



# Student Handbook

2021-2022 revision



**Mission:** For over fifty years, St. Theresa Catholic School has been serving Southwest Little Rock with a prekindergarten to eighth grade educational program. The mission of St. Theresa Catholic School is to help parents fulfill their duties as primary educators of their children by welcoming our multicultural children and families to a safe and supportive Christ-centered environment. Our objective is to lead each student to know, love, and serve God and to foster success in each student by positively empowering students to use their personal skills and abilities from their diverse backgrounds. We cultivate relationships among students, parents, faculty, and staff by embracing our diversity and valuing the teachings of Jesus Christ.

**Philosophy:** The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Little Rock seek to offer high quality academic programs which are integrated with religious truth and values. Students are prepared for life in today's Church and society and for leadership in society and the Church of tomorrow through a strong, basic, and contemporary curriculum which includes instruction and formation in the beliefs, values, and traditions of Catholic Christianity. The development of the whole person of the student (spiritually, intellectually, personally, socially, and physically), is the focus of Catholic education. The teachers, as partners with the parents, play a significant role in this educational ministry as they daily witness to the meaning of mature faith and Christian living. They are selected with care and are challenged to ongoing professional and spiritual growth.

**Goals:** Broad goals of the Catholic school are to teach the gospel message, to build a faith community, to worship God, and to be of Christian service. Specific goals flow from the fundamental understanding of the school as a Christian educational community. Because the school is Christian, specific goals include:

- sharing knowledge enlightened by faith
- developing and committing to religious values
- fostering an understanding of our responsibilities to one another
- helping students develop a pattern of life-long learning
- improving everyone's opportunities to learn

- guiding students toward a spirit of freedom which recognizes discipline
- providing quality education in the Catholic tradition for children of the parish
- playing a role in raising national levels of knowledge, competence and experience

**General information:** St. Theresa Catholic School is fully accredited by ANSAA (Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association) which is approved by the US Office of Education as well as the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. School hours are 8:00-3:00. The school is open at 7:30 am daily. The front office is open from 7:45-3:45. After-school care runs until 5:30 daily.

Office -- 501.565.3855      Fax -- 501.565.9522      [schooloffice@stslr.org](mailto:schooloffice@stslr.org)  
Stslr.org      Check us out on facebook: St. Theresa Catholic School, Little Rock  
Miss Gonzalez, assistant principal cell 501.258.8751  
Mrs. Dunn, principal cell 501.258.5153

### **Policies**

**Absences:** Absences may be excused for the following reasons: illness, school-sponsored event, medical appointment, court appointment, serious illness in family, death of a family member or special circumstance deemed appropriate by the principal. Other absences are considered unexcused. Generally, if a student is absent twenty-five (25) or more days during a school year, the students will be required to attend summer school and/or repeat the grade. In the time of COVID, we know absences may be more in number than normal due to quarantines. If a student in in quarantine, he or she will still be expected to complete assignments.

Three tardies=1 absence

Arriving after 9:00 or leaving before 2:00 indicate a ½ day absence.

The school may require proof regarding reason for absence. Students who are suspended or expelled will be considered unexcused.

Work missed during absences must be made up. It is the responsibility of the student to make up his or her work. Parents may assist by picking up the work and/or communicating with the teacher via Remind. Due dates will be established by the child's teacher.

**Admissions:** The schools in the Diocese of Little Rock admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origins to the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The Catholic schools in

the Diocese of Little Rock do not discriminate on the basis of color, race, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

While the school does not discriminate against students with special needs, a full range of services may not be available to them. Decisions concerning the admission and continued enrollment of a student in the school are based on the student's emotional, academic and physical abilities, and the resources available to meeting those needs.

The diocese stipulates that a kindergarten student must attain the age of five (5) years on or before September 1st of the school year. Documentation of the state-required immunizations plus a birth certificate and baptismal certificate (Catholic students) is to be presented at the time of registration. A school will not accept a transfer student without the permanent record/transcript and health record. A student may be accepted conditionally if the parent/guardian signs a request form for records to be sent from the previous school.

**Advisory school board:** Each Catholic school of the Diocese of Little Rock will have an advisory board in accordance with the policies and regulations adopted by the diocesan board of education. School board members may be elected or appointed. Unlike a public school board, a Catholic school board is not autonomous. All parish boards are advisory. Actions of the board become effective only upon the approval of the pastor. The main purpose of the board is to assist the pastor and principal to provide a quality education in the parish school. As individuals, school board members have no authority. Authority is exercised as a group.

2021-2022 Board members include Lupita Alvarez, Janeth Cervantes, Karla Robles, Larry Tucker, Emmanuel Leyva, Joan Chambers, Sister Nancy Cassidy, and Juan Carlos Rodriguez.

**Allergies:** Parents are to make the office and classroom teacher aware of any allergic conditions that a child has that may impact the student at school. If a child's condition is severe enough to warrant an epi-pen, then one is to be furnished and kept in the "grab-and-go bag" that travels with the class from location to location. If a student is diagnosed with asthma, an Asthma Action Plan should be furnished to the school. In addition, a rescue inhaler needs to be supplied to the school. Inhalers will also stay with the student's class in a grab-and-go bag.

**Athletics:** Any athletic program in competitive sports must be under the direct supervision of the school principal. Any athletic support group must have the explicit approval of the pastor and be under the direct supervision of the principal. All adults coaching or volunteering to work with the students must be CMG trained. There must be two trained adults at each practice. Students competing in parochial league athletics must meet all eligibility requirements. Schools in the Diocese of the Little Rock MAY join AAA for some sports. The principal and/or athletic director will communicate with parents and students regarding those opportunities.

**Attendance:** If a student is ill or must be absent from school, the parents should call the school office before 8:30 am or email the teacher. A student is considered tardy if he/she is not in his/her classroom when the 8:00 bell rings. To check in a student late or to check out a student early, parents must sign the attendance book in the office. Reminder: three tardies = one absence, and arriving after 9:00 am or leaving before 2:00 pm is considered a half-day absence.

Frequent tardiness or absences may interfere with a student's progress.

According to state law, (Arkansas statute 8-1504), every parent/guardian or other person residing in Arkansas and having custody of a child or children between the ages of seven (7) and sixteen (16), will send such child to a public, private or parochial school under such penalty for non-compliance under this section.

**Awards:** Periodically, the school holds assemblies to recognize the achievements of students. In addition, recognition may occur during a school day in the classroom. Honor roll is an award for 1st-8th grade students who maintain an 80% or higher in all subjects and in conduct. St. Theresa Catholic School strives to encourage students to give their best effort.

**Book covers:** All textbooks are to be covered with book covers, in order to maintain the books.

**Breakfast:** Healthy habits are encouraged at St. Theresa Catholic School. In an effort to provide students with the energy to learn, the school provides breakfast for free to any students who would like one.

**Care program:** After-school care is from 3:30-5:30 at a cost of \$1 for each student each day. There are some fees applicable to the program, as well. All students are welcome

to attend, but a registration form is required. Payment may be made in cash or check to the director, Tyfnae Benz.

**Classroom parties:** We will attempt to have a safe Christmas and Valentine party at the appropriate times. Parents will be invited to contribute treats.

**Classroom rules:** Classroom rules are based on the following list. Teachers may re-word these rules for age-appropriateness.

1. Be charitable and courteous.
2. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
3. Come to class with assignments and materials.
4. Food is to be eaten in the cafeteria.
5. Raise your hand to speak and wait to be recognized.
6. Silence in the halls.
7. Follow directions.
8. Be in correct uniform.

Teachers may offer positive rewards and incentives for individuals and/or the class.

**Complaint/Concern:** Any person feeling aggrieved concerning any matter connected with the school will contact the individual before discussing it with other patrons. If a person has a complaint with a teacher, the individual will first discuss it with the teacher. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the person will contact the principal. If the problem is still not resolved, the person will contact the pastor. If no solution is found, the matter will be referred to the superintendent. School board members are not to attempt to solve school problems but are to refer the individual to the above procedure. Gossip about teachers, staff or students is not tolerated, as it is not Christian. Pope Francis reminds us all, "Gossip can also kill, because it kills the reputation of the person!"

**Conduct:** Courtesy and good manners should be a key to a student's conduct at school. Our faith tradition contains many examples of treatment of others, including the Golden Rule, the Beatitudes, and the Ten Commandments. Students are expected to have respect for adults, themselves, others, and property.

**Conferences/Contacting faculty:** In the time of COVID, staff will communicate with you regularly (weekly). They use Remind or email. Teachers will not share their personal cell phone numbers. Principal and assistant principal share theirs.

**Computer/Social media agreement:** *please see appendix A*

**Discipline:** Acceptable standards of behavior by students will be expected at all times. This guarantees a positive social and educational atmosphere. Discipline will be administered when an individual's actions interfere with the right of teachers to teach and/students to learn. Any teacher or staff member in the school has the right to correct unruly students at any place and time. Corporal punishment is against diocesan policy.

**Dismissal:** We are doing dismissal at the covered walkway. Please come through from 3:00-3:30 to pick up your child. After 3:30, your child will go to OST (the after-school program by the pavilion).

**Distribution of materials:** Individuals or groups wanting to distribute materials at the school must seek approval from the principal.

**Drills:** Fire drills are conducted once a month throughout the school year. Tornado drills are conducted monthly for PK and twice a year for the remainder of the school. Maps are posted in each room directing areas of egress for fire/tornado. Lock down drills are practiced twice a year.

**Electronics:** Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned into the classroom teacher upon a student's arrival in his/her classroom in the morning. Teachers will place items in a secure location and give back to the student at dismissal. If an electronic device is kept in a student's possession, it will be confiscated to the principal's office and kept until a parent picks it up. If this occurs a second time, the device will be returned on the last day of the school year. Electronic readers are allowed. *also see appendix A*

Students in grades 2-8 have an assigned chrome book to use during the school day and will take them home. Students are responsible for these chromebooks and families must pay for a replacement if broken/lost. Students in grades PK, K and 1 may use ipads at times but they will not be sent home.

**Email:** Faculty members have individual email addresses.

**Expulsion:** Expulsion is defined as the permanent dismissal of a student from school. Expulsion from school will be the decision of the principal in consultation with the pastor and superintendent.

**Failure/summer school:** When failure seems unavoidable for a student, parents will be notified in advance of the probable failure. Parents are to sign written notice and make arrangements for summer school or retention.

**Field trips:** Field trips operate under stringent safety guidelines from the Diocese of Little Rock. Drivers would have to complete the Safe Driver course on CMGConnect and provide proof of insurance and driver's license. Field trips must be approved by administration.

**Food/beverages/gum:** The St. Theresa Catholic School community takes pride in our facilities, and we recognize the fifty-plus years of work that others have given to make St. Theresa the place it is. **Gum is banned on the entire St. Theresa Church and School campus.** In grades 6-8, two conduct marks are given for chewing gum. Wherever the students eat, they are expected to clean up their messes.

**Grading:** Uniformity of grading is maintained throughout the school; work of similar quality would receive the same mark from all teachers. Academic marks are based on academic achievement. Behavior is graded separately. The letter or percentage grade will be reported to parents as follows:

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: below 60%

Report cards are distributed quarterly.

**Graduation:** The graduation ceremony for 8th grade students occurs in late May at an 8:30 am Friday school mass at St. Theresa Church. Boys wear dress pants, button down shirt, tie and optional jacket. Girls wear modest dresses that are appropriate for mass. A sleeveless dress requires a wrap or shawl. **All tuition accounts need to be current in order for the school to distribute the student's diploma.**

**Harassment:** The schools of the Diocese of Little Rock DO NOT condone any form of harassment. All individuals are to be treated with dignity and respect. **Harassment in any form (sexual, verbal, physical, visual) is prohibited.** This applies to all



individuals in the school. Consequences of harassment may include suspension, expulsion, a police report, or any other action deemed necessary.

**Homework:** It is the student's responsibility to complete all homework assignments. A student will be given a score of zero for missing homework.

**Human sexuality:** *see Appendix B*

**Inclement weather:** When weather conditions are dangerous, St. Theresa Catholic School follows the schedule as all Catholic schools in the greater Little Rock area. A phone message will notify parents as soon as notification is given to the principal. Also, TV and radio stations will carry the announcement of closure for Catholic schools in Little Rock/North Little Rock. If school is closed due to weather, all other activities for the day are cancelled.

**Information technology:** *see Appendix A*

**Instructional materials and programs:** Students are expected to care for school-distributed materials and all school property. Students are expected to pay for damaged or destroyed instructional materials or school property. All Catholic schools follow diocesan curriculum, instruction and time requirements. The *In Spirit and Truth* curriculum guide details standards for math, science, language arts, religion, social studies, art, music, health, PE, technology and electives. The instructional program is designed to discover and develop the abilities of each student.

**Insurance:** Medical bills resulting from injuries or accidents at school are the responsibility of the parent. Parents are given the opportunity to sign up for insurance.

**Lunch program:** The lunch program is school-operated under the National School Lunch Program, and a monthly menu is provided prior to the start of each month. Parents are invited to apply for the National School Lunch Program (free and reduced lunch) at the beginning of the year. Please keep up with your lunch payments. An easy way to pay is to send a check for the designated days your child will eat that month. Please send checks or cash in envelopes with a label.

Another effort toward healthy habits is that the school will not allow lunches from restaurants be brought to students. If you bring a lunch from a restaurant, you will be

asked to check out your child for the lunch/recess period and return your child after eating.

The school will not accept lunches brought after 9:00 am. Your child will be given a tray lunch if he/she does not have a lunchbox. It is our goal to build personal responsibility with this policy.

**Medication:** The school must have a completed medical release form to administer ANY MEDICATION at school (even Tylenol). Medication forms are available from the school office.

**Money:** Money should always be sent to school in an envelope with clear labels so that it is applied appropriately.

**Non-custodial parents:** Non-custodial parents are not to use the school as a meeting place with their child/ren. In the case of divorce, the school office requires the court order stating visitation rights. The principal will follow the specifications of a court order in regard to pick-up of the child/ren. A copy of the child's report card may be given to a non-custodial parent.

**Nondiscrimination:** The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, handicap or national origin in administration of their educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic or social programs.

**PE:** Physical education is a required class for students in grades PK-8. Students are expected to wear rubber soled shoes on the day(s) they have PE class. **Students in grades 5-8 are required to bring a PE uniform to change into for PE class.**

**PTO:** The Parent Teacher Organization is a group we all belong to, automatically. There is no longer a fee associated with this group. This group has a leadership team of parent ambassadors, and various meetings/events occur throughout the year.

**Principal:** The principal of the school reserves the right to amend the policy manual for just cause. Parents will be given notification of changes that are made.

**Promotion/retention:** Promotion to the next grade level is determined by the teacher and principal. Promotion is generally based on cumulative averages of 60% or above in all subjects. Two subject-area failures constitute a grade failure unless made up in

approved summer school. Proof of attendance/grades at summer school may be required for promotion of the student. When considering retention, the principal, teacher and parent consider social, emotional, physical and moral development of the student.

**Service hours: Family commitment to Catholic education is very important.** All families must offer 30 hours of service per year. If a family does not meet the service requirement, the family will be billed a \$400 volunteer fee.

**Smoking:** Buildings of Catholic schools are smoke-free workplaces. Smoking is not allowed on the St. Theresa Catholic School campus.

**Soliciting:** No one is allowed on school grounds or in the building to solicit or request signatures for a petition unless authorized in writing by pastor or principal.

**Sports:** Students in grades 5-8 must meet parochial league eligibility requirements to participate in the following: football, basketball, track, volleyball and cheer. Teams are created and based upon the number of participating students at each grade level. In the event that St. Theresa will not field a team at a certain level, a St. Theresa student may play on another Catholic school team. If a student is absent the day of a game, he/she is not allowed to play in the game.

**Supervision of students:** The school supervises children as early as 7:30 am and as late as 3:30 pm. Families of children who need supervision before 3:30 will need to make arrangements to dropoff with breakfast staff. Supervision of children after 3:30 pm comes with an after-care fee. Children who are at school after 3:30 pm are signed into the after care program for a fee. After-care ends at 5:30 pm.

**Supplies:** School supply lists are provided. Parents are expected to provide the supplies on the list and to periodically check if supplies need to be replenished.

**Suspension:** Suspension is defined as the temporary exclusion from school for disciplinary reasons. Suspension may be in-school. Suspension will be determined by the principal.

**Tag day:** Tag days are out-of-uniform days at a cost of \$2 per student. Tag days occur approximately once per month.

**Textbooks:** All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Little Rock use approved texts with their instruction. Schools supply the textbooks, and the books are returned at the

conclusion of the school year. Students are expected to pay for books that are lost or damaged.

**Tuition:** Tuition rates are published in the spring of each academic year. They are found online or may be distributed by the school office. Tuition for the months of June, July and the registration fee are non-refundable. Tuition drafts occur via your plan selected through RenWeb/FACTS. You may also pay via cash or check through the front office.

**Uniform:** Complete uniform regulations are detailed in the tables below. Spirit shirts are allowed to be worn on Wednesdays.

Boys PK-8

<b>pants/shorts</b>	<b>shirt/sweatshirt/jacket</b>	<b>socks/shoes</b>
mandatory navy blue twill with belt (PK, K and 1st graders are not required to wear a belt)	gray polo-style with school logo, tucked in	white, black, gray or navy WITHOUT logo
shorts are allowed year-round	maroon fleece jacket or sweatshirt with school logo	athletic shoe

Girls PK-8

<b>jumper/skort/skirt</b>	<b>shirt/sweatshirt/jacket</b>	<b>socks/shoes/leggings/tights</b>
Jumper, skirt or skorts in school plaid for PK-4th grade (no more than 2 inches above knee)	gray, polo-style with school logo, tucked in	gray, white, navy or black socks, crew length or knee socks, WITHOUT logo
Skirt or skorts in school plaid for girls in grades 5-8 (no more than 2 inches above the knee)	maroon fleece jacket or sweatshirt with school logo	gray, white, maroon or black tights are allowed
		Solid black leggings or exercise-style pants are allowed to be worn under skirts/skorts/jumpers.

		athletic shoe
--	--	---------------

Uniform regulations for all students:

- The uniform must be clean and neat.
- Shirts must be tucked in.
- Girls must wear shorts under jumpers/skirts/skort OR in the cold weather, solid black pants or leggings may be worn under the jumper/skirt/skort.
- Boys hair must be above collar, ears and brows. For all students, no eccentric hairstyles (such as shaved-in designs or colorful dye) allowed.
- Girls hair must be worn out of the eyes and pulled back. No woven-in objects.
- Girls may wear CLEAR NAIL POLISH ONLY. No acrylic or fake nails of any kind.
- Girls may wear stud earrings only, in the interest of safety. One pair. Boys may not wear earrings.
- Seventh and eighth grade girls may wear light makeup.
- Acceptable jewelry is religious (necklace, bracelet, ring). Watches are acceptable.
- Undershirts and undergarments should be plain white or beige.
- No perfume or cologne, no spray deodorant or cologne brought to school.

**Upper building policies:** *see appendix C*

## Appendix A Technology policies

**Social media and cyber-bullying (students):** The same principles and guidelines found in this policy apply to parents' and students' personal activities online. Ultimately you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online Content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects employees, students, or families of the parish or school may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the school and/or legal action.

**Social media (parents):** The same principles and guidelines found in the school/parish policy apply to your personal activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects employees, customers (families), suppliers or people who work on behalf of the school/parish may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or legal action.

### **Computer usage terms and acceptable use (students and parents at St. Theresa School):**

St. Theresa Catholic School provides computer access and Internet access for its students and faculty/staff. All activities while using the computers, or in accessing the Internet in this school must be in the support of education and research, and consistent with the educational objectives of St. Theresa School. We must recognize that with access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be of educational value. St. Theresa School is taking precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover controversial information. For students: Use of the computers and Internet is a privilege, not a right and is subject to terms and conditions.

**THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF USE APPLY TO ALL STAFF AND FACULTY, AS WELL AS STUDENTS UNLESS THE ITEM STATES THAT IT IS SPECIFICALLY FOR STUDENTS. VIOLATION OF THESE CONDITIONS MAY RESULT IN TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT.**

#### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF USE:**

Ø Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulations is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret.

Ø Illegal activities are strictly prohibited.

Ø Students are not allowed to download any files from the Internet.

Ø Students are not allowed to subscribe to any mail list.

Ø Students are not allowed to use the Internet for personal communication.

**Ø STUDENTS MUST OBTAIN ADULT SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES. TEACHERS ARE TO ACTIVELY SUPERVISE STUDENTS WHILE THEY ARE ON THE COMPUTER.**

Ø Each student will be held responsible for the intentional altering of a computer workstation that occurs while they are logged into the computer or network.

- Ø Using, deleting, copying or modifying files or data on a computer belonging to others without their consent is prohibited.
- Ø Students loading software on any computer without authorization of teacher is forbidden.
- Ø Making illegal copies of licensed or copyrighted software is prohibited.
- Ø The administration or teacher has the right to access information stored in any user directory, on the current user screen, or electronic mail.

**Vandalism – Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user on the St. Theresa School Internet system. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Hardware or software shall not be destroyed, modified or abused in any way. Intentionally altering the files and/or the hardware on the St. Theresa School computers will be viewed as vandalism.**

**Reliability – St. Theresa School makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. We will not be responsible for any damages suffered. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or your error or omissions. Use of any information obtained through the Internet is at your own risk. We specifically deny any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.**

**Internet Access –**

- 1 Use of the Internet without the knowledge and permission of a teacher or other authorized personnel is prohibited.**
- 2 Before accessing the Internet, each student will receive instruction in the proper use of the on-line tools.**
- 3 Use of the Internet without a clearly defined educational objective, understood by both student and teacher, is not allowed.**
- 4 Transmission, installation, or downloading of materials in violation of copyright laws is prohibited.**
- 5 Student must notify teacher immediately of inappropriate material found. The teacher is then to inform the Principal of the incident.**
- 6 Students may not download files or programs without the permission of the teacher. Teachers are to consult the Technology Coordinator before authorizing programs to be downloaded by students or before downloading programs themselves.**
- 7 Students will use polite language, appropriate to a school setting.**
- 8 Students are not to reveal their personal address and phone number or those of other students or staff.**
- 9 The administration or teacher has the right to access information stored in any user directory, on the current user screen, or electronic mail.**

**VIOLATIONS OF THESE PROVISIONS MAY RESULT IN LOSS OF ACCESS TO THE COMPUTERS AT ST. THERESA SCHOOL AS WELL AS OTHER DISCIPLINARY OR LEGAL ACTIONS.**