper fitting clothes must be worn; no clearly oversized or under-sized shirts, shorts, or sweatpants should be worn
- Unless prior permission is granted by the school principal, **it is not acceptable to wear a different t-shirt in place of the school’s gym uniform t-shirt.** Wearing a plain white or gray shirt in place of the gym shirt is not acceptable; it is not part of the uniform. Examples of unacceptable t-shirts for gym include Walk-a-thon, Kindergarten Graduation, and Sports and Summer Camp t-shirts.
- The gym uniform t-shirt must be tucked into the gym uniform sweatpants or shorts.

Out of Uniform (Pink Slips)

A pink slip will be used to communicate dress code infractions home to a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian must sign the pink slip and the child must return it to school the next day. By signing the pink slip, parents/guardians are acknowledging their responsibility in correcting the infraction.

Students who are not in uniform will be sent to the office to change and/or call home to ask for the missing/correct uniform item to be brought to school.

Parents/guardians of students who are consistently out of uniform will need to meet with the assistant principal or principal to discuss a solution to the issue.

Dress Down and Dress Up Days

Periodically, special days are given for students to be out of uniform. These days will be announced on the monthly calendar and in the weekly newsletter. On dress down days students are permitted to wear school appropriate clothing (jeans, shorts, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc.) This clothing should not contain any inappropriate messages or be otherwise inappropriate (ex. overly tight or short clothing) Dress up days are days in which students are asked to wear very nice clothing to school to

mark a special event (ex. picture day, graduation, etc.). Jeans, t-shirts, and gym shoes are not acceptable on dress up days.

Halloween costumes that are worn to school must be school and age-appropriate.

Other/Miscellaneous

School Closures and Emergencies

Normally, St. Sylvester School will follow the decision of the Chicago Public School system regarding school closings for weather-related reasons. In an emergency situation that is specific to St. Sylvester School, such as a malfunctioning of our heating system or issue with pipes, an announcement about the closing will be emailed to everyone who signs up for and receives the Tuesday letters via email. It will also be made over radio stations WGN-720 and WBBM-780. You can sign up for automatic alerts through a state-sponsored website as well (info below). Please do not call the school or rectory for information.

We highly recommend that you get personalized information through the following possibilities:

- ~ Go to www.emergencyclosings.com and search for St. Sylvester School.
- ~ Request email notifications from the above website. Information on this is available at www.emergencyclosings.com under the Email Notifications tab.
- ~ Call 847-238-1234 and then enter St. Sylvester's telephone number (773-772-5222) and it will give an automated status update.

If no announcement is made, school will be open. When deciding whether or not to bring a child to school during inclement weather, it is up to parents/guardians to make the best choice they can to ensure the safety of their child.

In the event of a school closure, the school principal may determine that students engage in remote learning for the day. Please refer to St. Sylvester School's Remote Learning Plan for expectations and schedule information.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills are conducted to train the children to follow the proper procedures in case of such an emergency.

Tornado drills are scheduled practices during spring when tornadoes are most prevalent. Students will be kept in school if a tornado warning is sounded in the area. Parents and guardians are asked to refrain from calling or coming to school until the threat is over.

We will also periodically practice school lockdown drills in conjunction with the Chicago police department. These drills are scheduled to train the children to follow proper procedures in case of an emergency.

Student Accident/Injury/Illness at School

If a child becomes ill or is injured during the school day, parents /guardians or emergency contacts will be notified to pick up the child in the school office. In these situations, the parent or guardian picking up the child must enter the school and sign the child out.

Teachers and school staff will always use their discretion in sending a child to the office and/or having the parents called. Always keep emergency information up-to-date so that you may be contacted in the shortest amount of time possible.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays may be celebrated with a free dress down opportunity. Students may dress down on the day of their birthday OR the Friday closest to their birthday in the event of a weekend or vacation birthday. Students may not bring snacks, treats, goodie bags, etc. as this has proven to cause distraction to the learning environment.

Families may ask for help distributing invitations to birthday parties so long as all students in the child's class are invited.

Class Placement

Final decisions on class placement are made by the school administration and teachers. Families may make requests but should understand that these requests will be taken into consideration but are not obligatory for the school to grant.

School Board

Currently, St. Sylvester School has a board structured around the Archdiocese of Chicago's Board of Specified Jurisdiction model. The board consists of the principal, pastor, parish members, donors, several school parents, several community members, and others from the local business community. Its role is to support the current staff, to assist with the raising of outside income, and to advise and inform the school's administration and concerned constituents on school growth, policies, and procedures.

Cell Phones and Smart Watches – Students

We understand that cell phones/smart watches can be seen as important safety assets. However, there have been too many incidents in recent years in which cell phones/smart watches were used inappropriately during school hours and in ways that had nothing to do with care and protection. They have become a large distraction for many students and disturb classroom lessons and work. We do not view the possession of a cell phone by students during the day to be a necessity.

In cases of an emergency, it is always possible to contact the school via the front office or through the teachers' classroom phones. If a non-emergency phone call is received in the main office, accommodations can be made for the child to use a school phone to speak with a parent/guardian.

We know that students may still bring a cell phone to school. **However, no student is to keep this cell phone/smart watch on his or her person during the school day nor use it during school hours.** The cell phone/smart watch should be turned off and left in the child's locker. **It has been the long-standing practice of the school that any student who is found to be in possession of or using a cell phone during the school day will have the cell phone/smart watch taken by the teacher and kept for 24 hours at school before it is returned to the child.** If there are multiple violations of this cell phone/smart watch prohibition during the school day the school will take the child's phone/smart watch and it must be picked up only by the child's parent or legal guardian. **A child who brings a cell phone/smart watch to school does so with the understanding that these consequences are in place and is therefore liable to the consequences.**

Additionally, the school is not responsible for cell phones that are lost or stolen.

Email and Camera Usage – Students

Unless specific permission is given by the school or school staff members, camera use by students during the school day, in extended day, and/or within school property is prohibited. Students cannot post or otherwise share any unauthorized pictures of school staff, students, or property on any social networking site. Although the school can not request a student's social media login and password the school may require the student to show or share social media content. Unauthorized posting or sharing pictures of events, activities, or of other people by a student can leave that student subject to

disciplinary action including, but not limited to, loss of camera (for a period of 24 hours), detention, probation, suspension, and/or expulsion. The principal's discretion will dictate the severity of any necessary disciplinary actions by the school.

Furthermore, students may send email communication only to those who are part of the @stsylvesterschool.org domain and may not email friends, family, etc. from their school devices.

Toys and other Personal Items

Children who bring personal items to school are fully responsible for those items. The school cannot take responsibility for items that are lost or damaged.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE BY STUDENT

Substance is defined as illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia, anabolic steroids, tobacco, chemicals, inhalants, solvents, prescription or over-the-counter drugs used for purposes other than those for which they are indicated or in a manner or in quantities other than directed.

Substance abuse means the consumption or use of any substance for purposes other than the treatment of sickness or injury as prescribed or administered by a person duly authorized by law to treat sick and injured human beings.

Illegal Violations: The possession, use delivery, transfer, or sale of tobacco, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, illicit substances, chemical or any substance designed to look like or represented as such by students, on school premises, in school buildings, on school buses, or at school-sanctioned events is expressly forbidden.

School Procedures for Handling Violations:

- Notify the parent/guardian and suspend the student during the school investigation.
- Conference with principal, parent/guardian, student, pastor, and other appropriate persons as determined by the principal.
- Notify the police as directed by law.
- If the violation is founded, professional evaluation and, if necessary, treatment shall be provided by the parent/guardian.
- Based on the results of the certified clinical evaluation, the status of the student for continued attendance in the school will be determined by the principal. Options include but are not limited to continued suspension and/or expulsion.
- Appropriate confidentiality shall be maintained.

Mitigating circumstances such as first offense, age, seriousness of offense, prior conduct, cooperation of parent/guardian, attitude of student, and initial success of rehabilitative measures may warrant differences in procedures for the principal.

The approach to substance abuse should focus on education, not experimentation and provide a supportive environment for the learners. In determining consequences for violation, treatment and counseling shall have priority, but not necessarily exclude disciplinary measures.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Protection of Children and Youth

The mission of the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth is to promote the dignity of children and assist those who have been affected by abuse and trauma. Compliance requirements are as follows:

Archdiocese of Chicago Application for Employment or Volunteer Service (Form 7703) is to be completed by all prospective employees at the time of their interview. References are called and documented (local principal's initials, dated) on the 7703 form of the person being considered for employment. The school retains all application forms for 3 years following the interview.

Criminal Background Screening

- All employees and all volunteers who work with children must complete an online background check.
- No one may begin to work or volunteer unless the criminal background check has been completed and approved.
- All school employees are required to complete the **eAppsDB** form, online. For assistance, call the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth at **312-751-5238**.
- School employees hired after July 1, 2007 must be screened through digital fingerprinting procedures. Dates and sites are posted on the Archdiocese of Chicago website.

Safe Environment Training

- All employees and all volunteers who work with children must attend the **Virtus/Protecting God's Children** training program within three months of beginning employment, ministry or service.
- Verification of completing Virtus Training is filed in the personnel or volunteer file at the place of employment/ministry.
- Dates and sites for the Safe Environment Training (Virtus/Protecting God's Children) are posted on the Archdiocese of Chicago website. (Register online, after being hired or accepted as a volunteer.)
- If the new employee or volunteer has previously completed the Virtus training, inform the local school administrator and provide a copy of the certificate at the time of training.
- Volunteer background checks are completed through Virtus.

Code of Conduct

- All employees and all volunteers who work with children must read, sign, and date the **Code of Conduct Personnel Acknowledgement Form**.
- The signed Code of Conduct form is to be kept in the personnel file or volunteer file at the place of employment/ministry.

Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS)

- All employees and all volunteers who work with children must complete the Illinois Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System **CANTS 689** form. The Form is to be given to the local administrator.
- One copy is mailed, by the local school administrator, to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Springfield; a copy is retained in the personnel or volunteer file at the place of employment/ministry.

Note: All of the above forms are available online at www.archchicago.org under the Protecting God's Children link. All forms, except the CANTS form, are available in English, Spanish and Polish. The school reserves the right to make amendments and revisions to the handbook at any time.