

# **St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School**



## **Parent – Student Handbook 2026 - 2027**

*Growing a community of Saints*

**St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School**

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**Principal**

Mrs. Carol Church

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School is accredited through  
the **Mississippi Department of Education** and **AdvancEd (SACS/CASI)**.

This handbook is designed to be a synopsis of the policies and procedures of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School and is not intended to be all-inclusive. General policies applicable to all schools within the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi and the SVS Advisory Council govern the school. These are available in the school office and form an integral part of the agreement the school has entered into with parents to educate their children. The handbook, local policies and general diocesan policies strive to be consistent. However, due to human error and/or amendments to various parts, conflicts may arise. To the extent that a conflict exists, general diocesan policies shall take precedence followed first by advisory council policies and then this handbook.

The principal reserves the right to amend the handbook for just cause. Parents will be promptly notified in writing if changes are made. All policies and procedures designed for St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School are in effect during the regular school day, aftercare, summer program and all school-related activities. The principal has the right and responsibility to take appropriate action regarding the situation at hand.

#### **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

In compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1962, the Educational Amendments of 1972, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, St. Vincent de Paul's policy assures that no one on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity of the school.

#### **NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES**

This handbook is designed to be a synopsis of the policies and procedures of this school and it is not intended to be all-inclusive. General policies applicable to all schools within the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi also govern this school. The Diocesan Policy Manual is available for your review in the school office and forms an integral part of the agreement the school has entered with parents to educate their children. It is expected that this handbook, local policies, and general policies are consistent, however, at certain times due to human error and/or amendments to various parts, conflicts could arise. To the extent that a conflict exists, general policies shall take precedence, followed by local school advisory council policies, and finally, this handbook.

#### **DIOCESE OF BILOXI MISSION STATEMENT**

The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Biloxi will provide an education grounded in the moral teachings of the Catholic Faith, fostering Intentional Disciples of Jesus Christ and ensuring academic excellence.

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### **St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School**

#### **1.1 Mission**

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**On mission to grow a community of Saints.**

#### **1.2 Vision**

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St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School, a ministry of the Catholic Church, leads and guides our students in the Catholic faith through a Christ-centered curriculum. Our students are sent forth into the community with a formation of a strong moral character, the skills necessary to succeed academically and socially, the call to evangelize and the leadership to serve others with their God-given potential.

#### **1.3 Philosophy**

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At St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School (SVS) we believe in encouraging persons to become more fully the unique individuals they are destined to be. This belief involves an acknowledgment that *we are not the primary educators of children but, rather, participants in a perpetual growth process*. In Christ, we find our reason for existence.

As Christian educators, we are commissioned by the Catholic Church to assist each child in developing a life according to the message of Jesus and the stewardship of creation. We further believe that everyone is both teacher and learner. To develop a faith community, it is essential that students, parents and faculty cooperate to:

- Attain the doctrinal foundation of Catholic values;
- Express belief in our basic relationships with God; and
- Realize Christian unity.

Perceiving individual differences as strengths rather than weaknesses, we hold it necessary to develop an environment of trust in which both adults and children can experience mutual respect and reverence. Moreover, we believe that flexibility is necessary to allow teachers to adapt to the needs of the child and to allow the child to build self-worth, self-identity, self-discipline, responsibility, leadership skills, Christian values and the formation of conscience.

SVS also seeks an environment in which faith in the Catholic Christian tradition affects the social development, academic growth and religious maturity of all members of its faith community.

##### **1.3.1 School Honor Code**

SVS faculty and staff expect all students to be:

- Respectful

- Responsible
- Safe
- Spiritual

### **Code of Conduct for Families, Administration and Staff of St. Vincent De Paul:**

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School is considered a family. We work very hard to provide the highest level of academics and to form intentional disciples of Jesus Christ. The education of a child is a partnership between parents and school.

**If, in the opinion of the school administration, that partnership is irreparably broken, parents may be required to withdraw their child(ren) from our Catholic school.**

**This conduct includes, but is not limited to,**

1. **physical behavior**
2. **social media activities, internet posts**
3. **interaction with local and national media.**

**There are channels to discuss issues that may arise. Social media is not the appropriate forum and only serves to damage the school and the relationship between all parties.**

## **1.4 School History**

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SVS is a co-educational elementary school located in Long Beach, Mississippi. It is the consolidation of St. Paul School in Pass Christian and St. Thomas the Apostle School in Long Beach.

### **• History of St. Paul School**

This school dates back to January 1870 when the Sisters of Mercy arrived in Pass Christian and established the Sisters of Mercy School for Girls. In 1882, the Sisters began serving both boys and girls. In 1898, the school's name changed to St. Joseph Academy. With the dedication of a new school building in 1962, the school became known as St. Paul School.

### **• History of St. Thomas the Apostle School**

In 1922, the Daughters of Charity of St. Thomas the Apostle Church, under the direction of Father Joseph Hager, C.M., opened the doors of St. Thomas School—the first Catholic school building in Long Beach. One of the first teachers was Sister Mathilde Comstock, D.C. St. Thomas was blessed with service from the Daughters of Charity until they withdrew from the school in 1986. Both the Daughters of Charity and Sisters of Mercy, well-known as teaching communities throughout the world, laid the foundation for a strong Catholic identity in the foundational teachings of the schools.

### **• The Merger of the Two Schools**

This rich educational tradition continued until the devastation of Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005, when both churches and school buildings were destroyed. The Knights of Columbus, the Navy Sea Bees, teachers, parents, parishioners and volunteers from all over the country came

together to reopen the schools. The St. Vincent de Paul Council of the Knights of Columbus purchased a building in Long Beach for both schools to share for the remainder of the 2005-2006 school year. In February 2006, Bishop Thomas Rodi of Biloxi declared the consolidation of the two schools. After careful consideration, the name St. Vincent de Paul was chosen in honor of the Knights of Columbus that helped to reestablish the school following the hurricane. St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School became the official school name on July 1, 2006. SVS holds the highest accreditation with the State of Mississippi's Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges. Thanks to the collaboration of parents, priests and school personnel, SVS maintains a tradition for excellence in education and strives to develop basic Christian attitudes and values in students. There are more than 300 students enrolled in SVS, with some students being the fourth and fifth generations of their family to attend Catholic schools.

## **1.5 Facilities**

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Our state-of-the-art facility is located on 28 acres of partially wooded property landscaped to preserve the natural wetlands surrounding the school. The school building includes classrooms, science task labs, music and art rooms, a library, a computer lab, a full-size gymnasium and cafeteria. Our grounds extend our classroom to the outdoors with a science garden, recreational area, nature walk and prayer garden. Through the use of our outdoor classrooms, our school is committed to inspiring and motivating students so that they have a realistic understanding of their role as stewards of the earth and its resources.

## **1.6 Catholic Diocese of Biloxi**

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The Catholic school community within the Diocese of Biloxi, a ministry of the Catholic Church, embracing the teachings and traditions of the past, accepting the challenges and opportunities of the present and preparing for the demands of the future, provides an education based on Christ's teachings and Catholic values which focus on the formation of strong moral character, the furtherance of academic excellence, the inspiration to serve others, and the motivation to achieve God-given potential in the local and the world communities.

Seventeen Institutions of learning built on the long tradition of Catholic education are operating in Southern Mississippi under the leadership of:

**Bishop of Biloxi**..... Most Reverend Louis F. Kihneman III  
**Superintendent of Schools**.....Jennifer Broadus  
**Assistant to Superintendent**..... Tricia Harvey  
**Director of Religious Education**.....Amber Buckley

## 1.7 Advisory Council

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Below are the members of the St. Vincent de Paul Interparochial School Pastors & School Advisory Council:

Fr. Mike Austin, *Holy Family Parish*  
Fr. Satish B. Adhay, *St. Thomas the Apostle Parish*  
Fr. Khoa Phi Vo, *Sacred Heart Parish*  
Fr. Patrick Mockler, *Most Holy Trinity Parish*  
Fr. Rofinus Jas, *Our Mother of Mercy Parish*  
Fr. Cuthbert O'Connell, *St. Ann-Lizana Parish*  
Jason Green  
Trace Favre  
David Wolf  
Dr. Kim Benigno  
Ethan Smith

## 1.8 Faculty & Staff

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SVS employs teachers who are highly qualified, fully certified and/or licensed by the state. Teachers hold *at least* a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution and demonstrate competence in each core academic subject.

### *Faculty and Staff*

|                                                                            |                                                              |                                                            |                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Carol Church<br>Rhonda Powell                                              | Principal<br>Asst. Principal                                 | Robin Kirby-Peterson<br>Tracy Patridge<br>Jennifer Pacheco | Second Grade<br>Second Grade<br>Assistant |
| Ida Hammons                                                                | Secretary                                                    | Elizabeth Mink<br>Ginger Flowers                           | Third Grade                               |
| Julie Holley                                                               | Bookkeeper                                                   | Laura Hudson<br>Megan Bermond                              | Fourth Grade                              |
| Carolyn Anderson                                                           | School Counselor                                             | Jennifer Mink<br>Christy Peterson                          | Fifth Grade                               |
| Melinda Fairley                                                            | Lead Teacher,<br>Religious Coordinator                       | Cindy Cox<br>Briley Lassabe                                | Sixth Grade                               |
| Brandi Bradford<br>Natalie Auger<br>Tiffany Evans<br>Katy Peranich         | Toddlers 2's Teachers<br>Assistant Teachers                  | Kim Necaise                                                | Librarian                                 |
| Ally Smith<br>Kali Husband                                                 | Preschool -3 Lead<br>Asst. Teacher                           | Khara Molsbee<br>Cody Roth                                 | Music/Choir/Beta Club<br>Music for Mass   |
| Kalyn Hicks<br>Brayden Seal                                                | Preschool -3 lead<br>Co-teacher                              | Allison Voiron<br>Jennifer Pacheco (PK)                    | Physical Education                        |
|                                                                            |                                                              | Tara Meleones                                              | Art / Economics/Math                      |
| Jessica Deschamp<br>Leslie Herrera<br>Melanie Bishop<br>Molly Daley Waller | Preschool -4<br>Preschool -4<br>Preschool -4<br>Preschool -4 | Angela Ingram                                              | Technology Director<br>/Computer/STEM     |

|                                                                  |                                                        |                                                   |                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Tami Martin<br>Debbie Dupree<br>Cheryl Yarbrough<br>Ashlee Braly | Kindergarten<br>Kindergarten<br>Assistant<br>Assistant | Brittany Sumrall<br>Khara Colbert<br>Leslie Daley | Title I Tutorial<br>Title I Tutorial<br>Resource |
| Terri Dedeaux<br>Jamie Ruoss<br>Tammy Meyers                     | First Grade<br>First Grade<br>Assistant                | Jon Pacheco<br>Bruce Carver<br>Jessica Allen      | Cafeteria                                        |
| Bear Allen                                                       | Maintenance Director                                   | School Security Officer                           | Gene Dedeaux                                     |

## 1.9 Policies and Procedures

When no policy or procedure exists which specifically addresses a particular situation, the principal should proceed with a course of action based on other policies and procedures dealing with similar, related, or parallel situations and the mission, philosophy, objectives and/or procedures of the school. The policies and procedures of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi will take precedent if there is a conflict in policies of the school.

## Admissions

### 2.1 Admissions Policy

**2.1.1 Education Contract** The education of students of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School is based upon an agreement between the school and parents/guardians. The school agrees to provide superior educational services in exchange for payment of tuition/costs. Parents/guardians and students promise to abide by policies, procedures, and rules of the school. The information provided by the parents/guardians to the school for registration induces the school to enter into this agreement, and therefore, any misrepresentation, inaccuracy or untruth in the information provided, when discovered, may be grounds, in the sole discretion of the school, for subsequent removal of student(s) from the school and the termination of this agreement.

#### **2.1.2 State Regulations**

According to the 1976 Supplement to the Mississippi School Code, page 15, Chapter 390, House Bill No. 458, Section I: "Section 37-15-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows: 37-15-9. No child shall be enrolled or admitted to any school, which is part of the free public-school system during any school year unless such child will reach his sixth birthday on or before September 1 of said school year. No student shall be permanently enrolled in a school in the State of Mississippi who formally was enrolled in another school within the state until the cumulative record of said student should have been received from the school from which he transferred. Should such a record have become lost or destroyed then it shall be the duty of the superintendent or principal of the school where the student last attended school to initiate a new record. Section 3: This act shall take affect and be in force from and after July 1, 1977." To be eligible to enter kindergarten, a child must reach his/her fifth birthday on or before September 1. To be eligible to enter first grade, a child must reach his/her sixth birthday on or before September 1 of the school year.

### **2.1.3 Title IX and the Civil Rights Act**

In compliance with Title IX and the Civil Rights Act, SVS reaffirms that it has a non-discriminatory policy with regard to race, color, national origin, and sex both in the enrollment of students and the employment of teachers.

Admission is based on the following criteria:

1. Students currently enrolled will have ***first priority*** and will be allowed to pre-register during school registration for the following year. Students must have a FACTS agreement, online registration and registration fee to hold a spot for the upcoming year. The FACTS account must remain open and current. Any terminated FACTS account could alter a family's registration with SVDP.
2. Preference for admission during open enrollment is then given to students based on their status. People having the same status will be accepted in the order of the date that they made initial contact with the school. The order of priority is:
  - A. In-parish **practicing** Catholics with **siblings currently** enrolled for admissions for the coming year in SVS
  - B. Out-of-parish<sup>1</sup> **practicing** Catholics with **siblings currently** enrolled in SVS
  - C. Non-Catholics with **siblings currently** enrolled in SVS
  - D. In-parish **practicing** Catholics, as defined in the SVS Tuition Policy (see Section 3.2)
  - E. Out-of-parish **practicing** Catholics
  - F. Non-Catholics

### **2.1.4 US Department of Education – Child Find**

The Child Find law is a legal requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (**IDEA**). Its purpose is to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in a state, regardless of the severity of their disability, are:

- Identified
- Located
- Evaluated

It applies to children from birth through age 21, including those in various educational settings like public and private schools, as well as highly mobile or homeless children. This includes children who may have a disability even if they are performing adequately in school.

School districts are responsible for having a process to identify and evaluate children who may need special education services. This involves informing the public and parents about available services and the evaluation process. Evaluations are provided free of charge to parents.

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Diocesan guidelines, the school principal will accept a student from another parish school, only if the pastor of the parish in which the family resides approves the child's enrollment in the school. It will be the obligation of the family to contact their pastor to explain why they wish to have their child(ren) attend a school other than their parish school and request a letter of approval that must be presented to the school principal.

The main goal of Child Find is to ensure that eligible children with disabilities receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). By identifying children early, they can receive necessary intervention and special education services.

Child Find is a component of both Part C of IDEA, which addresses early intervention for infants and toddlers, and Part B of IDEA, which covers special education for older children and youth.

Ultimately, Child Find is crucial for IDEA as it ensures that children with disabilities are found and evaluated to access the support they need. The Rule reads as follows:

(a) General.

- (1) The State must have policies and procedures in effect in order to ensure that—
- (2) All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who need special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated; and
- (3) A practical method is developed and implemented to determine which children are currently receiving special education and related services.

(b) Use of term developmental delay. The following provisions apply with respect to implementing the child find requirements of this section:

- (1) A State that adopts a definition of developmental delay under §300.8(b) determines whether the term applies to children aged three through nine, or to a subset of that age range (e.g., ages three through five).
- (2) A State may not require an LEA to adopt and use the term developmental delay for any children within its jurisdiction.
- (3) If an LEA uses the term developmental delay for children described in §300.8(b), the LEA must conform to both the State's definition of that term and to the age range that has been adopted by the State.
- (4) If a State does not adopt the term developmental delay, an LEA may not independently use that term as a basis for establishing a child's eligibility under this part.

(c) Other children in child find. Child find also must include—

- (1) Children who are suspected of being a child with a disability under §300.8 and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade; and
- (2) Highly mobile children, including migrant children.

(d) Construction. Nothing in the Act requires that children be classified by their disability so long as each child who has a disability that is listed in §300.8 and who, by reason of that disability, needs special education and related services is regarded as a child with a disability under Part B of the Act.

Child Find is handled through the Harrison County Schools for St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School. Referrals are made after interventions within the classroom are unsuccessful and the multi-disciplinary team meeting which includes Language Resource teacher, Title I tutor, parents, teachers and the principal determines that the student needs a referral for testing. St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School does not have a special education program and is unable to provide services for students with severe disabilities.

### **2.1.5 Age Requirements**

The age requirements for the various grades and programs at SVS are set out below. The principal must approve of any exception to this policy.

- **Kindergarten**—According to state regulations, the child must be five (5) years old on or before September 1 to be admitted and enrolled in kindergarten.
- **Preschool**—To be admitted to the Preschool program, the child must be three (3) years old on or before September 1 for the PK3 program and four (4) years old on or before September 1 for the PK4 program.
- **Toddler Program (PK2)**—To be admitted to the Toddler Program (PK2), the child must be two (2) years old on or before September 1.

### **2.1.6 Admission on Probation**

Students may be admitted on either or both academic and behavioral probation. At the end of the first quarter, the teacher and the principal will make an assessment and recommend whether or not the child may be officially accepted into the school. If a child is accepted at SVS, both parents and students are bound to abide by the directives of the Diocese of Biloxi, the general policies of the Diocese<sup>2</sup>, as well as the local policies set forth by the Advisory Council.

## **2.2 Early Withdrawal**

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- Parents or legal guardians of students withdrawing from SVS must complete the required paperwork in the school office.
- The student's teacher must complete a Withdrawal Form.
- Permanent records cannot be given to parents or students but will be forwarded to the school to which the student transfers upon receiving the school's request. However, an unofficial copy of the records may be requested by parents/guardians for a minimal charge.
- All library books, tuition, textbooks and lunch records must be cleared before the child's transfer record is completed.
- If a student is withdrawn at any time during the month, the family will be responsible for the full tuition due that month.

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<sup>2</sup> A copy of the handbook of school policies of the Diocese of Biloxi is available for review in the principal's office.

- If an annual or semi-annual payment was made, the family will be reimbursed for the month(s) remaining after student(s) withdrawal.

## Tuition

### 3.1 Standard Rates

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Standard tuition rates shall be afforded to any family who is not a registered, active, contributing member of a Catholic Parish.

- The SVS registration fee is \$500 per child. This must be paid to hold your spot.
- All registration fees are due at the time of registration and **are non-refundable**.
- Registration fees include two tickets into the Knights Club. Please refer to Section 8.3.1 for more information on the Knights Club.
- There will also be a Security fee (for an officer on campus) of \$150.00 per child which will be added to your tuition.
- Fundraising - Four Knight Club tickets are required \$50 each. You can buy the tickets or sell the tickets. Your FACTS account will be drafted for the Knight Club tickets.

| Preschool Rates                     | Per Child |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 5 Days Full Time 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. | \$6525    |
| 5 Days Half Day 7 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | \$4500    |

| K-6      | Per Child | 2 Children | 3 Children |
|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Parish   | \$5600    | \$10600    | \$15400    |
| Standard | \$6800    | \$12800    | \$17900    |

Tuition will not be prorated - if children are in attendance any part of a month, tuition for that month will be due.

***Please see 3.7.2 for situations with Natural Disasters/Disease Outbreak.***

### 3.2 Parish Supplement

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Parish supplemented tuition rates are afforded to in-parish practicing Catholics and ***must be applied for each year***. In-parish practicing Catholics are Catholic families who are registered, active, contributing members of one of the school's six associated parishes—Holy Family, St Thomas the Apostle, Most Holy Trinity, Our Mother of Mercy, Sacred Heart, and St. Ann-Lizana.

- To be considered a registered parish member, the family must submit a completed parish registration form to the parish office of one of the associated churches and be placed on

the parish census.

- To be considered an active member of the parish, the family must attend mass at one of the churches associated with SVS on a weekly basis.
- Church attendance and regular contributions are very important. To be considered a contributing member, the family must regularly contribute financially to the parish by using the church's support envelopes. If automatic deposits are used for church contributions, the family should still drop an empty church envelope in the offering plate so that church attendance may be recorded.
- To be afforded the parish supplemented tuition rate, families must submit a Parish Supplement Request Form, which is included in the student registration packet, to the pastor of the parish where the family attends mass each week. The pastor should send the signed form to the school indicating if parish supplement has been awarded to the family. This form must be completed yearly and is due to the school office by May 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The parish supplemented tuition status may be afforded to parishioners from other local parishes that do not have a school if the pastor of the other parish approves in writing and states that the parishioner meets the parish supplement criteria. Parents are required to obtain a letter from their pastor and submit it to the school office which will be submitted to the School Advisory Council for approval.
- Preschool students do not qualify for Parish Supplement. However, preschool tuition payments can qualify for childcare tax credit benefits (Tax ID #20-5780801).

All Catholic families will be registered at the standard tuition rate until their application for parish supplement has been returned to and evaluated by the school. This form is required yearly and has a due date of May 30<sup>th</sup>.

### 3.3 Payment Plans

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Families have the following three options for paying tuition each year:

- **Monthly Payment Plan**- requires enrollment in the FACTS Tuition Management Program. The payment will be automatically debited from the assigned bank account in ten (10) or eleven (11) payments. Payments can be drawn on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of each month from July through May, or August through May, respectively. **Your account must remain active during the school year.**
- **Semi-Annual Plan** – requires enrollment in the FACTS Tuition Management Program. The payment will be automatically debited from the assigned bank account on August 5<sup>th</sup> and January 5<sup>th</sup>. **Your account must remain active during the school year.**
- **Annual Plan** – This plan requires enrollment in the FACTS Tuition Management Program. Payment is due by August 1<sup>st</sup>. If the payment is not made by August 10<sup>th</sup> the FACTS form that is filled out at Registration will be activated and drawn on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Payments for the Annual Payment plan may be made anytime during the summer in order to comply with the August 1<sup>st</sup> deadline by mailing the payment to the school office.

### 3.4 Tuition Assistance

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Tuition assistance is based on need and availability of funds and must be applied for each school year. If circumstances change in the school year and additional assistance is required, parents should contact their parish office.

#### **3.4.1 FACTS Grant and Assistance Program**

If a family needs reduced tuition, you may fill out the FACTS program for grants and aid. **Tuition assistance must be applied for in the spring.** The application form will be processed through FACTS Grant and Assistance Program. Applicants must adhere to all requirements and application fees from FACTS, which will review the application and return a suggested rate of tuition to the parish office by May 1. (St. Thomas and Holy Family are the only parishes that use FACTS grant and aid to determine *needs-based assistance*. You must go to the parish office of your parish to request **needs-based assistance**.)

#### **3.4.2 ACE Scholarship**

You must complete FACTS Grant and Aid through the ACE portal to be considered for this scholarship. All decisions and scholarship amounts are determined by ACE. There are eligibility requirements for this scholarship based on income.

### 3.5 Tuition Delinquency Policy

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In the course of a school year, there may arise occasions in which families become delinquent in their tuition payments. This results in a drag on the school's cash flow. Delinquent accounts will be handled as follows:

- If there is any outstanding balance seven (7) days prior to the start of the academic year, the student(s) will not be allowed to register or start the new school year.
- If there is an outstanding tuition balance in the middle of the quarter, the progress report(s) of the student(s) will not be released until payment has been received.
- If there is an outstanding tuition balance at the end of the quarter, the nine-week term grades of the student(s) will not be released until payment is received. ***Parent must meet with the principal.***
- If there is any outstanding tuition balance by December 20 of the school year, the school will inform the family that their account must be current before the start of the spring semester and that the family's FACTS account must be reinstated and ***remain active*** for the duration of the school year. If the outstanding balance is not paid in full the day before the first day of school in January, the student(s) will not be allowed to return for the spring semester.
- If there is any outstanding account balance(s), including tuition, cafeteria, library books/fines or aftercare, by May 20, final report cards will not be issued, and students

will not be allowed to return to St. Vincent until their account is cleared. There is no guarantee that your spot will be held until your account is cleared.

### **3.5.1 Payment Attempts**

- **First Payment Attempt:** If payment is not processed on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of the month (as specified in the agreement), FACTS will try once again to debit the assigned bank account on the following date designated for the school's debit, the 20<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>, respectively:
  - FACTS will send a missed payment letter and assesses a fee for non-sufficient funds (NSF).
  - If a FACTS account is not active or has not been set up, the school will notify the parents/guardians by phone and/or email that they must have an active FACTS account for their child(ren) to continue at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School.
- **Second Payment Attempt:** If payment is not processed on the second attempt, FACTS will send another missed payment letter and assess another NSF fee. Within five days, FACTS will notify the school of the second unsuccessful attempt to draw on the account. At this time, the school will contact the family by phone and/or email to arrange for payment of the outstanding balance.
  - If a family still does not have an active FACTS account at this time, the school will contact the parents for a meeting to make the account active.
- **Third Payment Attempt:** If payment is not processed on the third attempt, FACTS will send another missed payment letter, assess another NSF fee and contact the school of the third and final attempt to draw on this account. The school will make a second attempt to contact the family by phone and/or email.
  - If the balance is still not paid or the family has not contacted the school within a week of this second attempt at contact, a certified letter from the school will be sent informing the family of the outstanding balance and the need to contact the school.
  - If payment arrangements are not made in response to this letter and a FACTS account is not activated, the nine-week term grades of the student(s) will not be released until payment is received.
  - FACTS users will be blocked until payment is received and the delinquent account is made current.

As a Catholic institution, we endeavor to help all families who are going through hardships. However, it is the responsibility of the family that has difficulty meeting its tuition obligation to **immediately notify** the principal and/or pastor to determine whether special arrangements and/or adjustments to the agreement can be made. If a new payment plan is agreed upon, it must be put in writing and signed by all parties.

### **3.5.2 Preschool Tuition Delinquency Policy**

Preschool tuition payment attempts will follow the process set out in Section 3.5.1. If there is an outstanding account balance of more than one (1) month, a letter or email from the school will be sent home informing the family of the outstanding balance and the need to contact the school. ***If payment arrangements are not made with the school and a FACTS account is not activated, the student will not be allowed to return to school on the first school day of the next month.***

### **3.6 Returned Check Policy**

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If a family presents payments that are NSF on three (3) occasions for any school charges (including cafeteria, PTO, tuition, aftercare, etc.), only cash payments will be accepted for the remainder of the school year. The family will also incur a service charge fee of \$40.00 for processing.

### **3.7 Financial Obligation Policy**

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#### **3.7.1 Incidental Billing**

Monthly charges (i.e. cafeteria, aftercare) will be billed through FACTS twice monthly (after the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month). Miscellaneous charges will be posted upon occurrence. You will receive notification from FACTS when these charges are posted. Some examples include: *Field trips, sports, year books, t-shirts, fundraisers etc.*

#### **3.7.2 Natural Disaster/Pandemic**

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances which, in the judgment of the school administration, make it infeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, school shall resume as soon as practical via distance learning and/or other methods adopted and/or developed by the school administration and faculty. Due to continuing financial obligations relating to operational costs, including administrative, faculty, and staff salaries, there shall be no suspension, reduction or refund of tuition or applicable fees.

## **School Policies & Procedures**

### **4.1 Attendance**

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Prompt and regular attendance at school is essential for successful schoolwork and is required by MS 37-13-91 Compulsory School Attendance Law. Absences burden the student and teacher and may impact student progress. The parent/guardian must notify the school office between 7:40 and 9:00 AM on the day of an absence. Any written documentation pertaining to the absence should be sent to the teacher upon the student's return to school-this includes doctor's notes and parent's notes. Determination of excused/unexcused will be made in accordance with the law by

administration. To participate in any school-sponsored event that occurs after school hours, a student must be present in school on that day, for at least 66% of the day.

Absences will be considered unexcused unless the following conditions apply:

1. Illness (doctor's excuse **may** be required) or isolation ordered by health officials.
2. Medical or dental appointments (These should be made after school hours when possible.)
3. Death or serious illness in the immediate family (Notify the teacher/principal.)
4. School closing
5. Required attendance at court proceedings.
6. Valid educational travels **preapproved** by administration.

A letter will be sent to the parent/guardian of any student who accrues 8 absences (lawful or unlawful) in a semester. If a student accumulates 12 unexcused absences during the school year, the local truancy officer will be contacted. This may result in charges being filed against the parent/guardian for educational neglect. Absences not verified with a note will automatically be considered unexcused. Please call the school to report an absence and send a note to school when the student returns detailing the reason for the absence. If you have a doctor's excuse, please send as soon as possible.

Normal school hours begin at 7:50 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. Students are expected to arrive on time. Attendance is documented in school records.

- Students may not arrive earlier than 7:00 a.m. Any student arriving before 7:30 a.m. will go directly to the cafeteria. At 7:30 a.m., students will go to their classrooms.
- At 7:45 a.m., teachers will escort students to the gym for Prayer and Pledge. Students should be at school and in the classroom by 7:45. The tardy bell rings at 7:50.

#### **4.1.1 Tardiness**

- Any student arriving at 7:45 a.m. must check in at the front office. The back door will be locked, and no teacher is available to open the door for students arriving late. They will be directed by intercom to come to the front office.
- Children with excessive tardiness (5 unexcused tardies within a 9-week period) will receive notification of the excessive absences and parents will be required to meet with the principal and teacher to discuss the matter. Through MDE accreditation, we are required by law to report excessive absences. Please send in all absentee excuses from the doctor or written excuses from the parent to the front desk.

#### **4.1.2 Late Check-in / Early Check-out**

If it is necessary to leave school early for medical appointments or other important reasons, students must bring a note from home, or a parent must call the office. The note should be given to the teacher, who will send it to the school office. Parents and/or visitors wishing to check a student out or return a student to school must sign the student in/out and wait for the office staff or principal to get the student from the classroom or return the student to the classroom.

No teacher and/or teacher aide is to release a student to a parent or visitor without clearance from the front office.

To participate in any school sponsored events which occur after school hours, a student must be present at least 60% of the day.

#### **4.1.3 Notification of Absence**

Parents are asked to call the school office after 8:00 a.m. on the first day of a student's absence.

- Excused absences require a doctor's or parent's note stating the reason for the absence. Official documentation for an excused absence must be received within five days of the absence. Students missing five consecutive days of school and/or a total of twelve (12) days of unexcused absences will be reported to the State Attendance Officer in accordance with Mississippi Code Section 37-13-91, As Amended (1972).
- Excused absences are defined as those involving school business, illness or injury, death or serious illness (immediate family), court proceedings, medical appointment or religious observances.
- Unexcused absences are those deemed non-medical, non-emergency (including vacations) and/or not cleared and approved by the principal. The teacher is not obligated but may assist the child in making up missed work or tests for any unexcused absence. Make-up work will be due within the same number of days that the student missed.

#### **4.2 Records Review**

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In keeping with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, parents have the right to request an appointment with the school administrator to view their child's record at any time during regular school hours. SVS abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents:

*In the absence of a court order, to the contrary, a school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child.*

If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

#### **4.3 Promotion & Retention**

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- A student will be promoted if, considering his/her abilities, s/he satisfactorily completes the work of the current grade.
- Promotion from Early Childhood shall be based upon accomplishing the required essential curriculum elements as well as progress made in social, emotional and physical growth.

- If a student receives a grade below 65, the student fails the subject. If two core subjects<sup>3</sup> are failed, the student may be recommended for retention. Parents must be informed of the likelihood of a student's academic failure and possible retention after the January report card and before the end of the school year. Parents are ordinarily informed of the school's recommendation in writing when placement concerns arise.
- A student may not be retained more than once in the same grade or twice during grades K-6. Every effort will be made by the school administrator and teachers to provide alternative programs or adjust the regular program for children with special needs.
- If all avenues have been explored and the school cannot meet the needs of the student or the parent(s) have not acted on the school's recommendations regarding diagnostic evaluation and/or outside tutoring or remediation, the principal has the right to request withdrawal of the enrolled student or refuse re-admittance.

#### 4.4 Uniforms

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All students in the Preschool Program through Grade 6 are required to wear the school uniform<sup>4</sup> per the following guidelines:

##### **4.4.1 Boys PK3 – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- Plain navy shorts or slacks (no patch pockets and the length of slacks must touch the shoe); preschool boys may wear pants with an elastic waist.
- White pique knit polo shirt (long or short sleeve) embroidered with the school crest, which must be tucked in;
- ***Black or Navy belt*** (if there are belt loops on the pants);
- White athletic crew socks that are at least 2 inches above the ankle.
- Navy blue leather/tennis shoes ("sneakers")—Velcro closures are permitted in PK only.
- Red sweatshirts and fleece embroidered with the school crest may be worn in class and can be purchased through the school.
- Plain white undershirts or turtlenecks—with no visible logo—may be worn under the uniform shirt.
- ***Outer coats MAY NOT be worn in the classroom.***
- Hair must be clean, neatly groomed and the child's natural color and must not touch the collar, eyebrow or the ear; No fad haircuts that call attention to the child's appearance are allowed (this includes colorful braids, other hair paraphernalia, lines cut into the side of the head or bangs that hang in the face or hair that touches the collar for boys. ex. mullet).
- Simple jewelry may be worn, including a necklace, watch and/or bracelet. No rings or earrings allowed; and
- No make-up, nail polish or tattoos of any kind will be permitted.

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<sup>3</sup> Core Subjects for grades 1-3 consist of Reading, Language Arts and Mathematics and in grades 4-6, Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

<sup>4</sup> All clothing should be labeled with the child's name.

#### **4.4.2 Girls PK3 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**

- School plaid jumper: length of jumper must be touching the top of the knee.
- White shirt with a peter pan collar embroidered with the school crest.
- White or navy bike/mini shorts under jumpers
- White athletic crew socks (must be 2 inches above the ankle); Solid Blue or White leggings (no designs)
- Navy blue leather/tennis shoes (“sneakers”)—Velcro closures are permitted in PK only.
- Red sweatshirts and fleece embroidered with the school crest may be worn in class and can be purchased through the school.
- Plain white undershirts or turtlenecks—with no visible logo—may be worn under the uniform shirt.
- ***Outer coats MAY NOT be worn in the classroom; they must wear***
- Hair must be clean, neatly groomed and the child’s natural color; No fad haircuts that call attention to the child’s appearance are allowed (this includes colorful braids and other hair paraphernalia, lines cut into the side of the head or bangs that hang in the face).
- Hair bows may only be **red, white, navy or school plaid** and must not exceed 6” Barrettes and bobby pins must be natural hair color only.
- Simple jewelry may be worn, including a necklace, single pair of stud earrings, ***regular*** watch and/or bracelet, but no rings allowed; and
- No make-up, nail polish or tattoos of any kind will be permitted.

#### **4.4.3 Girls 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- School plaid skirt or skort, length must be touching the knee.
- White pique knit polo shirt (long or short sleeve), with the school crest embroidered on the left chest, which must be tucked in.
- White or navy bike/mini shorts under skirt.
- White athletic crew socks that are 2 inches above the ankle. No frilly or lace socks are allowed; Solid Blue/White leggings
- Navy blue leather/tennis shoes (“sneakers”)—Velcro closures are permitted in PK only.
- Red sweatshirts and fleece embroidered with the school crest may be worn in class and can be purchased through the school;
- Plain white undershirts or turtlenecks—with no visible logo—may be worn under the uniform shirt.
- ***Outer coats MAY NOT be worn in the classroom.***
- Hair must be clean, neatly groomed and the child’s natural color; No fad haircuts that call attention to the child’s appearance are allowed (this includes colorful braids and other hair paraphernalia, lines cut into the side of the head, bangs hanging in the face).
- Hair bows may only be **red, white, navy or school plaid** and must not exceed 6” and barrettes and bobby pins must be natural hair color only.

- Simple jewelry may be worn, including a necklace, single pair of stud earrings, **regular** watch and/or bracelet but no rings allowed; and
- No make-up, nail polish or tattoos of any kind will be permitted.

#### **4.4.4 Uniform Suppliers**

Uniforms may be purchased through the following suppliers:

**Southern Printing**  
230 Davis Avenue  
Pass Christian, MS 39571  
228-452-7309

**Educate & Celebrate**  
311 Cowan Road  
Gulfport, MS 39507  
228-206-1901 228-547-0811

**Educate & Celebrate** is open **Monday - Saturday** and even later in the evenings during the summer. In addition, we have a uniform website for those that would like to order online [educateandcelebrate.myshopify.com](http://educateandcelebrate.myshopify.com)

Families wishing assistance for uniforms due to financial hardship are welcome to visit the school uniform closet. Clean, used uniforms are available for purchase at \$2/item. Fleece and sweatshirts are \$5/item. Contact the school office for more information.

The **school name, logo, motto, or mascot may not be used in any form without the permission of the principal.** All uniforms and apparel must be purchased through approved vendors and uniform closet. Contact the school office for any questions in regard to the use of school name, logo, motto, or mascot.

#### **4.4.5 Non-Uniform Dress Code**

On special occasions, students may be permitted to wear “free dress”, according to the following guidelines:

- Regular jeans, slacks or shorts (no shorter than 3 inches above the knee).
- Girls **may not wear gym shorts** shorter than 3 inches above the knee.
- Skirts, skorts or dresses (no shorter than 3 inches above the knee);
- Leggings may be worn with shorts over them.
- Shirts that fully cover the midsection.
- No shirts or dresses with sleeves less than 2” in width.
- No flip-flops, tight clothing, low rise, hip hugger or saggy/baggy pants; and
- Shoes must be closed toe and closed heel.
- No hats or caps

Any student wearing clothing that does not comply with the non-uniform policy will be required to change clothing, either by the parent being called to bring a change of clothes or by borrowing a school uniform from the school. The principal has the final decision on all matters of dress and grooming.

## 4.5 Discipline

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SVS uses a school-wide behavioral management plan, which clearly communicates behavior expectations and consequences while fostering positive reinforcement and nurturing students to be self-disciplined with Christian behavior.

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School expects and enjoys a high standard of propriety from all students. Parents and teachers are called to guide students in developing a sense of personal and social responsibility through self-discipline. Students are called to be respectful and to demonstrate Christian character.

Discipline is seen as an opportunity for faith development. We expect students to conduct themselves in a manner that is becoming of a Catholic student and always exhibit self-disciplined behavior, on or off campus, in conformity with the norms of our school handbook. The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations.

Our educators teach and model desired behavioral traits regularly and lovingly encourage children to meet these goals and behavioral outcomes each day. Teachers will communicate with parents the expectation of conduct that exhibits our Catholic values. Classroom Teachers establish age-appropriate procedures at the beginning of the year. Goals and outcomes for each classroom are shared with parents as the year begins. Parents are invited to be a part of the relationship-building process throughout the year.

Communication to parents regarding student misbehavior is accomplished through a system of written “Checklists” (in conjunction with phone calls, conferences or emails). Checklists are divided into categories, which **graduate in severity based on the behavioral infraction.**

- The “Category 1 Checklist” results in a warning. However, three (3) warnings within a 9-week period will result in a detention. This checklist is for minor infractions.
- The “Category 2 Checklist” **may be given for repeated warnings and also for more serious behavioral infractions.** These result in immediate detention. A student receiving three “Category 2 Checklists” within a 9-week period will receive an in-school suspension.
- The “Category 3 Checklists” are most severe and may result in In-school suspension or Out of school suspension as well as a meeting with the principal and/or Pastor, or expulsion depending on the severity of the situation.

### **4.5.1 Campus Expectations**

- Students are expected to behave respectfully and orderly throughout campus so as not to disrupt learning.
- Students are expected to follow all school rules and procedures and must adhere to the SVS Honor Code:
  1. Be Respectful
  2. Be Responsible

3. Be Safe
4. Be Spiritual

- Students are expected to always conform to the uniform code.
- Students are expected to learn in a safe, bully-free environment.

#### **4.5.2 Classroom Expectations**

- Each student should be allowed to learn without interruption from other students.
- Teachers expect to teach without behavioral disruption, so when the teacher is speaking, students must listen and follow directions.
- Students will respect all others and keep hands, feet and objects to themselves.
- Students should be prepared for class each day, including having the necessary books, supplies, homework and updated planner.
- Students should stay in their seat unless given permission to do otherwise.
- Students should raise their hand and wait to be recognized before speaking.
- All assignments are to be turned in on time. Failure to turn in homework/classwork on the correct day will result in a checklist. It is the responsibility of the student to discuss with the teacher missed or incomplete assignments.

Individual teachers have the discretion to expand on these classroom behavioral guidelines and/or disciplinary procedures.

#### **4.5.3 Detention**

Detention sessions may include lunch, recess or being removed from class for a period of one hour in the office and/or library. Students are responsible for any missed assignments if they are pulled for detention in the office. If an after-school detention is assigned, parents will be notified of the date and time for afterschool detention.

Excessive conduct issues will affect a student's involvement in all school sponsored events including CYO sports.

#### **4.5.4 In School Intervention (In school suspension)**

#### **4.5.5 Out of School Suspension (OSS)**

### **4.6 Grievance**

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A Grievance Policy has been established to ensure due process and to provide a process of appeal for a perceived wrong:

- If a family has a grievance, they must first communicate that grievance to the teacher.

- If the issue cannot be resolved or requires a higher authority, the family should then go to the principal.
- If the issue remains unresolved after meeting with the principal, the family may submit a written appeal to the school Advisory Council within five (5) days of the event requesting the council to act as a mediator between the principal and the aggrieved party. The president of the school Advisory Council will place the request on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled board meeting.
- Upon hearing and reviewing all the evidence, the School Leadership Team will deliberate and send a recommendation within five (5) business days to the parties involved concerning a proposed resolution of the matter.
- The principal will respond in writing to the aggrieved party, whether to accept the School Leadership recommendation, reverse the previous decision of the complaint or modify the original decision.
- If the matter cannot be resolved within this grievance policy, the aggrieved parties may pursue an appeal process according to Governance #8 of the Diocesan Policy Manual

## **4.7 Communication**

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Every effort is made to keep parents informed of school events. Important information is communicated through the school website ([www.svdpcatholicsschool.org](http://www.svdpcatholicsschool.org)), FACTS information system, SVS parent Facebook page, SVS Instagram, *SVS This Week* newsletter and church bulletins.

Parents are welcome to confer personally with the principal and/or teachers. In each case, it is advisable to call or email the school office in advance to arrange an appointment to discuss any issues of concern. It is also important that parents contact the teacher before contacting the principal. If they are not satisfied following conferencing with the teacher, they should request a conference with the principal and teacher collectively so as to resolve any issues.

### **4.7.1 FACTS**

FACTS is an online program that allows parents to take an active role in their student's school life. Parents will be assigned a login and password to access their child's records, including grades, assignments, attendance, fees, calendars and weekly bulletins from teachers. This system will also be used to make payments for lunch, tuition, and other charges.

### **4.7.2 FACTS Messenger System**

FACTS Messenger is a diocesan-wide communication system that allows SVS to send parents information through email, text and telephone messages. During registration, parents are asked to provide their preferred method of contact in order to receive these messages. It is the responsibility of the parents to maintain accurate information within the FACTS system.

### **4.7.3 Media Release**

By signing the media release form, parents grant the school the right to disseminate and utilize the following listed information pertaining to your child(ren):

- Photographs, video images or similar technology that portrays a visual representation of your child(ren), including candid images taken during school hours and at school functions.
- Audio or digitally reproduced, taped and other vocal reproductions and representations of your child(ren)'s voice.
- Honor roll lists containing your child(ren)'s name.
- Student of the Month, religious, athletic and other awards received by your child(ren) as judged appropriate for inclusion at the sole discretion of the school.
- Samples of your child(ren)'s work (e.g., art, essays, etc.); and
- The school newsletter and/or newspaper with any references made to your child(ren) and his/her school activities; and

### **4.7.4 Internet Use**

SVS provides all students, faculty and staff access to the Internet. Students must have permission from at least one parent/guardian to access the Internet at school. Any use of the Internet at SVS must comply with the philosophy and rules of discipline as outlined in the handbook. Any infraction will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Discipline Policy (see Section 5.5).

- A student's Internet activities at school must be in support of education and research and be consistent with the educational objectives of SVS.
- Students are required to have teacher supervision when accessing information on school grounds.
- The use of the Internet is a privilege. Inappropriate use may result in a loss of the privilege to use electronics.
- Actions that constitute unacceptable Internet use include, but are not limited to:
  - Using impolite, abusive or otherwise objectionable language in messages.
  - Placing unlawful information on the Internet.
  - Using the Internet illegally in ways that violate federal, international, state or local laws or treaties.
  - Using the Internet at school for non-school related activities.
  - Sending messages or data that are likely to result in the loss of the recipient's work, data and/or hardware or software.

- Sending chain letters, flame letters, pyramid schemes or any other content to lists or individuals that would cause congestion or otherwise interfere with the work of others.
  - Using the Internet for advertising or commercial purposes.
  - Using the Internet for political lobbying.
  - Sending or receiving copyrighted materials or materials protected by the trade secret without owner's permission.
  - Knowingly giving one's password to others.
  - Using another person's password.
  - Using Internet access for sending or retrieving pornographic, threatening or violent material, such as information on bomb, and/or inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the network.
  - Circumventing security measures on school or remote computers or networks.
  - Attempting to gain improper access to another's resources, programs or data.
  - Vandalizing, which includes any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user on the Internet, including the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
  - Revealing one's name, address, phone number or any personal information to any person or identity on the system (If anyone requests this information, the user should immediately disconnect and inform a faculty member of the incident.);
  - Falsifying one's identity to others; or
  - Changing any computer fields that do not belong to user.
- No student should personally solicit emails, and parents should not send emails to students during school hours.
  - Any inappropriate messages will be reported.
  - Use of any information obtained via the Internet and related technologies are at the user's own risk and will not be considered private.
  - The educational programs governed by the school specifically deny any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained and make no warranty with respect thereto or costs incurred thereby.

#### 4.8 Transportation

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Normal school hours begin at 7:50 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. ***Students are expected to arrive on time.*** Parents are responsible for their children's transportation to and from school. For the safety of the students, the following procedures are to be followed:

- Parents **may not talk or text on cell phones in the school parking lot while dropping off or picking up students.**
- Students should not walk through the parking lot into the school during carline.

- All parents must pick up their children in the car line and **remain in the car** while the student enters the car.
- Only authorized people may pick up students and must present a current school-issued ID card before a student can be released.
- School-issued ID cards should be displayed in the front car window when picking up students. **If a parent or authorized person does not have the school-issued ID card, he or she will need to park in a designated parking space and report to the front office.**
- The cost of replacing a school-issued ID card is 2 for \$1.00.
- Any change in the student's normal means of transportation must be sent to the school office in writing.

#### **4.8.1 Morning Drop-off Procedures**

- Normal drop-off times are 7:30 to 7:45 a.m. Drivers should enter SVS from Espy Ave. and drop off PK students in front lobby of the school. Teachers will escort students from their cars and student ambassadors will walk them to the PK hall. Parents should not let their child out of the car until a teacher is present to escort them into the building, or the parent should park and escort their child into the building. If the PK student has older siblings, they may also be dropped off in the front.
- Students in Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade should be dropped off in the back of the school by the cafeteria. Students may exit the car on the right sidewalk at any point on the circle and walk to either of the two back doors. Parents should not exit their vehicles at any point in the car line.
- If a parent wishes to stay for Prayer & Pledge, students should be dropped off first and then the parent may park in a designated parking lot and join the child for the morning assembly. Parents should exit the school from the cafeteria immediately following Prayer & Pledge and should not linger in the halls or outside of the classrooms. If a parent wishes to stay, the visitor's policy must be followed (see Section 9.1).
- If students arrive before 7:30 a.m., they should be taken directly to the school cafeteria where they will be supervised in before-school care. Students may *not* be dropped off before 7:00 a.m.
- If a student arrives after **7:45 a.m.**, the **parent must park in a designated parking spot and escort his/her child into the building. For the safety of the students, parents may not leave their child unattended to enter the school building.**
- Parents ***may not stop or leave their car unattended in front car line of the school or in the back-car line.***

#### **4.8.2 Afternoon Pick-up Procedures**

- PK students will be dismissed at 2:30 p.m. from the front of the school. If the PK student has older siblings, s/he may be dismissed at the back, car line at 3:00 p.m.
- Students in Kindergarten through 6th grade will be dismissed from the back of the school in a double carline.
- Drivers should enter the campus for afternoon pick-up as they do for morning drop-off. They should always remain in their car. A teacher will bring the student(s) to the car and buckle the student(s) in.
- Student(s) who are not picked up by 3:15 p.m. will be sent to after-care, which is held in the school cafeteria. After-care charges are assessed from 3:30-5:30 p.m. See Section 6.5.1 for rates.
- PK students who attend for half-days should be picked up at 12:30 p.m. in the front lobby of the school. A teacher assistant will escort these students to the front of the school no earlier than 12:25 p.m.
- In case of severe cold or rainy days, SVS will implement a gradual release in a single carline. Preschool students will be released from the front of the school at 2:15 p.m. Students in Kindergarten through 2nd grade, and any older siblings, will be released from the back of the school in a single carline at 2:30 p.m. Students in grades 3-6 will be released at 2:45 p.m. from the back of the school in a single carline. Parents will be notified if these procedures are implemented.
- No checkouts from the front office after 2:30 p.m. You must go through the car line after 2:30 p.m. If you have extenuating circumstances and need to pick up early (before 2:30), you must contact the front office. They will have all of your children ready to pick up when you arrive to sign your children out.
- If you wish to check out upper grade children with PK child/children for an early release day or 60% day, you must send notification to the front office. We will have your children ready for you when you arrive for pick up.

#### **4.8.3 Field Trips**

In connection with their classroom studies, students may take various educational field trips throughout the year. These trips are an integral and exciting part of learning. Parents will be notified in advance of the specific details for all field trips and will be required to return a signed permission form. If a parent does not want his/her child to participate, it should be indicated on the form. **Field trips are a privilege afforded to students. If a student fails to meet academic or behavioral requirements, s/he may be excluded from participating in the field trip.**

The following rules will apply:

- Students must follow the SVS Honor Code at all times.

- Teachers will be responsible for communicating to parents the class's needs for chaperones and details about the field trip.
- All students **will** ride the bus to the field trip destination but may be signed out by **their parent** at the end of the field trip. Only a parent of a child or authorized person on file at the school will be permitted to sign a child out from a field trip. If a parent is not comfortable with a child riding the bus, the student cannot sign into school until they arrive at the field trip destination. The teacher will let the office know that the student is present.
- In the event that the bus is not available, the school depends on parent volunteer drivers for field trips. Specific procedures are in place for the safe transport of the children, and it is imperative that these procedures be followed:

All parent drivers must complete the driver information form provided by the office and have current insurance documentation on file before driving for any field trip. ***This must be completed at least two weeks before the field trip.***

In accordance with the Diocese of Biloxi Risk Management Office, *"no student participating in any program and/or activity, under our actual or perceived care, custody and/or control, will be permitted to ride in the front passenger seat of any vehicle," regardless of whether the vehicle has side airbags.*

All children in the lower grades are to be transported using booster seats according to the weight and height limits prescribed by law. Parents should leave their child's booster seat at school with the teacher on field trip days to be used by volunteer drivers.

All students must wear seat belts at all times; there may be only one child per working seat belt while traveling.

The **teacher in charge of the field trip will make vehicle assignments for students**, provide address of the location and carry copies of emergency medical information for each student on every trip.

Students are to remain with the assigned chaperone/driver for the entire day.

**Chaperones will not be allowed to bring siblings** on any field trip. If they are going to chaperone, they must be able to monitor students on the field trip at all times without added distractions. If parents bring siblings on the field trip, they will not be allowed to chaperone a group of students with the exception of their own child.

Drivers will remain with the field trip "caravan" and follow the designated route. **It is imperative that drivers not make unauthorized stops or detours while transporting children.**

Drivers are expected to obey all traffic laws and acceptable speed limits.

Drivers are to call the school immediately in the event of car trouble, separation from the caravan or inability to find the field trip destination.

If a child requires medication during a field trip, it must be submitted to the front office, along with detailed instructions, **at least two days prior** to the field trip to allow the teacher time to plan and organize for its distribution on the day of the field trip.

#### **4.8.4 Nathan's Law - MS Code § 63-3-615 (2024)**

The School Bus Safety Task Force was created by Nathan's Law and with the support of Gov. Phi Bryant. The mission of this task force is to help make traveling to and from school safer for our students in the state of Mississippi. The Mississippi Legislature passed Nathan's Law as a proactive strategy to protect our most valuable resource- children. Nathan's Law is as follows:

- **(1)**
  - **(a)** The driver of a vehicle upon a street or highway upon meeting or overtaking any school bus that has stopped on the street or highway for the purpose of receiving or discharging any school children shall come to a complete stop at least ten (10) feet from the school bus before reaching the school bus when there is in operation on the school bus the flashing red lights provided in Section 63-7-23, or when a retractable, hand-operated stop sign is extended; the driver shall not proceed until the children have crossed the street or highway and the school bus has resumed motion or the flashing red lights are no longer actuated and the hand-operated stop sign is retracted.
  - **(b)** The driver of a vehicle upon a divided highway that has four (4) lanes or more and permits at least two (2) lanes of traffic to travel in opposite directions need not stop upon meeting or passing a school bus that is stopped in the opposing roadway, or if the school bus is stopped in a loading zone that is a part of or adjacent to the highway and where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.
- **(2)**
  - **(a)** Except as provided in paragraph (b), any person violating the provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon a first conviction thereof shall be fined not less than Three Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$350.00) nor more than Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$750.00), or imprisoned for not more than one (1) year, or both. For a second or subsequent offense, the offenses being committed within a period of five (5) years, the person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not less than Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$750.00) nor more than One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00), or imprisoned for not more than one (1) year, or both. In addition, the Commissioner of Public Safety or his duly authorized designee, after conviction for a second or

subsequent offense and upon receipt of the court abstract, shall suspend the driver's license and driving privileges of the person for a period of ninety (90) days.

- **(b)** A conviction under this section for a violation resulting in any injury to a child who is in the process of boarding or exiting a school bus shall be a violation of Section 97-3-7, and a violator shall be punished under subsection (2) of that section.
- **(3)** This section shall be applicable only in the event the school bus shall bear upon the front and rear thereon a plainly visible sign containing the words "school bus" in letters not less than four (4) inches in height.
- **(4)** If any person witnesses the driver of any vehicle violating the provisions of this section and the identity of the driver of the vehicle is not otherwise apparent, it shall be a rebuttable inference that the person in whose name the vehicle is registered committed the violation. If charges are filed against multiple owners of a motor vehicle, only one (1) of the owners may be convicted and court costs may be assessed against only one (1) of the owners. If the vehicle that is involved in the violation is registered in the name of a rental or leasing company and the vehicle is rented or leased to another person at the time of the violation, the rental or leasing company may rebut the inference of guilt by providing the law enforcement officer or prosecuting authority with a copy of the rental or lease agreement in effect at the time of the violation.

#### **4.9 Emergency, Health & Safety**

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- PK and/or Kindergarten students are required to present an immunization record and original Certificate of Compliance from the Mississippi Department of Health showing that the student has all of the shots necessary to attend school.
- If a student transfers from another school within the state, his/her records should contain the Certificate of Compliance.
- Parents are asked to inform the school of any serious or chronic ailments a student may have.
  - A child may not attend school with any of the following symptoms: ***fever, undiagnosed rash, vomiting, lice, diarrhea, inflamed eyes and severe cold or sore throat.*** They should be free of any symptoms for 24 hours OR have a doctor's excuse with the suggested date of return to school.
  - ***A child must be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school.*** A fever is defined as 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally, or 102°F taken rectally (Mississippi Department of Health). A reading of 100.4°F on a no touch thermometer is a fever.
  - The school administrator is authorized to take the temperature of a student. If a child becomes ill or injured while at school, the parent will be called, and the child will be isolated from other students until picked up. If parents cannot be reached, the staff

will attempt to contact other individuals listed on the emergency contact list.

- Parents are required to keep emergency information current.
- If a child becomes ill or injured while at school, the parent will be called, and the child will rest at the nurse's station near the front office until picked up. If parents cannot be reached, the staff will attempt to contact other individuals listed on the emergency contact list.
- In the event of a serious accident or injury, SVS staff will contact 911 immediately and then the parent. Paramedics will decide on the appropriate action. If the child needs emergency treatment, he or she will be taken to the nearest available medical facility that is capable of providing the necessary treatment. The parent will be responsible for all medical charges.
- SVS staff will only administer medication that has been prescribed by a doctor. The medication must be in the original prescription bottle and have the student's name on the label. Medication cannot be expired and must have adequate dosage. A written medical release form is available at the school office and must be completed and signed in order for SVS staff to administer the medication.<sup>5</sup> It is the parents' responsibility to keep regular prescriptions up to date.
- Medications may not be left with the child's teacher, nor should students bring medications to school in their backpacks. Parents are required to personally bring any medications and instructions directly to the front office to be kept at the nurse's station, where the child will report to receive his/her proper dose.
- Parents should provide a record of any regular medications a student may be taking in order to provide SVS staff with a better understanding of the child's educational needs.

#### **4.9.1 Emergency Closure of School Due to Natural Disaster/Pandemic**

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances which, in the judgement of the school administration, make it infeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, school shall resume as soon as practical via distance learning and/or other methods adopted and/or developed by the school administration and faculty. Due to continuing financial obligations relating to operational costs, including administrative, faculty and staff salaries, there shall be no suspension, reduction or refund of tuition or applicable fees.

#### **4.9.2 Gender Policy**

God made us in his image: imago Dei. He created us male and female. Gn. 1:27. The Church's teaching on gender and sexuality is so rich and parents and students are encouraged to learn more about these profound truths as a family. Parents are charged with the sacred obligation to teach their children and pass on the Catholic faith. At our Catholic schools, we are blessed to be able to pass on these sacred truths by passing on the faith in our classrooms.

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<sup>5</sup> It is preferable to request that the child's physician prescribe medication that can be administered outside of school hours.

Accordingly, the Church rejects the modern fallacy and heresy that a person can subjectively choose to be a sex different than the one God gave that person. This is contrary to Catholic teaching. In endeavoring to ensure a nurturing Catholic school environment, the Diocese of Biloxi is promulgating the following policies regarding matters of gender and the dignity of the human person as they relate to Catholic schools in our Diocese.

This policy applies to all offices, parishes, parish schools, and diocesan schools of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi (each an “institution”) as well as their employees, personnel, volunteers, student, and youth participating in parish or institutional faith formation. For the purposes of this policy, a “parish school” is any Catholic school in the Diocese of Biloxi founded or operated by a parish or for which the pastor of the parish holds an ex officio appointment regarding the school, including without limitation any inter-parochial schools that have resulted from the merger of any two or more parochial schools.

1. Teaching: Those who teach, make presentations, counsel, or facilitate discussions on Church property or on behalf of the Church shall conduct themselves in accord with their biological sex and conform their lessons, materials, guidance and discussions to the teachings of the Catholic Church. If a teacher at a Catholic school intentionally attempts to teach in a manner contrary to Catholic magisterium, this may be grounds for immediate termination.
2. Legal Names: Legal names are to be used on official documents and Catholic school records. Pronouns used at Catholic Schools are to be those that align with a person’s biological sex. Only pronouns that accurately reflect a person’s God-given biological sex shall be used when addressing that person. No person may designate a “preferred pronoun” in speech or in writing, and no institution shall permit such designation by any person on institutional email, correspondence, or other communications. Legal names, or abbreviated versions of a legal name (e.g. Dan, instead of Daniel), when requested by a person, should be used when addressing a person.
3. Bathrooms and Facilities: When using an institution’s bathrooms or facilities, including locker rooms, all persons must use the bathrooms or other facilities that correspond to their God-given biological sex.
4. Single-Sex Institutions, Programs, and Activities: A person may only be admitted to an institution that is designated as single-sex consistent with this or her God-given biological sex. A person may only participate in institutional activities (whether curricular or extracurricular, athletics, ministries, or other programs) that are designated as single-sex consistent with this or her God-given biological sex.
5. Parish or School Dances: No person may attend a dance, mixer, or similar event sponsored by an institution with a date of the same God-given biological sex.
6. Personal Appearance & Dress: Every person is expected to present and conduct himself or herself in a manner consistent with their God-given biological sex. Specifically, this means that every person is expected to refrain from acting in a manner the purpose of which is to hold themselves out as being a sex or gender that is inconsistent with the

person's God-given biological sex or which, regardless of intent has the effect of causing confusion or scandal regarding the person's sex or gender relative to the person's God-given biological sex. This includes, but is not limited to, dressing consistent with their God-given biological sex and complying with any applicable sex-specific dress code. Dress code requirements shall conform to the Diocesan handbook and each respective Catholic School handbook as applicable.

7. Prohibition on Student Sex/Gender Transition: No student of Catholic school may engage in so-called social transitions, surgeries, or medical treatments that seek to "transition" the person to a sex or gender inconsistent with his or her God-given biological sex. If this section is violated, the student may be expelled immediately.
8. This policy incorporates by reference the Catechism of the Catholic Church and its teaching on gender and sexuality, and the *Theology of the Body* of Pope St. John Paul the Great.
9. This policy may be amended from time to time at the discretion of the Bishop of Biloxi.
10. Families who need referrals and resources should reach out to the school office.

#### **4.9.3 Harassment / Bullying Policy**

It is the policy of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Biloxi that the school environment be a Catholic, Christian community that reflects Christ-like care and concern. Harassment of others, whether based upon gender, color, race, age, national origin, disability, or otherwise, is disruptive and immoral and will not be tolerated. Further, harassment or bullying of anyone will not be tolerated.

Harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communication, or any physical act or threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or received differentiation characteristic that:

- i. Places a student in actual or reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or
- ii. Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's performance, opportunities or benefits.

Bullying is a form of harassment.

**Mississippi Code § 37-7-301-e** allows a school to discipline for misconduct that takes place in the school, on school property, on the road to and from school, on any school-related activity or event, or for conduct occurring on property other than school property or other than at a school-related activity or event when such conduct, indetermination of the superintendent or principal, renders the offending person's presence in the classroom a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teachers of such class as whole.

Any incidents of harassing behavior or bullying should be reported to the appropriate school official within five days of the alleged incident. Diocesan protocol will be followed on any reports of harassing or bullying behavior. (Appendix E, Handbook of Catholic Policies, for forms)

## Academics & Religious Education

### 5.1 Curriculum

The academic program is continually updated and designed to meet the needs of all students through a Christ-centered environment. The basic curriculum offered includes Religion, Reading, English, Public Speaking, Handwriting, Spelling/Vocabulary, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Technology, Art and Music. Our goal is for all students to successfully complete their academic expectations based upon their personal needs. A wide range of teaching materials and media are used at each level with emphasis placed on enrichment activities. Remedial assistance is available at each level.

- **Preschool**—the PK3 and PK4 programs emphasize skill development for gross and fine motor, social integration, academic readiness and spiritual development. These skills are developed through the use of games, cooking activities, arts and crafts, music, story time, physical education, play, critical thinking activities and participation in formal church worship.
- **Kindergarten**—curriculum is based on a structured program of intense readiness and recognition skills designed to prepare the child for early success in first grade. For added enrichment, students also participate in library, music, technology and physical education. The following chart outlines the subjects taught in Kindergarten.

| Subject                | Program                                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading /Language Arts | Project Read/ SAAVAS/Sadlier (gr 3-6) / Thinking Maps |
| Math                   | Saxon /Thinking Maps                                  |
| Religion               | Sadlier /Thinking Maps                                |
| Phonics                | Project Read /Thinking Maps                           |
| Art/Music/Technology   |                                                       |

- **Grades 1-6**—SVS offers a challenging curriculum that exceeds state standards and provides enrichment opportunities at each grade level. For added enrichment, students participate in art, music, public speaking, technology, library and physical education. The curriculum is continually updated to meet the needs of current students. The following chart outlines the subjects taught in grades 1-6:

| Subject       | Program                                                                                         |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading       | Project Read/MyView - MyPerspective/Thinking Maps /Vocabulary Workshop (gr.4-6)                 |
| Math          | Saxon/Thinking Maps                                                                             |
| Language Arts | Project Read/Written Expression/Linguistics/ Grammar Workshop (gr 4-6)<br>English/Thinking Maps |

|                  |                                                                     |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spelling/Phonics | Project Read Phonology (gr.PK4-6)                                   |
| Social Studies   | Interactive Notebooks/Studies Weekly- state standards/Thinking Maps |
| Science          | Interactive Notebooks/Studies Weekly –state standards/Thinking Maps |
| Religion         | Sadlier/Thinking Maps                                               |

### **5.1.1 Homework Policy**

Homework is meant as *practice* for skills taught. It is not meant to be overwhelming. To determine approximately how long homework should take, add a “0” to each grade to determine the average range. For example, homework in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade should take about 20-30 minutes, in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 30-40 minutes, and so on.

Homework journals are provided for each student in Grades 1 through 6, to record daily assignments and establish good work habits. The school will pay for one journal. If it is lost, the parents will need to purchase additional journals. Parental assistance is needed to ensure the student has enough time and a suitable environment for completing assignments at home.

Individual classroom homework policies will be given to parents at the beginning of the school year. In addition to homework policies, classroom newsletters for each grade level will be posted weekly for parents on the school website. As good practice, students *are still expected* to write their assignments in their homework journals daily. In grades 4-6, it is the *students’ responsibility* to maintain written assignments in journals.

Teachers will prompt students to write in the journals and will give students time to write the assignments. Teachers will initial journals when prompted by the students.

## **5.2 Grading Scale**

Grades on daily assignments will be posted on FACTS. In addition, progress reports will be sent home midway through each quarter. Report cards will be sent home after every nine (9) weeks.

- **Preschool** students are not graded on their activities and, therefore, will not receive progress or report cards. However, students will be evaluated by the teacher at the beginning of the school year to gauge approximate social and learning development skills. Parents will also receive updated reports on these skills mid-year and at the end of the school year.
- **Kindergarten** students will receive report cards four (4) times during the school year, at nine-week intervals. Teachers will schedule parent/ teacher conferences during the first quarter to review initial evaluations. The following grading scale will be used to report progress: O (Outstanding), S (Satisfactory) and N (Needs Improvement).
- Students in **Grades 1-6** will receive report cards four (4) times a year, at nine-week intervals. Progress Reports are sent home at least once at the midpoint of each quarter for the parents to sign and return. Additional progress reports may be sent, as the teacher deems it necessary to keep the parents informed of the students’ progress. Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled at the first and third grading period for grades 1-6. The following grading scale will be used to report progress:

|                                                                        |                              |        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| A                                                                      | Beyond Mastery- High Honors  | 100-90 |
| B                                                                      | Mastery – Honors             | 89-80  |
| C                                                                      | Proficient                   | 79-70  |
| D                                                                      | Minimal Understanding        | 69-65  |
| F                                                                      | No Evidence of Understanding | 64-0   |
| <b>EXTRA CURRICULAR SUBJECTS (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade)</b> |                              |        |
| O                                                                      | Outstanding                  |        |
| S                                                                      | Satisfactory                 |        |
| N                                                                      | Needs Improvement            |        |
| <b>EXTRA CURRICULAR SUBJECTS (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade)</b> |                              |        |
| A                                                                      | Beyond Mastery – High Honors | 100-90 |
| B                                                                      | Mastery – Honors             | 89-80  |
| C                                                                      | Proficient                   | 79-70  |
| D                                                                      | Minimal Understanding        | 69-65  |
| F                                                                      | No Evidence of Understanding | 64-0   |

- Conferences may be requested by teachers or parent at any time during the year and are highly encouraged. Parents should call the school during office hours to schedule conferences with teachers and/or the principal.
- **Honors and High Honors Recipients will be considered as such:**  
89-80 = Honors (Mastery/Advanced Mastery)  
90-100 = High Honors (Beyond Mastery)
- Awards Recognition for Honors and High Honors will be announced during Prayer and Pledge at Year End (May) only. Certificates will be given in class for each nine weeks for any student who receives honors or high honors scores (see above) in all subject areas including conduct.
- At the elementary level, **emphasis is placed on the growth** of students. We are building the foundation for success to allow students to excel at the middle and high school levels. Awards will be presented to those who showed high growth with high achievement and high growth.

### **5.2.1 Testing**

- Students will be assessed in each subject on a weekly basis.
- Quarterly exams provide one measure for assessing student progress in determining promotion/retention. This data is also used to drive instruction. The goal is to show growth for every child.
- Students are tested through STAR in reading and math quarterly. We use this data to determine growth. We want students to understand their score and to develop goals for growth.

- Students in grades one through six will be given the secure form for Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). These scores determine the level of knowledge of students in comparison to national standards and help inform the curriculum of the school. A profile of all scores is shared with the parents, and all test scores become a part of the cumulative record of the student.

### 5.3 Textbooks & Supplies

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Textbooks are issued on loan to the students at the beginning of each school year. Students are required to keep the books always covered and expected to use the books with care to allow the maximum years of use.

- Book cards listing the textbooks assigned to the student are sent home for parents to sign acknowledging responsibility for the return of the books in good repair.
- Fines and replacement fees for damaged or lost textbooks must be paid before the final report card is issued.
- Many of the school's textbooks are furnished through funds allocated by the State of Mississippi. The amount of textbook money allocated to the school from the state is based on average daily attendance of all students. ***Regular attendance is encouraged to maximize textbook allotment.***

School supply lists for the academic year are posted on the school Website in May. Hard copies may be obtained from the front office. Supplies may be dropped off to the student's classroom during final registration or on the first day of school. Families may also opt to order a supplies box for their respective grades in June, which will be delivered to the school on behalf of the student by the first day of school. Please label any personal items sent to school, including lunch boxes, uniforms, mats, book bags, sweatshirts and jackets.

### 5.4 Enrichment Programs

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In addition to the core curriculum, SVS offers a number of enrichments learning programs that offer a well-rounded learning experience for students. Each class participates in these programs at designated times throughout the week:

#### **5.4.1 Library**

SVS has an attractive, well-stocked library with books for every reading level. Its selection adopts the proposals by the American Library Association. Students participate in the Accelerated Reading Program and are given time each week to visit the library, where they can read and check out books. They also receive instructions regarding the use of the library as a resource.

Books are checked out for a period of one week. Students will be fined 5 cents per day for any overdue books. Students who lose books will be charged a replacement fee, not less than \$10.00, based on the cost and age of the lost book. Notices are sent home twice monthly regarding late book returns, fees and fines.

Additional books may not be checked out until outstanding book(s) are returned or fines/fees are paid.

### **5.4.2 Physical Education**

Physical Education is an integral part of a child's physical and mental development. All SVS students are required to participate in physical education classes each week according to their physical ability.

- Any physical limitations should be addressed with the teacher and/or principal verbally or in writing.
- Students are expected to wear proper dress for PE classes. Tennis shoes should be worn on non-uniform days. Girls must wear white or navy shorts under their skirt or jumper.

### **5.4.3 Art**

Students in grades 1-6 participate in weekly art classes. Through the study of various artists, movements and art history, students are introduced to a culturally diverse world. Students practice the techniques of different artists while gaining an appreciation for various mediums. This program encourages confidence in their creative voice.

### **5.4.4 Music**

All students participate in weekly music lessons and bi-annual productions. Music lessons are engaging and allow students to experience the art of performance while learning about different genres of music. Students practice the technique of singing, learn rhythm and read music.

### **5.4.5 Technology/STEM**

Students in grades PK4—6 engage with various forms of technology both in the classroom and the technology lab. Younger students use technology to reinforce basic classroom objectives while older students, as they progress in skill, are taught to use the computer as a resource tool. All students and faculty must adhere to the rules and policies of internet use as set out in Section 5.7.4.

### **5.4.6 Public Speaking**

All students in grades 1-6 will participate in public speaking classes. The informal course focuses on teaching students' communication and leadership skills. They learn to overcome nervousness when speaking in front of groups, to organize and present ideas logically and convincingly, to listen carefully to the ideas of other students and offer helpful advice.

## **5.5 Aftercare Program**

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The SVS Aftercare Program is designed to integrate academics, tutelage, play and spiritual guidance for students after the school day has officially ended. All students enrolled at SVS are eligible and invited to participate in after-school activities. Additional fees are assessed for Aftercare and select after-school activities.

| Hours                     | Fees                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Morning Care 7:00-7:30    | No charge                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                  |
| After Care<br>3:30 – 5:30 | <b><u>Registration (non-refundable)</u></b><br>1 Student - \$25<br>2 Students- \$40<br>3 or more Students- \$55 | <b><u>Half- Hourly Rates</u></b><br>1 student - \$4.00<br>2 students - \$3.00 per child<br>3 or more students - \$2.50 per child |

**Aftercare Rate is based at \$4 per half hour, per student – 178 days per year.**

- The program officially begins at 3:30 p.m. during school days. All school facilities are used for the Aftercare Program; however, students in grades K-6 will primarily be located in the gym and cafeteria and preschoolers in the PK pod. A snack and drink are served daily.
- The Aftercare Program ends promptly at 5:30 p.m., at which time all children must be picked up. Parents must have an emergency plan for unforeseen delays in picking up the children. In the event a parent is not able to arrive on time for close of aftercare, it is imperative the Aftercare Director be notified as soon as possible, and the parent should have the emergency pickup designee enroute to pick up the child(ren).
- A late fee of \$5.00 per five (5) minutes, per child, or portion thereof, will be assessed if children are picked up after 5:30 PM. More than three occurrences in one month or six in a year, will be cause for dismissal from the Aftercare Program. All aftercare charges must be paid within 30 days of the statement date or student will be denied participation in the program.

#### **5.5.1 Fees**

- **Preschool** children attending Aftercare on a *full-time basis* do not have fees associated with this service. However, part-time students will be charged the registration fee and \$4 per half hour.
- **Full-time participants** in the Aftercare program must pay these fees through FACTS Management Program. Please make note of this choice on your Registration Form.
- Aftercare may be utilized on a **part-time** basis at \$4 per half hour per student.

#### **5.5.2 Requirements and Discipline**

There is a required *study hall* time for students in grades K-6 for 30-45 minutes on Monday through Thursday. The aftercare staff cannot tutor children or help with homework as they are monitoring all students. *All students must have a book to read every day when homework has been completed.*

Aftercare is an extension of the school day. All students are required to follow the school's defined rules and procedures as set out in Section 5.5 of this handbook.

- In the event a student chooses not to follow rules and procedures, he/she will receive a behavioral form indicating the problem. Behavioral forms are to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the counselor prior to the student's return to Aftercare.

- A second discipline form will result in student probation, and the parent will be required to conference with counselor and/or principal prior to the child returning.
- A third behavior form will result in a conference with the Director and possible exclusion from the program for the remainder of the year. This decision is solely at the discretion of the principal.
- Severe infractions (e.g., bullying, biting, fighting) may result in the parent being called to pick up the child immediately.

## **5.6 Student Assistance**

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SVS provides a full-time language resource teacher who teaches students with atypical needs through an intervention program. Students may receive assistance in the classroom as well as one-on-one tutoring when needed and on a referral basis.

Other student resources and services provided to SVS students include:

- Student Referral for Learning Deficiencies (Harrison County Schools) Child Find (IDEA)
- Project Read
- Language Resource
- Title I Services through Harrison County Schools
- Hearing Screenings
- Eye Screenings
- Volunteer Aids
- Family Life
- Educational Assemblies
- Counselor (2 days a week)

Students also have access to an on-call school counselor either by request or teacher referral. Students must have a signed permission form from a parent/guardian in order to meet with the counselor.

## **5.7 Religious Education**

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All students receive religious instruction according to the directives from the Diocesan Religious Education office. Liturgy and prayer are a major part of our Catholic faith. Students begin their day in prayer and pray before meals, dismissal and at other appropriate times during the day as they live their faith.

- Students attend mass every Friday morning and on Holy Days of Obligation. Students prepare for the Mass and participate as altar servers, lectors, choir members, gift bearers and banner makers. Parents are encouraged to attend Mass and sit with their child(ren) on Fridays. Appropriate dress is required.
- Daily Religion classes are held at all grade levels. The curriculum is uniquely Catholic and follows the guidelines of the Department of Religious Education of the Diocese of

Biloxi. In addition to formal religious instruction, care is taken to provide regular opportunities for receiving the sacraments and participating in the liturgy of the church.

- All staff and students develop a faith formation plan with goals for growing in our faith. We partner with the parents in these endeavors and invite parents to participate in their child's faith formation plan.

### **5.7.1 Receiving Sacraments**

As a school community, we celebrate and honor those children who have received any of the Holy Sacraments from their parish. If you wish for your child to receive any of the sacraments, *please consult your parish priest for more information.*

## **5.8 Teacher Requests**

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Teacher requests *are discouraged*. Classroom lists are constructed very carefully and include teacher input. Every effort is made to create a well-balanced classroom while being fair to everyone. We carefully consider the needs of the students to ensure that the right personality/talent of a teacher matches each student's particular needs with the exception of 4-6 grade where each teacher will teach every child for certain subjects.

If you feel that you have a specific behavioral or academic concern for your child, you may email [ihammons@svdpcatholicschool.org](mailto:ihammons@svdpcatholicschool.org) to note *your academic and/or behavioral concerns.* Your input on academic/behavioral concerns will be considered in the placement of your child.

## **Student Services**

### **6.1 Cafeteria**

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- SVS serves both breakfast and lunch daily.
- Federal assistance is available for qualifying families regardless of race, sex or national origin. Due to government regulations, all families are asked to please fill out all federal forms, even if you are *not* eligible for assistance.
- As part of federal guidelines, "fast food" items and carbonated beverages may not be brought into the cafeteria at lunch by the student and/or the parent.
- Each student will have a cafeteria account within FACTS. Balances will be tracked and invoices sent monthly.
- Seconds can be purchased only by students who purchase a meal provided by the school and upon completion of that meal.
- **If you want your child to have the option of seconds, you must complete a form stating whether your child may or may not receive seconds at registration.**

| Item                                               | Price         |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Breakfast Meal                                     | \$3.50        |
| Entree Meal with milk/juice                        | \$5.00        |
| Extra milk/juice/bottled water                     | \$0.75        |
| Main Item or Sandwich (extras)                     | \$3.00        |
| Any Side Item (extras - ex. Fries, veggies, Fruit) | \$1.50 / each |

*Prices and availability are subject to change, at which time you will be notified.*

## 6.2 Student Organizations

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To further enrich the academic experience, SVS offers several clubs, organizations, service projects and events in which students may participate throughout the year:

| Academic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Activities & Events                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Religious & Service Projects                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Fitness</li> <li>Duke Talent Identification</li> <li>Math Olympiad</li> <li>Spelling Bee</li> <li>Summer Reading</li> <li>Science Discovery Projects</li> <li>STEM Activities/Camps</li> <li>Stock Market Game</li> <li>House System</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Art Contests</li> <li>Children of the Arts</li> <li>Krewe of Wrecks</li> <li>Field Day</li> <li>Basketball</li> <li>Football</li> <li>Cheerleading</li> <li>Wax Museum</li> <li>Fifth Grade Market</li> <li>BETA club</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easter Basket Drive</li> <li>Food Drives</li> <li>Community Service Projects per grade level</li> <li>Free Dress for the Poor</li> <li>Hoops for Hearts</li> <li>Weekly Liturgy and Class Masses</li> <li>Altar Servers</li> <li>Retreats &amp; Prayer Rallies</li> <li>Feast of Corpus Christi</li> <li>Children's Choir</li> <li>Rosary Rally</li> </ul> |

## 6.3 Activity Policies

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- Accreditation regulations do not allow SVS to sponsor competitive team sports. However, students may participate in diocesan sports leagues, such as track and basketball, and will only compete against other Catholic school leagues within the Biloxi Diocese.
- As a convenience, various groups use SVS facilities after school hours to hold their activities. Such groups include SVS choir, Brownies, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, gymnastics, basketball and tennis. Outside groups that use school facilities are required to provide their own insurance.
- The school's name, logo, motto, or mascot may not be used in any form without the permission of the principal. If permission is given, the principal is responsible for ensuring all policies of the school and the Diocese of Biloxi are followed, including background checks and safe environment training for all adults involved.

### **6.3.1 Classroom Parties & Invitations**

- Party Policy—any class celebrations, including birthdays and holidays, ***must be approved by the teacher who will designate a date and time for the party so that it does not interfere with regular classroom instruction.*** If treats are provided, they must be in individual or pre-cut servings (include a label to detail ingredients due to allergies).
- Invitation & Card Policy—all party invitations and holiday cards are to be placed in blank envelopes for easy distribution to all students in the class. Teachers will distribute invitations to student parties if ***all*** students in the class are invited. The only exception to this policy is if the invitation is to all of the girls in the class or to all of the boys in the class.

## **6.4 CYO Sports**

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St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School participates in the Diocese of Biloxi CYO Sports League. Students in select grade levels may participate in football, basketball, cheerleading, and track. Coaches are parent volunteers, and practices and games are coordinated through the coaches and Diocese of Biloxi Youth Office. Students wishing to participate in a CYO sport must register with the diocese and pay a registration fee through FACTS. Fees cover uniforms and other needs.

CYO sports is an opportunity to show Christian behavior as Disciples of Christ in the sports arena. As a student of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School, we expect our students to spread the love of Christ in all that they endeavor as missionaries of Christ. As a CYO member, students must maintain passing grades (**no grades lower than a “D”**) to be eligible to participate in CYO practices and games. Christian behavior is a hallmark of a Catholic student; therefore, students with chronic behavior reprimands may result in administration removing students from CYO practices and/or games. If a student is absent from school, they may not participate in CYO practices or games.

## **Parental Involvement**

### **7.1 Parent Teacher Organization**

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The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is composed of the parents and guardians of the students at SVS, school staff and interested members of local parishes. The objectives of the organization are to:

- Assist children in developing character and a community lifestyle grounded in Catholic teaching and gospel values.
- Foster the religious, intellectual, physical, cultural, aesthetic and social development of each child.
- Enhance the ability of parents to participate actively and effectively in their child’s education.
- Provide support and information to the parents that will assist them in the growth, development and maturation of their children.

The PTO will communicate with parents through the school website, app and weekly newsletter. In support of its objectives and to build community, the PTO will sponsor several events throughout the year, including the Back-to-School Picnic, Fall Festival, Christmas Blessings, Family Nights and Teacher Appreciation Week.

PTO will coordinate with Room Mothers to send out information to families. It is important to remember that any social media (Text, Group Me etc.) used for the purpose of school communication using the St. Vincent name and/or logo must be monitored by the Room Mother and/or teacher.

## 7.2 Volunteer (Service) Opportunities

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Service is a big part of Catholic education. One way to teach service to our children is to lead by example. **All families are expected to volunteer at least 5 hours per semester.** There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer both at school and from home. PTO, Carnival Activities and Knight to Remember are a few areas in need of volunteers- please contact the school to see how you can help. These organizations offset costs of education for all children which would otherwise be passed on to parents through tuition or fundraising fees.

SVS's goal is for every student to reach his/her potential. Consistent with this philosophy is the concept of volunteer-in-education, whereby parents and other community persons are involved in enriching and supplementing the school curriculum. This approach can increase the teacher's effectiveness and help provide individual attention to students on occasion.

SVS welcomes and relies on volunteers for a variety of services, including:

- Public relations
- Office aids
- Substitute teachers
- Classroom aids
- Lawn care and maintenance
- Room Parents
- Field Trip drivers
- Library aids
- Cafeteria Volunteers
- Fundraising
- Cafeteria servers
- Baking (on special occasions)
- Creative assistance
- Professional expertise
- Club sponsor
- Nursing Station Volunteer
- Parent Teacher Organization activities
- CYO sports/cheerleading

## 7.3 Fundraising

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SVS relies on fundraising *to help supplement* the costs of educating its students. Tuition does not cover the full expenses of the school. Thus, every family is expected to volunteer and/or participate in one or more of the major school fundraisers, which include Knight to Remember, Carnival Association of Long Beach and St. Paul Carnival Association. Parents are regularly given information and opportunities relating to these fundraisers throughout the year. **Parents are expected to volunteer at least 5 hours each semester.**

### **7.3.1 Knights Club**

Knights Club is an annual fundraiser sponsored by SVS that supplements the operational costs of SVS.

- Each student is given four Knights Club tickets to sell as part of the school's annual registration fee. Additional Knight Club tickets are available for purchase of \$50.00 each. Parents can sell or purchase the tickets but FACTS will be charged for the cost of the tickets.
- Drawings for cash prizes will be made each Monday that school is in session, beginning in August.
- Any ticket received after the first drawing will participate in the remaining drawings.
- On the first two Mondays in December the winner will receive \$250.00. On the third Monday, the winner will receive \$500.00.
- The final drawing will be held on the last Monday of the school year.
- Participants need not be present to win.
- The names of the winners will be published in the weekly newsletter, *SVS This Week*.
- All checks to winners will be drafted by a member of the school administration and will be made available the day following the drawing. Any outstanding balances will be deducted from the total winnings before being disbursed.
- All tickets are eligible for the remaining drawings regardless of whether the ticket has already been drawn as a winning number.

### **7.3.2 Carnival Associations**

CALB and SPCA are the annual fundraisers supported by the school that supplement the operational costs of SVS. **Parents are encouraged to join both or your choice of Carnival clubs. The school will host events, and you are encouraged to get involved.**

Both carnival organizations offer tuition assistance for those parents who work these events, sell sponsorships, and procure silent auction items.

Family involvement through volunteer efforts, purchase/sale of tickets for events, silent auction solicitation, and Board membership helps us to keep these events successful and directly benefits all families through lower tuition costs and purchase of needed educational materials for the children of SVS.

## **Campus Safety & Security**

Parents, visitors and volunteers are always welcome. However, for security reasons, exterior doors will remain locked throughout the school day and during Aftercare.

## **8.1 Visitors Policy**

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- Once school has begun, after Prayer and Pledge has begun at 7:50, Parents may only enter through the main front entrance. All staff and students will be in the gym for prayer and pledge, and we will not be able to open the cafeteria door. Should you need assistance entering the school due to handicap situations, call the office for assistance.
- Visitors must sign in and obtain a pass before entering the school hallways. There is a sign in sheet with passes at the front desk and there will be a sign in sheet with sticker passes at the cafeteria door. You must sign in and get a pass.
- The visitor's pass must be worn at all times while on campus.
- No parent or visitor should stand in the hallway outside a classroom or office unless they receive approval.
- The Long Beach, Pass Christian and Harrison County Police Departments provide regular walk-throughs for additional security.
- Long Beach Fire Department conducts our yearly inspections for fire safety. They will periodically walk through our schools to ensure our safety as well.

## **8.2 Emergency Procedures**

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SVS has a crisis management plan in place that defines the actions for quickly ensuring the safety of students in the case of an emergency. Evacuation procedures will be implemented as rapidly and safely as possible. Causes for evacuation include fire, flood, severe weather, threats or intruders. A copy of this plan is available at the school office.

As part of the Safety Preparedness plan:

- Fire/Earthquake drills will be held monthly.
- Tornado drills (2) will be held annually.
- Lockdown drills (4) will be held annually. Two of these will be surprise drills.
- Training of teachers for Crisis situations will be held two times annually.
- Emergency equipment will be tested regularly throughout the year.

The plan is re-evaluated every year to ensure the most up-to-date safety measures are in place. Gulfport Police Officers provide our teachers with training once per year. Working collaboratively with the Harrison County Sheriff's Office, Long Beach Police Department, Pass Christian Police Department as well as Gulfport Police Officer Trainers, we review our Crisis Plan and campus layout to determine any suggestions for improvement.

## **8.3 Parental/Guardian Custody Adherence Guidelines**

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In order to provide the services rendered by the law, a certified copy of the complete Custody Agreement must be on file in the school office.

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Biloxi adhere to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regarding privacy of student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order, to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof.

Be advised that if a teacher is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.).

The school can only release a child to those who have a legal right to remove a child or someone who was previously authorized by a parent or legal guardian. Absent a court document stating otherwise, both legal parents have the right to pick up a child. Parents can properly authorize individuals with an "authorization card" (different from an emergency card) to permit those persons to pick up their children. If a parent tells the school, they want a person for whom they have not previously filled out an authorization card to pick up their child, the parent should be asked to immediately to provide authorization in writing prior to pick-up.

If a person who is not on the school's list for authorized pick-up attempts to pick up a student, and in so doing violates Diocesan policy, disturbs the peace, or violates local, state or federal law, the school reserves the right to contact law enforcement.

#### **8.4 Pandemic/Infectious Disease**

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St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School will follow Diocesan Protocol. In the event that you test positive for an infectious disease, please follow your doctor's advice on quarantine and contact the school immediately at (228)222-6000

#### **8.5 Immunization Policy**

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The Diocese of Biloxi requires all students of Catholic schools to receive the immunizations mandated by the State of Mississippi for entry to school unless a student is entitled to a medical exemption. A medical exemption is allowed when a child has a medical condition that prevents the child from receiving a vaccine. No other exemptions will be allowed. The purpose of this policy is to fulfill Christ's commandment to "love one another" and uphold the sanctity of life by endeavoring to protect our students and families through immunization.

#### **8.6 Insurance Policy**

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All parents are required to carry the school insurance through Christian Brothers; a plan offered to SVS students through the Diocese of Biloxi and included in tuition. Coverage extends only to school-related activities. A brochure outlining the coverage is available on request.

## Preschool Program

### 9.1 Admissions

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For SVS's general admissions policy,<sup>6</sup> please refer to Section 2 of this handbook.

- To be admitted to the Toddler Program (PK2), the child must be two (2) years old on or before September 1.
- To be admitted to the Preschool program, the child must be three (3) years old on or before September 1 for PK3 and four (4) years old on or before September 1 for PK4.

### 9.2 Tuition

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The rates for the preschool program are set out in the chart below. For more information on the general tuition policies of SVS, please refer to Section 3 of this handbook.

| Preschool Rates                     | Per Child |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 5 Days Full Time 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. | \$6525    |
| 5 Half Days 7 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.     | \$4500    |

- Preschool students do not qualify for Parish Supplement. However, preschool tuition payments can qualify for childcare tax credit benefits (Tax ID #20-5780801).
- Preschool tuition payment attempts will follow the process set out in Section 3.5.1 of this handbook.
- Preschool tuition payment attempts will follow the process set out in Section 3.5.1. If there is an outstanding account balance of more than one (1) month, a letter or email from the school will be sent home informing the family of the outstanding balance and the need to contact the school. ***If payment arrangements are not made with the school and a FACTS account is not activated, the student will not be allowed to return to school on the first school day of the next month.***

### 9.3 Curriculum

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The PK3 and PK4 programs emphasize skill development for gross and fine motor, social integration, academic readiness and spiritual development. These skills are developed using games, cooking activities, arts and crafts, music, story time, physical education, play, critical thinking activities and participation in formal church worship.

#### **10.3.1 Student Evaluations**

Each student will be evaluated according to specific assessment guidelines at the beginning of the school year and then again at the end of the school year. Promotion from

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<sup>6</sup> Any exception to this policy must be approved by the principal.

Early Childhood shall be based upon accomplishing the required essential curriculum elements as well as progress made in social, emotional and physical growth.

## **9.4 Preschool Uniform**

Students in the Toddler Program (PK2) are required to wear the PK2 school uniform as set out in Section 5.4.4.

All students in the Preschool Program (PK3 and PK4) *are required to wear the school uniform*<sup>7</sup> per the following guidelines:

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### **9.4.1 Toddler Program (PK2) Boys**

- School t shirt purchased through Southern Printing.
- **Plain** navy-blue shorts or pants (elastic waist- easy pull up and down)
- Navy blue tennis shoes (Velcro closures are required)
- Red sweatshirt and fleece (purchased through Uniform Stores)
- White crew socks
- Hair must be appropriate length (bangs out of face, back of hair line not touching the collar)

### **9.4.2 Toddler Program (PK2) Girls**

- School t shirt purchased through Southern Printing.
- Plain navy-blue shorts, skort or pants (elastic waist- easy pull up and down)
- Navy blue tennis shoes (Velcro closures are recommended)
- Red sweatshirt and fleece (purchased through Uniform Store)
- White crew socks

### **9.4.3 Boys (PK3&4)**

- Plain navy shorts or slacks (no patch pockets and the length of slacks must touch the shoe); preschool boys may wear pants with an elastic waist.
- White pique knit polo shirt (long or short sleeve) embroidered with the school crest, which must be tucked in.
- **Black or Navy belt** (if there are belt loops on the pants);
- White crew socks.
- Navy Blue leather shoes (“sneakers”) with Velcro closure only.
- Red sweatshirts and fleece embroidered with the school crest may be worn in class and can be purchased through the school.
- Plain white undershirts or turtlenecks—with no visible logo—may be worn under the uniform shirt.
- Outer coats *may not be worn in the classroom*.
- Hair must be clean, neatly groomed and the child’s natural color and must not touch the collar, eyebrow or the ear, No fad haircuts. No shave lines.

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<sup>7</sup> All clothing should be labeled with the child’s name.

- Simple jewelry may be worn, including a necklace, watch and/or bracelet. No rings or earrings are allowed; and
- No tattoos of any kind will be permitted.

#### **9.4.4 Girls (PK3 &4)**

- School plaid jumper.
- White shirt with a peter pan collar embroidered with the school crest.
- White or navy bike/mini shorts under jumper.
- White crew socks; Solid White/Solid Blue leggings (no designs)
- Navy Blue sneakers or leather shoes (“sneakers”) with Velcro closure only.
- Red sweatshirts and fleece embroidered with the school crest may be worn in class and can be purchased through the Uniform Store.
- Plain white undershirts or turtlenecks—with no visible logo—may be worn under the uniform shirt.
- Outer coats **may not be worn in the classroom.**
- Hair must be clean, neatly groomed and the child’s natural color, No fad haircuts.
- Hair bows may **only be red, white, navy or school plaid** and must not exceed 6” and barrettes and bobby pins must be natural hair color only.
- Simple jewelry may be worn, including a necklace, single pair of stud earrings, regular watch and/or bracelet, but no rings allowed.
- No make-up, nail polish or tattoos of any kind will be permitted.

#### **9.4.5 Uniform Suppliers**

Uniforms may be purchased through the following suppliers:

**Southern Printing**  
230 Davis Avenue  
Pass Christian, MS 39571  
228-452-7309

**Educate & Celebrate**  
311 Cowan Road  
Gulfport, MS 39507  
228-206-1901 228-547-0811

**Educate & Celebrate** offer onsite visits to schools where parents are able to "pre-order" (offering great DISCOUNTS to parents who pre-order, in-store appointments/sales, and open **Monday-Saturday** and even later in the evenings during the summer. In addition, we have a uniform website for those that would like to order online. [educateandcelebrate.myshopify.com](http://educateandcelebrate.myshopify.com)

Families wishing assistance for uniforms due to financial hardship are welcome to visit the school uniform closet. Clean, used uniforms are available for purchase at \$4/item. Fleece and sweatshirts are \$8/item. Contact the school office for more information.

### **9.5 Classroom Procedures**

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#### **9.5.1 Discipline**

Conscious Discipline, which emphasizes praise and positive behavior, is implemented in the toddler classroom. The teacher will assist the child in talking things out and teaching the child ways to handle different situations. The teacher will model a variety of positive ways to behave and will work on redirecting children to more appropriate behaviors throughout the day. The goal is to help children use their own words and solutions to solve conflicts and assist them in making positive choices.

Occasionally, the teacher may use a supervised “safe place” (an extension of Conscious Discipline) for misbehavior that persistently occurs. The safe place is a chair or a cushion that the child will be asked to sit on to calm down. It gives the child time to think about his/her actions. The safe place will have books, stress balls and other items to soothe the child. The length of time to sit at the safe place is one minute for each year of age or until the child has calmed down and is ready to return to classroom activities.

Parents will be contacted to set up a conference if a problem persists or is more severe (e.g., scratching, breaking the skin or other physical behavior). The parents, principal and teacher will discuss ways to correct the behavior in a positive way. Should the behavior continue or become worse, the principal may take other actions as deemed appropriate, including potentially asking that the child be removed from the program.

It is normal for toddlers to throw tantrums when they do not get their way. Should a toddler throw a tantrum that exceeds two minutes, the child will be removed from the classroom and walk to the office, where the teacher or staff member will sit with the child until the tantrum is over.

Behavior sheets will go home daily, which will have information on behavior, rest time, food intake, etc. Parents should sign the report and send it back daily.

### **9.5.2 Snack Time**

- All students in the PK3 and PK4 program will be provided with a morning and afternoon snack. Students may bring their own lunch or purchase a meal in the cafeteria. Please see Section 7.1 for more details.
- All students in the Toddler (PK2) program will be provided an early morning snack, a mid-afternoon snack and a late afternoon snack. Students are provided with lunch. No lunch boxes are allowed without a doctor’s note detailing dietary needs for medical reasons. Please see Section 7.1 for more details.

### **9.5.3 Potty Training**

- Students in the **PK3 and PK4** program **must be fully potty trained** (no pull-ups) by the time they start school. We understand that accidents may happen, but continual accidents denote that the child is not potty trained. If your child is having continual accidents, we will schedule a conference with you to discuss this issue to develop a plan of action.

- Teachers in the Toddler Program (PK2) will assist children in the potty-training process. Children generally achieve potty training between the ages of 2 1/2 to 3 years old. Parents must begin potty training at home before the teacher starts at school. During this time the child should wear pull-up **training pants** for health and safety reasons while at school. It will be at the teacher's discretion when the parents may bring in big girl or big boy underpants to school.

#### **9.5.4 Supplies**

- A list of school supplies for the PK program will be available in May prior to the start of the school year. Lists are posted on the school website or may be obtained at the school office. All students are expected to bring these supplies by the first day of school.
- Teachers may ask for additional supplies throughout the school year, depending on the needs of and usage by the students.

#### **9.5.5 Enrichment Activities**

- Students in the PK3 and PK4 program will participate in the following enrichment activities:
  - Music
  - Physical Education
  - School Mass
  - Library Storytime
  - Computer lab (PK4 only)
- Students in PK2 participate in music, physical education and story time.

#### **9.5.6 Party Policies**

- Any class celebrations, including birthdays and holidays, must be approved by **the teacher who will designate a date and time for the party** so that it does not interfere with regular classroom instruction. If treats are provided, they must be in individual or pre-cut servings (with label to detail ingredients due to allergies).
- All party invitations and holiday cards are to be placed in blank envelopes for easy distribution to all students in the class. Teachers will distribute invitations to student parties if ***all*** students in the class are invited. The only exception to this policy is if the invitation is to all the girls in the class or to all the boys in the class.

#### **9.5.7 Health**

Please see Section 5.9 of this handbook for complete details on the school's Health and Emergency Policies.

- PK students are required to present an immunization record and original Certificate of Compliance from the Mississippi Department of Health showing that the student has

all the necessary shots to attend school.

- ***A child may not attend school with any of the following symptoms: fever, undiagnosed rash, vomiting, lice, diarrhea, inflamed eyes and severe cold or sore throat.*** They should be free of any symptoms for 24 hours or have a doctor's excuse with the suggested date of return to school.
- **A child must be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school.** A fever is defined as 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally (Mississippi Department of Health). A reading of 100.4°F on a no touch thermometer is a fever.
- Please refer to the Mississippi Health Department Guidelines for health-related questions for preschool. All classes have a copy on hand in the classroom as well.

### **9.5.8 Immunization**

Mississippi Law (Senate Bill 2650) states, "It shall be unlawful for any child to attend school, kindergarten, or similar type facility intended for the instruction of children either public or private unless they shall first have been vaccinated against those diseases specified by the State Health Officer." A Certificate of Compliance is required from a private physician or a Mississippi county health department prior to attending St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School.

The Diocese of Biloxi requires all students of Catholic schools to receive the immunizations mandated by the State of Mississippi for entry to school unless a student is entitled to a medical exemption. A medical exemption is allowed when a child has a medical condition that prevents the child from receiving a vaccine. No other exemptions will be allowed. The purpose of this policy is to fulfill Christ's commandment to "love one another" and uphold the sanctity of life by endeavoring to protect our students and families through immunization.

## **9.6 Rules for Drop-off & Pick-up Procedures**

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Parents are responsible for their child(ren)'s transportation to and from school. For the safety of the students, the following procedures are to be followed:

- **Parents may not talk or text on cell phones in the school car line while dropping off or picking up students.**
- Students should not walk through the parking lot to the school during carline.
- All parents must pick up their children in the car line and **remain in the car** while the student enters the car.
- Only authorized people may pick up students and must present a current school-issued ID card before a student can be released.

- School-issued ID cards should be displayed in the front car window when picking up students. **If a parent or authorized person does not have the school-issued ID card, he or she will need to park in a designated parking space, report to the front office and sign out the student.**
- The cost of replacing a school-issued ID card is 2 for \$1.00.
- Any change in the student's normal means of transportation *must* be sent to the school office *in writing or through email to [ihammons@svdpcatholicsschool.org](mailto:ihammons@svdpcatholicsschool.org).*

#### **9.6.1 PK2 Drop-off/Pick-up Procedures**

- Parents must **park their car in the designated front parking lot and walk their toddler into the front lobby during drop-off.**
- Parents must pick up their toddler directly from front car line at 2:30 p.m. Please let your teacher know daily if your child is attending aftercare.
- Parents must pick up half-day students from the lobby at 12:00 p.m.
- After 2:30, parents must park their car in the back-car line and pick up their toddler from the cafeteria, if your toddler is attending aftercare. Please let your teacher know daily if your child is attending aftercare. If your plan changes, please let the front office or your teacher know the change in plans.

#### **9.6.2 Morning Drop-off Procedures**

- Normal drop-off times are 7:30 to 7:45 a.m. Drivers should enter SVS from Espy Ave. and drop off PK students in the front entrance of the school. Teachers will escort students from their cars and Duty teachers with student ambassadors will walk them to the PK hall. Parents should not let their child out of the car until a teacher is present to escort them into the building.
- If the PK student has older siblings, the older siblings may also be dropped off in the front.
- **Parents should *not* exit cars while in carline.** If a parent wishes to stay for Prayer & Pledge, students should be dropped off first and then the parent may park in a designated parking spot, sign in and get a name badge entering through the front doors of the school or the rear parking lot. Prayer and Pledge will be held in the gym for the morning assembly at 7:50.
- If a student arrives before 7:30 a.m., he/she should be taken directly to the front office entrance where he/she will be escorted to before-school care in the PK 2 classroom. **Students *may not* be dropped off before 7:00 a.m.**
- **No check-outs from the front office after 2:30 p.m. You must go through the car line after 2:30 p.m.**

- **If a student arrives after 7:45 a.m., the parent must park in a designated parking spot and escort his/her child into the building at the front entrance. For the safety of the students, parents may not leave their child unattended to enter the school building. You must sign your child in at the front desk.**
- Parents **may not stop or leave their car unattended** in the front or back entrance of the school. Please park in a parking spot.
- SVS Preschool is a school – not a daycare. Students are actively learning skills through play, carpet time and centers. Arriving late causes a disruption in the learning process. We will not accept students being dropped off after 10:00.

### **9.6.3 Afternoon Pick-up Procedures**

- PK students will be dismissed at 2:30 p.m. in the front lobby of the school. If the student has older siblings, ***both may be picked up from the back car line from 2:50 - 3:30 p.m.***
- Drivers should enter the campus for afternoon pick-up as they do for morning drop-off. **They should remain in their car at all times.** A teacher will bring the student(s) to the car and buckle the student(s) in. Please refrain from holding a conference with the teacher during carline. You may email your teacher to set up a date and time to communicate.
- Student(s) who are not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be sent to after-care. Aftercare is held in the school cafeteria for ages K-6 and the Preschool pod for PK students. After-care charges are assessed from 3:30-5:30 p.m. See Section 6.5.1 for students who attend for half-days (should be picked up at 12:00 p.m. in the front lobby of the school. A teacher assistant will escort these students to the front of the school no earlier than 12:00 p.m.
- In case of severe weather days, SVS will implement a gradual release in a single carline. Preschool students will be released from the front of the school at 2:15 p.m. Students in Kindergarten through 2nd grade, and any older siblings, will be released from the back of the school in a single carline at 2:30 p.m. Students in grades 3-6 will be released at 2:45 p.m. from the back of the school in a single carline. Older siblings will be released with younger siblings on these days. Parents will be notified if these procedures are implemented.

# Calendar



## 2026-2027 Academic Calendar

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School  
4321 Espy Avenue  
Long Beach, MS 39560  
(228) 222-6000



| July 2026      |      |    |    |    |     |      |
|----------------|------|----|----|----|-----|------|
| M              | T    | W  | T  | F  | S   | S    |
|                |      | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4   | 5    |
| 6              | 7    | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11  | 12   |
| 13             | 14   | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18  | 19   |
| 20             | 21   | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25  | 26   |
| 27             | 28   | 29 | 30 | 31 | (2) |      |
| August 2026    |      |    |    |    |     |      |
| M              | T    | W  | T  | F  | S   | S    |
|                |      |    |    |    | 1   | 2    |
| 3              | 4    | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8   | 9    |
| 10             | 11   | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15  | 16   |
| 17             | 18   | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22  | 23   |
| 24             | 25   | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29  | 30   |
| 31             | (21) |    |    |    |     |      |
| September 2026 |      |    |    |    |     |      |
| M              | T    | W  | T  | F  | S   | S    |
|                | 1    | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5   | 6    |
| 7              | 8    | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12  | 13   |
| 14             | 15   | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19  | 20   |
| 21             | 22   | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26  | 27   |
| 28             | 29   | 30 |    |    |     |      |
| (21)           |      |    |    |    |     |      |
| October 2026   |      |    |    |    |     |      |
| M              | T    | W  | T  | F  | S   | S    |
|                |      |    | 1  | 2  | 3   | 4    |
| 5              | 6    | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10  | 11   |
| 12             | 13   | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17  | 18   |
| 19             | 20   | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24  | 25   |
| 26             | 27   | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31  | (16) |
| November 2026  |      |    |    |    |     |      |
| M              | T    | W  | T  | F  | S   | S    |
|                |      |    |    |    |     | 1    |
| 2              | 3    | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7   | 8    |
| 9              | 10   | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14  | 15   |
| 16             | 17   | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21  | 22   |
| 23             | 24   | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28  | 29   |
| 30             |      |    |    |    |     |      |
| (16)           |      |    |    |    |     |      |

| Make up Days    |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Janaury 4, 2027 |  |
| May 25, 2027    |  |

|                      |                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| July 24th            | Work Day/New Teacher Orientation |
| July 30th            | First Day of School for students |
| September 7th        | Labor Day - Closed               |
| October 5th - 9th    | Fall Holiday                     |
| November 23rd - 27th | Thanksgiving                     |
| Dec 21st - Jan 4th   | Christmas Holidays               |
| January 18th         | MLK, Jr. Holiday                 |
| February 8th - 9th   | Mardi Gras                       |
| March 26- April 1    | Easter Holidays                  |
| May 24th             | Last Day of School               |

| TERMS:                               |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Quarter 1 – July 30 to October 1     |  |
| Quarter 2 – October 2 to December 18 |  |
| Quarter 3 – January 5 to March 11    |  |
| Quarter 4 – March 15 to May 24       |  |

| Teacher Staff Development / Retreats |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 24/2026                              | New Faculty Orientatio            |
|                                      | Diocesan Mass                     |
| 10/12/26-3/12/27                     | Intentional Discipleship Training |
| 7/24-29/2026;5/25/27                 | SVdP Professional Development     |

| Category of Events  |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| January 24-31, 2027 | Catholic School Week |
| April 19-23, 2027   | ITBS Testing         |

| Report Card Dates | Progress Reports |
|-------------------|------------------|
| October 13th      | August 31st      |
| January 5th       | November 9th     |
| March 15th        | February 15th    |
| May 24th          | April 19th       |

| Early Release Days |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| December 18, 2026  | 60% day 12:00        |
| October 2, 2026    | PM Staff Development |
| March 11, 2027     | PM Staff Development |
| May 24, 2027       | 60% day 12:00        |

| December 2026 |    |    |    |      |    |    |
|---------------|----|----|----|------|----|----|
| M             | T  | W  | T  | F    | S  | S  |
|               | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4    | 5  | 6  |
| 7             | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11   | 12 | 13 |
| 14            | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18   | 19 | 20 |
| 21            | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25   | 26 | 27 |
| 28            | 29 | 30 | 31 | (14) |    |    |
| January 2027  |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| M             | T  | W  | T  | F    | S  | S  |
|               |    |    |    | 1    | 2  | 3  |
| 4             | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8    | 9  | 10 |
| 11            | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15   | 16 | 17 |
| 18            | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22   | 23 | 24 |
| 25            | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29   | 30 | 31 |
| (18)          |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| February 2027 |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| M             | T  | W  | T  | F    | S  | S  |
| 1             | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5    | 6  | 7  |
| 8             | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12   | 13 | 14 |
| 15            | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19   | 20 | 21 |
| 22            | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26   | 27 | 28 |
| (18)          |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| March 2027    |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| M             | T  | W  | T  | F    | S  | S  |
| 1             | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5    | 6  | 7  |
| 8             | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12   | 13 | 14 |
| 15            | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19   | 20 | 21 |
| 22            | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26   | 27 | 28 |
| 29            | 30 | 31 |    |      |    |    |
| (18)          |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| April 2027    |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| M             | T  | W  | T  | F    | S  | S  |
|               |    |    | 1  | 2    | 3  | 4  |
| 5             | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9    | 10 | 11 |
| 12            | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16   | 17 | 18 |
| 19            | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23   | 24 | 25 |
| 26            | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30   |    |    |
| (20)          |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| May 2027      |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| M             | T  | W  | T  | F    | S  | S  |
|               |    |    |    |      | 1  | 2  |
| 3             | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7    | 8  | 9  |
| 10            | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14   | 15 | 16 |
| 17            | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21   | 22 | 23 |
| 24            | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28   | 29 | 30 |
| 31            |    |    |    |      |    |    |
| (16)          |    |    |    |      |    |    |

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
|  | School Closed                 |
|  | PM Staff Development          |
|  | Report Cards/progress reports |
|  | Faculty/Staff Development     |
|  | Instructional Days            |

|  |                                          |
|--|------------------------------------------|
|  | Parent Teacher Conferences               |
|  | First & Last Day of School               |
|  | 60% days (Christmas/Last day of school)  |
|  | Preschool dismisses at 11:30 on 60% days |