

# St. Therese Catholic Academy



Parent and Student Handbook  
2023-2024

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*Although we have attempted to cover every phase of school life, we know there are areas that may not be covered by this handbook. Therefore, any decisions regarding matters not specifically written in this handbook will be left to the discretion of the school administration. St. Therese Catholic Academy reserves the right to supplement and/or amend the Parent and Student Handbook at any time, at which time notice will be provided to Parents and Students.*

## **MISSION**

Together we will teach children to model their lives after Jesus Christ, strive for academic excellence, and develop their personal and physical selves to become positive, contributing members of the communities in which they live, all in accordance with the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church.

## **VISION**

St. Thérèse Academy, a school of excellence rooted in Catholic values and acting in accordance with the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church, attracts a diverse student body with a range of learning differences who desire an education focused on the spiritual, personal, physical, social, and emotional aspects of the human person. Education steeped in Gospel values is made accessible to every child offering diplomas to prepare them for their path in life including college and career readiness. It is a place where students are not identified by a difference; rather, are recognized for their God-given gifts and talents. Students are afforded the opportunity to cultivate their gifts achieving optimum benefits for both our students and our community. St. Therese Catholic Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, or disability in the administration of educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid or athletics as well as any other school administered programs.

## **OBJECTIVES AND COMMITMENTS**

1. To help each child come to the realization that each is worthy and beloved in God's sight
2. To promote a love for all that excludes no one because of religion, nationality, race, or social status
3. To provide for different expressions of faith: personal, communal, and liturgical
4. To foster an awareness of local, national, and global needs in order to alleviate human suffering by promoting peace, justice, freedom, and the nobility of work
5. To integrate gospel values in all areas of the curriculum
6. To maintain an administration, faculty, and auxiliary staff who are catechists and who contribute their competence and are themselves living witnesses to the gospel values of Christ and in accordance with the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church. To enable each individual to achieve some degree of accomplishment by providing a variety of learning opportunities for each child
7. To encourage an appreciation and acceptance of the varied religious and cultural heritage of the school community through personal sharing and other enriching activities
8. To enable the student to acquire basic skills in all subject areas by maintaining a balanced academic program
9. To allow growth in leadership and personal responsibility
10. To enhance the health and physical development of the student through physical education classes and programs with emphasis on the development of skills and good sportsmanship
11. To maintain a harmonious relationship among staff, parents, and students that promotes understanding and a common spirit of trust and support of all aspects of the school program
12. To create a "school home" which serves as an extension of their homes, accommodating and complementing the role of today's families in a constantly changing world

13. To provide opportunities for each student to develop talents in art, music, foreign language, and technology

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN COOPERATION STATEMENT**

Part of the philosophy of St. Therese Catholic Academy is the belief that the school assists the parents in carrying out their primary responsibility of providing religious and secular education for their children. Hence, St. Therese Catholic Academy expects the parents to be involved as much as possible in the education of their child. This means not only supporting the school and participating in its activities, but also providing instruction, witness, and role modeling at home and in public in support of our Catholic mission. Parents and guardians are expected to work courteously and cooperatively with the school to assist the student in meeting the academic, moral, and behavioral expectations of St. Therese Catholic Academy. Parents are responsible for comments about the school whether in public or on social media, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Communication with the school administration, faculty, and staff should be done in a manner that is not discourteous, disruptive, or threatening. St. Therese Catholic Academy is ultimately responsible for the orderly operation of the school in the best interest of all its students.

Therefore, the school reserves the right to take action, up to and including terminating its relationship with a student if his/her parents fail to provide the support, assistance, and example necessary for helping the school accomplish its role in the child's education, or if a parent/guardian or student engages in conduct determined to be harmful to St. Therese Catholic Academy, its faculty, staff, or students. Failure to abide by the regulations and policies of this handbook by either the student or his/her parent or guardian may result in the student's removal from St. Therese Catholic Academy.

### **CUSTODIAL RIGHTS**

The school presumes that both biological parents have access to their children unless a parent provides legal evidence of sole custody rights. It is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a court-certified copy of a court order. Copies of legal documents (custody of the child, court-approved guardianship or tutorship, or court-approved visitation rights) MUST be on file in the office. If any change occurs, the custodial parent must supply the school with a current copy. It is assumed by the school that parents will abide by the court order.

### **CHILD PROTECTION MANDATES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The Child Protection Site Coordinator serves as the administrative liaison for the Office of Child and Youth Protection and assists the Head of School in implementing the Safe Environment requirements. It is the law of the State of Louisiana and the policy of the Archdiocese of New Orleans that volunteers who supervise children must:

- Complete the safe-schools training
- Read and sign the Diocesan Code of Ethics.
- Submit background checks at the Louisiana State Police Headquarters. These requirements include, but are not limited to, all who help in the cafeteria, library, art and computer helpers, homeroom parents, and coaches. These requirements also include adults who go on field trips. The process must be completed prior to volunteering. If

fingerprinting and a background check was completed in a previous year at St. Therese Catholic Academy and is on file, it is not necessary to repeat the process. If this process was completed at another Diocesan institution, it must be repeated for St. Therese Catholic Academy. Volunteers are mandated reporters for suspected child abuse or neglect.

### **MEDIA CONSENT**

Parents will have to sign a release form that indicates whether or not they authorized the use of student pictures in publications and on the school's website/social media sites

### **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT**

A copy of this plan is in the main office and is available to the public.

### **ADMISSIONS**

St. Therese Catholic Academy admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at this school. No person in the schools of the Archdiocese shall, based on gender, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination.

### **ADMISSION CRITERIA**

St. Therese Catholic Academy has adopted and will comply in every way with the Archdiocesan Guidelines for admission of students as stated in the handbook of policies for the Schools of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. All students currently enrolled at St. Therese Catholic Academy will be given priority for admission for the next school year. Newly entering students will be accepted to the school according to the following criteria:

1. Siblings of presently enrolled students
2. Catholic families from a parish without a parish school
3. Other Catholic families with permission of their pastor
4. Non-Catholic families who allow their children to participate in the school's religious program other than the actual reception of the sacraments

\*Students are enrolled on a probationary status for their first semester of enrollment each year (first 90 days of school)

## **NEW STUDENTS**

Copies of the following documents are required for admission to St. Therese Catholic Academy: Official birth certificate with full certificate number displayed

Baptismal Certificate (if applicable)

First Communion Certificate (if applicable)

Current Immunization records

All report cards and standardized test scores Social Security card

Failure to disclose any information concerning the educational and behavioral needs of the student is grounds for removal or non-acceptance. Falsifying enrollment documents in all or in part is grounds for removal or non-acceptance. The school administration reserves the right to make final decisions on admissions.

## **RE-ENROLLMENT**

Re-enrollment for current students is held during the spring semester of each school year.

## **TRANSFERS**

St. Therese Catholic Academy may accept students in Pre-K through 12th grade, if there are open seats, after the first day of school. Admission will be based on the student's academic performance as well as discipline and attendance records. Report cards and test scores (if applicable) must be provided before the student will be considered for acceptance. If the administration believes that the student does not meet the profile of a St. Therese Catholic Academy student, the student may not be offered admission.

## **WITHDRAWALS**

When a student withdraws during the school year, the parents must come to the school to sign a Withdrawal Form. Allow three business days for the office to complete the withdrawal process. Student records will be mailed directly to the next school upon the school's request and after the parent completes the withdrawal process, including but not limited to return of books and athletic uniforms.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

Tuition rates and fees are established annually by the administration. Failure to pay all fees and tuition by designated due dates may result in disallowance of your child to take tests or exams and/or the removal of your child from the school. Remit payments by check, money order, or credit/debit card as applicable.

## **REGISTRATION FEES**

- Registration fees are to be paid according to the published timelines and are non-refundable.
- Registration fees are waived for the 4th child or more of a family with 4 or more enrolled.

## **TUITION FEE/PAYMENTS**

There are two options for payment of tuition:

- Prepayment of tuition in full before the start of the school year Deferred Tuition Payment Plan
- A tuition loan program is available through the services of a bank pre-selected by the school. All information is sent to parents before registration regarding the procedure and detailed information on tuition and other fees.
  - Payment is made monthly to the participating bank.
  - A family whose tuition account from the participating bank is turned back over to St. Therese Catholic Academy may not be eligible to finance their tuition for the following year through the school finance program. If this family chooses to return to St. Therese Catholic Academy, they must pay their tuition in full on or before the due date. All families that must pay in full in advance will be notified by St. Therese Catholic Academy before they register for the next year. If the problem occurs after registration, they will be notified as soon as possible.

## **TUITION REFUNDS**

### *Paid in Advance*

If a student withdraws or is dismissed during the year, tuition paid in advance will be refunded according to the graduated tuition refund scale as approved by St. Therese Catholic Academy. Full payment must be paid in order for the student to participate in class trips, end-of-year programs, or, possibly, exams or tests. Please note, under certain circumstances, parents may be asked to pay by money order. There are several Archdiocesan Tuition Assistance programs, and parents of new or returning students can contact the Head of School for more information.

### *Tuition Loan*

If a student withdraws or is dismissed during the year, any tuition loan outstanding will be canceled according to the following Head of School graduated cancellation scale.

\*Any principal, interest, bank fees, or fees owed to the school that are outstanding at the time of cancellation of the loan will be due and payable to St. Therese Catholic Academy at the time of the cancellation of the loan.

### *State/City Ordered Closure*

If school is closed due to weather or a public health concern, parents/guardians will still be responsible for payment of tuition. The education of each student will continue with virtual/remote/e-learning. Teachers will continue to plan standards-based lessons and evaluate student work. Report cards will be distributed at the end of each grading period. If a parent/guardian cannot make the regular tuition payment, the Head of School should be notified as soon as possible to create a payment plan.

## **FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM**

The school will have hot lunch available for purchase through School Food and Nutrition Services of New Orleans, Inc., a ministry of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. All payments will be made through a child's My School Bucks account. Students will not be able to "charge" to their lunch account.

Clear water bottles are allowed in the classroom; however, no carbonated beverages, glass or cans are allowed at school. Students are **NOT** allowed to bring soft drinks or **ANY** energy drinks to school. Candy is NOT allowed in school unless given by a teacher as a reward. Parents are NOT allowed to send or bring “fast food” lunches to students. Food deliveries of any kind are **NOT** allowed. Students may not share food. **Students are not allowed to bring any form of nuts, including peanut butter, in their lunches.**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION AND SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

### *Daily School Schedule*

8:00am-3:15pm

### *Attendance*

Regular daily classroom instruction is important in ensuring a child’s academic success. Students should attend school unless they are ill, or a serious reason arises. Absences, excessive tardiness, or early check-outs resulting in attendance of fewer than the required days will result in student retention. Exceptions to the attendance policy can be made only in the event of extended personal illness as verified by a physician, or at the discretion of the Head of School.

Parents are strongly discouraged from removing children from school for any reason (ex. trips, appointments, etc.) other than out of necessity. Medical appointments should be made outside of school hours whenever possible. Daily schedules and school-year calendars are established before the school year begins. School administration may consult with the Superintendent of the Office of Catholic Schools on any exceptional cases before granting credit to students who have missed an excessive number of school days.

### *Absences*

Absences should be reported to the school office by the parent/guardian by 8:00 am. It is also recommended that the parent/guardian notify the teacher(s) via email of the student’s absence. The student is responsible for schoolwork covered during his/her absence, and it is the student’s obligation to procure and complete all assignments/tests covered during the period of absence. All work should be made up in a timely manner. Students who are absent for half or more of the school day due to absence, early check out, late arrival, or suspension may not participate in extra-curricular activities occurring that day.

### *Absence Due to Illness*

If a student has a communicable disease, parents are asked to notify the school office as soon as the disease is diagnosed. Students who have a communicable disease must present a doctor’s certificate before being readmitted to class. Children who are ill must not return to school until they are free of fever for 24 hours. When a child vomits at school, the parent will be required to pick up the child as soon as possible.



### *Tardiness*

Students who arrive at school after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy. If the tardiness is due to a doctor's appointment, a written note from the doctor's office is required, though the note does not eliminate the tardiness.

### *Early Check-Out*

Parents will sign the CHECK-OUT book in the office when they come to take the student from school and then wait in the reception office until the student is called from the classroom over the intercom. No adult may go and get a child from the classroom. Teachers are not allowed to release students to parents from the classroom. Students may not be checked out of school within an hour of dismissal. Early check-outs should be limited to emergencies and may not be used as a by-pass of the carpool line.

### *Carpool*

The safety of your children is our highest priority. It is imperative that carpool procedures are strictly observed. Please use extreme caution during arrival and dismissal times because of the number of pedestrians and the traffic. For detailed instructions regarding these procedures, refer to the school's website.

Parents must have the student's name and grade displayed on a car hanger. St. Therese Catholic Academy will provide one

at the beginning of the year.

Parents are not allowed to park cars and walk to pick up students. Cars must get in line and allow children to board accordingly for the safety of all students.

### Parents are asked not to conference in the pick-up line.

We operate a **Cell Phone Free Dismissal**. For the safety of our students and teachers, we ask parents to refrain from using their cell phones during dismissal.

No student is allowed back into the buildings for books or forgotten items without the supervision of a teacher. Students are to accept the responsibility of having all books and belongings before leaving school. Parents will report to the main office for forgotten items after school.

If your child is going home with a friend or by some way other than the usual means, please send a note to the office that morning stating the details. Students will only be released to those listed on a student's emergency card.

### *Supervision Before and After School*

The school grounds are supervised from 7:40 am until 3:15 pm. Any child arriving before supervision starts in the morning or remaining after supervision has ended in the afternoon will be taken into the Extended Care Program. Parents will be responsible for the fee charged for this service, which includes registration for the program.

### *Extended Care Program*

Before and after school care is provided for St. Therese Catholic Academy students on school days. The Extended Care Program charges a fee based on which service they utilize. Before school

care is available beginning at 7:00 am. After school care is available immediately after dismissal until 5:30 pm. Any parent who wishes to pick up their child before 3:30 pm must use the designated carpool line. Students who participate in the after school program are provided with a snack, free play time, supervised homework, and leisure activities. Extended Care is part of the school day; therefore, all St. Therese Catholic Academy rules apply. In keeping with the school rules, management procedures have been established for the Extended Care Program and can be found on the school website. Parents of students participating in this service will abide by the details of procedures and fees as published on the school website. There is no after school care provided on half days.

### *Parents/Visitors*

Parents and visitors must sign in and get a visitor's badge from the office before going to a classroom or another building on campus. Parents or visitors should have an appointment or have made arrangements with the teacher in advance to conference with the teacher. Parents should not expect to go to the classroom to "observe." The receptionist will call the classroom to verify that the teacher is expecting the individual. If not wearing a visitor's tag, the individual will be escorted back to the office. Materials for school should not be dropped off at school (e.g., school supplies, lunches, homework, late assignments, and projects will not be accepted). Weapons, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco are not allowed on campus.

### **HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Sending a child to school confirms that each child is in good health.

NOTE: St. Therese Catholic Academy is a nut-free facility. Parents should not send any nut-containing product to school.

### *Immunizations*

Students are required to have proof of immunization or a physician's statement for vaccine exemption or otherwise be in compliance with applicable law. A legible copy of current immunization status must be kept on file for all students enrolled.

### *First Aid/Medication: General Information*

- Students are not allowed to carry ANY medication including over-the-counter medication such as acetaminophen, cold tablets, cough syrups, etc., on school property at any time.
- Students are not allowed to bring medications to school to give to the office. Parents must bring medications to school between 7:45am and 2:00 pm on school days. Only the office can receive medications.
- Medication shall only be administered to students with an order from a Louisiana licensed physician, dentist, or other prescriber authorized in the State of Louisiana who has filled out a State of Louisiana Medication Order Form.

1. A medication order form must be filled out for each medication to be administered at school.
2. The medication will be provided in a labeled pharmacy container or manufacturer's bottle/box, which includes the student's name, physician's name, medication name, dosage, and time to be given.
3. All information on the order form must match the information on the medication bottle.
4. A new form must accompany any change in dosage amount.

The parent/guardian shall cooperate with personnel designated to administer medication as follows:

- Cooperate in counting the medication with the designated school personnel who receive it.
- Cooperate with school staff to provide for safe, appropriate administration of medications to students, such as positioning, and liquids or foods to be given with medication.
- Comply with written and verbal communication regarding school policies.
- Remove or give permission to destroy unused, contaminated, discontinued, or out-of-date medications according to the school guidelines.
- Remove or give permission to destroy any medications not picked up at the end of the school year.
- Notify the school if contact information changes throughout the school year.

### *Illness*

If a student is ill they should be kept home. In case of illness, the student will be made comfortable until a parent can be contacted. In the event the parent cannot be reached, the person whose name appears on the emergency form will be called. Please keep the information on the form up to date.

### *Medication*

If a student has any serious illness or is on any type of medication, it is essential that the Head of School and the Teacher be notified of this at the opening of school. This notification will be kept on file. After notification, any medication must be kept in the school office, not in the student's possession.

Only medication prescribed by a licensed physician or dentist and dispensed by a registered pharmacist will be administered during school hours by authorized personnel. "Over the counter" medication (acetaminophen, cold tablets, cough syrups, etc.) will not be given unless prescribed by a licensed physician and labeled by a licensed pharmacist with the proper directions. The form on the titled "Request for School Personnel to Administer Medication" must be completed and must accompany the medication. The form can be found on the school website.

### *Nut-Free Policy*

The purpose of this policy is to establish a safe and supportive environment for students with peanut allergies. St. Therese Catholic Academy will work with parents and students to reasonably accommodate the needs of students in a manner that balances all of the related interests and is developmentally appropriate for students. While we cannot fully control lunch or

snacks brought on campus by individuals or that are consumed during our events, we endeavor to be a “peanut allergy aware” premise and minimize the likelihood of a severe allergic reaction. We ask that all students, faculty and staff refrain from bringing peanut and tree nut products for lunch and/or snack.

### *Allergy Aware Spaces*

In an effort to prevent a life-threatening allergic reaction, there is a strict avoidance of nuts and peanuts at St. Therese Catholic Academy. Reactions can range from mild to life threatening.

The following practices are in place to help prevent allergic reactions:

- All student rooms and playgrounds are designated as peanut allergy aware spaces. There will be no classroom projects with peanut butter or peanut shells, nor will any of these projects be allowed to remain in the classroom if sent from home with students.
- We discourage families from sending foods containing peanuts or peanut butter.
- On special occasions when students are allowed to bring a snack to share, parents should refrain from sending anything containing peanuts or peanut-containing products. Parents should check with the teacher before sending food by students to be shared with the class.
- In the event any student needs a peanut free snack, parents will work with the school and provide an appropriate snack to be distributed by the school as needed.

### *Allergy Action Plans*

Students at risk for a life-threatening allergic reaction will require an Allergy Action Plan completed by a physician and signed by the parent or guardian. These action plans must be sent to school and approved by the Head of School before a child is allowed to attend school. Any medication ordered on the Allergy Action Plan must be provided to the school by the parent or guardian. Emergency care plans, along with emergency medicines, will be made available to appropriate staff at all times as well as training on EpiPen usage.

### *General Use EpiPen*

In the event a student is having an anaphylaxis reaction while at school, the general use EpiPen will be administered to any student who does not have his/her own epinephrine auto injector on campus. All epinephrine auto injectors will be stored according to manufacturer’s instructions in a clearly labeled, locked, easily accessible cabinet at room temperature.

The general use EpiPen will be administered by a trained personnel when one or more of the following are present:

- Lung: Short of breath, wheeze, repetitive cough
- Heart: Pale, blue, faint, weak pulse, dizzy, confused
- Throat: Tight, hoarse, trouble breathing/ swallowing
- Mouth: Obstructive swelling (tongue and/or lips)
- Skin: Many hives all over body

Or a combination of symptoms from different body areas:

- Skin: Hives, itchy rashes, swelling (e.g. eyes, lips)
- Gut: Vomiting, diarrhea, crampy pain

### *Class Parties*

No presents (birthday, Christmas, etc.) are to be exchanged at school. Parents should not send floral, balloon, or other types of arrangements to students at school. Valentine cards can be exchanged in PK through 4th grade homerooms, provided each child brings one for every classmate.

### *School Counselor*

The school counselor visits each class at scheduled times throughout the year. Topics covered include self-respect, friendships, conflict resolution, managing anger, taking responsibility, resisting peer pressure, handling stress, and bullying. Other topics not listed may also be covered. The counselor also meets with individual students who request an appointment or who are referred by either a teacher or a parent. A child may be counseled by the school counselor during school, at the school's discretion. Parents may also request an appointment by calling the main office and leaving a message or emailing the school counselor. In addition, the school counselor meets with parents and teachers to provide resource information and may refer to mental health professionals or agencies in the community if appropriate.

Students' confidentiality is respected; however, a parent will be contacted in the event the student expresses intent to take harmful, dangerous, or criminal action against oneself or another person. Also, the law mandates that teachers, school personnel, and volunteers are required to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

If a student needs an academic evaluation and/or classroom accommodations, contact the School Counselor for assistance. When an evaluation is completed by an outside agency, the Counselor coordinates communication between the school and outside agencies. Parents should forward all needed evaluation forms to the Counselor who will distribute them to the teachers.

## **ACADEMICS**

### *Student Honor Pledge*

I pledge to uphold the mission statement of St. Therese Catholic Academy in all of my academic endeavors. I understand and recognize the infractions of academic dishonesty. I will be honest in all of my academic efforts while at St. Therese Catholic Academy.

### *Curriculum*

The primary goal of the St. Therese Catholic Academy curriculum is to provide learning experiences to educate children holistically in mind, body, and spirit. St. Therese Catholic Academy meets or exceeds the LA Department of Education's Bulletin 741 for curriculum and non-public school standards. St. Therese Catholic Academy's core subjects are religion, reading/literature, language arts, science, social studies and math. In addition to the core subjects, art, music and physical education are enrichment classes that are part of the regular curriculum. Our high school students receive a well-rounded education that focuses on the four core subjects: math, ELA, science and social studies.

Additionally, our students are able to participate in either a TOPS curriculum-which prepares

them for a four year college-or a Jump Start curriculum-which prepares them for trade based skills and two year colleges.

## ***PREKINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN***

### ***Curriculum***

Activities include use of manipulative materials and games to enhance readiness skills and coordination; group experiences to promote sociability and concern for peers and the environment; and informal introduction to letters and numbers. Areas are provided for individual and small group instruction.

### ***Discipline***

The faculty and staff are receptive, responsive and aware of the needs of the early learner. St. Therese Catholic Academy is eager to work with parents to promote a child's optimal growth and development as it relates to acceptable behavior. Faculty and staff model, acknowledge and encourage positive behaviors with the children and with each other. Methods used if a child exhibits behavior that is dangerous, disruptive, uncooperative or unkind include: redirecting, helping each student to use words and language to express their feelings and needs; talking to a child about unacceptable behavior; and briefly separating from the group while under supervision.

### ***Biting Policy***

A child who bites another child will be removed from the group, and the teacher will explain to the child why this behavior is unacceptable. A phone call will be made to the biter's parents by the teacher. If the biting continues, parents will be called to address a plan of action. The child who was bitten will receive immediate attention in treating the bite. If the skin is not broken, the area will be cleaned with soap and water, ice will be applied, and a note will be sent home by the teacher. If the skin is broken, the child will be taken to the office. The area will be cleaned, ice will be applied, and the parent will be called by the teacher/ office staff. Individual confidentiality will be maintained when sharing information.

### ***Required Personal Items (to be supplied by the parents)***

- Extra clothes (2 sets)
- Nap Mat

### ***Toilet Training***

St. Therese Catholic Academy understands the varied developmental needs of our students. Children will be given the opportunity to work on toilet training while at school. St. Therese Catholic Academy does NOT potty train, but does work with the family in accomplishing this task.

## **ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

Students in grades Kindergarten through 7<sup>th</sup> will be graded on a quarterly system. Each quarter consists of a 9-week period.

Report cards will be issued 4 times a year for all grades. These grades are averaged from multiple assessments including traditional and non-traditional tests/assessments, in-school and/or at-home projects, daily task completion, and group collaboration. A student who misses tests, projects, and/or daily work, must arrange with his/her teacher to make up the missed work in a reasonable amount of time. If work is not made up before quarterly grades are due, that student will receive an "I" (incomplete) for the quarter. If work is not made up at all, the student's quarterly grade will drop as a result of the incomplete work.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled multiple times a year. The dates/times of these appear on the school calendar and will be sent out prior to the conferences. Parents wishing individual conferences outside of the scheduled time must contact their child's teacher to set up a conference appointment.

## **HIGH SCHOOL**

### *Curriculum and Track Information*

St. Therese Catholic Academy offers three tracks for our high school students.

#### 1) TOPS DIPLOMA TRACK

Students on this path will work towards a high school diploma that will allow them to pursue a 4 year college degree. These students will take higher level courses and will take more online courses.

#### 2) JUMPSTART

Students on this track will work towards a high school diploma that allows them to go to a community college after high school or immediately enter the workforce. This track focuses on career readiness skills and life skills.

#### 3) LIFE SKILLS TRACK (The ROSE Program)

On a case by case basis, some curricula can be more personalized. This track is non-diploma seeking. Students in this track are integrated into academically and developmentally appropriate courses. This track also offers instruction on independent living skills, internships in the school setting, and a focus on soft skills.

Students and parents will meet with administrators following their Freshman year to begin discussing appropriate track placement. Parent input as well as test scores and teacher input will be used to determine placement.

### *Absences on Test/Exam Days, Project Presentation Days*

Any student who misses a test, project, or exam will make it up at the discretion and convenience of the Teacher and/or Head of School.

### *Summer Assignments and Summer Reading*

Each year, the faculty compiles a list of required summer reading as well as other summer work for grade levels. Students must complete these assignments. The assignments will correspond with a graded activity/ assessment done during the first week of school. These assignments are assigned according to the student's ability and/or track.

### *Academic Residency*

Once enrolled in the high school at St. Therese Catholic Academy, students must take all high school credit courses at St. Therese Catholic Academy. No new high school credit will be accepted from any other institution without prior approval of the Head of School.

### *Academic Work Missed*

Students are responsible for contacting individual teachers in order to make-up missed work. Make-ups or unfinished work should be completed within two days from their return to school. Any missed work could result in a failure for each assignment missed.

### *Course Credit and Report Cards*

St. Therese Catholic Academy High School operates on the semester system. Each semester (fall and spring) is divided into two quarters.

In order to receive credit for a half-year course, a student must earn a grade of 60 or better for that semester. In order to receive credit for a full year course, the average of the first and second semesters must be at least 60.

### *GPA Mandate for Extra-Curricular Activities for High School*

Students must have a C average to participate in extracurricular activities.

### *Graduation Requirements*

Participation in graduation exercises is a privilege that must be earned by each student. In order to participate in the graduation ceremony, as well as in any activities related to graduation, St. Therese students must successfully complete all course work, must complete all service hours, and must meet all financial obligations to the school.

Any senior receiving a failing grade on his/her report card may, with the Head of School's permission, be allowed to participate in graduation activities as long as:

- his/her required number of summer school credits does not exceed the total number of credits allowed for in a St. Therese Catholic Academy's summer session. In this case, the student would receive his/her diploma upon successful completion of the coursework in the summer session.
- he/she does not have any serious disciplinary infractions.
- he/she does not have any outstanding finance charges.



### *Valedictorian and Salutatorian*

A student must attend St. Therese Catholic Academy for three full years of high school to qualify for either of these awards. The valedictorian is the student who graduates with the highest cumulative GPA; the salutatorian is the student who graduates with the second highest cumulative GPA. In addition to the cumulative GPA, these awards are based on the rigor of courses taken, attendance, disciplinary record, leadership, character, and service to the community and school. St Therese Academy recognizes a valedictorian and salutatorian from both the TOPS track and the JumpStart track.

### *Transcripts*

For college application purposes, a transcript is prepared for each student. Transcripts include courses taken and letter grade received. Students will be provided a copy of their unofficial transcript to verify accuracy and present to colleges. Official copies of transcripts are submitted directly to the colleges and universities to which the student applies. The school will notify colleges of any significant changes in the student's academic or personal status between the time of application and graduation. This includes, but is not limited to, a significant drop in grades, probation, suspension and dismissal.

### *Homework*

Teachers may assign homework in any subject. Refer to each teacher's class syllabus regarding specific homework procedures.

### *Field Trips*

Educational field trips provide an additional dimension to the classroom curriculum. Field trips are arranged by the teachers after consultation with the Head of School. A student's participation in a field trip is contingent upon his/her conduct, and unpaid tuition, fees, and other financial responsibilities must be brought current prior to the field trip. Parents must sign and return the St Therese permission slip in order for a child to participate, although a faxed or scanned permission slip that has been signed and sent to the office prior to the field trip will be accepted. A written note or phone call does not substitute for the signed St. Therese Catholic Academy permission slip.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The study and practice of Catholic faith in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church is the essence of our existence at St. Therese Catholic Academy. The entire school attends Mass together monthly and grades K-7<sup>th</sup> attend every other week. The season of Advent is observed with the lighting of Advent wreaths, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and with the Jesse Tree tradition. Students attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Stations of the Cross during Lent. May Crowning is held in May to honor our Blessed Mother. Students receive the sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the school year. Morning and afternoon prayers are led by students. Daily prayers are also part of the school day. Students are taught awareness of the needs of others by participating in various mission and service activities, and fund drives. Catholic parents who send their children to our school are expected to attend Church with their children every weekend. Family Living and Child Protection Catechesis are part of the school's religious instruction program.

In addition, high school and middle school students are expected to meet certain standards in performing service hours as part of their religion class requirements. Details concerning these requirements will be distributed by the religion teachers at the beginning of the school year. The chair of the Religious Education Department will send service hour requirements.

#### *Family Participation*

Since St. Therese Catholic Academy is committed to bringing the student to Christ, it assists Christian parents in their responsibility of passing on the Light of Faith to their children. It is to be expected that all Christian families attending St. Therese Catholic Academy worship together on Sundays in their respective churches.

### **STUDENT EVALUATION AND PROMOTION**

#### *Testing Program*

St. Therese Catholic Academy administers the MAP and TerraNova tests to the elementary students. Standardized testing results are documented in the student's cumulative record.

#### *Progress Reports/Report Cards*

Progress reports may be viewed online via the parent RenWeb account in the middle of each nine week period. Report cards are issued at the end of each nine week period.

### **SCHOOL UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE POLICY**

#### *Uniforms*

Schiro's School Time  
5008 West Esplanade  
Metairie, La 70006  
(504)885-2993

Ponsetti's Shoes  
4436 Veterans Blvd  
Metairie, La 70006  
(504)885-0028

#### *Hair (boys)*

Hair must be clean and neatly groomed at all times. Hair must be of moderate style and proportionate length and thickness in the front, back, and on the sides. Hair must be cut, not merely combed back or away, so that it cannot touch the collar of the uniform shirt, the ears, or the eyebrows. Only the student's natural hair color is allowed. Hair dyeing, highlighting, or bleaching is not allowed. Facial hair must be shaved.

#### *Hair (Girls)*

Hair must be neat, clean, and of moderate style and proportionate length and thickness in the front, back, and on the sides. Hair style must not cover the eyes. No portion of the head may be shaved. Only the student's natural hair color is allowed.

### *Lotions, Perfumes, Colognes and Polish*

In the interest of students who are allergic or sensitive to odors, strong smelling lotions, creams, perfumes, and cologne may not be applied before or during school or brought to school.

### *Elementary Students (K-7<sup>th</sup>): Uniform Requirements*

#### **BOYS**

1. PANTS—Gray Non-Pleated or Pleated Pants, shorts may be worn in warm months
2. SHIRT—Light Blue Pique Knit Shirt with monogram logo (K-4<sup>th</sup>) /Light Blue Oxford with Monogram Logo (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>)
3. UNDERSHIRTS—Only a plain, solid white undershirt (sleeves are not visible) may be worn under the uniform shirt. During cold weather, a plain white long-sleeved shirt may be worn under the uniform shirt.
4. BELT—Black solid color; must be worn at all times, no oversized or unusual buckles.
5. SOCKS—White crew length socks.
6. SHOES— ALL black or ALL white tennis shoes. Shoes must be neat and clean.
7. JACKETS and SWEATERS
  - a. \*Navy blue full zip fleece with monogram logo (K-12)
  - b. \*Navy cardigan with monogram (K-12)
  - c. \*Navy V-Neck with monogram (K-12)
  - d. This is the only acceptable outerwear that may be left on during the school day. Other jackets or outwear must be removed once the student arrives at school.

#### **GIRLS**

1. JUMPER—Blue/Red plaid jumper (K-2<sup>nd</sup> Must be knee length)
2. SKIRT- Plaid Blue/Red Skirt (3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Must be knee length)
3. Blouse—Plain White collared blouse (K-2<sup>nd</sup>) & White Oxford with Mono Logo (3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)
4. SHOES—ALL black or ALL white tennis shoes. Shoes must be neat and clean.
5. SOCKS—White crew length socks.
6. JACKETS and SWEATERS
  - a. \*Navy blue full zip fleece with monogram logo (K-12)
  - b. \*Navy cardigan with monogram (K-12)
  - c. \*Navy V-Neck with monogram (K-12)
  - d. Only acceptable outerwear that may be left on during the school day. Other jackets or outwear must be removed once the student arrives at school.

## *High School Students (8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>): Uniform Requirements*

### **BOYS**

1. PANTS—Gray Non-Pleated or Pleated Pants (fitted, worn on the waist) are tailored to the correct length (touching the top of shoe). Pants are NOT to be worn on the hips. Pants that are baggy, have ragged edges, are stained, or are torn are not allowed. Keys and lanyards may not visibly hang from belt loops or pockets.
2. SHIRT—White Oxford with Monogram logo with monogram (mandatory). Shirts may not be oversized, but must be sized in order to allow the student to tuck the shirt in completely.
3. UNDERSHIRTS—Only a plain, solid white undershirt (sleeves are not visible) may be worn under the uniform shirt. During cold weather, a plain white long-sleeved shirt may be worn under the uniform shirt.
4. BELT—Solid, black leather belt; must be worn at all times; no ornate, oversized or unusual buckles
5. SOCKS—White crew length socks.
6. SHOES—ALL black or ALL white tennis shoes. Shoes must be neat and clean.
7. PIERCINGS-Boys are not permitted to have piercings at school.

### **GIRLS**

1. SKIRT—Blue/Red Plaid (fitted at waist and knee length); rolling skirts are NOT allowed
2. BLOUSE—White Oxford Uniform Shirt with Monogram Logo
3. UNDERSHIRTS—Only a plain, solid white undershirt (sleeves are not visible) may be worn under the uniform shirt. During cold weather, a plain white long-sleeved shirt may be worn under the uniform shirt.
4. SOCKS—White crew length socks.
5. SHOES— ALL black or ALL white tennis shoes. Shoes must be neat and clean.
6. PIERCINGS-Girls are allowed one earring per earlobe, in the lower ear. No other piercings are allowed at school.

### *Uniform Accommodations*

Uniform accommodations can be granted at the discretion of the Head of School based on medical and/or psychological documentation. Parents/ guardians should contact the Head of School with any uniform concerns that relate to sensory, medical or psychological necessities.

### *Spirit and Free Dress Days*

Spirit dress is an optional privilege for students on specified days. Students may wear the current themed St. Therese Catholic Academy spirit shirt with school bottoms. Uniform rules still apply to shoes, socks, and outerwear on all special dress days. All free dress and spirit dress shirts/blouses must be modest (no spaghetti straps) and loose fitting. Shirts with violent, alcohol, suggestive, or tobacco content are never appropriate. If your child chooses not to participate, he/she must come in the school uniform.

NOTE: If your child does not follow guidelines on a special dress day, he/she will call home for a change of clothes to be brought to school. The clothing must be dropped off to the school office by 9:30 a.m.

## **DISCIPLINE/CODE OF CONDUCT**

Note: The Head of School makes the final decision regarding discipline matters.

### *Schoolwide Guidelines*

It shall be a condition of enrollment that students behave in a manner, both on and off campus, which is consistent with the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church. Every faculty member is authorized to hold every student to strict accountability for any disorderly conduct or breaking of rules, at school or away from the school campus, during the school day, at Extended Care, or at any school related activities. In those cases where corrective action becomes necessary, disciplinary measures taken will be constructive and directed toward serving educational ends. It should be clearly understood by the student and his/her parents that the purpose of all disciplinary action is to mold future behavior. If the Head of School determines that the school program is no longer serving the needs of the child, the Head of School has the right and authority to end the student's enrollment.

## **GENERAL RULES**

### *On Campus*

Students follow classroom rules and staff members' directions and always behave in a Christian, safe, and orderly manner. St. Therese Catholic Academy is a smoke-free facility. No smoking is allowed on campus.

Examples of prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Fighting, vulgarity, name calling, obscene words or gestures, hurtful language
- Excluding others, deliberate disrespect, stealing, dishonesty, cheating
- Destruction of another's property, threatening another, lying
- Possession of prohibited items, improper use of internet/social media
- Violation of civil/criminal law, promoting any philosophy or practice which is contrary to the school's code of conduct
- Leaving school grounds or other assigned area without permission
- Skipping class, not reporting to detention, forging a parent's signature, vandalism, bullying, hitting/pushing/kicking others
- Classroom disruption, disorderly behavior, loud/distracting behavior
- Refusing to follow staff directions, throwing food, pens/pencils, rocks, or other objects

### *Academic Honesty*

Students must uphold a high standard of academic honesty. During any testing, students shall not talk or distract others while one or more tests are still out. Depending on the severity of the disruption and/or academic cheating, consequences may include, but are not limited to, points taken from the test, zero credit for the test, with other consequences deemed appropriate by the administration, suspension, or expulsion. Plagiarism may earn the same consequences.

### *Vandalism*

Students are expected to respect St. Therese Catholic Academy facilities, its contents, and all instructional materials/technology; students should not vandalize or otherwise damage or take the school's property and possessions. Students are to keep lockers clean and in order, and the administration reserves the right to inspect and search lockers at any time.

### *Assigned Areas*

Students are expected to remain in their assigned areas of supervision unless expressly given permission to leave that assigned area.

### *Items Brought to School*

No magazines, trading cards, toys, or other games/recess equipment should be brought to school without the teacher's permission. Guns, knives, explosive devices, items that are considered weapons, tobacco products, cigarette lighters, alcohol, drugs, inappropriate pictures and music lyrics, pornography, ammunition, pepper spray, and other inappropriate items are prohibited on school grounds.

### *Cafeteria*

Students enter and exit the cafeteria in an orderly manner. Students use good table manners, speak in an appropriate volume, keep the area clean, and follow teachers' directions. They should not share food. Students who bring lunches from home should not use "fast food" bags or containers. No candy, soft drinks, energy drinks, or peanut-containing items are allowed on campus.

## **BULLYING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

All school community members are to treat everyone with dignity and respect. In that spirit, the prohibition against acts of harassment, hazing, and bullying applies to all Catholic school students, both on and off campus. It is recognized that harassment, hazing, or bullying can involve verbal, physical, written, or electronic communication with devices currently in use or with any new electronic devices developed in the future.

### Premise

1. St. Therese Catholic Academy is a Christ-centered school community with Jesus as our role model for respectful behavior. St. Therese Catholic Academy is committed to providing a physically safe and emotionally secure learning environment.
2. Scripture provides guidance for appropriate, respectful behavior.
3. An optimal learning climate arises from a safe, tolerant environment populated with caring, dedicated students and adults.
4. Harassment, hazing, and bullying behavior are not Christ-like and are prohibited. Students engaging in these kinds of behavior are subject to disciplinary action and/or legal action.

### Definitions

1. Harassment is unwelcome offensive conduct, whether physical or verbal, that is directed toward another person or group of persons when the person exhibiting the behavior knew or should have known that it would cause the person or persons to whom it was directed to be fearful, anxious, or emotionally upset as a result of the behavior. Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets, or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with school performance whether the interference is direct or indirect, unwarranted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal schoolwork or movement.

2. Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Any of the above stated forms of harassment that are of a sexual nature are considered sexual harassment when they are unwelcome and create an environment or causes an atmosphere that affects a student's school performance in any way or affects a student's ability to take advantage of the school's programs.
3. Hazing is a form of harassment that involves intentional, knowing, or reckless acts that induce pain, embarrassment, humiliation, deprivation of rights, physical pain, or mental discomfort. It is directed against a student for the purposes of being initiated into, affiliated with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization, club, athletic team, or other group. Culpability includes hazing practices mandated or voluntarily entered into by any party.
4. Bullying behavior is the repeated harassment and targeting of another person or group of persons with the intent to cause emotional, physical, or psychological harm. Cyberbullying is bully behavior conducted through social media/internet/email/texting or other electronic transmission.
5. Cyberbullying is the transmission of any electronic textual, visual, written, or oral communication with malicious and willful intent to coerce, abuse, torment, or intimidate a person under the age of eighteen. (LA Revised Statute 14:40.07)

### *Responsibilities and Strategies*

#### For Students

1. Do not bully others
2. Know the difference between bully behavior and mean-spirited behavior that is unacceptable but not considered bully behavior
3. Report bullying to an adult immediately
4. Associate with students who treat others with kindness
5. Tell the student who is bullying to stop
6. Name the bully behavior
7. Recruit bystanders and witnesses as support; bystanders can make a positive impact when they act
8. Learn and use the SEAL strategy
9. Doing nothing is often mistaken as a support of bully behavior
10. Be a friend to a victim
11. Take responsibility for your own words and actions

#### For Adults

1. Do not bully others
2. Know the difference between bully behavior and mean-spirited behavior that is unacceptable but not considered bully behavior
3. Model Christ-like behavior; refer to scripture passages, the Commandments, the Beatitudes, etc.
4. Supervise actively (at home/at school)
5. Teachers set clearly defined classroom expectations that prohibit bullying
6. Intervene immediately and address bully behavior promptly. Doing nothing is often mistaken as a support of bully behavior.

7. Teach students strategies for dealing with bullying and for positive problem solving
8. Minister to the target, the bystanders, and the perpetrator; empower bystanders
9. Recognize Christ-like behaviors
10. Administrators, teachers, and parents communicate with each other in the spirit of cooperation
11. Do not post negative comments about students, teachers, or the administration on any social media.

#### For the School/Administration

1. Establish and enforce anti-bullying policy and procedures
2. Establish school-wide rules and apply sanctions accordingly
3. Notify parents of the policy
4. Train staff; hold regular meetings; be vigilant
5. Promote a safe, secure learning climate; support all positive, constructive efforts
6. Oversee and maintain documentation
7. Annually review and update policy and procedures

#### Reporting System

1. Students and/or parents should report alleged incidents of bullying promptly. To do so, the reporter should complete the proper form and return it to a teacher, the guidance counselor, or the administration. Reports can be made anonymously; however, no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
2. Reports can be made to any staff member, at any time
3. Staff members are required to forward report forms to the administration. They are also required to report all substantiated incidents of bullying to the administration promptly.
4. If a student wishes to discuss an incident with a staff member, the adult will try to provide a safe, private, practical way of doing so.

#### Response and Disciplinary Action

1. Teachers and/or the administrators investigate the reported event promptly and determine whether or not the report of bullying can be substantiated.
2. If the behavior is determined to be bullying, the administration will assess the nature, severity, and circumstances of the bully behavior. The administration will notify the parent of the victim and the parent of the offender.

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

St. Therese Catholic Academy intends that all its electronic equipment and computer resources be used only for purposes consistent with the mission, philosophy, and objectives of the school as stated in its Parent-Student Handbook. It is each user's responsibility to act ethically and in conformance with school policy. Any student who fails to conform to this agreement will be subject to having his/her access to electronic resources at school revoked, and his/her future access denied.

Failure of a student to conform to this agreement will also subject him/her to whatever additional corrective action the school administration deems appropriate, including suspension or expulsion.



### *Intended Use*

At St. Therese Catholic Academy, all electronic resources are to be used only in conducting and/or supporting education and research projects assigned or approved by the faculty. By means of the Internet and other sources, school computers have access to material that may be considered lacking in educational value or otherwise inappropriate to the school's purposes. Therefore, St. Therese Catholic Academy reserves the right to prioritize access to and use of all electronic resources and to monitor or disallow students' use of any other matter sent or received through school resources.

### *Prohibited Use*

Prohibited use at St. Therese Catholic Academy includes the following:

1. Transmitting or receiving material in violation of any national or state law or regulation. This includes, but is not limited to, copying, saving, or redistributing copyrighted material other than for educational research purposes.
2. Searching, viewing, or retrieving material that is not related to schoolwork, community service, or further education. This includes but is not limited to material that faculty or administrators determine in their sole discretion to be obscene or potentially threatening.
3. Posting of information on web pages unless it conforms to the mission, philosophy, and objectives of St. Therese Catholic Academy in accordance with the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church. St. Therese Catholic Academy prohibits the use of its name or logo in word or pictures online without written permission of the administration.
4. Student users are expected to respect copyright laws regarding software.
5. Also, copyrighted information used in school reports is to be acknowledged by way of bibliographic citations.
6. Activities involving personal financial gain, selling, ordering, advertising, subscribing, or purchasing of products or services are all prohibited.
7. Visiting "chat rooms" or transmitting personal addresses or telephone numbers is prohibited.
8. Forwarding or participating in chain letters.
9. Vandalism, which includes but is not limited to any deliberate attempt to harm or destroy any data, software, or hardware, including uploading or creation of a computer virus or loading unauthorized data or programs on school computers is prohibited. If a student, after an investigation, is determined to be responsible for such, the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) are responsible for fines, penalties, or other consequences imposed by law.

### *Other Considerations*

Regarding privacy, school computers and data storage will be treated as lockers, desks, and book sacks in that any faculty member or school administrator may view a student's electronic communications or data saved on disk or hard drive to determine its appropriateness. Students using the school's computer resources and Internet must be aware that their actions and behaviors reflect on the school. Nothing in this agreement is intended to preclude supervised use of the school's electronic systems under the direction of a teacher or other authorized person acting in conformity with school regulations and procedures. In all cases covered by the

agreement, the Head of School has the authority to settle any problems that may arise. If a student has any question about whether or not a specific in-school computer use or activity is permitted, he/she is to consult a teacher or school administrator.

By signing the Acknowledgement Form at the back of this handbook, both the parent/guardian and student indicate that they have read and accept this policy.

#### RECORDING DEVICES

To maintain the security of the school's premises and systems, St. Therese Catholic Academy prohibits unauthorized photography, audio, or video recording of its employees and students.

#### INTERNET USE POLICY

Students must follow all rules related to the Internet connection through the computers at school. Use of the Internet is a privilege and therefore, inappropriate behavior may lead to penalties, including but not limited to the revoking of a student's Internet accessibility, disciplinary action and/or legal action.

Students are to refrain from inappropriate games or jokes according to the philosophy of St. Therese Catholic Academy.

Students are not allowed to participate in any "chat room" activity or other activities on the school's computers contrary to or inappropriate according to the philosophy of the Catholic Church and/or St. Therese Catholic Academy.

Students may not send personal email communication at school without permission and from home to school that is subversive, treasonous, libelous, defamatory, invasive or privacy or contrary to or inappropriate according to the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church and philosophy of St. Therese Catholic Academy.

Students may not participate in or be associated with, in or out of school, the distribution of derogatory, inappropriate, or harmful information regarding the school, faculty/staff, as well as information in violation of the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church or St. Therese Catholic Academy.

Parents are asked to attentively monitor their child's internet activity at home as well as their communication by means of email and chat rooms. At times, problems resulting from this type of communication filter over to school and will be subject to appropriate discipline/consequences.

NOTE: Students may not participate in or be associated with, in or out of school, the distribution of derogatory, inappropriate, or harmful information regarding the school, faculty/staff, as well as information in violation of the teachings of the Catholic church or St. Therese Catholic Academy.

## *Copyright*

- Technology users must respect copyrights and licenses to software, entertainment materials, published and unpublished documents and any other legally protected digital information.
- Any material protected by copyright must not be copied except as specifically stipulated by the owner of the copyright or otherwise permitted by copyright law.
- All copyrighted information (text, images, icons, programs, video, audio, etc) retrieved from technology sources must be used in conformance with applicable copyright laws.
- Plagiarism of digital information is subject to the same disciplinary action as plagiarism in any other media.

*Students must abide by the Acceptable Use Policy for Catholic students.*

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communications, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog journal or diary, personal website, social networking, web bulletin board, or a chat room, as well as any other form of electronic communication. Common current examples of social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Pinterest, YouTube, Tumblr, and Reddit.

St. Therese Catholic Academy encourages the creation of a positive digital identity. Nevertheless, students are responsible for the content of their social media communications. In an effort to balance these interests, student interactions online should be:

- Guided by the principles of respect, dignity and safety of themselves and others.
- Respecting the privacy of others in the school community.
- Aware that their posting may be visible to friends, enemies, parents, teachers, admissions officers, and future employers (even where the original intent was for the communication to be private).
- Free from sexual, profane, vulgar, defamatory, racist, harassing or threatening language and/ or references to drug and alcohol use.

The same principle and guidelines stated throughout the handbook apply to student activities online. Before creating online content, students should use common sense and consider both risks and rewards that are involved. Any student conduct that adversely impacts the image of the school or members of the school community may result in disciplinary action, regardless of when or where the posting was made.

## **CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Electronic devices such as radios, recording devices, electronic games, laser pointers, iPods/MP3 devices, tablets, eReaders, Apple® watches/Smart watches, and other electronic devices are prohibited at school. Students may not bring them onto campus.

St. Therese Catholic Academy recognizes the convenience as well as the logistical and safety advantages for students having cell phones in their possession at school. Although the school

discourages students from bringing cell phones onto campus, it is permissible to do so under the following restrictions:

1. St. Therese Catholic Academy is not responsible for lost, stolen, damaged, or misused cell phones. Students bring cellphones to school at their own risk.
2. When a student chooses to bring a cell phone onto campus, it must remain powered off (not just on silent or vibrate) and stowed away in the student's backpack. The cell phone should not be on the student (not in his/her hand or pocket) or in another student's possession.
3. Cell phones MAY NOT be used during the school day, or in before or after care. Students may not use their cell phones or other students' cell phones in any capacity during the school day, including Extended Care and extracurricular activities.
4. The school and its personnel will not store or otherwise be responsible for students' cell phones.

If a student is caught with/using their phone at school, the phone will be confiscated and brought to the Head of School's office. On the first offense, the phone will stay in the Head of School's office until the end of the school week. On the second offense, the phone will stay in the Head of School's office until the end of the school week and a parent will be required to come and pick it up at the end of the week. On the third offense and for every offense after, the phone will stay in the Head of School's office for 2 weeks and a parent will be required to come and pick it up at the end of the second week.

#### **TELEPHONE**

The school telephone is not to be used by students except in case of emergency, and only after the Teacher or Head of School has given written permission. Students are not allowed to use their personal phones during the school day. If students need to contact their parent/guardian during school they may use the phone in the main office with permission. Students will not be allowed to call for forgotten books, lunch, PE clothes, etc.

Parents/Guardians are asked not to bring forgotten books, lunch, PE clothes, etc. to the office if the child forgets it. The students must learn responsibility for their belongings and duties. Items brought by the parent will not be delivered to the student except in cases of emergency.

#### **CELL PHONES MAY NOT BE USED DURING THE SCHOOL DAY OR IN BEFORE AND AFTER CARE.**

#### **SUBSTANCE-ABUSE POLICY**

Aware of the ever-present danger of the illegal use of chemicals/alcohol by students, St. Therese Catholic Academy strives to provide preventative education and a drug-free climate on campus and at all school related functions. The use of all chemicals, including alcohol, tobacco and tobacco products is prohibited.

1. Tobacco, Vaping, and Smokeless Tobacco: If a student is found to have in his/her possession any tobacco or tobacco-related product on the school grounds or at any school-related function, appropriate action will be taken by the Administration.

2. Appropriate action may include but is not limited to suspension. Any tobacco product found in the student's possession will be confiscated.
3. Alcoholic Beverages: If a student is found to be in possession of, or under the influence of alcohol on school grounds or at any school-related function, the alcohol will be confiscated, and the parent/guardian will be called. Appropriate action will be taken by the Administration. Appropriate action may include, but is not limited to, suspension or expulsion.
4. Prescription or Over-the Counter Drugs: If a student is found to be in possession of, to have provided or sold a prescription or over-the-counter drug to another person on school grounds or at any school-related function, the item will be confiscated, and appropriate action will be taken by the administration. Appropriate action may include, but is not limited to, suspension or expulsion.
5. Illegal Drugs: An illegal drug is any drug, the possession of which is prohibited by federal, state, or local law.
  - If a student is found to be in possession of, or under the influence of an illegal drug on school grounds or at any school-related function, the parent/guardian and civil authorities will be notified immediately, and appropriate action will be taken by the administration. Appropriate action will include but is not limited to suspension or expulsion.
  - If a student is found to have provided or sold an illegal drug to another person on school grounds or at any school-related function, the parent/guardian and civil authorities will be notified immediately, and the student will be expelled.

## **CONDUCT**

### *Conduct Off Campus*

A student is to conduct himself/herself on and off campus in a manner that upholds the respect and positive image of St. Therese Catholic Academy. All students at St. Therese Catholic Academy are students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside of school, that violates civil or criminal law, is contrary to faith and teachings of the Catholic Church, or is detrimental to the reputation of St. Therese Catholic Academy, may be disciplined by school administration.

Such activities prohibited by this section include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Committing or attempting to commit acts of vandalism
- Smoking, vaping, or other use of nicotine
- Possessing or consuming alcohol
- Shoplifting; stealing
- Participation in any cult or occult activity
- Using/possessing/selling narcotics (including marijuana, illegal drugs, or those not authorized for the student using them)
- Violating local curfew laws; trespassing
- Truancy ("Skipping" school)
- Pornography
- Crude, obscene, harassing, bullying, or insulting e-mails
- Violating the Bullying Policy; violating the substance abuse policy
- Posting/forwarding inappropriate messages, pictures, videos, comments, etc. on the

- internet
- Fighting, purposely hurting someone; threatening someone
- Possessing or using a weapon

### *Disciplinary Referral Form*

A teacher, teacher assistant, support staff member, or Extended Care worker may submit a disciplinary referral form to administration to report a single incident, ongoing smaller problems, or the student's failure to improve behavior after warning or correction. The administrator determines the level of consequence to be assigned and completes the documentation.

### *Suspension*

A student may be suspended by the administration for ongoing minor offenses or for a single serious violation of school regulations. Notice will be given in writing to the parents. No suspension will last longer than three days. During the suspension period, the student is marked absent. The child is responsible for all assigned class work, homework, projects, tests, and/or quizzes missed during his/her absence and must make up for all work missed. A suspension impacts the student's conduct grade. Suspensions may be noted on a student's cumulative record. If a student earns a 3rd suspension, he/she is at serious risk of expulsion.

### *Probation*

A student at risk of expulsion, due to either an accumulation of suspensions, failure to improve after other consequences, or a single action, will be placed on Probation. Failure to improve the assignment of another suspension will result in expulsion. The student's family will be informed of the probation in writing.

## **COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL**

The school and staff communicate with parents in a variety of ways. The media and methods used for communication are at times dependent upon grade levels. Methods of communicating with families include:

- Back-to-School Event (presentations and handouts)
- Weekly/daily folders (lower elementary school)
- Grades, assignments, test schedules, and teacher pages posted on RenWeb
- Conferences, emails, notes, and phone conversations
- Disciplinary Referral Forms
- Report Cards; Progress Reports (on RenWeb)
- Parent-Student Handbook
- Weekly newsletters, parent email, telephone, and text messaging systems (Parent Alert via RenWeb)
- Website, school calendar, Facebook, and Instagram
- Flyers, written office communication, and written teacher notices

### *Parent-Teacher*

Parents may request appointments with a teacher by submitting a note to the teacher or office or by emailing the teacher. We ask that you do not appear unexpectedly before, during, or after school to speak with a teacher. Teachers will attempt to respond to all requests within 48 hours.

Parents are urged to communicate with their child's teacher whenever any serious problem arises. However, because class time belongs to the children, visits should never be attempted during class hours, recess, or lunch periods. To assure enough time, visits with the teacher should be made by appointment. Parents are asked NOT to text or call the personal numbers of any faculty or staff members concerning school matters. Correspondence between parents and the school is important and should be kept confidential. It should not be accessible to the child; therefore, written correspondence should be sent to school in a sealed envelope. Please do not write comments or a request for a conference/assistance on your child's test papers, behavior/conduct folders, or other documents sent home for signature, as these are on open display for the student to read.

#### *Parent-Administration*

Appointments with the school's administration may be made by calling the school office. Please make efforts to resolve classroom issues with the teacher before contacting administration. Please do not come to the school office for a conference without first calling for an appointment.

#### *Parent-Student*

Only messages of vital importance will be delivered to students during the school day. Arrangements for carpools, doctors, etc., should be made before children leave home for the school day. In an emergency, parents are to call the school office and leave the message or come to the school office in person. Likewise, students will not be allowed to call home except for a serious reason. Parents may not drop off a child's forgotten items to be delivered to the classroom. In an effort not to disrupt classroom time, students will only receive dropped off items at the end of the school day. Please make every effort to ensure that your child(ren) has all necessary items before coming to school.

### **SAFETY**

#### *Health and Emergency Forms*

Health and Emergency Forms are completed by parents and kept on file in the office and classroom. They must give the parent's name, address, home and work phone numbers, emergency contact persons and their phone numbers in case a parent cannot be reached, doctor's name and phone number, and special medical conditions. Parents should notify the office of any changes in this information as it occurs.

#### *Notification of Parents in Emergencies*

Unless otherwise directed, an attempt will be made via telephone or text to notify parents of an emergency. It is imperative that we have correct emergency numbers on file. Please do not call the school during an actual emergency as that will negatively impact the school's ability to use the phone for communication with local authorities and first responders. Parents are not to come during any emergency until notified by the school that is safe to do so. Please cooperate with civil authorities in the event of a crisis. The Head of School or authorized person determines the nature of the emergency and initiates the appropriate action. Staff follows the emergency procedures outlined in the Emergency Procedure Handbook.

### *Safety Drills*

Fire drills, severe weather drills, lockdown drills, evacuation to the field, and shelter in place are practiced throughout the school year. Escape routes are posted in every classroom.

### *Emergency School Closings*

In case of bad weather or other emergency, please tune to local TV or radio stations to hear the latest bulletins on school closings. If the Archdiocesan schools and/or Jefferson Parish schools are closed in an emergency, St. Therese Catholic Academy will also be closed.

### *Emergency Evacuation or Shelter in Place*

In order to ensure the safety and protection of all students, a detailed evacuation plan and shelter in place plan has been developed. You may view the plans by making a request to do so through the school office. Once an evacuation order is given by the Parish, all students must remain with school personnel to facilitate evacuation. Parents must wait until students have arrived at the evacuation center before checking out children.

### *Firearm Free Zone*

This is a reminder that Louisiana law provides that school properties (and within 1000 feet of the property) are firearm free zones. This law applies to both students and non-students and also applies to school-sponsored events. Law enforcement personnel are exempt from this law. School should include such notice in any school handbook, such as "This School and all school-sponsored events are firearm free zones pursuant to Louisiana law." It is also advisable to post signs at each major point of entry to the school such as "Firearm Free Zone Pursuant to Louisiana Law." If you would like to read the specific law, it is Louisiana Revised Statute 14:95.2.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct which undermines the integrity of St. Therese Catholic Academy's employment and academic relationships. All employees and students are entitled to an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures. Sexual harassment refers to sexual conduct which is unwelcome, which is personally offensive, which debilitates morale and which interferes with the working or learning effectiveness of its victims and their peers. Individuals who experience sexual harassment should make it clear that such behavior is offensive to them and may process a complaint pursuant to the Head of School.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

St. Therese Catholic Academy offers extracurricular activities throughout the school year. Complete details and registration information will be distributed in backpack mail and in the Newsletter throughout the year.

The students of St. Therese Catholic Academy have an opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities. Many learning opportunities are provided in this area and students are encouraged to participate. Some activities are limited to certain levels, and some are limited by numbers.



Parents are expected to cooperate with coaches and faculty by picking up their children promptly after practice, games, and other events. The coaches/moderators, with the approval of the Head of School, may deny the privilege of participation on a team, in a club, or in an activity to any student who is disruptive, uncooperative, and who disregards coaches/moderators and school policies.

### **APPOINTMENTS AND MESSAGES**

Appointments with the Head of School or with the teachers are made by requesting such through the front office.

Parents may not go to the classroom to talk with the teachers during the school day. Please do not conference with teachers while they are on duty.

Only messages of vital importance will be relayed to students during class hours. If through urgent necessity a parent comes to school to deliver a message, the parent must report to the school office.

Notes requesting early dismissals for doctors appointments, etc., should be sent to the front office in the morning. The parent should call for the child in the office and must sign the child out. The parent may not go directly to the classroom. The child will come to the office. If a child is returning to school that same day, the parent must bring the child to the office and sign him/her in.

**Please make every effort to schedule doctor appointments outside of school hours.**

### **DAMAGED TEXTBOOKS & TECHNOLOGY**

Students should make a special effort to take proper care of their textbooks, workbooks/notebooks and technology. Textbooks must be kept free of pencil or ink marks. If a book is lost or damaged through carelessness, the student will be held responsible and payments will have to be made. Teacher will instruct the students as to the proper care of the textbooks.