

Saint Catherine Catholic School



2025-2026 Parent – Student Handbook

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School office hours: 7:30am – 3:30 pm

Very Rev. Jose Gonzalez, Pastor
Mr. Steven Cullipher, Principal
Accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference

Dear St. Catherine Catholic School Families,

Welcome to Saint Catherine Catholic School (SCCS)! Our school provides a strong Catholic foundation with exemplary academic rigor to guide students to become the gift to the world that God intends for them to be.

Saint Catherine Catholic School views education as a cooperative effort. The collaboration and cooperation of family, school, church, and community is essential in preparing young people to take the mantle of leading our collective community, and the world, to a brighter future that embraces the teachings of Jesus. The Saint Catherine Catholic School community provides an opportunity for moral, academic, and spiritual development within an environment of mutual respect, love for one another, and a structural framework that fosters the health of mind, body, and spirit. Using Catholic values, students are encouraged to make responsible choices. We ask parents to join us in the responsibility of educating their children and embracing the Catholic way of life. We encourage you to be involved with your child's spiritual and educational needs. Your choice of Saint Catherine Catholic School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest treasure in his/her life.

This handbook is set forth to be a guide for students and parents in meeting the expectations set by Saint Catherine Catholic School to accomplish its mission. By supporting the policies and procedures outlined in the following pages, we will accomplish the role as partners in your child's growth and development.

The instructional program at Saint Catherine Catholic School allows for a systematic progression of skills and competencies. Each student is encouraged to advance at the pace most appropriate to his or her age, developmental stage, ability, and to accept the responsibility for his or her own learning.

Saint Catherine Catholic School asks that you read this Parent-Student Handbook in its entirety and understand that you and your child are bound by the handbooks' policies and procedures as part of the student's requirement for attending Saint Catherine Catholic School. Return the signed form, indicating your agreement regarding the handbook and the principal's right to revise the handbook if deemed necessary. This handbook is part of the contractual agreement between you and the school.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Mr. Steven Cullipher, M. Ed.

Principal

SCCS Mission Statement

Saint Catherine Catholic School provides a Christ-centered education and a strong Catholic foundation where children can strengthen their relationship with God and prepare for life's challenges and their service to others.

Our Philosophy

Acknowledging our partnership as the school community of Saint Catherine, we promise to work together to:

- Teach the message revealed by God which the Church proclaims
- Foster and nurture each student's faith through prayer, the Sacraments, attending Mass, and community service
- Recognize all students have their own unique level of ability and achievement
- Build a positive self-concept and sense of self-worth in each student entrusted to our care
- Provide a curriculum in which students will experience a constructive pattern of growth leading to personal fulfillment and future success as lifelong learners
- Provide a foundation of skills that will enable all students to be creative users of technology both now and in the future

Students attend Saint Catherine Catholic School to develop fully their God-given talents and capabilities. To accomplish this, students are asked to:

- Do their best work always
- Show respect for the work of their teachers, volunteers, and peers
- Treat all members of the school community with respect
- Obey all school policies, procedures, and responsibilities
- Develop personal standards of conduct that reflect Christian morals and behavior
- Observe the school dress code, including standards on non-uniform (dress down) days.
- Help care for school property and keep the school free from damage and defacement

Our Objectives

Spiritual

We believe that our school community fosters an atmosphere where faith is nurtured, and Gospel values are lived. At SCCS, we are servants of the global community and are committed to:

1. Provide religious education
2. Provide age-appropriate experiences in prayer, sacraments, worship, service, and evangelism
3. Emphasize integration of Christian principles into our total curriculum

4. Establish a foundation that guides and supports our students in making moral decisions and acting accordingly.
5. Encourage all families to practice their Faith.

Intellectual

We believe children should have many opportunities to develop their individual potential, expanding their base of knowledge, and exploring their interests. To that end, SCCS strives to:

1. Provide a large spectrum of learning experiences
2. Spark enjoyment in lifelong learning
3. Maintain a quality education by periodic and systematic evaluation and by updating all areas of the curriculum
4. Encourage modification of the curriculum in addressing individual learning styles
5. Present professionally prepared instruction throughout the curriculum which allow our students to compete in the global market

Social-Emotional

We believe basic human needs of belonging and trust can be fulfilled by a positive self-concept. SCCS fosters social-emotional development by striving to:

1. Guide and affirm student recognition of both their giftedness and their limitations
2. Teach students strategies for coping with change
3. Instill concepts which convey and support the freedom to express their individuality
4. Provide experiences through which students can develop good communication and interpersonal skills
5. Ensure teacher accessibility to materials for a comprehensive understanding of child and adolescent development

Physical

We believe the Physical Education that we will provide will contribute to the growth and development of the whole person. Participation in physical activities promotes the fulfillment of the physical health and social-emotional well-being of the individual. It will provide the following:

1. To present a value system that will enable the students to respect their bodies through wise dietary choices, proper hygiene, exercise, and appropriate moral decisions
2. To promote activities that enhance one's lifelong health and leisure
3. To offer various options for a healthy release of energy

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Acceptable Use Policy

The Diocese of Venice requires that all students and parents sign and return the Code of Conduct for the Use of Technology & social media (available on the Diocesan Website) prior to utilizing any computer and their applications at school. Unacceptable behavior utilizing email, social media, or any form of computer/electronic communication inside or outside of the school will not be tolerated and is subject to disciplinary action.

Accident Insurance

Every child in Saint Catherine Catholic School is covered by the diocesan insurance plan for the hours he/she is under school supervision. Coverage is secondary to the family's insurance.

Accreditation & Teacher Certification

All parish elementary schools must be accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference. Saint Catherine Catholic School received full accreditation by the Florida Catholic Conference in 2015. SCCS was reaccredited in 2024. All faculty members were committee members and participated in the Accreditation process and will continue to do so.

All classroom teachers are degreed, certified, or awaiting certification by the Florida State Department of Education. Both certification for all teachers and accreditation for the school are required by policy of the Office of Schools of the Diocese of Venice and the Florida Catholic Conference. Periodic accreditation reviews for the school are done one year and three years after it is accredited by the FCC. Teacher certification must be maintained through regular, on-going in-service education and professional development workshops and conferences.

Admissions Policy

Saint Catherine Catholic School admits students of any race, color, religion, and national ethnic origin and protects and provides all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, or ethnic origin in administration of education policies.

Students entering Kindergarten must be five years old on or before September 1st to comply with the Florida Statute 232.04 regarding entry age. Students entering First Grade must have successfully completed Kindergarten to meet the requirement of Florida Statute 232.01. Students entering the Pre-School Program at Saint Catherine must be of appropriate class age on or before September 1st.

ALL INCOMING STUDENTS WILL BE ON A 90-DAY PROBATIONARY PERIOD. We reserve the right to refuse admission if a child's discipline records fail to meet the school standards. Furthermore, if the parents fail to uphold their financial obligations or volunteer requirements, re-admission for the following year may be denied.

Florida State Law also requires that all children entering Florida schools for the first time must be immunized against diphtheria, pertussis-tetanus, poliomyelitis, varicella, hepatitis B, rubella and measles unless exempt provided in Section 2 of the law. Every child entering a Florida school for the first time must present the school a Florida Certificate of Immunization or Exemption. Immunization forms may be obtained at our doctor's office or at the Highlands County Health Department.

Applicants must provide the following records prior to acceptance:

1. Birth Certificate
2. Baptismal Certificate and Parish Certificate for Catholics
3. Student Physical Examination
4. Florida Certificate of Immunization
5. Report Card from previous or present year
6. Latest standardized test score – to be mailed by the school

Students are admitted to Saint Catherine Catholic School in the following priority:

1. Current students
2. Siblings
3. Registered members of Saint Catherine Parish
4. Registered members of neighboring parishes

Amendment of Handbook

The school retains the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Morning Procedures:

All children are to be dropped off in the morning through the carpool line in front of the school building. **Children are to get out of the car from the door closest to the curb.**

Drivers are not allowed to exit their cars. There are personnel assisting with transportation to make it convenient for drivers.

Morning Care begins at 7:00AM (for a fee).

First bell rings at 7:30 am; students may enter their classroom.

Second bell rings at 8:00 am. **A student who arrives at the school after 8:00 am is considered tardy.** Students who are tardy for class must first stop at the front desk to receive a tardy slip before being admitted to class. Continued tardiness may result in the need for a parent conference with the teacher to discuss the problem. After five tardies, per Quarter, parents will be notified via email letter from the administration.

If parents have a business matter in the office or an appointment with the school personnel, first drop off your child(ren) and then return to the designated parent parking

area to park your vehicle **before** coming into the building. Due to fire codes, parking in the main driveway in front of the school building during school hours is not permitted.

Afternoon Procedures:

THE CAR SIGN INDICATING THE STUDENT'S NAME MUST BE VISIBLE TO THOSE ANNOUNCING CARPOOL.

NO PARENT OR GUARDIAN MAY WALK UP TO DROPOFF/RETRIEVE THEIR CHILDREN DURING PICKUP/DROPOFF. PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CARS UNTIL PICKUP/DROPOFF CONCLUDES.

If parents have business in the office or an appointment with the school personnel, they **may not** park in front of the school building. They **must** park in an available parking spot and walk to the office.

Parents are to pick up their children promptly. Unless involved in school sponsored activities, children must leave the school grounds by 3:30 pm. After carpool concludes, any remaining students will be sent to the Extended Day Center for Learning Program. Fees will be assessed for students not picked up by 3:30 pm.

Dismissal (Early)

EARLY DISMISSAL IS STRONGLY DISCOURAGED UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY AS IT IS A DISRUPTION OF THE CLASSROOM LEARNING CLIMATE.

Please avoid picking up your student after 2:15 p.m. If a student is leaving school early, it is a requirement that a written and signed note from the parent be submitted the morning of, stating the time and reason for the early dismissal. Parents/Guardians and those whose names are listed as emergency contacts, and authorized pickups, are the only ones who may pick up the student and must come to the school office to sign out their child prior to the office calling for the child. All authorized pickup persons must be over 18 and if driving, have a current license.

Asbestos

Saint Catherine Catholic School is inspected annually to assure an asbestos free environment.

Athletic Programs

Saint Catherine Catholic School subscribes to the philosophy that sports and team participation are necessary ingredients for building mature and well-rounded individuals. Therefore, we try to provide opportunities for after-school athletic competitions with surrounding private schools. Students who choose to participate must make a commitment to their team. To play on a school team is both a privilege and a responsibility.

All student athletes are required to maintain satisfactory academic grades and demonstrate an attitude of respect, sportsmanship, loyalty, and appreciation for teachers, classmates, and coaches of Saint Catherine Catholic School.

Students must maintain a C average (70% or above) with no failing grades in any classes to participate in any SCCS sports program. Students receiving disciplinary actions (including detentions or ISS) may NOT participate in SCCS sports activities, until determined by the administration.

The principal reserves the right to remove a student, temporarily or permanently, from any sports team.

Attendance and Absentee Policy

Please call the school at (863)385-7300 before 9:00 am to report your child's absence.

A student who arrives at the school after 8:00 am is considered tardy. Students who are tardy for class must first stop at the front desk to receive a tardy slip before being admitted to class. Continued tardiness may result in the need for a parent conference with the teacher to discuss the problem. After five tardies per Quarter, parents will be notified via email letter from administration.

Absences

Parents are responsible for the regular attendance of their child(ren) at school. If a student is absent, a parent must personally call the school office before 9:00 am or the student's absence will be considered unexcused. In accordance with Florida State Statutes, a student in K-5 with more than 15 absences (whether excused or unexcused) in a semester may be retained for lack of attendance unless medical evidence of illness or injury is presented in writing from a competent medical authority. For grades 6 and up, a student with more than 10 absences per semester may be retained under the same circumstances/conditions. All educational requirements must be met before a passing grade is assigned. The principal will have the final judgement on this issue.

Absences shall be excused for the following reasons only:

1. Illness or injury of the student
2. Illness, injury, or death in the immediate family
3. Extensive medical procedures
4. Other major family emergencies
5. Other circumstances determined by Principal's discretion

Absences are **unexcused** when taken for vacations, personal activities, and any other event not covered by the excused absence definition.

As noted above, parents are expected to contact the school prior to 9 a.m. each day a student is absent to avoid unexcused absences. Students arriving at school after 11:00 a.m. will be marked absent ½ day. Upon returning to school after an extended absence period (three days or more), the student who has been absent is also required to present a written excuse stating the date, the reason for the absence, and the signature of the doctor. **Only** the principal may authorize an absence for special circumstances. Prior permission is required for such absences, except in case of an emergency. **FAMILY VACATIONS DURING SCHOOL TIME ARE UNACCEPTABLE AND WILL NOT BE**

CONSIDERED EXCUSED ABSENCES. Parents should realize that students with an unexcused absence are still assessed on all missed content.

A record of attendance and tardiness is maintained for every student. State law requires that the student's attendance records be retained as part of his/her permanent record at the school. This is a legal document for all educational institutions.

A child returning to school after an absence or after leaving the school for a medical reason must present the homeroom teacher a dated and signed written excuse. Following an infection or communicable disease, a note from the doctor must be presented stating that the child is able to return to school. Should a lengthy absence be anticipated, the parents should notify the school in writing and plan for missed work.

Excessive unexcused absenteeism may result in the student not being promoted.

Teachers must be given 24-hour notice to prepare the assignments so that their regular teaching duties are not interrupted. Teachers will post classroom content to the school's Learning Management System (LMS) for students to access.

In the rare event of a planned absence, parents must submit to the principal (at least a week in advance) a written request explaining the absence and seeking approval. A planned absence will be classified as excused only if it is approved by the administration.

Absences due to medical or dental appointments will be excused for the time of the appointments only.

In case of an excused absence, the student may take all books with him/her on the last day of attendance prior to the absence, or the student can receive a list of work which must be covered upon returning to class after the trip. In either case, the student will have the same number of days absence to complete this work and return it to the teachers. For example, if a student is absent for three days, three days after returning to school will be given to complete the assignment or make up assignments.

Birthday Celebrations

Saint Catherine Catholic School understands that a child's birthday is a special day. Birthdays are recognized each morning. Store bought cupcakes may be brought to school and passed out **during lunch** in the cafeteria/classroom. No balloons, or party favors will be permitted. Chewing gum is never permitted on school/parish property. In following good Christian behavior, a child who wishes to invite classmates to his/her personal party should include either **all their gender class or the entire class**. If only a limited number of classmates are invited, please mail the invitations. **Distribution of limited invitations will not be allowed in the school.** Persons entering the cafeteria, recess area or academic building must be fingerprint cleared and must have completed the safety training by the Diocese of Venice. To schedule your fingerprints and the safety training, please contact the school office.

Book Care

Textbooks are the property of school. All students are to care for their books and all property of the school in a respectful manner. Each child is responsible for the care of schoolbooks, materials, and property belonging to the school. Restitution must be made by students for any damage caused to schoolbooks (assigned to individual students by number), materials and property. The nature of the restitution will be determined by the principal.

If a book is damaged or lost, a partial or full cost of the book will be invoiced to the student/family. Report cards may be withheld until damaged/lost book or school items are paid for.

Book Fairs

The Media Center may host Book Fairs during the year. Books and other items can be purchased. Proceeds are used for new materials for our Media Center and classrooms.

Calendar of Events

Each year a calendar of events is available for viewing on our website. This calendar includes all the school activities of the year, holidays, and special events. The administration reserves the right to make changes deemed necessary and will notify families through the school mail system, monthly calendar, phone system, or email. The Calendar is available in print upon request.

Cell Phones & Personal Property

Diocese of Venice Policy on Prohibition of Phones and Wearable Devices in Schools

Purpose: Educators are feeling the drastic effects of non-school issued, electronic devices. They have become an ever-present distraction to learning, and a drain on teacher motivation, leading to lower retention and reduced school safety.

After an analysis of school 'Cell Phone Policies' within the Diocese of Venice in Florida, it has been identified that schools have wide-ranging policies that are difficult to enforce at the diocesan level.

The purpose of this analysis is to create one consistent and enforceable policy implemented at all schools within the diocese. This will allow the Department of Education to maintain a focused, respectful, and productive learning environment in all schools by ensuring that students are not distracted by mobile phones, wearable devices, or other electronic gadgets during school hours.

Scope: This policy applies to all students within the Diocese of Venice who bring mobile phones or wearable devices (including, but not limited to, smartwatches, fitness trackers, and any other technology capable of communication or internet access) onto school premises, whether they are in classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, or other areas.

Policy Details:

1. General Rule: Students who bring mobile phones or wearable devices must store these devices in a diocesan approved lockable storage pouch. Bags will be locked at the

beginning of each school day and students will keep the bag in their possession, whether in a backpack or locker. At the end of the school day, students will pass the bag across the unlocking mechanism to gain access to their phone or other wearable devices.

2. Definitions:

- Mobile Phones: Any device capable of making phone calls, sending messages, or accessing the internet, including smartphones.
- Wearable Devices: Includes smartwatches, fitness trackers, or any other device worn on the body that connects to the internet or communicates with other devices.

3. Exceptions:

- In the case of special permission granted by school administration (e.g., for medical reasons or specific school activities), students must provide the device to the principal's office at the start of the day and follow guidelines for its use.
- Students involved in extracurricular activities or after-school programs may use their devices only once they are off school grounds and away from the school premises.

4. Consequences for Violations:

- First Offense: The phone or wearable device will be confiscated, and a parent/guardian will be required to pick it up from the school office. A meeting with the student, parents, and school administration will be scheduled to discuss the situation.
- Second Offense: The student will be subject to a more serious disciplinary action, such as detention or suspension. Further violations may lead to an extended ban on bringing devices to school.

5. Exemptions:

- Medical Necessity: Students who require a phone or wearable device for health-related reasons (e.g., for monitoring medical conditions) may submit a request for an exemption, along with appropriate documentation, to the principal. These devices will be subject to strict regulations and must remain off and secured unless needed for medical purposes.
- Pre-approved School Activities: Phones and wearable devices may be permitted for use during specific educational activities with prior approval from the teacher and school administration.

6. Student Responsibility:

- It is the responsibility of students to ensure that their devices are stored securely in school issued lockable storage pouch upon entry into school. The school will not be held responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen devices.

- If the school issued storage pouch is lost or misplaced, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain an additional bag from the school office. If the storage pouch is permanently damaged or lost, the student will be responsible for the cost of its replacement.
- Students should be aware that the use of any mobile device to record, take photos, or video without proper consent is strictly prohibited and may result in further disciplinary actions.

7. Enforcement: Teachers, staff, and administrators will monitor adherence to this policy. Random checks may be conducted to ensure compliance. Students who need to contact parents during the school day are encouraged to use the school office phone or designated communication methods.

Conclusion: The goal of this policy is to create an environment where both students and faculty can focus on education, interact with their peers, and engage in school activities without distractions caused by personal devices. We appreciate the cooperation of parents and students in ensuring a positive and productive school experience for all.

Child Abuse Reporting

Saint Catherine Catholic School will cooperate with investigations concerning reported cases of child abuse. In compliance with **State Law**, the school will report all incidents in which we have reason to suspect child abuse.

Communications

It is the policy of Saint Catherine Catholic School that **no communication of any kind will be sent to school families through the school unless it has first been reviewed and approved by the school administration.** The principal or his/her representative must review all items relating to athletics, class fund raising or activities, PTO programs and functions, student organization activities, or teacher requests, prior to their dissemination to the school families or other outside organizations. This policy is intended to protect the school and its associated organizations by assuring that all printed communication leaving the school follows the philosophy, policies, and practices of Saint Catherine Catholic School.

The Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct provides a guide for the behavior of the students and the logical consequences for failure to follow these guidelines. SCCS will implement a behavioral system which emphasizes the strengths of each child and focuses on positive improvements.

Consequences are seen as an extension of the instruction, rather than punishment. Thus, inappropriate behavior will result in logical consequences designed to teach and reinforce expected behaviors. When a student violates general rules of conduct, the teacher may use a variety of responses to point out and modify such behavior. These

responses may include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, check mark reminders, denying privileges, assigning service-oriented consequences, school detention, and/or ISS. Parents will be notified if a problem continues, and the teacher or parents may request a conference. If the cooperative efforts of the child, parent and teacher do not solve the problem, the administration will be contacted for further support and possible administrative action.

It is imperative that clear, consistent documentation of student behavior is kept by the teacher. Parents must also be consistently notified of any disciplinary action. All disciplinary incidents should be recorded on the Student Information System for clear communication with parents. Students involved in any disciplinary situation will be separated. Older students will write their statement in their own words, and younger students may relay their story to an adult who will write for them. Statements may also be taken from adult witnesses, i.e., teachers, assistants, and if necessary, parent volunteers.

Repeated disregard of procedures, blatant disrespect for students, school/parish personnel or property, or a single serious infraction may jeopardize a student's enrollment. At the discretion of teachers and administrators, the student may be required to follow a Behavior Contract, or serve detention, suspension, or may be asked by the principal to be withdrawn from Saint Catherine Catholic School. In extreme situations, the child could face expulsion. **The principal has the final authority in the interpretation of the facts of any school behavior situation. ALL students are on a 90-day probationary period.**

The following behaviors are **never** permissible and would result in serious consequences that may include suspension or expulsion:

- Fighting, bullying, threatening another student
- Blatant defiance of school/parish personnel
- Profanity or verbal abuse
- Continuous refusal to prepare assignments or participate in class
- Willful destruction of property or vandalism
- Stealing
- Possession of a weapon or other dangerous object
- Possession or use of tobacco products
- Possession, use, or selling of alcohol, drugs, vapes, or inhalants

Demerits

3 Demerits in 9 weeks = in-person parent conference with Administration/Teacher.

5 Demerits in 9 weeks = In-school Suspension

10 Demerits in 9 weeks = Out of school suspension and possible expulsion

LEVEL I Infraction = 1 Demerit

Level I Infractions are acts of misconduct that disrupt the orderly operation of the classroom or school function. Level I infractions are to be handled by the supervising teacher. Examples include, but are not limited to, those behaviors listed below:

- Classroom disruption/disorderly conduct/insubordination
- Defacing property or clothing
- Disrespect for others (may include gossiping, mocking, or mimicking, name-calling or forms of bullying and/or physical contact)
- Dress code/Personal appearance/Writing, marking, tattoos, or other inappropriate things on one's body.
- False and/or misleading information; lying
- Inappropriate language; verbal, non-verbal or written
- Unauthorized tardiness or absence from class

Logical consequences include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal reprimand
- Paying for damaged property
- Written apology
- Withdrawal of privileges (including sports or extra-curricular activities)
- Counselor and/or peer mediation
- Special work assignment
- Student behavior contract
- Detention
- Removal from activity

LEVEL II Infractions = 2 demerits

Level II infractions are major acts of misconduct. This includes repeated acts of misconduct from Level I. Level II infractions must be reported to an administrator. Level II infractions will immediately result in parent notification and conference. Examples of Level II infractions include, but are not limited to, those behaviors listed below:

- Cheating or plagiarism
- Destruction of property; vandalism
- Profane or abusive language or materials, including misuse of internet privileges
- Intimidating or threatening behavior
- Humiliating publicly
- Excluding from the group
- Social rejection
- Teasing about appearance
- Intimidating or improper use of social media
- Stealing – taking possessions (lunch, clothing, etc.)
- Extortion
- Sexual or racial taunting
- Unauthorized absence from school

- Possession of inappropriate material; i.e., electronic devices, questionable printed material (May be confiscated and not returned to the student)
- Spitting, kicking, or any inappropriate physical contact/injury
- Chewing Gum (chewing gum is not allowed on SCCS campus)
- Eating, other than lunch, snack time or other approved times
- Safety violations – behaviors that interfere with the student’s safety or the safety of another

Logical consequences include, but are not limited to:

- Detention
- Behavioral Contract
- Suspension
- Withdrawal of privileges (includes extracurricular activities and sporting events)

LEVEL III Infractions = 3 Demerits

Level III infractions are the most serious. **These must be reported IMMEDIATELY to the administrator and may result in a student’s immediate removal from school.**

Level III infractions include, but are not limited to:

- Physical violence/inflicting bodily harm
- Possession, transmitting or use of tobacco products, vapes, drugs, or alcohol
- Bomb threats or false emergency alarms
- Possession, use or display of any firearm, operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded. Included in this category is any item which could be used to intimidate or inflict harm on another person.
- Sexual misconduct, including harassment

Level III infractions will be handled at the discretion of the Pastor and Principal following Diocesan and state and local agency guidelines.

The school reserves the right to search for any item brought on school property or to a school activity.

Mutual Respect

Although it seems inconceivable, no teacher or staff member at Saint Catherine School should ever be subjected to disrespectful words, actions, or gossip or to either be verbally or physically assaulted by the parents or relatives of any student. The faculty and staff, as professional educators, should treat parents, students, and others with similar respect and courtesy. Any such incidents cited above should be reported to the principal verbally or in writing as soon as possible. The principal will then contact those involved and any witnesses to the reported incident and will take action as he/she deems appropriate to resolve the situation.

Bullying

As a member of the Body of Christ and part of the community of Saint Catherine Catholic School, each person has a right to be treated with respect and dignity. No student, teacher, or staff member has the right to treat another person in a way which will knowingly cause physical or emotional pain. We are committed to making our school a safe and caring place for all.

Our school defines bullying as follows:

Bullying is unfair and one-sided. It happens when someone repeatedly hurts, frightens, humiliates, threatens/intimidates, and/or excludes someone on purpose.

If a student feels he/she is being bullied, the following steps will apply:

1. **If you feel safe doing so, tell the person doing the bullying to stop.** Clearly state, "I do not like what you are doing (or saying). Please stop." Then give the person the opportunity to stop.
If you do not feel safe saying something to the person bothering you, immediately **report the incident** to your teacher or another staff member.
2. You will be asked to write your side of the story.
3. The person doing the bullying and the person being bullied will be coached separately, to create solutions and a plan for the future.
4. A bullying report form will be filled out for documentation purposes for each verified incident of bullying. The offending student will be issued a verbal warning and/or other consequences deemed appropriate by administration.
5. Parents will be notified. The offending child will be instructed to call his/her parent in the presence of the teacher or administrator and explain the inappropriate behavior.

Bullying will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action. Appropriate action will be taken, which can include, but is not limited to, notification to parents and to the appropriate authorities. A child can also be terminated or expelled. We strive to maintain confidentiality when addressing issues of bullying. We will not discuss the consequences or discipline issued with any other persons, other than the child who is bullying and his or her parents.

Anyone can report issues with bullying behavior to a staff member. The negative effect of witnessing bullying behavior is serious and will be well documented, so we hope to empower all to be able to stand up to bullying.

All students should immediately report bullying to an adult if:

- They or someone else are in danger
- Someone is touching or showing private body parts ("Breaking the Touching Rule")
- The victim asks the person bullying to stop, but the child continues the actions of bullying

Harassment

Harassment of any individual because of their sex, race, religion, color, national origin, age, or disability is strictly prohibited by the Diocese. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1954 and will not be tolerated at any diocesan entity. Maintaining an environment free of discrimination and harassment is everyone's responsibility.

Search and Seizure

Teachers and administration reserve the right to inspect all articles on school property at any time. Prohibited items may be seized and kept in the administrative offices until claimed by a parent. A teacher may ask the student to empty pockets, bags, purses, etc. If suspected threats or danger to the student or school population exist, teachers may search a student directly. In cases of direct student searches, the parents will be notified.

Detention

The following outlines the detention process for faculty and students. This has been reviewed and updated to better ensure safety and accountability. Detentions are typically issued for students in grades 3 and above.

- Level I infractions may incur a lunch detention (three lunch detentions will incur an after-school detention).
- Detention may be served with a designated teacher, on Wednesdays 3:15 to 4:00 pm.
- Three after school detentions within the same grading period may result in an In-School suspension.

In-School Suspension

Students serving an in-school suspension will be permitted to work on schoolwork, class work, and homework. Students may meet with the principal for reflection and deterrence of repeated incidents.

Out-of-School Suspension

Short of expulsion, out-of-school suspension is the school's strongest expression of disapproval for a student's conduct. Once a student has received an out-of-school suspension, continued misconduct will result in expulsion. Students who receive out-of-school suspension must complete all work as assigned. Quizzes and tests will be administered on the day of the student's return. No additional time will be allowed. Students who have been assigned an out-of-school suspension and fail to complete assigned work will be graded appropriately.

Expulsion

If a child's behavior continues to be unacceptable to teachers or to other students, the administration may request the student to withdraw from SCCS. Such a request will be made at the discretion of the principal. **Any conduct not consistent with Catholic**

moral teachings and the philosophy of Saint Catherine Catholic School constitutes grounds for possible expulsion. This will be determined by the principal, in conjunction with the pastor, and with the advice from the superintendent of schools. The principal's determination will be final. All level III offenses, as listed in this handbook, are serious enough for removal from SCCS.

Discipline with Purpose

Discipline with purpose is premised on the Catholic Christian beliefs of the inherent goodness and value of every person. Each student is a child of God, and, as His cherished creation, deserves our respect and consideration.

The primary purpose of Saint Catherine Catholic School is to provide a Catholic education in an environment permeated by the teachings of the Gospel. We support a positive approach to discipline. Our students need to realize that the observance of rules brings happiness to themselves and others. We strive to create a climate of controlled and responsible freedom.

The positive spiritual, academic, social, and emotional development of our students provides the basis for all disciplinary actions. Consequently, **the philosophy and policies of our system must be accepted. It may not suit every child or parent. We reserve the right to request that a child pursue his/her education elsewhere should the child and/or parent refuse to accept the school rules and regulations.**

Our students are expected to demonstrate:

- Appreciation for the blessing of a Catholic education
- Reverence during times of prayer and religious activities
- Participation in the liturgy, openness, and effort in learning their faith
- An effort to develop Christian leadership through service to others
- Respect for the rights of classmates, teachers, parents, and volunteers by contributing to an atmosphere that is safe and conducive to teaching and learning
- Appropriate effort in class, such as good study habits, regular attendance, and punctuality
- Respect for school and parish property, their own property, and the property of others
- Self-care: good grooming, personal appearance, and compliance with the uniform code
- Turning in work that is neat, complete, on time, and of good quality

Our staff members support and encourage our students through:

- Demonstrating professional interest and attention to every student
- Notifying parents when there is a concern about character development, cooperation with school or classroom policies, or issues with academic progress
- Providing appropriate support to correct the concern

Off-Campus Behavior

Schools in the Diocese of Venice reserve the right to discipline students for engaging in conduct that occurs off campus if it endangers the health and/or safety of others, adversely affects the education process or the reputation of the school, conflicts with the moral teachings of the Catholic Church, or is otherwise a violation of school policy. Examples include, but are not limited to, illegal activity, alcohol consumption, possession, use, or sale of drugs, inappropriate internet and social media activity, harassment or bullying, pornography, fighting, illegal use of firearms, theft, arson, and sexually inappropriate disciplinary penalties for off-campus conduct depending on the severity of the issue. Such penalties may include, but are not limited to, suspension, expulsion, detention, and/or restitution. The student may also be removed from extracurricular activities and sporting events, as well as field trips, dances, and graduation ceremonies.

Friend Request

Teachers and other school staff are instructed not to reply to student friendship requests on social media, for example Facebook, Snapchat etc. Teachers and students should not exchange emails, text messages, or other communications other than those necessary as part of the academic process. This includes current and former students who have not reached the age of 18. **This policy applies to both school and non-school email/media accounts.**

Conferences

Scheduled Parent-Teacher conferences for all grades are held each academic year. Parents are **required** to attend these conferences to ensure proper communication between home and school. The Conferences days are marked on the school calendar. Information will be sent home prior to these scheduled events. Please plan accordingly. Failure to attend Parent-Teacher conferences may result in your students' dismissal from school.

Divorced and Separated Parents

Divorced and separated parents must provide the school with a notarized copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree.

The school respects the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will, upon request, provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

Dress Code

Students should appear neat and well-groomed. School attendance helps prepare children for their future professional lives. Part of their training for life is to make good decisions in dress and grooming while on campus, just as a professional would in their careers. Students are to arrive at school properly attired. It is the student's responsibility to be in complete uniform when he/she comes to school each morning. Uniforms are to be the proper size and worn appropriately. Uniforms are to be neat and clean. Shirts **must** be tucked in always, except on PE days. Skirt length must not be shorter than 2 inches above the knee, shorts 2 inches above the knee, and pants or shorts with belt loops must have a belt.

School Uniform: School uniforms are available as described on the school's website.

Gym uniform for PE days. Students must wear their PE uniform for the full day on PE days. The PE uniform for children in Primary, Intermediate, and Middle school is:

- Light gray T-shirt (with school logo)
- Navy mesh shorts/sweatpants (shorts must not be shorter than 2 inches above the knees)
- White/Blue/Black socks
- Solid black sneakers

All Students are to wear a navy blazer on Mass days or any day of their choosing. On days when the temperature is below 60 degrees and the students have PE, they may wear navy sweatpants and sweatshirts with the school logo on them but NOT on Mass days.

Girls and Boys are permitted to wear all black sneakers during the week but not on Mass days.

No writing, marking, tattoos, or other inappropriate things on one's body.

A small traditional analog watch is acceptable. Watches with any kind of digital display are not allowed. All other jewelry is considered inappropriate for a uniform.

The hair is to be neatly groomed and of moderate length. Bandanas/ kerchiefs covering the head are not permitted. Hairstyles that entail significant contrasts of long and short hair, or unnatural

contrasts in color, are not acceptable. Hair styles that are extreme or bizarre, or that involve design or architecture are not permitted.

Girls

No make-up of any kind is to be worn while on school grounds. No nail polish or acrylic nails are allowed in any grade. Post earrings are allowed (one in each ear lobe). All hair clips must match the uniform. All other jewelry is considered inappropriate for a uniform. No piercings other than the ears are permitted. Bleached/dyed/colored hair and extreme hair styles are not allowed.

Boys

Hair is to be neatly trimmed. No extreme hairstyles, fades, etching/patterns, mushroom cuts, bleached/dyed/colored hair is allowed. Hair length must be above the ears, above the eyebrow, and off the collar. Hair should not extend more than one inch from the scalp. Any hairstyle that is a distraction to learning is inappropriate and will not be allowed. Boys should be clean-shaven.

NOTE: Inappropriate jewelry, articles of clothing, etc. are subject to confiscation.

Parents of students who violate the dress code will be contacted; students will remain in the office and be counted as absent until the situation is remedied. **The administration reserves the right to judge the appropriateness of the student's appearance.** These guidelines have been formulated to ensure an environment conducive to learning.

Emergency Procedures

Fire Drills

Fire Drills are conducted monthly so that students will understand clearly what is expected of them in the case of an actual fire. When a fire drill is conducted, the alarm will sound. Students will exit the classroom in a single line **without talking or running**. The teacher must be at the end of the line with his/her red emergency backpack containing the school register, walkie talkie, emergency handbook, and cell phone. The teacher must take attendance immediately after the class has reached its assigned position. If all is clear, the teacher will hold up the green all clear signs. If a student is missing, hold up the red alert sign and word must be sent immediately to an administrator via the walkie talkie. All students who are present in school must evacuate. Students who are away from their classes when the fire alarm goes off should go immediately to the area assigned to their classes or go out with another class and then report to their homeroom teacher. Teachers will be notified when it is time for students to return to class. All students must return to class in silence.

Emergency School Closing

In the case of inclement weather, Saint Catherine Catholic School will follow the guidelines set by the Diocesan Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

These Guidelines are as follows:

- If the Highlands County Public Schools close due to an impending storm, Saint Catherine Catholic School MUST also close.
- Saint Catherine Catholic School MAY re-open before the public schools if the school building and roads are safe.
- Although the Diocese contacts the newspapers, TV, and radio stations, we are subject to the media's willingness to list our school closure and re-opening announcements. Any attempt at notification is subject to the availability of utility services.

Therefore, the following procedures will be utilized in the event Saint Catherine Catholic School re-opens earlier than the Highlands County Public Schools:

1. The school's phone messaging service and Email accounts will notify parents of the school re-opening. **Therefore, we ask you to keep the school office updated with your most current phone numbers (cell and land lines) and email account.**
2. There will be an updated message on the school's main answering machine.
3. Access Saint Catherine Catholic School (www.stcatheschool.org) or the Diocese (www.dioceseofvenice.org) for updated information.
4. MOST IMPORTANTLY – Please use your common sense and good judgment.

Fees:

Tuition Rates

PRE-K 3	1 Payment	2 Payments	10 Payments
8 AM- Noon	\$3,100.00	\$1,550.00	\$310.00
8 AM- 3 PM	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$500.00

PRE-K 4	1 Payment	2 Payments	10 Months
8-11 AM	No Charge-VPK	No Charge-VPK	No Charge-VPK
Part-time (8am -12pm)	\$3,700.00 less VPK rate	\$1,850.00 less VPK rate	\$370.00 less VPK rate
Full-Time (8 am – 3pm)	\$ 6,000.00 less VPK rate	\$3,000.00 less VPK rate	\$600.00 less VPK rate

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE	Yearly Rate	2 Payments	10 Months
Full Day: 8-3 PM	\$8,900.00	\$4,500.00	\$890.00

Notes:

- Only one scholarship can be applied per child.
- The Early Registration Fee is \$100.00 per student (before January 1st) for returning students. The fee increases to \$150 per student after January 1st.
- The Registration Fee is nonrefundable.
- Copies of school records can be provided for \$0.25 per page payable in cash (all other fees must be paid).

Re-registration and Re-Enrollment

This payment is due at the time of re-registration:

Early Re-Registration Returning Students (November-January 1st) \$100.00

Re-Registration (after January 1st) and Open Registration for New Students \$150.00

Students in 8th grade and Kindergarten will have a Graduation Fee due no later than September 30.

FACTS TUITION is a management company that Saint Catherine Catholic School uses for collection of the tuition. **All parents are required by the Diocese of Venice to utilize the service.**

Tuition Guidelines

1. Each family has the choice of paying tuition via one of the three plans:
 - a. Full payment due August 20th (\$15.00 FACTS Fee)
 - b. Two-payments due August 20th and November 20th (\$15.00 FACTS Fee)
 - c. 10 Month payments starting June 1st through May 1st (\$41.00 FACTS Fee)
2. Delinquent accounts will be notified and given a maximum of ten (10) days to make the delinquent payment. Parents will not have access to FACTS information for grades and reports.
3. If, after ten (10) days, the delinquent payment has not been made, a second notification will be attempted.
4. Any account delinquent after **sixty (60) days** may result in dismissal from the school.

Without fiscal stability, Saint Catherine Catholic School cannot continue to provide students with high quality Catholic education. Fiscal stability is only possible with the cooperation of all families involved. The role of the School Finance Committee of the School Board, is to ensure that needed operational funds derived from tuition be both timely and sufficient, and to utilize a policy concerning late or overdue payments. Anytime a problem arises with tuition not paid through FACTS, this committee is notified, and action is taken accordingly. Parents sign an agreement each year to follow these guidelines. This policy is intended to serve the needs of the entire community.

After-School Program and Fees

For full description of program information, please see the “Parental Reference Sheet” that is available from the Enrollment Specialist.

Fee for One Child:

- \$50.00 per week
- \$180.00 per month

Fee for Two or more children will be double the single child rate.

\$25.00 After-school Registration Fee, once a year. This will be added to your first invoice on FACTS.

LATE FEE: \$10 late fee will apply every 15 minutes after 6:00 PM. After three late fees, the family may be excluded from the program.

Aftercare space is limited and will be allocated on a first-come/first-served basis with priority given in the order of monthly, weekly, then daily students. Parents should contact the school prior to sending their student to aftercare to ensure that space is available. Students sent to aftercare without prior approval may be charged an additional fee of up to \$100 per occurrence.

Morning Care

Morning care will be available from 7:00AM to 7:30AM for a fee of \$10/week per child with a maximum of \$20/week per family. Morning care space is limited and will be available on a first come, first served basis.

Delinquent Accounts

If your tuition is made monthly and you do not have sufficient funds in your checking account or savings account for a FACTS deduction, FACTS will attempt to debit your account a total of **three times** to deduct the total for the current month. If they are unable to deduct your monthly tuition, you will be notified by FACTS and the school office, and you will be assessed a late fee. If no attempt is made to pay within a week after you have received notification from FACTS, you will be required to meet with a school representative to discuss your situation and tuition payments.

If there is a financial hardship and the tuition payment cannot be made, the parent(s)/guardian must contact the school and set up an appointment to discuss payment options. The parent(s)/guardian have the responsibility to inform the principal as soon as possible of any change in maintaining your financial obligation. This will not relieve you of your financial responsibility but will enable the principal and parents to work toward a resolution. Failure to pay your financial obligation may result in your child's report card or student record to be withheld until full payment is received.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is allocated during the current school year. If the parent indicates a need for financial assistance, a request form must be completed. All financial assistance forms are the same throughout the Diocese of Venice and are processed through FACTS. There is a \$30.00 Family Application Fee.

All families will be required to show a FACTS application and verification that they have applied for all scholarships (if this is a hardship, see school office). Families are also asked to show application and denial from Step-Up or AAA Scholarships. Payments can be divided into 10 installments if they begin in August, 11 installments if they begin in July, 12 installments if they begin in June. The tuition management company charges a one-time yearly fee per contract with them, usually one fee per family. The payments are automatically withdrawn from the family's savings or checking account. The tuition management company charges a penalty fee for each time they are unable to withdraw funds from the account.

Students who withdraw during the school year may forfeit school provided financial aid for the entire year so that those funds can be used to support students committed to Catholic education.

Field Trips

Field trips are considered part of the curriculum in all grades. They are educational and enrich the experiences of the child. Students can be denied participation in a field trip if they fail to meet behavioral requirements. The permission slip form from the Diocese of Venice will be sent home in advance of the field trip and should be returned by the prescribed deadline. Only those students who return the permission slip signed on time by a parent will be allowed to go on the field trip. This permission slip cannot be altered or added in any way. **The school cannot accept letters stating that the child may go on the field trip. Phone calls will not be accepted in lieu of the Diocesan permission slip form. Volunteer drivers are not permitted.**

Field Trips should be coordinated with a teacher and approved by the principal. Personal field trips are unexcused absences. Unapproved personal field trips coordinated with multiple students may result in the students' withdrawal from school.

Fingerprinting

In accordance with Diocesan policy, all parents and family members must have Diocesan cleared fingerprints on file in the school office and attend a Safe Environment Training before they can volunteer on campus, participate in field trips, or join their child for lunch. A fingerprinting fee will be required for all parents and volunteers. To schedule your fingerprints and the training please call the school office. Instructions on the fingerprinting process can be found on our website.

Volunteers on the SCCS property do not hold SCCS responsible or liable for any accidents or injuries while performing volunteer duties.

Volunteers must sign in at the front office. Volunteer hours can be accrued through a variety of services to the parish and school including, but not limited, to the following:

- Assistance to teachers (teacher directed in classroom or at home)
- School fundraising programs
- Special school activities
- Coaching and/or assisting with school sports activities
- Library assistants/reading group
- Sale of School fundraisers during weekend masses
- Service on the School Board committees/PTO
- Lunch mothers
- Room moms
- Book Fair Volunteers

Forgotten Materials

Should a student forget an assignment, materials, or items needed for class, the school office will not interrupt the learning environment during the school day to deliver any forgotten items. Forgotten medication or lunches will be accepted by the office staff and will notify the student at an appropriate time.

Fundraising Policy

The Parent Teacher Organization is responsible for many school fundraising activities and projects all of which benefit our school. Parents will be notified of all events and activities by the PTO in advance. Because tuition alone does not cover the cost of educating a child, SCCS Families are required to participate in at least two school fundraisers each year, according to their financial contract. **Families who choose not to participate in fundraising activities may be required to pay the additional cost of educating their child above the standard tuition rate.**

Grading Scales

Students in K-2 will be using the Diocese of Venice skills-based report card with the following scale. The key will include all specials.

E- Exceeds expectations
M- Meets expectations
SP- Shows progress toward expectations
I – Improvement needed
X – Below grade level

The following grade scale for **students in grades 3-and above** is legislated for schools in the Diocese of Venice, as well as the Standards Proficiency scale below. Grades will be numeric, and the equivalent is listed below.

A (90-100%) Outstanding Achievement
B (80-89%) Above Average Achievement
C (70-79%) Average Achievement
D (60-69%) Below Average Achievement
F (0-59%) Unsatisfactory Achievement

Conduct/Effort and Specials Grading Key

O = Outstanding
S = Satisfactory
N = Needs Improvement
U = Unsatisfactory

Quarter core subject grades for students in grades 3 and above are reflective of a student's performance in meeting grade level standards and benchmarks.

Progress Reports will be sent home quarterly as well as Report Cards. Conferences will be conducted three times per year to discuss a student's overall progress.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of an education program. It is intended to reinforce skills and to develop initiative, independent thinking, and responsibility. A daily amount of homework is to be expected at each grade. Providing practice and enrichment, homework is a serious and essential portion of the Saint Catherine Catholic School curriculum.

Homework should be turned in on the due date and during the class for which the homework was assigned. If homework is not turned in, the student will receive a zero and/or be assigned lunch detention. Late work will not be accepted except in the case of an excused absence.

We urge parents to help their children develop good study habits early in life by setting aside a definite time for study each night. Children should study away from television and other disturbing noises.

Homework help will be available in aftercare. It is the student's responsibility to ask for the help they need. Aftercare workers are not responsible for making sure your student completes their homework. It is imperative that students take responsibility for their work.

Honor Roll

The purpose of the honor roll is to reward outstanding scholastic achievements. We honor students in grades 3 and above that are highly motivated, responsible, and hard working. These qualities are reflected in their schoolwork.

Qualifications for Honors (Based on Core Classes):

Principal's List: Average of all classes is between 95 – 100, with no grade below 90.

First Honors: Average of all classes is between 90 – 94, with no grade below 85.

Second Honors: Average of all classes is between 85-89, with no grade below 80.

Good Citizenship

Perfect Attendance

Honors are based upon the student's average grade for the quarter. All grades for core classes for that quarter must average out to 87 and above to qualify for honors.

*****Students who are eligible for the Honor Roll cannot have served an after-school detention or suspension during the quarter.*****

Immunizations

The State of Florida, and Florida Administrative Code Rules require all students entering and attending school to be immunized. **All student's immunization records must meet state requirements for them to attend Saint Catherine Catholic School. Saint Catherine Catholic School does not honor religious exemptions.**

Pre-K (age-appropriate doses as indicated):

- * DTaP vaccine (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis)
- * Polio vaccine
- * MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, rubella)
- * Hepatitis B vaccine
- * Varicella vaccine (or date of disease)
- * Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) vaccine
- * Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine (Prevnar) (Effective January 1, 2008, for children aged 2 to 59 months)

Kindergarten and above:

- * 4-5 doses of DTaP vaccine (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis)
- * 3-5 doses of polio vaccine (last one after age 4)
- * 2 doses of MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, rubella)
- * Hep B (3 Doses)
- * 2 doses of varicella vaccine or date of disease (year) as verified by parent or healthcare provider

Additional Immunization Requirements for 7th Grade Entry

In addition to compliance with all other immunization requirements, children entering, attending, or transferring to the seventh grade in Florida schools must complete the following:

- One Tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap)

Internet Access

Parents should carefully monitor their children's use of the internet. During school hours, monitoring takes place at Saint Catherine Catholic School. Before students are permitted to access the internet at school, an Acceptable Use Policy form signed by both the parent and the student must be on file. **No personal use of electronic equipment is permitted during the day or in after-school.** Engagement in social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, etc., will result in disciplinary action if the content of the parent's or student's blog/message includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, church, or SCCS students.

Lost and Found

PLEASE MARK ALL CHILDREN'S CLOTHES AND BELONGINGS WITH FULL NAMES WITH A PERMANENT MARKER.

Lost and found articles will be placed in the front office. Every effort will be made to return lost items. If an unmarked item is not claimed within 15 days, the item will be donated.

Lunches

Saint Catherine Catholic School provides families the option of ordering a hot lunch for their child each day. The hot lunch is individually wrapped and provided by Sophie's Cafe. Parents may also opt to pack a lunch for their child. Parents should avoid candy or sodas in their child's lunch. The monthly lunch menu is available to parents on our website. Parents order lunches through FACTS and must complete this by 9:00 p.m. the night before to ensure their child receives lunch. Please understand that mistakes will happen, and we will do everything in our power to provide food for your child. In the event of a mistake, we will contact you by phone before giving your child any food.

For the safety of our students, faculty, and staff, parents may not have food delivered to our campus.

Medical Forms and Medication

All medications, whether prescribed or over the counter, are considered a drug, and the school must ensure proper handling and dispensing of any drug. An **Authorization for Medical Form** (available at the office) must be completed before any student can receive medication at school. This includes and is not limited to cough drops, sore-throat lozenges, aspirin, or acetaminophen. Medication must be on the original pharmacy label showing the child's name, name of medication and directions for administration. We suggest that you ask the pharmacist to prepare two containers: one to stay in school and one to keep at home.

All medication must be kept in the school office. This policy includes non-prescription medication as well as prescription medication. A note should be sent to the teacher explaining the need for medication and the dosing schedule so that the teacher can remind the student to go to the office at the proper time.

ILLNESSES

It is important for the health of all students and staff that a child does not attend school when sick. The following guidelines are offered as appropriate reasons to keep your child home from school until his or her symptoms are gone, or a health care provider has cleared your child to return to school. Please keep your child home if they have any of the following:

1. Conjunctivitis/Pinkeye (requires a doctor's note that the student may return to school and is not contagious)
2. Cough that is persistent and productive with thick or constant nasal drainage. (Exception: may attend school for mild cold symptoms)
3. Diarrhea (student should not return to school until symptom-free for at least 24 hours after the last episode and tolerating solid food).
4. Fever of 100.0 F. or higher (student must be fever-free, without fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Advil/Motrin for 24 hours before returning to school).
5. Flu or Flu-like illness (fever, body aches, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, fatigue). Students must be fever-free, without fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Advil/Motrin for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

6. Impetigo (student may return to school 24 hours after treatment is started. Lesions should be covered to prevent the spread of infection to others).
7. Rash of unknown origin and/or the area is too large to be covered by a band aid (requires a doctor's note to return to school)
8. Sore throat with fever (student must be fever-free without fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Advil/Motrin for at least 24 hours before returning to school).
9. Strep Throat (student may return to school 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started and is fever-free).
10. Vomiting (student should not return to school until symptom-free for at least 24 hours after the last episode and tolerating solid food).

Head Injury

If a student hits their head during the school day, a parent will be contacted, and they may need to pick their child up.

Head Lice Policy

When a student is found to have head lice, the parent will be called, and the student is sent home for treatment and removal of nits. Upon returning to school, the student will report to the principal or designee with parent/guardian to be checked for the absence or presence of nits. Only when the student is found to be nit free will that student be permitted to return to class. When head lice are reported in a class, all students in that class shall be checked for the presence of nits. Parents will then be notified that head lice were present in the classroom.

Health Screening Requirements

Under the direction of the Highlands County Health Department, we have a program to safeguard the health of our students.

The program includes:

Vision Screening: Grades K, 1, 3, 6

Hearing Screening: Grades K, 1, 3, 6

Scoliosis Screening: Grade 6

Screenings are not diagnostic but are helpful in identifying students who have results outside the normal limits. Signed permission slips from parent or guardian will be requested for all screenings.

If a teacher notices a specific problem with a student, he/she will advise the school office and parents, or guardians will be notified.

Operating School Norms

During transition times, students will be expected to walk silently to their next class or scheduled event. Based on our Root Beliefs, students are expected to follow a schoolwide behavioral system to positively impact all.

Parents as Partners

As partners in the educational process at Saint Catherine Catholic School, we ask parents:

1. To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
 - ☐ Gets to bed early on school nights
 - ☐ Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
 - ☐ Is dressed according to the school dress code
 - ☐ Completes assignments on time; and
 - ☐ Has lunch purchased or a **nutritional** bagged lunch every day
2. To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences and attend all Home & School meetings
3. To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers
4. To meet all financial obligations to the school
5. To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and/or health
6. To complete and return to school any requested information promptly
7. To support the religious and educational goals of the school
8. To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
9. To treat teachers and staff with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems
10. To monitor student's academic progress by talking with your child, reviewing school work sent home, and initiating contact with the teacher in a timely manner if you see issues of concern

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

This is an extension of both the school and family communities. Your active involvement is important. Information on the PTO Board meetings will be sent out from the Principal's Office. The function of the PTO is to provide activities for students and parents, organize volunteer efforts, and perform fundraising for the school. Reminders of upcoming activities are listed on the school website.

Physicals

Students are required to have a current physical on file each year. **Physicals should be done after June 1st and before August 1st.**

Prayer

Prayer is an integral component of our faith expression and the centering element of our lives as Catholic Christians. Prayer and prayer rituals are incorporated into every aspect of our school day. Morning and afternoon prayers are celebrated each day with the entire school.

Promotion/Retention

Promotion and retention are based on individual assessment of student progress. If a student is a possible candidate for retention, parents will be notified via written communication or direct conference no later than the end of the third quarter.

Rainy Day Procedures

Please remember that rainy days might cause procedures to be irregular. Drivers will need to be extra cautious and patient.

Reporting Misconduct

All employees and agents of a district school board, charter school or private school have a duty to report misconduct. If you are aware of or observe misconduct, report all allegations or suspicions of misconduct by an instructional personnel member to your school administrator or district contact. Report allegations or suspicion of misconduct by your school administrator to your district contact. Document the activities or details of the events. Secure evidence (if applicable). Diocese of Venice, 1000 Pinebrook Road, Venice, Florida 34285, (941) 484-9543.

Sacramental Preparation

Sacraments are beautiful spiritual events in the lives of individual Catholics and of our parish as a faith community. The sacrament of communion is prepared by our school wide religion teacher.

Typically, students are prepared for sacraments as follows:

- First Reconciliation & Communion – 2nd grade and up

These sacramental preparations demand certain key prerequisites:

- Parents must be involved in the student's preparation and attend the required meetings, sessions and/or retreats as needed. Many of these events will occur outside of the regular school schedule so that all families preparing for sacraments of initiation can come together as a parish community of faith.
- In preparing for each sacrament, it is important to understand that Sacraments celebrate key spiritual events in our lives and **help affirm the faith that is already being practiced**. For this reason, it is important that parents and their children practice the faith, especially through regular attendance at Sunday Mass.

School Advisory Board

The School Advisory Board of Saint Catherine Catholic School works in conjunction with the pastor and school administration to ensure a sound education program at Saint Catherine Catholic School. The School Advisory Board is made up of the pastor or administrator of Saint Catherine Parish, up to nine nominated representatives who serve a three-year term, and one representative appointed for a one-year term. Parish representation is taken into consideration.

The School Advisory Board is a consultative, advisory body to the administration of Saint Catherine Catholic School. The board also advises school administration regarding the adequacy of school policies and effectiveness of their implementations, long range planning, and the support of local policies.

Safe Environment Training

Please refer to the section on Fingerprinting.

School Pictures

Individual school pictures are scheduled during school time. There is also a make-up day for those students not in school on the day school pictures are scheduled. These dates are marked on the school calendar and specific instructions will be sent home. Fall – school/class pictures. Spring – dress-up with Sunday best. No make-up.

Service Hours

Every family registered at Saint Catherine Catholic School is required to contribute 20 volunteer hours per family to the school during the school year, to assist in the progression of our school. Hours must be documented in FACTS and approved by faculty or staff members with direct knowledge of the hours served. Opportunities to volunteer are virtually endless. The PTO helps parents and guardians find volunteer opportunities that fit their schedule and lifestyle. Teachers and Instructional Assistants may also facilitate parents and guardians in finding hours. Whether it is helping in the lunchroom/classroom during the school day or yard work on the weekends, the school is constantly looking for volunteers to help improve our school. In addition, volunteer hours served at any of our parishes may count toward volunteer hours. Any hours that are not fulfilled will be billed at \$10.00 per hour in the same manner as tuition debt and may also affect a family's eligibility for financial aid.

Spiritual Development

School Mass/Liturgy

Religion is taught in each grade and is reinforced by a Liturgy/School Mass. Students are required to wear the appropriate uniform for all Masses and to practice reverence for all liturgies by being on time. On Mass days, students are to sit with their class. Parents are welcome to attend and are invited to engage in prayers and worship at Mass.

Mass on Holy Days of Obligation

Each family making a commitment to Catholic education is encouraged to celebrate the Eucharist with our larger parish community at Mass. Please note that the scheduled school Mass does not exempt our obligation to attend Mass on the weekend. On Holy Days of Obligation, parents will be responsible for taking their children to Mass unless scheduled by the school. On days when we do not attend Mass as a school, your child will be excused for the duration of Mass if you choose to take them during school hours.

Service Program

The philosophy of the student service program is to provide students with hands-on experiences in building the Kingdom of God: to have an understanding for the needs of the larger community, plant seeds of hope, compassion, and mercy in the hearts of our children as they serve the poor or those most in need and develop leadership skills to empower students to be involved in social justice. Students are required to participate in class projects. Middle school students are required to complete service hours as follows:

6th Grade – 10 Service Hours

7th Grade – 20 Service Hours

8th Grade – 30 Service Hours

Serving as an alter server, lector, etc. for a weekend Mass will be counted as two service hours for each Mass served. Students must have the priest or coordinator sign their service log (bring a pen). Serving at the school Mass will count as one service hour.

Student Retreats

Retreats provide a spiritual experience for students to grow in their relationship with Jesus through planned activities and prayer in a different setting away from school, typically on weekends. The school organizes retreats for students throughout the school year. Students are required to participate in retreats. More information will be announced in the year. Eighth grade retreat is mandatory for graduation.

Religious Education

All SCCS school students are required to attend formal classes in Religion. It is expected that all students, regardless of religious affiliation or belief, will participate fully in the religious/spiritual activities at the school, including Mass, liturgies, and prayer services. Diocesan guidelines are followed to develop the curriculum plan for each grade, and are centered on four major themes:

- Doctrine and Scripture
- Prayer and Liturgy
- Faith Response/Morality
- Family Life

Health Education and Human Sexuality

Family life education is the primary right and responsibility of the parents. Throughout the school year we will keep you informed of programs your children will participate in from the Diocesan curriculum on Health Education and Human Sexuality and provide age-appropriate content and self-awareness. Diocesan approved curriculum: Collier County Abstinence Program (CCAP) endorsed by Bishop Dewane.

Smoke Free Environment

Saint Catherine Catholic School is a smoke free and tobacco free environment. This includes all e-cigarettes and vapes. Use of these products is prohibited on all school property.

Social Activities

Social activities appropriate to the various age groups in the school may be planned during the year. However, a social activity will carry the sponsorship of the school only when announcements for it come from the school administration or it has the administration's explicit endorsement. The school feels strongly that certain social activities are not generally suitable at the level of development found in elementary school students and such gatherings are not encouraged. Any unapproved activities that negatively impact the learning environment of the school are prohibited and may result in families being asked to withdraw from the school.

Solicitation

Any solicitation, other than school or parish fundraising projects, is not permitted within Saint Catherine Catholic School.

Special Needs

Saint Catherine Catholic School is committed to helping all children with special needs within the means that are at our resource disposal. Saint Catherine Catholic School cannot guarantee specific accommodations or achievements of any students with special needs.

Standardized Tests

All schools within the Diocese of Venice must participate in the Diocesan approved standardized testing program. Grades 2 and above take the Terranova NEXT with Inview Cognitive Assessment. Terranova is a national norm referenced achievement test. This means your student's scores are indicative of how he/she did on the test as compared with other students in the same grade from across the nation who took the same test at the same time during the school year (February and March).

The tests results give parents and educators an objective picture of how their child is progressing in school. Scores can also help show whether a student is doing better in some subject areas than in others. Remember students cannot pass or fail a test such as the Terranova; it is a source of information about your child's achievement at a certain point in his/her education. Teachers use this information to enable them to

work on the weakness and strengths of the students. Students will also be administered a Performance Assessment to determine whether they are working to their full potential.

The Renaissance Star 360 Test is given 3 times a year to show growth in Reading and Mathematics. This is a test administered in-house.

Title I is available throughout the county for students who need extra help in Reading and Mathematics.

Volunteers are available to tutor students once they have fulfilled the requirements of the Diocese. After school tutoring will be offered to students with learning deficits as determined by the administration, as resources allow. Parents are notified if a student is determined to need additional help.

Student Records

Accurate and current files for each student are maintained in the school office. Student records are always handled in a confidential matter.

Senate Bill 622, Omnibus Education Act, amends 232.23 Florida Statutes; require each school to maintain a permanent cumulative record for each pupil containing student data, as prescribed by Regulations of the State Board of Education.

The Act exempts the cumulative record from the Florida Public Records Law by limiting access of the record only to the superintendent, the professional staff of the school, the parent/guardian of the pupil, a court of competent jurisdiction, and to such other persons authorized in writing by the parent/guardian or principal.

The school voluntarily complies with the Buckley Amendment (1974) and allows parents to see the student's cumulative record file. A request to see a student's file must be put in writing and must be in the presence of a witness delegated by the principal.

Student Safety

Both the Diocese of Venice has given specific guidelines, and Saint Catherine Catholic School has measures in place to protect your children to ensure their safety. Wrongful conduct on the part of employees, volunteers, coaches, or students will not be acceptable.

Technology

Technology – Acceptable Use Policy

Technology is a valuable and real-world educational tool. St. Catherine will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response to ensure responsible use of technology. The policy outlined below applies to all technology use, including but not limited to, Internet use. *The Acceptable Use Policy for Technology* applies to all students, faculty, administrators, staff, volunteers, or community members allowed access to school technology resources. In some cases, outside or personal uses of technology may be applicable under this policy.

Student School Assigned E-Mail accounts

- E-mail services provided by the school are to be used only for the exchange of appropriate, school-related information.
- E-mail is closed to any address that does not end with stcatheschool.org. Students can only communicate within the school community. In RARE cases, other, individual email addresses may be allowed for communication, but they must be approved by the principal.
- The use of e-mail during class is prohibited unless authorized by the classroom teacher.
- Students should always use appropriate language in their e-mail messages.
- No inappropriate e-mail will be tolerated, including derogatory, obscene, or harassing messages. E-mail messages of an abusive or harassing nature will be regarded as a major violation and will be subject to a disciplinary response, which may result in expulsion.
- Chain letters of any kind and spam are prohibited. Chain letters are defined as any email message asking you to pass information or messages on to other individuals or groups via e- mail.
- Students are prohibited from accessing anyone else's e-mail account.
- E-mail etiquette should be observed. In general, only messages that one would communicate to the recipient in person should be written.
- Only approved e-mail programs may be used for student e-mail.
- School e-mail addresses are not to be given to ANY websites, companies, or other third parties without the explicit permission of a teacher or administrator. This includes, but is not limited to, any site one would use to set up an account on, such as Facebook, Instagram, Animal Jam, X (Twitter), Xbox, etc....
- Only school-related attachments may be sent on the school e-mail system.
- Email services are monitored for vulgar language, attachments, and proper use always, on and off campus.

Scope of Use

We recognize that the digital world allows anytime, anywhere access. Uses mentioned in this policy apply to **inside school** use and may in certain instances apply to personal technology use and/or uses **outside of school**. Where personal outside use of technology threatens a likelihood of substantial disruption in school, including harming or interfering with the rights of other students or teachers to participate fully in school or extracurricular activities, these activities may be viewed as a violation of the *Acceptable Use Policy for Technology* and may be subject to the disciplinary measures found herein. The types of electronic and digital communications referenced in this AUP include, but are not limited to, social networking sites, cell phones, digital cameras, text messaging, email, voice over ip, chat rooms, and instant messaging.

Technology Goal

The school's goal is to prepare its members for life in a digital global community. To this end, St. Catherine Catholic School will embrace the **ISTE (*International Society for Technology in Education*)** which...

- Integrates technology within the curriculum to enhance teaching and learning.
- Encourages critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.
- Facilitates evaluation and synthesis of information.
- Encourages ethical practices and provides education for internet safety and digital citizenship.
- Provides a variety of technology-based tools and related technology skills.

Responsibilities of Users

Our school will make every effort to provide a safe environment for learning with technology including Internet filtering and safeguards. The students, faculty, administrators, staff, and school community are granted the privilege of using the computer hardware and software peripherals, and electronic communication tools including the Internet. With this privilege comes the responsibility for appropriate use. *The Acceptable Use Policy for Technology* is provided to each student/parent annually. Every student and parent/guardian must sign an *Acceptable Use Policy for Technology* acknowledging acceptance of ECS's expectations.

Grades K-8 will be provided with iPad agreements upon the receipt of the iPad or during registration. iPads may stay in the classrooms or go home with students, as determined by the classroom teacher.

Policy Violations

The use of computer/technology is a privilege, not a right. Vandalism or intentional modification of system settings is prohibited. The system administrators may close an account at any time, as necessary. The administration, faculty, and staff of the school may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges.

Violation of the *Acceptable Use Policy for Technology* will be dealt with by the administration of the school. Violation of these rules may result in any or all the following:

- Loss of use of the school network, computers, and software, including Internet access. The student will be expected to complete work on paper or a non-networked, stand-alone computer system if available.
- Issuance of detentions or suspensions.
- Disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to, dismissal and/or legal action by the school, civil authorities, or other involved parties.

- Parents are responsible for the replacement/repair cost of the iPad if damaged or lost.

Title I

Our school, through the Highlands County Board of Education, will offer students the opportunity to participate in resources from Title I if they qualify based on the survey they fill out. Title 1 is a federally funded program which uses skill-based materials to assist students who may need extra practice or enrichment in Reading and Math skills. This program is offered to our students locally. Parents of students who qualify will be notified at the beginning of the school year and are required to attend a Title Meeting annually. Parents must sign and return permission forms for students to be eligible for Title 1 services.

Transfer of Ownership

You will be notified 30 days before a transfer of ownership occurs via email.

Tutoring

After school tutoring will be available by invitation. School administration will determine which students need tutoring based on test scores and parents will be given the option of signing their student up for tutoring.

Video/Photograph Release

In accordance with the Diocesan Policy, parents are required to sign a release for their children's photos not to be used relating to publicity for the school. If not signed at registration, you get the form from our main office. Please sign and return.

Visitors

Visits to and contact with the school are encouraged in many formal and informal circumstances. There is, however, a specific procedure to follow to ensure academic continuity and to minimize interruption and distraction of the learning process. All persons entering the school during school hours **must** sign in at the school office, state the location of volunteer work, and receive a visitor pass.

Volunteer passes will only be issued to those who have completed the Diocesan fingerprinting process. This is for the protection of all the students. All messages to students or school personnel during school hours must be channeled through the school office. **No adult is ever permitted in the classrooms with any messages during school hours unless given explicit permission by the school office.** Any messages for the entire school body or a particular class or group of students must first be submitted to the school administration for approval and delivery.

Under no condition may a teacher be disturbed during school hours. An appointment with a teacher may easily be arranged by leaving a written message or contacting them via e-mail/phone messages.

Weapons

The possession or use of any form of weapon on school property at any time is forbidden.

Withdrawals and Transfers

In the event of a student withdrawal or transfer, parents should complete a ***Withdrawal Form*** at the admissions office. All transcripts and records of the student must be requested by and mailed directly to the new school. In case the name and address of the new school is not definite at the time of departure, please notify the school office as soon as this information has been established, and records will be forwarded. **NO** records may be released without written parental permission or until payment arrangement of delinquent tuition is made. When an academic appraisal is sought from families of transferring students, the administration will approve any needed forms and mail them directly to the new school. SCCS needs at least 72 hours' notice prior to any forms being mailed.

Students who are withdrawn or transferred during the school year may forfeit any financial assistance provided by the school. Forfeiture may result in parents repaying the school for any financial assistance provided.

SUFS funding is prorated for days attended, and any refund of SUFS funds will be returned to SUFS.

SCCS Parent-Student Handbook Rules and Regulations

Parent Agreement 2025-2026

As directed by the Office of Schools of the Diocese of Venice, each parent must sign a form indicating that he/she has read, understands, and accepts the directive, rules, and regulations, as outlined in the school Parent-Student Handbook. In this regard, you are asked to sign on the line below to indicate your agreement with this directive. This is a requirement for your child to attend our school and must be completed within the first week of school.

The Parent-Student Handbook is part of the contractual agreement between the school and the parent and is essential to the smooth and informed day-to-day running of the school program. Parents having any concerns or questions about the contents of this handbook may call the school, and the principal will gladly discuss and help clarify any such issues.

Student Full Name _____

Grade _____

I, _____, understand and accept the policies and procedures and directive contained in the Saint Catherine Parent-Student Handbook. I have read the book and agree to follow the policies and procedures of the handbook. I also understand that the principal has the right to amend this handbook at any time.

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____

This form must be signed and returned within one week of the beginning of school.