

# Student/Parent Handbook



## **SAINT THERESE OF LISIEUX SCHOOL**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM.....	6
TESTING PROGRAM.....	11
AUXILIARY SERVICES.....	11
CURRICULAR RELATED.....	13
DAILY PRACTICES AND POLICIES.....	14
ATTENDANCE.....	15
DAILY SCHEDULE.....	17
CAFETERIA.....	17
DRESS CODE.....	18
EMERGENCIES.....	21
AFTER SCHOOL CARE.....	22
TEXTBOOKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES.....	22
TRANSPORTATION.....	22
STUDENT ACTIVITIES.....	24
HEALTH AND SAFETY.....	27
HEALTH ISSUES.....	27
SAFETY ISSUES.....	30
DISCIPLINE.....	33
BULLYING PREVENTION.....	38
PARENT INFORMATION / INVOLVEMENT.....	41
HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION.....	43
REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS.....	44
FINANCIAL INFORMATION.....	44
FUNDRAISING.....	46

*The administration of Saint Therese School reserves the right to amend the Parent/Student Handbook at any time. Parents/Guardians will be given prompt notice of any amendment.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

On behalf of the Faculty, Staff, and Administration, welcome to Saint Therese School. When you enrolled in Saint Therese School, you became part of the rich history of education in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. We are proud to be both a community of families with shared values and a partner with parents in the education of their children.

It is the aim of Saint Therese School to provide a Catholic educational setting in which our students and their families can integrate Gospel values in daily living. We strive to create a climate in which each child can develop spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially, and in turn, enhance the world.

Each child will develop an understanding of Catholic Doctrine, Liturgy, the Sacraments, Sacred Scripture, and Personal Prayer to build a personal relationship with Christ and His Church.

All children will be provided with challenging, yet realistic goals to achieve their full potential. Individual learning styles and rates of achievement will be recognized.

Each child will receive guidance in developing sound attitudes and habits for both mental and physical health.

Each child will develop a Christian awareness of responsibility to God, family, parish, community, nation, and world.

### **VISION STATEMENT / DEPARTMENT FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

The vision for the Department for Catholic Schools is to promote and to sustain Catholic Schools of unparalleled quality, which integrate faith into every aspect of life and culture, producing graduates who continually strive for human and Christian perfection.

### **PERCES PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

The aim of our schools is to provide a Catholic, educational setting in which our students and their families can integrate Gospel values in daily living. We strive to create a climate in which each child can develop spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially, and in turn, enhance the world.

Each child will develop an understanding of Catholic Doctrine, Liturgy, the Sacraments, Sacred Scripture, and Personal Prayer to build a personal relationship with Christ.

All children will be provided with challenging, yet realistic goals to achieve their full potential. Individual learning styles and rates of achievement will be recognized.

Each child will receive guidance in developing sound attitudes and habits for both mental and physical health.

Each child will develop a Christian awareness of responsibility to God, family, parish, community, nation and world.

### **MISSION**

The Mission of the Saint Therese School Community is to inspire our students to be Christ-centered, lifelong learners. In the spirit of the Little Way of Saint Therese, our school integrates our Catholic Values across the curriculum, to instill in our students a sense of responsibility and accountability that leads to service, leadership and the courage to discover one's calling in the world and in the Church.

## **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

The Saint Therese School Community believes that:

- Catholic Faith Formation is the primary reason for our school.
- Students are encouraged to use their God given talents to the best of their abilities.
- The school partners with parents, families, the Church and community in educating the whole child.
- Students are encouraged to build the Kingdom of God through service to school, parish and community.
- Teachers design creative, rigorous lessons to challenge students to meet their fullest academic potential.
- The social, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of all students are valued and respected.

## **PROFILE OF A GRADUATE**

Graduates of Saint Therese School will demonstrate:

- An understanding of and commitment to their Catholic faith;
- An aptitude for critical thinking and problem solving;
- Integrity, responsibility, respect and courtesy for themselves and others;
- A willingness to work collaboratively or independently;
- A lifelong commitment of service to others.

## **HISTORY OF SAINT THERESE SCHOOL**

Construction of our school was completed in 1954. On August 21, 1954 Bishop Dearden blessed Saint Therese School, and officiated at the first Mass celebrated in the basement of the new school. Opening day took place on Tuesday, September 7, 1954, for 237 students in grades 1 through 4 with six Sisters of Charity and one lay teacher. Construction of the Activities Building was started in August 1962, and the building was dedicated in August 1963.

The Little Flower Preschool began a program for 4-year old children in September 1990 and a program for 3-year old children in September 1991. The 4-year old full day program started in August 2006. The parish can boast that thousands of students have gone through the Saint Therese religious formation program better prepared to face the challenges of life.

A celebration for alumni, parents, teachers, friends, and parishioners in honor of the school's 50th anniversary took place on Sunday, September 12, 2004. It began with Eucharistic Liturgy at 2:00 followed by a school open house and ending with a dinner at the Georgetown Center.

In 2015, the first lay principal of Saint Therese School was hired, ending 61 school years of leadership by the Sisters of Charity.

On July 1, 2019, governance of Saint Therese School officially transitioned from a parish based school to a regional governance model. The school continues to enjoy the support of Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish, the successor to Saint Therese Parish.

Since the beginning of the school, many dedicated Sisters of Charity and lay teachers have ministered at Saint Therese School and, in partnership with parents, have continually pursued traditions of academic excellence and dedication to the faith development of many young people.

## **PARISH**

Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish was established on July 1, 2020 as a merger of the former parishes of Christ the Light of the World (Duquesne), Holy Trinity (West Mifflin), Resurrection (West Mifflin), Saint Agnes (West Mifflin), Saint Joseph (Duquesne), Saint Maximilian Kolbe (Homestead), Saint Rita (Munhall/Whitaker) and Saint Therese of Lisieux. Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish is the supporting parish of Saint Therese School. Fr. E. Daniel Sweeney is the Pastor of Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish.

## **REGION**

Saint Therese School is one of six schools that are part of the Pittsburgh East Regional Catholic Schools, Inc. (PERCES). In addition to Saint Therese School the PERCES Schools are: Divine Mercy Academy (Monroeville), Holy Family School (Plum), Mary of Nazareth School (White Oak), Sacred Heart Elementary School (Shadyside) and Saint Bede School (Point Breeze). The Regional Administrator for PERCES is Mr. Joseph Rosi.

## **MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION**

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools accredits Saint Therese School. Middle States accreditation is an expression of confidence in Saint Therese School's mission, goals and objectives, performance and resources and it validates publicly the excellence in education. The Middle States Evaluation is an ongoing process requiring the submission of updated plans for continued accreditation. Saint Therese School was reaccredited in May, 2018 and the current accreditation runs through May, 2025.

## **CATECHETICS (Religious Education)**

Catholic Faith Formation is the center of the Catholic school. A conscious effort is made to create a Christ-centered atmosphere by stressing Christian values in the classroom as well as throughout the school. It is our goal to integrate catechetics into every aspect of the school curriculum.

Our belief in Jesus has drawn us to this school community. Our beliefs are expressed in and strengthened by daily communal prayer. Students develop an understanding and a love for the Church's daily worship.

Morning prayer includes an introduction that briefly sketches the saint or feast of the day or some aspect of the liturgical season. Attention is also given to the seasons of the year, to the anniversaries of historical figures and peacemakers of our time, and to the civil holidays that have significance for our children. Each month, the students will pray together a prayer common to our Catholic Faith. (i.e. Our Father, Hail Mary, Act of Faith, etc.) with the hope that these prayers will become part of their personal prayer life.

Faith experiences are an integral part of catechetics. Opportunities for Eucharistic Liturgies, Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, Devotion to Mary, classroom prayer, and service to others are included. Community is at the heart of Catholic education, not simply as a concept to be learned, but as a reality to be lived.

Student Masses are held at 8:15AM each Friday school is in session in Saint Therese Church. Kindergarten students traditionally begin joining students in grades 1-8 for Mass in early November. Dates and times of all Masses and services are communicated on monthly school calendars and in the Saint Therese Times newsletter.

The principal, in conjunction with the Saint Thomas the Apostle Pastor and the Catechetical Administrator, work with the teachers in the religious development and sacramental preparation of the students. Parent Preparation Programs for Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation are held during the year. These are parish programs and involve all eligible children and parents of the parish.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

### **CONTINUOUS GROWTH APPROACH TO INSTRUCTION**

The Catholic Schools located within the Diocese of Pittsburgh are committed to a program of education that seeks knowledge and practice of the Catholic faith, academic excellence, moral courage and the learning of the faith in the light of social teachings of the Church.

The Catholic School offers a strong traditional curriculum. In the "Continuous Growth Program" of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, students advance through a defined curriculum according to their individual needs and abilities. In addition to meeting all the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the curriculum gives special attention to the integration of Gospel values.

Research indicates that children will achieve according to the expectancies placed upon them by their teachers and parents. Catholic school teachers place high expectations on all children so that all children are encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability.

This is particularly true in the skill areas of Reading and Math. The curricula for these subjects are so designed that students can advance through defined levels of competency according to their needs and abilities. Student achievement is evaluated at the students' grade level.

The goals of the Continuous Growth Program in Language Arts and Math are:

- to recognize and provide for differences in each student's growth patterns.
- to provide an environment in reading and math classes that permits and encourages continuous progress.
- to adapt the math and reading curriculum to each child so as to challenge maximum individual development.
- to encourage students to exert effort so that they may experience success in their encounter with each school situation.

Curriculum guidelines for all subject areas are provided through the Diocese of Pittsburgh Department for Catholic Schools. The guidelines endeavor to give continuity to the teaching/learning process and to meet individual needs of students. All textbooks are selected from texts, recommended by the Curriculum Directors of the diocese, that have a philosophy consistent with the Catholic philosophy of education and presentation of subject matter which is sequential, consistent, and adaptable to the Continuous Growth Program.

Flexible pacing is an important component of the continuous growth concept. This provision places students at an appropriate instructional level and then allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills. Teachers will assess the instructional needs of students and provide differentiation through the use of small, flexible groups.

Teachers, recognizing different learning styles, vary their presentation and assignments so as to provide for the individual needs of each child. Critical thinking skills, problem solving and research techniques are a part of instruction. Enrichment activities are provided for all students, to broaden lessons presented.

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

Saint Therese School strives to be as inclusive as possible in welcoming all students for whom we can provide an appropriate education. Therefore, we implement the Diocesan Academic Support Model to assist students who are struggling academically and/or have been identified as a person with a special need. These students may receive academic support through teacher-developed planning as needed by:

- Creating a growth plan for each student identified with a special need.
- Adapting curriculum as appropriate for identified students.
- Making accommodations and interventions that will benefit the student.
- Attending remedial reading and/or mathematics support program.
- Attending speech and language support program.
- Having an Equitable Participation professional observe the student as a consultative support to the school.
- Referring students be screened for a learning problem.

Parents/Guardians who have a concern that their child may need additional academic support should contact their child's homeroom teacher. Specific steps will be outlined at that time which may include a team meeting with the parent, teacher and principal.

## **COURSE OFFERINGS**

The following disciplines are included in the Saint Therese School curriculum:

Religion

Reading: Phonics (K-3), Vocabulary, Comprehension, Literature

English/ Writing

Spelling/Penmanship

Mathematics: Concepts, Computation, Problem Solving, Pre-Algebra (7), Algebra (8)

Science/Health

Social Studies

Spanish (K-8)

Computer Technology (K-8)

Fine Arts: Music, Art

Physical Education

## Catechetics/Religious Education

The Catholic Church recognizes parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. The role of the school is to supplement and complement the role of the parent. In the school, a formal catechetical program is taught daily. The Diocesan Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines, "Growing in God's Covenant" contain a balance of doctrinal content, scriptural understanding, faith formation, and prayer and worship experiences.

Goals and objectives are constant and consistent to enhance the spiritual formation and moral development of all students. A genuine, personal relationship with God and the response of worship and service are ultimate goals of the religious instruction. Liturgical and personal prayer are outcomes of the guidance and religious instruction provided. Opportunities for both communal and personal prayer are a daily priority. Careful planning and programming ensure a broad and deep understanding of authentic Church Doctrine. A variety of materials and resources are used to foster both spiritual growth and moral development.

Parents are encouraged to communicate in words and actions the Church's teaching concerning human sexuality. When adults respond to their sexuality in a love-giving manner they enable their children to integrate the Church's teaching concerning human sexuality into their own lives. The Catholic Vision of Love is the Diocesan mandated Sexuality Program.

## Language Arts

The language arts curriculum presents numerous opportunities for the integration of faith, culture and life by developing an awareness of the Gospel values. The philosophy inherent in the language arts curriculum is one of continuous growth, which recognizes and nurtures the God-given potential and learning style of the individual.

Language, as communication, enables one to become more perceptive through listening, observing and feeling. Language, as a skill, provides one with the important tools to speak fluently, to read and comprehend, to compose, to write legibly and to spell correctly. An awareness of the history of language and the continuous development of vocabulary also are important phases of skill development. An appreciation of literature enriches the student through the experience of skillful authors who vicariously open new worlds to the student.

## Mathematics

It is our mission to enable all students to learn the skills, acquire the knowledge, and develop the attitudes in mathematics necessary for them to become morally and socially responsible citizens. The challenge is not only to meet and to exceed grade level expectations but to excite students to explore topics on their own, to develop proof for answers and to learn from one another.

## Social Studies

In the Catholic School, Social Studies provides many opportunities for teachers to help students understand, appreciate, and learn how to live Christian social values.

The scope of the social studies curriculum includes elements of anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, and sociology, with emphasis on global awareness and values. An integrated interdisciplinary approach helps students develop a sense of relationship among the various social studies disciplines. A clear understanding of current events helps students to integrate the past with the present and prepares them for the future.

The Social Studies curriculum begins in kindergarten with an introduction to community helpers. It progresses in the primary grades to the student of family and friends, and later encompasses a more in-depth study of the community. Beginning in fourth grade, the curriculum focuses on the study of the United States land regions and Pennsylvania history. At the fifth grade level, both United States history through the Civil War and a study of the United States geographical regions are studied. Sixth grade students study World Cultures and World Geography with an emphasis on the countries of the Eastern Hemisphere. Seventh grade studies United States history to the Reconstruction and eighth grade studies United States history beginning with the Reconstruction to the modern day. Map and geography skills are taught at all levels. Social Studies prepares students for the future by instilling the importance of a value-oriented life perspective.

## Science

The primary goals of the teaching of science in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh are to develop a respect for the sacredness of all life, the pursuit of peace and order in the world, and an awareness of the responsibility to be co-creators of life-giving designs and protectors of the environment.

The science curriculum focuses on an inquiry-based process and fosters collaborative learning. Science education strengthens life skills, such as creative problem solving, critical thinking, team cooperation, use of technology, and the value of life-long learning.

### World Languages

Because the Church is universal and embraces all people, regardless of race, nationality and financial status, the Catholic school encourages the study of world languages and other cultures. World language students learn the sounds and syntax of the language and work toward proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. A variety of materials and methods are used for instruction. Saint Therese School offers Spanish in grades K-8.

### Physical Education

Physical education is a vital component of the curriculum, which assists students in identifying their physical strengths and weaknesses and encourages them to build on their strengths to achieve personal goals. Students learn to follow rules and to respect the rights of others through games and physical activity. Learning to channel energies constructively helps students perform successfully in life.

### Health

The curriculum presents information at each level of development to help students make wise, moral decisions with respect for the God-given gift of life. The health curriculum places holistic emphasis on wellness, fitness, behaviors, and skills for healthy, active living. Education and health for children are inextricably intertwined. Students then have the benefit of sustained learning for reducing health-risk behaviors and enhancing health-promoting behaviors.

### Fine Arts

In the Fine Arts program, students have the opportunity to deepen their awareness of God's gift of creation and to respond creatively to the beauty and goodness of the world through music, art and drama. Instruction in the Arts contributes to the development of the whole person, promotes individual expression, allows experimentation with diverse materials and elements, enables exploration and appreciation of the works of other students and major artists and musicians, develops an awareness and sensitivity toward the environment, and finally promotes a deeper understanding of heritage and culture.

### Technology

Technology instruction is essential in today's educational process. This instruction includes computer awareness and computer literacy. When this instruction and awareness are mastered, the computer becomes a basic tool for teaching logical thinking and problem-solving, creative writing, communication, the handling of information, and many other aspects of the curriculum.

Teachers of computer literacy look beyond hardware and develop an awareness of values such as relationships, collaboration, ethical conduct, responsibility and creative expression. As in all other areas of the curriculum, the integration of the Gospel values is a part of the teaching/learning process in the computer lab and classroom.

### Internet Use Policy

This guideline is established to ensure understanding and application of Saint Therese School Internet Use Policy. Saint Therese School reserves the right to amend these guidelines at any time. It is understood that the administration of Saint Therese School will inform parents/guardians of any changes through written communication from the principal via Option C and/or Saint Therese Times weekly newsletter. **Students' parents and/or guardians are required to review these guidelines with their child(ren) and complete and return a parent/guardian consent form annually.**

This guideline includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- Information and news from a wide variety of sources and research institutions
- Public domain and shareware software of all types
- Discussion groups
- Access to any educational institutions and libraries

### Internet Etiquette

All students are required to:

- Be polite when sending written messages to others
- Use appropriate language in all messages
- Avoid anything pertaining to illegal activity
- Protect information, personal or otherwise
- Respect others' access to the internet
- Remember that deleted materials can be retrieved

The following actions, which are not inclusive, are considered unacceptable actions:

- Placing unlawful information on the Internet
- Using the Internet for non-school related activities
- Sending messages that are likely to result in loss of the recipients work or systems
- Using the Internet for commercial purposes
- Using the Internet for political lobbying
- Sending or receiving copyrighted material without permission
- Plagiarism
- Using Internet access to send or retrieve pornographic material, inappropriate file text, files dangerous to the integrity of the system, violent or threatening material or messages
- Circumventing security measures on school or remote computers or networks
- Vandalism
- Falsifying one's identity
- Using social network sites
- Using the Internet to harass another person or engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks, cyber bullying

Students who have been issued a Chromebook may take the Chromebook home outside of school hours.

Parents/Guardians of students who choose to do so must sign an acknowledgement indicating their responsibility for the device and the cost of replacement. Students taking the device home must bring it back to school each day fully charged. The charger should be returned daily as well. All students will have access to Google Classroom outside of school. Permission slips for the Chromebooks, in addition to the internet release, are needed before the students can use the Chromebook.

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.

As Saint Therese School requests parent permission for posting student photographs, online posting of photos of students during school hours is strictly prohibited, regardless if the name of the student is used. This includes school volunteers and parents posting photos on social media platforms of school events of children other than their own.

## **TESTING PROGRAM**

Formative and summative assessments are regular components of classroom instruction at Saint Therese School. These assessments require students to synthesize information, apply what they have learned and demonstrate their understanding of what has been taught. In addition, standardized tests and Diocesan assessments are administered to gauge student progress, identify individual student skills as well as strengths and weaknesses of the overall school academic program in comparison to other Diocesan and national schools.

### Achievement Tests

Students in grades 2-8 are administered a standardized test to measure progress from one year to another. A component of the standardized testing program for grades 2, 4 and 6 is a cognitive abilities section, which helps compare a student's achievement with other students of the same age, grade, and ability. If a child should be absent due to illness, every attempt will be made to enable the child to make-up the tests. However, since the tests must be mailed on the last scheduled test day, make-up testing often necessitates taking more tests daily than is ideal. To prevent this, trips and non-emergency appointments should not be scheduled during testing weeks. Testing weeks will be published as soon as the dates are available. Standardized tests for the 2020-2021 are tentatively planned for Spring, 2021.

### ACRE

ACRE Tests are an assessment created by the National Catholic Education Association designed to gauge the effectiveness of a school or parish Religious formation program. Tests include questions about faith knowledge as well as about religious attitudes, beliefs and perceptions. Tests are typically administered in February to students in grades 5 and 8. As the test is an assessment of the school and our Catechetical program, only composite results are received.

### Acadience Reading

Acadience Reading is a screening assessment administered to students in grades K-3 minimally three times a year (September, January, May). This tool helps teachers identify specific needs of emergent readers and to identify goals to move the student forward academically.

## **AUXILIARY SERVICES**

### Remedial Reading and Math (Act 89)

Allegheny Intermediate Unit (IU3) personnel work with and provide support to students who are not demonstrating grade level proficiency in reading and/or math. This service is a pull-out remedial program for eligible students based on teacher referrals, standardized test results, and parent approval. Alternate strategies are planned for students in accordance with individual goals and in support of the classroom curriculum to help students develop mastery of basic skills.

### Speech/Language

Speech and language services are provided through Act 89 funding. This service offered through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit screens and identifies students whose moderate or severe impairment of language, articulation, voice or fluency impacts academic performance. This program is a pull-out health related service that accommodates individuals as well as groups to enhance communication skills which directly impact social and academic interactions.

### Educational Psychological Testing

This service is an academic evaluation or a consultation for students not meeting expectations appropriate for grade or chronological age. The evaluation is to identify accommodations and adaptations that can be used in the classroom to help the student.

Psychological testing is available by parent/guardian request or at the recommendation of the teacher in consultation with the principal. Parents/guardians make the final decision. Parents/guardians may request testing in writing through their school district of residency or through the intermediate unit. Saint Therese School and parents complete the necessary forms and forward them to the school district. Results are formally reported to parents/guardians, principal and teachers along with a list of recommendations made by the psychologist. This information is kept confidential and not shared with anyone without parent/guardian permission.

### Counseling

This service offered through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (IU3) addresses school related issues by a qualified and certified school counselor. Children may be referred by parents, principal, teachers, and through self-referral. Individual counseling requires parental permission. However, a student may be seen one time without parental consent if deemed necessary by the principal.

At Saint Therese School, we value the personal and social development of your child as much as their academic growth and success. Throughout the school year, our School Counselor from the Allegheny Intermediate Unit will be visiting classrooms to present lessons based on the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards. ASCA standards address the career, academic, and personal/social development of all students. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the principal or school counselor.

### Equitable Participation

This service offered through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (IU3) provides a range of academic, behavior and speech and language consultation services.

### Gifted Program

Admission to the Gifted Program for students in the local school district is based on results of standardized academic testing, tests of cognitive skills, and academic performance. The parent/guardian submits a letter to the school district requesting testing. Saint Therese School completes the necessary forms and forwards them to the school district. Students who are accepted attend classes in a local public school of their particular school district. They are responsible for making up missed classroom work.

### Student Assistance Program

Act 211 of 1990 mandates the Student Assistance Program (SAP) in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It is a comprehensive program of prevention, intervention, and support for students in grades K-12. The members of the Team are the principal and faculty members of the school who have received special training through approved agencies.

The program exists in order to promote the growth and development of the child. The team members work with students who are experiencing educational and behavior difficulties which impact their social, emotional, and educational progress.

Faculty and/or parents/guardians make referrals for the program. Once the team has received a referral, classroom teachers are asked to complete a form which helps identify the behaviors. The team then makes informed assumptions as to what is needed to help the student. They convey this information to classroom teachers, parents/guardians and evaluate the results. If necessary, after consultation with parents, appropriate referrals are made to outside agencies.

Team members must maintain all information regarding students and their families under safeguard of privacy and confidentiality. Access is limited to those who have a legitimate educational interest.

## **CURRICULAR RELATED**

### Assemblies

Assemblies are held throughout the school year. The assemblies are planned in conjunction with the principal and faculty with a focus on education.

### Field Trips

Every class is permitted field trips during the year. Each student must have a signed permission slip before he/she is permitted to participate. Transportation, in accordance with diocesan directives, is provided by bus, and a fee is charged to cover costs. Every effort is to make costs as reasonable as possible. If costs for a field trip are a hardship, the family is encouraged to contact the principal to make arrangements for assistance.

Guidelines for both students and chaperones are in effect for each trip. Proper behavior is expected from students and chaperones on field trips. Chaperones are selected at the discretion of the teacher and may not be necessary for every field trip.

Chaperones on field trips must have all clearances required by the Safe Environment Policy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

### Homework

A reasonable amount of homework, according to grade level, is of great educational value. Assignments are not always written. Independent reading, study and memory work are frequently assigned. Homework is assigned on a regular basis to enrich school experiences, provide practice and review, develop good study habits, teach responsibility, and foster originality. Parents can assist students with home assignments in the following ways:

1. Provide a quiet spot away from distracting elements;
2. Check to see what was accomplished during the designated study time regarding completeness, neatness, and correctness;
3. Be willing to listen to reading, spelling, and math facts and to explain procedures, but never do the assignment;
4. Consult the OptionC on-line homework information if the child uses the excuse "no homework" too often.

If a child cannot complete an assignment, the parent should inform the teacher by written note or email stating the reason. Arrangements should be made as soon as possible to make up incomplete assignments. The Diocese recommends the following time schedule for home study:

Primary (Grades K-2)	10-30 minutes
Intermediate (Grades 3-5)	40-60 minutes
Middle School (Grades 6-8)	70-90 minutes

If a child is regularly spending significantly more time on homework than the above guidelines, please contact your child's teacher.

### Library

The school library is open on school days. All books may be checked out for one week and a fine is charged for overdue books. Generally, the fine is five cents per day. This fine may be lowered at the discretion of the librarian. Students are responsible to pay for any lost or damaged books. Final records may not be released if lost or damaged books are not returned or replaced.

## DAILY PRACTICES AND POLICIES

### ADMISSIONS/REGISTRATION POLICIES

Saint Therese School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all students at the school. Saint Therese School does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. Students can be admitted with a disability if, with reasonable accommodation, the student can meet program requirements.

Children who are not of the Catholic faith are expected to participate in religion classes and to attend all religious functions of the school/church.

Registrations are accepted beginning in late January or early February.

Families of students in the three-year preschool program will have one-week priority to register in the four-year preschool program.

#### Age Requirement:

- Students entering preschool must be 3 or 4 years old on or before August 31.
- Students entering kindergarten must be five years of age on or before August 31.
- Students entering first grade must be six years of age on or before August 31.

#### Records Required

- Complete medical records and official certificates of birth and baptism are required at the time of registration.
- When a student transfers, a certified copy of the student's disciplinary record must be obtained from the school from which the student is transferring prior to admission.
- All parents and students are to sign the "Catholic School Memorandum of Understanding."
- Students applying for admission to grades 6, 7 and 8 will be interviewed by the principal or his/her designee prior to admission. This requirement may be waived if the student presents a letter of recommendation from the principal of the previous Catholic School or the Director (Coordinator) of Religious Education of a Parish Catechetical Program.

A waiting list will be established if/when any grade level (Preschool-8<sup>th</sup> grade) reaches capacity. A second section of any grade level may be opened (if not already opened) once the number of students makes it economically feasible for the school to do so.

Grade level and academic group determinations are made on the basis of school records.

All students transferring into Saint Therese School do so with a 90 (academic) day probation period. Any student who has a discipline problem during that time may be asked to withdraw from the school. All transfer students are monitored to be sure placement is appropriate.

## Immunization

Immunization records must be complete before any child may enter school. The requirements, as indicated by Pennsylvania State Law, are as follows:

### Grades K – 8

- 4 doses of tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis\* (1 dose on or after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday)
- 4 doses of polio \*\* (4<sup>th</sup> dose on or after 4<sup>th</sup> birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose given)
- 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella\*\*\*
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or evidence of immunity

*\*Usually given as DTP or DTaP or if medically advisable, DT of Td*

*\*\* A fourth dose is not necessary if the third dose was administered at age 4 years or older and at least 6 months after the previous dose*

*\*\*\* Usually given as MMR*

### Grades 7 – 8

- 1 dose of tetanus/diphtheria/acellular pertussis (Tdap)
- 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV)

Questions about immunizations should be directed to your family physician. Failure to have a child properly immunized or failure to produce immunization records may result in exclusion from the school

## Memorandum of Understanding

Parents enrolling their child(ren) in a Catholic school, are expected to accept this memorandum of understanding, support the Catholic identity and mission of Saint Therese School, and uphold all the principles and policies that govern a Catholic school.

The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions operated as programs of the Catholic Church; they are not private schools but are administered and supported by the sponsoring parish(es), the diocese, or religious community. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right. While academic excellence and involvement in extracurricular activity (i.e., sports, clubs, etc.) are important, fidelity to the Catholic identity of the school is the fundamental priority. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity. In all questions involving faith, morals, faith teaching, and Church law, the final determination rests with the diocesan bishop.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance and punctuality are major factors in determining academic success. Parents and guardians of students who acquire excessive absences may be required to provide documentation from a physician indicating that the absences are related to an existing medical condition. Students absent for more than thirty days during the academic year may be denied academic promotion.

## Absence

Absences from school are defined as either excused or unexcused according to guidelines from the Pennsylvania School Code. Excused absences include illness, quarantine, impassable roads, recognized religious holidays, and urgent reasons, such as a death in the family or a court appearance. The state guidelines also permit an excused absence for trips if a request is sent to the school prior to the dates of the trip. If no prior notice is received, the absence is classified as unexcused.

Parents/Guardians should call the school office, 412/462-8163, by 8:00 a.m. each day that a child is absent from school. Messages can be left earlier by calling the school office at 412/462-8163 and leaving a message at extension 400. Give the child's name, homeroom teacher, and reason for absence. **Follow up calls will be made until all absences are verified.** Unless the absence will be for an extended period of time, please make arrangements with another child to have assignments brought home.

*According to the Pennsylvania School Code, Section 1332, "The absence of any pupil who remains out of school with or without his parent's permission, and is not absent because of illness or for other urgent reasons, as defined in the School Code, shall be unexcused. Such absence will be recorded as 'unlawful-unexcused' for a pupil who is under the compulsory attendance age." Section 1333, "Any such child who has been absent three days, or their equivalent, during the term of compulsory attendance, without lawful excuse...shall be given written notice. If, after such notice is given..., attendance is again violated by the person, such person shall be liable... for referral to the magistrate."*

Upon returning to school from an absence, a student must submit a written excuse signed by the parent or guardian to the homeroom teacher, stating the reason for the absence and the date or dates of absence as required by state law.

A written excuse should be given to the teacher for the following reasons:

Following an absence

Excused from gym class - If the excuse from gym is for an extended period of time, a note from the doctor is required.

Permission for out of school appointments (child is expected to return when possible)

Attending funerals

Change of plans in leaving school (bus, ride or walk)

Early dismissal

Parents and guardians of students who acquire excessive absences (ten days) may be required to provide documentation from a physician indicating that the absences are related to an existing medical condition.

Assignments and tests missed during absences must be made up upon return to school. It is the student's responsibility to see each teacher about work missed and to see that it is completed within a reasonable time after the return to school.

A student is responsible for making up all work when absent from school and for completing the course of study prescribed by the State and the Department for Catholic Schools.

#### Return from School Following Illness

It is the goal of Saint Therese School to keep illnesses at a minimum. Students who are ill should stay home for the purpose of the safety of all.

#### Tardiness

Students are tardy when not present in the classroom for morning prayer at 7:55 a.m. Tardy students register in the late book which is available in the secretary's office. Students who arrive after 10:30 are marked absent for the morning session. Children who leave school before 12:30 are marked absent for the afternoon.

#### Early Dismissals/Late Arrivals

Parents/Guardians should make every effort to schedule appointments at a time that school is not in session. Days off for students are published for your convenience in scheduling appointments. If a child must have an early dismissal, he/she must have a written note for the principal's approval. For these dismissals, parents or an authorized adult must meet the child at the office and sign him/her out at the authorized time.

### Vacations

Parents are encouraged to schedule vacations when school is not in session. If students are away from school on vacation, teachers may not be able to give all assignments before they leave. All work missed during the vacation time will be due within a reasonable time upon the student's return.

### DAILY SCHEDULE

The following is the standard schedule. Saint Therese School follows a modified schedule on school delays, early dismissal days and liturgy days.

7:30	School building opens and students report directly to classrooms.
7:55	Tardy bell rings. Opening Prayers
8:10	Period 1
8:50	Period 2
9:30	Period 3
10:10	Period 4
10:50	Period 5 – First Lunch (Grades K-3)
11:30	Period 6 – Second Lunch (Grades 4-8)
12:10	Period 7
12:50	Period 8
1:30	Period 9

In order to ensure a safe environment for all students, students may not arrive to school any earlier than 7:30AM.

### CAFETERIA

All students must bring or buy a lunch from the cafeteria. Those bringing lunch may purchase milk. Parents and guardians are not to bring food to the cafeteria during the lunch period.

Families qualifying for free or reduced lunches should apply through the school office or the National Lunch Program - [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).

The cafeteria is operated in accordance with U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion, or national origin.

### During lunch

1. Remain seated unless disposing of trash, etc. until finished eating and teacher dismisses students.
2. Refrain from abusing food; your own or that of others. Never throw food.
3. Discard all papers, scraps of food, etc. at your place and dispose of them properly.
4. Obey cafeteria monitors at all times. Be courteous and respectful to all those helping.
5. Walk at all times.
6. Speak in a conversational tone.

Every school day the students enjoy recess supervised by teachers.

### During recess

1. Do not re-enter the building without a monitor's permission.
2. Display good sportsmanship and exercise self-control.
3. Play in assigned areas only.
4. Stay in the recess area at all times. This includes not retrieving a ball that has gone outside of the recess area.

5. Obey the directives of playground monitors, courteously and promptly.
6. Rough games, water guns, snowballing, footballs, and frisbees are not permitted.
7. Stop playing and walk quietly to designated line when the monitor gives the signal.

Students are never to leave the playground area without the permission of the principal and the knowledge of the teacher on recess duty. In case of illness or accident, the student is to report to the school office.

If a child has an early dismissal during recess time, the parent or designee picking up the child must follow normal procedures and report to the main office. School personnel will escort the child from recess to the main office for dismissal.

Teachers with the students at recess have the responsibility of enforcing rules. They are to be obeyed and treated respectfully. When the bell rings to end the playground session, the students will be met by their homeroom teacher and brought to their classrooms.

If inclement weather makes it necessary to stay indoors at lunchtime, classroom rules are to be observed:

1. Stay in homeroom.
2. Engage in quiet activities.

**DRESS CODE**

Saint Therese School is a Catholic elementary school which maintains the right to establish a uniform dress code for its students. It is recognized that proper school attire and good grooming are conducive to a student's educational and social development. The dress code was developed to promote a Christian atmosphere, free children for academic concentration, de-emphasize competition among children regarding clothing, allow more economical dress for school, and provide some choice to accommodate individual differences.

It is expected that all students in grades one through eight follow the dress code. While Kindergarten students do not wear the uniform, regulations for socks, shoes, hair etc. do pertain to the Kindergarten students. The Dress Code policy is intended to maintain a standard of dress that is neat, economical, modest, and attractive. It is the obligation of the parents/guardians to see that student dress is according to the guidelines and the spirit for which the uniform was adopted.

If items are not purchased at Schoolbelles, they must look exactly like the uniform purchased there. You may shop online at [www.schoolbelles.com](http://www.schoolbelles.com) (School Code S1870) or visit Schoolbelles at 4721 B-125 McKnight Rd.,

	<b><u>Girls</u></b>	<b><u>Boys</u></b>
<b>Shirts (1-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red, White or Navy Polo or 3-button pique knit</li> <li>• Long or Short Sleeves</li> <li>• No logo other than Saint Therese School script</li> <li>• Shirts without ribbed bottom must be tucked in at all times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red, White or Navy Polo or 3-button pique knit</li> <li>• Long or Short Sleeves</li> <li>• No logo other than Saint Therese School script</li> <li>• Shirts must be tucked in at all times.</li> </ul>
<b>Sweatshirts/ Pull-overs (1-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy or Red; must have the school monogram.</li> <li>• Sweatshirts, zippered front sweatshirt, hooded sweatshirt, crew neck, fleece pullover and fleece jacket are acceptable.</li> <li>• Uniform shirt must be worn under all sweatshirts/pullovers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy or Red; must have the school monogram.</li> <li>• Sweatshirts, zippered front sweatshirt, hooded sweatshirt, crew neck, fleece pullover and fleece jacket are acceptable.</li> <li>• Uniform shirt must be work under all sweatshirts/pullovers.</li> </ul>

<b>Sweaters (1-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy or Red; Crew Neck Pullover, V-Neck Cardigan or V-Neck Pullover Vest; must have school monogram.</li> <li>• Uniform Shirt must be worn under all sweaters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy or Red; V-Neck Pullover, Crew Neck Pullover, V-Neck Cardigan or V-Neck Pullover Vest; must have school monogram.</li> <li>• Uniform Shirt must be worn under all sweaters.</li> </ul>
<b>Pants/Shorts (1-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy or Khaki Pants or Shorts*</li> <li>• Navy, Khaki or Plaid skirts, skorts or jumpers.</li> <li>• Cargo shorts are not permitted.</li> <li>• Shorts/Skirts must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee.</li> </ul> <p><i>*Shorts are permitted from April 15-October 15 unless otherwise announced by the administration. *</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy or Khaki Pants or Shorts*</li> <li>• Cargo shorts are not permitted.</li> <li>• Shorts are to sit at the waist and not be excessively baggy.</li> </ul> <p><i>*Shorts are permitted from April 15-October 15 unless otherwise announced by the administration. *</i></p>
<b>Socks (K-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black, Navy or White plain socks.</li> <li>• Socks must be worn at all times.</li> <li>• Socks must be visible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black, Navy or White plain socks.</li> <li>• Socks must be worn at all times.</li> <li>• Socks must be visible.</li> </ul>
<b>Shoes (K-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black, White or Grey Tennis Shoes with one primary accent color.</li> <li>• Black, Brown or Tan Dress Shoes, including “Sperry” style shoes.*</li> <li>• Laces must be tied and correspond to the main color of the shoe</li> <li>• Boots are not to be worn in school. When boots are worn to school, shoes should be brought to change during inclement weather.</li> <li>• Backless shoes, flip flops or slippers are never permitted.</li> <li>• Fluorescent colored shoes are not permitted.</li> <li>• Shoes may not be heeled more than one inch.</li> <li>• Wheeled or light up shoes are not permitted.</li> </ul> <p><i>*Tennis shoes are required on gym days.*</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black, White or Grey Tennis Shoes with one primary accent color.</li> <li>• Black, Brown or Tan Dress Shoes, including “Sperry” style shoes.*</li> <li>• Laces must be tied and correspond to the main color of the shoe</li> <li>• Boots are not to be worn in school. When boots are worn to school, shoes should be brought to change during inclement weather.</li> <li>• Backless shoes, flip flops or slippers are never permitted.</li> <li>• Fluorescent colored shoes are not permitted.</li> <li>• Shoes may not be heeled more than one inch.</li> <li>• Wheeled or light up shoes are not permitted.</li> </ul> <p><i>*Tennis shoes are required on gym days.*</i></p>
<b>Hair (K-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair is not to be dyed, highlighted, dipped or streaked in any way.</li> <li>• Fad hairstyle are not permitted.</li> <li>• Hair accessories (i.e. clips, barrettes, hair ties, headbands, or small bows) are acceptable as long as it is school colors or natural colors (red, white, navy blue, black, brown).</li> <li>• Excessively large bows or hair adornments are not acceptable.</li> <li>• Any accessory that becomes a distraction to the learning process will be sent home and not be permitted to be worn again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair is not to be dyed, highlighted, dipped or streaked in any way.</li> <li>• Fad hairstyle are not permitted.</li> <li>• Hair must not cover the ears, eyes or fall below the shirt collar.</li> <li>• Hair accessories of any kind are not acceptable.</li> </ul>

<b>Jewelry/ Make-Up (K-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small, tasteful posts or hoops earrings</li> <li>• Bracelets, necklaces, watches and/or rings in moderation</li> <li>• Makeup may be worn in moderation <b>in grades 6-8 only.</b></li> <li>• Nails should be neat, cleaned and trimmed. Acrylic fingernails/tips should not be worn. Nail polish, if worn should be modest and light in color.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bracelets, watches, or religious necklaces or pendants are acceptable.</li> <li>• Boys are not permitted to wear earrings, makeup or nail polish of any kind.</li> </ul>
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Physical Education Uniform

All students in grades 1-8 wear their gym clothes to school on the day they have physical education class. This schedule is announced prior to the start of school. For the 2020-2021 school year, students in Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade have Physical Education classes on Monday; 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades on Tuesdays and grades 3,4 and 5 on Wednesday.

- A gray Physical Education T-shirt with the school logo, which must be purchased at Schoolbelles. Only the specified Saint Therese School PE T-Shirt is permitted; other Saint Therese shirts or Spirit Wear **are not** part of the dress code.
- Red mesh shorts with school logo, which must be purchased at Schoolbelles. (April 15-October 15)
- **Solid** black, navy blue, gray or red sweatpants or nylon athletic pants.
- Tiger Warm Ups (purchased through STAA) may be worn with the gray T-shirt with school logo.
- Tennis shoes must be worn on gym days (all students K-8).

No-Uniform Days

Attire must be clean, neat and modest; nothing tight, ripped, torn, or ragged may be worn. Only long shorts (no more than 3 inches above the knee) are permitted. Jeans, sweat pants and T-shirts are permitted.

All shirts must have sleeves that cover the entire shoulder.

T-shirts with inappropriate words and/or logos are not permitted.

If your child is wearing form fitting jeans, stretch pants, leggings or yoga-style pants, a long top which comes down below the hips must be worn to cover the front and backside of the pants.

Occasional color or other themed No Uniform Days will be scheduled. There is no cost on these days for students to dress down. However, in order for a student to participate, they must wear clothing with the designated colors or theme. Otherwise, they are to wear their normal school uniform.

Policies for hair, socks, makeup, shoes, etc. are in effect on Non-Uniform days except in special circumstances as announced by the administration. Shorts may only be worn on non-uniform days during the period of April 15-October 15 unless otherwise indicated by the administration.

In the event a no-uniform day occurs the student’s designated Physical Education day, students must wear tennis shoes so that they may participate in Physical Education class.

Dress-Up Days

Students are to wear modest attire equal in formality to the uniform or better. Above guidelines are to be followed for length of skirts.

### Uniform Exchange

Once each month at a designated time parents are invited to the school for uniform exchange. Times are posted on the monthly newsletter. The Saint Therese Parent Association (STPA) parent organization sponsors the exchange program.

### Clothing Identification

Parents are strongly urged to mark their children's personal belongings with their names. Since children do not readily claim lost items, proper identification helps us to find the owner and save parents the cost of replacement. The "lost and found" articles are found in the cafeteria. Periodically, all items at the "lost and found" will be displayed and students reminded to look for missing items. Notice will also be placed in the Saint Therese Times Newsletter. Any remaining items will be donated to a local charity

## **EMERGENCIES**

### Emergency Cards

At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians are required to complete a student emergency card. It is imperative that the school is able to reach you to inform you of illness or an emergency situation. It is also important to list the names of others who can be contacted should you be unavailable. Keep the card updated by notifying the office of changes.

### Emergency Closings and Closings and Delays

Saint Therese School follows the Steel Valley School District for weather closings and delays. There may be occasions where Steel Valley School District does not close or delay, and Saint Therese School does or vice versa. These situations may include power outages or other utility emergencies, an already scheduled school closing, etc. Parents/guardians should always look for announcements identifying Saint Therese School, Munhall and should not exclusively look for Steel Valley School District.

Parents are informed of school closings or delays due to weather or other circumstances in the following ways:

- Through the OptionC Parent Alert System through E-mail, telephone and/or text messages.
- By listening for an announcement regarding Saint Therese School, Munhall on KDKA-TV (Channel 2), WTAE-TV (Channel 4) and WPXI-TV (Channel 11) or by viewing the station websites.

Please do not call the school or rectory for closing information.

Bus riders are to listen for delays/cancellations in their school district. If Saint Therese School is in session at the usual time, it is the decision of the parent or guardian regarding transportation to school on these days. If a school district cancels school and Saint Therese School is in session, the school district will not transport students to or from school. Parents are urged to use their best judgment as to whether it is safe to bring their children to school.

When there is a two-hour delay, the school building will open at 9:30AM and a modified schedule will be followed. Preschool begins at 10:00AM. Four year olds who attend the morning session only (Preschool 4) will be dismissed at 12:00PM. In the event of a two-hour delay schedule, Preschool 3 will follow a 10:00AM-12:00PM schedule.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Because our attendance registers are legal indicators of a child's presence at the times we are in session, children who arrive late or are absent because of weather will be marked as Excused Tardy or Excused Absence.

### Emergency Dismissals

In the event that we would be required to dismiss school early, that information will be announced in the same way as closures and delays. Because phone service may be interrupted in the school, some emergency situations may not allow for all of these options. Children will be dismissed as indicated on the emergency card. Please make arrangements and alert your child where to go if he/she arrives home in your absence. Please do not depend upon school phone lines and availability of staff to address individual needs.

### **AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

Saint Therese School offers an after school program for parents and guardians who need child care. Our after school program operates only on school days from 2:30 to 6:00 p.m. There is a registration fee, and the cost is based on a per-hour payment. More information and registration materials can be found on the school website, [www.stthereseschoolmunhall.org](http://www.stthereseschoolmunhall.org) under the tab “After School Care.”

### **TEXTBOOKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

#### Textbooks

Saint Therese School participates in Pennsylvania's Act 195/90 whereby the state purchases textbooks and instructional materials of non-religious items. A parent form with permission to have their child use these books must be signed and is kept on file in the school office. All books are to be covered at all times. Students are responsible for the condition of the books given to them at the beginning of the year. Students are required to pay for the book if it is damaged or lost. Books taken to and from school are to be placed in a book bag.

#### School Supplies

For the convenience of families, supply lists are available each June for the following school year. They are posted on the school's website: [www.stthereseschoolmunhall.org](http://www.stthereseschoolmunhall.org). Students provide their own school supplies and are expected to comply with individual teacher requirements.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

It is important that we know the ordinary means by which each child arrives and departs daily. Families are to return a “Dismissal Information Form” at the beginning of the school year indicating the daily schedule for transportation. Homeroom teachers must receive written notification from parent/guardian if there is a change in the manner in which the child is to go home.

#### Bus

Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior while in route on the bus. Every bus follows the guidelines that are within their own discipline code. Students are expected to remain in their seats at all times. This ensures their safety and the safety of others.

If improper conduct occurs, the driver prepares a report which is sent home to alert the parents to the problem. If the behavior persists, the bus company has the right to ask the school district to suspend the student's privilege of riding the bus, temporarily or permanently. This will result in the student losing bus privileges. The parent will be responsible to make other arrangements for transportation.

The following bus rules are to be obeyed:

- Use only the bus and bus stop assigned. Only the Department of Transportation can authorize changes.
- Remain seated at all times until the correct stop has been reached. If the driver has assigned seats, these seat assignments are to be honored.
- Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus. Do not put anything out the window.

- Observe the same conduct as in the classrooms. Quiet, respectful talking is permitted. Loud talking, etc. may distract the driver, prevent students from hearing instructions, or prevent the driver from hearing signals from emergency vehicles.
- Keep the bus clean; do not eat, drink, or chew gum on the bus.
- Cooperate with the driver. Any directives of the bus drive in addition to the above are to be followed.

Concerns regarding bus scheduling should be addressed to the individual school districts.

## **ARRIVAL PROCEDURE**

Classrooms open at 7:30 for students. Parents/Guardians should not assume that it is permissible to drop off children at school very early in the morning. We cannot be responsible for the safety of those children who arrive too early. When bringing your child to school, leave him/her at the designated drop-off areas. Please do not accompany the child to the classroom.

### Bus Riders

Children will exit the buses at the drop-off area by the cafeteria and walk to their classrooms.

### Car Riders

It is imperative that the traffic pattern for student drop-off be followed accurately since it is based on the safety of all children.

- Enter the parking lot closest to Steel Valley School.
- Drop-off children between the school and activities building and continue past the main building to Main Street or exit left and go down the hill by Saint Therese Plaza.
- Children in kindergarten to grade 8 enter by the side door nearest the Saint Therese Plaza building and report directly to their classroom.
- As traffic backs up, vehicles may pull to the cafeteria door to drop off students as well.
- All children must enter the main door of the school after 7:55AM as all doors will be locked.

## **DISMISSAL PROCEDURE**

### Car Riders

All children who are picked up in cars must be met in the area by the gym. No cars are allowed in the church parking lot, rectory parking lot, the parking area in front of or behind the preschool or the path next to the preschool at this time. follow the traffic patterns as stated below:

1. All cars picking up children **must** park in the area in front of the gym.
2. Cars may enter the property by way of the road between the church and the rectory.
3. Park facing the gym. Line up in rows in order of arrival. Display car number on the driver's side. Contact the office for car numbers.
4. Children will be dismissed from the gym door in the same order as cars are parked.
5. Follow the directions of the parking lot monitors.
6. Exit between the school and activities building and turn right or left.

Our goal is the safest dismissal possible. Dismissal begins promptly at 2:20PM with all cars typically cleared from the parking lot in less than ten minutes.

Students who are not picked up by 2:30PM will be sent to the office. If students are repeatedly late being picked up, they may be required to enroll in After School Care.

### Walkers

All walkers in grades K-8 are dismissed from the front door of the main school building. Students who walk home must have a signed permission form on file with the main office granting permission of the student to leave campus. Walkers will be escorted to the corner of the property to the crossing guard who will assist the students in crossing Main Street. Walkers must be residents of the Steel Valley School District.

### Bus Riders

Children board the buses between the school and church.

Any changes from the regular dismissal plan for a child must be communicated in writing to the child's homeroom teacher.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

### Altar Servers

Students have the privilege of serving at liturgical services in their parishes. Those who choose this privilege are expected to fulfill assigned responsibilities and be on time. Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish invites students in grade 4 and above to be altar servers.

### Chess Club

Chess teaches children planning, thinking ahead, independent study, abstract thinking, the ability to handle defeat, responsibilities for one's actions, mental discipline, and respect for the quality of other minds. The Chess Club meets after school once a week. Students pair-off against one another to sharpen their skills.

### Musical

Saint Therese students are encouraged to use their natural giftedness to develop skills in music, art, drama, and dance. A musical is held each year to help talented and/or interested students an opportunity to explore the arts and to develop their creative talents.

Students in grades 4 to 8 may audition for the Spring Musical. Both the cast and stage crew grow in confidence by performing for others and engaging in activities that make them well-rounded, self-directed, and service-oriented people.

### Instrumental Music Program

The diocesan instrumental music program is available for a fee for interested students from grades 4-8. The Diocesan Program dictates the monthly fee annually. The instruments are rented with the option to buy. Small group lessons are provided one period a week and practice is held once a week. The periods are rotated so the same classes are not missed too often. However, it remains the responsibility of the student to make up missed work. A meeting is held at the beginning of each school year to provide more information for interested parents.

### Junior Achievement

Junior Achievement allows students in K to 8 to learn about economics, business and capitalism using fun activities. Junior Achievement sponsors the program with students from Serra Catholic High School teaching the classes. These are usually scheduled on one day, typically during Catholic Schools Week.

Fifth grade students will participate in the JA Biz Town Program. Junior Achievement provides a curriculum that covers standards in Language Arts, Social Studies and Mathematics that culminates in students "running" a city. The culmination takes place at Junior Achievement's facility in South Fayette.

### Forensics Club

Forensics Club is the act of public speaking. Students on the team will practice and perform some form of public speaking or acting for a judge and a small group of peers. The judge will provide you with feedback and critiques as well as a rank of your performance. Students perform in two different rounds with their prepared piece. Forensic tournaments are held on Saturdays. Forensic Club is offered to students in 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Invention Convention

Students in grades 2-6 are invited to participate in the Invention Convention. Students brainstorm solutions to a common problem by creating a new invention. Students work independently or in groups and present their projects at a culminating program at Seton LaSalle High School. The Invention Convention takes place in late Winter or early Spring.

### Religious Activities

Homeroms take turns preparing school masses. They are lectors, gift bearers (not during COVID-19 Pandemic), and add to the awareness and solemnity of the celebration.

The eighth grade class has the honor of bringing to life the story of Holy Week by reenacting Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday in a solemn way through the Living Stations during Holy Week. Students in other grades enhance the presentation with hymns.

Saint Therese School helps students develop a sense of connectedness between school, parishes, and local community through exposure to a variety of parish programs especially the food bank. Middle school students help to organize local outreach programs and missionary activities by taking an active role in communicating information about them.

### Sports Program

Students at Saint Therese School may participate in the diocesan sports league.

All coaches are required to be accredited, to have completed all requirements of the diocesan safe environment policy, and to follow the guidelines for the Diocesan Catholic Elementary Schools Sports Program.

### Basketball

Basketball is offered at all levels, beginning with instructional teams in the primary grades and continuing with separate boys' and girls' developmental, junior varsity and varsity teams at upper levels. Playing time varies per level in accord with diocesan guidelines. The decision of the coach is final. Ordinarily, the athletic director, principal or Diocese will not intervene in playing decisions unless Diocesan policy is not followed.

### Cheerleading

When the number of cheerleaders necessitates separate squads, cheerleading is offered with separate junior varsity and varsity squads.

### Golf

Golf can help a child get a real feeling of accomplishment and also teach him/her to think ahead. Once he/she realizes the structure of the game, he/she will start to plan and this is a lesson that can be applied to other areas of life.

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### Track and Cross Country

Track and Field helps children to enjoy their success in speed, strength, excitement and fun of track and field. Meets are set up with area schools and at the end of the season with a diocesan competition ending the season.

### Volleyball

Volleyball is offered to both boys and girls at the Junior Varsity and Varsity level. The season for girls begins on or shortly after the first day of school. Boys' volleyball is a spring sport.

The education of the student is our primary concern. The faculty and administration of Saint Therese School, along with the Saint Therese Athletic Association (STAA), hereby agree to the following policy:

1. The student will be expected to maintain acceptable school behavior. Serious offenses may result in exclusion from one or more practices and games.
2. The student will be expected to maintain acceptable academic achievement in relationship to his/her ability. This includes, but is not limited to a student not having an E in any core class.
3. The student must be present in school on the day of the practice or game in order to attend said activity. If an activity occurs on a weekend, the student must be present on the last school day prior to the event.
4. Parents/Guardians will be contacted if students do not meet the above expectations.

Exceptions to this policy are at the sole discretion of the building principal.

Fundraising for all teams is provided entirely through STAA sponsored fundraising events and refreshments sold at games. The STAA has a general organizational meeting in the fall to acquaint parents and students with the programs. Consult the STAA website ([www.sttheresetigers.com](http://www.sttheresetigers.com)) for information and up-to-date calendar.

### Student Patrol

Students are selected for bus patrol from the middle school. Selection is based on a willingness to strive for the following qualities: leadership, reliability, good attendance, punctuality, interest in safety, obedience to rules, courtesy, respect for others, attitude of service, and an understanding of the limits of their authority.

The safety patrol helps students arrive at and leave school safely. It is never the safety patrol members' responsibility to act as "school guards." The job of the patrol is to help students find their busses or to assist them in boarding/deboarding in a safe and orderly manner. Monitoring conduct on the busses is the responsibility of the drivers.

### Student Leaders

The purpose of Student Leaders is to develop leadership, pride, and responsibility and to be of service to Saint Therese School. Student Leaders are Middle School students who demonstrate the exemplary behavior, dedicated to academic success and commitment to their faith. Students interested in being a Student Leader must have the approval of their classroom teachers. The Student Leaders meet with the Student Leader Moderator to plan and implement school activities.

Student Leaders play an important role in outreach activities by developing social consciousness and bringing life to the Gospel message of service. Throughout the school year, the Student Leaders assume leadership in school-wide fundraisers to help the needy. They raise money for various charitable causes including, Chimbote, World Missions, Food Bank, Arthritis and Cancer Societies, and other local service projects as needs arise.

Acceptable behavior and grade requirements may be put in place for any activity. For example, students participating in the Spring Musical are expected to follow the same behavior and academic performances as required for athletics. These requirements will be communicated to students/families prior to participating in any activity.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### HEALTH ISSUES

#### Nurse

A school nurse is assigned to Saint Therese School by the Steel Valley School District each year and is present in the building only to fulfill her responsibilities. She is available in any emergency situations. The responsibilities of the school nurse include:

- Keeping updated health records for all students.
- Screening students for hearing—grades K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>
- Assuring the completion of a physical examination before entrance to kindergarten and in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Screening students for vision—yearly.
- Scoliosis screening—grade 7.
- Recording height and weight for students—yearly.
- Recording required immunizations.

#### Dentist/Dental Hygienist

The Dentist/Dental Hygienist makes routine visits to our school and is responsible for maintaining all dental records. The Pennsylvania School Health Law requires dental examinations for students entering 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. These grades were selected because they represent critical periods of growth and development in a child's life.

We recommend that your family dentist do these examinations. School dental health evaluations will be provided for students who do not furnish proof of a private dental examination within the last six months. These forms are given out to the students before school ends so that appointments can be scheduled over the summer.

#### Illness

It is often difficult to decide if your child should stay home from school when complaining of illness. An objective sign is an elevated temperature. Children should be kept home from school until the temperature has remained normal (below 100 degrees) for 24 hours without the aid of medication.

If a child has a temperature of 100° or more, skin rash, pink eye, diarrhea/vomiting, strep throat, or evidence of head lice, the child will be sent home. All cases of head lice should be reported immediately. Parents should not send their children to school if they display any of these symptoms. Please inform the school office if your child becomes sick with a contagious illness. Notes will be sent home with the other children to warn parents of contact and incubation of communicable diseases.

#### Accident and Injury

In the case of accident or illness at school, parents are contacted to take the child home, to the doctor, or hospital. It is important for your child's safety and comfort, as well as the effective operation of the office that emergency information needed to locate parents is available for each child and that this information is kept up-to-date by parents.

Parents of children who have any type of physical disorder should contact the principal, school nurse, or teachers to make them aware of the problem.

### Administration of Medication During School Hours (Diocesan Policy 560.08)

Medication should be given at home, and physicians should be asked to change the schedule for the administration of medication so that it can be given before and after school hours. Medication that must be distributed during school hours must be administered by the parent or their designee.

Students requiring a fast-acting inhaler, such as albuterol for asthma or epinephrine for life-threatening allergies may be self-administered. Students may carry their own medication and administer it during the school day as ordered by their licensed prescriber and authorized by their parent and school.

An order from a licensed prescriber for the medication, including a statement that it is necessary for the student to carry the medication and that the student is capable of self-administration, is required before the student may carry the medication on his/her person. A student needing to self-carry emergency medication should have an emergency care plan or a similar form completed by their healthcare provider. Before allowing a student to self-carry medication, the nurse assigned to the school will ensure that the student is competent in self-care through demonstration of administration skills and responsible behavior. The student must notify school administration immediately following each use.

If medicine must be administered at school, the following guidelines apply:

1. When possible, school personnel should supervise the student's self-administration of medication.
2. Stored medications administration by a RN, LPN or parent must be in a secure locked location. Students should never be given access to this location.
3. The medication should be delivered to the school by the parent, guardian or other responsible adult along with the treating physician's written documentation relative to the diagnosis, prescribed medication, dosage and instructions for the student's self-administration of the medication.
4. Medication brought to school must be in a container labeled by a pharmacist or doctor. The label must include the student's name, the name of the physician, date of prescription, dosage and frequency of administration.

### Nutrition

The Department for Catholic Schools Diocese of Pittsburgh promotes healthy students by supporting the Nutrition Guidelines for Competitive Foods in Pennsylvania as a part of the total learning environment. All diocesan schools are expected to provide a healthy environment where students learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of students. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

### Classroom Treats

All foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the nutrition standards. Keep this in mind when you are sending in treats for any special occasion including birthdays. **For the wellbeing of all children, we insist that only pre-packaged treats with ingredients listed from the manufacturer. If this directive is not followed, please be aware that the treats will not be distributed and will be sent home.** We encourage you to be creative and consider celebrating special events with non-edible treats.

### Parties

The Saint Therese Parent Association sponsors treats for special occasions during the school year. Classroom parties for Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day may be held. Teachers in each department (Primary, Intermediate, Middle School) have determined the time and structure of the party. No other instructional time should be used for parties without the principal's permission. All parties are expected to follow the nutrition policy for treats as stated in this handbook.

### Party Invitation

Party invitations are not to be sent to school for distribution as this may cause hurt feelings among the students who are not invited. The only exception to this is if every boy or every girl is invited or all students in your child's room are invited.

### Physical Activity

The Department for Catholic Schools Diocese of Pittsburgh promotes daily physical activity for all students, and a physical education curriculum that engages students in moderate to vigorous activity during physical education class time. Each school is to provide recess for students that encourages moderate to vigorous physical activity through the provision of space and equipment.

Recess periods in the gym and/or outside are scheduled for each grade for daily physical activity. Students are to wear athletic shoes to school daily so that they may safely participate in this activity.

### Substance Abuse

The Department for Catholic Schools recognizes that chemical abuse is a serious problem. We believe that chemical dependency is a life-threatening illness that affects individuals in all areas of their lives, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and socially. It is therefore, the intent of this policy to prevent and to prohibit the possession, use, sale, distribution and/or intent of distribution of any illegal or controlled mood-altering medication or chemical. These are prohibited on school property and at any school sponsored event.

Violations of this policy may result in the following consequences:

- a. appropriate disciplinary response consistent with the school's philosophy
- b. notification of parent/guardian
- c. notification of municipal authorities when appropriate
- d. suspension or expulsion from school
- e. referral of students to appropriate drug and alcohol agency

This policy will be implemented through the cooperative efforts of administration, faculty, parent/guardian, staff, student and community.

### Teacher/Student Confidentiality

Teachers will keep a student's confidence so long as no one's life, health or safety is involved.

### Wellness Policy

Saint Therese School promotes healthy students by supporting good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. Our school believes that promoting proper dietary habits will contribute to students' health status and academic performance. The entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

The complete Wellness Policy is posted on the school website, [www.stthereseschoolmunhall.org](http://www.stthereseschoolmunhall.org).

## SAFETY ISSUES

### Asbestos Notice

Pursuant to the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act (AHERA), our school was inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector. A Management Plan was developed and submitted to the PA Department of Education. A copy of our Asbestos Inspection Report and Management Plan is on file in the school office.

The school is re-inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector every three (3) years. The maintenance and custodial staff have received two (2) hours of Awareness Training and conduct a periodic surveillance twice a year, in December and June.

### “All Hazards” School Safety Plan

Catholic schools teach the value and dignity of every human life. With this in mind, it is critical that every step is taken to insure the safety and security of all members of the Catholic school community. Under Commonwealth law, all schools in Pennsylvania are mandated to develop emergency preparedness plans. These plans identify, from a school administration level, action to be taken during the four phases of an emergency: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The purpose of this plan is to identify and clarify emergency roles and responsibilities for Saint Therese School and its staff. It further prescribes procedures and coordination structures for Prevention/Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery efforts at the school level. The ultimate objective is to minimize the negative consequences of any incident on the school, its staff, students, and parents/guardians.

This document provides a basic “All Hazards” School Safety Plan, recommended emergency response teams, site specific hazard vulnerability analysis and list of vulnerabilities, staff roles and responsibilities, training requirements, and exercise procedures based on the four phases of emergency management.

### Safety Drills

The purpose of practicing safety drills is to protect and keep as safe as possible the children and adults in the building from a potential emergency. We want everyone in the building to know what to do, how to react, and to be calm and responsive. Drills are conducted twice a month at different times of the day and often without pre-announcement to give students and staff the opportunity to practice what to do in different scenarios.

The faculty and staff participated in mandatory training and have a copy of the “All Hazards” School Safety Plan that provides lesson plans with instructions on how to exercise the drills. Procedures for all drills are posted in every classroom. Teachers take roll call at the start of all drills. Students remain in absolute silence during all drills. Misconduct of any nature is reported to the principal. It is considered a serious offense and is dealt with immediately.

### Fire Drills

Fire drills are held monthly. No one--teacher, student or other personnel--may remain in the building during fire drills. When the students hear the bell, they are to leave the room quickly and quietly in single file and are evacuated to Saint Therese Church. Students remain there until summoned back to class.

### Weather Emergency Drills (Drop, Cover and Hold)

Once the announcement is made concerning a weather drill, teachers follow the policy governing weather emergencies for student safety. All classes move quietly to their assigned safe places. Once there, the children get into position. They are instructed to sit facing the wall, cover their eyes by leaning their face against their arms and remain in this position until given the all clear signal.

### Lockdown Drill

A lockdown takes place to prepare students for hostile intruders, hostage situations, and a weapon on campus or anytime instructed to do so. An announcement is made to lock doors immediately! Students move to the safest part of the room, away from windows and doors. Window shades are pulled down. The window in the classroom door is covered to prevent an intruder from seeing into the room. Classroom lights are turned off. No one is permitted to exit or enter the room once the door is pulled shut and locked. Classes wait for instructions to resume activities. During a lockdown, no one is permitted to enter or exit the building for any reason.

### Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-Place drills are designed for those situations in which it is safer for everyone to remain in the building than to evacuate. Generally, shelter in place means simply staying indoors. When directed to do so, all students report to their assigned room. Doors and windows are closed and locked.

### Evacuation

Evacuation drills are designed to prepare students, teachers, administrators, and other people in the school to leave the building quickly and in a pre-planned and organized manner when conditions outside the building are safer than the conditions inside the building.

Evacuation sites provide a safe haven in close proximity to the school and must be within walking distance.

- Our primary evacuation site is Saint Therese Church. If it is deemed unsafe to keep the children in the church, teachers will be notified to escort students to an alternate site.
- In case of fire or other disruptions, all in the building will evacuate to Steel Valley High School Auditorium.
- If Steel Valley High School is in an endangered area (hazardous material accidents are an example) students will be evacuated to Munhall Fire Department #4, 3401 Main Street, Munhall.

Partner grades are assigned to assist young children: Eighth grade and preschool; seventh grade and kindergarten; sixth grade and first grade.

Dismissal procedures are as follows:

1. Students will only be dismissed to the authorized individuals as indicated on the Emergency Release Card.
2. Parent/Appointee must report to the homeroom teacher for dismissal so that each teacher may document to whom the child has been released.

### Safe Environment Program

The purpose of the Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Pittsburgh is to take reasonable measures to assure that adults who have contact with minors (those under 18) are committed to providing a safe environment for children and youth, are capable of identifying and preventing abuse of children, and have no personal history of behavior that would be a threat to children.

Teachers, coaches and assistants, chaperones, and adults who volunteer at Saint Therese School and Parish are required to follow the steps outlined below to receive volunteer clearances. We realize it takes time and attention on your part to complete the process; please realize the goal is solely to protect your child(ren). Adults (18 or older) volunteering with children at Saint Therese School must be compliant with the requirements of the safe environment policy as listed on [www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org), the diocesan website.

## HOW TO BE COMPLIANT

Go to [www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org). Click on Safe Environment Compliance then School Volunteer. All School Volunteers must complete the following.

1. [Safe Environment Database/PA State Police Clearance \(renew every 5 years\)](#)
2. [Code of Pastoral Conduct/Child Protective Services Law](#)
3. Child Abuse History Clearance (Renew every 5 years)
4. FBI Clearance or Waiver (Renew every 5 years)
5. Protecting God's Children [On-line Class](#) or [Live Class](#)
6. Mandated Reporter Training [On-line Class](#) or [Live Class \(Renew every 5 years\)](#)

Send a copy of the certificate you receive at the conclusion of each training to the school office. This is necessary to follow diocesan procedures to keep your confidential file and database updated. You must complete all requirements within 3 months of the submission of your application or it will be archived. When you have completed all of the requirements, your application will be removed from the archive and you may begin volunteering.

The Safe Environment Coordinator for Saint Therese School and Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish is Mrs. Trish DiGiannurio. Questions can be directed to Mrs. DiGiannurio at the parish office at Saint Maximilian Kolbe, 412-461-1054.

### Weapons

No person other than public officers in uniform in the exercise of their duties shall bring any weapon as defined in Section 912 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, 18 Pa. C. S. 912, onto school grounds or in any school building or vehicle even though they may have a legal permit to carry such weapon.

Any person carrying a weapon, look alike weapon, or any object which might simulate a weapon onto school property, including, but not limited to, a school building, outdoor areas, outdoor facilities, vehicles used to transport students, or school related activities poses a clear and present danger to other students and staff. For the purpose of this policy, a weapon is defined to be a gun, knife or any other article which could be used to cause injury. Such person in possession of a weapon violates state criminal statutes and school regulations and will be subject to the following discipline and penalty:

1. If a student is found to be in possession of a weapon, his/her parents will be notified immediately.
2. The matter will be referred to local police authorities., if in the sole discretion of the school administration, such a referral is appropriate.
3. Administration of the school will decide upon the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken.
4. The disciplinary action taken may result in expulsion. (Diocesan Policy 560.04)

Any student or employee found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action and reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency for criminal prosecution under 18 Pa. C. S. 912. Non-school students who violate this policy shall be prosecuted as trespassers.

### Security/Visitors

All doors to the school will be closed and locked during school hours. Parents/guardians and visitors should ring the buzzer by the main school door to gain entrance to the building. For security reasons, anyone entering Saint Therese School is to report to the secretary's office immediately regardless of the purpose of the visit. For the safety of all students, all visitors going beyond the entrance to the school will present a valid State ID or Driver's License for an immediate background check. Visitors will receive a one time use badge to be used to gain access to the school. Communication with teachers and students will be handled by the school office and will be done in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process in the school.

Any articles or items to be left for a student will be left in the school office or with the secretary. This will eliminate any unnecessary interruptions to classes and instruction.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### Introduction

The administration and faculty of Saint Therese School are committed to teach and model Gospel values to encourage students to live their lives as a reflection of Christ. The philosophy of the school strives to recognize and respect the dignity of each person and to offer a positive, Christ-centered, safe learning environment based on the Social Teaching of the Church. Discipline is considered an element of moral guidance not as a form of punishment.

Every teacher and staff member shares the responsibility to model appropriate behavior and to support the structure necessary for learning self-discipline. Students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their actions, develop self-control, and accept responsibility and consequences for inappropriate behavior.

A Christ-centered school environment fosters the following behaviors:

1. Recognizing and fostering the uniqueness and dignity of each individual;
2. Nurturing respect in all relationships;
3. Developing a sense of rights and responsibilities and commitment to the entire school and Community.

Social skills, both interpersonal and intrapersonal, are taught, modeled, practiced and infused into the daily life and experience of the school family.

### Guiding Principles

The following seven principles are the basis of Catholic Social Teachings and are the principles that guide us in all of our interactions.

- We believe in the life and dignity of the human person. Each person is sacred.
- We believe we are called to family, community, and participation. It is our duty to support each other by our actions.
- We believe that we have rights and responsibilities. Every person has the fundamental right to life and responsibility to and for one another.
- We believe that we have an obligation to the poor and vulnerable. We are called to put the rights of others before our own.
- We believe that we are called to care for God's creation. We are all stewards of the earth.
- We believe that solidarity is our call. We are one family regardless of our differences.
- We believe that workers have rights and that work has dignity. Work is a form of participating in God's creation.

### Expectations

As a matter of safety, students are expected to avoid conduct unbecoming a Catholic School student at all times and to behave in the following manner:

#### Before school:

1. Arrive after 7:30 a.m.
2. Report to your homeroom and wait for the teacher to tell you when to enter.
3. Engage in quiet conversation.
4. Follow classroom procedures for lunch sign up, turning in office paperwork, etc.

#### In school:

1. Walk quietly and in a single file at all times including change of classes.
2. Use proper language at all times.
3. Follow the dress code for school days and no uniform days.
4. Respect school property and the property of other students.
5. Bring a note from their parent/guardian if there is a change in the mode of school transportation.
6. Put electronics in place designated by the homeroom teacher.

#### In the classroom:

1. Follow the classroom rules of each teacher.
2. Be responsible for submitting homework on time and making up missed assignments.
3. Have a respectful attitude toward teachers and one another.
4. Be responsible for appropriate supplies.
5. Be honest in all communications.
6. Use computers and school equipment appropriately.
7. Refrain from chewing gum or eating food.
8. Do not remain in or enter a classroom at any time without a teacher or designated adult present.

#### After school

1. Follow dismissal procedures.
2. Walk to assigned place to wait until bus or car arrives.
3. Avoid running or playing games on the school grounds.
4. Leave the school grounds immediately.
5. Sign in at the extended care program.

#### At athletic events and assemblies

1. Practice good sportsmanship as spectators and participants.
2. Be respectful to coaches, referees, and visiting teams.
3. Use appropriate good manners during special performances.

#### Outside school

1. Behave responsibly off school property. If the principal is made aware of misconduct off school property of a child recognized to be a student in Saint Therese School, parents may be contacted; however, it is important to note that the school is not responsible for student's actions that occur off school property.
2. Principals will forward disciplinary notices given by public school bus drivers to parents to support the disciplinary report of the bus driver. Continual infraction of rules may result in loss of bus transportation privileges.

### Consequences

Discipline is the key to good conduct, to respecting the rights of others and is essential to learning. Classroom standards and expectations for student behavior vary according to age and are determined by the individual teacher. Please be aware that any disrespect, destructive act, or inappropriate behavior will be dealt with accordingly. If an individual student does not meet his/her personal responsibility for good conduct, the school may discipline the student.

The severity or repetitive nature of non-compliance to the school's expectations will determine the appropriate consequences. To remediate unacceptable behavior, the following actions may be taken:

- Teacher/student conference to develop a plan for remediation
- Loss of recess
- Notification to parents
- Detention
- Administrative referral

### Primary Grades

A student who repeatedly disregards school rules, disrupts learning, or interferes with the safety of others may be isolated in the classroom, cafeteria, or on the playground until she/he evidences the desire to change behavior. If it is necessary to isolate a child repeatedly, parents will be notified to assist the child in developing appropriate behavior. Serious offenses or repeated infractions as described below will result in detention which is served during the normal lunchtime recess.

### Grades 4-8

If behavior warrants action, any member of the faculty may issue a student detention. Students may be given multiple warnings before receiving a lunch detention. Students receiving a lunch detention will serve the lunch detention on the same day if received before lunch or the next day if received after. Students will serve the detention in the cafeteria and eat lunch separate from their peers. The students will be monitored by the teacher on lunch duty.

Considering that good behavior is the norm achieved by most students, students in grades 4-8 will serve one-hour detentions after the accumulation of three lunchtime detentions. After school detentions will be served in the main office on Tuesdays with advance notification given.

Positive behavior activities will occur quarterly. Students who received three lunch detentions, one or more after school detentions or a suspension of any type will not participate in these activities. Each student will start each grading period with no accumulated detentions.

Behaviors that may cause a student to receive a lunch detention include:

1. Chewing gum or eating outside of cafeteria
2. Disrupting instructional time; writing or passing notes in class
3. Dress code violations e.g. careless appearance, short skirts, untucked shirts, pants not at waist, not conforming to the uniform code
4. Loitering in the hall and/or restroom
5. Having a cell phone/electronic device
6. Failing to care for school property, such as computers, desks, books (including not covering books)
7. Any other behavior deemed to be contrary to the school values
8. Misconduct during fire and weather drills.
9. Disrespect for any person, both those in authority or other students
10. Disrespectful behavior during prayer and worship

A student may be issued a one hour, after school detention for the following infractions:

1. Violating or damaging personal property in desks
2. Fighting, violent or threatening behavior, harassment
3. Repeated incidents of bullying behavior, physical, emotional, social, will result in appropriate interventions according to developmental levels of offending students.
4. Name-calling, using “put-downs,” teasing in a hurtful way
5. Cheating, dishonest representation, cutting class
6. Profane or foul language, gestures, actions, or material
7. Stealing, destruction of property
8. Refusal to comply with direction from adult
9. Willful disobedience as determined by previous detentions
10. Conduct detrimental to the reputation of the school
11. Any other behavior deemed to be contrary to the school values

#### Aggressive Behavior

Fighting, using physical means to settle a disagreement is never acceptable. Any physical confrontation that may result in disciplinary action by the administration may result in the involvement of local law enforcement. The developmental levels of the offending students will be taken into consideration when determining consequences.

#### Electronics

No student is permitted to have any electronic device (anything that can be turned on/off) on his/her person or in the coat closet during school hours. Students must deposit these items in the place designated by the homeroom teacher. If a student is found with an electronic device, it will be confiscated and kept in the office until a responsible adult picks it up.

Smartwatches may not be used for any reason during the school day. Students are strongly advised not to wear smartwatches to school. If a smartwatch is worn, it may only be used to tell time.

#### Extra-Curricular Activities

Since participation in extra curricular activities is a privilege, restrictions may be placed on student participation if unacceptable behavior is not altered. This includes athletic events.

Students with behavior incidents that take place at athletic events and/or extra-curricular activities are subject to all discipline policies and may be excluded from practice/games/activities as a consequence for their behavior.

#### Student Discipline Record

In accordance with Pennsylvania Act 2008-61, the parent/guardian of a student transferring to another school shall provide a sworn statement of affirmation stating whether the student previously was suspended or expelled from any public or private school of the Commonwealth or any other state for an offense involving weapons, alcohol or drugs; for the willful infliction of injury to another person; or for any act of violence committed on school property. A certified copy of the student’s disciplinary record shall also be obtained from the school from which the student is transferring.

#### Suspension Policy (Diocesan Policy 550.02)

In the event of a serious infraction of school regulations or for repeated detentions, a student may serve either an in-school or out-of-school suspension. Suspension may vary in length from one to ten days. No prior notice is needed. The parent/guardian will receive a written notice of suspension. This notice will explain why the student was suspended. It will also contain an agreement between the student/parents/guardians and the principal describing the student’s future cooperation in a program designed to resolve the student’s problems. If

misconduct continues, a student may be asked to leave the school. These decisions rest with the administration and may be necessary for the benefit of the total program.

The following examples for suspension are illustrative but not exhaustive:

- Leaving the school grounds without permission
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Fighting
- Truancy
- Continued instances of bullying
- Conduct judged by the principal as seriously contrary to the purpose of Catholic education, the goals of the school, the physical or spiritual welfare of the students or members of the school community

Suspensions should be held in school, and the student not marked absent, unless the offense is particularly excessive, in which case, out-of-school suspension is the remedy. Out-of-school suspensions follow the same guidelines as in-school suspensions except assignments are given in the various subject areas for home study. The parent/guardian will meet during this time of suspension with the principal and teachers to define expectations upon the student's return.

As a general rule, suspensions are to be served in school as soon as possible. Students may not participate in lunch recess or in any school sponsored activities, including but not limited to athletics, from the date of the incident until after the suspension is served. If further suspensions occur, the student will be on probation and in danger of expulsion.

#### Expulsion Policy

A student may be expelled for the following reasons:

- Chronic, undesirable conduct detrimental to the physical and/or moral well-being of self or other students as evidenced by an accumulation of suspensions.
- A single serious incident, event, or situation involving disregard for a clear violation of a school rule or regulation, such as possessing a weapon on school property.
- Conduct judged by the principal as seriously contrary to the purpose of Catholic education, the goals of the school, the physical or spiritual welfare of the students or members of the school community.

The foregoing listings establishing reasons for disciplinary action are not all inclusive. It remains the duty of the principal, administration and staff to deal appropriately and proportionately with individual instances of attitude or conduct which may occur.

The following behaviors will result in immediate administrative referrals and can result in referrals to law enforcement or other government agencies:

- Violations of weapons policy
- Violations of the drug/alcohol policy
- Any purposeful action that results in bodily harm to another

The principal/Department for Catholic Schools are the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may use discretion in the implementation of these policies. In the case of all suspensions and expulsions, diocesan procedures are followed.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION**

### **Anti-Bullying Diocesan Policy**

It is the policy of Saint Therese School to ensure that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity. In keeping with the teachings of Christ, Saint Therese Catholic School provides a safe, caring and supportive school environment, free of bullying, for all member of the school community. Therefore, all members of the Catholic school community are expected to use non-violent means to resolve conflict as reflected in the gospel values.

All situations of conflict are not necessarily bullying. When people are interacting and have different opinions, different ways of doing things, different ideas, etc., conflict can occur. Mature people can often work through the differences and move on. However, when working with developing minds, it is not always easy to find commonality and moving on doesn't happen readily.

### **Definition of Bullying**

The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) legal definition of bullying consists of three parts:

- Bullying is intentional aggressive behavior. It can take the form of physical or verbal harassment and involves:
- An imbalance of power (a group of children can gang up on a victim or intimidate someone who is physically bigger or more aggressive can intimidate someone else, for instance)
- Bullying behavior is frequently repeated (unless there is intervention)

Bullying behavior can include teasing, insulting someone (particularly about their weight or height, race, sexuality, religion or other personal traits), shoving, hitting, excluding someone, or gossiping about someone.

Bullying can cause a victim to feel upset, afraid, ashamed, embarrassed and anxious about going to school. It can involve children of any age.

### **School Setting**

A school setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school.

- A school entity shall not be prohibited from defining bullying in such a way as to encompass acts that occur outside a school setting if those acts meet the other requirements specified in the definition of bullying.

### **Students are expected to:**

- promote a positive and caring environment for all by developing an awareness of bully issues.
- refuse to bullying others or to be a bystander to acts of bullying.
- report all acts of bullying that they may experience or observe to appropriate school personnel.
- assist and co-operate in the implementation of school-wide anti-bullying initiatives.

### **Parents/Visitors are expected to:**

- promote a positive and caring environment for all by developing an awareness of bullying issues.
- inform the school if bullying is suspected.
- encourage students to discuss any incidents of bullying and reinforce the need to speak out.
- support the school when resolving identified incidents of bullying.
- support the school through the Student Assistance Programs (SAP) in promoting local school anti-bullying initiatives.

### **Reporting/Investigating Incidents**

Students who experience bullying are encouraged to report it to any adult employee of the school. Employees of

the school who observe bullying or receive reports of it will act immediately to protect the alleged victim and to immediately forward an Incident Report to the Principal for prompt investigation.

### Sanctions for Bullying

Once an investigation has concluded, if bullying has occurred, actions may be taken against the perpetrator. These action(s) must be appropriate to the seriousness of the incident(s) and in accordance with accepted common sense application of the school's bullying discipline policy.

### Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation or reprisal against any person who reports bullying incident(s) is strictly prohibited. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment used against a person who reports incident(s) of bullying in good faith. Disciplinary action against any person who retaliates or engages in reprisal for reporting such behavior(s) will be determined by the bullying discipline policy.

### False Reporting

Students are prohibited from knowingly or willfully falsely accusing one another of bullying. Disciplinary action will be taken and determined by the bullying discipline policy.

### Consequences

A student who violates the anti-bullying policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct which may include:

- Parental conference
- Loss of school privileges
- Exclusion from school-sponsored activities
- Detention
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Counseling/Therapy outside of the Intermediate Unit or school.
- Referral to law enforcement officials

### School Harassment Policy (Diocesan Policy 550.13)

Harassment - a general term to describe words, gestures, and actions which, according to Black's Law Dictionary, tend to "annoy, alarm and abuse (verbally) another person. A person commits a petty misdemeanor if, with purpose to harass another, he : (1) makes a telephone call without purpose of legitimate communication; or (2) insults, taunts or challenges another in a manner likely to promote a disorderly response; or (3) makes repeated communication anonymously or at extremely inconvenient hours, or in offensively coarse language; or (4) subjects another to an offensive touching, or (5) engages in any other course of alarming conduct serving no legitimate purpose.

In sum, it is making cyber harassment of a child a criminal offense (harassment) and misdemeanor of the third degree.

Cyber harassment of a child occurs when a person:

- Has an intent to harass, annoy, or alarm a child
    - Uses electronic means to directly address a child or indirectly through social media
    - To engage in a continuing course or conduct which
      - o Makes a seriously disparaging statement or opinion about the child, or
      - o Threatens to inflict harm on the child
- Minors can be charged with the crime.

The crime may be deemed to have been committed where the victim child resides.

### Anti-Sexting Policy (Diocesan Policy 550.16)

It is the policy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh that a student may not possess, view, send, or share pictures or text having sexual context.

Sexting can have serious moral, social and legal consequences. Students and parents need to be aware of the consequences of sexting.

Currently, under the Pennsylvania sexual abuse of children statute, minors could be charged under the Commonwealth's child pornography laws. In general, under Pennsylvania's sexual abuse of children statute, it is a felony to:

- Photograph, videotape, depict on computer or film sexual acts by a child under the age of 18 years.
- Disseminate photographs, videotapes, computer depictions and films of a minor engaged in a sexual act
- Intentionally view or knowingly possess or control any book, magazine, pamphlet, slide, photograph, film, videotape, computer depiction or other material depicting a child under the age of 18 years engaging in a prohibited sexual act or simulation of such act.
- If convicted under the statute the offender must register as a sex offender and can be subject to up to 10 years in jail and/or a \$25,000 fine.

Students may also encounter social consequences. Images can easily escape their control through being shared more broadly than they had anticipated. This can have a long-term impact on their digital reputation. Images can also potentially be used for cyber-bullying or cyber-stalking, or they may attract unwanted attention from others.

If anyone suspects or is made aware that such activity is happening in the school, the administrator should be notified.

Anyone that has intercepted any content which may constitute child pornography, should not interact with the information, forward or share it in any way including to school authorities. Immediately seek guidance from local police.

School authorities are to notify the police whenever they have been made aware that sexting has occurred.

Students in violation of this policy are subject to school discipline, including suspension and possible expulsion.

### Gender Policy (Diocesan Policy 550.21)

The gender of every human being is a gift fashioned by God that enriches the human family through the complementarity of masculinity and femininity. At this time the Diocese of Pittsburgh recognizes gender according to a student's birth certificate. "Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest

Catholic Schools and all catechetical programs of the Diocese of Pittsburgh recognize that all children, because they are made in the image and likeness of God, deserve to be treated with charity, love and respect. Each school strives to provide a safe educational environment that fosters academic success as well as physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. The teachings of the Church are followed, including those teachings related to gender, in a Christ-centered atmosphere that promotes Gospel values.

Our Catholic schools and catechetical programs will follow these procedures:

- Administrators will maintain student permanent records and other legal records and documents using the student's legal name and gender.
- School personnel may honor requests of parents/guardians to address a student by a preferred name or nickname.
- Students are to use bathrooms according to their God-given gender. Where possible, arrangements are to be made for a private bathroom to address special needs.
- In all other circumstances students are expected to comply according to their God-given gender.

## RATIONALE AND AUTHORITY

"By his incarnation, the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every human being. This saving event reveals to humanity not only the boundless love of God who so loved the world that He gave his only Son' (John 3:16), but also the incomparable value of every human person." (Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 2) With these words, St. John Paul II reaffirms our deeply rooted belief in the inherent dignity of every human person. Each person that we encounter is to be regarded as the image of the living God.

According to the divine plan, the image and likeness of God for every human person is embodied in a specific gender as either male or female. The distinction and complementarity of men and women is thus to be accepted from God as a gift to be received, honored, and affirmed. As Pope Francis explains, "The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation" (Pope Francis *Laudato Si*, no. 155).

Instead of seeing gender as something to which we ascribe our own meaning and self-determination, the Church believes that the gender each person receives from their mother's womb is a sign of God's love for the person and all humanity. It is on this basis that the Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms that, "Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual *identity* [because] physical, moral, and spiritual *difference* and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life" (CCC no. 2333).

During the early years of life, children experience the natural developmental process of growth in all areas of their life, but especially in regard to their sexuality. Due to the supreme dignity of human sexuality and the personal feelings that surround the development of a person's sense of personal value, no form of contempt, bullying, or mistreatment in regard to gender will be tolerated in our Catholic Schools. Loving pastoral care should be provided with due consideration to fairness, safety, and the privacy rights of all students.

## PARENT INFORMATION / INVOLVEMENT

The basic principles of the philosophy of a Catholic School flow from the obligation of parents to be the primary educators of their children. To fulfill this responsibility, the parent must become the educational partner with the school.

To help the parents' partnership in education become a reality, the school endeavors to help parents to

- have a clear understanding of the philosophy of a Catholic School
- have a working knowledge and a commitment to the philosophy of the local Catholic school
- establish mutual cooperation concerning all aspects of their child's education
- provide home experiences that will complement, reinforce, and extend the formal religious and academic instruction received in school

### Rights of Non-Custodial Parents

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives full rights to each parent, unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, State's statute or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes these rights. Such an order is to be on file in the school and those persons responsible for the child(ren) are to be informed of the circumstances. Every effort is made to keep the non-custodial parent apprised of the progress of the child(ren) through reports, report cards and parent/teacher conferences if requested by the non-custodial parent and not prohibited by the court.

### Elastic Clause

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems that arise, this clause empowers the administration and faculty to take disciplinary action for any behavior that violates the spirit and philosophy of the school even though it is not specified in the discipline policy.

The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any regulation for just cause, at his/her discretion.

The Catholic Church and Saint Therese School recognize parents as the primary educators of their children. The education of students at our school is a partnership between parents and the school. If, in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the parent to withdraw his or her child. This is a very serious decision that is not made lightly.

The list of policies and procedures included in this handbook are not exhaustive. Each individual circumstance will be dealt with on a case by case basis and up to administrative discretion.

Saint Therese School/PERCES reserves the right to amend the Parent-Student Handbook at any time. Families will be given prompt notice of any amendment.

## **PARENT ORGANIZATIONS/VOLUNTEERS**

### Volunteers

The help of volunteers is always needed in the school and at school-sponsored events. Please consider using some of your time and talent to help enhance our quality program. The possibilities are endless. At Saint Therese School parents play an integral role in the education of their children through the STPA, Saint Therese Advisory Council, fund-raising activities, playground/lunchroom monitors, field trip chaperones, and classroom helpers. This partnership is invaluable to the success of our school.

### School Advisory Council

The School Advisory Council of Catholic School is a body whose members are selected through a process determined by the Principal and who are expected to participate in offering expertise and assistance in designated areas of responsibility to the Principal. School Advisory Councils do not have the power to enact policy, but exist to offer advice, guidance, and support to the Principal in specific areas as requested by the Regional Administrator and Principal.

Such advice and assistance are especially encouraged in the areas of public relations, student retention and recruitment, fundraising and development, and the strengthening of parental and community support for the school. The Principal is responsible for the operation of the school and its programs and he or she is accountable solely to the Regional Administrator and Superintendent of Schools.

The local School Advisory Council shall consist of no fewer than five (5) and no more than nine (9) members. Members of the Advisory Council are expected to be practicing Catholics and parents of enrolled students;

however, it is possible for qualified non-Catholic members of the community to be selected for the Advisory Council. Such non-Catholic membership, however, can never exceed one-quarter of total membership.

### Saint Therese Parent Association (STPA)

The Saint Therese Parent Association (formerly known as VIP) is intended to provide opportunities for parents to fulfill their God given role as educators and to give mutual support through collaboration with the school.

The membership of the parent organization consists of the parents/guardians, principal, and the faculty of the school. It is not intended to replace the School Advisory Committee.

The objectives of the organization are:

- to offer opportunities for parents to understand the Catholic Philosophy of education and the Diocesan School Program(s);
- to publicize through an on going and effective public relations, marketing campaign the contributions of the school to the parish and the broader Church and civic communities;
- to maximize financial resources available to the school through well-planned fund raising activities, volunteer services, and contributions from the business community.

### Saint Therese Athletic Association (STAA)

All sport programs are the responsibility of the Principal. The Athletic Director is accountable to the Principal. Coaches are selected by the Athletic Director and approved by Principal and serve on a volunteer basis. The Diocesan Guidelines for Elementary Catholic Schools Sports programs guide the policies. Parent interest and willingness to serve on the Board are vital to the continued success of the program.

The executive board consists of the Principal, Athletic Director and the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

### Committee Meetings

Dates for committee meetings are on the school calendar. Any parent/guardian may attend these meetings. If you wish to address a specific topic, you must have your agenda item to the president 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

## **HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

The chief avenues of communication from the school to home are through the Parent/Student Handbook, school announcement through OptionC, and the school's web site.

### Option C Parent Alerts

The monthly calendar, lunch menu, and other timely notices are sent electronically via Option C toward the end of each month. Information from the Diocese, Parish, STPA, STAA, and other school related news is sent as needed. Notify the office if you are unable to receive electronic mail and we will send you hard copies.

Information or fliers, etc. that a parent/guardian may want to send by e-mail must be approved by the principal.

### Saint Therese Times Newsletter

Saint Therese Times, a weekly newsletter, is published each Friday (or last academic day of the week) and distributed via Option C Parent Alerts. The newsletter includes a message from the principal, a look at upcoming events and other timely information. The newsletter will also be posted to the school website, [www.stthereseschoolmunhall.org](http://www.stthereseschoolmunhall.org).

### Messages for Teachers

Positive communication between teacher and parent/guardian is vital to our total educational program. Any questions or concerns you have about your child should first be directed to the teacher and then the principal. The teachers and principal have school issued email address as well and may also receive messages through Option C. The teacher/principal will respond to you at his/her earliest convenience.

## **REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS**

Reporting student progress will be in accordance with diocesan regulations which combine parent conferences with written reports of a student's progress.

At Saint Therese School, we recognize the importance of reliable and readily available communication. OptionC ([www.optionc.com](http://www.optionc.com)) is an online educational resource available to all Saint Therese families. This resource keeps all of your students' important and necessary information in one place. It is easy to use and provides access to all the information parents/guardians need to know about your child's educational progress.

Parents and Students can use OptionC to verify homework assignments and due dates, check subject grades and test/quiz scores as often as you like, know test dates and when projects are due. To access your child's information, you will need the school-supplied user-name and password. Contact the office if you need your child's password. If you do not have access to a computer with an Internet connection, notify the office so that arrangements may be made to keep you informed periodically about the academic progress of your child(ren).

### Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year on the dates established on the official school calendar. Kindergarten students receive a report card three times a year, beginning in January.

### Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice a year. Dates and times are posted on the yearly and monthly calendar. Conferences may be requested at other times throughout the year by parents/guardians or teachers.

### Telephone Conferences

Telephone calls are one possible way for teachers and parents to maintain good communication for the benefit of the child. Because of the importance of class time, no teacher is to be called from class to talk with parents/guardians.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Scholarship Monies may be available for students of families meeting diocesan eligibility criteria for financial need.

1. Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Grants: EITC grants are available to needy families with children in Catholic schools from pre-school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade meeting state income criteria.
2. Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC): OSTC grants are available to needy families with children in Catholic schools from K through grade 12<sup>th</sup> meeting state income criteria who reside within the attendance boundaries of a low-achieving school as determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
3. The Bishop's Education Fund (BEF) is a tuition assistance fund for Catholic students attending a Catholic elementary or secondary school in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Families submit an application for financial aid through the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Applications typically must be completed by March 15. This one application is used for Scholastic Opportunities Scholarships and Bishop's Education Fund. Application forms are available in the school office or may be downloaded on the diocesan web site: [www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org).

### Tuition

Saint Therese School is an important, available ministry that emphasizes academic excellence within a value-oriented Catholic environment. Because significant expenditures are required to provide a quality elementary school education, it is necessary to charge tuition and to seek compliance with the payment schedule.

Before the end of each school year, tuition amounts are determined for the following school year. The fee schedule is given to each family and they are required to reregister at this time. Each family pays a nonrefundable re-registration fee that is applied to the tuition for the following year if paid by a set date.

From time to time, students will need to withdraw from their current enrollment at Saint Therese School. A formal records request from the new school is required to initiate the withdrawal process. Until that is received, the student continues to be enrolled in Saint Therese School and parents/guardians are responsible for tuition payments.

Within the first ten days of the first semester, students can be withdrawn with a prorated refund based on time enrolled from the start of school. After the ten-day period, families who choose to withdraw will be obligated to pay for the 1<sup>st</sup> semester tuition (2 nine-weeks). Following the conclusion of the first semester, the same cycle will happen in the second semester. For the first ten days of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, students can withdraw from school with a prorated amount of semester tuition. Following those ten days, families will be obligated to pay the entire second semester tuition.

No transcripts will be released until tuition payment amounts have been verified and reconciled by the regional office.

If a family is temporarily burdened by a financial problem, a parent should contact the principal in advance of the due date. If such unusual circumstances exist, the school authorities will arrange for an alternate payment plan. Saint Therese School uses FACTS Tuition Management for collection of tuition. Tuition payments are not accepted in the school office.

If payments for tuition and fees are not made on schedule and parents have not contacted the school, the following steps may occur:

- a. Access to the on-line grading system may be denied.
- b. Report cards may be withheld.
- c. The student may be asked to transfer at the end of the second quarter or at the end of the year.
- d. Student records will not be sent to another school, with the exception of those required by law.
- e. No student may receive a transcript or a diploma until tuition payment amounts have been verified and reconciled by the regional office.

### Tuition Subsidy

Each year, all Catholic families submit a Pastor Verification Form to qualify for tuition subsidy. Catholic children must meet three criteria to be eligible for the Catholic tuition rate.

1. They are baptized.
2. The family is registered in a Catholic parish, and
3. The family is practicing their faith through regular Mass attendance and regular use of the parish envelope system.

If approved by the pastors, the subsidized Catholic tuition rates are charged. Otherwise, each child in the family must pay the per pupil cost.

Because parents of non-Catholic children do not support the local parish as parishioners, it is understandable that their tuition rates reflect the per-pupil costs.

## **FUNDRAISING**

The diocesan policy for funding in the elementary Catholic schools calls for each school to have fundraising activities to generate at least 10% of their total operating budget. Saint Therese School has two ways to generate the fundraising goal, general fundraising and assessment fundraising.

### General Fundraising

School parents are expected to participate in the general fundraising events such as the Parish Festival, February Affair, Fish Fry and other STPA-sponsored general fundraising activities to the best of their ability through service, monetary donations, and attendance.

### Service Program

The goal of the service program is to foster a greater sense of belonging, friendship, and shared interests within the school community by providing ways for all families to take an active role in helping the school meet the fundraising goal.

- All families are required to perform a minimum number of service hours during the school year. One shift must be worked in preparation for or during the annual festival and 12 hours on STPA fundraisers.
- Two of the 12 required hours may be earned by volunteering in your child's classroom at the request of the teacher or by participating in a STPA sponsored family event (not a fundraiser).
- Hours are only earned at events that raise funds to benefit Saint Therese School.
- As service hours are in place to help meet the fundraising goal, athletic coaching or other volunteering within the athletic association do not count toward the fundraising goal.
- Anyone over the age of 21—aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends, another parent, etc. may work on behalf of a family. They must notify the fundraising chairperson in advance.
- Hours may not be transferred to another family's account once they have been recorded.
- Each family is responsible for keeping track of their service hours. A service coordinator oversees the program.
- Service hours are not carried over to the next school year.