



Saint Ambrose

SPANISH DUAL
LANGUAGE PROGRAM

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

"Preschool Parent Handbook"

2024-2025



This school is accredited by the Virginia Catholic Education Association whose accreditation process has been approved by the Virginia Council for Private Education as authorized by the Virginia State Board of Education.

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Dear St. Ambrose Preschool Parents,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! What an exciting year we have in store! At St. Ambrose School we recognize that parents, teachers, and students are all partners in the educational process. Let us therefore always remain in communication and continue to share, evaluate, and assess throughout the school year. I know that this will be a year of fun and discovery for your child.

Early childhood education is a critical component of the lifetime journey of learning that you and your child are now embarking upon.

This Parent-Student Handbook gives you a wealth of information about our procedures and philosophies. The mission statement reflects our belief that our school is here to support you in your responsibility to educate your child. One of the most treasured aspects of our school is our dedication to working with families. It is our hope that we are making a difference in your lives and in the lives of your children.

I encourage you to get involved in this wonderful community. Everyone has a talent to share, and our community becomes stronger with everyone participating. In such a short time I have witnessed a dedicated faculty, generous parents, and enthusiastic students. This winning combination allows the Spirit of Saint Ambrose to thrive in our school. Central to all is our common faith. In the words of Saint Ambrose “Christ is everything to us.”

Please read this Parent-Student Handbook. It is filled with policies and procedures that will allow us to work together for a successful school year. After reviewing the Handbook, please sign and return the enclosed statement indicating your agreement to abide by these policies and procedures

We look forward to growing with you and your child throughout the coming year.

God Bless,
Marybeth Cuccias
Preschool Director

I. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION/MISSION STATEMENT

DIOCESAN PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...
Teaching them to carry out everything I have commanded you.*

Matthew 28:19-20

These words of Christ addressed to the apostles at the Ascension bestowed on the Church the office of teacher. Obedient to this divine challenge, the Church provides education permeated with the spirit of Christ and dedicated to promoting the full development of the human person.¹ The two-fold goal of Catholic schools is to provide an environment which will foster rich religious training as well as solid academic education in a Catholic, value-oriented manner.

¹Declaration on Christian Education #3

DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENT

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Arlington are an essential component in the educational ministry of the Church. Our schools are committed to providing an education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ where Catholic doctrine and values and academic excellence prepare each student for a life of faith, service, and integrity.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY

Saint Ambrose Preschool's mission is to provide a caring, quality, child-centered and developmentally appropriate program (for children ages 3 through Pre-K) in a secure environment which is based on Catholic values and traditions. We strive to nurture a love of God, respect of self and others, and a spirit of learning and sharing through a cooperative relationship with our school and parish families. Saint Ambrose Preschool is a part of Saint Ambrose Catholic School and operates under the guidelines of the Virginia Catholic Education Association's early childhood programs.

Catholic schools nurture personal growth, scholarship, lifelong learning, service, and responsible stewardship through a faith-centered way of life. The Catholic School of the future, rooted in the richness of the Catholic tradition, will be a Christ-centered learning environment, focused on cultivating the potential of children and adults within the community it serves.

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

Each school shall utilize the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) template to develop and distribute a handbook for students and parents/guardians. All local policies and procedures must be in

conformity with the Office of Catholic Schools' policies, guidelines and regulations.

A committee, representative of the total school community, shall be involved in the development and periodic revision of this handbook. The handbook shall be updated annually to reflect policy and procedural changes. Principals shall establish a process for review and revision of local school policy to ensure changes reflect the input of key stakeholders. All parents, along with students in middle and high school, are required to provide a signature of receipt acknowledging they have read the rules and regulations outlined in the handbook, and they agree to abide by those rules (Appendix AG-3). An acknowledgment form will be provided to students upon receipt of the handbook. The form must be signed and returned by Friday of the first full week of school. Failure to have a signed form on file will not prevent the school from enforcing its policies and/or prevent a student from enrolling or continuing to be enrolled at the school.

Faculty and staff members shall be given access to all school handbooks.

In light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues that arise, the faculty and administration reserve the right to address and to take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this handbook. In addition, in view of the unique and essential religious mission of the school, it is expressly understood that the school may take action in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the school, the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the school to perform its religious mission or effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the school and the Community of Faith.

This handbook may be modified by the school after reasonable notice to the parents/students of the effective date of any changes. Any section headings are for convenience of use and shall not affect the interpretation of any provisions. If the school should elect not to take action in a particular situation, this shall not be construed or interpreted as a waiver or preclude the school from acting in a subsequent situation of the same or similar kind.

Handbooks and all subsequent changes are subject to prior written approval by the Diocese. To the extent any local handbook or policy statement therein may be inconsistent with the policies, guidelines, or regulations of the Office of Catholic Schools, the Office of Catholic Schools' policies, guidelines, or regulations shall be of controlling force and effect.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN ROLE

In this handbook, the term "parent" refers not only to a child's natural or adopted parent, but to a student's non-parent legal guardian or to any person or agency authorized to act in place of parents.

Since parents/guardians have given their children life, the Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary and principal educators of their children. The Catholic parents' promise at baptism to raise their children Catholic supports this premise. The Catholic school exists to assist parents in the Christian formation of their children. Since school is a continuation of the education children

are receiving at home, diocesan schools should demonstrate respect and support for the parents in their important and challenging task.

As foundation for a faith-community, parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the school's celebration of prayer and liturgy.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the programs which are developed for the education of their children. The wide spectrum of this involvement includes volunteer work, participation in parent-teacher conferences, attendance at meetings and seminars designed to help parents assist their children at home, and active involvement in the school's Parent-Teacher Organization.

Parents are expected to support the school's mission and commitment to Christian principles and support the school policies as outlined in school handbooks (i.e., annually sign the school's Handbook Agreement Form). One of the conditions for initial and continued enrollment at the school is receipt of this signed form indicating the parent's support of the school's philosophy, policies, and regulations.

If a parent repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students, or displays disrespectful, disruptive or harassing behavior toward teachers or toward school, parish, or diocesan staff (in verbal, written, or digital form), the school may take corrective action. Such corrective action may include, at the discretion of the principal (and, for parish schools, the pastor of the parish) the following: imposition of particular rules or procedures the parent must follow in interacting with the school and its students and staff; restriction or termination of the parent's access to school or parish property; dismissal of the parent's child(ren).

The school may impose other appropriate corrective action, without prior recourse, based upon the nature of the parent's conduct and the surrounding circumstances.

SEXUAL IDENTITY POLICY

The Diocese of Arlington is committed to providing a safe environment that allows students to develop and prosper academically, physically and spiritually, consistent with Catholic teachings and principles affirming that the body reveals each person as male or female and that the harmonious integration of a person's sexual identity with his or her sex is an expression of the inner unity and reality of the human person made body and soul by God and in the image and likeness of God. In fulfillment of these religious truths, our Catholic educational environment shall reflect a relation to persons (including name and pronoun usage, uniforms, access to facilities and overnight accommodations, and eligibility for single-sex curricular and extracurricular activities) that is respectful of and consistent with each person's God-given sexual identity.

Recognizing that each person is created in the image and likeness of God ensures that dignity is safeguarded, and safe environments are fostered. When parents send their children to Catholic schools and when persons choose careers in Catholic education, they should expect an

environment consistent with the truth that God-created sexual identity speaks to His vision for each person’s relationship to Him, oneself and others. Behavior and expressions of a person’s sexual identity within the school environment that are inconsistent with these principles and/or which cause disruption or confusion regarding Catholic teachings on human sexuality are prohibited. The full cooperation with this policy of school officials, faculty, parents and students is required and a condition precedent to the continued enrollment of each student and the continued employment of each employee, and the enforcement of this policy by the school is deemed a spiritual mandate.

NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

Catholic Schools, administered under the authority of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, comply with those constitutional and statutory provisions, as may be specifically applicable to the schools, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, marital status, disability, national origin, or citizenship in the administration of their educational, personnel, admissions, financial aid, athletic, and other school-administered programs.

This policy does not preclude the existence of single sex schools, nor does it conflict with the priority given to Catholics for admission as students. This policy also does not preclude the ability of the school to undertake and/or enforce appropriate actions with respect to students who advocate on school property or at school functions, any practices or doctrines which are inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Catholic faith.

NON-CATHOLIC CHILDREN

The presence of students from other faiths provides a wonderful diversity to the school. However, the presence of non-Catholic students in the school shall not alter the primacy of Catholic religious formation as an integral component of the school’s educational program. As such:

- a. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of the school.
- b. Non-Catholic students must participate in liturgies (except for reception of the Eucharist), retreats, other religious functions, and religion classes for credit.
- c. Non-Catholic students may be exempt from formal co-curricular or extra-curricular sacramental preparation programs but not from the catechesis held during the school day.
- d. All students are expected, for testing and discussion purposes, to be knowledgeable of the Catholic Church’s positions on scripture, revelation, and moral practices. While Catholic teaching respects the various faith traditions of the students attending the Catholic school, parents/guardians must be aware that it is the Catholic position that will be taught.

In light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues that arise, the faculty and administration reserve the right

to address and to take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this manual. In addition, in view of the unique and essential religious mission of the school, it is expressly understood that the school may take action in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the school, the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the school to perform its religious mission or effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the school and the Community of Faith.

This handbook may be modified by the school after reasonable notice to the parents of the effective date of any changes. Any section headings are for convenience of use and shall not affect the interpretation of any provisions. If the school should elect not to take action in a particular situation, this shall not be construed or interpreted as a waiver or preclude the school from acting in a subsequent situation of the same or similar kind.

II. CURRICULUM

The curriculum is not just the goals of the program and the planned activities but also the daily schedule, the availability and use of materials, transitions between activities and the way in which routine tasks of living are implemented virtual or in person. Young children are expected to learn through active and positive manipulation of the environment and concrete experiences that contribute to concept development.

Without limiting the rights of the school under section VIII of this handbook, modifications may be made in the environment and staffing patterns for children with special needs.

The daily schedule is intended to provide a balance of activities with attention to the following dimension of scheduling:

- a. Daily outdoor play, weather permitting.
- b. Alternating periods of quiet time and active play
- c. A balance of large muscle and small muscle activities is provided.
- d. Various small group or large group activities through most of the day
- e. A balance of child-initiated and staff-initiated activity is provided. The amount of time spent on staff-initiated, large group activity is limited.

Developmentally appropriate materials and equipment that project heterogeneous, racial, gender and age attributes are selected for use.

The school will use media, such as television, films, videotapes and computers, that have been previewed by adults prior to use. Another option for activity is always available. No child is required to view or interact with the program; and the staff discusses what is viewed with children to develop critical viewing skills. Technology is incorporated as an integral part of the day.

The goal of the school is to emphasize concrete experiential learning and to achieve the following goals:

- a. foster positive self-concept;
- b. foster spiritual development;
- c. encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment;
- d. develop social skills;
- e. encourage language development;
- f. enhance physical development and skills;
- g. encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices;

- h. encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts;
- i. respect cultural diversity.

Staff provides materials and time for activities, but children choose from among several activities that the teacher has planned, or the children initiate. Staff respects the child's right to choose not to participate at times.

Children are not always required to move from one activity to another as a group. Unregimented transitions are also used as a vehicle for learning.

Planned or routine activities may be changed according to the needs or interests of children, and/or to cope with changes in weather or other situations that affect routines without unduly alarming children.

Routine tasks such as toileting, eating, dressing, and sleeping are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children's learning, self-help and social skills. Through complimentary actions at home, parents are expected to assist and cooperate with staff to make feeding and the development of other independent skills a positive experience for children. Provision is made for children who are early risers and for children who do not nap.

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

Saint Ambrose Preschool provides all supplies and materials.

ASSESSMENT

The school's program is intended to assist staff and administrators in a systematic evaluation of the program, to diagnose children's strengths and weaknesses and to aid in the revision of the curriculum and planning of instruction.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Teachers are expected to be reasonably available to parents/guardians throughout the school year to keep the lines of communication open in the best interest of the students. Parent-teacher conferences can be scheduled throughout the school year if necessary. Parents should first privately contact a

teacher with any concerns about a student or class concerns before seeking intervention by the school administration.

In the event a parent desires to discuss a problem with his/her child's teacher, the parent should make an appointment for a private meeting with the child's teacher. Teachers welcome the opportunity to discuss a matter of concern with parents before it becomes an actual problem. Any parent who wishes to speak with the principal may do so after an initial meeting with the classroom teacher. Similarly, parents should discuss matters of concern with the school principal, and pastor when necessary, before bringing them to the Office of Catholic Schools.

SCHEDULING AND OTHER CONFERENCE INFORMATION

A mid-year conference will be scheduled for all Saint Ambrose Preschool families. An end of year conference can be scheduled at the request of parents and/or teachers

PROGRESS REPORTS

Evaluation of the child must be based on teacher judgment, observation, daily performance, class participation and effort.

RETENTION/PROMOTION/PLACEMENT

A major goal of the school is to assist children to complete each year satisfactorily. Retention is recommended only when it is deemed necessary and advantageous to the needs of the child.

- a. The final decision to promote or retain a child is based on the child's developmental performance and best interests, as determined by the principal/director.
- b. Parents will be kept informed about the inability of their child to progress satisfactorily.
- c. Children who would not benefit from being retained may be "placed" in the next level; however, the school may prepare and implement an Intervention Plan for the child as a condition of placement.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS

DIOCESAN INITIAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Children who desire an educational experience founded on the Catholic philosophy of education and who fulfill the age, health and behavioral requirements are eligible for admission to the school.

The school sets registration procedures and admission policies. The availability of space and the order of preference for admission are determined by the school according to the following general criteria:

- a. Children from the parish
- b. Children from parishes without schools
- c. Children from parishes with schools (for sufficient reason)
- d. Children from non-Catholic families

If approved by the pastor, and where practicable, siblings may receive special consideration.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESCHOOL ADMISSION

There is no testing for preschool admission. However, readiness assessment may be utilized to determine the developmentally appropriate placement in the preschool program. The following list of documents/information is required:

- a. Presentation of an original birth certificate (schools are expected to keep a copy of the certificate on file)
- b. Baptismal certificate for Catholic students
- c. Proof of custody where applicable
- d. Progress reports (if available)
- e. Completed Diocesan Application Form (*Appendix J*)
- f. A non-refundable application fee
- g. A fully executed MCH 213G Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Form or other U.S. state equivalent, which stipulates the following must be submitted prior to the student beginning school:
 - i. Proof of exact dates of required immunization as required by the Code of Virginia. Immunization records are required to be signed and verified by a licensed healthcare provider.

- ii. Physical examination covering all required aspects as mandated on the MCH 213G within 12 months prior to entering school for the first time. Equivalent school entrance physical forms from another state may be acceptable. (Note: A pre-school physical does not take the place of the required kindergarten entry physical even though it was completed within the 12 months prior to kindergarten entry. This is because some aspects required for kindergarten are not included in a pre-school physical – e.g., hearing and vision screening)
- h. Proof of satisfying tuition requirements at any former Diocesan school if previously enrolled in a Diocesan school.

GENERAL CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION

A child is admitted to the school on the premise the child intends to learn the Catholic religion and be educated in a Catholic environment. In certain cases, a child may be admitted on a probationary basis subject to the child successfully completing one or more subsequent interim evaluations. A child with academic or other needs (i.e., behavioral), which cannot be reasonably addressed by the school may be denied admission.

School application forms may request disability-related information. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not prohibit a school from asking questions about a student's disabilities provided that information does not discriminate (automatically prohibit a student from applying).

CLASS PLACEMENT

The principal/director and faculty reserve the right to place a child in a class to ensure the best interests of the child.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCE/TARDINESS/LEAVING SCHOOL

Regular attendance in the program is strongly encouraged for setting the groundwork for a successful school experience. Neither the school, the Diocese, the Office of Catholic Schools, nor any of its employees/staff are responsible for ensuring actual attendance; this is the responsibility of the child's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Except in cases of emergency as determined by the principal/preschool director and/or a staff member (as applicable or necessary), a child may only be released from school to another authorized adult with the prior written or verbal authorization of the child's parent. The adult will be required to produce identification before the child is released.

ATTENDANCE/REPORTING PROCEDURES

ABSENCE

Please email Saint Ambrose School at “attendance@stambroseschool.org” or call Saint Ambrose School (703) 698-7171, if your child will be absent from school.

TARDINESS

A student who is tardy should report to the principal/preschool director's office or attendance office. A student who arrives late for an excused reason (i.e. director's note) is counted tardy.

Frequent cases of tardiness should be brought to the attention of the principal/preschool director so that the parent may be contacted.

PLEASE ENTER THROUGH THE MAIN ENTRANCE OF THE SCHOOL AND CHECK IN AT THE FRONT OFFICE WHEN ARRIVING FIVE OR MORE MINUTES AFTER THE START OF THE SCHOOL DAY.

MEDICAL EXCUSES

Please give the Saint Ambrose School Office Copies of any pertinent medical information provided by your child's Physician

ANTICIPATED ABSENCE

Please notify the Saint Ambrose School office or your child's teachers if you know in advance if your child will be absent from school.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Parents must sign their children in/out when arriving late or being released outside of regular school hours.

TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER SCHOOL

The school must be notified in writing by the parent(s) of a student regarding a decision to transfer a student to another school, including the last day the student will attend classes at school. All school-owned materials such as textbooks and library books must be returned to school and all fees paid before leaving. Student records will be sent to the new school upon a “Release of Student Records Form” from the new school. All fees and tuition **MUST BE PAID** prior to the release of the student’s records.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Each school should formulate a policy of traffic, pedestrian, bike, and bus safety for its students and communicate this policy to all school personnel, students, and their parents/guardians. Older students in elementary schools may serve as traffic/pedestrian safety patrols at the discretion of the school principal. Within the scope of this designation, the students shall work under the supervision of and in cooperation with the school principal and the local police liaison for safety issues.

Please note that if you choose to drop your child off at **8:00 am**, you must follow the K-8 school drop off procedures. You will be provided a map of instruction for dropping your child off (curbside) and your child will be escorted to the preschool classroom by a safety patrol or school staff member. Parents must let the preschool director know in advance if their child will be dropped off at 8:00 am.

8:15 AM Drop Off

Parents are responsible for transportation to and from Saint Ambrose Preschool. Children should be brought to the preschool entrance number 2 located on the left side of the school building at the start of school. Children should not arrive prior to 5 minutes before the start of their class session. It is very important that children arrive on time to school; however early arrivals may be disruptive to other school activities. Please be aware of other small children in the parking lots and drive slowly. An adult must accompany each child to the preschool entrance door where you will be greeted by your teacher and/or director. Your child will then be escorted to the classroom. For departure, parents will pick up their child at the same door as drop off. After picking your child up at the classroom door return to your vehicle.

Parents who are late in picking up their child should proceed to the front office to pick up your child. A late pick up fee of \$10.00 for each 5 minutes after the 11:30 for half day and 3:15 pm for full day dismissal time will be assessed for children picked up late.

Preschool Children are eligible to attend Extended Day Care at age 5 years old.

LUNCH/MILK PROGRAM

Rules for acceptance and participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs are the same for all students without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA related activity should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC, 20250.

"[Insert additional Snack/Lunch/Milk Program Information here - Optional]"

All students need to bring a small nutritious snack to school each day. Full day students are required to bring a healthy lunch each day from home or parents may order a lunch from the school on line lunch program. Saint Ambrose Preschool is a peanut-tree-nut free facility.

IV. GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

ADMINISTRATIVE

CHILD CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP

At the time of school entry or at any other time where a change in custody status/arrangements occurs, it is the responsibility of the parent(s) to provide the principal/administration with a true and correct copy of the legal document for any student for which there is a legal custody agreement or for any student not residing with his/her parent.

School communication with the appropriate guardian is essential. Accordingly:

- a. Custodial parents should identify, in writing, other adults who may have access to information regarding their child.
- b. Non-custodial parents may receive information (when requested) regarding the child unless specific documentation to the contrary is provided in the legal custody agreement.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Parents/Guardians have a right (unless prohibited by the courts in a custody agreement) to the timely inspection, during school hours, of the educational records (cumulative and confidential) of their child. The school shall respond to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records.

If the education records of a student contain information on more than one student, the parents' access is limited to specific information about their child only.

Student records shall be open to authorized school personnel only (principal, assistant principal, and those to whom they extend access within a given year).

The school administration may elect to provide, at cost, photocopies of a student's educational records to parents, but documentation is to be stamped "unofficial."

CONFIDENTIAL ACADEMIC RECORDS

Parents/guardians are obligated to share educational/psychological testing results and any resulting plan with the school. If a student has a documented disability, a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Services Plan (ISP), 504 plan, and/or Student Assistance Plan (SAP) should be maintained in the student's confidential file. The refusal to provide such information is grounds for terminating enrollment in the school.

Confidential records for dis-enrolled students are merged with the students' cumulative files.

RETENTION OF RECORDS

Permanent record card (to include transcripts, attendance record, and standardized test results) is to be retained indefinitely.

The following student records are to be retained for 25 years:

- a. IEP/ISP or 504 Plan
- b. Student Assistance Plan
- c. Eligibility Minutes
- d. Student Support Team Minutes

The following student records are to be retained for 7 years, or when the students reaches the age of 25, whichever is greater:

- a. Application
- b. Counselor Notes
- c. Discipline Notes
- d. Court Documents
- e. Psychological Reports

SCHOOL VISITORS

All persons other than school staff and currently registered students must first report to the school office immediately upon entering school grounds, sign-in, and wear an identification tag when visiting the school.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

All materials prepared by parents/guardians for release to the parish or school community must be approved by the principal or his/her designee.

PRINCIPAL/PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR'S COMMUNICATION

Saint Ambrose Preschool fosters an "open door" policy and the director is available to meet with parents upon request.

TAKE-HOME COMMUNICATION

All materials prepared by parents for release to the parish or school community must be approved by the principal/Preschool director or his/her designee.

All materials prepared by parents for release to the parish or school community must be approved by the principal/Preschool director or his/her designee.

The director of Saint Ambrose Preschool will provide a monthly newsletter, and each classroom teacher will provide a monthly calendar for the parents.

TELEPHONE USE

The telephone in the Saint Ambrose School Office is available for preschool family use if needed

INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSINGS

If, during the year, the school uses inclement weather/emergency days, it may be necessary to modify the published school calendar.

If school closes unexpectedly for a single day, there will be no academic requirements for that day. If, however, the school will be closed for an extended period due to weather, public health, or community concern, the school **may** transition into virtual instruction for the required duration. These will be counted as instructional days.

Saint Ambrose Preschool will observe the following emergency closing policy:

If Saint Ambrose School opens 2 hours late, the half day program for the 3- and 4-year-old classes will not be in session. The three/four-year-old full day students will begin school at 10:15 am. In the event it is necessary to close schools one or two hours early due to hazardous winter conditions, we will dismiss at regular time 11:30 am for the half day program and 1:00 pm for the full day program.

Saint Ambrose Preschool **will not** add days on to the end of the year for school closure due to inclement weather unless it exceeds a total of 10 full day closures. Saint Ambrose Preschool will then add up to 3 days total to its school calendar.

Should Saint Ambrose Preschool close due to inclement weather or a natural disaster, a Saint Ambrose Preschool staff member will remain with the children until each child has been picked up.

PHOTOS AND OTHER MEDIA

Parents/guardians may opt their children out of participating in videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography, or participation involving the Internet. When a parent decides to exercise this right, the school is required to use the Waiver/Right to Object Form (*Appendix N*). All student or parental publications are subject to review and approval by the school administration prior to publication.

MEDIA CENTER

All materials chosen for the media center must be appropriate for students, not only in age level and reading ability, but also for their capacity to foster our students' moral development. All materials shall conform with diocesan policies and guidelines regarding Catholic education.

Parents, guardians, or teachers who object to print or multi-media materials used in the classroom must complete an Objection to Content Form (*Appendix K*) after they have read the book or viewed the media and then submit it to the school principal. Those objecting to materials obtained in the school media center should complete Objection to Content Form for Library Materials (*Appendix K-1*). A review committee (to include an Office of Catholic Schools member) will subsequently discuss the objection and decide the disposition of the challenged material. The parent or teacher initiating the review should be personally notified of the results of the review. The Superintendent of Schools has the final say in any subsequent question of this review.

FIELD TRIPS

Class visits to places of cultural or educational significance enhance the lessons of the classroom. Field trips, virtual or in person, are planned by teachers and approved by the school administration in order to achieve educational objectives. Financial considerations may bear on the feasibility and frequency of field trips.

Field trips are considered an extension of the school day and the code of conduct will apply.

A permission form signed by a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must be obtained prior to a student participating in each activity (*Appendix R*, available in PowerSchool).

In the event private automobiles/vehicles of students, parents, or other authorized adults of at least 21 years of age are to be utilized to transport students on field trips, the drivers and/or the vehicle owners must have a valid driver's license and sufficient liability, medical, and uninsured motorist insurance coverage as defined by the Diocesan Risk Manager. Evidence to this effect

must be presented to the principal/administration for review and approval prior to the use of such vehicles. Appendix R-1 must be used for this purpose. The principal/administration shall have the right to prohibit, for any reason, a proposed driver from transporting students on a field trip.

Youth weighing less than 100 pounds may not be seated in the front seat. Virginia's child safety laws require that children under eight years old are secured in a child safety seat or booster seat, regardless of height or weight. Children between eight and 12 should remain in a booster seat until they can fit in a seat belt.

Cell calls and texting are not permitted while driving.

Parents/guardians are to be furnished with detailed written information about the field trip and must be given the opportunity to “opt out” their children from the field trip.

Teachers and other school employees should not drive students in their personal vehicles.

It should be understood, in rare instances, world conditions and specifically threats of terrorism against Americans may necessitate the cancellation of school-sponsored trips.

School-sponsored ski trips are not permitted.

Alcohol shall NEVER be served to minors, regardless of cultural norms and/or parent permission while on a field trip.

All medications given on field trips must comply with medication administration policies. For a student with prescription medication and/or medically necessary health related procedures or treatments, a trained individual needs to be present on the field trip such as” a school nurse, parent/guardian, or designated family member to ensure care in the case of an emergency. If a trained individual of the school is unable to chaperone the student on a field trip, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide a trained individual to accompany the student.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Overnight trips are not permitted for preschool children.

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

Parent-Teacher Organizations (and like-named entities) support the critical relationship between schools and parents, the primary educators of their children. These organizations support the principal to advance the school’s mission.

Every school should have an effective Parent-Teacher Organization. It can help mobilize the parent

community regarding legislative proposals impacting Catholic education. The work of PTOs and like organizations shall be guided by the PTO Handbook and the direction of the pastor and principal.

All parent organization activities and all materials prepared by parents for release to the Parish or school community must be submitted to the principal or designee for approval prior to implementation and/or distribution.

All PTO monies must be deposited in the parish or school account as designated by the pastor. In consultation with the principal, the PTO officers should prepare a budget and submit it to the pastor and principal for approval.

PTOs shall have by-laws which establish, among other things, term limits for officers as well as the organization of committees. Persons nominated to serve as a PTO board member must receive the approval of the pastor and principal.

FUNDRAISING

Any program of generating additional revenue should have the approval of school leadership (pastor, principal, head of school). These activities should be organized and executed so that the school program is not interrupted.

Students may participate in, and cooperate with, worthy collections and fundraising projects conducted by a school or parish, provided such activities have been approved by the school leadership (pastor, principal, head of school).

[Insert additional fundraising information here as needed--optional]

TRANSPORTATION/PARKING

Please observe the following when transporting children to Saint Ambrose Preschool:

Child safety restraint devices are required whenever private transportation is being used and should be placed in the back seat of motor vehicles.

-Providing approved, properly secured restraint devices is the responsibility of the parent.

-Car pool members should have their children ready on time. It is very important for your child's well-being to arrive at school and be picked up on

time.

-Parents must park in designated spaces and must accompany children directly to the classroom.

-Under no circumstances should a child be able to run ahead. The parking lot can be busy and parents are responsible for their child's safety during arrival and departure.

Preschool children dropped off at 8:00 am will be escorted to the preschool classroom by a Saint Ambrose Safety Patrol. Children dropped off at 8:15 am will be walked to the preschool door entrance by a parent/caregiver where a staff member will be there to take your child into the preschool classroom.

V. FINANCES

SCHOOL TUITION POLICIES

A family's tuition obligation continues even if the school shifts to a virtual model. The education of each student continues with teachers planning and delivering lessons and assessing student progress. Report cards will be distributed at the end of each grading period. If a parent/guardian cannot make the regular tuition payment, the principal should be notified as soon as possible to create a payment plan.

TUITION AND OTHER FEE SCHEDULE

Little Lambs - Three Year Olds

Eligibility: Child must be 3 years old by Sept. 30, 2024

Days: 5-Day program (Monday- Friday)

Time: 8:15 am – 11:30 am

Tuition: \$6,600.00: 10 monthly (Aug-May) payments of \$660.00

Days: FULL DAY: 5-Day program (Monday – Friday)

Time: 8:15 am – 3:05 pm

Tuition: \$9,300.00: 10 monthly (Aug-May) payments of \$930.00

Little Knights - 4 Year Olds

Eligibility: Child must be four (4) years old by Sept. 30, 2024

Days: 5-Day program (Monday- Friday)

Time: 8:15 am to 11:30 pm

Tuition: \$6,600.00: 10 monthly (Aug-May) payments of \$660.00

Days: FULL DAY 5-Day program (Monday – Friday)

Time: 8:15 am to 3:05 pm

Tuition: \$9,300.00: 10 monthly (Aug-May) payments of \$930.00

A non-refundable registration fee of \$150 is due when registering your child.

The additional nonrefundable \$200.00 admissions fee is due within 2 weeks of acceptance into the Saint Ambrose Preschool Program. This includes the cost of a school bag, a school T-shirt, field trips, PTO membership, and a school directory.

The tuition schedule is based on a ten (10) month payment plan, beginning in August and running through May. Monthly tuition payments must be paid through FACTS Tuition Management (which charges a one-time fee of \$55.00 for this service).

Parents who wish to pay the tuition in full may pay the school directly no later than August 10, 2024.

Enrolled preschool students will have priority for acceptance to St. Ambrose School Kindergarten classes

VI. CHILD RESPONSIBILITIES & BEHAVIOR

CODE OF CONDUCT

In all areas of learning, discipline must be considered in the development of the whole person. The Code of Conduct is based on the Gospel message of Jesus. Growth in self-discipline, a responsibility for Catholic moral values and a loving respect for the rights of all persons is encouraged and nourished by the Code of Conduct. To achieve these ends, parents/guardians, faculty, and students work together to create a Catholic school environment. These basic components include:

- a. Teachers have a right to teach. No student will stop the teacher from teaching.
- b. Students have a right to learn. No student will stop another student from learning.

Based upon the Catholic moral values and loving respect for others taught by Jesus, students:

- a. will be honest and committed to integrity.
- b. will be respectful and courteous toward all teachers and adults.
- c. will refrain from harassment of any kind.
- d. will use appropriate language.
- e. will speak respectfully to and about others.
- f. will complete all assignments and participate fully in class.
- g. will respect all school and personal property (see *Care of School Property*).
- h. will refrain from any deliberate disruption in the school.
- i. will adhere to the school's cell phone policy.
- j. will comply with the Internet Responsible Use Policy.
- k. will demonstrate good sportsmanship when engaged in all school-sponsored co- and extra-curricular activities.
- l. will be present for all required activities unless officially excused by the administration.
- m. will adhere to the dress code (see *Dress Code*).
- n. will not give or receive unauthorized assistance on tests, quizzes, or assignments.
- o. will not leave school grounds during the school day for any reason without permission from the principal/administration.
- p. will not bring to school, nor possess at school, any real or toy knives, guns (or any facsimile thereof), sharp objects that may be used as a weapon, matches, lighters, sparklers, laser devices, or any facsimile thereof. It is understood if this term is

- violated, suspension, or expulsion may result (see *Substance Abuse/Weapons* and *Inappropriate Materials*).
- q. will maintain, and support others who maintain, a safe and drug-free environment at, or near, school and at all school-sponsored functions/activities with the understanding that possession or distribution of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or any other substance that may be harmful or dangerous and forbidden, to include drug paraphernalia, will result in suspension or expulsion from school (see also *Substance Abuse/Weapons*).
 - r. will not engage in any physical or verbal contact with another student which could be interpreted to be an inappropriate display of affection. Such conduct is prohibited on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities.
 - s. will, at all times, whether at school or in the community, conduct themselves in a manner which reflects the Catholic values and principles of the school.

All of the conduct expectations include student use of the Internet.

The school observes this Code of Conduct because it is built on fundamental Catholic social teachings. The role of the principal/administration, staff, and faculty is to work with the students and parents/guardians to assist the students in developing a strong Christian attitude toward life.

DISCIPLINE

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems which arise, this handbook empowers the faculty and administration to take disciplinary action for any behavior (within or outside of the school community) which violates the spirit, philosophy, and code of conduct of the school, even though not specified.

In justice to the other students, circumstances may dictate that a student be removed temporarily or permanently from the particular school setting.

Classroom rules are designed to protect persons and property and to promote pro-social behaviors, such as sharing and taking turns. If problems arise, the children in question will be reminded of acceptable behaviors and redirected to more positive activities.

USE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

In cases where a child is continually disruptive of others or in the case of a single serious disciplinary infraction, the teacher will apprise the principal/director of the situation. They will assist in the development of a course of action to be taken to correct the situation.

Children who lack self-discipline or who violate the rights of others can expect disciplinary action. Each offense will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the age of the child, the nature of the infraction and the severity of the case. Repeated infractions can result in more serious consequences, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion, but there is no requirement for progressive discipline.

SPECIFIC DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

Saint Ambrose Preschool believes the teacher should be an example of patience, love, positive guidance and forgiveness. Positive reinforcement- recognizing and encouraging desired behaviors-is the teacher's primary means for effective discipline.

"Time –out" is used when a child needs a few minutes to gain control over his/her behavior. At no time will corporal punishment, intimidation, shaming, shouting, or other forms of humiliating or frightening discipline be tolerated

SUSPENSION

Suspension may be imposed as determined by the principal/administration. Once the principal/administration suspends a student, parents/guardians may be required to sign a behavioral contract in which they signify their understanding of the problem and agree to work with the school in correcting the situation.

The failure of the parents to execute the above referenced agreement shall preclude the student from returning to the regular instructional program. This policy applies to in-house and out-of-school suspensions.

EXPULSION

Expulsion may be resorted to when one or all the following are present:

- a. a serious infraction of school rules occurs.
- b. The student has demonstrated continuing disregard of school rules for which other means of discipline have proven ineffectual.
- c. The student's continued presence in the school is considered by school officials to be a serious hindrance to the safety or welfare of the school community.
- d. a parent/guardian repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students or displays disrespectful, disruptive, or harassing behavior toward teachers, school, parish, or diocesan staff.

If the principal/administration believes it necessary to expel a student, the principal/administration will notify the student and the student's parents about the student's action and provide them with an opportunity to respond in accordance with the school's disciplinary hearing process before making any final decision on the matter.

A parent/guardian whose child is expelled may appeal this decision in writing to the Superintendent of Schools within 5 working days from the time of written notification.

During the pendency of any appeal, the expelled student shall be removed from the school community in compliance with the expulsion notice unless otherwise directed at the discretion of the principal/administration.

Students who have been expelled from any Diocesan school may not apply for admission to that school or another Diocesan school for a minimum of one (1) year from the date of expulsion.

REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Privacy of individual students must be balanced against the need to protect the health, welfare, and safety of other members of the school community.

STUDENTS AND STUDENT PROPERTY SEARCHES

The principal/administration or his/her designee has the right to protect the health, welfare, and safety of school patrons against drugs, weapons, unauthorized publications, and other contraband materials. Search of a student's person and/or personal property on school property or at school activities may be conducted by the school principal/administration or other designated officials. It is only necessary that a search be reasonable and related to the school rights in these regards. The failure of a student to voluntarily submit to a search shall be presumptive evidence of the existence of contraband and grounds for appropriate disciplinary action.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Children are to care for school property in a respectful manner. Children who deface or damage school property or the property of others will make financial restitution. If library books are not returned, students will be assessed an amount equal to the value of the book or its replacement, whichever is greater, as determined by the principal/administration.

DRESS CODE

The dress code provides a standard for our children that fosters an environment conducive to learning and respectful behavior.

Final decisions regarding the school uniform rest with the principal/director.

DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS & OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

Please dress your child for his/her class at Saint Ambrose Preschool in the required school uniform. Please mark all removable clothing with your child's name. Rubber-soled shoes are best for indoor and outdoor play.

Open toe shoes/flip flops are not permitted to be worn at school. All children will receive a Saint Ambrose Preschool tote bag and T-shirt the first week of school. Please have your child bring this tote bag to school every day. All artwork and occasional correspondence will be sent home in your child's school bag. Children may not bring a backpack to school from home. Jewelry items such as watches, bracelets, rings and necklaces are not permitted to be worn at Saint Ambrose Preschool. Umbrellas are not permitted in preschool classrooms. When sending your child to school in boots, please pack a change of shoes for the school day as boots are not permitted to be worn in the classroom.

Preschool children are not permitted to have hand warmers at school.

PLAYGROUND REGULATIONS

All children using the playground play area at Saint Ambrose Preschool must have adult supervision and may not be left unattended at any time.

LUNCHROOM REGULATIONS

Given the risk of potential harm, students' access and use of microwave ovens is prohibited in grades preschool through grade 5. Student meals provided by parents/guardians must not be heated in microwave ovens by school personnel and/or school volunteers.

Given the risk of potential harm, students' access and use of microwave ovens is prohibited.

Lunch boxes can't be stored in refrigerators. Parents can provide a freezer pack in the lunchbox.

Parents are responsible for sending in a nutritious snack to school each day with their child's name and date on the snack. Saint Ambrose Preschool is a tree nut and peanut free facility. Teachers frequently plan food preparation projects as small group or classroom activities designed to reinforce an idea, concept, or theme being explored with the children.

For birthdays, a special sharing snack provided by each child may be brought in to share with the class and will be served during the class snack time.

SHOW & TELL

Children are allowed to bring toys from home for the purpose of Show and Tell only. Weapons (whether real or toys) of any kind are not appropriate Show and Tell items and shall not be brought to school for any reason. If weapons of any kind are brought to school, the child shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action which may include, but not be limited to, expulsion.

VII. HEALTH, SAFETY, & WELFARE

STUDENT HEALTH, SAFETY, & WELFARE

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the health and well-being of their children. School health services supplement, rather than substitute, for parental care and concern for the health of the students.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND/OR CHILD ABUSE

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse generally applies to all clergy, all employees and all volunteers.

It is the policy of the Diocese that sexual misconduct and/or child abuse while performing any work or activity under the auspices of the Diocese is contrary to Christian principles and outside the scope of any authority, duties, and/or employment of any clergy, employee, or volunteer.

Virginia law imposes upon school personnel the legal responsibility of reporting to the local child protective services agency any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect.

School personnel who suspect the abuse or neglect of a student must report the matter directly to Child Protective Services and to the school principal (who in turn will call the Vicar General). The school principal should complete Attachment B found in Appendix G, which must be sent to the Vicar General. The school principal must inform the superintendent as well.

In accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, (Section 63.2–118, “Any person required to make a report or conduct an investigation or family assessment, pursuant to this chapter may talk to any child suspected of being abused or neglected or to any of his siblings without consent of and outside the presence of his parent/guardian, legal custodian, or other person standing in *loco parentis* or school personnel.”

WELLNESS POLICY

The Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools Wellness Policy meets minimum federal standards and establishes goals for physical education, nutrition, and healthy environments in schools. All schools must develop, and continue to evaluate, local school wellness policies. The local policies create a framework for increased student activity, staff wellness, safe and healthy environments, and the elimination of foods of minimal nutritional value during the school day. All schools have wellness committees to implement, sustain, and evaluate the local wellness program.

ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID

The parents/guardians of an injured student will be notified of the accident/injury by the principal/administration or the principal/administration’s designee as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority

of aiding the student.

If an incident results in a medical condition or injury which can be reasonably known to the appropriate supervisory faculty/staff member and/or the principal, the school and/or its staff are authorized to render reasonable basic first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion of the school, serve to minimize the severity of the injured person's condition. As an example, staff should initially resort to using only ice, band aids, soap and water when treating cuts and/or scrapes to avoid any possible known or unknown allergic reactions to salves or creams. In addition, staff may secure a professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion of the school, appears to be reasonably warranted. The school and school officials shall be expressly held harmless from any liability costs or expenses associated with the professional diagnosis and/or any treatment or first aid provided (including but not limited to the cost of transportation), such costs or expenses being the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

AIR QUALITY AND PREVENTION OF HEAT/COLD RELATED ILLNESS

When students and activities require time outside, schools will monitor weather related to the 'feels like' temperature. To prevent heat and/or cold related illness, outside activities may be restricted based upon a heat index or wind chill factor, which registers in the caution level. Schools will consult local weather reports and Appendix F-15 for guidance in outdoor activities. Schools that do not have air-conditioned classrooms are permitted to provide early dismissals in accordance with Appendix F-15.

ILLNESS

Each school will provide a health office or comfortable space, apart from the student population, where children who become ill or injured can be cared for following *Virginia School Health Guidelines*.

Children with fevers, contagious, or infectious diseases will be sent home promptly and excluded from school while in that condition, per Virginia Department of Health regulations. Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable illness by a healthcare provider or is fever free/symptom free for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school, afterschool, and extracurricular activities.

When a student is requesting a waiver from participating in Physical Education classes and/or recess, parents are required to submit a written statement from their child's physician which states any activity restrictions with regard to participation in Physical Education classes and/or recess. The statement is expected to include a specific time frame for the activity restrictions.

In order to limit the spread of illness at Saint Ambrose Preschool, please keep your child home:

1. If your child is too ill to play outside.
2. For at least 24 hours after having a fever of 100 degrees or greater after fever reducing medications.
3. If there is a productive cough or thick nasal discharge.
4. If there has been diarrhea or vomiting within 24 hours.
5. If less than 24 hours has elapsed since receiving antibiotics.
6. If your child has contracted a communicable disease and an incubation period exists.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION OVERVIEW

All school clinic, administrators, and staff are required to administer medication within the framework of the procedures outlined in diocesan policy and summarized here.

All prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications may be administered during the school day under the following conditions:

- a. When the need for administration of medicines during school hours has been confirmed by the school nurse/health assistant (or the school administration);
- b. After the first dose of any medication has been given at home;
- c. When the parent/guardian provides and transports the medication to and from school and the medication is given directly to the school nurse/health assistant or a senior member of the school administration;
- d. When there is a licensed health care provider's written order signed by the parent/guardian requesting the school administer the medication or to permit the student to self-administer the medication;
- e. When the medication is brought to the school in its original container stating the name of the student, the dosage and method of administration prescribed by a licensed health-care provider. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to notify the school of any changes to the original prescription. The new prescription must also be brought to the school in the original container as stated above;
- f. When the appropriate medication authorization form (*Appendix F-6*) has been completed, signed by the parent/guardian and accompanies the medication;
- g. For any medication, parents must document the number of tablets or dosages to be secured for administration by authorized school personnel. If tablets are to be divided, the parent or guardian is responsible for dividing the tablets in order to achieve their

child's proper dosage.

- h. Herbal and homeopathic medications will not be given in Diocesan schools without written authorization by a LHCP that shall include desired and adverse effects. Protein supplements will not be administered unless directly requested by a physician with a health treatment plan.

Under no circumstances are medications to be shared with other students.

Picc Lines, Heparin/Saline Locks, and Central Venous Lines may be present in students with specialized health care needs. Dressing changes, heparin flushes, and other medication administration via these lines are to be done at home, not at school.

When the medication is epinephrine, trained school employees are permitted to administer Epi-pen injections when:

- a. the parents advise the staff most directly involved with the student of the situations when an Epi-pen may need to be administered (e.g., symptoms indicating that a person is suffering from severe allergic reaction, basic procedures for administering the Epi-pen with a suitable demonstration);
- b. parents of students requiring such injections provide a licensed health-care provider letter attesting to the life-threatening allergy;
- c. parents agree to execute the release of liability/hold harmless agreement regarding the use of the Epi-pen.

All diocesan schools will maintain non-student-specific school stock epinephrine. This school stock epinephrine can be used in an allergy-naïve student when anaphylaxis is suspected. Employees at the school will be informed of the location where the medication will be stored, and they will be appropriately educated on its use.

All diocesan schools will maintain naloxone, an opioid antagonist, to be available for use if opioid overdose is suspected in any individual on school campus. Any student receiving naloxone will be transported via EMS to the local emergency room and cleared to return to school. All staff will be trained in how to recognize opioid overdose and administer naloxone.

A student is NOT permitted to self-medicate. The school does not assume responsibility for medications taken independently by the student. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for students who demonstrate the capability to carry and self-administer emergency lifesaving medications (e.g. inhaler, Epi-pen).

All OTC and prescription medications are to be kept locked in the clinic/school office and be administered by the school nurse, clinic aide, principal or trained designee. No student is to carry/possess medications without appropriate medical authorization. No medication will be administered unless the school has received a signed copy of the Medication Authorization Form (*Appendix F-6*). OTC medications do not require a health care provider's signature unless the

medication is required for four (4) or more consecutive days.

It shall be the student's responsibility to come to the clinic/school office at the appropriate time for medication unless a health care provider or parent/guardian indicates in writing that the student cannot do this.

Within one week after expiration of the effective date on the order, or on the last day of school, the parent/guardian must personally collect any unused portion of the medication. Medications not claimed within that period will be destroyed.

LIFE THREATENING ALLERGY

Schools will utilize current resources and reputable materials such as: Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) and the CDC's Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to develop allergen management communications for student handbooks, classrooms, and parental publications.

All schools must provide an annual in-service educating school faculty and staff about the policy. Training will include minimizing the risk of exposure to life threatening allergens in the school setting as well as anaphylaxis recognition, medical management, and incident reporting.

Schools will utilize the policy to develop allergen management communications for student handbooks, classrooms, and parental publications. Schools will select and train staff to be utilized as anaphylaxis response teams responsible for managing an allergic crisis.

Parents/guardians of students with a life-threatening allergy must inform the principal and school health personnel of any allergies and provide schools with fully executed diocesan documents. Parents/guardians are expected to supply schools with any emergency medications as prescribed and may additionally provide the student with "safe" foods for classroom celebrations involving food. Schools will utilize diocesan documents to formulate an emergency care plan for the student and will share this care plan with those involved with the student including, but not limited to: teacher(s), food service, bus drivers, and janitorial staff.

TELEHEALTH

Medical appointments made via telehealth cannot be facilitated in the school building. If a student has been scheduled for a telehealth visit for medical reasons, the parent/guardian will need to check his/her student out of the school building and complete the appointment in the privacy of their vehicle or at home.

If a school is able to adequately support virtual regularly scheduled therapy sessions in the building (e.g., occupational or speech therapy) for students with a documented diagnosis, they can do so on a case-by-case basis after evaluating the specific circumstances.

SPECIALIZED STUDENT CARE NEEDS

The parent/guardian of any student on a continuing regimen for a non-episodic condition shall inform the school principal/administration and identify, in writing, the student's supervising health care provider. If necessary, and with parental written consent, there may be occasions when the school needs to communicate with the health care provider regarding possible effects on the student's healthcare management, special emergency procedures, or behavior at school.

TOILETING/INCONTINENCE

Although the vast majority of school staff would assist in an emergency situation, as no child should be left in wet or soiled clothing, it is important to note that there is no expectation that routine and predictable incidents are to be dealt with by school staff.

Parents/guardians will always be contacted in incidents of soiling. The exception to this policy is the student with a prescribed health-related treatment or procedure plan obtained in writing from a LHCP, with proper authorizations in writing by the parent or guardian.

For preschool students, it is recognized that continence training is an area of development which is reached at different ages for all children and that every child has individual needs which are respected. The preschool director will determine age-appropriate protocols for the student population.

USE OF CRUTCHES

An order from a licensed healthcare provider is required to use crutches at school. If a student arrives at school on crutches without a licensed health-care provider order, the parent will be called to take the student home.

CONTROL OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

DISEASE

Parents/guardians must notify the school within 24 hours if their child or any member of the immediate household has developed a communicable disease. Parents must notify the school immediately if the disease is life threatening. Parents must pick up their sick or injured child in a timely manner when contacted. If the parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child.

The protection and welfare of each individual student is of great importance in the schools of the Diocese of Arlington. In an effort to enhance the protection of students:

- a. No daycare/preschool, elementary, middle, or secondary school student may attend class without documentary proof of adequate immunization in accordance with Virginia Department of Health’s school entry requirements (or modified schedule as approved by licensed health care provider) on the Virginia School Entrance Health Form MCH-213G (*Appendix F-2*).
 - i. A certificate of immunization is not required for any student for whom the school has written certification from a licensed doctor of medicine or osteopathy, licensed nurse practitioner, or the local health department, that one of more of the required immunizations may be detrimental to the student’s health. The certification must indicate the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstance that contraindicates immunization. The Virginia School Entrance Health Form (MCH-213G) provides a space for such a certification to be made
 - ii. On a basic level, for the good of society, the Catholic church generally encourages the use of immunizations. The Church teaches that questions of immunization are ‘left to a matter of conscience’ and parents have the right to decide about the health of their children in this matter. Parents or guardians who object to the administration of immunizing agents for their child on the grounds that this conflicts with their religious tenets or practices must produce a notarized Certificate of Religious Exemption form (*Appendix F-18*), which will be retained in the student health record. Schools may request a statement from their parish priest or affiliate, describing such objection to specific immunizing agents. If an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable illness occurs, the student who is not immunized against that disease, will be excluded from school for an undetermined period of time as per the instructions of the State Health Commissioner and the public health department.
- b. Students who have traveled or resided in a foreign country for three months or more, where tuberculosis is common, are required to provide documentation, prior to school entry, of a negative tuberculosis skin test or chest x-ray result. All diocesan schools are responsible for compliance with local health department regulations pertaining to tuberculosis screening and treatment.
- c. Students with fevers and/or contagious or infectious diseases will be sent home promptly and will be excluded from school while in that condition, according to the Virginia Department of Health regulations. Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable illness by a health care provider or is fever free/symptom free for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school.
- d. School health personnel will follow the Virginia Department of Health Communicable Disease Chart, found in the *Virginia School Health Guidelines*, when referring suspected cases of communicable disease to the local health department for excluding or readmitting a student.

- e. The Diocese of Arlington has comprehensive guidelines for school/parish-based influenza vaccination clinics. The liability associated with the vaccination of children is great. The Diocese of Arlington does not promote school-based vaccination clinics for children during school hours, and in the absence of the parent, with the exception of a state or federal emergency. Any school wishing to offer an onsite school immunization program must comply with all aspects of the Memorandum of Agreement Vendors wishing to serve as vaccinators must be fully vetted by the Office of Risk Management prior to the signing of any contract for services.

LICE

All students identified as having an active case of lice will be excluded from school until they receive treatment. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide appropriate and adequate treatment for the student and home environment as recommended by their health care professional. Readmission to school is determined by the school nurse/administration based upon re-inspection and the effectiveness of treatment. Follow up treatment is expected and verified by the school nurse/administration. Classroom contacts may be inspected. Saint Ambrose Preschool will observe a “no nit” policy for a child to be at school.

BLOODBORNE DISEASE

The Christian community is called to respond to the sick in our midst with compassion and justice. The diocese recognizes its obligation to protect the rights of individual students infected with Hepatitis and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and to provide a safe environment for students, staff members, and the public. Students who are infected with bloodborne Hepatitis, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), or HIV-related conditions must be provided the opportunity to receive a Catholic school education.

Since it is known that bloodborne Hepatitis and HIV are not transmitted through casual contact, any student who is infected will continue education in a regular classroom assignment unless his or her health status requires otherwise. It is the intent of the Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools to follow the recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health, which state that most bloodborne Hepatitis and HIV-infected children be allowed to attend school in an unrestricted setting, and that decisions regarding school attendance be based on the medical condition of each child and

the expected type of interaction with others in that setting.

Persons involved in the implementation and monitoring of this policy shall maintain confidentiality of records in compliance with federal and state law and diocesan policy. All diocesan schools shall also maintain a program of information and training for school staff members to ensure a consistent and accurate understanding regarding prevention of exposure to bloodborne pathogens. This includes training related to the proper application of universal/standard precautions.

FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire drills are held once a month at Saint Ambrose Preschool. Diagrams showing the exit routes are posted in all rooms. Students, upon hearing the fire bell, are to maintain absolute silence and calmly but quickly exit the building following the teacher in charge. Students will remain outside until given the signal to return.

In the event of a bomb scare, the building will be evacuated, and students will assemble at the Fairfax County Police facility adjacent to the school. Our “Emergency Management Plan” is posted in each classroom, and detailed procedures for Shelter in Place, Lockdown, Tornado/Severe Weather, Earthquake, and Fire Drill/Evacuation, and other emergency situations

HARASSMENT

Harassment can take place in person or in writing and can be physical, verbal, or electronic. Regardless of its form, the Diocese of Arlington prohibits it.

This policy applies to the school site itself, to all school-sponsored and affiliated activities and events, whether in school or out of school, including but not limited to special events, field/service trips, retreats and/or other overnight trips, sporting events and practices, to all forms of transportation used by school personnel and students to come and go to the school and school-affiliated activities, and to all forms/use of technology.

Furthermore, since student behavior, whether inside or outside of school, reflects on our schools and can have a significant impact on life at school, there are times when it is appropriate and important for school administration to respond to incidents that occur outside of school and beyond school hours. Therefore, the schools reserve the right to discipline those in the community who engage in harassment of other school community members at any location and at any time if such harassment takes the form of obscene, libelous, slanderous language or incites

violence, invades the rights of others, or contributes to a substantial disruption of the school community. Therefore, if such harassment originates outside of school and it comes to the attention of school staff, appropriate action will be taken to maintain a safe and respectful work and academic environment. As the primary educators of their children, parents have the responsibility to handle harassment issues not involving the school and that are occurring outside of school.

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation against anyone who has reported these behaviors is prohibited. Students engaging in these behaviors are subject to disciplinary and/or legal action. Students, parents, employees, and service providers are responsible for reporting incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation on campus. School principals will ensure that all illegal behaviors are reported to the appropriate local authorities and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools immediately.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT - STUDENTS

Sexuality affects all aspects of the person, including in a general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. Until sexuality can be expressed through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, chastity is the successful integration of sexuality within the person. Chastity is expressed notably in friendship with one's neighbor when the equal personal dignity of man and woman is recognized. Offenses against chastity, which include lust and the more serious acts of pornography and immoral sexual conduct, are violations of our Catholic faith and morals.

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Arlington will respond appropriately to allegations of sexual harassment or sexual abuse in its schools. See Part 3, Section 2, Chapter 2, Article 6 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (¶¶ 2331-2400)

No student is to sexually harass or sexually abuse another member of the school community. All reports of harassment or abuse will be thoroughly, and appropriately investigated and disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate, up to and including expulsion. Instances of sexual abuse will result in suspension at a minimum. If it appears that a violation of criminal law may have occurred, the matter will be reported to law enforcement authorities.

“Sexual harassment” is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. "Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" includes, but is not limited to, the deliberate making of unsolicited gestures or comments, or the deliberate display of sexually graphic materials which are not necessary for school purposes, either in person or via any media source.

BULLYING

Bullying is defined as any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the person being bullied; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between aggressor or aggressors and person being bullied; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyber bullying. Bullying does not include inappropriate developmental teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Physical intimidation or assault
- b. Extortion
- c. Oral or written threats, including text messaging
- d. Malicious teasing
- e. Putdowns
- f. Name calling
- g. Threatening looks
- h. Gestures or acts of aggression (overt and covert)
- i. Cruel rumors & false accusations
- j. Social isolation
- k. Cyberbullying

Bullying is prohibited. School personnel will not tolerate any bullying on diocesan school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity (on or off school grounds). In addition, the Office of Catholic Schools expects students and parents who become aware of an act of bullying or cyberbullying to report it to appropriate school personnel (e.g. principal, teacher, school counselor). The Office of Catholic Schools expects staff members who become aware of an incident of bullying or cyberbullying to take appropriate steps to intervene unless intervention would be a threat to staff members' safety. If a staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report the bullying to the school principal for further investigation.

In cases of reported bullying, the principal or designee shall interview all students involved (i.e. the alleged aggressor(s) and the alleged target(s)) and investigate, as appropriate. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents/guardians, and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying will be subject to appropriate consequences.

Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include:

- a. Counseling
- b. Parent conference

- c. Detention
- d. Suspension and/or expulsion

Depending on the severity of the incident(s), the principal may also report incidents of bullying to law enforcement.

HAZING

Hazing is defined as the imposition of strenuous, often humiliating, tasks as part of a program of rigorous physical training and initiation.

Hazing is prohibited. School personnel will not tolerate any hazing on diocesan school grounds, in virtual school, or at any school-sponsored activity (on or off school grounds). In addition, the Office of Catholic Schools expects students and parents who become aware of an act of hazing to report it to appropriate school personnel (e.g. principal, teacher, school counselor). The Office of Catholic Schools expects staff members who become aware of an incidence of hazing to report the hazing to school administration for further investigation.

In cases of reported hazing, the principal or designee shall interview all students involved (i.e., the alleged aggressor(s) and the alleged target(s)) and investigate, as appropriate. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents/guardians, and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting hazing will be subject to appropriate consequences.

Consequences for students who engage in hazing shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include:

- a. Counseling
- b. A parent conference
- c. Detention
- d. Suspension and/or expulsion

Depending on the severity of the incident(s), the principal may also report incidents of hazing to law enforcement.

RACISM

Racism is defined as prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- a. Discrimination
- b. Victimization
- c. Oral or written threats, including text messaging
- d. Malicious Teasing
- e. Putdowns
- f. Name calling
- g. Threatening looks
- h. Gestures or acts of aggression (Overt and Covert)
- i. Cruel rumors and false accusations
- j. Social Isolation
- k. Cyber-racism (racism that takes place using digital devices)

Racism is prohibited. School personnel will not tolerate any racism on Diocesan school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity (on or off school grounds). In addition, the Office of Catholic Schools expects students and parents who become aware of an act of racism to report it to appropriate school personnel (e.g. principal, teacher, school counselor). The Office of Catholic Schools expects staff members who become aware of any racism incident to take appropriate steps to intervene unless intervention would be a threat to staff members' safety. Every instance of suspected racism should be brought immediately to the attention of school leadership.

In cases of reported racism, the principal or designee shall interview all students involved (i.e., the alleged aggressor(s) and the alleged target(s)) and investigate, as appropriate. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents, and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting racist behavior will be subject to appropriate consequences.

Consequences for students engaged in racist behavior shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include:

- a. Counseling
- b. A parent conference
- c. Detention
- d. Suspension and/or expulsion

Depending on the severity of the incident(s), the principal may also report incidents of racism to law enforcement.

ASBESTOS MANDATORY YEARLY NOTIFICATION

ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) which requires schools to be inspected to identify any asbestos containing building materials.

The law further requires an asbestos management plan to be in place. You are welcome to review a copy of the asbestos management plan at the school during regular business hours.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

School leadership at each individual school must install video surveillance cameras in order to maintain a safe and secure environment.

- a. Video surveillance cameras may be placed in public locations deemed appropriate. Such locations may include, without limitation, school entrances/exits, lobby areas, hallways, classrooms, cafeterias, athletic areas, gathering spaces, and outdoor grounds, as well as school buses.
- b. Restrooms, changing rooms, private offices, nurse's offices, and locker rooms are excluded from security camera use.
- c. It is recognized that it will not be possible to monitor all building areas, rooms, and grounds, or to monitor any location at all times.

To the extent video images may be deemed appropriate to create student records or personnel records, the school shall comply with any applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance, retention, and disclosure.

Video images obtained by the school shall be viewed by authorized school and diocesan personnel as necessary. The school and the diocese may rely on the images obtained by the video surveillance cameras in connection with the enforcement of diocesan or school policies, regulations, codes of conduct, building rules, and other applicable laws or rules, including, but not limited to, use of such images in student disciplinary proceedings and matters referred to local law enforcement agencies in accordance with applicable law. Video images may become part of a student's educational record in accordance with applicable law.

All video recordings shall be stored in a secure place. Recordings will be saved for no less than 60 days and may be retained longer if deemed appropriate. All video recordings are the sole property of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington. Release of such videos will be made only with the permission of the diocesan Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

VIII. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Office of Catholic Schools recognizes the beauty and potential inherent within each child. In an effort to foster continued growth, the school embraces the opportunity to provide assistance and services for children with disabilities according to the resources available within/to the school. Parents are considered an integral part of the process.

In order to accommodate a child who has been evaluated for special learning needs, parents are obligated to share educational/psychological testing results and any resulting plan with the school. The refusal to provide such information is a condition for negating enrollment in the school. A child may be admitted on a probationary basis with dates and criteria of evaluation clearly established in writing.

If a child has a documented disability, a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Services Plan (ISP), 504 plan, and/or Student Assistance Plan (SAP) should be maintained in the child's confidential file. Children who have a documented disability, but do not qualify for services through the local public school, may be eligible for accommodations through a Student Assistance Plan written at the Catholic school.

When a student qualifies for special education services through the public school and will not receive services, an Individualized Catholic Education Plan can be written following the information in the Guidelines for Serving Students with Disabilities.

Failure of the parent to sign the Student Assistance Plan or Individualized Catholic Education Plan does not prevent the implementation of the plan.

Children with disabilities are expected to follow the school's policies and honor code.

IX. PROGRAM INFORMATION

LICENSING INFORMATION

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. The Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, allows child day centers operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from licensure by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the religious exemption law.

RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION

In compliance with the Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, ALL Diocese of Arlington Preschools and are religiously exempt from licensure and are classified as a “religiously exempt child day center.”

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please call the Office of Child Care Licensing toll-free at 833-778-0204.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

A Crisis Management/Emergency Preparedness Plan has been developed and approved. All employees have been trained accordingly.

OVER-THE-COUNTER SKIN PRODUCTS

All non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations. Non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall not be kept or used beyond the expiration date of the product.

For all over-the-counter skin products:

- a. written parent authorization noting any known adverse reactions shall be obtained;
- b. shall be in the original container labeled with the child’s name;
- c. does not need to be kept locked, but shall be inaccessible to children under five years of age;
- d. any center-kept sunscreen shall be hypo-allergenic and have a minimum SPF of 15;
- e. children nine years of age and older may administer their own sunscreen, if supervised.

When insect repellent is used, a record shall be kept that includes the child's name, date of use, frequency of application, and any adverse reaction. The manufacturer's instructions for age, duration, and dosage shall be followed.

INSURANCE

The program is covered by public liability insurance through the Diocese of Arlington and the Catholic Mutual Relief Society of America. Student insurance must be provided by the family through their own policy or purchased through an independent school insurance provider.

TAX INFORMATION

Because the Internal Revenue Service requires identification of care givers in order to claim a credit for child and dependent care expenses, the school will complete and return to the parent any W-10 that is sent in, provided Part II is already completed by the parent.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

In compliance with state regulations for state licensed programs, a custodial parent shall be admitted to any child day program. Such right of admission shall apply only while the child is in the child day program (63.2-1813 of Code of Virginia).

X. APPENDICES

School Forms

[Insert School Forms here as needed--optional]

Additional School Information

[Insert Additional School Information here as needed--optional]

Diocesan Forms

- Permission for Emergency Care Form (Appendix F-1)
- Confidential Student Health History Update (Appendix F-1A)
- Virginia School Entrance Health Form (Appendix F-2)
- Virginia School Entrance Health Form Instructions (Appendix F-2A)
- Asthma Action Plan with Indemnification (Appendix F-3)
- Nebulizer Treatment Log and Procedure (Appendix F-3A)
- Anaphylaxis Action Plan with Indemnification (Appendix F-4)
- Diabetes Quick Reference and Indemnification (Appendix F-5)
- Virginia Diabetes Medical Management Plan (Appendix F-5A)
- Diocese Medication Authorization Form (Appendix F-6)
- Student Injury Accident Report (Appendix F-7)
- Wind Chill Factors/Heat Stress Index (Appendix 15)
- Certificate of Religious Exemption (Appendix F-18)
- Seizure Action Plan (Appendix F-20)
- Photo, Press, Audio, and Electronic Media Release for Minors (Appendix N)
- Parent Permission for School Sponsored Trip Participation.English (Appendix R)
- Permiso De Los Padres Para Excursiones Patrocinados Por La Escuela.Spanish (Appendix R-A)
- Use of Personal Vehicle (Appendix R-1)
- Preschool Handbook Agreement Form (Appendix AG-3)

XI. PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK AGREEMENT FORM

(2024-2025)

PARENT/GUARDIAN

I have received a current copy of the Parent/Student Handbook. In doing so, I have explained the content of this document to my child(ren).

I acknowledge and agree to the policies obtained therein, and will require my child(ren) to comply with the policies which apply to students.

I also realize during my child's enrollment at the school I will be informed from time to time, formally or informally, of various changes in school and/or Diocesan policies.

I understand the school and/or Diocese reserves the right to change policies at any time with or without advance notice.

I further understand it is required for me to sign this form in order to continue my child's enrollment at the school.

Student's Name _____

(Parent's Signature) _____

(Printed Name of Parent) _____

(Date) _____