

ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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FAMILY HANDBOOK 2025-2026 Revised June 2025

Pastor
Associate Pastor
Principal
Assistant Principal

Rev. David Belt
Rev. Matthew Pohlman
Mrs. Julie Perrault
Mr. Greg Verraneault



This Family Handbook is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute a contractual agreement between St. Stephen the Martyr (SSM) Catholic School and any student or any parent of any student. The information contained in this Handbook provides a general description of rules and regulations. The school reserves the right to add to, modify, or abolish any of the Handbook provisions without notice. Updated information will be communicated through email to families. Non-enforcement of any of the rules or regulations does not serve as a waiver of their future enforcement. The Handbook does not create any restriction upon SSM Catholic School's right to institute any course of disciplinary action, which, at SSM Catholic School's sole discretion, it believes is necessary and consistent with its Catholic educational mission.

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Section I - Mission, Vision & History

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church Mission Statement

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church is a community for all people to encounter Christ, know Christ, and proclaim Christ.

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School Mission Statement

United in Christ to ignite the joy of faith, community, and learning.

Vision

The vision of St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School is to take into consideration the total personality of the student in the imparting of knowledge. There is unity of purpose springing from the students' oneness. The school is responsible for contributing to the total development of each student in terms of his origin, nature, and destiny. St. Stephen exists as a unit of the Mystical Body of Christ and as an institution of society. As such, its function is two-fold. First, it strives always to help the student grow in Christian love of God and all creatures, and secondly, it helps students in their search to find their full human potential. In order to obtain these goals we will:

- Encourage a love and devotion to God by means of frequent use of the Sacraments and other liturgical services.
- Promote the Christian view of all persons as children of God and thus worthy of our love, respect and help.
- Assert the necessity of proper use and care of all God's creatures.
- Promote honesty to oneself and peers.
- Maximize individual development.
- Achieve proficiency in basic skills.
- Develop intellectual capacities to think, solve problems, and synthesize information.
- Promote an understanding of the role and importance of a moral citizen.

History

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School opened in the fall of 1992 with grades preschool through fifth. Sr. Regina Wagner was the founding Principal. The first graduating eighth grade class was in 1996. The second phase of the school opened in the fall of 1997-when a library media room, gym and additional classrooms were added. St. Stephen is accredited by the Nebraska Department of Education under Rule 10 and is accredited by Cognia™ Performance Accreditation beginning in 2015.

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School follows the directives of the Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic Schools Office, the Nebraska State Department of Education, and the policies set forth in this Handbook.

Section II – School Admission, Registration, and Attendance

ADMISSIONS GUIDELINES

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

SSM does not discriminate against students on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnic origin, or gender, with respect to all aspects of the educational program generally made available to students at the school. This includes administration of the school's educational and admission policies, its teaching methods, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school sponsored programs.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Preschool through eighth grade

Prior to being eligible for enrollment in SSM, families are encouraged to be registered, active members in parish life and participate in the parish as follows:

- Spiritual Involvement: Regularly attend Mass at SSM Catholic Church.
- Financial Involvement: Regularly support the church financially through both contribution envelopes and once enrolled, timely payment of tuition for students. Tuition and church support are separate financial responsibilities. Tuition is not a substitute for regular church support and regular church support is not a substitute for tuition.
- Stewardship Involvement (time and talent): Regularly be involved in church activities or perform volunteer work in the school.

Initial and continued enrollment in the school depends upon meeting the general requirements set forth above. Failure to meet any of these requirements may be grounds for denied admission or continued enrollment in the school.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Preschool through eighth grade

In addition to the general requirements, the following must be provided prior to admission to SSM:

3-Day Preschool, AM Session or PM Sessions

- Must be 3 years old by July 31, 2025, but no older than 4 by July 31, 2025
- Must be independently toilet trained
- Best suited for those experiencing preschool for the first time, 2 years before Kindergarten

5-Day PreK, AM or PM Sessions

- Must be 4 years old by July 31, 2025
- Must be independently toilet trained
- Best suited for those attending Kindergarten next year

Transitional Kindergarten (TK), 5 days/week, all-day

- Recommended age: 5 years old by December 31, 2025*
*Priority placement will be given to students who most closely meet this recommended age.
- Must be independently toilet trained
- Previous preschool experience recommended
- Best suited for Kindergarten age students who are waiting one year

Birth Certificate:

Students must be 5 years old on or before July 31 to be admitted into the kindergarten program. A copy of the original birth certificate will need to be on file in the school office and updated to FACTS SIS.

Baptismal Certificate:

A copy of the baptismal certificate will need to be on file in the school office and in the Religious Education office.

Up-to-Date Health Records:

A physical examination is required prior to the start of the school year for all kindergarten students, seventh-grade students, and students transferring from an out-of-state school. All incoming students must provide the date of their last dental examination date and vision evaluation.

Up-to-Date Immunization Record:

All students must meet the Omaha Archdiocesan immunization requirements stated in our registration documents. These required immunizations must be on file in the school office before the beginning of the school year. Students transferring from another school must submit a copy of their records from the previous school.

PRIORITY FACTORS

After the general and admission requirements set forth are met, priority for admission will be determined in the following order:

- Students currently enrolled in the school (preschool through seventh grade).
- Siblings of students at SSM.
- Children of faculty.
- Involvement in volunteer efforts in the parish and school.
- Length of registered membership in SSM, as determined by census card (with the greatest length being given priority).
- Families with children previously enrolled in the school must pay enrollment fees by February 23, or make payment arrangements with the school Principal or their place in the school may be given to a child on the waiting list.

The Pastor, based on the factors set forth above, will determine a waiting list for admissions. SSM reserves the right to exclude any student demonstrating he or she is unwilling or unable to handle the school's academic, religious, and discipline expectations or requirements. The decision on whether to exclude a student will be made by the Pastor and Principal.

ENROLLMENT, SCHOOL TUITION & FACTS MANAGEMENT

The Finance Committee of SSM Catholic Church approves tuition. Enrollment fees are **non-refundable** and are paid at the time of enrollment. FACTS Management handles all financial transactions such as tuition, lunches, field trips, etc. electronically. All banking information must be completed and updated on family FACTS accounts before students are enrolled in the school.

Tuition can be paid through the following payment methods:

K-8 Rates:	Tuition	Enrollment Fee
First and Second Child	\$3,800/student	\$200.00/student
Third Child	\$3,300.00	\$200.00
Fourth Child	\$2,200.00	\$200.00
Family Max	\$13,100	\$200/student
Non-Catholic Student Rate:	Tuition	Enrollment Fee
One Child	\$4,380.00/student	\$200.00
Early Childhood Rates:	Tuition	Enrollment Fee
3-Day Preschool	\$1925.00	\$200.00
5-Day PreKindergarten	\$2,850.00	\$200.00
Transitional Kindergarten	\$5,700.00	\$200.00

Tuition payments begin the 10-month payment plan starting July 2025 and ending April 2026. Payments are paid on either the 15th or last day of the month. Lunch payments (lunches, field trips, activities, etc.) begin September 2025 and end June 2026. These payments are paid through FACTS and will appear as “incidental” charges. Please ensure that your banking information is current on FACTS.

Families desiring to apply for tuition assistance may do so by applying through FACTS. Decisions will be made by mid-July. Financial aid is determined based on parents' financial information and the most recent tax returns. SSM requests families desiring assistance first apply through the Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha (CSF) if the family income meets certain requirements. CSF's website is csfomaha.org/parents-family. Deadline for applying for Financial Aid for the 2026-2027 school year is May 1, 2026

Note: the enrollment fee is non-refundable. If a student transfers out of the school/parish, tuition may be refunded based on the time remaining in the school year. If the school building closes and remote learning is in place, tuition is not refunded unless you officially withdraw and enroll in another school district. All school materials will need to be returned.

Delinquent Tuition: St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School relies on prompt payment of tuition in order to meet our financial obligations. Delinquent accounts are reviewed monthly and if satisfactory payment arrangements are not made, a student may be dropped from enrollment.

APPLICATION FOR ENROLLMENT

Re-enrollment for current students for the next school year will be held annually in January. Families will receive an automated Re-Enrollment email from FACTS with a link to complete Enrollment Packets in the FACTS Family Portal. Current families must complete enrollment packets and pay the enrollment fee by February 20. If a child is not re-enrolled at that time and there is a waitlist for that grade (class), enrollment will be opened to those on the waitlist. In addition to the \$200 enrollment fee paid to St. Stephen, the following fees are paid directly to FACTS:

- \$11 re-enrollment fee/child
- \$22 fee for new applications
- \$20 or \$50 FACTS annual/family payment processing fee (depending on which tuition payment plan is selected)
- Credit card processing fees are assessed if paying via credit card vs. ACH.

New students can apply for admission beginning on Sunday, January 25, 2026. We encourage families to apply online as it simplifies submission and provides parents the ability to track the status of their child's application. To begin the Application, visit school.stephen.org/admissions and click the “Apply Here” button. Note: there is a \$22 application fee for all new student applicants, including those that have siblings already enrolled at St. Stephen the Martyr. This fee is required by FACTS and St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School does not receive this payment. This fee must be paid by credit card and there is a credit card processing fee.

Once the application is approved, the applicant will receive an email that they are eligible to enroll. The student's spot in our school will be reserved once we receive the completed enrollment packet and enrollment fee of \$200.

If a child **not previously enrolled** is **not accepted** for enrollment into the school because a class is full, the child's name will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with the priority factors set forth above. The waiting list is in effect for one year and will be reviewed periodically. Parents will be notified if a space becomes available in the class for which their child is listed. If the family refuses the opening, the name is automatically withdrawn from the list. The family may re-apply at the next spring registration.

TRANSFERS INTO ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Parents must provide the following documents for admission:

- A review of health and immunization records from the previous school attended.

- A release of information form for academic records must be signed by the parents before registration.
- A baptismal certificate is required before the reception of any of the Sacraments.
- Original birth certificate to be presented, copied and immediately returned.

The school reserves the right to contact the previously attended school.

TRANSFERS OUT OF ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Upon request from a new school, SSM will transfer the necessary information to a new school. Information is sent by email or fax between schools and is not given to parents to hand deliver.

NON-CATHOLIC and/or NON-PARISHIONERS

Students, who are not of the Catholic faith and/or are not parishioners of SSM Catholic Church, must attend and participate in religious activities scheduled at the school (i.e. Religion class, Mass, religious services, etc.).

ABSENCE AND TARDINESS

So that K-8 students are in their classrooms by 8 AM when school begins, the doors unlock at 7:50 AM for students to report to their classrooms. Students are tardy if they arrive after 8:00 AM. **For absences and tardiness, parents can email the School Office at school@stephen.org or call the office at 402-896-0754.** Any student arriving after 8 AM but before 8:05 AM will report to the classroom. The teacher will record the tardy. After 8:05 AM, students will report to the office for a tardy pass. A tardy student will not be allowed into the classroom without the tardy pass after 8:05 AM. An absence of 2.5 hours or more in length shall be recorded as a half-day absence. We understand weather and/or traffic back-ups can sometimes cause our morning drop-off lines to take longer than usual. Our office staff and teachers take these situations into consideration and often offer a 10-minute grace period when necessary.

Frequent, unexcused tardiness is a real concern. An initial tardy letter is sent once the student reaches **ten** tardies in a quarter. Additional letters are sent at **15** tardies. If a student has 15 or more tardies in a quarter, he/she may need to make up the academic time after school and/or at recess time. Tardies in excess of **30** minutes may be counted as partial absence days. Tardy counts will reset each quarter. A letter may be sent to the county attorney once a student reaches 20 tardies.

No student may leave the school premises at any time without a note from parents and permission from the Office. Permission from the Office is required for any student to leave the school premises for lunch. Periodically the school office will contact parents if there are issues with absenteeism and/or excessive tardies.

TRUANCY AND EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM

Regular attendance by students is essential for students to obtain the maximum benefits of the school's educational and religious programs.

If a student is not at school to attend a school-related event (e.g., speech tournament, sports event, etc.), he or she will not be considered absent.

Excessive absenteeism occurs when a student misses so many days of school that his or her educational growth suffers. If any student has accumulated a total of ten (excused or unexcused) absences per quarter, the school will follow up with the family and discuss the next steps. Excessive absenteeism may be reported to the County Attorney's office once a student is absent for more than 20 days.

Administration will have consideration for excessive absences in regard to the following:

- Illness related to the physical or behavioral health of the student. This will include any health directives issued by a physician.
- Educational counseling to explore curriculum changes to solve the excessive absenteeism problem.
- Educational evaluation to assist in determining the specific condition(s) contributing to the excessive absenteeism problems, supplemented by specific efforts by the school to help remedy any condition diagnosed.
- Referral to appropriate agencies for economic services;
- Family or individual counseling; and
- Assisting the family in working with other community services.

It shall be within the discretion of Administration to determine, in light of the particular circumstances, whether a student may make up work due to excessive absenteeism. For purposes of discipline, the following absences will be considered excused:

- Absence excused by a written note, indicating specific dates, from a healthcare professional. Documentation should be submitted in the Office upon returning to school. Documentation received after the last day of the semester will not be accepted.
- Absence due to an immediate family member's death or family member's illness.
- School-related activities.
- Court-ordered appearances.
- Illness documented.

SSM will try to keep students and parents aware of any attendance concerns, but ultimately the responsibility for monitoring student attendance belongs to the student and his/her parents.

When a student is absent because of illness for up to two days, no homework needs to be collected. A student has a grace period and can receive work when he or she returns to school and will have two days to get the work completed and turned in. If a student is ill and absent for more than two days, the teachers will collect work to be picked up and/or will post it on Google Classroom. Work is not expected to be completed on the day of return. **A student is given a day for each day missed if the absence is a result of illness (physical or emotional).** We care about the emotional and academic health of our students and do not expect children to work when they are too sick to be at school. All work will be in the North corridor by 4 PM to be picked up if a

student is absent for two or more days. **If a child misses school for sports or vacations, they should collect work before they leave if possible. It is not the responsibility of the teacher to collect their work. The teacher will determine when assignments should be turned in.**

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

SSM complies with Nebraska State Law which requires 1,032 hours of instruction per year for elementary schools. The progress of each child at school depends to a great extent on the regularity and punctuality of attendance.

DISMISSAL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

SSM is a closed campus, meaning once a student has arrived on school grounds, he/she may not leave until dismissal except with permission of the Principal. Those who have doctor and dental appointments or who must go home for some reason must have a written note or verbal communication from the parent. If a parent finds it necessary to withdraw a student before dismissal, then the parent or adult identified in advance by the parent must report to the School Office before taking the student. All students must be signed out at the office prior to being allowed to leave. The Safe Environment provision for the care of minors is thus transferred directly to the care of the guardian/ parent at that time.

Upon return to school, parents are asked to accompany their students to the school office to sign in and receive an admittance slip to class. This procedure helps maintain accurate attendance and guards for the safekeeping of all students.

Section III – Schedules, Staff, and Daily Operation

CALENDAR

The calendar is published annually, listing student days of attendance, teacher in-service days, parent/teacher conferences, holidays and activities. **Dates and events may be subject to change as necessary. Timely notice will be provided whenever possible.**

Calendar for 2025-2026

Aug 14	Thurs	Back-to-School Event/ 3:30-6:30
Aug 18	Mon	First Day of School: NOON DISMISSAL (TK A-L only, no school for TK M-Z)
Aug 19	Tues	NOON DISMISSAL (TK M-Z First Day, no school for TK A-L)
Aug 20	Wed	First Day for PreK Classes
Aug 25	Mon	First Day for Preschool Classes
Sept 1-2	Mon & Tues	No School: Labor Day Break/Teacher Inservice
Sept 4	Thurs	Curriculum Night
Sept 19	Fri	Noon Dismissal–Martyr Marathon
Sept 24	Wed	2 PM Dismissal–Staff Meeting
Sept 26	Fri	Progress Reports
Oct 3	Fri	No School/CSO Teacher Inservice
Oct 17	Fri	Quarter 1 Ends
Oct 22	Wed	Report Cards Emailed

Oct 23	Thurs	No School–Parent/Teacher Conference 8:00 AM-7:00 PM
Oct 24	Fri	No School
Oct 27	Mon	No School/Martyr Marathon Day Off
Oct 31	Thurs	Halloween Parties
Nov 21	Fri	Progress Reports
Nov 26-Dec 1	Wed-Mon	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 2	Tues	School Resumes
Dec 10	Wed	2 PM Dismissal– Staff Meeting
Dec 19	Fri	11 AM Dismissal– Christmas Break Begins/End of 2nd Quarter
Dec 22-Jan 5	Mon-Mon	No School– Christmas Break
Jan 6	Tues	Classes Resume
Jan 9	Fri	Report Cards
Jan 16	Fri	No School– Teacher In-service
Jan 19	Mon	Staff Retreat
Jan 25	Sun	New Families School Open House
Jan 25-Jan 30	Sun-Fri	Catholic Schools Week
Jan 30	Fri	11 AM Dismissal–Special Friends Mass
Feb 7	Fri	Progress Reports
Feb 11	Wed	Valentine Parties PK-5
Feb 12	Thurs	11 AM Dismissal–Conferences 12:00 PM-7:00 PM
Feb 13	Fri	No School–Teacher Day Off
Feb 16	Mon	No School–Teacher In-service
Mar 6	Fri	End of 3rd Quarter
Mar 9-13	Mon-Fri	No School–Spring Break
Mar 16	Mon	Classes Resume
Mar 20	Fri	Report Cards Emailed
Mar 25	Wed	2 PM Dismissal–Staff Meeting
Apr 2-6	Thurs-Mon	No School–Easter Break
Apr 7	Tues	Classes Resume
Apr 23	Thurs	Progress Reports
Apr 24	Fri	No School/Staff Day of Service
Apr 30	Wed	2 PM Dismissal–Staff Meeting
May 4	Mon	No School–Teacher In-service
May 14	Thurs	8th Grade Last Day
May 15	Fri	No School–8th Grade Graduation 10:30 AM
May 29	Tues	Field Day
May 20	Thurs	Last Day of School for Preschool, PreK & TK
May 21	Thurs	Last Day of School for K-7th Grade - 10 AM Dismissal

FACULTY AND STAFF 2025-2026

Principal	Mrs. Julie Perrault
Assistant Principal	Mr. Greg Verraneault
Admin. Asst.	Mrs. Kim Kruse (T-W-Th)
Admin. Asst.	Mrs. Lauren Noble (M-T-W)
Admin Asst	Mrs. Christy Labenz (Th-F)

Secretary	Mrs. Amy Pugh (M&F)
Preschool	Mrs. Carrie Gentile
Pre-Kindergarten	Mrs. Kerrie Tabaka
Transitional Kindergarten	Mrs. Michelle Foster
Transitional Kindergarten	Mrs. Ashley Hoff
Kindergarten A	Ms. Kaycee Perez
Kindergarten B	Miss Abby O'Brien
Kindergarten C	Miss Madison Schrage
First Grade A	Mrs. Rose Fitch
First Grade B	Mrs. Nowell Heidrick
First Grade C	Mrs. Julie Gorup
Second Grade A	Mrs. Mary Gill
Second Grade B	Mrs. Sarah O'Leary
Second Grade C	Mrs. Amy Michaelson
Third Grade A	Mrs. Sarah Mancilla
Third Grade B	Mrs. Angie Lowry
Third Grade C	Mrs. Caroline Niehaus
Fourth Grade A	Mrs. Diane Haack
Fourth Grade B	Ms. Peyton Hermann
Fourth Grade C	Mrs. Jennifer Jensen
Fifth Grade A	Mrs. Susan Roche
Fifth Grade B	Mrs. Joni Coffey
Fifth Grade C	Mrs. Ronita Bolton
Sixth Grade A	Mrs. Jeanna Pestel
Sixth Grade B	Mrs. Allison Bonar
Sixth Grade C	Mr. Joe Connolly
Seventh Grade A	Ms. Jodi Peetz
Seventh Grade B	Mrs. Erika Codina
Seventh Grade C	Mrs. Shelisa Mabeus
Eighth Grade A	Mr. Adam Harvey
Eighth Grade B	Mrs. Kristin Koubsky
Eighth Grade C	Mrs. Myah Brown
Art	Ms. Victoria Suto
Library	Ms. Elizabeth Chu
Computer	Mrs. Emily Pennings
Music	Mrs. Jessica Tucksen
Music	Mrs. Susan Smith
Physical Education	Mrs. Nicole Verraneault
Physical Education	Mrs. Alison Johnson
TEAM A	Mrs. Dawn Schweers
TEAM B	Mrs. Amy Ryan
Spanish (5-8)	Mrs. Catherine Luth
Spanish (2-4)	Mrs. Maricela Machica
School Counselor	Mrs. Missy Delaney
School Counselor	Mr. Adam Daymunt

School Intervention	Mrs. Missy Delaney
School Intervention	Mrs. Julie Heaton
Kitchen Manager	Mrs. Missy Ziola
Director of Maintenance	Mr. Paul Manzito
Custodians	Mr. Scott Dethlefs & Mr. Andy Secora
KidZone Director	Mrs. Cheryl Connolly
Pastor	Fr. Dave Belt
Assoc. Pastor	Fr. Matthew Pohlman
Director of Operations	Mrs. Erin Finken
Director of Communications	Mrs. Rachel Cooley
Director of Finance	Mrs. Juli Han
Assistant Director of Finance	Mrs. Amy Maroney
Director of Liturgy	Mr. Sam Jizba
Director of Mission	Mr. Adam Ybarra
Director of Religious Education	Mrs. Sandy Kimmey
Director of Technology	Mr. Tom Marble

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The purpose of the Home and School Association (H&S) is to enhance the spiritual, educational, and physical well-being of the students of St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School. H&S exists to support the school's mission. It serves as a valuable resource for St. Stephen the Martyr administration, faculty, and staff, as well as the general membership, and provides an important bridge between home and school.

OFFICERS:

President	Mrs. Leigh Daly
Vice President	Mrs. Suszi Munson
Treasurer	Mrs. Stacie Roy

SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

The School Advisory Board is elected by the parishioners. The board meets quarterly. The School Advisory Board makes recommendations to the Pastor and is advisory to the administration. The formation of policy is a major role of the Board. Current members of the School Advisory Board include the following:

President	Charles Cooper, Jr.
Vice President	Nicole Paus
Secretary	Scott Sanderson
Other members	Jarred Roy, Jennifer Ross, Kelli Herstein, Amanda Trieber

HOT LUNCH

SSM serves a nutritious hot lunch. Students select their choice for option 1, 2, 3, or cold lunch when attendance is taken in the morning. Families are charged based on the morning

selection unless the child becomes ill before lunch. The program is subsidized by the government and is strictly conducted according to government guidelines. Opportunity for Free and Reduced Price meals is provided for those who apply and qualify. If a student requires a meal modification, please contact the kitchen manager via the School Office at (402) 896-0754.

The application is available upon request. Active participation in the Hot Lunch Program is vital to its success. Menu options are subject to change.

Any outside food that you bring in **must be in a plain sack or bag**. No identifying fast food sacks or containers are allowed. The state considers this competition with the hot lunch program.

A separate table will be established as the “Nut Free” table for students with nut allergies. See Section VII Health and Safety for more details on the school’s Nut Policy.

No student may leave the school premises at any time without notification from the parents and permission from the Office. In order to join a child for lunch, parents must call the school office by 8:30 AM.

Lunch periods to accommodate students.

10:45 - 11:20	Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten & First Grade
11:20 - 11:45	Second, Third & Fourth Grades
11:45 - 12:05	Fifth & Sixth Grades
12:25 - 12:45	Seventh & Eighth Grades

LUNCH PRICES

Hot Lunch (per meal) Grades TK-8	\$4.50
Adult Lunch	\$5.85
Extra Entrée	\$3.00
Milk (per meal)	\$0.75

The cost of student lunches will be billed as incidentals through FACTS and charged on the 15th and the last day of the month. If the lunch charges are returned by the family's bank, the family must bring a check or cash to the office within 5 days of the rejected charges. Failure to do so will result in the school asking the family to have their children bring cold lunches until the balance is paid. The family also has the option to apply for Free and Reduced Price School Meals through the National School Lunch Program. These forms can be obtained confidentially in the kiosk outside of the school office and returned to the school office when completed. **NOTE: school lunch prices are subject to change. Families will be notified in advance.**

In the operation of school nutrition programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against, write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

SNAP and FDPIR State or local agencies, and their subrecipients, must post the following Nondiscrimination Statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

TREATS

Students wishing to bring birthday treats should make arrangements with the teacher in advance. Treats will be distributed at the end of the day. No gum is to be given as a treat. The government lunch program prohibits the distribution of treats at lunchtime. For the safety of all those present, **treats should not contain nuts or nut products and should not be processed where other nut products are prepared.**

HOURS: OFFICE

Office hours are 7:30 AM - 3:50 PM on school days or by appointment.

HOURS: SCHOOL DAY

Kindergarten through Eighth Grade:

Doors Open: 7:50 AM

School Begins: 8:00 AM

Dismissal:

- **Regular Dismissal Times**
 - 3:15 PM KidZone
 - 3:20 PM Last names A-L
 - 3:25 PM Last names M-Z
 - Dismissal will “flip” at semester
- **10 AM Dismissal (The Last Day of School)**
 - No School for Preschool and PreK
 - All Students (including KidZone) Dismiss at 10 AM
 - No hot lunch service
- **11 AM Dismissal**
 - No School for Preschool and PreK
 - All Students (including KidZone) Dismiss at 11 AM
 - No hot lunch service
- **Noon Dismissal**
 - No School for Preschool and PreK
 - All Students (including KidZone) Dismiss at Noon
 - No hot lunch service
- **2 PM Dismissal**
 - 1:50 PM Kidzone and TK
 - 2 PM K-8

Early Childhood Class Times

Doors Open: Portable doors open 10 mins prior to class start time for all Early Childhood classes.

- 3-Day Preschool (Mon-Tues-Wed, Half Day):
 - **Morning Class Time:** 8 - 10:50 AM
 - **Afternoon Class Time:** 12:25 - 3:15 PM
- 5-Day PreK (M-F, Half Day)
 - **Morning Class Time:** 8 - 10:50 AM
 - **Afternoon Class Time:** 12:25 - 3:15 PM
- Transitional Kindergarten (M-F, All Day):
Class Times: 8 AM - 3:15 PM

On 2 PM Dismissal Days, Early Childhood Classes will meet as follows:

- **Morning Classes:** 8 - 10:15 AM
- **Afternoon Classes:** 11:30 AM - 1:45 PM
- **Transitional Kindergarten:** 8 AM - 1:50 PM

HOURS: TEACHER

Teachers are present at school between 7:30 AM and 3:50 PM

KIDZONE

KidZone is a before and after school program for TK-8 grade students of SSM. KidZone services are available before school 6:50 to 8 AM, after school to 6 PM, and scheduled days off. Please contact the KidZone Director for program details.

LITURGY OF THE MASS

The Mass is the focus of SSM's public worship of God and the focus of the parish worshipping community. Students are taught about the Mass and given opportunities for Mass participation appropriate to their grade level.

8:15 AM Mass Schedule for Grade Levels:

- Tuesday Grades 1-4
- Wednesday Grades 5-8
- Friday All School Mass (Kindergarten will join in October)

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT POLICY

Unless such rights are restricted by a legally-binding instrument or court order, the non-custodial parent:

- is entitled to exercise all parental rights regarding student records;
- may obtain information from their child's records on a regular basis; may receive general notices; and may attend regularly scheduled teacher conferences or have separate conferences scheduled.

A child may not be released during the school day to anyone except the custodial parent unless written permission is provided by the custodial parent.

If the parents are separated and/or neither is the primary custodian of the child, the school may release the child to either parent unless the school has evidence of a legally-binding instrument or court order to the contrary.,

Any contact by the non-custodial parent with the child during the school day will be governed by the legally-binding instrument or court order in effect unless the school has received permission from the custodial parent providing for contact. Such permission must specify the type of contact. If the parents have joint custody, each parent shall be afforded all parental rights, unless restricted in some way by a legally-binding instrument or court order.

The school may require custodial and non-custodial parents to provide a court certified copy of the court document in effect that sets forth the rights and restrictions pertaining to parental rights.

LOCKERS, DESKS AND COMPUTER FILES

Lockers, desks, and computer files are school property. The school reserves searching rights.

COMMUNICATIONS

Email: There are many ways we communicate with our SSM school community, **but email is our primary communication channel. All important notifications from your student's teacher & Administration, including school closings, will be disseminated via email.** Please keep your FACTS Family Portal updated with your correct email. Enrolled families are required to have one adult designated to receive correspondence emails. If you have questions on how to update your information in FACTS, please contact the school office at: school@stephen.org or (402) 896-0754.

Martyr Messenger: The Martyr Messenger is a bi-monthly newsletter, distributed through email and posted online after distribution at school.stephen.org/martyr-messenger, intended to communicate school information and activities with parents and students. The communications department coordinates publication in collaboration with the school office. Any requested fliers, handouts or information needs to be pre-approved by the Principal and delivered to the school office by noon on the Monday prior to publication.

School App: We strongly encourage families to download our school app. It includes easy access to Announcements, the Lunch Menu, Martyr Messenger, our Google Family Calendar, Student Grades & Behavior, Volunteer & Sports Club sign-ups, FACTS Financial, etc. The app is FREE (thanks to generous funding from St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School Home & School Association) and available to download in the Apple & Google Play stores. To download, visit your app store and search "SSM School".

Google Family Calendar: Our Family Calendar contains all scheduled school activities and parties as well as Martyr Mondays and dress-down days. You can view it at school.stephen.org/google-calendar or add the calendar to your phone or computer by following the directions on this page school.stephen.org/google-calendar-link.

Social Media: We love sharing what is happening at SSM on our social media channels and encourage our families to follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/ssmschoolomaha), Instagram (instagram.com/ssmschoolomaha) and X (x.com/ssmschoolomaha). **Social Media, however, is not our primary communication channel. Families must check their emails to ensure they stay informed on important school information.**

MEDIA/PUBLICATION RELEASE/PHOTOS

Occasionally, the students at SSM are chosen to publish their writing/artwork in contests and events. Additionally, events arise where students may be photographed or recorded for television, newspaper, website, social media, email or radio publication. St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School's social media accounts are public and thus can be shared to other accounts, outside of our school community.

To ensure the safety of our students and community, St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School will never post or release information that is considered private and confidential. This includes posting conversations, last names, personal schedules, addresses, phone numbers, etc. without noted consent. Photos of students will not be posted on St. Stephen the Martyr's social media accounts, website or emails **if a parent specifically opts their child(ren) out of such communications. Unless otherwise opted out, students automatically opt in. If a parent or guardian would like to opt-out, he/she must write the Principal a note indicating that objection by Friday, August 29, 2025.**

SOLICITATIONS

Students should not solicit teachers and staff for various fundraising programs and projects. While we support the goal of these various activities and organizations, it can place an undue obligation upon teachers and staff.

PETITIONS

Students are not authorized to petition other students and/or staff for support or signatures. If a student desires to effect change in school policy or operations, he/she is directed to meet with the school administration to discuss the possibility of initiating a change process. The school administration's decision on the issue in question is final.

MOVIES/VIDEOS

There are times during the school year when a teacher may choose to enhance the learning experience for their class by utilizing various forms of media-films, videos, etc. Movie ratings will be either G or PG. All other movies must be approved by Administration and require parent permission forms.

NUISANCE ITEMS POLICY/CELL PHONES/WATCHES

Students are asked not to bring personal items from home to school or school-related events. These items can be a distraction to the school environment and, if of any value, could also be broken, lost or misplaced. SSM is not liable for any of these personal items brought from home.

Nuisance items include but are not limited to wireless earbuds (AirPods), fidget spinners, radios, laser pens, iPads, smartwatches, collectible cards, playing cards, questionable books, and pictures, or anything that detracts from the learning environment. These items are not allowed at school at any time. School personnel reserve the right to confiscate and hold any such items. Items will be returned at the discretion of SSM personnel.

Students are not to have **cell phones or smartwatches** on their person during the school day. Students found using a cell phone or smartwatch within the building during school hours will have their phones/watches confiscated. Confiscated items will be released to a student's parent or guardian. It is highly recommended that when parents want their students to carry cell phones/smart watches to school for safety purposes, they instruct their students to turn them in to the school office when they arrive or give them to their teacher. If cell phones are not turned into the office or to the teacher, they must be turned off and left in lockers or school bags during the school day. Any cell phones going off during the school day will be confiscated and turned into the office. A parent will need to come to the office to have the cell phone or watches returned to him/her. While on school property, cell phones may not be used for unauthorized photography.

Note: Exceptions can be made for students with medical needs that require alerts and frequent contact to their parents. Usage for such purposes will be monitored by the school office staff.

PARENTAL CONCERNS AND PROCEDURES

A parent with a question or concern regarding a situation involving a student is urged to follow these procedures in this order:

1. Contact the student's teacher to discuss the situation and work with the teacher to arrive at possible solutions. Appointments with the teachers will be made by writing an email or calling to request a meeting.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent should then request a conference with the Principal and/or Assistant Principal. After discussing the situation with both parties, the Principal will act as a facilitator, making every effort to resolve the problem and initiate reconciliation between the two parties.
3. If resolution and reconciliation have not been achieved after discussion with the teacher and Principal, and the parent still feels the issue has not been addressed, the Pastor may be asked to assist in the resolution and reconciliation of the problem.

Every effort should be made to resolve questions, concerns, and problems at the earliest possible stage in a manner appropriate for Christians. **Parents are strongly discouraged from using social media or other public forums to address and/or share concerns/problems they may have with SSM students, teachers, staff, administration or the school.** The SSM administration is eager to work with parents when problems or difficulties arise.

SSM views a student's education as a partnership between parents and the school. Parents and students are expected to comply with the school rules, policies, and consequences for inappropriate behavior. Parents and students are expected to accept and support the authority of school officials. Just as the parent reserves the right to withdraw a child, the school has the right to cancel the enrollment of a student if the administration determines that the parent and/or student demonstrates a refusal to maintain a partnership with the school.

PARTIES

Parties are held at certain times of the year. Generally, there are two parties, Halloween and Valentine's Day. Grade-level coordinators, organized through SSM Home & School Association, help the teacher coordinate the activities. Middle school generally takes a field trip in place of the classroom party. Any other parties require prior approval of the Principal. Parents are directed to ask individual classroom teachers for their approval if they wish to bring siblings when volunteering for a classroom party or function. Please consult the **Nut Policy** in this handbook when bringing food items to school.

PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY THE SCHOOL

School pictures are taken each year in the fall by a commercial photographer as a service to parents. Students may purchase these photographs but are under no obligation to do so. Students should dress in nice clothes on that day.

PRAYER

Daily prayer is an integral part of the school day, beginning and ending with prayer. Students daily use formal and spontaneous forms of prayer. Prayer services are planned for special feasts and liturgical seasons such as Advent and Lent.

RECESS & PLAYGROUND

Regular recesses are scheduled for K-8 grade students. Parents should make sure students are appropriately dressed for the weather. When there is a wind chill below 10 degrees Fahrenheit,

or other weather concerns, students will have indoor recess. The Weather Channel will be used to establish the current temperature/wind chill. Inappropriate behavior or failure to accomplish assigned tasks may determine a student's recess participation.

Students must remain in view of the teacher or person supervising at all times. No one may leave the schoolyard without permission. Appropriate Christian behavior is expected at all times. Students are made aware of the rules concerning behavior and equipment use. Playground supervisors have complete authority to redirect inappropriate student behavior. Students who take playground equipment out to recess are responsible for bringing it back into the school. A rotating schedule provides K-5 grade students an opportunity to use the playground equipment.

Note: A doctor or parent note is required if a student should stay in during recess time or have limited participation in physical education. A note for the child to resume activities must also be provided.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT POLICY

The placement of students with classroom teachers at SSM is an administrative responsibility. Many factors are considered when determining how students are placed each year. These factors relate to the child's academic and social development, a teacher's teaching style, a child's learning style, the boy/girl ratio in the classroom, and balanced academic grouping. It is a very time-consuming process for both the teachers and Administration. Teacher requests are not accepted. Classroom assignments will be made known at our Back to School Event. This is due to the need to add and remove students from class lists and to update teachers assigned to classes throughout the summer. **Due to these and other factors, requests for information about classroom assignments prior to our Back to School Event cannot be honored.**

BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT

Our Home and School Association organizes the "Back to School" event. This is an opportunity for your children to briefly meet the teacher, drop off supplies and find out your student's classroom assignment. You will receive separate information from our Home and School Association.

COUNSELOR

SSM offers full-time counseling. Our school counselors spend time with the students in the classroom addressing various issues and expectations while remaining faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church. They also see students individually and in small groups. Students may visit with the counselor for an initial visit with or without parental permission. If a parent does not want his/her child individually to visit with our counselor, please provide a request in writing to the counseling office.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL SUPERVISION

Our school doors open at 7:50 AM. Students are expected to leave the school grounds by 3:30 PM. Supervision is not provided before and after school, however; teachers are on door duty before and after school beginning at 7:50 AM. The children are expected to keep off the grass before and after school. Children should go home/to their ride or carpool upon school dismissal. St. Stephen the Martyr School does not supervise students electing to walk to the YMCA across 168th Street after dismissal. Students are NOT permitted to wait for rides on the playground because St.

Stephen the Martyr School does not provide supervision on the playground. Any students on the playground will be sent to the office to call about their ride. See below for details regarding late pick-up.

In the event a child is not picked up by 3:30 PM., he/she will be taken to the Office and asked to contact a parent by phone. Any child unaccompanied by an adult anywhere on campus (including the playground) will be brought to the office. **If no parent arrives before 3:45 PM, the student will begin accruing charges at the rate of \$5.00 for every 10 minutes. This fee will be charged as an “incidental fee” through FACTS. *** If the delay is a result of an accident or family emergency, please call the office.**

BICYCLES

A bicycle rack is provided by the school but the school accepts no responsibility for bikes parked on parish property. Bikes may be used for transportation only to and from school and are not to be ridden on the playground, sidewalks or parking lot at any time. The students must adhere to the guidelines for entering and leaving the school premises to ensure the safety of everyone

GUM/CANDY

SSM is a gum-free environment. Students are not allowed to bring gum/chew gum in school. Candy received as a reward in the classroom must be eaten in that teacher’s classroom or taken home. No open candy will be allowed in the hallways or other teachers’ classrooms. Be sure to consult the “Nut Policy” in Section VIII: Health and Safety for safety guidelines regarding the exposure and consumption of nut products.

STUDENT RECORDS

In compliance with the Federal Family Rights and Privacy Act, SSM recognizes the right of the parent/guardian to be given access to their child's educational records and prevents the school from allowing information to be released to others without parental consent unless a valid exception is applicable.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

When any person has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that reasonably would result in abuse or neglect, he or she shall make a report by calling the State of Nebraska, Department of Social Services at 1-800-652-1999. The person making the report should also inform administration of the alleged misconduct since Administration is normally contacted by DHHS once a report is made about a student or school family. SSM will cooperate fully in the investigation of such cases.

TELEPHONE

The school telephone is a business telephone. Students may use the phone free of charge in emergency situations. Permission to use the phone may not be given depending on the reasons given for the call. At no time is a student to use a teacher’s classroom telephone. Student telephone use is restricted to the school office area.

Teachers are not called from their classrooms for telephone calls, except in case of emergency. Teachers’ phone numbers are not given out. If it is necessary to speak with a teacher,

leave your name and phone number, and Office personnel will ensure that the teacher gets the message.

A teacher can easily and effectively be contacted by email. All teachers' email addresses are their first initial, followed by a period, his/her last name and then @stephen.org. Example: Principal Julie Perrault is j.perrault@stephen.org. A complete list is available on our website: school.stephen.org/contact-us.

VACATIONS

Families are encouraged to schedule vacations during times when school is not in session. This helps promote the value of education to the students. During the school year, there are many designated holiday/vacation times.

Note: students will be expected to make up any missed schoolwork while gone. **Requests for homework prior to any vacation will be given at the discretion of the student's teacher.**

VOLUNTEERS

As mandated by the Archdiocese of Omaha, volunteers who have contact with children are required to participate in the Safe Environment Training session and undergo a background check, prior to their assistance in the school.

After completion of the session, the following applies:

- Volunteers provide support for the teachers by working in the classroom or at home.
- All volunteers must report to the Office and sign in before working in the building. An identification badge must be worn while volunteering.

VISITORS

Although we love having visitors, we encourage anyone having contact with our students to get Safe Environment training and certification.

When parents wish to visit the building during lunch periods, they must conform to all school rules. The Administration must know when people are in the building. All visitors during the school hours will need to "buzz" in at the North or South entrances. The office staff will use the school cameras and ask for visitor information before unlocking the doors. Visitors, including parents, should report to the office to sign in before going anywhere in the school.

Parents will not be allowed to wait in the commons area before and/or after school. Your child(ren) will meet you outside when they are dismissed.

Visitors During Lunch Periods in Our Dining Room

Acceptable times for former students, who are minors, to visit staff are limited to teacher lunch periods when teachers are not on duty or after dismissal. In the interest of ongoing instruction and our Safe Environment guidelines, access to classrooms and other locations is restricted. All visitors must sign in and sign out in the office. Since available empty seating is very limited in our Dining Room during our lunch periods, SSM allows only adult guests in the Dining Room during lunch periods. Please let the office know if you plan to come to lunch by 8:30 AM. **All visitors are**

reminded that outside food must be in plain wrapper containers and drinks are limited to water and milk. Sodas are not to be brought into the Dining Room during lunch periods.

WEATHER & SCHOOL CLOSINGS

St. Stephen the Martyr School (SSM) follows the school closure decisions of **Millard Public Schools (MPS)** and/or **Omaha Catholic Schools** in cases of inclement weather.

School Closures: If either MPS or Omaha Catholic Schools cancel classes due to inclement weather, SSM will also be closed. When SSM is closed, Kidzone will be closed and all school-sponsored activities will be canceled. Please note: The SSM Sports Club will make its own decision about canceling evening practices.

- Closure announcements should be communicated by 6:15 AM via email, using the “Correspondence” address(es) on file in FACTS.

Cold Weather Decisions: In cases where closures are considered due to extreme cold rather than snow or ice, SSM typically will follow the decisions made by MPS or Omaha Catholic. Administration will always directly communicate with families and staff about the decision to close school or if school will be open.

Kidzone on Non-School Days: If Kidzone is scheduled to be open on a day when SSM is not in session, but MPS or Omaha Catholic Schools close due to weather, Kidzone will be canceled.

Weather Makeup Days: SSM’s calendar allows for up to 11 weather-related closure days. If the school approaches the minimum number of required instructional hours, a regular school day may be scheduled on a previously planned day off.

Early Dismissal & Weather Emergencies:

Early Dismissal: SSM will usually remain in session once the school day has begun.

- If deteriorating or forecasted weather requires early dismissal, families will be notified via email.
- Parents may come to pick up their children at any time during the school day if they feel weather conditions are threatening.

Tornado Warnings

If a Tornado Warning is issued by the National Weather Service (Omaha/Valley, NE):

- Students and staff will shelter in place until the warning is lifted.
- Parents will be notified of the shelter-in-place status via email
- During the warning: School staff will not be able to answer phones.
Doors will remain locked for safety; no one will be admitted until the warning ends.

After the warning is lifted:

- Phones will be answered.
- Doors will be reopened.
- Students will either return to class or be dismissed, depending on the time of day.

If the school day has already ended when a Tornado Warning is issued:

- Students may leave with a parent/guardian as long as shelter has not been put in place.
- Families are strongly encouraged to shelter in place within the school building.
- All students still on campus, including those in Kidzone, will shelter with staff.

Section IV – Academics

SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

The mission of the Catholic Church is identified by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Jesus' last words to the apostles:

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt 28:19-20)

Thus, the teaching mission of the Church comes from Christ himself. The responsibility for fulfilling that mandate passes on unchanged to the bishops and all Catholics. Within each Catholic diocese, the diocesan bishop is its principal teacher, assisted by clergy, religious, and lay men and women, who serve as educators and catechists. Catechesis is the act of handing on the Word of God intended to inform the faith community and candidates for initiation into the Church about the teachings of Christ transmitted by the Apostles. It also involves the lifelong effort of forming people into witnesses to Christ and opening their hearts to the spiritual transformation given by the Holy Spirit. The teaching authority of the Catholic Church, called the Magisterium, lies with all of the bishops who are led by the pope and guided by the Holy Spirit.

RELIGIOUS FORMATION

The traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church and the values of Christian living permeate the school day. This high priority is expressed through worship, prayer, religion classes, and the general climate of the school. Catechesis for justice, mercy, and peace is an integral part of the curriculum and school environment because of our need to live this in our daily lives.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Each student receives daily instruction in religion. The instruction follows Archdiocesan Curriculum guidelines. Content includes Doctrine, Scripture, Tradition and Church History. Topics are taught using methods appropriate to the various age levels. Integrated with instruction is attitude formation. It is important that children have pleasant, joyful, religious experiences and positive attitudes about faith, practicing faith, Church personnel, and being a Catholic. The Associate Pastor teaches regularly in the classrooms.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Students receive special, intense preparation for Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. This is done in cooperation with the parent/guardian. Students will receive the sacraments only if they are adequately prepared. Reception of the sacraments is celebrated jointly by families in both the school and religious education programs. Fees are assessed to families to cover the cost of materials shared for student instruction of the sacraments.

The sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist are ordinarily received for the first time by second graders. Meetings are scheduled during the year so that parents may review the content of preparation, deepen their own understanding of the sacrament being received, and help prepare their children for receiving these sacraments.

Preparation for confirmation involves seventh and eighth grades and requires candidates to participate in special retreats, service hours and activities. Confirmation is received in the spring of the eighth-grade year. There are also parent meetings held in preparation for receipt of this sacrament.

REPORT CARDS, PROGRESS REPORTS AND GRADE REPORTING

SSM communicates with school families through the *FACTS School Information System*. Parents and students will be able to check academic progress with a personal login. Efforts will be made by teachers to keep grade reporting up-to-date. Other information-sharing options are available through FACTS and Google Classroom (grades 6-8). Log-in information and instructions will be provided to parents by the time progress reports for the first quarter are processed. Please get familiar with FACTS and how to access information about your student.

Report cards will be emailed at the end of each quarter in October, January, March and May. Report cards will be emailed through FACTS. Regular communication between teachers and parents is necessary at all levels of instruction. Formal Parent/Teacher Conferences are held in October. Third-quarter conferences will be at the request of the teacher or parent. The teachers are always available for conferencing during the school year. We encourage ongoing communication.

Progress reports are provided after the first five weeks of each quarter. They will be available to parents through FACTS. Progress will be reported for each subject. This is ample time for a student to improve before report cards are distributed.

The Marking Codes

The Kindergarten report card is achievement and standards-based. It will reflect where students are in terms of mastery.

Conduct

Conduct/behavioral skills/Special Classes, along with first and second grades will be assessed using the following scale:

- S Satisfactory (meets goals)
- N Needs Improvement
- U Unsatisfactory

E	Excellent
S+	More than Satisfactory
S	Satisfactory
S-	Less than Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory
+	Strength
-	Weakness

Teachers are asked to also include comments for a better explanation of the marks.

Grades

Grade Marking Scale for third through eighth grades (includes Music, PE, Spanish, Computer and Art)

A	93-100
B	86-92
C	78-85
D	70-77
F	Below 70.0
I	Incomplete
E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory
+	Strength
-	Weakness

RETENTION

A teacher may recommend the retention of a student after conferring with the Principal and the parents. The final decision to retain a student rests with the parent/guardian in consultation with the Principal and teacher.

HOMEWORK

Homework is a normal part of learning and is given at the teacher's discretion. It is appropriate for teachers to consider weekends and holidays when giving homework, but long-range assignments, make-up work and practice are an acceptable part of school and home study. Time occupation with extracurricular activities, including sports and clubs, does not excuse students from homework assignments. All students in third through fifth grades are required to have an SSM assignment book. Students in grades 6-8 will have assignments entered and posted on Google Classroom and FACTS. If no homework is assigned, it is suggested that students review material appropriate for their grade level. It is very important that the student comes to school prepared with their completed homework in hand. **Please refrain from dropping off forgotten work for students as it is their responsibility to bring their own work.**

When students in the third through eighth grades fail to bring completed daily homework assignments to school, it will be marked as a late assignment and may result in a demerit or detention if multiple late assignments are accrued. When a repetitive pattern of frequently missed assignments occurs, alternative responses may be made by the teachers.

HONOR ROLL

Students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades are eligible for the Honor Roll. Students achieving an average of 93 percent and above in their “core classes” that meet daily will be on the Gold Honor Roll. Students averaging grades between 86 and 92 percent in their “core classes” that meet daily will be on the Red Honor Roll. Any student who has earned an F in any subject will not be eligible for Honor Roll.

BODEN REISCHL ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Student artwork is hung around the building and each month selected artwork will appear in *The Boden Reischl Artist of the Month* gallery on our first floor and on our website. *The Boden Reischl Artist of the Month* student recognition and art program is supported by the members of the Home and School Association. Learn more at school.stephen.org/art.

Student Services T.E.A.M.

Our Student Services T.E.A.M. is an interdisciplinary support team whose primary purpose is to assist the general education teacher with academic and/or behavioral needs through the development of classroom interventions. Students Services follows the MTSS model. The statutes of the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 51-Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs relating to SAT teams are as follows:

006.01C Student Assistance Team (SAT) or Comparable Problem-Solving Team

006.01C1 For a school-age student, a general education student assistance team or a comparable problem-solving team shall be used prior to referral for multidisciplinary team evaluation.

006.01C2 The SAT or comparable problem-solving team shall utilize and document problem-solving and intervention strategies to assist the teacher in the provision of general education.

006.01C3 If the student assistance team or comparable problem-solving team feels that all viable alternatives have been explored, a referral for multidisciplinary evaluation shall be completed. A referral shall include information from the SAT/MTSS problem-solving team, meeting the requirements of Subsection 006.01C.

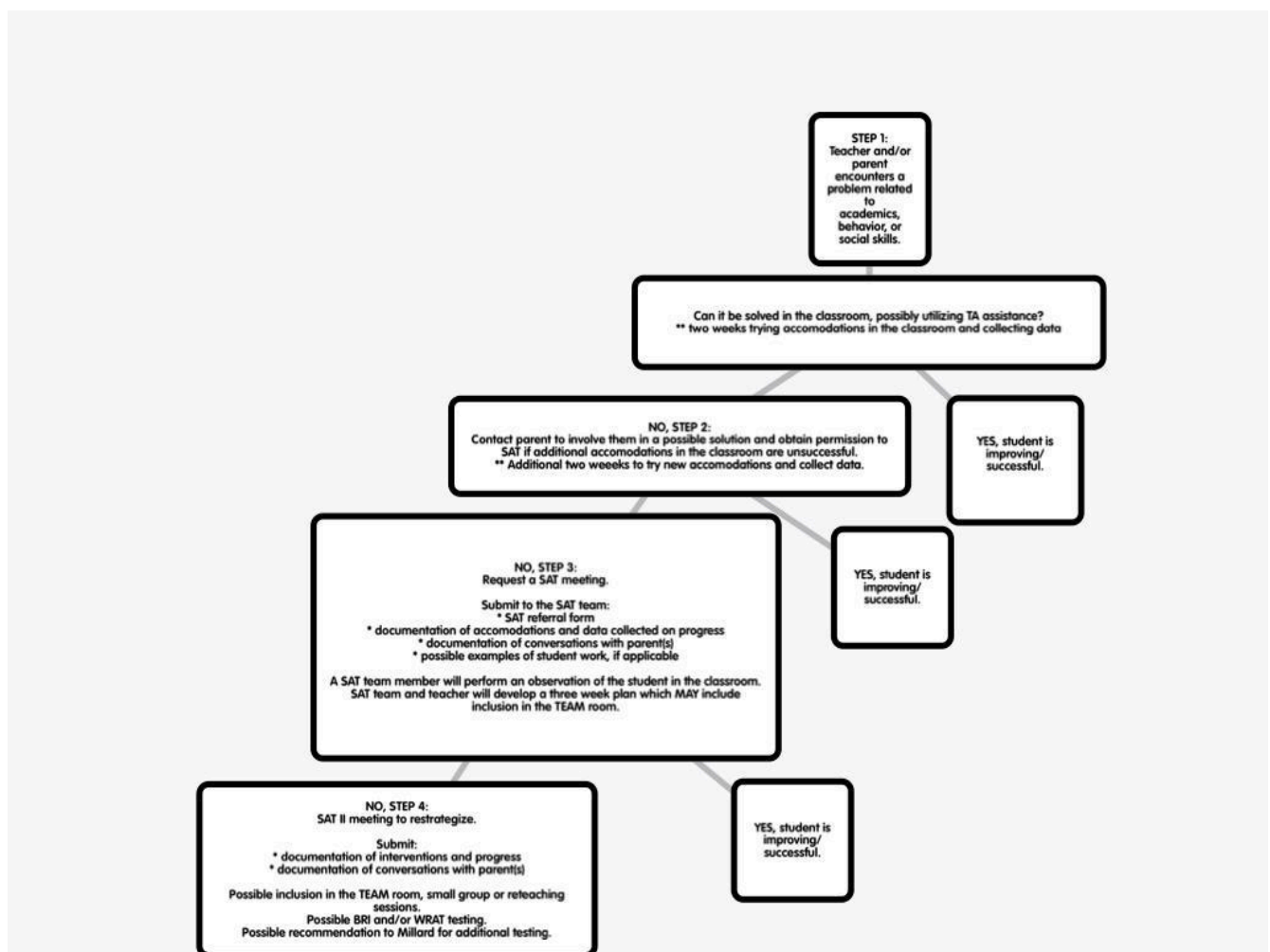
Recognizing that individual differences exist among students, reasonable adjustments and accommodations are to be made to help students develop skills affecting academic growth. When developmental delays and behavioral impairments exist to the degree that school adaptation is difficult, the Principal, after consultation with parents, will initiate a referral to the appropriate agency or resource. After diagnosis by qualified persons, suggestions for helping the student will be implemented by support personnel in the school. If this assistance does not result in significant progress within a specified time, the Principal will assist parents in locating a more helpful educational situation for the student. Note: Diagnostic testing services are available to students through the public school system. Referrals are arranged through the Principal. A certified resource teacher will work with those students who are identified as needing additional assistance in

academic courses. Teacher recommendation, class output and testing results will be used to determine a student's level of need.

The SSM SAT/MTSS team, which includes school administration, resource specialists, and other general education teachers, will problem-solve, offer suggestions and strategies, and review and evaluate interventions the general education teacher has implemented in the regular classroom. If the SAT/MTSS team determines that the general education interventions are not successful, a referral to the appropriate public school district multidisciplinary team will be made. The SSM SAT/MTSS team strives to offer the best possible instruction programs for all students.

A flow chart depicting the **Steps to Student Intervention** has been developed by the T.E.A.M. teachers. These steps are to be followed when either a parent or a teacher encounters a problem related to a student's academics, behavior, or social skills. The goal is to determine what is causing the problem and what assistance or accommodations can be provided so that improvement is made.

STEPS TO STUDENT INTERVENTION



TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT: ONE-TO-ONE COMPUTING

SSM provides computing equipment for student use. An individual Chromebook is assigned to students in sixth through eighth grades to be used throughout their middle school years. There is a \$150.00 technology fee that will be assessed at the beginning of each middle school year. Other devices are purchased for student use in Early preschool through fifth-grade classrooms to aid instruction. All computing devices are the property of SSM. Any effort by students to misuse or operate the device beyond normal use guidelines, by opening the device through sealed panels, or efforts made to enter the inside of the device is strictly forbidden and violates its warranty. Screen repair for damages will be covered **the first time** by the school. Any screen damage that occurs more than once will be the family's responsibility and will be billed through FACTS incidental billing. If a student removes keys, the family will be responsible for repairs (the warranty does not cover purposeful damages). If a Chromebook is lost, the family is responsible for replacement. Students violating this trust to use school property in good faith and cause damage to computing devices will be held responsible for the damages and, if necessary, the replacement of the item. See technology agreement forms for more information.

SERVICE

Service to others is one way children learn the responsibilities of belonging to a caring community. Each classroom participates in service projects during the year, either as a class or in conjunction with all-school projects. Students are trained for service on the Altar beginning in fourth grade. Children in all grades are given the opportunity to perform one of the ministries as their class prepares their mass. A committee of teachers is responsible for the planning and implementation of school service projects each year.

ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

Students in grades K-8 will do STAR assessments at least three times a year. Parents will have access to their child's individual reports in the winter and the spring once the testing session closes. Students in grades K-4 will take fluency assessments and phonics screeners throughout the year. Students will participate in Archdiocese assessments throughout the year focusing on specific content aligning with grade level standards. Teachers will rely on both formative and summative assessments throughout the year to assess their students on a regular basis.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are approved by the Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Office and may be provided through the state-legislated Textbook Loan Program, which is locally administered by the district of school residence. Some textbooks are purchased by the school. Since textbooks are loaned to students and not purchased by them, they will be reused from one year to the next. Therefore, all books are to be covered. We ask that you not use contact paper book cover material. A fine is assessed for loss or unreasonable damage done to books.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are intended to be a learning experience with preparations and follow-up as to the effectiveness of the educational experience. The purpose is to enhance the curriculum and specific units being taught and to expose the students to cultural opportunities, community service, and resources in the community. Field trips are a privilege; not a right. Plans for field trips will be coordinated with the Principal. Parents will be notified as to the details of the field trip at least one

week prior to the trip. Bus transportation is the mode of travel. Parents of students are not authorized to transport students other than their own to any school-sponsored event. All field trip chaperones must be Safe Environment certified. A signed permission slip must be on file before a student may participate in a field trip. Phone calls or email permissions are not accepted.

ACADEMIC COMPETITIONS

Students may have an opportunity to participate in a number of academic competitions. St. Stephen the Martyr Staff members will not provide transportation to students. Parents of students will be responsible for transportation.

Section V – Code of Conduct: Defined

SSM tries to do everything possible to help each student be successful. SSM makes every effort to maintain an appropriate and safe learning environment for all students in the school. If the behavior of one student disrupts the learning or safety of other students on a regular basis, action must be taken to prevent this from continuing. The teacher will work with the student and parents to help him or her change the behavior. If these efforts are not successful, the student will be referred to the Administration and a meeting will be set up with the teacher(s), student, and parent(s) to determine the next steps. If the student's needs cannot be met at our school, a transfer may be initiated.

INTRODUCTION: CODE OF CONDUCT: DEFINED

1. Policy Statement

Every SSM student has the right to an education. The following standards have been instituted to ensure that right. Each student and their parents are required, on their own, to become familiar with these standards, and to help provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.

SSM primarily uses *Love and Logic*, *Restorative Practices*, and *The Boys Town model* as a framework for PBIS and discipline. In keeping with the mission and goals of SSM, a school-wide discipline system is in place. This system is reviewed annually for effectiveness. It is intended to provide an age-appropriate, respectful, self-discipline system based on a Christian philosophy on a continuum from PreSchool through eighth grades. SSM believes that by forming positive relationships and implementing restorative practices, students will learn to take responsibility for their actions and learn from mistakes in a healthy environment. Our goal is to provide consistency and continuity that will enable students opportunities to accept personal responsibility to grow socially, academically, spiritually and physically. Although we focus daily on in-school behaviors, it is important to note that **a student can be held accountable for conduct inside or outside of school that is detrimental to the school, the school image, or against Catholic Church doctrines or teachings.**

2. Levels of Consequences

Consequences for disrespectful and irresponsible behavior include but are not limited to, the following. Consequences are defined in more detail below.

- Demerit/Behavior infraction

- Detention
- Parent Conference
- In-School Suspension
- Students Assistance Team
- Behavior Contract
- Suspension
- Expulsion

3. Definitions

Demerit/Behavior Infraction—When a demerit/behavior infraction is earned, the student will be required to take the information home to the parent as directed by the teacher. Each subsequent demerit/behavior infraction in a quarter will result in further disciplinary action to be determined by the teacher and/or the Principal. The teacher and/or the Principal determine when a violation requires a demerit/behavior infraction and/or a detention. Before a demerit is issued, the teacher will first have a conversation with the student about the behavior and provide an opportunity for correction if possible. If a student earns 5 demerits (upper elementary and middle school), a detention will be scheduled.

Detention—A detention is a time spent in school under the supervision of an adult on staff. Detentions will vary in length. Parents will be notified of a detention. When assigned, the detention will be served by the student regardless of whether a parent/guardian signature has been acquired on the notice provided. Failure to serve any of the detentions may result in additional time to be served. Detentions can be earned for a single incident depending on severity.

Detentions should be served after 5 demerits are earned. Several missed detentions can be transmuted by the Principal to an in-school suspension.

Parent Conference—A parent/guardian conference is a meeting between school personnel and the parent/guardian of the youth experiencing behavior problems. Failure of a parent/guardian to attend a scheduled conference without an acceptable excuse makes it difficult for the school and parent to work together for a workable solution to an existing problem. The school and parent will need to make arrangements for rescheduling the missed meeting.

In-School Suspension—A student who earns an In-School Suspension (I.S.S.) will report to the school office, and will be isolated from his or her peers for the duration of the suspension, including lunch. While in I.S.S., the student is responsible for all class work missed.

Student Assistance Team (SAT)—A conference with a team of teachers can be convened in a case when a student repeatedly shows disregard for the school rules despite disciplinary action. The team will be made up of teachers, the Principal, and possibly the Pastor. The creation of a Behavior Contract may be implemented at this time.

Behavior Contract—The Behavior Contract will detail acceptable behaviors for the student and expected outcomes. Students breaching the Behavior Contract will be reviewed by Administration for possible revision of the Contract, withdrawal, or expulsion of the student from school. Behavior Contracts may also be written for other students as needed.

Suspension—Suspension is the temporary exclusion of a student from school. SSM personnel strive to resolve discipline problems in a Christian manner with parent and student involvement and cooperation. Suspension may be one of two types, In-School Suspension (I.S.S.), or Out-of-School Suspension (O.S.S.). Parents are notified prior to the suspension of every student.

The following procedures will be followed for suspension:

1. The decision to suspend a student rests with the Principal and/or Assistant Principal, but the Pastor may be notified. The majority of suspensions will be in-school suspensions.
2. The student will be removed from the classroom or other setting and taken to the school office.
3. School administration will investigate by discussing the circumstances and situation with the person(s) making the complaint of misbehavior and the student accused of the misbehavior.
4. If suspension is necessary, the parent/guardian will be called and informed by school administration. The student and parent/guardian will be notified of the reasons for the suspension, the length of the suspension, and the conditions for returning to class. The student will be expected to complete all missed schoolwork.

Expulsion—Expulsion is the permanent exclusion of a student from school and school activities. SSM will expel a student when the conduct of the student is a hindrance to the welfare, safety, or progress of the school community and/or evidence of repeated disregard for the philosophy, policies, rules and regulations of the school. The following procedures will be followed for expulsion:

1. The decision to expel a student rests with the school administration.
2. The student will be removed from the classroom or other setting and taken to the school office. The student may be asked to immediately leave the school premises.
3. School administration will investigate by discussing the circumstances and situations with the person(s) making the complaint of misbehavior and the student accused of the misbehavior.
4. Parents/guardians will be notified within three days of the expulsion.
5. If requested in writing from a parent/guardian within three days of the expulsion, the expulsion may be reconsidered by the Pastor.
6. School administration will notify the necessary public school authorities.
7. School administration will notify the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

4. Penalty to be Followed

If minimum and maximum penalties are not specified for a specific prohibited act, the recommended penalty shall be imposed. **School administration retains the authority to review the facts associated with any incident and determine a penalty or consequence for an action other than that presented as a guide in this handbook when, at the Principal's discretion, it is deemed necessary.**

5. Mandatory Compliance

Students and their parent(s) or guardian(s) are hereby notified that compliance with the School's Standards for Student Conduct is mandatory. It is the responsibility of all students and their parent(s) or guardian(s) to become familiar with these Standards.

6. Bullying/Harassment

OFFENSIVE CONDUCT AND HARASSMENT

Student offensive conduct, bullying or harassment (repeated incidents of such conduct) on the basis of a person's gender, sexual orientation, race, color, age, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability is prohibited. Offensive conduct, bullying, or harassment may result in suspension or expulsion.

Examples of offensive conduct which when repeated constitute harassment include but are not limited to the following:

1. Explicit and offensive sexual references or gestures.
2. Unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature and unwelcome verbal, written, or physical advances or suggestions of a sexual nature.
3. Name-calling, or taunting on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability.
4. Language of any kind, including graffiti, epithets, vulgar or profane jokes, which is disparaging or demeaning to others on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability.

References:

Student Offensive Conduct, Bullying or Harassment (Archdiocesan Policy #5032) Procedures for Reports and Investigations Relative to Offensive Conduct, Bullying or Harassment (Archdiocesan Policy #5033)

PROCESS TO ADDRESS BULLYING

Purpose: SSM is a Catholic-Christian school. We strive to create an environment where our students can grow in Christian virtues of love for one another, compassion, kindness and respect toward others. In order to maintain this Catholic-Christian environment, incidents of bullying, which are contrary to these values, will NOT be accepted. **All students represent the SSM community.** This means that student behavior must reflect the school's values on and off campus. Student conduct off-campus can have a detrimental effect on our school's reputation. **The administration reserves the right to discipline students for conduct away from school that has a negative impact on individuals within our school.** These incidents will be acted upon when they are related to school activities or school-sponsored activities on or off campus.

What bullying IS:

The definition of bullying is when an individual or a group of people with more power, **repeatedly** and **intentionally** causes hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond.

What bullying is NOT:

- Single episode of social rejection or dislike
- Single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- Random acts of aggression or intimidation
- Mutual arguments, disagreements or fights

(National Center Against Bullying, 2018).

Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of everyone, including parents, to report suspected bullying to the appropriate authorities; the appropriate authorities include:

- Teachers
- Teacher Associates
- School Counselor
- Administration

It is then the responsibility of these authorities to take the appropriate steps necessary to deal with the situation, using the guidelines listed below.

Bully Prevention Plan

SSM utilizes a Bully Prevention Plan to promote positive peer relationships. This plan revolves around educating students, parents, and teachers about the true definition of bullying and how they can best prevent it. The school depends on timely reporting by bystanders and teaching students to report and equip themselves with strategies research has shown to best eliminate bullying incidents.

The role of parents is to stay in close and open communication with teachers if bullying concerns exist. Open communication between the home and the school is important in eliminating a bullying issue. Open communication includes thorough and timely discussions and dealing in a straightforward manner with the students involved. Parents should understand that the consequences involving other students are private and will not be discussed.

Procedure for Reporting

- Incidents of bullying/harassment at any time over the course of the entire calendar year may be reported to SSM school.
- If a student feels that he/she is the object of bullying/harassment, that student should first confront the individual causing the harassment if possible. A report may still be filed with the school.

- Students or parents/guardians may report an incident of bullying/harassment at any time. One may file a report as a victim or witness, with or without the reporter's identity being revealed.
- An individual who has complaints of bullying/harassment that occurred student-to-student or faculty-to-student will report such conduct to the Principal/Assistant Principal. If the Principal/administrator is thought to be involved in the offensive conduct, the student or parent/guardian should report the matter to the Pastor of SSM.
- An individual who complains of bullying/harassment also will be expected to file a written complaint.
- If an anonymous report is filed, no formal disciplinary action will be taken; however, the administration will review the report and take appropriate action (alert teachers, increase vigilance, confront the accused, etc.) The identity of the reporter will remain confidential if possible.
- If a signed report is filed, formal disciplinary action will be taken following an investigation by Administration. The identity of the reporter will remain confidential if possible.
- To file a written complaint, a student or parent/guardian may fill out a Bullying/Harassment Reporting Form found in the guidance counselor's office. Completed reports are turned in to the counselor. Alternatively, a student or parent/guardian may bring the signed complaint to the Principal/administrator, or, if the Principal/administrator is thought to be involved, to the Pastor.

Procedures for Investigating

- All reports will be taken seriously and will be promptly investigated by the administration.
- All involved parties (victim, accused, witnesses, teachers, etc.) will be interviewed individually.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted.
- The administration will determine the veracity of the report and follow through with the appropriate consequences.
- A student in violation of this policy may or may not be given a warning prior to incurring discipline. Regardless of the severity, any further violations will be subject to discipline, including suspension or expulsion.
- More egregious violations of this policy may result in suspension or expulsion for a student or termination from employment for a staff or faculty member.
- Any suspected violations of the Safe Environment policy will be reported to the Archdiocese.

Instances of Retaliation

- SSM School will not tolerate retaliation against any student or employee who files a complaint in good faith of bullying or harassment, or who, in good faith, provides information in connection with any such complaint.
- Instances of retaliation will be subject to discipline, including suspension or expulsion for a student or termination of employment for a staff or faculty member.

Filing False Charges

- The school will take disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion if sufficient evidence substantiates the guilt of a student who falsely alleges bullying or harassment.
- The school will assist persons falsely accused of violating the bullying/harassment policy, making known to the appropriate parties, the false complaint.

Confidentiality:

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep a report of bullying and the result of the investigation confidential; however, student confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. All parties involved in the situation will be informed of the confidential nature of the situation and be asked to refrain from disclosing any information about the situation to others.

VIOLATIONS AGAINST PERSONS

1. Firearms, Explosives, and Weapons

Knowingly possessing, handling, transmitting, using, intimidating with, or threatening with any firearm, explosive, destructive device, pipe bomb, or stun gun is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. Firearm means any weapon, including a starter gun, which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, or the frame or receiver of any such weapon, or any firearm muffler or firearm silencer, or any destructive device.

2. Other Weapons

Using or threatening with a knife, throwing star, brass knuckles, chemical substances (including, but not limited to, mace, pepper guns, and bleach), and any other object that could be used to injure a person is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

3. Restraint and Seclusion

Physical restraint and seclusion of students for behavior management shall be used in circumstances and under conditions that are in the best interests of students.

Physical restraint is appropriate when a student is displaying physical behavior which presents a substantial imminent risk of injury to the student or others, and the student is demonstrating the intent and the ability to cause injury within a matter of seconds or minutes. The degree of physical restriction employed should be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident, the size and condition of the student, and the potential risks for injury to the student or others. Physical restraint does not include: (a) taking away a weapon; or (b) breaking up a fight.

Seclusion is appropriate when a student is displaying physical behavior and/or verbal behavior that presents a substantial, imminent risk of injury to other students or staff and the threat could be diminished if the student were placed in a safe environment away from other

students and staff. Seclusion should only be used as long as necessary and should be discontinued when the student is no longer a threat to himself/herself or others. **Time-out procedures that do not constitute seclusion are permitted in school.**

Immediately after the student has restored emotional and behavioral control following the use of physical restraint and/or seclusion, a staff member not involved with the incident shall examine the student to ascertain if the student has sustained any injury. The Principal or Assistant Principal will verbally notify the parent/guardian as soon as possible (no later than the end of the school day in which the physical restraint or seclusion occurs).

All use of physical restraint or seclusion must be documented in a memorandum within one school day of the incident. The Principal or Assistant Principal will send a copy of the memorandum to the parent or guardian within two school days following the use of the restraint or seclusion.

Section VI- Discipline Response By Grade Level

INTRODUCTION

SSM recognizes the benefits of consistency among those disciplining. The administration retains the authority to review the facts associated with any incident and determine a penalty or consequence for an action other than that presented as a guide in this handbook when it is deemed necessary.

In accordance with the philosophy of the school, which emphasizes deep respect for the human dignity and uniqueness of every individual, each student will be considerate of the rights of others in the interaction of the school day. All students are expected to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school, which are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative Practices promote inclusiveness, relationship-building and problem-solving, through such restorative methods as circles for teaching and conflict resolution to conferences that bring victims, offenders and their supporters together to address wrongdoing. Instead of punishment, students are encouraged to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions and come up with plans to repair harm.

PRIMARY: KINDERGARTEN, 1ST & 2ND GRADES

Our **Primary** grades, Preschool through second, utilize a card system or clip system. Should the student fail to comply with the rules governing behavior, the student will be verbally warned. In the case of a second offense within the day, the student will have their card flipped on the classroom discipline chart. On this chart, the student has colored cards with each card representing a different consequence. Teachers will ensure that they are in contact with parents if behavior becomes repetitive or a concern.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY PLAN: 3RD - 8TH GRADES

In the **Intermediate and Middle School**, grades third through eighth, we are recognizing the student's efforts and successes in assuming responsibility for academic work, organization and personal choices. To quickly identify improvement areas and develop a plan for improvement, students are issued a new behavior card each quarter. These cards provide a written record of each student's progress which will aid in communication between home and school. The purpose of the Student Behavior Card is to provide immediate and consistent logical consequences to assist in modifying negative behavior. Students may earn demerits for a variety of Tier 1 and Tier 2 infractions (see tiering system below). Any staff member who witnesses an infraction may assign a demerit. The same staff member will also add the demerit to FACTS SIS for additional documentation in the event that the behavior card is misplaced and the event will be emailed. Students can earn multiple demerits in a day.

When a demerit is earned, the student will bring the card home at the end of the day and the card must be signed by a parent or guardian before the start of the next school day. This ensures proper communication between students, parents, and staff members. Failure to sign the demerit card may result in an additional demerit earned. Extracurricular activities may be jeopardized by frequent misbehavior, and repeated detentions may result in suspension from school. It is important for students to be aware of what behaviors result in developing a positive school climate, which is neither teacher-dominated nor student-controlled, but rather is a joint effort to learn, relate, and experience. Students will receive new behavior cards quarterly and demerits will reset. The behavior cards must be signed by the parent/guardian. No parent signature is an automatic teacher signature at the beginning of the week.

When a student accumulates a certain amount of demerits, a consequence is assigned accordingly. Depending on the severity of the demerit(s), the behavior consequence for every five demerits may include but is not limited to:

5 demerits= 30 min detention

10 demerits= 1-hour detention

15 demerits= in-school suspension and conversation with parents about behavior plan

20 demerits= short term suspension from school and school-related activities

25+ demerits= meeting to determine enrollment status

Behaviors or actions that are determined to be too severe for a demerit will be an immediate office referral. The school administration will determine the appropriate consequences for such events.

Students are recognized and encouraged to make good behavior choices. Merits are earned for positive behavior that goes above and beyond the daily expectations of our students. Merits can be assigned by any staff member. Merits may be assigned using the "PRAY" model. Blank behavior cards or cards with ONLY merits do not need to be signed at the end of the week. **Parent involvement is key to affecting change in student behavior.** Parent meetings with a teacher throughout the discipline process are held at designated intervals as needed.

Escalation Process: In general, the school's discipline cycle has an escalation process based on a 3-tier system described below:

Tier 1

Incidences that are handled within the classroom by the instructor

Tier 2

Involves the necessity of the instructor contacting the parents/guardians

Tier 3

Student is sent to the office and the instructor completes a Behavior Referral

This involves Principal and/or Assistant Principal intervention

Repeated Tier 3 offenses may result in discussion if SSM is the appropriate school for this child.

Tier 3 Behavior Referral/ Severe Offenses

A referral is an electronic documentation, sent by a staff member, which results in a student meeting with the Principal or Assistant Principal to discuss the offense. The age of the child, circumstances affecting the situation, and severity of the conduct will determine the level at which the process begins. The exact level of supervision and corresponding punishment will be left to the discretion of Administration. A serious offense may result in an immediate in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. Depending on the severity of the offense, the Administration may involve law enforcement. Behaviors leading to a referral/suspension/expulsion include, but are not limited to:

- Physical/emotional abuse or threat
- Inappropriate actions or language
- Disrespect/defiance
- Repeatedly breaking rules
- Cheating
- Harassment
- Damaging school property
- Stealing
- Pulling the fire alarm or setting a fire
- Smoking/taking drugs/selling drugs
- Weapons violation
- Cyberbullying

Section VII – Uniforms and Dress Code

Each student is required to wear a uniform corresponding to the sex identified on the student's birth certificate.

UNIFORMS AND DRESS CODE

School uniforms give students a sense of identity, that they are collectively part of something bigger than just themselves as individuals. The uniform gives the student a greater sense of purpose in being at and emphasizes being dressed for success. **The following dress code is**

to be followed. All shirts, shorts, slacks, sweaters, jumpers, skorts and skirts can be purchased at Lands End and DiGiorgio's Sportswear (they do not carry the Khaki options) and should be in good condition.

MALE DRESS CODE

Pants:

- Need to be worn at the waist with belt loops and button and zippers (NO drawstring, cargo pants, or joggers)
- Navy blue or khaki pants

Shirts:

- Gray (must be the color sold for SSM), navy (only to be worn with khaki bottoms), or white knit shirt (short or long sleeved), SSM logo optional
- Sweatshirts (optional & must be worn over a uniform-approved shirt):
 - Crew neck or quarter zip uniform sweatshirts in navy or red purchased through Lands End or Digiorgio's **with the embroidered SSM logo.**
 - 6-8th grade students may wear hoodie uniform sweatshirts in navy or red purchased through Digiorgio's **with the embroidered SSM logo.**
 - **Spirit Wear sweatshirts & screen printed sweatshirts may only be worn on Martyr Mondays or Dress Down Days.**
- Navy blue or red uniform cardigan sweater (optional)

Shorts:

- Navy blue or khaki walking shorts (must have button, zipper, and belt loops)
- Shorts are optional attire that may be worn throughout the year unless a special event is planned and requires pants (Example: 8th grade Mass at St. Cecilia's Church)
- Short Length: Knee length to 2-inches above the knee

Socks:

- All students need to wear a single pair of socks.
- Color: solid navy blue, solid black, solid gray, or solid white socks (no beads or ornaments, team logos or stripes up the back; small discreet shoe logos are acceptable.)

Shoes:

- Tennis shoes (with ties or velcro for PE)
- Dress shoes
- Shoes must have a closed heel and closed-toe
- No sandals, clogs, Crocs, no black soles that leave marks, no light-up shoes, no shoes with wheels, **no boots during school hours**
- Shoes need to be visibly tied at all times

Belts:

- Belts are optional but may be required for special events like certain field trips. They will need to be black, navy, or brown.

FEMALE DRESS CODE

Jumpers, Skirts, Skorts, pants, shorts:

- **Grades TK-8:** plaid jumpers, plaid skirts, navy, khaki, and plaid skorts, navy or khaki shorts and pants (shorts and pants must have button and zipper- NO drawstring and no joggers)
- **Length of jumpers, skirts and skorts, and shorts: knee length to 3-inches above the knee– If a skirt is determined to be shorter than this, a new skirt will need to be purchased or the school may provide a skirt that follows the guidelines. Please be aware of your child’s skirt length before sending your child to school.**

Shirts:

- White, Gray, or Navy knit shirt (long or short sleeved) with/without banded bottom (SSM logo optional). Gray (must be the color sold through Digiorgio’s and Lands End that is approved for our school) **NAVY is only worn with khaki and plaid options**
- White blouse with a pointed, button-down or peter pan collar (SSM logo optional)
- Sweatshirts (optional & must be worn over a uniform-approved shirt):
 - Crew neck or quarter zip uniform sweatshirts in navy or red purchased through Dennis or Digiorgio’s **with the embroidered SSM logo.**
 - 6-8th grade students may wear hoodie uniform sweatshirts in navy or red purchased through Digiorgio’s **with the embroidered SSM logo.**
 - **Spirit Wear sweatshirts & screen printed sweatshirts may only be worn on Martyr Mondays or Dress Down Days.**

Socks:

- All students need to wear a single pair of socks.
- Color: solid navy blue, solid gray, solid black or solid white plain socks (no beads, ornaments, no team logos or stripes up the back; small discreet shoe logos are acceptable)
- Knee highs: solid navy, solid black or solid white
- Tights: solid navy, solid black or solid white
- Leggings: optional attire, solid color, navy blue or black and fitted (tight at ankle)

Shoes:

- Tennis shoes (with ties or velcro for PE)
- Dress shoes
- Shoes must have closed heel and closed-toe
- No sandals, no crocs, no backless shoes, no black soles that leave marks, no light-up shoes, no shoes with wheels, **no boots during school hours**
- Shoes need to be visibly tied at all times

MARTYR MONDAYS

Beginning in **September** most Mondays throughout the school year will be “Martyr Mondays”. On these days, students can wear a “spirit” sweatshirt/T-shirt purchased through the

8th-grade fundraiser or another approved SSM spirit top (including Martyr Marathon t-shirts, SSM sports camps/team shirts/jerseys, VBS shirts). Students will wear uniform bottoms, socks and shoes.

DRESS-DOWN DAYS (DDD)/PICTURE DAY

On occasion, the students are given the opportunity to dress casually. These days will be on specific days throughout the year. We will inform you ahead of time if it is a regular uniform day or a dress-down day. Attire for dress-down days may consist of **blue jeans and pants** in good condition (no holes) and shirts appropriate for school. If shorts are worn, **they will be the length of the uniform shorts (no more than 3 inches above the knee/ or not shorter than the length of fingers when down at the sides)**. Stomachs, backs, and shoulders must be covered. If any attire is immodest or considered inappropriate, the student will need to call home for a new outfit, stop in the office to see if we have an appropriate option, or use something to cover themselves. Female students wearing jewelry must follow the guidelines of the handbook (no hoop earrings). If female students wear leggings they must be modest: **tops/tunics should be worn over the leggings and must be at least the length of the end of the student's fingertips (when arms are at side)**. Open-toe shoes can be worn with dressy clothes but students are advised to avoid all shoes with slick or smooth soles that slide on surfaces and can lead to injury. No Crocs or Slipper type shoes.

HAIR/MAKEUP/JEWELRY

Hairstyles must be kept neat and trimmed. Other extremes in dress and hairstyles such as mohawks, shaved lettering, tails, etc. are prohibited. Extreme hair color variations will not be allowed. Makeup is not worn until eighth grade and then only moderately. No fake fingernails are allowed. Female students may wear nail polish, but it must be one color and neatly kept and trimmed. No tattoos, temporary or permanent, are allowed. Female students (K-8) may wear one earring (not dangling) per ear. No cartilage earrings are allowed. No stacking bracelets are allowed (one bracelet is acceptable as long as it is modest and appropriate for a Catholic School). Thin chain necklaces (one) that can be tucked under a student's shirt are acceptable as long as it is modest and appropriate for a Catholic School. Male students may not wear earrings and **their hair length must be no longer than the top of their shirt collar**. Administration has the discretion to determine whether hair, makeup, and jewelry are appropriate.

*** Students are given the opportunity to correct their dress if possible (calling home, unrolling skirts, taking off jewelry and giving it to the teacher, etc) before a demerit or discipline mark is earned. We also have extra uniforms in the office for students who need to borrow a uniform for that day.

Section VIII – Health and Safety

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

In order to comply with the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, SSM has devised a Wellness Policy to address the areas of nutrition, physical activity, and healthy living. Research shows that students who try to live each day as healthy individuals are better learners.

Therefore, SSM will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to help students make healthy food and activity choices for their present and future lives. The complete policy and resource links can be found on our [website](#).

ASBESTOS

SSM School, originally built in 1992 and added onto in 1998, is an asbestos-free building. Our school contains no asbestos of any form. In accordance with Environmental Protection Agency regulations, a management plan submitted to the State Department of Health is available in the school's administrative office for you to review.

ASTHMA PROTOCOL

SSM School adheres to the State Mandated Implementation of Rule 59, "Emergency Response to Life – Threatening Asthma or Systemic Allergic Reactions Protocol." The protocol involves the use of an IM Epi-Pen and nebulized albuterol. The protocol is to be administered by trained responders to ANY student showing life-threatening asthma attacks or other allergic reactions. Responders will be available during the course of regular school hours.

ASTHMA-SELF ADMINISTRATION

Occasionally, a student's parent or guardian will request that the student be allowed to self-manage his or her asthma or anaphylaxis condition while at school during school-related activities. In such instances, the school will adhere to the following steps:

1. Require and receive a written request from the student's parent or guardian that the student be allowed to self-manage his or her asthma or anaphylaxis condition.
2. Develop, with the student's parent or guardian, along with the student's physician, an asthma or anaphylaxis medical management plan for the student for the current school year. This plan must:
 - (a) identify the health care services the student may receive at school relating to such condition;
 - (b) evaluate the student's understanding of and ability to self-manage his or her asthma or anaphylaxis condition;
 - (c) permit regular monitoring of the student's self-management of his or her asthma or anaphylaxis condition by an appropriately credentialed healthcare professional;
 - (d) include the name, purpose, and dosage of the prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medication prescribed for such student;
 - (e) include procedures for storage and access to backup supplies of such prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medication; and
 - (f) be signed by the student's parent or guardian and the physician responsible for the treatment of the student's asthma or anaphylaxis condition.
3. The medical management plan must be kept on file at the school.
4. The student's parent or guardian must sign a Release and Indemnification form before the student is allowed to self-administer his or her asthma or anaphylaxis medication.

5. Once the medical management plan is in place, the student shall notify the Assistant Principal (or, in the Assistant Principal's absence, the School Secretary) when the student has self-administered prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medication to be used according to the plan.
6. Once the medical management plan is in place, the student shall be allowed to self-administer his or her asthma or anaphylaxis medication on school grounds, during any school-related activity, or in any private location specified in the plan.
7. If the concerned student uses his/her prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medication other than as prescribed, he or she will be subject to discipline and his/her parent or guardian will be notified; however, the method of discipline shall not include a restriction or limitation upon the student's access to asthma or anaphylaxis medication.

HEALTH NURSE

A licensed nurse and/or physician reviews immunization records, physical exams, dental exams, vision evaluations, and other health data. Creighton University College of Nursing students will provide health screenings when requested by the Nebraska state-required health services.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATION

The school adheres to the Omaha Archdiocesan policy regarding immunization and physical examinations. Nebraska State Law requires that all students be immunized for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, varicella, mumps and rubella. The school must have a record of the dates of these immunizations prior to the first day of school. The school has the right to exclude the child from school until the information is submitted. State Law requires a physical examination of kindergarteners and seventh graders and for all transfer students from out of state within 60 days. Any parent who chooses to refuse immunizations for his/her child due to religious or medical reasons should complete the appropriate forms found in the **Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic Schools' Immunization Policy**. The policy and supporting documents are linked below:

- [Immunization Policy for Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Omaha](#)
- [Affidavit - Refusal for Religious Reasons](#)
- [Refusal of Immunizations for Medical Reasons](#)

STUDENTS WITH NUT ALLERGIES

It will be the policy of **SSM Catholic School** to do its best to eliminate or minimize the risk of exposure to nuts for our students and to have a plan in place to respond to an emergency. A parent or guardian should inform the school of any peanut or tree nut allergies of their child. Communication between the school and home is important to ensure the continued safety and welfare of all of our students. Ultimately, all students with dangerous allergies must be educated on how to protect themselves.

To minimize the risk of exposure to nuts for our students, our school will:

1. Designate tables as NUT FREE in the Cafeteria. Students with allergies to nuts may invite a non-allergic friend to join them with a nut-free lunch.

2. Direct the school lunch program to limit its offering of peanut butter products and items containing other nuts.
3. Discourage students and parents from bringing treats to school that contain nuts or were processed and packaged in places where other nut products are prepared. The school encourages students who have nut allergies to bring their own supply of snacks to school to lessen the risk of exposure.
4. Promote the implementation of guidelines from the www.attackonasthma.org site which directs the response to severe asthma or anaphylaxis (severe allergies) and requires any parent who has a student with severe asthma or anaphylaxis to have an Action Plan on file with the school. This plan will contain Action Plan forms completed by the physician or school nurse and by the parent or guardian.
5. Discourage the use of candies and other products that were processed and packaged in places where other nut products are prepared in projects or activities in school and communicate to parents that items brought for the completion of projects should be checked that they do not contain nuts and were not processed in a factory that manufactures nuts.
6. If requested by a parent or guardian, provide an allergy-free computer for use by students with nut or other life-threatening allergies.
7. In classrooms of students with life-threatening allergies, educate the other students and their parents about the allergy and ways to minimize exposure to nuts or other life-threatening foods to affected students.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Students with a medical condition, which may be passed on to others in the classroom, must be excluded from school until they are no longer contagious. These conditions include, but are not limited to:

- COVID-19: Please refer to Douglas County Health Department for updated protocols <https://www.douglascountyhealth.com/covid-19>.
- Measles– Students and staff with confirmed or suspected measles should be isolated at home, away from school and other public places, until 4 days after the rash appears. Those without proof of immunity (e.g., vaccination records, prior infection) may be excluded from school for up to 21 days after the last exposure, or longer if they receive immunoglobulin.
- Chickenpox – Students may return after the chickenpox has scabbed over.
- Fever – Students should remain home until 24 hours after a fever breaks. A fever is considered 100.4 degrees or above.
- Vomit – Students, who vomit at school during the school day will be evaluated to determine if this is due to illness. Students who are ill must be removed from school for the remainder of that day.

- Antibiotics (for communicable or contagious diseases)– It is recommended that students should be kept home for a minimum of 24 hours after starting on a new medication.

Some conditions may require a doctor's attention and note before returning to school.

Examples: If the test is positive, the student will need to stay home for at least 24 hours for: Pink Eye; Skin Rashes - which may include impetigo, scabies and fifth disease; and Strep Infections such as scarlet fever and strep throat. Note: Students who have taken a strep test must remain home until the results of the test have become known. If the test is positive for ringworm, the student will need to stay home for at least 48 hours. Students who have exposure or test positive for COVID-19 will need to follow the Douglas County Guidelines that are in place at that time.

When students are detected as having Head Lice, they are sent home immediately and isolated from others in school. They may return after treatment with head lice shampoo.

MEDICATIONS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

The school will not purchase, prescribe or provide any medication to any student. If a child must take medication during the school day, a written, signed and dated school medication form must be completed by the child's physician and by the parent.

The medication must be brought to school by the parent in the original container which has been labeled by the pharmacist. The medication will be kept in a safe area in the health office and administered by a designated school personnel member. Unused medication must be picked up by the parent or it will be destroyed.

Students are not allowed to carry their own medication while in school (with the exception of inhalers in the middle school grades). The school will not assume responsibility for medications a student carries and takes on his/her own.

DIABETES-SELF ADMINISTRATION

Occasionally, a student's parent or guardian will request that the student be allowed to self-manage his or her diabetic condition while at school and during school-related activities. In such instances, the school will adhere to the following steps:

1. Require and receive a written request from the student's parent or guardian that the student be allowed to self-manage his or her diabetic condition.
2. Develop, with the student's parent or guardian, along with the student's physician, a diabetes medical management plan for the student for the current school year. This plan must:
 - (a) identify the health care services the student may receive at school relating to such condition;
 - (b) evaluate the student's understanding of and ability to self-manage his or her diabetic condition;
 - (c) permit regular monitoring of the student's self-management of his or her diabetic condition by an appropriately credentialed healthcare professional;

- (d) be signed by the student's parent or guardian and the physician responsible for the treatment of the student's diabetic condition.
3. The medical management plan must be kept on file at the school.
 4. The student's parent or guardian must sign a Release and Indemnification form before the student is allowed to self-administer his or her diabetic condition.
 5. Once the medical management plan is in place, the student shall be allowed to self-manage his or her diabetic condition on school grounds, during any school-related activity, or in any private location specified in the plan.
 6. If the school determines that the student has endangered himself, herself, or others through the misuse of such medical supplies, it may prohibit the student from possessing the necessary medical supplies to manage his or her diabetic condition or place other necessary and appropriate restrictions or conditions on the student's self-management. In addition, the student may be subject to discipline. The school shall promptly notify the parent or guardian of any prohibition, restriction, or condition imposed, as well as any disciplinary action taken against the student.

ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA GENDER POLICY

St. Stephen the Martyr follows the Archdiocese of Omaha's Gender Policy for Schools. You can view this policy on our [website](#).

SAFETY PLAN

SSM has a written school Safety Plan in place. The faculty and staff have been trained and will utilize our Safety Plan if and when needed. Periodic drills concerning lockdowns and evacuations will take place during the school year.

All guests that enter SSM must be buzzed in by the front office, and identified by staff, and sign in at the front desk. A visitor badge will be issued upon entering and signing in. All SSM staff will wear identification badges

Video cameras are installed in the main entryways and exterior of the building. These cameras cover the playground areas, entrances and parking lots. These are there to enhance student and parishioner safety.

SAFETY CODES

In order to ensure the safety of every student, it is necessary to have safety procedures to protect the well-being of students during emergency situations. Students shall follow these procedures when a Lockout or Lockdown is announced:

Lockout

When a Lockout is announced students will comply with the instructions of the teacher or staff member who is supervising the area of the building where the student is located. Unless told otherwise, the general procedures for students to follow under a **Lockout** are:

1. All building exterior doors are locked down manually.

2. Students will remain in the classroom and continue with the activities of that classroom. Lights will be kept on.
3. The door will be locked, but the teacher may admit students who are in the hallway or have been in other areas.
4. Students may not leave the classroom.
5. Students may not be allowed to use cellular phones and computers.
6. Students who are between classes are to immediately report to their next class.
7. Students who are in other areas of the building are to follow the plan for that area of the building.
8. Determine if External Communication Coordinators will send email/text messages to parents/stakeholders and execute decisions.

Failure of a student to comply with the instructions of a teacher or staff member during a Code Yellow will result in disciplinary action.

Lockdown

When a Lockdown is announced, students will comply with the instructions of the teacher or staff member who is supervising the area of the building where the student is located.

Students, who are between classes, are to immediately report to their next class or to the closest possible safe location.

Teacher Associates will be expected to join a teacher in their assigned classrooms or move to the nearest classroom as time permits. Teacher Associates will follow the direction of the teacher and assist them during all lockdowns.

Common Sense Rule: As in all emergencies, adults in charge will respond in the best manner possible taking necessary precautions and using good common sense measures to maximize the safety of all students. Unless told otherwise, the general procedures once a **Lockdown is announced are:**

1. Students will remain in the classroom and take cover in the classroom away from windows or doors. All windows and blinds are closed and lights are off.
2. The door will be locked and students will not be admitted to the room once a Lockdown has been announced.
3. Students may not leave the classroom.
4. Students may not be allowed to use cellular phones and computers.
5. Students who are in other areas of the building are to follow the plan for that area of the building.
6. Teachers will take attendance and make efforts to account for the location of all missing students by contacting the office.
7. Teachers assigned to the Crisis Response Team will remain with their students during a Lockdown unless otherwise notified.
8. **All building interior doors accessed through key cards will be locked when the RED Button is engaged. All exterior doors will have been locked manually during the Lockdown.**
9. **Call 911 if not contacted previously.**

10. The EMERGENCY RED BUTTON will be disengaged once it has been officially verified by authorities that it is now safe to resume our normal daily routine.
11. Determine if External Communication Coordinators will send initial or updated email/text messages to parents/stakeholders and execute decisions.

Failure of a student to comply with the instructions of a teacher or staff member during a Lockdown will result in disciplinary action.

A safety and security audit is conducted yearly.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Emergency information is on file in your FACTS Family Portal. The information must be kept current at all times. SSM should be alerted to any known allergies the child may have and other health problems that could influence the child's performance and learning ability in the classroom. This is done by completing the forms in FACTS at the time of enrollment. If any changes occur, please contact the school office to update the information.

In case of illness or injury, parents will be contacted by phone. Parents must arrange for the child's transportation home. If the parent cannot be reached, emergency phone numbers will be called in order to obtain necessary help for the child. Children are not allowed to walk home during school hours if sick or injured. **In the event of an emergency, which requires immediate medical attention, the parent will be notified and the child will be transported by ambulance if necessary, to the hospital at the parent's expense.**

FIRE AND SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted throughout the year. Students are instructed verbally in the classroom concerning the route to be taken to get outdoors quickly. Silence and order should be maintained at all times. Severe weather drills are conducted once a year. Students are instructed as to routes and safe location areas. Silence and order should be maintained. **ALL REMAIN IN THEIR DESIGNATED PLACES UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS TURNED OFF.**

SAFETY PATROL

All fifth and sixth graders are members of the Safety Patrol and will take their turns on the weeks assigned. All students must obey the Safety Patrol. They will be reported to the Office if they fail to adhere to the simple rules of safety. Safety Patrol is scheduled for each semester. All assigned Safety Patrol students must find their substitute if they are unable to report for duty.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Directions and diagrams for evacuation due to fire and severe weather are posted in each classroom, school office, the kitchen, the dining room and the church. They are also in the Safety Plan.

Section IX – Extra-Curricular Activities

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All activities and programs should support SSM's mission.

As an enrichment to our daily school instruction and activities, the school offers extracurricular activities for students. The largest of these invitational events is our annual spring musical sponsored by our Home and School Association. Students in 1st-8th grades are eligible to participate in the spring musical. Other extracurricular activities are offered at various times throughout the year, and students will be made aware of these activities by their teachers and be given the opportunity to participate.

In order to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, students are expected to maintain a satisfactory academic standing as well as satisfactory conduct. Students must be in attendance in school on the same day as participating in any school activity. If a student does not earn eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities, SSM will notify the student's parents or guardian.

ATHLETICS

SSM Parish is committed to Christian competition which is an extension and an expression of the values upon which our religious beliefs are based. Students are offered the opportunity to participate in athletic programs through the St. Stephen the Martyr Sports Club. For more information, visit stephen.org/sports-club.

BAND

Instrumental instruction begins in fifth grade. The school band is operated under the direction of Music in Catholic Schools. It is funded by a separate parent tuition which can be paid monthly, quarterly, by semester or yearly. Classes for band take place during the school day. Students in band are expected to keep up with their studies. A band meeting is held early in the fall.

Section X – Traffic Routing

TRAFFIC DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

There are two routes to drop off students.

1. In the mornings if you enter the NORTH lot, you need to follow the NORTH traffic route off of 168th Street heading east to enter the parish drive past the roundabout and head east toward the exit at the top of the hill. This is one-way traffic on school mornings from 7:30-8:00 AM. Cones will be set up to block parking in the first tier nearest the building to aid with drop-off. Parking is available on the north side on the 2nd and 3rd tiers north of the school building. Large vehicles such as vans must park on the third tier. Cars can be parked on the second or third tier. The first tier is to be left free for staff and visitors.
2. Those entering the SOUTH lot leaving 168th Street toward "V" Street will head north as they turn into the parish. Follow the roundabout drive for drop-off of students. Families with students in the portable classrooms should use the SOUTH entrance. Parking is available in the south lots **except** for those directly in front of the Parish Center and portable buildings, which should be reserved for our Early Childhood Education students.
3. North-side Winter Route: To prevent stuck vehicles and drop-off lane back-ups, when conditions require it, we will change our north-side traffic routing procedure to two-way traffic. All north-side traffic will enter and exit through our main entrance

(nearest the fire station). This is outlined in more detail on our website at school.stephen.org/drop-off-parking-procedures. When determined this traffic routing is necessary, parents will be notified by email and we will have staff members outside directing traffic.

We do ask that when parking to pick up students please back into the parking stalls. This allows the driver to have a wider range of vision.

MORNING DROP-OFF

For traffic route maps, visit school.stephen.org/drop-off-parking-procedures.

- K-8 Students may enter the building starting at 7:50 AM
- Early Childhood students may enter the portables starting at 7:50 AM
- Students may enter through any door.
- Parents may walk their children to the door but may not enter the building (staff will be in the doorways to assist and welcome students).
- Staff will be on duty to help guide traffic.

AFTERNOON PICK-UP

- Our dismissal times are staggered to allow for better traffic flow. Please view dismissal times in Section III under “Hours: School Day”.
- Safety Patrol & staff will be on duty.
- Carpools will dismiss together (please communicate with your student(s) AND teachers if you are in a carpool so they know when to dismiss).
- Parents may wait by the doors but not enter the building.
- Students who need to stay after school will remain in their homerooms until the final group is dismissed, then travel to the scheduled room on campus (please communicate with your child and teacher(s) for their pickup time).

Section XI – Technology Use Policy and Miscellaneous

TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY

5061--TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY-STUDENTS

Purpose

Technology is a valuable and important tool to improve student learning and enhance the academic curriculum taught at the school. St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School’s objective is to provide students and employees with a wide range of information technology to support higher-level learning and instruction in and outside of the classroom. All St. Stephen the Martyr employees and students are expected to contribute to a safe and productive learning environment while using technology and related network resources. The rules and guidelines governing the use of the school’s technology are outlined below.

Technology and Network Resources

For purposes of this policy, the term “technology” or “network resources” refers to all aspects of St. Stephen the Martyr-owned or leased electronic equipment (including computers, tablets, printers, scanners, cameras, etc.), email, internet services, servers, software, network files and folders and all other technology-related equipment and services. These rules apply to any use of the school or church technology or network resources, whether this access occurs in school (live or virtual) or outside of school. Students are expected to use technology and network resources in accordance with this policy.

Access to the St. Stephen the Martyr wireless network WILL be restricted to the school or church-approved electronic devices from 7:30 AM to 5 PM on school days. It may also be restricted entirely or at certain additional times whenever deemed necessary. The use of personal electronic devices may be allowed in the classroom (or library) at the sole discretion of faculty/staff. The use of personal electronic devices as a “hot spot” for students and others to bypass the school network is prohibited while on school premises.

Student Responsibilities and Acceptable Use

Student access to technology is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to use technology in a responsible manner consistent with St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School’s educational and religious objectives. The following list provides some examples of student responsibilities and acceptable uses of technology:

1. All technology must be used to further the educational and religious mission of the school and should be respected at all times. Students are responsible for reporting any misuse.
2. Students must use his/her real identity when using St. Stephen the Martyr network resources.
3. The network is to be used to store and transmit school-related data only.
4. Students may be assigned unique email and login usernames and passwords to protect the information on the network. Do not access or use other people’s accounts. Do not access or use other people’s computers, or folders, or any other electronic device without express permission from the owner.
5. Do not share passwords with any other person. St. Stephen the Martyr faculty and parents should be the only exceptions. If a student believes his or her password has been compromised, the student must immediately report this concern to a faculty member.
6. Students are responsible for all actions taken under a student’s username and password.
7. With the exception of an Apple ID, students should always use his/her St. Stephen the Martyr email address or username when utilizing online resources for digital storage or collaboration.
8. Electronic communications (emails) between faculty and students **must** be made via the St. Stephen the Martyr internal email system. Electronic communications between faculty and students through personal accounts may be deemed

- inappropriate and result in disciplinary action.
9. Students should obtain permission before accessing, posting, or transmitting information belonging to others.
 10. Students must respect network security and should not attempt to bypass any technological blocks placed on computers to protect students and filter content that the school has classified as objectionable. Faculty may request to unblock a website if the website is appropriate and relevant to school activities.
 11. There is no privacy online. Students should never provide personal information online or share any information the student does not want made available to the public.
 12. Students should back up his/her work often. Do not use technology as an excuse. If your computer fails at home, you are still responsible for completing all assignments on time.
 13. If applicable, students are responsible for regularly checking his/her school email account and teachers' course pages to stay updated on information shared electronically by the school or his/her teachers.
 14. All student files stored on the network may be deleted at the end of each school year.

Unacceptable Uses of Technology and Network Resources

The use of technology and network resources must be consistent with the educational and religious objectives of St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School. Examples of unacceptable uses of technology include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To access, post, publish or store any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, sexually-oriented, threatening, racially offensive or illegal materials that are inconsistent with the objectives and/or teachings of the school.
- To harass, intimidate, threaten or bully others, whether inside or outside of school.
- To steal or borrow intellectual property without permission.
- To plagiarize the work of others, or to use the work of others as your own without giving proper credit.
- To breach copyright laws by using unlicensed software or pirating audio or visual materials.
- To bypass the St. Stephen the Martyr content filter or network security.
- To knowingly spread computer viruses or malware.
- To send out "chain" emails, mass emails, and/or surveys not approved by faculty or staff.
- To misrepresent one's own identity or the identity of others.
- To take a photo, record through video or audio any student or faculty member without his/her knowledge and consent.
- To express profanity or any other inappropriate content online, including the St. Stephen the Martyr website, email program, social media or other internet sites.
- To share personal information or information about any student or faculty member to anyone via the Internet.
- To access another user's account or invade the privacy of others.
- To store or download unauthorized software programs, music, videos, game files or personal photos on St. Stephen the Martyr computers.

- To play games, chat online, or watch videos during the school day unless associated with a class and permission from a teacher is explicitly given.
- To utilize encryption or software to hide activity that violates the St. Stephen the Martyr Technology Acceptable Use Policy.
- To violate any federal, state, or local laws.

Social Networking (Facebook, Instagram, X, Snapchat, TikTok, texting, blogs, etc.)

Although social networking and texting normally occur outside of the classroom, it may have a negative impact on the school community. If a student uses social networking or a personal electronic device to convey offensive or disrespectful communications inconsistent with this policy and/or the objectives of the school, St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School reserves the right to take any disciplinary action it deems necessary to protect students and faculty. St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School encourages parents to routinely view and monitor their students' personal networking sites and electronic devices to ensure the information and content do not place any student at risk.

If a parent or guardian posts offensive or disrespectful content targeting the school in any way, the school administration reserves the right to make decisions regarding the family's enrollment.

Guidelines for social networking:

- Be aware of what you post online. Social media venues, including wikis, blogs, photo and video-sharing sites, are very public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint for all to see. Do not post anything you would not want friends, parents, teachers, future employers, or God to see.
- Follow the St. Stephen the Martyr code of conduct when posting online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions; however, do it in a respectful manner. Make sure that criticism is constructive and not hurtful. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
- Be safe online. Never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, first and last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birth dates, and pictures. Do not share your password(s) with anyone besides your teachers and parents.

No Expectation of Privacy

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School sets the terms and conditions of technology use. Students should have no expectation of privacy or anonymity while using technology and network resources provided by St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School. All content created, sent, accessed or downloaded using any part of St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School technology or network resources is subject to the rules stated in this policy. St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School reserves the right to monitor the network and examine or remove electronic files and/or materials whenever it deems necessary. Students should never assume that emails, files, or other content created or stored on the St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School network will be maintained as private or confidential. Should St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School determine there is a reasonable need to do so, it reserves the right to search students' personal electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, etc.) brought onto school

grounds.

Disciplinary Action

Violations of this Technology Acceptable Use Policy may result, at minimum, in the loss of technology and network privileges as well as appropriate disciplinary action (up to and including suspension or expulsion). Any violations of federal, state, or local laws will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Students who receive or learn of any harassing, threatening, or inappropriate electronic communications or postings should immediately notify the faculty member supervising the activity or the administration.

Access to Inappropriate Materials on the Internet/Disclaimer

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School currently utilizes an internet content filtering system that reduces student access to offensive and pornographic materials. However, no filtering system is foolproof and St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School cannot entirely control what students may or may not locate on the internet. While the school allows students to access the internet for educational purposes only, students may have the ability to access inappropriate materials. St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School is not responsible for the content of the information or materials students may retrieve from the internet. Students who inadvertently access inappropriate materials must report the incident to the supervising faculty member or the school's administration immediately.

5063 COPPA

Student Privacy Notice: Our school may contract with publishers or online providers to offer online curriculum that aligns with school standards or other services that support the teaching and learning process of the students. These applications or websites are offered for the benefit of the students and our school. Online providers give our school full notice of their collection, use, and disclosure practices.

In order for our students to use these educational programs and services, certain personal identifying information, which may consist of the student's name, username, email address, grade level, age and/or date of birth, may be provided to the website operator strictly for educational purposes. Under the federal law entitled the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), these websites must provide parental notification and obtain parental consent before collecting personal information from children under the age of 13. For more information on COPPA, please visit:

<https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/rules/rulemaking-regulatory-reform-proceedings/childrensonline-privacy-protection-rule>

The law permits schools such as ours to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of all of its students strictly for educational purposes, thereby eliminating the need for individual parental consent given directly to the website operator. By acknowledging receipt of the Student/Family Handbook, you consent for our school to provide personal identifying information

to operators of approved web-based educational programs and services strictly for educational purposes.

Amended: February 6, 2025

Online Website or Service	Primary Purpose	Policy
Google G-Suite for Education, classroom, groups, meets, hangouts, sheets, slides, sites	Online teaching and learning framework	https://google.com/terms/education_privacy.html https://cloud.google.com/security/compliance/coppa/
Renaissance Learning: STAR Math, STAR Reading, Freckle, IXL, Nearpod, Amplify Science, Guided Readers, Amplify Boost, TCI Social Studies Typing.com, Canva	Student Assessment and Learning Support	https://www.renaissance.com/privacy/ https://www.ixl.com/privacypolicy https://amplify.com/customer-privacy/ https://www.teachtc.com/privacy-policy/ https://www.typing.com/privacypolicy https://www.canva.com/policies/privacy-policy/

The Principal/Pastor reserves the right to amend the handbook for just cause. The school reserves the right to add, modify, or abolish any of the handbook provisions without notice. Parents/guardians and students will be informed of any changes.

FAMILY HANDBOOK/ TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Please sign the below form in your FACTS Family Portal Account by August 22, 2025.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR CATHOLIC SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK and the TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Each family must receive and acknowledge the Family Handbook and the Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Parents/Guardians must fill out the web form through FACTS (Family Handbook/ Technology Acceptable Use Policy) as a condition of continued enrollment.

I have received, read, understand, and will abide by the 2024-2025 St. Stephen the Martyr Family Handbook.

I have read the Technology Acceptable Use Policy and this Authorization for Internet access and understand and agree to the terms of that Policy. I understand that access to the Internet is designed for educational purposes and that the School prohibits the access of inappropriate materials, but that it is impossible for the School to restrict access to all controversial and inappropriate materials. I will hold harmless the School, its employees, and/or agents from any harm caused by materials or software obtained by my child via the Internet. I also agree, on my child's behalf, to the terms of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy; I affirm my child's obligations pursuant to that policy and this Authorization and accept all responsibilities and/or liabilities arising from my child's compliance or non-compliance with that policy and/or Internet use. I have discussed the terms of this Authorization with my child. I hereby request that my child be allowed access to the Internet while at school.

Parent/Guardian

Signature _____