

**St. Helen Catholic School**  
**Family Handbook**  
Parent/Student Handbook 2017-2018  
*Principal: Phyliss Coleman, Ed.D.*

**INTRODUCTION, GOALS, AND MISSION**

We are pleased and proud that you have selected St. Helen Catholic School for your child. The mission of St. Helen Catholic School is “to grow children in wisdom, age, and grace! St. Helen Catholic School is a culturally diverse community composed of the clergy, parishioners, parents, students, families, school personnel, and all who help to fulfill the school mission. St. Helen Catholic School promotes high academic standards within a Christ-centered, spiritual environment. Members of the St. Helen community seek to teach Catholic values, strengthen students in the Catholic faith, focus on the education of the whole person, and witness to the presence of Jesus Christ in the world.

**GOALS**

- Educate and form the total person spiritually, intellectually, personally, socially, and physically while recognizing the dignity of each student as a member of the Catholic educational community.
- Celebrate Catholic traditions through daily prayer, regular liturgical and sacramental experiences, a solid program of Catholic religious studies, and the teaching of Catholic moral standards.
- Promote traditional Catholic educational values by emphasizing high academic standards and achievement.

**OUR MISSION**

To grow children in *Wisdom, Age, and Grace (WAG)!*

**HANDBOOK AND POLICIES**

In as much as it is true that loopholes may be found in any code, it is the expectation of SHCS that parents/guardians and students will use good judgment in complying with the behavior code, dress code, and/or school policies. The finding of a loophole and the exploitation of that loophole to avoid compliance with the spirit of the code will not be considered valid; rather, such incidents will be treated as violations of the code. To avoid such a misunderstanding, use the following rule: If you are not sure that it is allowed, do not do it!

Communities are successful to the degree to which the members are knowledgeable and are in accordance with the rules, regulations, and policies that govern them. Parents assist and support the teachers and administration in the implementation and enforcement of the student code of conduct, school policies, and regulations. It is expected that families abide by the policies, procedures, and regulations set forth in this handbook. The school and/or the principal retain the right to amend this handbook at any time. Parents and students are expected to sign the Handbook Acknowledgement Form (at end of handbook). If you have any questions about the contents of this handbook, please contact the school at 281-485-2845.

*The remainder of the St. Helen Catholic School Handbook is organized in alphabetical order.  
If you are unable to locate a needed item, please consider using other titles/names to find it.*

## **ACADEMICS**

St. Helen Catholic School (SHCS) is accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference (TCCED) under the auspices of the Texas Education Agency (T.E.A.). SHCS also holds an additional accreditation from AdvancED (formerly the Southern Association of Schools). Our school strives to provide an exemplary learning environment using the English language to educate the whole child: body, mind, and spirit. We attempt to provide students with opportunities for success by fostering a positive learning atmosphere, providing a supportive atmosphere from all members of the school community, nurturing a Christ-like community, and celebrating our Catholic traditions through a solid program of religious studies. Curriculum is enhanced with fine arts, foreign language, and other extra-curricular activities, as well as offering multi-dimensional experiences in physical education, self-esteem building activities, and culturally diverse programs. All core and most enrichment classes are conducted in English, which requires learners to speak, write, and understand the English language.

### *Academic Progress*

Any student not maintaining a 78% average or above may be placed on academic probation for a period of time designated by the principal. Lack of improvement may result in withdrawal. The principal and teachers will monitor grades closely. Parents are responsible for monitoring students' progress via GradeLink and teacher communications.

### *Mastery of Curriculum*

When 60% of the class has achieved passing grades on tests, assignments, or on individual averages, the class is considered to have "mastered" the unit or lesson. If 60% of the class does not have passing grades (70% or higher on assignments), the teacher will re-teach and re-assess the class. Some students may be referred for tutoring in a specific subject area. Tutoring recommendations are not made lightly and are usually necessary for student success.

### *Promotion and Retention*

A student is promoted to the next grade pending satisfactory completion and mastery of the work of the current grade.

- Promotion shall be based upon the student accomplishing the required essential curriculum elements, as well as his/her progress in social, emotional, and physical growth. Just as the principal reserves the right to place a student, the principal also reserves the right to recommend retaining a student who does not show developmentally appropriate social or academic skills for promotion to the next grade.
- If a student receives a grade of below 70 for the year, the student fails the subject.
- If two major subjects are failed, the child is recommended for retention. The major subjects are Religion, Reading, English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
- If a returning student fails one academic subject for the year, he/she must attend a summer school program or tutoring in the area failed and complete the remediation/summer school with a passing grade. The parents are responsible for locating a summer school program suitable for the needs of the child.
- If parents of a child, recommended for retention, do not agree with the recommendation of the teacher(s) and administrator(s), they have the option of withdrawing their child and placing them in another educational environment. "Retention" will be documented on the child's report card and final record.

### *Retesting – Individual Students*

If a student receives a poor grade that is failing, it is at the teacher's discretion to allow the student to "retake" the test. Generally, the highest grade the student may achieve on the "retake" assignment is a 70. However, the final decision to retest is the teacher's.

### *Student Placement*

School Board Policy Effective April 14, 2004:

"Student-to-class placement decisions are made by the administrator/principal of the school. In the case of special needs students, the principal may consult with the parents or guardian before placing the student with a particular teacher who has proficiency in the area of the student's needs. The principal reserves the right to change any student from class to class, also according to the student's needs, if necessary, during the course of the school year."

SHCS administration and teachers reserve the right to place any student in the grade deemed appropriate, based on student assessments and records/documentation. In addition, if a student is placed in a grade, a probationary period in a particular grade level will be in effect for 6-9 weeks, at which time a final placement decision will be made.

### **ADMINISTRATOR ON DUTY**

Each Catholic School must have a designated person responsible for decisions/actions that must be made or taken. When the principal is on duty, he/she will be the Administrator on Duty. The principal will designate a person to serve as the Administrator on Duty whenever he/she is off-campus. This designation will be known by the pastor, faculty and staff. In general, when the principal is off-campus, the Administrator on Duty will be the Director of Student Activities.

### **ADMISSIONS**

The Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston admit all students to the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to the student body. They shall not discriminate based on race, color, age, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of its admission, financial, athletic, or scholarship programs. However, children must show satisfactory achievement on the admissions/screening exam given to them at time of application.

Children must meet the age requirements as outlined by the Archdiocese. Typically, students must meet the following age requirements for admission. Students entering a:

- PK3 or PK4 classroom must be 3 or 4 years old, respectively, on or before September 1;
- Kindergarten class must be 5 years old, on or before September 1; and
- First (1<sup>st</sup>) grade class must be 6 years old, on or before September 1.

The child's birth certificate must be presented for proof of age. Other documents that must be provided are:

- Application
- Release of Confidential Information form
- Certified birth certificate
- Baptismal certificate, if applicable
- Academic records (including achievement test scores)
- Social Security card (number will be recorded on the permanent record card)
- Health records
- Student Information Form

The principal reserves the right to contact any former schools the child may have attended. It is a SHCS policy that the principal has the authority to accept or refuse admittance of any individual as a student at this school for any reason. This decision is based on the state and Archdiocesan policies for admittance and on all information received from the applicant at the time the application for admittance is made. All new students are accepted on a probationary basis. A complete immunization record indicating that requirements are met, with a physician's signature, is required at the time of registration. Archdiocesan policy requires that any new student present written evidence of TB testing and the results.

All new students are required to take an entrance or screening exam and may have a brief interview with the principal, principal's designee, or a teacher. At the time of pre-registration, a packet is provided to each family or is made available online. This packet contains a registration form, tuition schedules, payment plans, health record, information sheet, etc. These papers should be filled out completely, signed, and returned by the appropriate date. Test dates and times for new student enrollment are announced before Catholic Schools' Week, which is held the last week of January.

All PK3, PK4, and K students must be potty-trained prior to the first day of school. For SHCS purposes, "potty-trained" means that the child identifies his/her need to go to the bathroom, independently removes his/her pants, cleans/wipes him/herself independently, replaces his/her clothing, and calls for assistance, as needed. Teachers and staff members cannot spend valuable instructional time in the restroom teaching students these skills that are to be taught at home. If the child is not potty-trained, he/she may be withdrawn from school until potty-training occurs.

Re-enrollment for current students is not automatic. Families with outstanding financial obligations will not be issued registration packets until all accounts are clear. Families who consistently violate policies or who do not promote the campus in positive communications will not be issued registration packets. Students who consistently pose discipline or academic concerns or who do not practice Catholic doctrine (for example, ashes during Lent) will not be issued registration packets. (If families are unfamiliar with Catholic doctrine, questions should be directed to their child's religion teacher, the principal, or the pastor.) Student with parents who consistently disregard or question the SHCS Code of Conduct and campus expectations will not be issued registration packets.

SHCS considers the following priorities when setting timelines for accepting admission applications:

1. Students currently enrolled in SHCS and their siblings whose parents follow SHCS policies
2. Parishioners
3. Non-parishioners

#### *Legal Surname Used for Official Admission Records*

A student must be identified by the student's legal surname, as it appears on the student's birth certificate or other document suitable as proof of the student's identity, or in a court order changing the student's name (Education Code 25.0021). Parents may issue a special request for the child to be called by a nickname or be "known" as another surname. However, our responsibility is to teach the child his/her legal surname and given birth name.

#### **ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES**

AP classes are available to high achieving junior high students in grades 6, 7, and 8. AP classes are offered in a Literature/Social Studies block and a Science/Math block. Students have to meet high report card (generally, a minimum of 86 or higher averages in all classes) and achievement test standards to be recommended for placement by their teachers. Dependent upon student achievement records, they may be invited to be in all four AP classes or in just two classes. Students will be invited to join AP classes at the beginning of the new school year or at the end of the previous school year. The JH teachers will make the decision to place students in the AP classes with input from the principal. Newly enrolled students will not be placed in AP classes until they have been monitored for a 6-9 week period. The decision is non-revocable and may not be appealed.

Parents will receive a notice of advanced level placement for their children. In order to remain in the AP classes, an average of 86% or higher must be maintained in AP classes each nine weeks. Placement in the advanced classes is re-evaluated at the end of every nine weeks period. If a child's nine week average in the advanced classes falls below the 86% requirement, he/she will be placed on probation for the advanced classes. Grades in the AP classes will be re-evaluated at the end of either progress report time or the end of the nine-week period. If grades do not improve above the 86% requirement, the child will be removed from AP classes. The decision is non-revocable and may not be appealed.

Please note, if your child is in any of our four AP classes in grades 6-8, he/she will most likely need to plan for additional time to be spent on homework and studying.

## **ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM AS TEACHING TOOLS**

Animals have been part of the learning experience for students for many years. The use of animals in the classroom proves to be effective at teaching the positive benefits of bonding and caring. Animals may be incorporated into the classroom environment with the goal of enhancing a variety of learning experiences.

Prior to bringing an animal or animals into the classroom, the following must occur:

- Development of a long-range curriculum plan to assure the animals are responsibly cared for;
- Approval from the principal for animal incorporation into the classroom; and
- Inquiries of the parents of involved students regarding allergies, etc.

## **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT**

The original campus of St. Helen Catholic School was completed in 1997. No asbestos or material containing asbestos was used in the construction of the main (old) building. The newly constructed building was finished in 2017 and had no asbestos used in the construction. Therefore, it is not necessary for the campus to develop or post an asbestos management plan for the main building. However, the (former) Middle School Building is an older facility and an Asbestos Management Plan (inspection) is available for review for that facility. For additional information, please contact the facility manager at St. Helen Catholic Church.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES FOR STUDENTS**

### *Arrival Times and Procedures*

Students may not arrive before 6:30 A.M. because no one is on duty to supervise them. Arrivals between 6:30-7:30 A.M. must be registered in the Extended Day program. These students meet in the resource center for early morning care. Teachers are not on door duty until 7:30 a.m. and are not ready to receive students; therefore, please park your car and walk your child to the computer room/ resource center for early morning care, if registered. Students not enrolled in Extended Day may not arrive before 7:30 a.m. (unless parents are on morning car pool duty, then a 7:20 arrival is permitted). To avoid delays and for the safety of all students, all parents must follow carpool line procedures and are not allowed to walk their child up to or into the school building due to the moving traffic line in front of our building (exception: students/families who walk to school AND PK-K students for the first few days of school.)

Teachers on morning duty at 7:30 A.M. direct students to their classrooms or another appropriate, designated area. All students, grades PK3-8, will be dropped off in the front of the main campus building. **Students have seven (7) plus hours of instruction daily: 7:50 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.** (2:00 p.m. optional early dismissal for grades PK3-PK4). On early dismissal days, all students are dismissed at 12:00 p.m. (11:00 a.m. optional early dismissal for grades PK3-PK4). Students will hear 2 announcements per day, 7:50 a.m. and 2:55 p.m., to keep them abreast of school events.

### *Dismissal Times and Procedures*

Afternoon announcements are made at 2:55 p.m. for all students in PK - 8th grades. In order to help us maintain a safe and orderly dismissal, please schedule your business with the school between 7:30 A.M. and 2:30 P.M or 3:15 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. If your child will be picked up before the regular dismissal time, please notify the teacher a day in advance or contact the receptionist the morning of your request. Due to supervision of students, your child's teacher may not check email during the day and may not read your email about dismissal changes. This also applies to changes in pick-up persons, after-school activities, etc. Please notify the teacher a day in advance, if at all possible, or contact the receptionist the morning of the change to guarantee your message is received.

If you need to pick up your child early, you **MUST** pick him/her up in the office **by 2:30 p.m.** We have limited staff in the office and they are unable to call for children after 2:30 p.m. because it is very busy. Parents/Guardians

arriving after 2:30 p.m. will interfere with regular school dismissal and the smooth operations of the campus. Students picked up after 3:00 p.m. (regular dismissal time) must be picked up through the regular carpool line. Parents and others are asked to be polite about waiting their turn in the carpool line – PLEASE DO NOT BREAK OR “CUT” IN LINE because this does not model Christian behavior for our students and other families.

Occasionally, parents/families may purchase a “zip line” pass at various school auction events. This special pass allows them to be one of the first four families in the front of the car line during dismissal. These families’ vehicles have special areas in which they line up. Please accommodate their auction win!

The staff member in charge of lining up cars and sending them to specific “pick-up stations” provides an extremely valuable service to students and families. Because of numerous safety issues, all drivers must attend to and follow the directions of the traffic director. Drivers must not be on cell phones (state law) and must be attentive to the directives provided by the traffic director. Failure to attend to the traffic director’s guidance may result in disciplinary actions. Please remember, we want to keep you, your child, and our staff members safe – SAFETY FIRST!

An optional, early pick-up time of 2:00 p.m. is available for PK3 and PK4 students every day. To utilize this option, parents must notify their child’s PK3 or PK4 teacher that their child will be picked up early. The parents should drive up to a designated pick-up location. A staff member will load your child into your vehicle. If the PK3 or PK4 parent has another child(ren) in grades K-8, the parent must enter the pick-up line in front of the main campus for the usual dismissal time.

**Parents will not be allowed access to the building to pick up their child once dismissal procedures have started – THIS IS FOR THE SAFETY OF YOU AND YOUR CHILD!** It is much faster for parents to remain in their vehicle and wait in line. If parents do walk up to the building, they will be asked to wait outside until carpool duty is completed, then may pick up their child. With approximately 400 students, it is very busy in the hallways after school. For this reason, parents and others are not allowed in the building during dismissal to pick up their children because it disrupts the orderly flow of students leaving the building. Your patience and understanding is appreciated because we are watching out for the safety of your children!

In the main building, all students sit according to grade level in the main hallway before they are dismissed to their rides. Specific dismissal locations will be determined after completion of the new educational facility.

All students awaiting pick-up in our pick-up lines are prohibited to use electronic devices, to read, write, eat or drink. These activities during dismissal cause delays in the dismissal process – including vehicle lines.

Please hang your family's name card (provided to you at the beginning of school) from your vehicle’s rear view mirror so that the name may be seen from a distance. Students are dismissed and escorted to the car by a teacher on duty. If you are at the front of the line, and your child is not outside, you may be asked to move to another pick-up location to prevent traffic congestion; your child will be brought to you there. **Please remain in your vehicle; if you approach the building entrance, you will be asked to wait outside the building until after carpool duty is over.**

Elementary students walking or riding bikes will be crossed over to the nearest sidewalk and require parent's written permission to walk/ride bikes. Students will not be allowed to leave campus with anyone other than their assigned carpool without written permission from a parent or guardian. In order to keep calls to the school office to a minimum, carpool changes must be of an emergency nature only. Requests for early dismissal should be made in writing and submitted to your child's teacher in advance.

A late charge of \$1 per minute will be billed to parents when students are not picked up within the 20 minute window of time which begins with the dismissal bell (3:00-3:20 p.m.). This late charge policy also applies to dismissal from detention, athletic events, clubs, and after school classes. However, no 20 minute grace period is provided for these "extra" events. For example, if tutoring ends at 4:00 p.m., the child must be picked up at 4:00 p.m. before charges of \$1 per minute ensue.

At the beginning of the school year, walker's badges will be issued only to those students who reside near the school, who regularly walk home, and who have parental permission to do so. Students who are walking home will be released at 3:20 p.m. (after carpool traffic has ceased) and will be escorted to the nearest sidewalk. All other students are to use the carpool line. All walkers and bicycle riders must have a carpool number on file and alternate plans for inclement weather days.

#### *Safety Concerns at Arrival/Dismissal Times*

We respectfully request your cooperation with the teachers on duty at arrival and dismissal times. Because safety of our students at SHCS is of utmost concern to us, please do not use this time to engage the teachers in parent-teacher conferences. If you need to talk with a teacher, call the office to request a formal conference.

Additionally, all visitors entering the campus must enter through the main campus entry and will be viewed by both exterior and interior cameras. The receptionist will allow you to enter the main building through a secured door.

- You will be asked to provide ID prior to receiving a visitor's pass.
- A picture ID system called Raptor will be used to screen ALL visitors.
- Each visitor must present a driver's license or a state ID to the receptionist.
- The Raptor system then runs the picture ID and checks the Department of Public Safety's and state police forces' databases for active charges of sexual abuse or for outstanding warrants.

Everyone must go through the security door and check with the receptionist. **NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO ENTER THE CAMPUS OR CLASSROOMS WITHOUT FIRST GETTING A VISITOR PASS FROM THE RECEPTIONIST.** Students will not be released to anyone not on the approved check-out form or emergency listings. (All visitors who wish to be volunteers MUST have completed an initial VIRTUS training course prior to working with any of our students.)

#### *Early Release Days/Times*

Students who are not picked up within 20 minutes of dismissal on early release days (by 12:20 p.m. usually) will be charged a \$35.00 fee, plus a dollar each minute thereafter until the child is picked up. Early release times on early release days are usually scheduled at 12:00 p.m. Lunch will NOT be served on early release days, so parents are encouraged to send a snack with their children. (Please refer to the school calendar for availability of after-school care on early release days.)

#### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

In compliance with the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department and the State of Texas Family Code, schools of the Archdiocese of Galveston- Houston follow compulsory attendance laws. Daily school attendance is the only effective way to assure continued academic progress. All absences are considered absences – they are neither excused nor unexcused. SHCS recognizes the following as valid reasons for an absence:

- Student illness;
- Family emergency, such as death or serious illness.

If a student has been **absent for three days or more** or is under a doctor's care:

- The school needs a "Return to School" form from the doctor.

- Requests for homework are honored for a 3:20 P.M. pickup only if the request is received before 9:00 A.M. on the day of an absence. Teachers must have time to assimilate the necessary papers due to variances in their daily schedules.

Additionally, please note:

- Unless a child is absent for two or more days or has a difficult time with make-up work, requests for homework for one day's absence are not necessary.
- When a student is absent from school for any reason other than illness or family emergency, parents are usually contacted and the consequences of the absence discussed.
- When a student is absent, the parent/guardian is expected to call the school office by 9:00 A.M. and send a written note upon the student's return to school.
- One-half day absences count as an absence – the student will not be eligible for a Perfect Attendance award.
- One-half day absences are accrued when a student misses 3.5 hours in one day, either morning or afternoon. A student who comes in after missing 3.5 hours of school will be counted absent ½ day (11:20 a.m. is the ½ day mark). Likewise, a student who checks out and misses 3.5 hours of school will be counted absent ½ day (checks out before 11:20 a.m.).
- A student who checks out during the day, and does not return by the last class of the day, may not return to campus for any reason– for example, Girl Scout Meeting, Art Club, athletics practice or game, or tutoring.
- The school staff is not obligated to provide special assignments to a student when a parent opts to schedule activities that warrant student absences on compulsory attendance days as indicated on the school's calendar. It is a teacher decision to provide work in advance or to allow the student to make-up work upon his/her return.
- A valid reason for absence does not mean a student will not be marked absent. A student not physically present at school is marked absent.
- For students who are habitually absent and have accumulated excessive absences, a doctor's note may be requested for each absence in order to provide him/her with make-up work and other assignments.

School Board Policy dated May 9, 2002:

"Students are required to be in attendance. If a student has 10% or more absences in a semester, the principal and/or the SHCS Attendance Committee may retain the student in his/her grade for another year."

## **BACKPACKS**

Students in grades PK-4, will not be allowed to use backpacks with wheels. This is due to safety concerns for all students and staff. Because our PK-4th graders are not yet "good drivers," they often run over toes, feet, fingers, or knock over items unintentionally. Students in grades 5-8 will be allowed to use wheeled backpacks. Caution should be used when moving up/down stairs.

## **BIRTHDAY CLUB**

### *Birthday Club PK3-PK4*

To ensure that all students are treated special and fairly, individual birthday parties are not held at the school. Instead, all PK students will participate in a Birthday Club celebration held monthly with their teacher and classmates during his/her birthday month.

- Birthday Club will be held in the classrooms during either snack or lunch time, designated by the teacher.
- Because Birthday Club is one of our designated HSA Committees, it is NOT a room party. It is a club. Volunteers working Birthday Club are not permitted to bring siblings to volunteer.
- July and August birthdays are celebrated in late August or September, and May and June birthdays are celebrated in May.



- The guests of honor will receive a special birthday “crown” and a special treat. Celebrants receive a cupcake and juice. (Parents are not permitted to bring cakes or other dessert items for their child’s actual birth date.)
- All other individual birthday parties for students must be conducted off campus.
- Snacks, favors, gifts, will not be distributed on the actual date of the child’s birthday.
- If a child is absent on the date of the Birthday Club celebration, the child may receive his/her special “crown” and treat at the next monthly celebration.

Due to the abbreviated length of time for the party (30 minutes maximum) and the size of the classrooms (in comparison to the cafeteria), volunteers will be limited. The room parent will coordinate the birthday goodies. Depending upon the size of the class and the number of instructional staff members assigned to the classroom, an additional volunteer may be requested by the room parent, upon approval from the classroom teacher. Other volunteers may participate ONLY in classroom parties, not in Birthday Club.

### *Birthday Club K-8*

To ensure that all students are treated special and fairly, individual birthday parties are not held at the school. Instead, all students participate in a Birthday Club party held monthly with the Principal during his/her birthday month.

- July and August birthdays are celebrated in late August and May, and June birthdays are celebrated in May.
- From 11:00-11:30 a.m., the guests of honor are seated with the Principal or designee at a specially decorated table in the cafeteria (or other available venue).
- Celebrants receive pizza, a cupcake, ice cream, a drink, and a special remembrance.
- Parents are not permitted to bring cakes or other dessert items for their child’s actual birth date.
- All other individual birthday parties for students must be conducted off campus.
- Snacks, favors, gifts, will not be distributed on the actual date of the child’s birthday.
- If a child is absent on the date of the Birthday Club celebration, the child may join the next monthly celebration.

### **CALENDAR FOR SCHOOL YEAR**

A copy of the current school year calendar may be found at the school's website: [www.SHCSsaints.org](http://www.SHCSsaints.org), then look for the 2017-2018 calendar link/tab. More detailed monthly calendars are also posted on the website and sent home in hard copy.

### **CAMERA SURVEILLANCE**

To enhance your child’s safety at school, the campus uses a closed-recording camera surveillance system (no audio recordings are made). Cameras are placed at numerous high-traffic areas in the campus, including stairwells and inside the classrooms. These digital recordings are kept for a limited period of time and are kept and viewed, as needed, in a very confidential manner. Parents are not permitted to view the recordings due to confidentiality issues with other children who may be viewed on the digital pictures. Cameras are not present where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy – for example, the clinic and restrooms.

### **CAMP KAPPE**

Camp Kappe, School for Environmental Education, is located in Plantersville, Texas, and is mandatory for fifth grade students. The students, their teachers, and chaperones learn about food chains and life cycles. They study botany, wildlife, farm animals and gardening. Students are introduced to environmental issues and concerns. Stewardship principles of God's creation are taught, which encourages the students to protect our God-given resources and to use them wisely. All 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will be expected to participate in this overnight experience, and absences from camp are unacceptable; students who miss the experience are given zeroes on numerous multi-disciplinary assignments. The costs incurred by the school for this experience is significant; therefore, students and

parents should plan to participate in numerous fundraisers and can probably expect to pay from \$50-\$100 (approximately) for the Camp Kappe experience. (Scholarships are available, with identified need.)

In order for a student's absence from Camp Kappe to be allowed, the following must occur:

1. The student's doctor must call Camp Kappe personally and speak directly to the camp director to express his/her objections for the student attending camp. If, after the dialogue with the director, the doctor believes a waiver should be given to said student, the doctor must write a letter to the campus principal stating the conditions that prohibit the student from attending Camp Kappe from said Tuesday through Friday. Once the doctor has spoken with the camp director, the school is presented with the doctor's written letter or recommendation to waive the Camp Kappe requirement, the principal gives the student an allowable absence for four days and alternative assignments are provided.

2. If the principal approves the waiver, the student is given makeup work and is required to pass a comprehensive major test. Any other absences are not allowed and the student receives zeroes in the content areas. Students not in mandatory attendance at Camp Kappe are not allowed onto St. Helen Catholic School grounds for the said 4-day period. (The student will receive absences for 4 days).

### **CARPOOL TRAFFIC PATTERN – Arrivals and Dismissals**

*Building Procedures - Arrivals for all grades (7:30 -7:45 a.m.)*

- **Arrival** (all grades) will be conducted under the carport of the main building in an orderly fashion, beginning at 7:30 a.m. Monday-Thursday and 7:25 a.m. on Friday or other Mass days.
- To avoid delays and for the safety of all students, all parents must follow carpool line procedures and **are not allowed to walk their child up to or into the school building** due to the moving traffic line in front of our building (exception: students/families who walk to school **AND PK-K students for the first few days of school.**)
- We will be unloading numerous cars at one time. Please pull forward as far as you possibly can so that we may successfully help all cars at one time.
- After dropping off your child under the carport, you must exit toward the direction shown to you.
- For further information, see section entitled ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL TIMES FOR STUDENTS for variances to dismissal procedures.
- PLEASE REFER TO YOUR “BACK TO SCHOOL PACKET” FOR A MAP OF TRAFFIC PATTERNS FOR ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL. (The map may be delayed, depending upon the opening of the new facility.)

*Building Procedures – Dismissals 3:00 p.m.*

- **For dismissal**, all students in **grades PK3-8<sup>th</sup>** will be picked up at the main campus building beginning at 3:00 p.m. Optional PK dismissal pick-up time is 2:00 p.m. Additional information regarding dismissal will be distributed once routes from the new facility have been secured.
- We will be loading numerous cars at one time. Please pull forward as far as you possibly can so that we may successfully help all cars at one time.
- If your child is not ready or not listening to his/her name being called while waiting in the main building hallways, the carpool loaders will ask you to go around and get in line again or pull up to another door.
- To avoid delays in the carpool line, please pull out of the car line completely before putting books in the trunk of the car or helping your child adjust their seat belt.
- After picking up your child under the carport, you must exit in the direction you are guided.
- For further information, see section entitled ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL TIMES FOR STUDENTS for variances to dismissal procedures.
- PLEASE REFER TO YOUR “BACK TO SCHOOL PACKET” FOR A MAP OF TRAFFIC PATTERNS FOR ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL. (The map may be delayed, depending upon the opening of the new facility.)

Other important items to note for all students/parents during **dismissal times**:

- If you need to pick up your child early, you **MUST** pick him/her up in the office **by 2:30 p.m.** We have limited staff in the office and they are unable to call for children after 2:30 p.m. because it is very busy. Parents/Guardians arriving after 2:30 p.m. will interfere with regular school dismissal and the smooth operations of the office.
- Students picked up after 3:00 p.m. (regular dismissal time) must be picked up through the regular carpool line.
- Parents and others are asked to be polite about waiting their turn in the carpool line – **PLEASE DO NOT BREAK OR “CUT” IN LINE** because this does not model Christian behavior for our students and other families.
- Zip Line Passes: Occasionally, parents/families may purchase a “zip line” pass at various school auction events. This special pass allows them to be one of the first four families in the front of the car line during dismissal. These families’ vehicles have special areas in which they line up. Please accommodate their auction win!

### **CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phones are not allowed to be used at any time during the school day without staff/teacher permission. Electronic devices should also not be used during before/after school activities (clubs, groups, etc.) unless the sponsor has given specific permission to do so. A fine of \$50.00 will be imposed if a student is found with a cell phone, iPod, camera, game machine, or other electronic device on campus that is being used without permission, inappropriately, or is in violation of our technology policy. In the case of cell phones, if they are found in the “on” position or in use during the school day without permission, they will be confiscated. The \$50.00 fee must be paid in the presence of a parent and the electronic device will be returned only to the parent.

Other electronic devices must be used with the permission of the teacher. SHCS uses a “BYOD” (Bring Your Own Device) policy. All devices, school-owned or personal, must only be used for approved instructional purposes, for example – reading, research, or note-taking. Not following teacher directions for use may result in confiscation of the device. Students are responsible for their own electronic devices. For security purposes, students should NOT leave them in their lockers.

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, OR EMAIL**

Please immediately notify the school in writing when there is a change of address and/or a change in telephone numbers (home, cell, or business) or email addresses. It is important to keep this information current for the student's safety in case of emergencies or for late pick-ups. Also, important information is often delivered via our electronic newsletter and mass emails.

### **CHRISTIAN CODE OF CONDUCT**

Christian behavior and respect shall be observed during any verbal and nonverbal communication at all levels within the school community. The following actions will be termed in violation of Christian charity and may result in dismissal from the school:

- Public criticism of school personnel, policies, or procedures or ANY behavior which does not promote the school in a positive manner (this includes social media sites)
- Threats of any nature (implied or actual) toward personnel or families (this includes social media sites)
- Verbal/nonverbal acts of aggression including yelling, screaming, pushing, etc.
- Public discussion/generation of rumors about students, family matters, staff, faculty, or procedures or ANY behavior which does not promote the school in a positive manner (this includes social media sites)

- Consistent and persistent disagreement with the administration or teacher policies. Rules are established to maintain order, provide a faith-based religious education, and teach strong academics (this includes social media sites)
- Blatant disregard to follow and support the requirements and expectations of all handbook policies.

We acknowledge that we are not the school for all families, and we will exercise the right to ask families to leave when the standards for Christian conduct are not followed.

School Board Policy dated April 13, 2000:

"St. Helen Catholic School reserves the right to enact withdrawal of any student and/or students who they, themselves, or their parents, create situations considered to be detrimental to the welfare and/or learning process of the other students within the school."

### **CLASSROOM VISITS**

We strive to minimize classroom distractions and to increase attentiveness of the child towards a positive, child-centered learning environment. All requests for classroom visits must be arranged with the principal and teacher in advance. Siblings are not permitted in the classrooms during visits. Visitors should refrain from conversation with the teacher or students. Visits will be restricted to days that will not interfere with regular classroom instruction or assessments and will not exceed 30 minutes. Frequent, repeated visits will not be allowed due to the interruptions they cause to student learning. Confidentiality is another factor in limiting visitors and visitor times in the classrooms.

### **CLINIC AND HEALTH ISSUES**

#### *Student/Family Use of Clinic*

As Christian parents, we are responsible for the health and welfare of our children. Please assist us in keeping a healthy environment by not sending children to school with any symptoms of illness.

#### *Health Screenings*

Vision, hearing, and spinal screenings are conducted each year on students per the State of Texas Health Department requirements. Students who do not pass the screenings are referred to their family doctor or specialist.

#### *Illnesses*

When the school determines that your child is ill, we expect you or a representative to arrive within 30 minutes to one hour maximum. It is paramount that you give us current telephone numbers as well as emergency contact names and telephone numbers. If the parents cannot be reached, then the emergency contacts will be called to pick up your child. Any child with a temperature of 100 or above or vomiting is sent home. A student should be fever free without the aid of medication for 24 hours before returning to school following an illness. Students are to be kept home when they have a cold, sore throat, temperature, eye infection, skin eruptions, swollen glands, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Any child exhibiting such symptoms is sent home. Students should not have vomited within 24 hours to return to school. Parents are required to notify the office if a student is ill. Please notify the school if your child has a communicable disease. When a child returns to school after having a communicable disease, he/she must present himself/herself to the office with a written note from a doctor saying he/she can be readmitted to class.

<b>Guidelines for Excluding Students from School</b>	
<b>Exclusion Guidelines</b>	<b>Return to School Guidelines</b>
Oral temperature of 100 degrees or above	Fever free for 24 hours
Vomiting, nausea or severe abdominal pain	Symptom free for 24 hours

Marked drowsiness or malaise	Symptom free
Sore throat, acute cold or persistent cough	Symptom free
Red, inflamed or discharging eyes	Written physician release
Wound, skin and soft tissue infections	Exclude until drainage is contained and covered with a clean dry bandage
Swollen glands around jaws, ears or neck	Written physician release
Suspected scabies or impetigo	Written physician release
Any skin lesion in the weeping stage	Covered and diagnosed as non-infectious
Earache	Symptom free
Pediculosis	Lice and nit free
Other symptoms suggestive of acute illness	Written physician release

### *Immunizations*

Each child entering SHCS must have received the basic series of immunizations against:

- whooping cough,
- diphtheria,
- typhoid,
- polio,
- measles,
- mumps,
- and all other diseases as required by state law and Archdiocesan policy.

The state requires that all students entering public or non-public schools have at least 5 doses of DPT, DT, and or TD vaccine, provided that at least one dose of DPT/OPV has been received on or after the fourth birthday. For the health and safety of the entire student body, the required documentation of immunizations, including the doctor's signature must be on file for a student's registration to be complete. All new students entering the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston school district are required to present written evidence of T.B. testing and results. Students with incomplete immunization records are not admitted to class until their record is current. It is the parent's responsibility to keep their child's immunization record current.

This statement was approved by the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission and endorsed by the Bishops of Texas in January 2009: 'Every student enrolled in a Catholic school in the state of Texas shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health Services. A student who fails to present the required evidence shall not be accepted for enrollment. The only exemption to the foregoing requirement is a medical exemption signed by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) authorized to practice in the state of Texas. [The Pontifical Academy for Life, "Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived from Aborted Fetuses," 2005: +DEF].'

### *Lice*

Any child sent home with lice may not return until all signs of lice are gone. The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston follows the nit-free policy of many local, county health departments. The school nurse aide must check the student before he/she is allowed to return to class. A student sent home with lice may not return to school until all signs of lice are gone, approximately 48 hours.

### *Medications*

If possible, all medication should be given outside of school hours. "Three times a day" medications should be given before school, after school, and at bedtime by parents. Only medication which is necessary for the child to

remain in school will be given during school hours. Stock medications are not kept in the clinic. The parents are responsible for bringing all medications for their child to the clinic and for picking up unused medicines or they will be destroyed. If you have any health-related or medication questions, please contact the Clinic office.

#### *Prescription Medications*

Law prohibits the school faculty from administering any kind of medication to the students without authorization. The student will need a Request for Medication Administration form signed by the physician and parent. Please obtain this form from the school office. The medication is to be brought to the school clinic in the original container. Prescription medication must be properly identified with the prescription label from a pharmacy. The school will not be held responsible for any medication that is taken by the child. The use of nebulizer treatments in schools for the treatment of asthma should be done with extreme caution. Non-medical personnel should not be responsible for the administration of the nebulizer treatment. The parent is ultimately responsible for the care of their asthmatic child.

#### *Non-Prescription Medications*

All fever reducers or over-the-counter pain relievers, cough drops, ointment, vitamins, and other over the counter medications are considered medications and may not be given to your child unless a permission slip that has been signed by your physician and a note giving parental consent is on file. A parent's signature alone is not sufficient for the school to administer over-the-counter medications. Non-prescription medications must be labeled with the child's name.

#### *Suspected Child Abuse*

SHCS abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect are reported to Child Protective Services.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Open, honest, and constructive communication is essential in creating a positive school environment. Various methods of communication exist to communicate school business with families, including school newsletters, the principal's NewsFlash, HSA e-blasts, administrative letters, schedules, and the school website. Parents are strongly encouraged to read and to be aware of the enclosed information from the principal, teachers, and school/parish groups. Communications are sent home throughout the week. Please check daily for memos in your child's folders and/or your child's backpack. If you wish to communicate a question, problem, or concern with a teacher or staff member, you should go directly to that person before going to the principal. If parents have a complaint about a teacher, they must discuss the difficulty first with the teacher. Parents or teachers may request the principal to be present at a conference.

If parents would like to schedule a conference with the principal, they are invited to contact the school office. If parents wish to discuss their child's progress, the conference should first be scheduled with the teacher. Parents wishing to log a complaint against their child's teacher should FIRST address the issue with the teacher. To voice a concern against a staff member who does not teach their child, parents should contact the principal. A good rule of thumb is to always go to the source of the issue so to avoid the "middle man" and get the problem resolved faster.

Parents wishing to inquire about the school community's attitudes regarding specific teachers, qualifications, programs, curricula, schedules, etc. should schedule an appointment with the principal. Parents who seek to promote or advocate personal causes, or question school policy and rules, with other parent groups via the calling of "special meetings," sending out personal electronic communications or surveys, etc. will be asked to withdraw their children and relocate to another campus. The appropriate means to gather information is to schedule a meeting with the principal and request information. Seeking to disrupt the school community by promoting a

personal agenda is disruptive to the school and, ultimately, impacts your child. Our campus is not a public school and is not suited for all families.

## **CONFERENCES**

Your child's progress is important to us; however, due to staff commitments, previously scheduled conferences, professional development sessions, and other school meetings, all appointments with administration and/or with teachers should be requested in writing or by telephone and scheduled in advance. Teachers will attempt to return phone calls within 24 hours of receipt of the message. Messages left for teachers may not be retrieved by the teachers until the close of the school day or beginning of the next school day due to their schedules. Teachers are available to discuss issues during the regular school day by appointment only. Contact the school office to request a conference, make a phone call to request a conference, send an email, or send a note with your child. Please respect the personal life of all staff members and refrain from calling a staff member at home.

Report card conferences are held in the fall with the homeroom teacher. These conferences are meant to be positive and constructive in nature, with the intent that of improving the child's academic progress and religious education. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the fall conference. The conference provides students an opportunity to discuss their accomplishments and goals for the upcoming academic quarter.

The school establishes two early release days for scheduling parent conferences during the school year. During the fall conferences, teachers meet with all students' parents. At the spring conference, only the parents of those children experiencing difficulties will be contacted. However, a parent may contact a teacher at any time to schedule a conference.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Each school year a Student Directory is published. Parents must contact the office if they choose not to have their phone numbers and address listed. Please do not call the school to request any phone numbers or addresses for any SHCS family or employee. It is a violation of FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) for us to divulge confidential information.

Confidentiality privileges also apply to the campus' camera surveillance systems. Parents are not permitted to view digital recordings of their children if other children's images are captured on the recording device by the school's camera system.

## **COPYRIGHT RULES**

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston that all employees, volunteers, and students are to abide by the federal copyright laws. Employees, volunteers, and students who willfully disregard copyright laws are in violation of this policy, doing so at their own risk and assuming all liability.

## **COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE**

Catholic schools offer many guidance opportunities for all students. These include value-oriented lessons, individual attention, meaningful liturgical celebrations, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, frequent affirmation, and the consistent application of Catholic principles of social justice. The guidance process is continuing and developmental; it helps all students to develop wholesome self-concepts, and self-discipline and skills to choose safe and healthy lifestyles. The counseling program utilizes a guidance curricula to assist the classroom teacher in integrating guidance with other subjects areas. *Faith, Family and Friends: a Catholic Elementary School Guidance Program* is utilized as the campus program.

St. Helen Catholic School employs a part-time, certified school counselor (available on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday). If the counselor is unavailable, the principal will assist with personal and social/emotional issues. Sometimes, counseling referrals to outside agencies will be made by the counselor or the principal.

## **CURRICULUM**

Core curriculum at SHCS is an Archdiocesan curriculum (founded on Christian values and authentic Catholic doctrine) based on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) essential elements as part of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Our campus curricula program is accredited by TCCED and AdvancED. Master teachers from the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Catholic schools develop, review and revise these guides as needed. It is our philosophy and belief that our curriculum demonstrates an excellence in academics, rather than merely the essentials of academics, since our curriculum is based on national, Catholic standards. Our curriculum includes English/Language Arts (reading, grammar, phonics, spelling, creative expression, and writing), math, science, social studies (history and geography), fine arts, p.e., and religion. These subjects are taught in a self-contained classroom setting (grades PK-2) with departmentalized settings for grades 3-8 and special programs, such as physical education, music, speech, and Spanish.

## **DELIVERIES**

SHCS will not accept delivery of restaurant food, flowers, balloons, etc. for students.

## **DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS**

SHCS uses a formative, developmentally-appropriate, choice discipline program that encourages self-discipline. The intent of this program is to form responsible individuals with values rooted in Christian precepts. The program is corrective in nature rather than being merely punitive. It is modeled after the sacramental life of the Church, in particular the sacrament of reconciliation. In this sacrament, a faith-filled person acknowledges and takes responsibility for the wrongful actions he or she has chosen, atones, and makes a sincere effort to do better. Similarly, in the formative discipline program, a student is challenged to acknowledge and to take responsibility for the inappropriate behavior, learn from this mistake, and make amends by consistently trying to avoid this behavior in the future.

This disciplinary program supersedes all previous plans. By no means is it all-inclusive. Administration and staff will exercise professional judgment and discretion so as to address each situation fairly and consistently.

A **“give me 5” cue** is used by staff to remind students of appropriate behavior and expectations. The “give me 5” cue is a raised hand with 5 fingers extended. The five fingers represent these cues: eyes on speaker, mouth quiet, being still, hands still, listening.

Bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, and harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, will not be tolerated at SHCS. Any incidents of this nature that are reported will be investigated fully. Consequences will fit the nature of the offense and may be severe, including suspension and/or expulsion or withdrawal from the campus.

### *Respect for God*

Students are encouraged to practice the Catholic-Christian faith through:

- Active participation in liturgies
- Sharing of oneself through community activities
- Reverence to God through their actions, including exhibiting reverence in church and prayer

### *Respect for Self*

Each individual is a child of God. Each student's behavior reflects this self-respect through:

- Propriety in dress
- Use of proper body language, including posture and facial expressions
- Fulfillment of all student responsibilities



### *Respect for Others*

Each student, parent, teacher, staff member, and visitor is treated as a child of God. Each student's behavior reflects this respect for others through:

- Cooperation with students, parents, teachers, staff members, and visitors
- Treatment of others with kindness in word and actions, a "no bullying" expectation
- Modulation of one's voice
- Promptness
- Preservation of the privacy of others
- Preservation of others' personal spaces, a "hands-off requirement"

### *Respect for Property*

Students are expected to use facilities and materials properly through:

- Use of school property and equipment in the manner for which they were intended
- Preservation of all areas of the church and school campus by keeping them clean, neat, and tidy (including, but not limited to the cafeteria, lockers, restrooms, hallways, pavilion, chapel, church, etc.)
- Compliance with the "hands off" requirement that extends to the personal property of others (including, but not limited to purses, lockers, backpacks, lunches, supplies, books, zipper bags, etc.)

### *Positive Reinforcement*

While recognizing that students first learn appropriate behavior at home, it is understood that parents, teachers, and students are all responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that encourages growth and learning. Each teacher will display a discipline plan that includes positive recognition for appropriate behavior. Positive reinforcement plays a key role in maintaining discipline each day and can take many forms, from verbal praise to more tangible rewards.

When a student chooses not to follow the prescribed rules, teachers assist the student in identifying the behavior, discussing the inherent problems the behavior causes, and focusing on what the student can do to prevent a reoccurrence. When a lack of respect for property results in breakage or damage, the student and his/her family are responsible for restitution and replacement/repair of the item(s) damaged.

### *Responsibility for Behavior*

St. Helen School has the highest expectations of appropriate behavior for its students and believes our students should be held to a higher standard of behavior. To facilitate an orderly and productive atmosphere, it is necessary to provide guidelines and present responsibilities for all those involved in achieving a positive learning environment. It is through the combined efforts of the educational trinity: student, parent, and teacher, that a student can become truly successful. By reviewing the guidelines for conduct and listed responsibilities, parents and teachers can assist and guide the student's efforts toward behavioral and academic success. Christian principles of respect for the rights of others govern the actions of all. Students are expected to follow all the explicit and implicit rules of good order. An important key for developing responsibility in children is by allowing them to experience logical and natural consequences. Teachers communicate with parents by note, discipline form, email, or telephone call when the student's behavior does not meet these high standards.

The parents' cooperation is encouraged, expected, and essential for effective resolution of the child's discipline issue.

While it is the student's responsibility to care for his/her assigned locker (grades 3-8), all student lockers are the property of the school and we reserve the right to inspect them at any time. (Locks are not allowed on lockers, so students are encouraged to take valuables – example, electronics – with them to class at all times.) Students will abide by the school's rules regarding usage and care of the lockers. Students are advised that lockers can be searched for just cause and without prior notice at any time. Any item found within a student's locker is the responsibility of the student.

### *Academic Dishonesty*

Academic dishonesty or cheating is a very serious offense. It is a violation of moral standards, not simply a disciplinary infraction. Depending on the severity and the level of cheating, teachers have discretion to submit a disciplinary referral and/or to allow the child to earn a “0” on the assignment in question. Plagiarism is included as an offense of academic dishonesty. Also, older students will be assigned an “N” or a “U” on their report cards for a cheating offense.

### *Disciplinary Notice/Referrals*

Specific breaches of discipline in the classroom are under the authority of the supervising teacher. However, all teachers have jurisdiction over all students, in any part of the campus or church, regardless of age or grade. Parents will be notified when their child has seriously misbehaved within the classroom or church, during extended care, or during extracurricular/elective activities. Disciplinary notices/referrals are issued to students who do not follow class or school rules. “Give me 5” cues and classroom rules will be used to remind students of appropriate behavior choices.

At the beginning of the school year, your teachers will send home grade level disciplinary procedures. Guidelines and behavior management for students in grades PK3-3<sup>rd</sup> grade vary somewhat from what is outlined below. Please refer to your teachers’ expectation letters. (For example, students in PK3-1<sup>st</sup> grade use a “clip” system on a color chart with facial expressions.)

Rules that may be posted in each classroom are:

- Respect yourself and others, while taking responsibility for your actions.
- Be prepared by bringing all required supplies and homework to class.
- Be on time.
- Choose your attitude.
- Be a consistent learner.
- All-inclusive and posted on a cross symbol:  
Be the Eucharist for those around you; Be the change you want to see in the world; Be respectful of everything and everyone with the reverence of Jesus; Use your gifts and talents to be your best.

According to the SHCS discipline plan, the following steps will be taken to improve student behavior:

- Warnings (all grades)
- Signing “the Book” (grades 4-8) or “flipping a card” and/or “moving a clip” (grades PK-3)
- Sign discipline referral form, taking responsibility for discipline choice
- Lunch isolation or walking recess
- Teacher contacts home or schedules parent conference
- Visit to the Principal's office (counts as a "referral")
- Possible before/after school detention assignment
- In-school suspension (with parents paying for the substitute; earned “U” on report card)
- Out-of-school suspension (may not be able to make up the work; counts as an absence; earned “U” on report card)
- Home-Study program
- Conference to consider student withdrawal from campus (with 2 out-of-school suspensions or major offenses of the disciplinary code)

### *Discipline Referrals, Conduct Grades, and Other Consequences*

- 0-2 referrals                      E on report card
- 3-4 referrals                      S on report card

- 5-6 referrals                    N on report card
- 7 or more referrals            U on report card

Additional referrals may result in the student's withdrawal from campus. (Conduct grade procedures may vary, depending upon grade level, especially in the early grades. Teachers will communicate disciplinary expectations with parents in these grades. In junior high, conduct grades will also encompass the use and completion of our agenda/planner books.)

- A student with less than 7 referrals for the year will earn Field Day in the Spring. A student with an N or U (cumulative) in conduct may not participate in Field Day OR a student with 7 or more referrals for the year may not participate in Field Day. (Serious consideration will also be given to student removal from the class field trip if discipline infractions are common.) Removal from Kindergarten Fun Day may also occur.

- Each single discipline referral form will result in lunch isolation and a "walking" recess (the student will walk the perimeter of the pavilion during recess). This will occur the day after the referral is taken home. Lunch isolation and "walking" recess will continue if the referral is not returned with a parent signature (or parent contact). Continued non-return of the referral form will result in a phone call home and, possibly, another referral. This procedure may not be followed if the student commits a serious infraction that requires immediate action; for example, fighting or extreme disrespect towards staff members.

- In-school or out-of-school suspensions result in an automatic "U" for a discipline grade for the pertinent 9-week marking period. Suspensions will result in removal from the end of year Field Day. The family will incur the cost for the substitute if the student is placed in in-school suspension. Further disciplinary infractions could result in a longer out-of-school suspension or withdrawal from the campus.

- After the 4th and subsequent referrals, before or after school detention will be served. Detention will be from 7:20-7:50 a.m. or 3:00-3:30 p.m. Detention will consist of copying Bible passages. Student will not be allowed to complete homework or to merely sit without working. Teachers or the principal will supervise the detention time.

These discipline forms or referrals notify both the student and his/her parent of a need for improved behavior. These notices must be signed by the parent and student, then returned to the teacher. The teacher has discretionary options for assigning consequences or suggesting consequences to the principal.

A visit to the principal will result after the teacher has provided the student an opportunity to correct his/her behavior, and the parent has been contacted for assistance to correct the behavior. If a student does not respond to repeated efforts by the teacher and/or parent to encourage his/her appropriate behavior, he/she will be sent to the principal's office. Additionally, when a major offense occurs (fighting or repeatedly bullying, for example), a student will immediately be sent to the office without the above-listed steps being followed.

### *Suspension*

Suspension is a serious punishment that shall be used when a student is in serious violation of the Discipline Code (7 referrals) or commits a major offense. Should it be necessary to suspend, both oral and written notice will be given to the student and parents. The suspension may be either in-school or out-of-school suspension. This is at the discretion of the principal and it will result in a "U" in conduct for that 9-week period.

In-school suspension means that the student will not be allowed to attend classes with fellow students and is required to complete all regular class work in another more secluded setting. A substitute teacher will be hired at the parent's expense. An in-school suspension may last up to three (3) days.

Out-of-school suspension requires that the student remain away from the school under the parent's supervision. In some cases, schoolwork will be assigned and completion required. It might be that the absences will cause the student not to receive any make-up work (teacher discretion). Any behavior resulting in two out-of-school suspensions may be cause for withdrawal from SHCS. A student who receives an out-of-school suspension may not return to campus for any reason until that suspension is fulfilled – for example, Girl Scout Meeting, Art Club, athletics practice or games and any other competitions.

**Major offenses include, but are not limited to:**

1. Destruction of property, vandalism of any kind
2. Smoking or use of tobacco, alcohol or other harmful substances, or possession of such items (See Diocesan Policy below)
3. Theft/cheating
4. Fighting
5. Harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing
6. Intimidation or defiance, including bullying or cursing/verbal assault of adult personnel or students
7. Leaving the classroom, campus, or school grounds without authorization
8. Repeated acts of incorrigible behavior (resulting in repeated discipline referrals)
9. Possession of weapons and/or other potentially dangerous items
10. Other acts of behavior unbecoming a St. Helen student

*Home Study*

A student who is accused of serious wrongdoing may be placed in a home-study program (under the direction of the parent/guardian), pending adjudication or an investigation into the matter. The length of time of the home-study program may vary for each child/offense, depending upon the amount of time remaining in the school year, the type of infraction, and other factors.

*Expulsion*

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter and, generally, every other possible solution will have been explored with the student and his/her parents prior to taking this action. A student's continued enrollment at the school will be subject to his/her meeting the scholastic and behavioral standards set by the school's administration. If any student fails to meet these standards, and if the principal believes that continued enrollment of the student is not in the best interest of the student or the school, the principal shall so advise the pastor. A written notification of the expulsion, stating the circumstances and dates of the matter shall be sent to the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools. Parents may appeal the expulsion through the appropriate grievance process.

*Immediate expulsion can take place when a student:*

- Participates in disruptive activities by a group, including but not limited to gangs and consistent bullying or harassment
- Possesses, uses or delivers narcotics, dangerous drugs, harmful substances, or alcohol on the school campus or school-sponsored activities
- Smokes or uses any tobacco product on school property or at school-related activity
- Possesses, uses or conceals a weapon or any item construed to be a weapon on school property or at a school-related activity (a weapon is any instrument which might produce bodily harm or death)
- Threatens bodily injury or harm to a student/school personnel
- Assaults a student or any school personnel that results in physical injury
- Leaves the school ground without authorization, disrupting the learning environment
- Vandalizes school property or the property of others
- Commits persistent acts of incorrigible behavior

Parents who consistently disregard or question the SHCS Code of Conduct and campus expectations may be asked to withdraw their child(ren). Disruptive, threatening (including bullying of others), or illegal behavior of a parent/guardian may result in the expulsion of that student. The authorities will be immediately notified if parents disrupt, threaten or engage in illegal behavior, including but not limited to, assaulting a student or school personnel. Assault is a crime that occurs when one person tries to physically harm another in a way that makes the person under attack feel immediately threatened. Actual physical contact is not necessary; threatening gestures or language that would alarm any reasonable person can constitute an assault. Parents or family members using profane language targeted to a student or another adult may face charges after a police officer has been called. Even without formal charges, the parent and student may be banned from campus.

#### *Archdiocesan Policy Regarding Use of Controlled Substances*

"The use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol is wrong and harmful. A student is subject to removal from class which may result in suspension, expulsion, or referral for prosecution. This policy is in effect whether the student is on school property or attending a school sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property."

The following are examples:

- Chemical substance use, possession for consumption, sale or dispensing of illegal drugs and narcotics.
- Acting under the influence of an illegal drug, alcohol, narcotic, marijuana, or a controlled substance.
- Medication misuse or over-dosage.

#### *Guns and Weapons*

We are a weapons-free, gun-free campus. Guns and other weapons on campus can be a hazard to the welfare of human beings and a safe learning environment. They will not be permitted nor tolerated on our campus. Possession of such items by students will result in immediate notification of the appropriate authorities.

### **DRESS CODE – UNIFORM STANDARDS**

#### *General Uniform Guidelines for Grades PK-8 (all students):*

- Parker Uniform is the exclusive supplier for uniform items.
- All students (PK-8) must wear the required uniform from the first day of school until the close of the school year. Notices of exceptions to this rule are sent home in advance (for example, "casual dress" days).
- The SHCS emblem must be on the left side of all shirts for the boys, the girls' polo shirts, the school V-neck sweater and sweatshirt.
- The Mass uniform is required and is necessary for yearbook pictures (grades K-8).
- Students may also wear the optional yellow polo shirt with the school logo on the left side on non-Mass days.
- Shirttails and blouses must be tucked into pants so the belt loops are visible. Belts must be worn on clothing that has belt loops. Belts are to be black, dark brown, or navy blue.
- All buttons on blouses or shirts (except the collar button) must be buttoned. Collar buttons must be buttoned (with a tie for boys on Mass days). Blouses or shirts are not allowed with missing buttons.
- Girls' hemlines must not be shorter than 2 inches above the knee for culottes, jumpers, or skirts.
- **Girls in K-8 only may wear Parker navy pants/slacks on non-mass days.**
- Holes or rips in uniforms must be repaired, re-stitched, or patched. Students will not be allowed to wear torn clothing items.
- Uniform violation notices will be issued if guidelines are not followed.

#### *Girls' Uniforms*

*General note for all girls:*

*To maintain modesty, all upper body undergarments should be plain and white when white blouses are worn.*

### ***PK3 and PK4 Girls:***

- PK3 and PK4 girls are required to wear a green polo dress and blue modesty shorts, with the SHCS initials on the left side of the collar.
- Girls also have the option of wearing the Parker plaid skort with the green or yellow polo shirt. However, the green polo dress is required and is necessary for yearbook pictures.
- When PK4 begins attending the school mass in January, the girls are required to wear the green polo dress. Shorts are not permitted in church.
- Please refer to sections entitled General Uniform Guidelines for Grades PK-8 and to the sections explaining socks, shoes, jackets and coats for additional information.

### ***K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Girls:***

- Kindergarten - 3rd grade girls can wear Parker plaid culottes with a required green or yellow Parker polo shirt with emblem.
- Official Mass uniforms must be worn for Friday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. Required Mass uniforms include plaid jumper and white blouse with navy trim and “peter pan” collar, with the SHCS monogram on the collar.
- To maintain modesty, all upper body undergarments should be plain and white when white blouses are worn.
- Please refer to sections entitled General Uniform Guidelines for Grades PK-8 and to the sections explaining socks, shoes, jackets and coats for additional information.

### ***4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls:***

- 4th-8th grade girls may wear a Parker plaid skirt, with a green polo shirt with emblem (yellow shirt optional).
- Girls in grades 4th-5th will now have the option to wear Parker plaid culottes on non-Mass days in lieu of the Parker plaid skirt. If your girl prefers pockets and other conveniences of the culottes, she may choose this option. Please keep in mind, the stated Mass uniform must still be worn on Fridays and all other Mass days.
- The official Mass uniform includes a plaid skirt with white buttoned down blouse with emblem.
- Privacy shorts are required to be worn under the skirt, but must not be visible.
- School sweatshirts may be worn on Mass days.
- Girls in **grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>** who participate in p.e. or Physical Conditioning must wear the approved Parker gym shorts to p.e. class.
- To maintain modesty, all upper body undergarments should be plain and white when white blouses are worn.
- Please refer to sections entitled General Uniform Guidelines for Grades PK-8 and to the sections explaining socks, shoes, jackets and coats for additional information.

### ***Boys' Uniforms***

#### ***PK3 and PK4 Boys:***

- Boys in PK3 and PK4 must wear the Parker navy-blue shorts or pants with either the required green Parker polo or optional yellow polo shirt.
- When PK4 begins attending the school mass in January, the boys are required to wear a green polo shirt with pants. Shorts are not permitted in church.
- Please refer to sections entitled General Uniform Guidelines for Grades PK-8 and to the sections explaining socks, shoes, jackets and coats for additional information.

### ***K-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Boys:***

- Kindergarten-8th grade boys may wear Parker blue pants or shorts with a green (yellow optional) Parker polo shirt with emblem.
- Official Mass uniforms must be worn for Friday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. Required Mass uniforms include Parker blue pants, white buttoned down shirt with emblem, and a Parker plaid tie.
- Pants are required as part of the Mass uniform.
- School sweatshirts may be worn on Mass days.
- A black, dark brown, or navy blue belt is required if Parker uniform pants are designed with belt loops.
- Boys in **grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>** who participate in p.e. or Physical Conditioning must wear the approved Parker gym shorts to p.e. class.
- Please refer to sections entitled General Uniform Guidelines for Grades PK-8 and to the sections explaining socks, shoes, jackets and coats for additional information.

### ***Socks and Shoes – All Grades***

- Students may wear white or navy socks (socks **MUST BE WORN** 1 inch above the ankle bone; socks must be visible above the shoes).
- Tennis shoes or other footwear must be predominantly **SOLID-COLORED** navy blue, black, brown, white, or gray. (For example, blue, yellow, red or any other **BRIGHT** colors are a distraction and not permitted.)
- No bright or neon colors, or other accent colors or glitter may be present on a student's shoe (colors which would make the shoes lack a predominant solid color).
- No lights, wheelies, pictures, cartoon characters, glitter, etc. should be present on any shoes.
- Shoes must be non-skid soles.
- For safety reasons, flip-flops, open-toed, opened-back, high-heeled, or high-top shoes or tennis shoes are not permitted (even on “free” or “casual” dress days).
- Heels must be two (2) inches or less.
- **Boots are not allowed on regular school days.**
- Not wearing appropriate shoes, socks, or dress will be a dress code/uniform violation.

**Girls may wear ONLY white or navy tights (solid-colored tights – no prints or patterns) during winter months.** Tights are defined as stockings that have feet in them – leggings without feet are not classified as tights. Leggings should not be worn as part of the school uniform.

### ***Jackets and Coats***

*General guidelines for all students* - Parents have the option of purchasing the monogrammed navy cardigan and navy fleece jacket through Parker. In cooler weather, students have the option of wearing long sleeved thermals or undershirts under their uniform shirts, provided they are white or navy.

### ***All PK Students:***

Unlike students in grades K-8, PK students will be allowed to wear any coat/jacket in the classroom over their uniform, as long as it is solid-colored (no pictures, themes, glitter, etc. will be allowed). However, when PK4 students begin attending weekly Mass in January, they will not be permitted to wear optional jackets in the church.

### ***K-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students:***

- A Parker navy blue cardigan, fleece jacket, or sweatshirt with emblem can be worn in the classroom. This is recommended for cold weather when a sweater is needed inside the school. These Parker sweaters and sweatshirts are the only outerwear that can be worn at Mass or inside any school building.
- Students may wear other jackets and sweaters to and from school and on the playground, but **NOT** inside the school and church buildings.

- The campus' National Junior Honor Society Chapter also sells approved sweatshirts for student use. In the fall, parents may choose to purchase sweatshirts from NJHS to directly support campus groups.

### ***P.E./Physical Conditioning Uniforms for Grades 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>***

- Students in grades 6-8 need shorts and a t-shirt for p.e. classes.
- Parker uniform gym shorts are required for grades 6-8 (strongly suggested for 5<sup>th</sup> graders who remain in p.e. shorts Monday-Thursday from p.e. until the end of the day for dismissal).
- Shorts must be fingertip length (approx. 4 inches above the knee.) Form-fitting or spandex shorts and workout clothing are not permitted.
- Students may wear a St. Helen t-shirt, Parker gray t-shirt, Christian t-shirt or solid color t-shirt.
- Sweatpants approved by the coaches are allowed during cold weather.
- Cargo pants and pants with large pockets are not allowed.
- No jewelry should be worn during p.e. class.
- Not wearing appropriate shoes, socks, or dress will be a dress code/uniform violation.

**\*Special Note** – If Junior High students are scheduled for a p.e. or physical conditioning class during first or second periods, they may wear appropriate p.e. uniforms to school. This saves time in clothing changes before class. However, students must be prepared to change into their school uniforms prior to third period class. **P.E. SHORTS MUST BE PARKER GYM SHORTS TO MAINTAIN MODESTY.**

### ***P.E. Dressing Requirements for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade***

Fifth graders will not be expected to purchase the official p.e. uniform or change clothes on a daily basis for p.e. However, to preserve their Mass uniforms on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> graders will be permitted to change into gym clothes after lunch and prior to p.e. class. They will be able to remain in their p.e. clothes through the remainder of the day until dismissal (only one period). This will save instructional time.

- It is strongly suggested that 5<sup>th</sup> grade student gym clothes be the approved Parker p.e. uniform shorts to maintain modesty.
- Shirts may be any school, spirit, or religious-themed t-shirt.
- Shorts must be fingertip length. Form-fitting or spandex shorts and workout clothing are not permitted.
- Tennis shoes are expected for p.e. every day, including Fridays.
- Not wearing appropriate shoes, socks, or dress will be a dress code/uniform violation.

### ***General Exceptions to Uniform Dress for ALL Grades (PK-8)***

#### ***Spirit Days - Wednesdays***

Spirit Day is on Wednesday, unless it is a Holy Day or special occasion. Spirit shirts may be worn on these days.

- Spirit shirts are St. Helen Catholic School t-shirts, a Christian t-shirt, such as one that may have a scripture on it, or a t-shirt from a high school in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.
- Shirts from other Catholic schools are not allowed unless the Principal gives special permission to wear them.
- During Catholic Schools Week, only St. Helen Catholic School Spirit Shirts are allowed (no high school t-shirts) so that we promote our campus. We are to promote St. Helen Catholic School specifically that week.
- Student athletes may wear their St. Helen athletic uniform on spirit days during the appropriate sport season.
- On spirit days, the appropriate skirt, culottes, or slacks must be worn with the t-shirt.

#### ***Denim Dollar Days***

As determined by the school calendar, students may choose to donate \$1.00 to the Athletic Department on Denim Dollar Day so that they can wear blue jean pants. Jean skirts, capris, and jean shorts are not allowed to be worn. An



exception to denim shorts is to be made for PK3 and PK4 students – both boys and girls may wear denim shorts in these grades.

### *Scout Uniforms*

Students actively participating in scouts are allowed to wear scout uniforms on meeting days (girls or boys).

### ***General Grooming Guidelines for ALL Grades (PK-8)***

The way a student dresses affects the way the student behaves and learns. To maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, we expect our students to be neat, clean, tidy, and modest in appearance. Hairstyles for boys and girls should meet the standards of good taste for the classroom.

- Boys' hair length must be above the collar and must not cover the ears. Facial hair is not permitted and must be shaven.
- All students' bangs must be above the eyes.
- Severe haircuts and styles that are disruptive to the learning environment are not allowed (examples – “Mohawk” or cut-in designs).
- Hair color must be of a natural color.
- The teacher and/or principal will contact parents regarding their child's hairstyle when it is not approved or is inappropriate. Students may be sent home to remedy the situation.

Girls with pierced ears may wear a single stud, small ball earrings, or small religious earrings. Earrings may only be worn in the ear lobe. One earring per lobe is allowed. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings of any kind.

Body piercing and tattoos of any type are not allowed. **Jewelry should be minimal and religious in nature.**

Students may be asked to remove any jewelry that might be disruptive to the learning environment. Makeup, nail polish, or artificial nails are not allowed; however, minimal makeup in good taste is allowed with parent and staff approval **ONLY for girls in grades 6 - 8**. The principal is the final authority of what is appropriate.

### *Casual Dress (formerly known as “Free Dress”) Days*

Casual Dress days are announced in advance in The Happenings or via separate handouts sent home. These particular days are usually reserved for Spring Picture Day or as rewards determined by the Principal. Casual Dress days are not wild, “free choice” days, but a more “casual dress” day. Parents should use caution when allowing their children to dress for Casual Dress Days. Not wearing appropriate shoes, socks, or dress will be a dress code/uniform violation, even on these special days.

Expectations for “Casual Dress Day” are as follows:

- **Not Permitted:** Tank tops, t-shirts with distasteful slogan/pictures, see-through tops, crop tops, halter tops, leggings as slacks, high heels, flip flops, and mini-skirts.
- Skirts are to be only 2 inches above the knee.
- **Boys and girls in PK3-PK4** are permitted to wear shorts.
- **Girls in K-8 are not permitted to wear shorts of any kind (except p.e.),** but may wear capris. Denim capris are acceptable on casual dress days **ONLY**.
- Shoes and socks must be worn (i.e., bobby socks and knee socks but not socks below the ankle; socks must be visible above the shoe).
- Sandals are acceptable only on casual dress days, but must not be flip-flops and must have a back strap.
- Clothes are to be in good taste. This includes no tight or see-through blouses, tight-fitting pants or skinny jeans, spandex, spaghetti straps, short shorts, etc.
- Leggings may be worn on casual dress days, but also must be accompanied with an appropriate-length skirt or dress. Leggings may not be worn as slacks for a long t-shirt.

- For students in **PK3-4<sup>th</sup> grades**, “wedges” and heels are not appropriate or safe – these shoes are not permitted.

### *Dress Code Violations*

Parents are responsible for student compliance with the dress code of SHCS. Faculty members share the responsibility for enforcement. The school reserves the right to decide whether a student's grooming is in accordance with the school's high standards. Because the campus values tradition and high ideals, those students in violation of the uniform and personal appearance code are given notice of the violation. Consequences to frequent violations will be earned. The consequences of a violation to the dress code are as follows:

1st offense: Written warning and/or telephone call to parent.

2nd offense: Written notice of violation will be sent home. If parent can be reached, the parent may opt to bring the appropriate uniform and/or clothing by 8:20 A.M., otherwise parent/student pays a \$10.00 fee. (For junior high students, the second uniform violation will result in a discipline referral.)

3rd and subsequent offenses: Written notice of violation will be sent home and the parent/student pays the required \$10.00 fee. Parents may be required to pick their child up from school so that the student can change into the appropriate uniform for school. (For junior high students, each subsequent uniform violation after the second one will result in a discipline referral.)

## **EMERGENCIES AND EMERGENCY DRILLS: CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY**

### *General Crisis Management Guidelines*

Catholic Schools within the Archdiocese are required to have a written comprehensive Crisis Management Plan (CMP) on file. It is updated annually. Each faculty and staff member receives a copy of the CMP and should be familiar with it. Evacuation drills and lock-down procedures should be practiced at least twice per semester.

When an emergency occurs and the teacher/faculty member is the only adult present, he/she should call 9-1-1 as soon as possible. Health emergencies should be handled quickly and calmly.

Should an emergency necessitate the closing of school, the school day will need to be “made up.” Notification of this make-up day will be provided to parents, staff and students prior to the day.

### *Local Emergency Call System*

The school has an emergency call system by which parents and staff can be notified in the event of any emergency (if updated phone numbers are on file). The Immediate Response Information System (IRIS), a high-speed notification and response service, electronically sends routine, priority and emergency messages from school officials to school contacts. Parents are also strongly encouraged to sign up for the principals’ NewsFlash notifications.

### *Release of Students During Disasters*

In the event of a major disaster, (chemical leak or hazardous material situation, SWAT team presence, weapons on campus, etc.) school will not be dismissed and children will remain under the supervision of school authorities until the campus is deemed ready to release students. Students are to be released only according to a predetermined plan and only to persons authorized by parents.

### *Emergency Drills: Fire/Disaster/Severe Weather*

#### *Fire drills*

Fire drills are held in accordance with the Pearland Fire Department regulations. These drills are worked out with the faculty and the Fire Department to ensure safe and orderly evacuation and precautionary measures.

We are required to conduct fire drills monthly. Each teacher must have posted in his/her room the planned evacuation route. In the case that the classroom exit is obstructed, classes must leave by an alternate exit. Students are instructed in the proper procedures for fire and all drills, including leaving in an orderly manner, silence, and speediness. Warning bells are as follows:

**3 Bells** – Evacuate the building

**2 Bells** – Return to building

**1 Bell** – Halt

#### *Lock Down Drills*

We have periodic lock down drills or other crisis management drills to ensure safe and orderly procedures in case of a crisis.

#### *Posted Emergency Routes*

Every classroom and office area used by staff or students should have a visible floor plan indicating the exit route to be used for emergencies.

#### *Severe Weather, Hurricanes, and School Closing*

SHCS will follow Pearland I.S.D. inclement weather decisions. If Pearland closes, SHCS will close. However, if PISD is delayed in making a decision, SHCS will broadcast our campus weather-related decision on local media outlets, including social media.

#### *Severe/Inclement Weather Drills*

Drills for severe/inclement weather are also held periodically. In case of severe or dangerous weather conditions, SHCS will follow Pearland Independent School District closings. Parents should listen to local news stations for any school closings. Also, check our campus web page or Facebook page. “NewsFlashes” may also be sent via email if you have signed up for them on the school’s webpage. An IRIS alert may also be sent.

If a tornado warning is in effect in the locality of our school, students will be moved to a safe place, preferable away from exterior doors and windows. Students will be kept inside, away from windows/glass and in an interior hallway on the lowest floor. Students will be directed to sit on the floor facing a wall, in a “duck and cover” position – head between raised knees, clasped hands covering the head and neck area.

When the Pearland ISD remains closed for an extended period of time, our school office will advise these news stations about closings and re-openings:

- Channel 2 – NBC
- Channel 11 – CBS
- Channel 13 – ABC
- Radio 740AM - KTRH

### **ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

SHCS students have many opportunities for enrichment including the following:

- Accelerated Reader
- Archdiocesan Spelling Bee
- Geography Bee
- Camp Kappe School for Environmental Education (5th graders)
- Archdiocesan Science Fair
- National Junior Honor Society

- Academic Electives and Academic Competitions/Tournaments (grades 6-8 generally)
- Athletics
- After school classes (with certified teachers)

### **EXTENDED DAY OR BEFORE/AFTER CARE PROGRAM**

The Extended Day Program is held on the main campus in various classrooms, as needed. All students attending the Extended Day Program must be registered in and attending the Day School. Extended Day is not a drop-in program. If parents know they will use the services of the Extended Day Program occasionally, they must register their children. This requirement complies with state law.

#### *Registration for Extended Day*

Registration for entry into extended day is \$30. (Separate tuition rates apply for extended day.) If you know your child will be participating in extended day on a regular basis, your best investment is to pay the \$130 monthly extended day fee. If you feel your child will only use extended day infrequently, you must register for extended day (\$30 registration fee) and be prepared to pay the \$20 drop-in fee. The Business Office must be notified in writing when a change is made to monthly pay or drop-in status, prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.

All children in the Extended Day Program must be picked up by 6:00 P.M. Staff work hard, have families and other commitments, and want to feel confident that their work day will be over by six o'clock. Arriving late interferes with their family time and previous plans. Any child being picked up after 6:00 P.M. will have a \$5.00 late fee charge, plus a \$1.00 per minute fee assessed. (This is non-negotiable.) Three occurrences of being five or more minutes late will be grounds for termination of the privilege to use the extended day service. Extended Day payments must be paid to the accounting office. Payments are due on the 1st of each month and are considered late after the 10th of the month. A late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed after the 10th.

If your child is not enrolled in extended day and you have a late pick-up, a \$1 fee will be charged for every minute past 3:20 p.m. School begins dismissal at 3:00 p.m. Students should be picked up between 3:00-3:20 p.m. For those students who remain at school beyond their regular school day or their assigned club time (clubs usually end at 3:45 or 4:00 p.m.), a \$1 per minute fee will be charged per student after club dismissal time. This is non-negotiable.

Snacks are provided for students in the afternoon after care program. However, no food is provided for early morning care, and no food is allowed to be brought in for morning care. Students should eat breakfast prior to entering the building for morning care.

#### *Extended Day Times*

Extended Day hours are as follows:

- Monday through Friday 6:30 A.M. - 7:30 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.
- On early dismissal days: Announced early dismissal time until 6:00 P.M., unless otherwise stated.

#### *Discipline in Extended Day*

Students will be under an Extended Day Discipline Management Plan that will be based on our Day School discipline plan for their grade level (listed in this handbook under Discipline). The Principal will handle the discipline if there is an emergency or if an Extended Day Coordinator is unavailable, or if the behavior is serious. The Extended Day staff have the authority to exact consequences in accordance with the Discipline Management Plan. Many disciplinary consequences enacted in Extended Day will be served during the regular school day following the infraction.

### *Child Care Tax Identification Numbers (TIN)*

St. Helen Catholic School does not need to provide our Tax Identification Number (TIN) in order for people to claim the child care credit on the federal tax returns. Parents/Families may complete a Form W-10, which can be found on the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website: [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw10.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw10.pdf). This form has specific instructions for 501(C)3 organizations (charitable groups). In the right-hand column under tax-exempt dependent care provider it states to write “tax exempt” in place of a TIN. This form is for the taxpayers’ records only.

If parents are filing a Form 1040A, the taxpayer will need to complete a Form 1040A Schedule 2, which can be found on the IRS website. The instructions state to write “tax exempt” if the provider is tax-exempt.

If parents are filing a Form 1040, the taxpayer will need to complete a Form 2441, which can be found on the IRS website. The instructions also state to write “tax exempt” if the provider is tax-exempt.

## **EXTRA- AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### *Athletics and Athletic Booster Clubs*

Students in the upper grades (**grades 5-8**) may choose to participate in our athletic programs, where a variety of sports are optional. If students choose to participate, parent permission and a health exam are required. Transportation to competitive events is not provided by SHCS. Students will participate in after-school practices approximately two times per week, in addition to game days one time per week (usually).

At this level, students are taught proper game skills and team-building skills. The goal of athletics in the middle school is not to "showcase" extraordinary athletes, but to allow all students an opportunity to play sports and participate. More competitive athletic competitions are expected at the high school level.

For girls in **grades 2-3-4**, a “Spirit Squad” is offered. Students are taught by a certified teacher to respect competition, learn team-building skills, and also learn basic pep squad routines for cheering.

We encourage parents to support their children in both their academic, spiritual, and athletic endeavors. Athletic booster clubs are volunteer parent organizations established to support students in athletic programs. Typically, booster clubs raise funds for student athletes and the school. Middle school booster club funds are managed differently from high school booster club funds. If any booster clubs are established at SHCS, all booster club funds will be deposited into a school account and managed by the principal. While booster club parents are encouraged to make suggestions regarding the expenditure of these funds, the discretion for spending relies totally with the school principal and event sponsors. Booster parents are expected to model the highest ideals of the Christian Code of Conduct.

### *Academic Activities/Competitions*

Generally, beginning in grade 3, students have an option to join and participate in several academic competitions. For the elementary students, they may have the choice of Geography Bee, Geography Club, Spelling Bee, and Elementary Robotics (depending upon sponsorship). Students in grades 5-8 have more rigorous competitions, which may include Quiz Bowl and Speech/Debate activities. All activities are optional and may necessitate an additional participation fee. Transportation will not be provided for Saturday or after-school practices and/or events. Science Fair individual projects are also required in some grades, encouraged in others.

## **FIELD DAY**

Field Day events incorporate team-building skills for all students. All students may participate in this fun-filled day if they have earned the right to do so. Because safety is the utmost concern for all students, and due to the physical activities of Field Day events, we ask parents not to bring younger siblings. Volunteers are welcome to work the concession stand. Students must have appropriate behavior during the school year (less than 7 discipline referrals) to participate in Field Day.

Due to the increase in enrollment and addition of PK classes, two separate field days will be scheduled. One day will be devoted for PK3 – Kindergarten while the second day will be for 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are taken to enrich the instructional program by taking advantage of the educational resources of the community and supplement classroom work. No student has an absolute right to a field trip; excessive disciplinary referrals or major behavior infractions may result in a child losing his/her right to a field trip. A child who is not allowed by the school to attend the field trip must attend school that day; supervision will be provided by a substitute teacher and parents must pay the necessary fee for the substitute teacher.

Parents will be requested to sign a field trip permission slip to indicate their willingness for their child to participate in class trips (forms will be sent home prior to the trip). According to state law, children are not allowed to attend a field trip without the completed field trip permission form from the parents or guardians. No exceptions will be made. Permission cannot be given over the telephone. Some field trips may require payment of an additional fee. Financial restraints should not keep a child from attending a field trip and should be discussed with the administration. Teachers shall coordinate field trip plans and arrange for additional parent chaperones. Student attire will be specified for each trip. Chaperones are not permitted to bring siblings on field trips.

Parents/Chaperones who participate on field trips:

- Must have attended a VIRTUS Workshop and have a current Criminal History Check on file.
- Chaperones must be able to devote their full attention to the supervision of students. For this reason, designated chaperones are not permitted to bring other children on field trips. Generally, the policy is that the younger children are chronologically and mentally in requirement of a greater standard of care.
- Often, parents who choose to visit at the location of the field trip may not be included in the group if they have purchased pre-paid tickets. Visiting parents not serving as chaperones should also ensure that their presence and/or inclusion in the school group does not interfere with planned activities for the school group.
- Visiting parents not serving as chaperones are asked not to bring siblings because this often becomes a disruption to the trip.

The campus will follow the 6:1 student/adult ratio for all field trip events requiring transportation to off-campus activities. The school accepts no liability or responsibility for accidents or events that may occur during the course of the field trip, including transporting of students to and from the event.

## **FIRST FRIDAY BREAKFAST**

It has been a tradition that all students receive a breakfast snack and milk in the school as part of First Friday Breakfast. The students receive this breakfast after the First Friday Mass each month. During Lent, an alternate food to the usual First Friday Breakfast snack may be served. First Friday Breakfast is not a party, therefore, volunteers should not bring siblings.

## **FUNDRAISING**

To provide a quality Catholic education for children, the school must have the necessary funds to provide the best-qualified teachers possible, as well as current technology and textbooks. Tuition does not cover the cost per pupil to educate our students. SHCS respectfully requests positive parental participation in required school fundraising activities and in serving the school. The school holds fundraisers such as Family Night and the Dinner-Dance. Parents are expected to contribute by buying, selling, or contributing at least \$250.00 net for one child or \$350.00 net per family per school year. One-half of this net obligation is due on or before December 31 and the other one-half is due on or before April 15 (no exceptions). Parents may opt for a buy out of their fundraising responsibilities. Since St. Helen Catholic Church has been generous in investing in our school, we ask that prior to

April 15, each family buy or sell \$50.00 of raffle tickets per family for the St. Helen Bazaar in June. This is not in addition to the tickets the parish mails each family. This \$50.00 does not count towards the fundraising obligation.

For specifics on fundraisers, please refer to the information distributed prior to the fundraiser. These fliers will denote the allocation of funds to be designated as a family fundraising contribution. (For example, 100% of the costs of Dinner Dance tickets may be counted towards fundraising commitments. But items purchased at the Dinner Dance do not count towards the fundraising commitment.)

## **GRADING/REPORT CARDS**

**Students (grades 1-8)** receive Report Cards quarterly (every nine weeks). The teacher is the determinant of student grades; the principal may not require a teacher to change a grade, as long as the teacher entered and computed the grade according to policy.

### *Weighted grades*

**In grades K-5, many test** grades are generally not weighted any differently from daily grades. Sometimes the teachers will record weekly/unit tests as two grades. In comparison to daily grades, which are counted once, test grades are sometimes “doubled.” Please discuss with your child’s teacher how he/she plans to count or weight test grades.

**In grades 6-8,** computation of grades will follow these guidelines:

- Homework will be weighted as 20% of the student’s 9-week grade.
- Participation grades (class participation, completion of work, agenda completion) will be 10% of the student’s 9-week grade.
- Daily independent work/quizzes are 30% of the student’s 9-week grade.
- Major tests and projects are weighted as 40% of the student’s 9-week grade.
- For special or long-term projects (qualifying as 40% of the student’s 9-week grade), submission of work is expected on the due date.
- Summary:
  - 40% Major Tests/Projects
  - 30% Independent Work/Quizzes
  - 20% Homework
  - 10% Participation/Completion of Work/Agenda Completion

### *Test Definitions*

Especially for students in grades 4-8, the terms “pop quiz” and “major/unit/chapter test” are used frequently.

**Pop quizzes** are used to measure a student’s immediate acquisition and progressive learning of the concepts presented in the classroom, notes, materials read, homework completed, etc. Pop quizzes **do not require** lengthy test review and studying, but may need a simple review of notes or textbook materials. Pop quizzes usually count as daily grades and can indicate if students are attending in class and completing classwork and homework.

**Major tests or unit/chapter tests** are used to measure a student’s cumulative learning of major concepts and units of study. In general, students should study for major tests by reviewing materials from class, notes, textbook selections, etc. Studying for a major test requires more time than studying for a pop quiz. Major tests are weighted differently (see percentages provided above in “weighted grades.”)

Parents are encouraged to attend scheduled report card conferences, usually after an early release day, from 1-5:00 p.m. Report cards are to be reviewed and signed by the parent with the classroom teacher during scheduled conference times. A conference is scheduled (at the end of the first 9-weeks) for parents of students in PK and Kindergarten where a verbal explanation of the student’s progress is provided instead of a formal report card at this

time. A formal, written report is issued for the remaining quarters for PK-K students, beginning with the 18<sup>th</sup> week or the end of the second 9-week reporting period.

*The marking code on the Report Cards for grades PK-8th grade is as follows:*

***PK - Kindergarten Academics and PK Conduct***

S	Satisfactory
NA	Needs Attention: Child is not able to complete goal at this time.
NT	Not Taught (at this time)
T	Transition: Child is in the process of learning.

***1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academics***

100-93	A = Outstanding
92-86	B = Above Average
85-78	C = Average
77-70	D = Below Average
Below 70	F = Failing

***Conduct Grades K - 8th***

E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory

***Conduct Grading***

Conduct is to be marked using an E-U system. This system should also be used to mark each subject area where there is need of improvement. All classrooms must have classroom rules and consequences for positive and negative behavior.

***Discipline Grading***

- 0 – 2 referrals = E on report card
- 3– 4 referrals = S on report card
- 5– 6 referrals = N on report card
- 7 or more referrals = U on report card

(Additional referrals may result in the student’s withdrawal from campus. For more information, see section entitled, “Discipline of Students.”)

***GradeLink– Electronic Gradebook***

St. Helen Catholic School uses a version of an electronic parent communication system called GradeLink. GradeLink allows you, as parents, to view your child’s grades after they are entered by the teacher. ALL families will be given new enrollment information for GradeLink access soon after the start of the new school year.

GradeLink will be Internet based. If you are unable to access it, you may need to check your computer settings because the school is unable to assist you with this issue.



Students in grades 1-8 will have their grades and attendance posted on GradeLink. Students in Kindergarten will only have attendance posted. Students in grades PK3-PK4 will not have grades posted on GradeLink, but will have attendance posted there, along with report cards.

Attendance will be posted by teachers daily. Grades will be posted at least once per week by teachers (except for elementary p.e. and music).

### **GRADUATION CEREMONIES**

Students in grade 8, who have passed all required courses and/or who are being promoted to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, will participate in the school's graduation ceremony. The grade 8 graduation ceremony is held in the morning in the church (9:00 a.m. special baccalaureate mass). The 8<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teacher and/or class sponsor will provide families with additional information regarding graduation in the Spring semester. Parents will be billed a minimum of \$100 in the fall to assist with the costs of graduation and the reception. (If a scholarship is needed, please contact the 8<sup>th</sup> grade sponsor and/or the principal immediately.)

### **GRADUATION TRIP**

SHCS participates in an annual tradition of taking the 8<sup>th</sup> graders to Washington, DC, for their graduation trip. In an effort to be inclusive and have every student participate, HSA donates funds and students are also expected to fundraise. Scholarships will be available to those who need assistance.

### **HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (HSA)**

When a student's registration is accepted, parents automatically become members of the Home and School Association (HSA). This organization consists of parents, teachers, clergy, and any parishioners interested in SHCS and the enhancement of our students' potential. We encourage all parents to become active participants in the HSA to provide the necessary link between home and school.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework assignments are given to reinforce the material taught to the students during the day and to foster a habit of independent study. (In general, homework is student practice of previously taught material.) The student is responsible for written and study assignments. Parents cooperate by providing the necessary quiet time and a designated location for homework. It is especially important for parents to encourage their children to put forth their best effort and together examine assignments. But it is equally important to allow the child to complete his/her own work and build stamina and independence.

Assignment/student planner notebooks are used in grades 3-8 to record class work and homework assignments. These notebooks encourage students to learn responsibility and organizational skills. They are to be signed by the parents. It is essential that parents allow students to be responsible for their own homework assignments and consider the consequences when assignments are not done. Grades PK-2 use "Peek of the Week" or some other form of communication to inform parents of upcoming assignments, events, and projects.

Parents are strongly discouraged from returning to school to collect forgotten student assignments. Please allow the student to accept responsibility for his/her own behavior and actions by allowing them to experience natural consequences for their own behaviors. By allowing the child to accept responsibility, parents are not only teaching a valuable "life skill," they will effectively eliminate the need to return to school for forgotten items in the future.

The following times reflect the average timeframe for homework at each grade level. Please note, if your child is in any of our four AP classes in grades 6-8, he/she will most likely need to plan for additional time to be spent on homework and/or studying. If your child is experiencing difficulty completing homework assignments in the recommended time allotments, please contact the teacher immediately for problem-solving. It is critical that

parents alert the teachers when their child is unable to complete work in the allotted time frame so that adjustments might be made and problem-solving occur.

*Homework Time Allotment:* Please note, if your child is in any of our four AP classes in grades 6-8, he/she will most likely need to plan for additional time to be spent on homework, including studying.

- Grade PK 5-10 minutes
- Grade K 15-30 minutes
- Grades 1-2 30 minutes
- Grades 3-4 45 minutes
- Grades 5 60 minutes
- Grades 6-8 90 minutes

#### *Late Work Policy – Homework and Special Projects*

When students do not complete an assignment in class, it may be assigned for homework. Homework, and all other assignments, is to be submitted on time. Homework will be weighted as 20% of the student's 9-week grade. Daily work/quizzes are 40% of the student's 9-week grade. For special or long-term projects (major tests and projects equal 40% of the student's 9-week grade), submission of work is expected on the due date. For each day late, each individual teacher will determine the points deducted from the final grade. Variances to this policy may occur in some middle school classes, but the teacher will communicate "late work" policies to families at the beginning of the year. ***Many teachers do not accept "late work" at all; it is their discretion to do so or not.***

#### **HONOR ROLL**

The Honor Roll is awarded to students who maintain their academic grades in **all subject** categories (including p.e. and other electives). The **Highest Honor Roll** is awarded to students who maintain all A's in all academic subjects, and all E's in conduct, p.e., music, and other electives. (For example, for students who have all A's in core subjects, but an S in p.e. or conduct, they will not qualify for Highest Honor Roll. They will instead qualify for High Honor Roll.) For each 9-week Highest Honor Roll designation, the previous 9-week period is reviewed. For the end of year Highest Honor Roll award, the student is eligible only if he/she has been on the Highest Honor Roll each 9-week period.

The **High Honor Roll** is awarded to students who maintain all A's and B's in all academic subjects and either an E or a S in conduct. A student receiving an N or U conduct grade in any class, including extracurricular and elective classes, is not eligible for any Honor Roll.

#### **HONOR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP**

To be admitted into the St. Helen Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society, students in grades 6-8 must exemplify all of the expected criteria for admittance:

- Scholarship,
- Service,
- Leadership,
- Citizenship, and
- Character.

For consideration of membership, students must also meet certain grade requirements and complete an application packet. However, simply meeting the grade and conduct requirements do not automatically provide induction into NJHS. All of the criteria for NJHS admittance is considered. Teacher sponsors are responsible for disseminating information about NJHS to students and for conducting monthly meetings. Induction ceremonies are held each spring.

## **HOT LUNCH PROGRAM**

The school provides a nutritious hot lunch every day that meets general nutrition requirements of the state of Texas.

- The Cafeteria Manager and her staff cook meals on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. The school has contracts with local restaurants for Wednesdays and Fridays.
- If you choose not to participate in the school's lunch program, please provide your child an alternative meal for lunch.
- If a student forgets his/her lunch, the school will immediately provide a sack lunch to your child and a lunch voucher will be sent home for payment (\$5 fee). Once a lunch is handed to your child, parents are obligated to pay the voucher.
- Lunch menus are sent home monthly with the student. Lunches are ordered and paid in advance by the predetermined deadline. **Late orders are not accepted.**
- Refunds for purchased pre-ordered meals cannot be given because menu items are ordered and purchased in advance. If a student is absent due to health reasons for a minimum of five days and misses at least five days of hot lunch, a credit is issued; however, a request must be made in writing.
- Each student in the family must turn in an order form to the classroom teacher with the exact change or separate checks. (Parents may inquire about writing only one lunch check for 3 or more children, if desired. Contact the Business Office.)
- For accounting purposes, please do not add other funds into lunch checks. Because of separate accounts, checks should be separate from other purchases, such as book orders, t-shirts, etc.

After obtaining a visitor's pass, parents are welcome to have lunch with their child. Siblings are welcome to come to lunch as long as their parent is not volunteering in some capacity. Please support our Hot Lunch Program (through pre-order) or bring a lunch from home to share with your child. If you wish to bring fast food to your child, please do so on Wednesday or Friday, when other students are eating this type of food. (The school contracts with outside vendors on these days.) If students do bring a sack lunch from home, only milk, juice, or water is permitted.

The first lunch menu will go home with your child on the first day of school. There is a quick turnaround on receiving orders so that the Cafeteria may order the correct amount of food. Most parents comply with the timeline on ordering lunches; however, some students do not order hot lunch through the lunch menu and pose additional issues for the cafeteria and for accounting. **On the issuance of ANY lunch voucher, the amount charged will now be \$5.**

Hot lunches will not be available until two weeks after school begins (**Monday, August 21, 2017**).

- Until that day, parents will need to provide their children with sack lunches.
- Students may not bring glass containers or any carbonated beverages in their lunches.
- Also, the campus has a policy regarding the delivery of sack lunches to students. Often, students forget their sack lunches at home and a parent delivers lunch and leaves it in the school office. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that we will have the personnel available to deliver the lunch to students in their classrooms. (We have only a small office crew and we can get very busy during the day.) Please be prepared to receive a lunch voucher if your child forgets his/her lunch at home, even if you deliver a lunch. Our recommendation would be to keep it simple and allow your child to purchase a lunch at school that day - it will save you a trip, also, and teach a valuable lesson!

## **LIBRARY/RESOURCE CENTER**

The library is central to the campus' total educational mission. As such, the library program is fully integrated into the curriculum, serving the school's educational goals and objectives. The library program contributes fully to the educational process of the school and meets the library standards of the Texas Catholic Education Department and AdvancED (accreditation agencies). The library offers both traditional resources and new technologies as teaching

and learning tools. Resources in the library are consistent with Catholic traditions and values. Library services are available to students and staff throughout the instructional day. It is also accessible before and after school, with the schedule being established by the Library Manager. Students will have a library class experience at least one time per week. The Library Manager will instruct students on proper use and maintenance of the Library system.

### **NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS - BUCKLEY AMENDMENT**

St. Helen Catholic School abides by Buckley Amendment provisions with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the 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 and/or copy of the custody section of the divorce decree.

### **PARKING**

No child is to be left in an unattended car. Children are unsafe left in a parked car that is running. Park your car in designated spaces, not under the carport. When it is raining, you may drive under the patio to pick up or drop off students. Unattended and “running” cars are a serious safety concern.

### **PARTIES**

Classroom parties are allowed only for four (4) occasions during the year. The permissible parties are for All Saints' Day, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and the year-end party. The Principal will announce any other parties in advance.

Siblings may not come to parties with parents who are volunteering. Parent volunteers are needed for supervision and will not be able to effectively supervise both siblings and classroom students. If parents come to classroom parties as visitors ONLY, siblings may come.

#### *Party Invitations – Private Events*

Party invitations may not be given out at school unless all students in the class or all students of the same gender in the class are included. If that is impossible, then invitations must be mailed or distributed off campus. This includes not handing out invitations before or after school when everyone is not invited because it may be impossible to include all classmates in outside parties. Christian behavior and proper etiquette, as well as good manners, requires that those hosting or attending the party refrain from discussing those parties at school. Not only is it hurtful to those who were not included, it is considered un-Christian and ill-mannered.

### **PERFECT ATTENDANCE AWARDS**

Perfect attendance awards, along with all other school awards, are provided at the end of the school year. To qualify for a perfect attendance award, students must have NO tardies and NO absences. Parents should carefully monitor GradeLink for accuracy in the reporting of tardies and absences, and notify the school immediately if an error is suspected.

### **PETITIONS**

All petitions and requests (students or parents) are to be pre-approved through the Principal's office. No petition is permitted to be circulated without prior approval. Doing so may result in withdrawal.

### **PICTURES FOR SCHOOL**

Individual school pictures are taken in the fall for all grades. Mass uniforms are required for fall individual yearbook pictures. Christmas pictures are also offered to students who desire to take them (these are optional). Class pictures (of students in their homeroom classes) and club pictures, including sports, are taken in the spring. Only PK3, PK4, and K students will have a casual dress day (although school uniforms may be worn) for spring

pictures. Eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) graders will also take graduation pictures in early spring. More information on appropriate dress for graduation wear and pictures for graduates will be sent home later in the school year.

### **PROBATION - ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL**

All newly enrolled students are conditionally accepted with a status of academic and behavioral probation for the first nine-week quarter. At the end of the first quarter, the administration may send a parent letter indicating the conclusion or extension of the probationary period. This procedure is also followed for students enrolling mid-year. A student can be put on probation at any time during the school year for academic or behavioral reasons. The principal reserves the right to put the student on probation or to suspend, place on home-study, or expel as deemed appropriate to the circumstances. The pastor will be consulted in cases of expulsion. The pastor's decision in these cases will be final.

### **PROBLEM AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION; GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

Every effort shall be made to resolve situations so that the education process can continue. Before differences become formalized grievances, both parties shall make every effort to resolve problems through open communication. If a parent seeks resolution of a situation relating to a student, the following steps should be taken:

- The parents should request a conference with the teacher to check their understanding and try to resolve the problem.
- If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved with the teacher, the parent may then discuss the issue with the teacher and principal.
- After discussion with the teacher and principal, if the case is still unresolved, the complainant may then present the grievance in accordance with the Archdiocesan Appeals Process (see Principal for appropriate forms).

#### *Archdiocesan Appeals Process and Grievance Policy*

Although the Archdiocese endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within its schools, it recognizes that misunderstandings or differences of opinion sometimes occur. Ideally, such matters can be resolved informally by a parent or guardian meeting with the immediate authoritative person to discuss the matter. If, however, the matter is not then settled to the parent or guardian's satisfaction, the parent or guardian may institute a formal grievance.

A formal grievance must be in writing on the appropriate forms, and must be received in five (5) working days following the occurrence of the event on which the grievance is based. Please contact the principal for a copy of the Archdiocese's current appeals process/grievance procedure and forms for further details. Also, please note that the current policy supersedes and replaces all previous policies and statements regarding institution and processing of formal grievances within Archdiocesan schools.

#### *Statement of Non-Discrimination*

No person shall be discriminated against, and no reprisals of any kind shall be taken against any person solely because of participation in the conflict resolution process.

### **RECESS PERIODS/SOCIAL TIME**

Research has shown that short, frequent breaks improve academic retention. Besides the short breaks provided during the school day during typical transitions, students also have an assigned recess period in grades PK-8. PK3-K students sometimes have two (2) recess periods per day – one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Students in grades 1-8 usually have one recess period/social time per day, at the time scheduled by the teacher. Also, students in PK-5 have assigned p.e. periods during the regular school day.

## **RELEASE OF REPORT CARD/SCHOOL RECORDS**

Students and parents need to reconcile all obligations before the end of each nine weeks, as well as the end of the school year; i.e., discipline, financial, make-up work, library fines, return of all library books, textbooks, equipment and/or media materials. The report card is not issued to parents, nor is it forwarded to another school, until all obligations are fulfilled, including, but not limited to, discipline and/or financial obligations. Students' records are not released before all tuition, fees, and fines owed to the school are paid in full. Parents are obligated through their signed contracts for the fulfillment of the year's tuition. The school's budget is based on the commitment of each child completing his/her attendance for the entire school year.

## **RELIGION PROGRAM**

Central to SHCS's curricular goals, and to the mission of the school, is the teaching of religion. The religion curriculum stresses the catechetical and moral dimensions consistent with the developmental stages of students. Religion is taught on a daily basis to all students regardless of religious affiliation. Other methods of integrating religion into the curriculum include:

- Participation in weekly Mass for all students regardless of religious affiliation (grades K-8 Fall; grades PK4-8 Spring);
- Participation in classroom or grade level para-liturgies;
- Regularly scheduled opportunities for Sacramental Reconciliation for Catholic students (junior high);
- Reflection and/or retreat for students;
- Service field trips, and
- Junior High students (grades 6-8) are required to attend retreats and/or days of prayer.

All school Masses are celebrated in the Church. As on other days, students are tardy at 7:50 A.M. on Mass days (usually Friday) since Mass begins at 8:00 A.M. Students (grades K-8) must be in full dress uniform for Mass. Shorts are not allowed in the Church or Chapel. Students not properly attired are in violation of the dress code. In January, PK4 students will participate in weekly Mass. PK3 students will not attend weekly Mass with the other students.

Sacramental preparation for First Reconciliation/First Eucharist is provided for students in second grade with parental assistance. Mandatory parent formation/information meetings are provided by your family's home parish to assist families in these sacraments. To be eligible, students must be attending the day school regularly. For additional information, contact the C.C.E. office: 281-485-5457.

As part of our Religion curriculum, students are taught about human sexuality through an Archdiocesan-approved curriculum program called "Family Life." Parents are encouraged to preview this program and talk with their child's teacher if there are any questions about the program.

## **REQUESTS FOR TEACHER ASSESSMENTS/REFERRALS**

Parents sometimes request that teachers complete outside referral instruments for personnel in the medical or educational assessment fields. The staff will complete these instruments in a timely manner; however, parents should note that the completed documents must be sent directly to the medical or educational consultant. Staff are not permitted to return the completed documents directly to the parent/guardian.

## **SAFETY**

Safety concerns and needs have been addressed in various sections of this handbook. Our primary responsibility, beyond spiritual and academic needs, is to maintain the safety and security of both our students and the staff. Should you see or hear anything which concerns you about the safety of our St. Helen community, please report it immediately to the school office, the principal, and/or the appropriate authorities if it is an emergency situation.

When events occur beyond our control, you will receive an alert/text/email as soon as we can provide you with necessary information about the event. We request that all parents and students follow all safety warnings from our staff to keep everyone free from harm.

Staff have access to the campus' Crisis Management Plan for information and directions regarding possible crisis or critical incidents. Students and staff frequently practice drills for fire, weather safety, intruders on campus, lockdowns, etc. to keep us prepared for emergencies. The camera system on campus also provides us with needed safety information.

## **SCHOOL BOARD**

All members of the School Board are volunteers and attend frequent Board trainings. These volunteers compose a leadership committee that is advisory, not regulatory. The School Board holds monthly meetings, most of which are open to the public.

### *School Board Membership Criteria*

The board consists of the pastor, principal, faculty representative, three parishioner positions and four or more parent positions; all positions have three year terms. The board should reflect the cultural diversity of the school served as much as possible. Membership of the board should be at least 5 members and no more than 11. Officers should include a President, Vice-President, and Secretary. Any member of the board is eligible to hold office.

Persons in the following categories may not be considered as candidates for the Board:

- employees of the parish and school;
- spouses, children, or siblings of employees of parish and school;
- more than one member of an immediate family at a time; and
- board members or professional educators of another school system.

### *Addressing the School Board*

Persons may wish to address the St. Helen School Board at regularly held board meetings. Persons may address the Board on an issue or policy of the school. (Grievances are handled through the Archdiocesan Grievance Procedure discussed in this handbook. The School Board does not handle parent or staff grievances.) Persons who desire to address the School Board should contact the president of the school board or the principal in writing at least 10 days prior to the next meeting. The board president and the principal shall decide if the issue is appropriate for consideration and at which meeting of the Board the issue will be presented. Persons who attend a meeting of the School Board without first having been placed on the agenda will be allowed to address the School Board only if the president determines there is time to hear the issue. During and following the presentation, questions of clarification can be asked by the Board. The Board will give no response during the board meeting. In executive session, board members discuss the presentation and assist in formulating the response that the board president will send in writing to the person making the presentation.

## **SCHOOL HOURS AND SCHOOL DAY**

The school is open at 6:30 a.m. daily for drop-off for students enrolled in extended day care. Staff duty hours are from 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (Some staff members have alternate schedules: 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. or 7:25 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.) Students may enter the building at 7:30 a.m. **The seven-plus hour school day runs from 7:50 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.** Dismissal and pick-up of most students is usually finished by 3:15 p.m. Extended day enrollees may remain on campus until 6:00 p.m.

## **SERVICE HOURS/WORKS OF MERCY**

Students and families earn service hours by donating the gift of time and stewardship according to the Works of Mercy identified by Catholic doctrine.

*Corporal Works of Mercy (of the body):*

- Give drink to the thirsty
- Feed the hungry
- Shelter the homeless
- Clothe the naked
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

*Spiritual Works of Mercy (of the spirit):*

- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Admonish the sinner
- Forgive offenses
- Comfort the afflicted
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Pray for the living and the dead

Most service hours earned by students and families fall into the category for Corporal Works of Mercy.

*Student Service Hour Requirement*

In keeping with the mission of St. Helen Catholic School: "to provide a well- rounded education emphasizing Catholic ideals of academic excellence, personal integrity, Christian service and enduring faith," the guidelines below must be followed:

- \* 6th-8th graders must complete **10 hours of service** within the school or community. Of these 10 hours, at least 5 of them must be performed outside of the school.
- \* 5th graders must complete **8 hours of service** within the school or community.
- \* 4<sup>th</sup> graders must complete **6 hours of service** within the school or community.

These student service hours are independent and in addition to the Family Service Requirement. **Only student service hours served on campus may count for Family Service Hours (maximum of 5 hours allowed).** These student hours **MUST** be recorded in the Family Service Hour binder (or electronically) by the parent by April 15 to count for the current school year. The religion teacher is not responsible for recording these hours.

*Service Hour Guidelines- Students*

- Service hours accrued during the summer months prior to the beginning of school will be accepted.
- At least one-half of the hours are due at the end of the 1st semester.
- Altar serving for funerals/weddings outside the school day will be accepted as service hours. If a student takes a financial blessing for this service, he/she cannot "double dip" by taking both the gratuity and claiming service hours.
- The signature of the person supervising the work/service being done is required.
- Service opportunities will be posted in The Happenings or relayed by teachers as they arise.
- Service hours will be counted as a major test grade in Religion at the end of each semester. All hours earned and verified should be turned in to the student's Religion teacher as soon as they are completed.

A few acceptable examples of service for students:

- \*Altar serving/choir (outside of the school day)
- \*St. Vincent de Paul (helping stock/organize shelves)
- \*Helping with the set-up/clean-up of the Dinner Dance or other school functions
- \*Helping in any aspect of the church bazaar



- \*Helping with Vacation Bible School
- \*Helping as an aide in any of the CCE classes

### *Family Service Hour Requirement*

Each family must complete 25 mandatory service hours for work within or regarding the school within the given school year or must pay the equivalent of \$10.00 per service hour that they are unable to complete. Designated family members may work for the parents – for example, a grandfather or aunt may work for the school to gain service hours for the family (if VIRTUS-approved). Families may work at the June Church Bazaar and gain service hours for the upcoming school year. No other church hours are permitted, except as approved by the Principal (if you desire to work directly with the church, there are several church committees you may join).

The due date for completion of service hours for the family requirement is **April 15**. Late service hours are not accepted due to the problems it poses for accounting. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** (Please refer to the Volunteer tab on the school's website for directions on how to record the hours and see this section for additional information.)

**PLEASE DO NOT RELY ON ANOTHER PERSON TO RECORD ANY DONATED HOURS. IF YOUR FAMILY IS RECEIVING DONATED HOURS, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO RECORD THEM UNDER YOUR FAMILY NAME. The office staff is not responsible for recording your family service hours. NO FAXES OR EMAILS WILL BE ACCEPTED for a record of your service hours.** There are two means of recording service hours:

- Personally, on a hard copy of the volunteer log book, or
- Electronically, via the Volunteer Link on the webpage.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston that all students should attend school in an environment free of gender discrimination that encompasses freedom from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is immoral and reprehensible and will not be tolerated in the Catholic schools. In both obvious and subtle ways, the very possibility of sexual harassment is destructive to individuals and to the Church/School community as a whole.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of a student's education;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting the student;
- Such conduct has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning educational environment; or
- Such conduct directly impacts the student's physical or mental health or welfare.

*Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to the following behaviors:*

- Unwelcome sexual advances, including advances or inappropriate comments via social media
- Physical contact, such as attempted or actual assault, unwanted touching, including pinching or brushing against another's body; blocking normal movements or interfering with work, study, or play because of sex;
- Verbal conduct such as sexually-oriented kidding, teasing, joking or flirting;
- Verbal abuse of sexual nature;
- Leering, whistling, sexually suggestive gestures or sounds; or
- Displaying pictures that are sexual in nature.

In addition, retaliation against students who report sexual harassment or who assist the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation will result in disciplinary action.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS AND REFERRALS**

### *Introductory Statement*

Consistent with the contents of the Church document, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, and the Pastoral Statement of the U.S. Bishops, *Persons with Disabilities*, the Archdiocese seeks to include students with special needs in our schools to the extent that the needs of such students can be met within the scope of the programs and resources offered. The Catholic Schools Office is aware that it is unrealistic to serve all categories of special need students. However, St. Helen Catholic School and the other Catholic Schools are cognizant of the fact that admission of special needs students must be considered and reviewed on an individual basis.

### *Legal References to Special Services*

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that local school districts locate, identify, and evaluate all private school students suspected of having a disability (for St. Helen Catholic School, the local district is Pearland ISD). This “Child Find” process must be conducted in consultation with private school representatives to ensure equitable access for private school students. In IDEA, these children are often referred to as “parentally placed private school children with disabilities,” and the benefits available to them differ from the benefits for children with disabilities enrolled in public schools.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 educational section (frequently called “Section 504”), provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in any program receiving federal assistance. Catholic educators strive to recognize and address the needs of all those who seek a Catholic education. Within our resources, St. Helen and other Catholic schools will offer services to eligible students with special needs, when possible. However, private schools are not required to significantly alter their programs, lower or substantially modify their standards to accommodate a child with special needs. Private educational institutions are only required to make minor adjustments to accommodate eligible students.

### *Records for Special Needs Learners*

All psychological and educational evaluations/reports regarding special needs testing of students received from local public schools, persons, or agencies are forwarded to St. Helen Catholic School, upon request. These records are kept on file at the school for a period of seven (7) years after the exit of the student. These records are kept in a secure file and are accessible only to the principal, the Intervention Specialist, the Counselor, and any other appropriate staff member working with the student.

### *Criteria for Acceptance of Students with Special Needs*

In making a determination regarding the admittance of a particular student, the school will review the child’s ability to meet the school’s academic, behavioral, and physical qualifications. Each Catholic school determines its ability to meet the needs of the student applicant. Consideration will be given to the following:

- Student’s demonstrated ability to meet grade level requirements;
- Record of student’s ability to follow school rules and regulations; and
- Students’ ability to meet the physical requirements of attendance.

### *St. Helen’s Services for Special Needs Learners*

*New Students* - When the Admissions Office or the principal is notified that an incoming student may have special learning needs, the principal and other appropriate school staff review current academic, social, medical, and psychological evaluations to determine if the applicant is qualified to enroll, with or without his/her disability. If the applicant is qualified for enrollment, the principal and Intervention Specialist will then determine if reasonable adjustments can be made to the educational program which will accommodate the student’s needs.

*Currently Enrolled Students* - If a teacher (or parent) is concerned about a child’s academic, behavioral, or emotional progress and feels that testing may be needed, he/she will discuss concerns with the parent/family and

the Principal, and then meet with the Intervention Specialist as soon as possible. We work as a team to do what is best for the child and will discuss:

- The student's current educational status, including attendance records, grades, achievement data, and classroom observations;
- Previous educational efforts and strategies provided for the student and the results;
- Documentation of recent vision and hearing screenings;
- Updated general health history inventory; and
- Other information provided by the parents or teachers.

Parents will be expected to disclose any pertinent information that may assist us in educating the student. The principal and staff are responsible for recommending educational alternatives and/or referral to the local school district and/or private agency of the parent's choice for further evaluation. In some cases, the campus may not have the resources necessary to help the child be successful. The principal or Intervention Specialist will then assist the family to locate an appropriate educational program for the child.

Documentation for all learning/behavioral referrals must be kept on file. This documentation will be included in the student's records. Accommodations for a child will be noted on the report card and in the child's permanent folder.

#### *Student Success Expectations for Special Needs Learners*

All available school resources shall be utilized to promote student success. Lines of communication will be kept open to inform parents of student progress in all areas. Concerns about a student will be addressed initially by the classroom teacher and parent. School success can only be attained through cooperation between parents and educators. Parents are expected to disclose any pertinent information from private resources (diagnoses and recommendations) that would be of specific educational value in programming adequately for their children. If it is determined that the school's resources cannot meet the needs of a student, or if parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to act on the school's recommendations for remediation or diagnostic evaluation, the principal may request withdrawal of the student or deny admission for the following year.

#### *Accommodations for Special Needs Learners*

The purpose of an accommodation of any type is to provide the appropriate instruction according to the individual student's special needs. As a result of a diagnostic evaluation, a student meets certain criteria to qualify for accommodations to his/her schoolwork. In many instances, **accommodations** (changes in methods of instruction) can be made in the classroom for students with special needs or for struggling students. (Accommodations are provided for academic needs and are not provided for behavioral needs.)

Students who are diagnosed with a learning difference or who are diagnosed with a special need through the public school system, private doctors, or through special agencies may be referred for special assistance with the campus Intervention Specialist after the administration has verification of the student's recommended accommodations. (Curricular modifications are not provided because **modifications** require alterations of curricular objectives.) The number of intervention sessions per week, length of sessions, and goals will be determined by the Intervention Specialist, principal, and classroom teacher after all available information has been reviewed. Students who meet any of the following criteria may be eligible for our special services program:

- IEPs from public, private, or local services,
- Score below the 50th percentile in reading, language, or math on the IOWA Test or other national achievement test.
- Have failing grades on report cards at the end of each quarter.

### *Standardized Testing for Students with Special Needs*

Those students with disabilities identified through IDEA may require special testing accommodations. These accommodations should be provided on a weekly basis through the classroom teacher. These students, as well as others not identified through IDEA, may be tested in a special testing environment to reduce distractions. These special testing arrangements must be planned for in advance through a meeting with the Intervention Specialist. Any adjustment made in achievement testing must be requested from the Catholic Schools Office via special request on the appropriate form.

### **STANDARDIZED TESTING AND ASSESSMENTS**

Achievement testing is one of several means of assessing pupil performance. All students in the Archdiocese participate in the testing program (at St. Helen Catholic School, students in grades 1-8 are tested). Standardized tests, the IOWA Test, and the COGAT School Ability Test (grades 2, 4, and 6 only), adopted by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, are administered to students each year in the Spring. The tests are a means to give teachers and the administrator a certain amount of information regarding the educational growth of the students. A majority of all SHCS students score in the high average or above average range of the testing.

The ACRE exams (measuring religious knowledge) are given to students in grades 5 and 8 in the spring of each year. Other assessments include regularly scheduled classroom tests, quizzes, etc. The teachers strive to provide a secure testing environment. They also attempt to plan tests so that students are not overwhelmed with more than two tests on the same day.

### **TARDINESS POLICY**

Tardiness has a direct impact on self-discipline and the overall discipline of the school. Habitual tardiness seriously affects school performance. To ensure an orderly, disciplined environment, school begins promptly at 7:50 A.M. on Monday through Friday. Tardiness is neither excused nor unexcused. Students must be in their classroom when the bell rings.

In addition, accreditation depends on adhering to a "Bell to Bell" schedule and requires a specific number of minutes per day for instruction. Please be supportive of the 7:50 A.M. daily start of school so that we may provide your child with an exemplary education. Students in grades 5-8 may experience even more disruption of their schedules if they are tardy because of their class locations.

- The first bell rings promptly at 7:45 A.M. and the student is tardy if he/she is not seated in his/her classroom at 7:50 A.M. (Monday – Thursday).
- Students may not be in the halls, at lockers, etc. when the bell rings.
- A student is tardy if he/she arrives after the designated time set by the school schedule. Tardies will be issued beginning at 7:50 A.M. for all students.
- On most Fridays, and any Mass days, students should also arrive promptly at 7:45 a.m. so they may arrive on time for 8:00 a.m. Mass. (On Friday, students are also tardy at 7:50 A.M. due to Friday Mass. On Holy Days of Obligation, Mass is required and tardies will also be counted at 7:50 A.M.). If tardy on Mass days, parents should bring their children to the receptionist office so that the children may be checked in and escorted to the church.
- A student who is late is required to report to the school office before being admitted to class. This includes being tardy on Mass days.
- On the fifth and subsequent tardy in a nine-week period, a student's parents may select one of the following:
  - One hour student detention, or
  - \$10.00 administrative fee charged to parent.

- We encourage parents to make the decision on whether the tardy is the child's fault or the parent's fault and choose the consequence accordingly. A parent- principal conference may be called each nine weeks for excessive tardies of ten or more.

Exceptions to the tardy/absence policy are physicians' appointments. If a student has a doctor's or therapist's appointment in the morning, he/she must bring a doctor's or therapist's excuse/note and arrive to school prior to 9:00 a.m. (3<sup>rd</sup> period for junior high classes for most days) in order NOT to be counted tardy or absent. Please contact the receptionist's office for questions regarding tardies.

### *Junior High Tardies*

Any student entering the main building after the 7:50 a.m. bell will be counted tardy. If a junior high student is tardy during the school day, during the change of classes, the student's homeroom teacher is responsible for tallying tardies and assigning consequences. Parents will be notified of the consequences. Students have very little traveling to do from class to class. Tardiness is not necessary, nor expected.

## **TECHNOLOGY USAGE**

Access to the technology resources of St. Helen Catholic School by its faculty, staff, volunteers, and students is for purposes of instruction, research, assignment completion, and school administration. Technology resources for students may include computer hardware and software licensed to the school. These resources are not to be used for personal or non-school related communications.

The servers, desktop PC's, printers, and all other school technology equipment are the property of St. Helen Catholic School. The school retains the right to search any and all equipment at any time. Appropriate language and etiquette are essential in using any aspect of the school's technology program. Facebook/MySpace, or any other social networking sites, are not appropriate for use at school. Students must refrain from accessing them or their access to technology may be revoked.

When a student's use of electronic communication (on devices either owned by the school or student) jeopardizes the safe environment of the school or is contrary to Gospel values, the student may be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including the revocation of the student's technology use.

A Catholic school administrator can impose consequences for conduct involving technology use occurring outside school that detrimentally affects the school. Whether occurring within or outside of school, when a student's, staff member's, parent's, or volunteer's use of electronic communication jeopardizes the safe environment of the school, detrimentally affects the school's reputation, disrupts regular school communications, or is intended to promote or advocate a certain cause, or is contrary to Gospel values, the staff member may be discharged or the volunteer may lose his/her privileges of volunteering at the school. The parent may be asked to withdraw their students and relocate to another campus. Below are the guidelines to follow when using technology.

### *Use of Technology Resources/Mobile Phones/E-devices*

Respecting the rights and property of others is paramount. No improper access or misuse of files, memory storage, data, or information, or improper use and waste of technology resources, such as disk space or printing supplies will be tolerated. Students may use personal electronic devices under the direction of the teacher, only for the purposes of reading appropriate materials or engaging in classroom instruction/assignments. Students all have the responsibility to respect their own, others', and the school's technology resources. If a student is discovered using a personal electronic device or other electronic equipment without permission or using it for inappropriate measures, the technology will be collected and held in the principal's office for parent pick-up. A discipline referral will ensue. Additionally, a \$50 fine will be assessed and the parent/guardian will be required to personally collect the device from the office (this policy also applies to cell phones that are found in the "on" position during the school day). Additionally, students are not permitted to use electronic devices during their wait time for dismissal.

### *Software*

Both operating systems and program applications must be approved by the school administration and Technology Consultant and installed by the appropriate, designated Technology staff. The illegal installation of copyrighted software or files for use on school computers is prohibited. The school's Technology Consultant is to install any software on school computers following the licensing agreement. The Technology Consultant or office staff will secure all license agreements and keep them on file.

### *Copyright*

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston that all employees, volunteers, and students are to abide by the federal copyright laws. Employees, volunteers, and students who willfully disregard copyright laws are in violation of this policy, doing so at their own risk and assuming all liability. This includes technology and other materials.

## **TELEPHONE USE AND MESSAGES**

Students may not use the school's telephones unless it is an emergency. Forgetting one's homework, P.E. uniform, lunch, etc., is not considered an emergency. Students and parents must arrange after school rides ahead of time. The office staff is available to serve you in an emergency, but they are not responsible for non-emergency messages. Unless it is an emergency, please limit your requests for messages to be delivered to your child.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are selected from the State of Texas Adopted Textbook List or from other publishers with Archdiocesan approval (see the Internet for "Texas Instructional Materials Adoption Bulletin" which includes multiple publishers in each subject area). Many of our textbooks are now online – please inquire of your teacher about optional textbook resources. Textbook selection is a function of the local Catholic school. Selection is based upon teacher input, and teachers are directed to choose what is best for their students' needs and the curriculum objectives.

It is expected that textbooks, traditional or online, are used in all major subject areas. Textbooks are provided on a rental basis and are distributed to students at the beginning of the school year. Students will be fined for damages beyond the normal wear or asked to pay full replacement cost for lost books. Supplementary material is also used to enrich and expand the curriculum. In general, textbook adoptions are made every 5 years, depending upon recommendations from the state of Texas.

## **TRANSFERS**

When a student transfers to another school, the parents should notify the front office prior to withdrawal. All textbooks are returned to the teacher. If fines or fees are not due, transcripts and other school records are sent to the child's new school by post office mail, as requested by the new school. Records are released to the new school's registrar after all previously required SHCS tuition and fees are paid. Parents wishing to view student records must submit a written request twenty-four hours in advance so that time is allotted to prepare the records for your viewing.

## **TUITION, REGISTRATION, AND FEES**

### *Refund Issues*

All tuition and all fees are non-refundable. This is clearly stated on parent enrollment contracts. Signing the enrollment contract indicates acceptance and obligates the parent to tuition payments for the academic school year. Refund requests based upon financial hardships are to be directed to the principal.

### *Fees*

Fees are established annually. Fees are posted on our website. Generally, an increase of 3% is enacted each year for fee increases. St. Helen and the Archdiocese offer tuition assistance for payment of fees, but assistance must be

requested as early as possible (December- January is preferable), prior to the upcoming school year. Contact the Business Office to determine how your family may apply for tuition assistance.

### *Registration*

Registration is complete when the principal has approved the applicant, all forms have been returned, and the registration, books, lab, and other fees have been paid. All previous school records and recommendations must be on file for the registration process to be considered complete. Registration fees are non-refundable.

### *Tuition*

Tuition payments can be paid annually or in 10 equal installments. St. Helen School has partnered with FACTS Tuition Management to automatically withdraw tuition payments according to the scheduled payment dates beginning in July through the month of April. If the installment option is selected, payments must be automatically withdrawn through FACTS. The accounting office does not accept tuition payments except to clear delinquencies. To learn more about FACTS or to sign up for tuition payments, visit their website at:

<https://ecashierk12.factstuition.com/ecashierk12/Controller?&query=83434/77581>

Tuition payments not posted by FACTS on or before the 20th of the month are assessed a \$25.00 late charge by the SHCS accounting office. Re-admission for the following school year is not allowed for the children of families who are not current with any obligations and fees. School records of students who have any unpaid balances are not released. Students are placed on financial suspension if tuition is 60 days delinquent. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the principal and/or accounting office for acceptable payment arrangements. Report Cards and all school records are held until accounts are current. Checks for tuition/fees that are returned for insufficient funds are subject to a penalty charge of \$25.00. Issuance of three insufficient checks requires that all future payments be made in cash or by money order. Invoices are not sent home for tuition payments. Invoices are only sent home for Extended Day drop-ins.

New students enrolling during the current school year will pay full month tuition if they enroll from the 1st through the 15th. If they enroll from the 16th through the end of the month, a half-month tuition payment will apply.

School Board Policy dated June 14, 2001:

"All fees, including but not limited to registration and book fees, are non- refundable and nontransferable to any other accounts or fees due. The principal reserves the right to refund or withhold any fees according to his/her discretion as the particular situation warrants. If the principal sends a letter of non-admission, funds are refunded."

School Board Policy dated May 9, 2002:

"If a family's tuition and/or any fees are ten days or more late, three times during the school year, the family must agree to prepay the year's balance of said tuition and/or fees. If a student's/students' family does not agree to prepay the balance of the tuition and/or fees, the child/children will be immediately withdrawn."

### *Parishioner vs Open Tuition Status*

Parishioner tuition status is offered to contributing and tithing members of St. Helen Catholic Church, and we wish to offer this rate to as many families as possible. Active membership in St. Helen Catholic Church is defined as a stewardship commitment of time, talent, and treasure. A calendar year must show a consistent stewardship contribution to qualify for the parishioner tuition rate (tithing amounts are not specified). In addition, qualifying parishioners must be registered for at least six months and show active participation in service to the ministries of St. Helen Catholic School. Parishioner tuition status is granted annually and reviewed at registration. Tithing statements are prepared and issued by the parish, evaluated annually, and used to determine parishioner tuition status for tuition purposes. Parishioner tuition status is granted annually by the pastor to those families who meet and/or exceed stewardship requirement for the school year. One must make verifiable contributions by check or envelopes. Loose cash is not verifiable by the Church office. Those families not meeting the contribution

requirements are classified by the higher Catholic tuition rate for the school year. Because parishioner tuition status is evaluated every year at registration, a change in parishioner tuition status may result in a change in registration priority and tuition rate. All families are eligible for sibling discounts.

## **USE OF FACILITIES - PARISH MINISTRIES AND THE EDUCATIONAL BUILDING**

SHCS is an integral part of the St. Helen parish ministries. However, we are not the only ministry that uses the school building. Currently, C.C.E and the youth group are the ministries that share school facilities with the Catholic School. Students and teachers are encouraged to keep rooms neat and clean for others to use during the evening hours or on the weekend.

If the need arises for an outside group to use the school facility after school hours, permission must be obtained in advance from the principal and/or the Church's facility manager. Due to the frequent after-school and evening use of the campus, it is very unusual for outside groups to be able to access the campus during these times.

## **VISITORS**

### *General Visitor and Volunteer Campus Guidelines*

- All visitors entering the campus must enter through the main campus building. Please do not attempt to gain initial access through other campus doors.
- Visitors will be viewed by both exterior and interior cameras (no one will be admitted to the Middle School building unless he/she has first received a pass from the main campus' receptionist). Cameras are also in use at every entry/exit, in each classroom, and in the hallways to monitor for safety.
- To insure the safety of all children, staff, visitors, and volunteers of SHCS, all visitors must check in through the Raptor system at the receptionist's desk. Everyone must go through the security door and check with the receptionist.
- Again, **NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO ENTER THE CAMPUS OR CLASSROOMS WITHOUT FIRST GETTING A VISITOR PASS FROM THE RECEPTIONIST**, which requires Raptor screening prior to receiving a pass. You will be asked to provide picture ID prior to receiving a visitor's pass through Raptor. Raptor is a picture ID system used to screen ALL visitors. The Raptor system runs your picture ID through its system and checks the Department of Public Safety's and state police forces' databases for active charges of sexual abuse or for outstanding warrants.
- All visitors who wish to be volunteers **MUST** have completed an initial VIRTUS training course prior to working with any of our students. Volunteers must sign in, and their VIRTUS status will be checked prior to working with children.
- After following procedures to check in, a visitor's pass must be worn and be visible at all times while on campus. The staff has been instructed to send anyone without a visitor's pass to the Receptionist's office to obtain a pass. This is a safety issue that must be observed for the sake of our students and staff.
- **Visitors may bring children to campus if they are attending parties, pep rallies, and programs ("the 3 P's").** These are the only events in which siblings are allowed. This holds true **UNLESS** a visitor is working as a volunteer. **NO SIBLINGS** are permitted when visitors are working as volunteers.
- Visitors are expected to dress appropriately. Extremely low-cut and revealing clothing and short-shorts or skirts should not be worn to campus as they pose a distraction to the learning process. Additionally, spandex and other clothing that allow undergarments to be seen are not appropriate for visitors or volunteers. In general, volunteers and visitors should follow the dress guidelines cues established by staff.
- Visitors should **NOT** use the students' restrooms. Please request to use the office facilities.
- Visitors should be VIRTUS trained in order to videotape or record students. Taking a picture of a single student or small classroom group is permitted. However, due to confidentiality issues and privacy requests of many students, videotapes and recordings are not permitted by non-VIRTUS trained visitors.
- At no time should visitors or volunteers post pictures, recordings, video, etc. of our students on public social media sites.



- Visitors are expected to comply with fire/safety drills and follow the evacuation procedures of the campus. We respectfully request your cooperation with all of our safety procedures while on campus.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

### *General VIRTUS Information*

All prospective school volunteers (when frequent, ongoing, recurring contact is expected) must attend the VIRTUS training “Protecting God’s Children (PGC)” program offered by the Archdiocese, free of charge.

- PGC is a workshop on child sexual abuse prevention. Applicants must register for VIRTUS training on-line by going to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org).
- As part of the VIRTUS training process, volunteers must sign an Ethics Code of Conduct and submit an authorization form for a background check. All parts of the process must be completed in order to be fully certified by VIRTUS.
- The campus VIRTUS Coordinator and Safe Environment Coordinator (SEC) is Raquel Wood, [rwood@sthelencatholicsschool.org](mailto:rwood@sthelencatholicsschool.org).
- **ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST BE VIRTUS CERTIFIED PRIOR TO WORKING ON CAMPUS – NO EXCEPTIONS!** (Please allow 3-4 weeks for your VIRTUS certification to be processed and for you to be able to volunteer on campus.)
- There are now two additional VIRTUS trainings. Please keep your certification current.

If the prospective school volunteer has attended PGC training previously, the VIRTUS Coordinator will verify the “active” status of the volunteer. If it has been 5 or more years since the volunteer has taken the initial training, the volunteer must register for the ongoing training, “Keeping the Promise Alive (KPA).” If it has been less than 5 years since the prospective volunteer has taken the first training, the VIRTUS Coordinator will alert the volunteer as to when their initial volunteer approval will expire.

If a VIRTUS trained volunteer has lost or forgotten his/her user name and/or password for the VIRTUS site, please email the SEC, Raquel Wood, [rwood@sthelencatholicsschool.org](mailto:rwood@sthelencatholicsschool.org).

### *General Volunteer Issues at St. Helen Catholic School*

Catholic schools depend on the consistent and loyal services of volunteers. Volunteers serve the school in many capacities, such as in the clinic, office area, cafeteria, or as room parents, etc. Another way to serve is to volunteer on committees. This includes, but is not limited to, the Dinner-Dance Committee and its subcommittees, Home and School Committees, Board of Education Committees, and making phone calls or assisting from your home.

Other ways of volunteering are to chaperone field trips or work at the church bazaar. Anyone in the family, including students, siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles may assist in earning the family's service hours. Please contact the front office or our volunteer parent coordinator to volunteer service to your child's school. All SHCS volunteers must sign the Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgment sheet, pass a criminal background check, and attend VIRTUS training. Volunteers will also be requested to present their valid picture ID for the Raptor system each time they come to campus.

Volunteers may not take younger siblings along on field trips or other school sponsored activities. **Due to liability and supervision concerns, siblings are never allowed to accompany a parent who is volunteering service to the school.** As with visitors, all SHCS volunteers are expected to be dressed appropriately. For volunteers, no shorts are allowed, unless you are landscaping, working Field Day, or helping at P.E. classes. Volunteers are expected to have the same standard dress code as teachers and staff.

Volunteering does not include walking your child to class or trying to get a chance to speak with the teacher prior to class starting. Teachers are all on duty supervising students at 7:30 a.m. and are not able to meet with you. We would like to maintain open communication with all parents and families, so please call in advance to request a

parent meeting. Parents are discouraged from interrupting classes or walking the building to observe their child, clean lockers, find lost supplies, etc. because of the possible disruptions caused. If you would like to visit your child's classroom, please schedule an appropriate time with your child's teacher.

If volunteering in a classroom, this means spending quality time on work assignments requested by the classroom teacher. We request the volunteer attends to the teachers'/students' needs, without undue distractions (for example, constant e-device use). The expectation is that our volunteers will confidently work with our students to improve their classroom experiences. It is also expected that the volunteer maintain strict confidentiality about what is observed in the classroom.

#### *Media Issues*

All approved volunteers are permitted to take pictures or videos at school functions. However, the posting of pictures and videos to public social media sites could be a violation of students' confidentiality and privacy. (Please research FERPA – Family Education Rights and Privacy Act to better understand privacy violations.)

#### *Room Parent Volunteers*

The Room Parents are volunteers whose duties are to assist the Principal, teachers, and students in various ways. Please contact the classroom teacher or an HSA representative to volunteer as a Room Parent. Room Parents may not bring siblings to school while they are volunteering.

#### *Student Volunteers*

All junior high students (6th - 8th graders) have a 10-hour required yearly service hour commitment for volunteering. Fifth graders have an 8-hour required yearly service hour commitment. Students in grades four have a 6-hour required yearly service hour commitment.

**PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM  
2017-2018**

*(you may print this form and return ONLY it to the campus)*

The school and/or the principal retain the right to amend the school handbook at any time. Parents will be given prompt notification via the website if changes are made. For the 2017 - 2018 school year, minor, but important, revisions have been made to the Handbook. Families are encouraged to be familiar with it and to learn school policies. Questions should be directed to the principal.

Dear Parents:

Please view our school handbook online at [www.SHCSsaints.org](http://www.SHCSsaints.org) and click on Parent Resources, Family Handbook. If you want to request a paper copy of the handbook, please contact the front office. Please sign, date, and return this acknowledgement form to your child's teacher. Your signature and that of your child/children indicate that you have read the online version or a hard copy version of the school handbook. It also means that you have discussed with your child/children the appropriate items from the handbook, and that you and your child/children agree to abide by the school procedures, regulations and policies discussed in this handbook. Ignorance of the policies is not an excuse for not following them.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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We have read and discussed the St. Helen Catholic School Handbook. We agree to follow the school procedures, regulations, and policies covered in this handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Student Signature

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Date

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Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**St. Helen Catholic School**  
**B.Y.O.D. (Bring Your Own Device) POLICY**  
**&**  
**ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

**The Ten Commandments of Student Computer Use**

*(you may print this form and return ONLY this form to the campus)*

Before a student will be allowed to take an electronic device out of his/her backpack or use a school-issued device, parents and students must agree and sign below. This form must be returned prior to students using their personal or school devices.

The classroom teacher will designate appropriate times and uses for the utilization of all electronic devices. We are signing this acknowledgement to state that we understand the Technology Acceptable Use Policy (found in handbook), the BYOD Policy, and the Ten Commandments of Computer Use. We agree to the terms of use of these devices (including the understanding of a \$50 fine for unacceptable usage). We will not hold the school responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices. As a parent/guardian, I am allowing my student to bring and/or use personal and school devices at school for the current school year.

As a St. Helen Catholic School Student, **I will ...**

1. Respect the computer equipment and my teachers' directions for use or non-use.
2. Avoid eating and drinking at the computer stations.
3. Not change settings on the computer.
4. Not make changes to or take from the school website.
5. Respect files or passwords and not share them.
6. Respect other people's files and only work with my own.
7. Not create any websites against the school.
8. Avoid email, instant message, chat, and other forms of communication on the school computers.
9. Only play games on the computer with a teacher's permission.
10. Turn off the screen and get a teacher if something bad appears on my computer.

As a student, I agree to abide by these rules when using the computers at the school.

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Classroom teachers will keep this agreement filed in their classrooms.*