



Guardian  
Catholic School

PARENT & STUDENT  
HANDBOOK  
2023 - 2024

*"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides,"*

Matthew 6:33.

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### **Agreement to Uphold School Policies as Stated in Handbook**

As a condition of enrollment, all parents and students are required to know and agree to support all school policies, rules and regulations as explained in the Parent/Student Handbook.

### **Right to Amend**

Guardian Catholic School reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be sent via the weekly newsletter, e-mail or other online or printed communication.

## MISSION and BELIEFS

*Our mission is to help each student attain their potential through high quality Catholic education in a Christ-centered environment that inspires each of us to think, learn, achieve, pray and serve our communities.*

### We Believe...

- Each person possesses a God given dignity that is to be respected by all.
- Education is a collaborative effort and the shared responsibility of parents, students, school, and community.
- The Christian principles we teach will enable students to act justly, make responsible moral judgments, respect others, and fulfill their responsibilities as citizens in today's global community.
- The celebration and teaching of the Catholic faith and traditions are integral to Catholic education.
- Prayer, worship, and service to others are essential for spiritual growth.
- The teaching and values of Jesus are integrated into all aspects of education.
- A school-wide approach to teaching responsibility and promoting discipline is our way to achieve a safe and civil school environment.
- Research based practices are essential for developing critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Teachers are committed to ongoing professional development and spiritual formation in order to provide the best teaching practices for our students in a Christ-centered environment.
- It is the role of the faculty and staff to create a learning environment that is responsive to the individual needs of students.
- On-going communication in a welcoming atmosphere leads to relationships that strengthen unity and community.

In keeping with Guardian Catholic School’s mission to provide high quality Catholic education in a Christ-centered environment, all teachers are qualified to provide effective curriculum and instruction. All teachers meet diocesan and state requirements and have a bachelor's degree; in addition, many have a master’s degree or higher. All teaching staff also participates in ongoing catechist formation to support them in their role in the faith formation of the students.

What should a graduate look like?

A Catholic school graduate is a knowledgeable, compassionate individual, dedicated to service and able to face the challenges of the future with faith, hope, and love.

**SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION**

Guardian Catholic School  
4920 Brentwood Avenue  
Jacksonville, Florida 32206

Telephone: (904) 765 - 6522  
Website: [www.guardiancatholic.com](http://www.guardiancatholic.com)  
School Information System: FACTS SIS

Principal – Jennifer Churchill  
Assistant Principal – Jenny Lord  
Early Learning Director, AP – Diane DeCarlo

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

Early Morning Care PK-8 <sup>th</sup> am	6:45 am – 7:50
(supervised before care in the cafeteria, breakfast provided to students at 7am)	
School Office	7:00 am – 3:30 pm
School Day Hours	
PK3 – PK4	7:50 am – 11:30 am
K through 8th Grades	7:50 am – 2:55 pm

## ADMISSION POLICY

Guardian Catholic School is open to all students regardless of religion, race, color, sex, or country of national origin. We have a goal of helping all children reach their full potential intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. We accept students who are able to manage in a regular education setting. Limited resources prevent us from accepting students who would require more than simple accommodations.

Students entering PreK-3 must be three years old on or before September 1 AND fully potty-trained by the first day of school; PreK-4 students must be four on or before September 1; kindergarten students must be five years of age on or before September 1; first graders must be six years of age on or before September 1 and must have successfully completed kindergarten.

Children registering for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten must present a birth certificate, social security number, physical report and up-to-date shot records. All other students entering Guardian Catholic School for the first time must present a birth certificate, social security card, physical report, up-to-date shot records and a report card including the most recent grading period. These items are required prior to attending class. The principal must approve registration and acceptance into the school.

All new students will be on probation for the first semester of school. They must show by their conduct, effort and passing grades that they can maintain the academic and behavioral standards required of students attending Guardian Catholic School. Students who fail to meet the requirements of the probation: (1) may be asked to leave Guardian Catholic School, or (2) may be given a longer probation period which will determine whether or not they may return the following year.

### TITLE IX

Guardian Catholic School adheres to the tenets of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Guardian Catholic School follows specific procedures and guidelines to ensure student safety during arrival and dismissal.

## ATHLETIC COMPETITION & ELIGIBILITY

Students in grades 5 through 8 may participate in basketball, soccer, softball, and track; priority is given to grades 6-8. Girls in grades 4 through 8 may try out for cheerleading. All are members of the Catholic Grade School Conference of the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Participation is determined by each student's grades, conduct and by the judgment of the principal and the coach. Eligibility is also subject to requirements set by the constitution of the Catholic Grade School League. Parents are responsible to provide transportation to and from athletic events. Coaches are not permitted to transport students.

Academic Eligibility Rules shall apply to all athletic and allied activities of the Catholic Grade School Conference.

- a) *Passing grades* A student is academically ineligible if he/she receives two (2) grades (or more) of 69% (D) or below in a major subject. Students who receive any one grade lower than 59% (F) or below will automatically be ineligible. Major subjects are Religion, Science, Social Studies, Math, English/Spelling, and Reading.
- b) *Times of Evaluation* Student grades will be evaluated at mid-quarter (progress reports) and at the end of the quarter (report cards) for continued eligibility.
- c) *Length of Suspension* If a student is academically ineligible, the length of the suspension is five (5) academic days for suspension at Progress Reports; ten (10) academic days for suspension at Report Cards. The suspension begins on the day following distribution of progress reports and/or report cards. Eligibility may be regained following the five (progress report) or ten-day suspension, if the grade(s) adhere to the rules of eligibility as stated in (a).
- d) *Conduct* A student may be ineligible based on conduct and misbehavior in the classroom. Ineligibility based on conduct is determined by Behavior Events and teacher/admin input.
- e) *Tryouts* All students are given equal opportunity to try out for all teams. Eligibility rules shall apply when a student is accepted on the team.
- f) *Transfer* If a student is ineligible and then transfers to another school, the ineligibility will be carried over to the next report card.
- g) *Ineligibility* The pastor and/or principal may at any time declare a student ineligible on the basis of poor school attendance or improper conduct.
- h) *FHSAA Rules* In accordance with FHSAA Rules, any student who repeats 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade and has played a school sanctioned sport, is ineligible to play that sport the

year he/she is repeating.

**Non-Academic Athletic Eligibility Rules** shall apply to all athletic and allied activities of the Catholic Grade School Conference.

- a) *Physicals and Parental Consent* The medical form (includes medical history, physician approved participation, and participation application) must be dated after June 1 of the previous school year and be kept on file at school. This medical form includes written parental consent signed by the parents and notarized. Physicals recorded on any form other than the one provided by the Catholic Grade School Conference will not be accepted.
- b) *Injuries* Any student not allowed to play because of injury, must have a –clear to play report from the physician before returning to play.
- c) *Transfers* Any student who transfers into a school after a sport season has begun is ineligible to play that sport.
- d) *Age Eligibility* If an athlete turns fifteen (15) before August 31 of the school year, he/she may not play that sport or any sport for that entire school year. Any principal or coach wishing to check the age of a player can contact the Commissioner’s office. The Commissioner will then contact the school involved requesting the birth certificate of the player in question.
- e) *Unsportsmanlike Conduct* Any athlete who strikes, curses, is removed from a game, threatens an official, or is guilty of any other related misconduct during a game, shall SERVE A MANDATORY SUSPENSION FOR THE NEXT GAME AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER SUSPENSION FOR A SPECIFIC TIME and, therefore, shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for a period of no more than ten (10) academic days. The effect of a suspension shall be to prohibit an individual player from taking part in interscholastic activity for a specified length of time for violation of the rules of this Conference. An appropriate committee of league coaches and official(s) involved shall determine a sanction that shall require the advice and consent of the principal(s) and the Superintendent of Schools. Eligibility may be recovered only by written request to the Superintendent through the Commissioner of the Catholic Grade School Conference. The Pastor or the Principal of the ineligible person’s school must endorse this written request.
- f) *Ineligible Players at Games* Ineligible players are not allowed to sit on the bench during any athletic contest. This includes academically ineligible players. The penalty for playing an ineligible player or for an ineligible player sitting on the bench shall be the loss of any game or games in which that player was involved while ineligible.

g) *Absence from School* A student may not attend a practice or game the day of a school absence. A student missing more than three (3) classes is considered absent for athletic competition.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance, prompt arrival at school, and remaining at school until dismissal are essential for each student's education. When a student is absent from school, a parent should call the office or email [Mrs. Carolyn Thomas at cthomas@guardiancatholic.com](mailto:cthomas@guardiancatholic.com) by 9:00 a.m. each day of the absence.

Students returning to school from an absence are required to present a written explanatory excuse from their parent(s) or legal guardian stating the cause for the absence. Failure to provide a note will result in an automatic unexcused absence. A physician's note is needed when the student (1) has been absent for three or more consecutive days, (2) has had surgery, (3) is returning to school after hospitalization, (4) has been under a doctor's care for a significant illness, or (5) is returning to school after being excluded because of a communicable disease.

Excused absences include the following: (1) illness or injury of the student; (2) serious illness or death in the student's family; (3) scheduled doctor or dentist appointment; (4) required court appearance or supervised visitation; and (6) having or being suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation, including, but not limited to head lice, ringworm, impetigo, and scabies.

Unexcused absences include but are not limited to the following: (1) pleasure trips; (2) suspension from school; (3) truancy; or (4) other avoidable absences that are not on the "excused absences" list.

Parents or guardians who need to pick up a child before dismissal for an important reason must stop at the office and sign the student out before the child will be permitted to leave. Early dismissals merely for the sake of convenience are not permitted.

A minimum attendance requirement of 37 days per grading period must be maintained to qualify a student for a passing grade for that quarter. This includes both excused and unexcused absences. Parents will be notified upon the fourth absence of the student within a quarter. After the sixth day of absence, official written notification will be sent to the parents requesting their cooperation in preventing further absences. Failure to improve attendance may result in the student's dismissal from the school and a failing grade in that quarter per subject missed.



If your child receives the Step Up for Students scholarship, the school is required to report quarterly whether or not your child's attendance meets Guardian Catholic School's attendance standard.

Parents of children in the VPK program are asked to see the section, –Voluntary PreK Attendance PolicyII included in this Handbook.

### **RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER ABSENCE(S)**

Students must be fever free (temperature of 99.9 F or lower), vomiting/diarrhea free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever and/or from vomiting/diarrhea will not be allowed to return to school the next day as this would not allow for the 24 hour protection of the entire school community.

#### ***Homework Policy due to Illness***

Missed assignments are the student or parent's responsibility to request make-up work immediately upon the student's return to school after an absence. Students who are absent have one day for each day of absence to make up the missed assignments, quizzes or tests. For example, a student who was absent three days would be given three school days to complete the missed work.

When a student is absent for **three or more days due to illness**, a parent may call the school office before 9:00 AM to arrange for homework assignments. Homework assignments may be picked up at the school office between 3:00 PM – 3:30 PM. Distance Learning is not being offered anymore.

#### ***Homework Policy due to Vacations/Planned Absences***

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility. Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences prior to vacations. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Please do not ask the teacher to make an exception in advance of an absence.

### **ABSENCES DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

Students needing medical appointments during school hours must be signed out by a parent in the front office. If the child returns to school during the same school day, he/she must be signed back into school in the office. Parents/guardians or others on the authorized pick up list may not go directly to a classroom to pick up a child. [It is helpful](#)

for the parent and school if parents call or email ahead of time to notify the school that the child will be leaving for an appointment. This allows the school to have the student ready for pick up. Students who are away from school for an appointment for 3 ½ hours or more will be counted as absent for ½ a day. Three (3) early withdrawals, each of which is less than 3 ½ hours, are considered a one-half day absence. Doctor and dentist appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible. Check the school calendar for days off and early dismissal dates as other possible times for making appointments.

### TARDINESS

Parents are encouraged to have children at school ten minutes prior to the start of school. Any student arriving after the designated starting time will be marked tardy. Students are required to be in the classroom at 7:50 A.M. A student who is tardy must report to the office to have his/her name removed from the absentee list and to receive a slip to be admitted to class late. Excessive tardies will have a direct impact on a student's academic evaluation and promotion to the next grade. After a student has reached 3 tardies within a quarter, the parent will be notified via email by the school. Three (3) tardies, each of which is less than 3 ½ hours, are considered a one-half day absence.

### RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER DISMISSAL OR STAYING ON CAMPUS

Students are not permitted to return to the school building/campus after dismissal unless accompanied by a teacher. Students who return to school after dismissal without a teacher or are found on campus after school unsupervised will be required to be picked up by the parent immediately. Students attending sports games or any school-sponsored event after school must be picked up from school by a parent and then accompanied by a parent for the entirety of the event/game(s). Students may not be dropped off and left unattended.

## BOOK FEE

The book fee covers all consumable books, classroom supplies, copy machine costs, and the rental of all hard-bound textbooks. Some—but not all—scholarships cover the cost of books. This fee is non-refundable after school starts.

## CATHOLIC RELIGION

All children attending Guardian Catholic School participate in Catholic religion classes, prayers and Mass. We foster openness and respect for all religions. Parents are encouraged to help foster their child's relationship with God by taking their child to a place of worship regularly.

## CELL PHONES

It is preferred that students do not bring cell phones to school. However, if a parent determines that a child needs to bring a cell phone to use after leaving school grounds, the following guidelines apply:

- Cell phones must be turned off and must be kept in the student's book bag during the school day and until the student leaves school property.
- The school is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones.
- Cell phones being used during the school day or at any time prior to leaving school property will be sent to the office and only released to a parent.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE

Up-to-date information is very important in case of emergencies and for school records. Parents/Guardians are requested to [update this information in FACTS SIS](#) and notify the School Office in writing of any change of address, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts.

## CHECKS

Checks will usually be accepted as a method of payment. However, following the issuance of one bad check, all future payments must be made with cash or money order. There will be a charge for returned checks; if the checks are not taken care of in a reasonable time, they may be sent to the State Attorney's office for prosecution and/or reported to the Credit Bureau. Any parent wishing to pay by check must write his/her driver's license number on each check and provide a copy of his/her drivers' license for the school file.

## CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local law enforcement agency. Reports should be made to Florida's Department of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will request of the investigator that the school be allowed to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews on school property. However, the school will follow the direction of the investigator with respect to these requests.

## CLOSING SCHOOL DUE TO BAD WEATHER

Guardian Catholic School will follow the decisions of the Office of Education of the Diocese of Saint Augustine in emergencies such as hurricanes. Announcements of canceled classes are communicated via text and email by the school.

## COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS & TEACHERS DURING SCHOOL DAY

All parents and visitors must report to the school office. Parents and other visitors are asked not to interrupt a teacher while class is in session for any reason. If a student is needed, the parent must go to the office and request that the student be called to the office. Items for students are to be left in the office and will be delivered by school personnel.

## CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

Guardian Catholic School reserves the right to make the final determination regarding a family's future enrollment. [All families are required to attend an orientation meeting with the principal and/or designated staff during enrollment.](#)

## CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK & PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

According to the policy of the Diocese of St. Augustine, all adults volunteering or working with the students must be fingerprinted for a criminal background check prior to involvement with the students and complete a Safe-Environment Training called Protecting God's Children. The diocesan forms, codes needed for Live Scan, and the fee schedule for the background check are available in the office. The Criminal Background check must be repeated every five (5) years.

These requirements protect the safety of our children. Parents who are not –official chaperones may not drive their car to a field trip destination with the plan of accompanying the class on the field trip.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum guides of the Diocese of St. Augustine are the basis of the school program and guide the selection of textbooks and instructional programs. These guides are updated and revised in accordance with sound educational research. The curriculum is available in the office for parental viewing.

## DISCIPLINE CODE

The purpose of the Discipline Policy for Guardian Catholic School is to ensure that proper order is maintained in a manner that is in keeping with the philosophy established by the Diocese of St. Augustine. All disciplinary action is directed toward the child's growth in self-knowledge, in self-discipline and in understanding of his/her Christian responsibilities. Administrators, teachers, staff members and parents work together to teach appropriate and Christian behavior.

Students are subject to the Discipline Code at all times while on school grounds and when representing the school at functions such as sporting events and field trips. Guardian Catholic School reserves the right to discipline a student whose actions, whether on campus or off, reflect discredit to Guardian Catholic School.

Guardian Catholic has adopted the Foundations Program for Safe and Civil Schools. The CHAMPS component is related to classroom management. Foundations fosters positive relationships within a caring and collaborative environment. Students are helped to make good choices through direct teaching, modeling and monitoring. Foundations is data-driven and focuses on continual growth and improvement. This positive environment with its structures and procedures supports a climate of learning and Christian living. Our structures and procedures are organized to promote successful behavior from all students.

We establish and communicate clear schoolwide and classroom behavior expectations with equitable responses to misbehavior, thus fostering positive academic engagement, decision making and behavioral/academic performance. Although we create an environment to support students in making good behavioral choices, we realize that sometimes students need increased structure and support to make better decisions. Therefore this policy encompasses a four tiered approach to addressing behavioral problems and their related consequences. It is our hope that this leveled system will help students in forming appropriate behavior responses to all situations.

Nothing in the Discipline Code precludes Guardian Catholic School's administrators, teachers, staff, and volunteers from alerting law enforcement authorities when violations of federal or state law are discovered.

### LEVEL 1

Level 1 misbehavior includes, but is not limited to, such things as minor disruptions, not completing assignments or homework, not following directions, teasing, minor disrespect, failing to be in the proper school uniform, running in the hall or other rule infractions in common areas. Classroom teachers and staff members assign consequences for misbehaviors at the first level.

### LEVEL 2

When any Level 1 misbehavior is repeated frequently, it becomes chronic and moves to Level 2. For Level 2 offenses, [teachers communicate and document this misbehavior via a Behavior Event within FACTS SIS. All Behavior Events are emailed to the parent so that the parent is aware of the misbehavior that occurred and can reinforce the school's expectations with their child.](#) Level 2 misbehavior includes any Level 1 infraction that becomes chronic, and these or similar behaviors: severe disruption, disrespect, chronic non-completion of assignments or homework, late completion and submission of homework, rude or indecent behavior, forging a parent's signature, name-calling, put-downs, profane language or gestures, repeated teasing, and behavior that might be gender or racially based. Teachers and staff members assign consequences that may include any Level 1 consequence as well as lunch detentions, recess detentions, and after-school detentions. Teachers will contact parents regarding the offense [via the Behavior Event email](#). A parent conference may be required.

### LEVEL 3

Level 3 offenses include any severe misbehavior; the student is sent to the office immediately. A Disciplinary Referral will be issued for any student involved in these or similar incidents:

1. Fighting / hitting
2. Sexual harassment
3. Bullying / harassment
4. Stealing
5. Physically dangerous behavior
6. Defiance
7. Gender, racial, or other gross teasing
8. Cheating
9. Repeated forgery
10. Destroying property
11. Obscenity
12. Flagrant disrespect to a person in authority (e.g., cursing at a staff member)
13. Consistent non-conformity to the dress code
14. Possession of pornographic material

Violations at this level always include a conference with the principal, parents, and involved staff members. Consequences are determined by the principal and administrative staff and may include suspension and/or expulsion. Other corrective actions may be assigned at the discretion of the principal.

After behavior referrals have been issued, the principal and administrative staff will determine whether the student should remain enrolled at Guardian Catholic School.

#### **Level 4**

Level 4 offenses include potentially illegal behavior:

1. Alcohol – the possession, transfer, use or sale of any alcoholic beverages
2. Drugs – the possession, transfer, use or sale of drugs or drug paraphernalia
3. Tobacco – the possession, transfer, use or sale of any tobacco product
4. Firearms – the possession of any firearm (including starter guns or parts thereof), or of any similar, destructive device
5. Weapons – the possession of any knife, metal knuckles, tear gas gun, chemical weapon, stun gun, BB gun, or other instrument or device that demonstrates the intent to go armed
6. Assault – any serious assault resulting in bodily injury
7. Sexual activity – consensual sexual activity between students

When the violation occurs, the student's parents/guardians will be called and informed of the violation and will be required to immediately pick up the student from school.

Students and parents will be informed either orally or in writing of the school rules that have been violated and of the specific grounds for disciplinary action. A conference will

be scheduled with the principal, parents, and involved staff members. The student will thereafter be suspended from school until a decision is reached on the consequences of the violation. Upon the recommendation of the principal, these and similar major violations may result in extended suspension, required counseling prior to returning to school or expulsion.

A student may be expelled from school at the discretion of the principal because of incorrigible or unacceptable behavior or conduct that affects the physical or moral welfare of the school or students.

## DRESS CODE & UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

### GCS UNIFORM POLICY

RC Uniforms is the sole provider of uniforms for Guardian Catholic School; all uniform apparel including navy pants and shorts must be purchased at RC Uniforms. All uniform items purchased from RC are marked with a GCS school logo or have the RC Uniform trademark tag. If you purchase items from any other location, you will be required to replace them.

[Click here for a complete list of items to be purchased from RC Uniforms.](#)

All students must be in uniform every day. In addition to the specific items purchased from RC Uniforms, students must follow all guidelines outlined in the GCS Dress Code below.

[Students who are out of uniform and/or not following the GCS Dress Code will be sent home.](#) The student may return to school only once he/she is in the proper uniform with adherence to the dress code.

Students in Grades 3-8 wear the Guardian Catholic School PE uniform for Physical Education classes. This includes: gray t-shirt, navy blue mesh shorts, and athletic shoes. PE Uniforms must be purchased at RC Uniforms and each item (t-shirt, sweatshirt, shorts) must have the GCS logo.

### GCS DRESS CODE

The Dress Code is designed to foster neatness, discipline, safety and to promote students' focus on education. All students must adhere to the dress code while on school grounds, on field trips and at school-related events.

#### Accessories



No makeup, lipstick, colored lip gloss, nail polish, gel nail polish, or artificial nails may be worn. No visible body art (tattoos) of any kind.

Jewelry is limited to two pair of post earrings worn in the ear lobe. Dangling earrings, [hoop earrings of any size, and huggies are not allowed](#). No body piercing except pierced ears. No cartilage piercing. Boys may not wear earrings of any kind.

## Appearance

The uniform should be clean and pressed with all buttons attached and hem intact. [Shirrtails must be tucked in while students are on campus](#).

## Belts

Belts must be worn at all times for students in [Grades 1-8](#). Belts must be a standard width and have a plain buckle. Belts must be solid navy blue, brown, or black and without decoration.

## Hair

Hair must be kept neat, well-groomed, and reflect the professional appearance of the uniform.

Girls may wear hair accessories (ie. bows, headbands, scrunchies, beads) that are plain white, black, navy blue, gray, and yellow.

Boys' must have a low haircut and be clean-shaven. Hair must be kept above the shirt collar, above the eyebrows and around the ears.

The following are NOT permitted:

- Excessive beading or weaves
- Multi-colored and/or unnaturally colored hair
- Designs in the hair
- Extreme styles that distract from the educational process (ie. mohawks or other fad hairstyles)
- Hats, scarves and bandanas
- Facial hair

## Shoes

Students in all grades are encouraged to wear athletic shoes. Shoes must be as close to one solid color as possible- navy blue, white, gray, black, or brown. Athletic shoes, oxford style saddle shoes, loafers, top-siders (ie. Sperry's) are acceptable. The sole of the top-sider must be beige/tan. Shoes must be worn correctly, cut below the ankle, and must be completely enclosed. Sandals, high tops, open-back shoes, boots, crocs, ballet slippers/flats, and shoes with a heel over one inch are NOT permitted. Shoes with laces must be tied at all times. Laces must be the same color as the shoes.

### **Skirts**

Skirts must be no shorter than three inches above the knee.

### **Socks**

Socks must be solid navy blue, black or white. Sock brand logos are acceptable (ie. Nike swoosh). Leggings, low cut socks, florescent socks, and socks with patterns are not permitted.

### **WINTER MONTHS (December through February)**

Girls may wear plain black, navy blue, white, or gray tights. Leggings may not be worn. Girls may wear the navy pants found at RC Uniforms during winter months only. Pajama style pants and sweatpants may not be worn at any time. Non-uniform jackets must be removed once inside the buildings.

### **NON-UNIFORM DAYS GUIDELINES**

Students may wear:

- jeans
- colorful tennis shoes
- shorts may be worn in grades PK3-2<sup>nd</sup> only and must be no shorter than three inches above the knee
- PE shorts can be worn in grades 3-8
- skirts (no shorter than three inches above the knee)
- skorts (grades K- 2<sup>nd</sup> only)
- nail polish (no gel nail polish or artificial nails)
- jewelry
- dresses (no more than three inches above the knee)
- pants/ sweatpants/ joggers

Students may not wear:

- Flip-flop sandals, [crocs](#) or open back shoes
- Tank tops or low cut blouses
- Shirts bearing midriff
- T-shirts with inappropriate writing or inappropriate logos
- Athletic shoes that convert to roller skates
- Pajamas or pajama-style pants
- Leggings
- Make-up
- Clothing that is extremely tight
- Hats
- Clothing with holes

### SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS GUIDELINES

Students must adhere to the below guidelines when attending school-sponsored events (ie. sporting events, school musical performances, sports banquet, cotillion, etc.)

Students may not wear:

- tight clothing, including short leggings
- clothing that is revealing, immodest, or tops that expose bare midriff or undergarments (including halter tops, sports bras, tube tops, razer back tops, spaghetti straps and low cut tops)
- shorts, skirts and dresses shorter than 3 inches above the knee
- excessive make up

**ALL UNIFORM REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES ARE SUBJECT TO THE  
DISCRETION OF THE ADMINISTRATION.**

## DRIVER INFORMATION

Volunteer drivers are needed for athletic or other school events. School personnel may not transport students. Any volunteer driver must be 18 years of age or older, hold a valid driver's license, and have the required insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle used to transport students. Each driver must have a Volunteer Driver Information Sheet on file in the school office.

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No electronic devices are to be brought to school; this includes personal iPads, notebooks, iPods, pagers, CD players, electronic games, and other similar items. If electronic devices are brought to school, the principal will keep them until a parent picks up the items. The school is not responsible for the loss of personal property that is not permitted at school in the first place.

## EXTENDED DAY

After School Care is not provided by Guardian Catholic School. However, the following options are available:

**Champions** conveniently provides after school care right here on our campus from 3-5:30 pm each school day for PK3 through Grade 8. Fee schedules are provided during the enrollment process; Champions is an approved provider for School Readiness services. All families are encouraged to choose Champions as your after school care provider. Champions is the only site approved for Success By 6. Site Director, Felicia Bosman, can be reached at 904-703-8379 to answer your questions about the program and assist with registration. Learn more at [www.discoverchampions.com](http://www.discoverchampions.com). **When enrolling in Champions, there is a 48-hour processing window before your child can begin services.** Print and sign your enrollment form and bring it to Ms. Bosman on or before your child's first day at Champions.

The following programs and day cares pick students up after school and bus them to an off- campus location for After School Care:

**Boys and Girls Club / Bridge- 904-354-7799 main number;** Elementary Grades - Tonya Gaillard ext 150; Grades 6-12 - Kenyetta Jackson ext 169

**Boys and Girls Club / NFL Youth Education Town,** 555 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street; contact Sa'Sha Barnhart, Unit Director, 904-632-8327 (office)

**One K Nation- 904-383-4321 main number** Contact LeVasiyea Haslem

**JaxPal Afterschool Program 904-854-6555 main number**

Eastside Center ext 323; Monument Center ext 325; Northside Center ext 317; Westside center ext 326

Guardian Catholic School is an approved provider of **School Readiness child care assistance** through the Early Learning Coalition of Duval. This financial assistance is available to families:

- Are at or below [150% of the Federal Poverty Level](#); AND
- Are employed at least 20 hours per week **OR** a student taking at least 12 credit

hours. Apply at [www.elcofduval.org](http://www.elcofduval.org) or call ELC at 208-2044 x1 to find out if you are eligible.

Parents with School Readiness funding should **request two providers on their certificate**: 1) **Guardian Catholic School** for school day wraparound services until 3pm; and 2) **Champions** for after school care.

## FIRE DRILLS

1. At the signal for a fire drill, all activity and discussion will end. No one but the teacher or supervising adult may speak.
2. At the direction of the teachers, students will walk single file out of and away from the building to assigned areas, closing all doors behind them.
3. If a student is in the restroom or between classes, he/she should go to the area assigned to the class to which he/she would go next. If the student does not know where that is, he/she should simply walk away from the building and report to the nearest teacher. The teacher will direct him/her.
4. In the event of a blocked exit, standard procedures should be followed and a teacher will redirect the students.
5. To insure everyone's safety, students must be silent, walk briskly and carefully, and be alert.
6. No one may remain in the building during a fire drill.

## FACTS TUITION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Guardian Catholic School uses the F.A.C.T.S. Tuition Management Program for the payment of all school fees. Each family's payment plan is arranged with the principal. Payments are made on either a ten (10) or eleven (11)-month plan. Further information about the F.A.C.T.S. Tuition Management Program can be obtained by calling the school office (904-765-6522).

## FIELD TRIPS

Class visits to places of cultural and educational significance give enrichment to the lessons of the classroom. The written permission of parents/guardians on the diocesan form must be obtained for each child participating in a field trip. No student may participate unless a signed permission slip for the specific event is on file in the office.

Parents who help chaperone field trips must have a current and valid Criminal Background Check on file in the office and must complete the Safe-Environment Training, Protecting God's Children.

## FUNDRAISING

Every family is expected to participate in school fund raising projects. Families who are unable to participate in the fundraiser are asked to make a donation to the school equal to the amount that would have been earned from the sale. The fee for this donation will be added to the family's bill.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The student must pass all major subjects and have all school fees paid in full in order to participate in the graduation ceremony. Major subject areas are Social Studies, Math, Science, English, Religion and Reading.

## GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

The Guidance Counselors provide support for students, parents and teachers in the areas of academics and emotional health.

The Guidance Counselors will assist the teachers and parents with interventions when a student has been identified with learning difficulties or behavioral concerns. If warranted, an educational screen can be administered to pinpoint areas of strength and weakness; appropriate interventions will be made based on the results.

The Guidance Counselors also provide support for the students' emotional well-being through individual and group counseling.

The Guidance Program is available for all students. Appropriate referrals to outside agencies will be made when the area of concern is beyond the services that can be provided at school.

## HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

All parents are members of the Home & School Association by virtue of their child's enrollment at Guardian Catholic School. A small membership fee is due at the time of registration each year. The purpose of the organization is to promote open communication and cooperation between and among parents, school administration and faculty. The Home & School Association promotes parental support to the school by

assisting with activities, social functions and fund-raisers. The appointment of officers takes place at the end of each school year and [is determined by school administration](#). All faculty and staff members are considered members of the Home and School Association and are not required to pay the membership fee.

## HOMEWORK

One of the most important objectives of education is to teach the child how to study independently. In order to acquire that habit, written homework and study assignments are given. These assignments serve as reinforcements of what has been taught in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to see that the children do homework each day and to provide support requested by teachers such as making it possible for the child to use the public library.

Homework is a requirement; therefore, homework that is not done or not handed in on time will affect a student's grade point average.

## ILLNESS/INJURY

If a child becomes too ill to remain in class or if he/she is injured, parents will be notified at once. If the parents cannot be reached, the person designated on the Emergency Medical Form will be notified.

## IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Parents are required to show each child's proof of immunization prior to the child being enrolled in a diocesan Catholic School.

## INSURANCE

All students are insured under the Diocese of St. Augustine Student Accident Program.

- This program provides ACCIDENT insurance only for all enrolled students of the Diocese while participating in school sponsored and supervised activities.
- These activities include interscholastic sports, football, band, cheerleading, intramural sports, gym classes, and non-sport extracurricular activities.

Highlights of the Program:

- Benefits paid for medical expenses when not recoverable from any other insurance policy (excess basis).

- Benefits for services paid on a Usual and Customary (U&C) basis.

## INTERNET POLICY

By virtue of the values professed in Catholic Schools of the Diocese of St. Augustine, appropriate use of the Internet is assumed. We are very pleased to bring this access to our school community and believe the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence in our school by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

The Internet is a vast, global, electronics communication network linking computers at universities, high schools, science labs and other sites. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through a number of discussion forums, as well as through electronic mail. In addition, many titles are available for downloading on the Internet, most of which are of educational value. Because of its enormous size, the Internet's potential is endless. It is possible to speak with everyone from prominent scientists to world leaders to a friend at college.

With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. It is impossible to control all materials on this global network, and an industrious user may discover controversial information.

We firmly believe that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweigh the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational and religious goals of our community.

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies, and regional and state networks. In addition, the smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the end users, who must adhere to strict guidelines. It is the purpose of these guidelines, as well as the contract for Internet use, to make sure that all who use the Internet, both students and faculty, use this valuable resource in an appropriate manner. If a user violates any of these guidelines, his/her access will be terminated and future access could be denied. The Internet Coordinators reserve the right to examine all data at any time.

The most important prerequisite for someone to receive an Internet access privilege is that he/she take full responsibility for his/her own actions. Diocesan Schools and the sponsors of Internet connections will not be liable for the actions of anyone connecting to



the Internet through their hook-up. All users/their parents shall assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions.

## LEAVING CAMPUS

Students are not allowed to leave campus during school hours for any reason.

## LIBRARY

Students in grades K-8 are scheduled for weekly library time to check out books and/or magazines. Students in grades K-2 are required to keep their library material at school at all times. Students in grades 3-8 are permitted to take their library materials home and are responsible for all materials checked out in their name. Students are also responsible for independent reading throughout the school year as part of a reading grade and for the Accelerated Reader program.

Loan Period for Books & Magazines: Library materials may be returned at any time. If a student finishes reading a book before the next scheduled check out day, the student may ask the classroom teacher permission to go to the library to exchange the book.

Grade Level	Maximum Limit	Loan Period	Renewal
K-2	1*	7 days	1**
3	2*	7 days	1**
4-8	3*	7 days	1**

\*Only (1) magazine may be checked out at a time.

\*\*If there is a hold on a book, that book is not allowed to be renewed.

**Holds:** A hold is a request for an item to be pulled as soon as it is available and set aside for the student who is next on the hold list. Holds should be requested by the student to the media specialist and are on a first come first serve basis. Holds will not be placed on materials on the shelf.

**Overdue Items:** Each student will be notified when he/she has overdue library material(s). It is the responsibility of the student to return the overdue item(s) to the library immediately or see the media specialist with any concerns. Overdue notices will be distributed in the weekly newsletter.

**Lost/Damaged Items:** A student will be charged the replacement cost for any lost library item(s). Damaged items will be assessed by the media specialist who will determine the cost of repair. Library fine notices will be distributed in the Monday Message. The fine notice indicates the reason for the fine, the amount of the fine, and the due date for payment. If the fine is not paid in full by the due date indicated, the amount will be invoiced to the student's school bill.

## LUNCH

Through the Community Eligibility Provision of the National School Lunch Program, all students have the opportunity for free school breakfast 7-7:45am and free school lunch. Students who choose may bring a lunch from home. However, there is no microwave available for student use. **Parents may not bring food from outside services such as fast food restaurants as this goes against the healthy mission of the school lunch program.**

While in the cafeteria students are taught to show responsible and respectful behavior by:

- speaking in a tone of voice that would be used in a restaurant;
- sitting on the chair, facing the table, and engaging in polite conversation;
- staying at assigned tables;
- cleaning the table and floor area where they sat.

During lunch students are expected to use the same manners required in the classroom. Courtesy toward other students and cooperation with lunch supervisors are in order at all times.

## MEDICATIONS

Florida Statute, Section 232.46 mandates that school staff must follow specific guidelines when administering medications to students at school. **There are no exceptions to these guidelines.**

Our main concern is for the safety of your child.

1. All medication must be brought to the school office by the parent/guardian. Students are **never** to bring medication to school in their backpacks.
2. The parent/guardian must fill out the permission form located in the office and sign it.
3. All medicine is to be counted by the parent/guardian and office staff upon us receiving it.
4. All medication **MUST BE STORED IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER**, no exceptions.

5. If your child is on liquid medication, the parent must provide the proper medicine spoon/dropper to administer it.

## PARENTS AS MODELS

Adults must be the role models of appropriate behavior at all times at school and at school functions. Speech and actions of adults should be respectful, professional and Christ-like, giving witness to the Christian atmosphere of the school. Raising voices, cussing, swearing, threatening, bullying, disrupting a class and other similar behaviors, are forbidden at all times.

Adults who fail to conduct themselves properly on school property, at school functions or while on the phone with school personnel risk the termination of their child's attendance at Guardian Catholic School.

## PARENT STUDENT AGREEMENT TO UPHOLD SCHOOL REGULATIONS

Catholic Schools recognize parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. The role of the school staff is to work with parents/guardians in a close partnership for the benefit of each child. Since parents/guardians are both teachers and models, it is expected that on school property and at school functions they follow and uphold school rules in order to teach the children by example.

It is important that the school and families work cooperatively to uphold school regulations. Therefore, each family needs to know and agree to support all school policies, rules and regulations as explained in the Parent/Student Handbook.

At the beginning of each school year, parents and students will be required to sign a statement verifying that they will read or have read the Parent/Student Handbook and are willing to support and observe the policies, rules, and regulations of the school.

## PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

### Parent-Teacher Mandatory First Quarter Conferences

Formal parent-teacher conferences regarding each student's progress are mandatory in the first quarter of the school year. The first quarter report card will be discussed at this conference. The report card can only be obtained at a conference.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences at Other Times

It is only through cooperation between parents/guardians and school staff that we can best meet the needs of each student. Inquiries, problems or questions dealing with individual students should be handled in the following manner:

1. Parents/guardians should first schedule a conference in advance with the teacher to discuss the matter.
2. If further clarification is needed, a conference with the principal and the teacher may be requested.

## PARTIES & BIRTHDAYS

Birthday treats may be brought only after the date and time are cleared with the classroom teacher. Birthday party invitations for off-campus parties will be distributed only if there is one for each child in the class. [Birthday parties may not occur on-campus.](#)

## PLAYGROUND RULES

During outdoor play during the school day or after school:

- Students are to obey the directives of the person in charge of the play area.
- Students are to remain in the designated play area.
- Tackle football is not permitted.
- Dangerous activities such as skateboarding, piggy back riding or roller blading are not permitted.
- No food is to be eaten outdoors during supervised play.
- Misuse or destruction of playground equipment will not be tolerated; the student will be required to pay the school for the damage done.

## PROBATION PERIOD FOR NEW STUDENTS

All new students in grades K-8 are on probation during the first semester of school. During that time the students must prove themselves ready to meet the standards of Guardian Catholic School's curriculum by maintaining passing grades and by exhibiting good conduct. If a student's academic performance or behavior is questionable, students will either be given an extension of time or be asked to leave.

## RELEASE OF STUDENT RECORDS

When it is necessary to withdraw a child from Guardian Catholic School, written notification should be presented in the school office as soon as possible so that all

reports and fees can be processed. School records will be submitted to the forwarding school when all fees have been paid in full.

## REPORT CARDS

Mid-quarter progress reports will be sent home for all students.

Report cards are issued quarterly.

Parents are asked to examine the report card carefully and make arrangements to meet with the teacher if necessary. [Report cards are emailed via FACTS SIS at the end of each quarter.](#)

The grading scale is as follows:

### Pre-kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2:

- S Student is proficient in meeting grade-level skills
- N Student shows a developing understanding of skills; assistance is required
- U Student shows little understanding of the skills; cannot complete tasks independently.

### Grades 3-8

- A 90%-100%
- B 80%-89%
- C 70%-79%
- D 60%-69%
- F 0%-59%

## REPORT CARD AWARDS

First Honors (*A Honor Roll*) are given to students in grades 3-8 who have straight A's in the major subject areas and conduct.

Second Honors (*A-B Honor Roll*) are given to students in grades 3-8 who have A's and/or B's in the major subject areas and in conduct.

Major subject areas are Religion, Science, Math, Social Studies, Reading, and English.

## REPORTING ABUSE/NEGLECT

Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local

law enforcement agency. Reports should be made to Florida's Department of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will request of the investigator that the school be allowed to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews on school property. However, the school will follow the direction of the investigator with respect to these requests.

## RETENTION

Student progression shall be based primarily on achievement of appropriate grade level skills. Other factors to be considered are mental and physical development, work and study habits, and maturation. If it seems necessary to retain a student an additional year in a particular grade, the following criteria will be used:

- **Kindergarten** – Lack of readiness in reading, math, and communication skills.  
At the primary level, especially Kindergarten, special consideration in a decision to promote a student will be given to social, emotional and maturation levels and chronological age.
- **Grades 1-2** – Failure in Reading, English or Math  
In grades 1-2, the subject is failed if the student receives a U as a final grade for any two quarters. Only one subject may be taken in summer school. Summer school is defined as a minimum of 30 contact hours with a certified teacher. The summer school tutor must be a certified teacher approved by the school's administration and must provide documentation of completed work. At the end of summer school, the student will be required to pass a test administered by Guardian Catholic School in order to determine promotion.
- **Grades 3-8** – For promotion in a Catholic school, a passing grade must be achieved in all major subjects: Religion, Reading, Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science. In grades 3-8, the subject is failed if the student's final average is an "F". Any failed subject must be made up in a summer program with a certified teacher and approved by the principal. The summer school tutor must be a certified teacher approved by the school's administration and must provide documentation of

completed work. Summer school is defined as a minimum of 30 contact hours with a certified teacher. At the end of summer school, the student will be required to pass a test administered by Guardian Catholic School.

Only one subject may be taken in summer school. If two subjects are failed, the student must repeat the grade level.

If one of the failed subjects is Religion, the student must make up work if he/she wishes to return to the school or to enroll in any other Catholic school in the diocese.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Catholic students who are preparing to receive the sacraments of First Penance, First Eucharist or Confirmation must meet the following requirements established by the Diocese of St. Augustine for the celebration of these sacraments:

- Ongoing remote preparation is essential prior to Sacramental Catechesis.
- Readiness of candidates is determined through consultation with parents, catechists, pastor and candidates.
- Remote preparation is provided through the parish Religious Education program and supported by the Catholic School religion program.
- Immediate preparation for the sacraments involves parish Religious Education programs for a minimum of six (6) hours and a maximum of twelve (12) hours for each sacrament.
- Parents and sponsors are encouraged to act as witnesses by their regular participation in church life within the parish.
- The proper context for the celebration of the sacraments is the parish community. A privileged time and place for the sacrament of Confirmation and First Eucharist is the Sunday assembly.

## SAFETY PATROL

Students in grades 5 through 8 are eligible to serve on the safety patrol. Their main function is to assist in the safe arrival and departure of all students. Parents are asked to cooperate with the patrol. Fire regulations prohibit vehicles from blocking school entrances before, during or after school.

## SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Consensual sexual activity among students is not permitted. A substantiated charge of sexual activity between students will result in disciplinary action that may include but not be limited to suspension or expulsion.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Catholic teaching recognizes that we are each made in the image and likeness of God, and that we should treat each person with dignity and respect. This teaching should be modeled by faculty and staff and by all students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade.

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate oral, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Any student who alleges sexual harassment by another student should bring this matter to the attention of the principal, his/her teacher, or guidance counselor. The principal will investigate the incident. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context will be considered.

A substantiated charge of sexual harassment against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action that may include but not be limited to suspension or expulsion.

## SOLICITATION

Solicitation will not be permitted on school grounds at any time.

## TELEPHONE USAGE

[Students are never permitted to use the classroom phone.](#) Students are permitted to use the office telephone only with the approval of school personnel.

## TEXTBOOKS

Hardbound textbooks are rentals and are assigned at the beginning of the school year. The students will be responsible for lost, damaged or defaced textbooks. If any of the above occurs, the family is responsible for the replacement cost of the book.



## THREATS AND VIOLENCE BY STUDENTS OR PARENTS

It is the desire and expectation of every administrator, teacher, parent, and student that all will be safe in our schools. Because each person is made in the image and likeness of God, Catholic teaching promotes respect for the dignity of each person. It is important that this teaching permeates the Catholic school community.

However, there are times when some fail to measure up to this standard, and we need to act accordingly. **All threats of violence that are verified will be taken seriously.** A threat is an expression of intent to cause physical or mental harm regardless of whether the person communicating the threat has present ability to carry out the threat and regardless of whether the threat is conditional or future. Threatening behavior consisting of words or deeds that are intended to intimidate anyone in the school community is strictly forbidden.

Bullying is considered a threat. While bullying has, in the past, been viewed as an inevitable aspect of the process of growing up, this attitude has been reversed following the tragic school shootings of recent years. Victimization of a child by his/her peers can lead to tragic consequences.

If a student makes a threat, the principal, at his/her discretion, may suspend, expel or dismiss the student from school. If suspended, the student may be required to receive a psychological assessment and counseling. If required, the student may return only when he/she presents a written verification from a psychologist/psychiatrist that such services have been provided. If the administration is willing to have the student return to school, a reinstatement conference will take place with the parent and student. Parents will be notified in writing that a second offense will result in further disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.

Adults must be the role models of appropriate behavior at all times at school and at school functions. Raising voices, cussing, swearing, threatening, bullying, disrupting a class and any other similar behaviors, are forbidden at all times. Adults who fail to conduct themselves properly on school property, at school functions or while on the phone with school personnel risk the termination of their child's attendance at Guardian Catholic School.

## TUITION AND FEES

The timely payment of tuition and fees is important. Prompt payments allow the school to meet the regular financial obligations incurred on behalf of the children enrolled. 22

Parents are asked to follow the Payment Plan agreed to for the current school year. The fee schedule is published annually and is available in the school office. The following guidelines have been adopted:

- ❑ Monthly payments are due no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month or on the date selected in the family's FACTS payment plan. This includes tuition, book fees, Before and After School Care fees, sports and all other regularly recurring expenses.
- ❑ After the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, a \$20 late fee will be applied to delinquent accounts.
- ❑ If payment or arrangements fail to be made by the end of any given month, children may be asked to stay home until payments have been made. We reserve the right to refer delinquent accounts to a Collection Agency.

When a family faces special financial circumstances, these needs should be presented directly to the principal for consideration. It is our practice to work closely with families during times of financial difficulty.

## TUTORING AND HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

All students in grades 2-8 who are staying for after school care in Champions will automatically be included in the tutoring and homework assistance program. Students in grades PreK-1 may be included.

## VALUABLES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

All valuables and other items should be left at home. The school is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

## VOLUNTEER HOURS

Each family is expected to volunteer at least 25 hours during the school year. Volunteer activities are essential to promote parental involvement in the school and to help defray some school costs. After May 1, each family will be assessed \$5.00 for each volunteer hour that has not been completed or has not been arranged to be completed.

Among the many volunteer opportunities are chaperoning for field trips, assisting teachers, parent workdays, and Home & School fund-raisers. A list of volunteer opportunities is included in the weekly messages from the principal.

## VOLUNTARY PRE-K ATTENDANCE POLICY

Parents of children enrolled in a VPK class must comply with the attendance policy. The attendance requirements are as follows:

1. Your child must arrive in the VPK classroom no later than 8:00 a.m. daily.
2. Your child must participate in the VPK activities until 11:30 a.m. daily.
3. You must call the Guardian Catholic School office (765-6522) if your child is going to be late or absent.
4. If your child is absent for five consecutive instructional days he/she will be dismissed from the VPK program.
5. Absences and tardiness may be excused under –extraordinary circumstances if appropriate documentation is provided. These include:
  - a. Hospitalization of the child, his/her parent or guardian (Doctor’s Note required).
  - b. Illness of the student, his/her parent or guardian that requires the ill person to remain at home (Doctor’s Note required).
  - c. Death of a member of the student’s, parent’s, or guardian’s immediate family (Obituary Certificate required).
  - d. Court ordered visitation (Court Documents required).
  - e. Parent’s or guardian’s military deployment (Military Documents required).
6. A child may not miss more than 26 days per year for illness.
7. A child may not miss more than 35 days per year regardless of circumstances.
8. Parents must complete and sign an attendance verification form for EACH month. These forms will be distributed on the last instructional day of each month and must be signed and returned to the office the same day.

Children who do not meet the attendance requirements will lose VPK funding. The child may be allowed to remain in the VPK classroom, but the parent will be required to pay full tuition. At the beginning of the school year, parents of VPK children will be asked to sign a copy of this policy that will be kept on file in the school office.

## AGREEMENT TO UPHOLD SCHOOL POLICIES AS STATED IN THE HANDBOOK

As a condition of enrollment, all parents and students are required to know and agree to support all school policies, rules and regulations as explained in the Parent/Student Handbook.

## RIGHT TO AMEND

The Principal and Superintendent reserve the right to make final decisions or changes to all information stated in the handbook. Failure to sign and acknowledge receipt of this handbook does not absolve families from the obligation to comply with all rules set out in the handbook and codes of conduct.

Guardian Catholic School reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be sent via the weekly newsletter, e-mail or other online or printed communication.



Guardian  
Catholic School

# EARLY LEARNING ADDENDUM 2023 – 2024

*In addition to the GCS Parent/Student Handbook, the following Addendum applies to all parents who have children enrolled in PK3 and/or PK4.*

### **Agreement to Uphold School Policies as Stated in Parent Handbook & Addendum**

As a condition of enrollment, all parents and students are required to know and agree to support all school policies, rules and regulations as explained in the Parent/Student Handbook and in the Early Learning Addendum to the Handbook.

### **Right to Amend**

Guardian Catholic School reserves the right to amend this Handbook and/or Addendum at any time. Notice of amendments will be sent via the weekly newsletter, e-mail or other online or printed communication.

### **Early Learning Program Philosophy**

Guardian Catholic School's Early Learning Program is based on the philosophy of developmental child care. Our program integrates child-directed and hands-on activities with teacher-led learning, direct instruction and technology. Our program focuses on development of the whole child: spirit, mind and body.

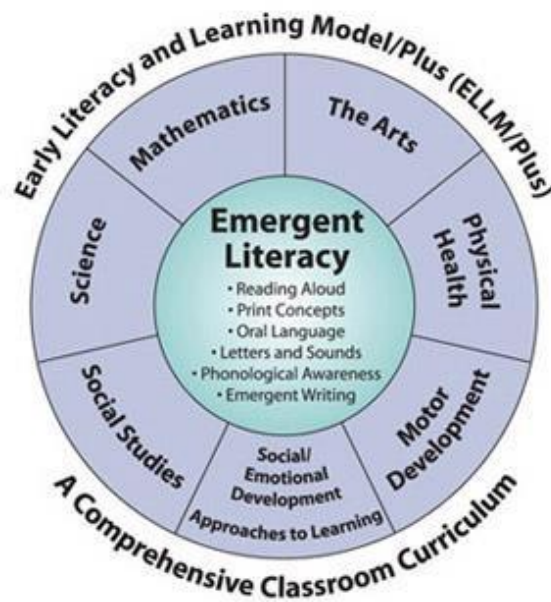
In this model, children develop physically, cognitively, socially, emotionally and spiritually through play-based learning, and teaching is primarily conducted interactively. The role of the teacher is to be a secure and supportive mentor and form an empathetic connection with the child, guiding them to their potential and setting healthy limits. Classrooms are homelike and comfortable environments where children are safe and free to explore.

## Curriculum

The Early Literacy and Learning Model/Plus (ELLM/Plus) is a research-based, comprehensive curriculum for 3-, 4-, and 5-year old preschool children that has been proven to be effective improving children's early reading achievement. It was developed by the University of North Florida (UNF) College of Education and Human Services and the UNF-based Florida Institute of Education (FIE).

The literacy-focused curriculum builds children's cognitive development through literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, motor experiences, and physical health. Children's acquisition of important cognitive and social/emotional development is facilitated through interactions with supportive teachers and other adults who encourage children's curiosity, persistence, and creativity by planning and implementing engaging activities and providing support during learning experiences. ELLM/Plus is designed to expand children's vocabularies and refine their understanding and comprehension of words they know and use.

The Goal of ELLM/Plus is that every child enters school ready to learn, ready to read, and ready to succeed.



## Assessments

Guardian Catholic's program participates in Guiding Stars of Duval which is a Quality Rating and Performance System (QRIS). Guiding Stars is designed to benefit:

- Providers so they can provide high-quality care and early learning experiences to children;
- Parents and Caregivers so they can find high-quality child care with an easy to understand rating system; and
- Children so they can have high quality early learning experiences to help develop skills they need to be successful in life.

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) uses research-driven insights to observe and measure how teachers interact with children every day to cultivate supportive, structured, and engaging classroom experiences. The CLASS tool is a core component of Guiding Stars of Duval. CLASS not only defines teaching quality through the lens of interactions, it provides the ability to measure and improve the interactions that matter most for student outcomes.

Cor Advantage is an observation-based assessment which provides an accurate picture of children's development and learning. COR Advantage helps teachers capture and analyze each day's play-based learning and then translate it into positive child outcomes through targeted, individualized instruction. It is built on the 36 items most critical for school readiness.

## **Attendance**

Guardian Catholic School operates Early Learning Program for 3-year-olds and 4-year olds from 8:00-11:30 am, 5 days a week for 540 instructional hours. The wrap-around program begins at 11:30. All enrolled families have access to our school calendar on the school website showing the scheduled days.

Attendance during scheduled instructional days is of utmost importance. You will be required to sign and comply with the following policy on Attendance and Tardiness to remain in the Early Learning program.

## **Tardiness**

Students may be dropped off at school from 6:45 a.m. to 7:50 a.m. and will be signed in digitally each day upon arrival. The instructional day starts at 8:00 a.m. and all children are expected to be in place and ready to start the day. Arrivals after 8:00 a.m. are disruptive to the group in progress and difficult for the arriving child as well. We understand that it is occasionally unavoidable to be –running latell; however, efforts should be made to be on time daily.

## Attendance Policy for Voluntary PreK (VPK)

Parents of children enrolled in a VPK class must comply with the attendance policy as follows:

1. Your child must arrive in the VPK classroom no later than 8:00 a.m. daily.
2. Your child must participate in the VPK activities until 11:30 a.m. daily.
3. You must call the Guardian Catholic School office (765-6522) if your child is going to be late or absent.
4. If your child is absent for five consecutive instructional days he/she will be dismissed from the VPK program.
5. Absences and tardiness may be excused under extraordinary circumstances if appropriate documentation is provided. These include:
  - Hospitalization of the child, his/her parent or guardian (Note from Doctor required).
  - Illness of the student, his/her parent or guardian that requires the ill person to remain at home (Note from Doctor required).
  - Death of a member of the student, parent, or guardian immediate family (Obituary Certificate required).
  - Court ordered visitation (Court Documents required).
  - Parent's or guardian's military deployment (Military Documents required).
6. A child may not miss more than 26 days per year for illness.
7. A child may not miss more than 35 days per year regardless of circumstances.
8. Parents must complete and sign an attendance verification form for EACH month. These forms will be distributed on the last instructional day of each month and must be signed and returned to the office the next day.

Children who do not meet the attendance requirements will lose VPK funding. The child may be allowed to remain in the VPK classroom, but the parent will be required to pay full tuition.

At the beginning of the school year, parents of VPK children will be asked to sign a digital copy of this policy that will be kept on file in the child's electronic portfolio.



## **Cost**

Guardian Catholic School is committed to making a quality Catholic education available to all who meet our admission criteria. Financial assistance is available from the following sources.

## **Success by 6**

Success by 6, a program of the United Way of Northeast Florida operated by the Early Learning Coalition of Duval, provides 2-year early learning grants for 3-year-olds to high-quality, accredited childcare centers. Success by 6 is a year-round program for families. If you have a child who turns 3 on or before Sept. 1 of the current year you may be eligible. When you apply for admission to Guardian Catholic, you will receive information regarding how to apply for Success by 6.

## **Voluntary Pre-K (VPK)**

The state of Florida provides tuition, book and registration fees for children who are four years old by September 1. Parents must apply to the state for Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) and bring the Certificate of Eligibility to Guardian Catholic to initiate enrollment. The program is free to all Florida residents. Contact the Early Learning Coalition of Duval County by phone at 904-208-2044; or visit their website at [www.elcduval.org](http://www.elcduval.org) . You can also register your child online at home or wherever you have access to the internet and a document scanner. Log on to [www.VPKDuval.org](http://www.VPKDuval.org)

## **School Readiness Program**

Guardian Catholic is a provider for Extended Day Care through the School Readiness Program and accepts reimbursement from the Early Learning Coalition of Duval. Apply online by clicking on the School Readiness Program link at [www.elcofduval.com](http://www.elcofduval.com). PK3 and PK4 students can apply these funds to charges for the PK Wraparound services provided by the school from 11:30-3:00 pm on school days.

## **Discipline and Expulsion Policy**

The purpose of the Discipline Policy which includes the Expulsion, Suspension and Dismissal information for The Guardian Catholic School is to ensure that proper order is maintained in a manner that is in keeping with the philosophy

established by the Diocese of St. Augustine. All disciplinary action is directed toward the child's growth in self-knowledge, in self-discipline and in understanding of his/her Christian responsibilities. Administrators, teachers, staff members and parents work together to teach appropriate and Christian behavior.

Guardian Catholic has adopted the Foundations Program for Safe and Civil Schools. The CHAMPS component is related to classroom management. Foundations fosters positive relationships within a caring and collaborative environment. Students are helped to make good choices through deliberate teaching, modeling and monitoring. Foundations is data-driven and focuses on continual growth and improvement. This positive environment with its structures and procedures supports a climate of learning and Christian living.

Our structures and procedures are organized to promote successful behavior from all students. Procedures are categorized into three levels: Schoolwide, classroom and individual. We establish and communicate clear schoolwide and classroom behavior expectations with equitable responses to misbehavior, thus fostering positive academic engagement, decision making and behavioral/academic performance. Although we create an environment to support students in making good behavioral choices, we realize that sometimes students need increased structure and support to make better decisions. Therefore this policy encompasses a four tiered approach to addressing behavioral problems and their related consequences. It is our hope that this level system will help students in forming appropriate behavior responses to all situations.

### **Level 1**

Level 1 misbehaviors include but are not limited to, such things as minor disruptions. Generally these misbehaviors are handled at the classroom level. Consequences: Classroom teachers and staff members assign consequences for misbehaviors at the first level.

### **Level 2**

Level 2 misbehaviors include any level 1 infraction that becomes chronic or misbehaviors that are of a more serious nature than level 1.

Consequences: A behavior incident report is written, shared with the parent and recorded in the student's school behavior record.

School wide interventions are applied. Students may receive detentions or loss of privileges for Level 2 offenses. A parent conference may be required.

### **Level 3**

Level 3 behavioral offenses include any serious behavior and may include but are not limited to: fighting/hitting, sexual harassment, stealing, bullying, defiance, etc.

Consequences: Student is sent to the office immediately. A Disciplinary Referral will be issued and a mandatory conference with the principal, parents, and involved staff members will be held. A student plan of action with support services may be initiated. Consequences are determined by the principal and administrative staff and may include suspension and/or expulsion. Other corrective actions may be assigned at the discretion of the principal.

### **Level 4**

Level 4 behavioral offenses are considered to be the most serious and may include consistent nonconformity with school rules and/or potentially illegal behavior. Offenses on this level may be of such a serious nature that student may be expelled without having previous offenses documented.

Consequences: Student's parents/guardians will be called and informed of the violation and will be required to immediately pick up the student from school. Students and parents will be informed either orally or in writing of the school rules that have been violated and of the specific grounds for disciplinary action. A conference will be scheduled with the principal, parents, and involved staff members.

The principal and administrative staff will determine if the student should remain enrolled at Guardian Catholic School. A student may be expelled from school at the discretion of the principal because of incorrigible or unacceptable behavior or conduct that affects the physical or moral welfare of the school or students.