

# Parent Partnership Handbook 2009-2010

**St. Francis of Assisi Parish School**  
**525 West Vista Way**  
**Vista, CA 92083**

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Website: [www.sfs-vista.org](http://www.sfs-vista.org)

Pastor: Rev. Edward "Bud" Kaicher

Principal: Mrs. Linda M. McCotter

## **School Hours**

	<u>Regular School Day</u>	<u>Minimum Day</u>
School Office	7:30 - 3:15	7:30 - 12:15
Full Day Preschool	7:00 - 5:30	7:00 - 12:00
¾ Day Preschool	8:00 - 2:45	8:00 - 12:00
½ Day Preschool	8:00 - 11:45	8:00 - 11:45
Kindergarten	8:00 - 12:00	8:00 - 12:00
Grades 1 & 2	8:00 - 2:30	8:00 - 12:00
Grades 3-8	7:45 - 2:45	7:45 - 12:00
After School Care	12:00-5:30	12:00 - 5:30

## **Frequently Used Telephone Numbers**

School Office	630-7960
Nurse's Office	630-7955
Miss Kathy	945-8048
Preschool	630-7964
Mrs. Kaiser	630-7965
Parish Office	945-8000
Religious Education	945-8010
True Grits Uniform	(858) 864-8544



***NEW!*** In the spirit of good Stewardship, all Forms, Lists, Parent Handbook, Class News, Student Supply Lists, Summer Reading, Curriculum, Application, Calendar,

*etc. are now available on our webpage. Paper copies are available only upon request.*



For your convenience, all new or amended policies are indicated with this arrow.

## Table of Contents

<b>GENERAL INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Accreditation .....	5
Philosophy .....	5
Mission Statement .....	5
Schoolwide Learning Expectations .....	5
Notice of Non-Discrimination .....	5
Parents as Primary Educators .....	6
<b>ADMISSIONS POLICIES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Assessment .....	6
Age of Admission .....	6
Priority of Admission .....	6
Returning Students .....	6
Stewardship/Non-Stewardship .....	6
<b>FINANCE POLICIES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Tuition .....	7
Registration .....	7
Tuition Assistance .....	7
Financial Assistance from Neighboring Parishes .....	7
Requests for Reimbursement .....	7
Stewardship Hours .....	7
After School Care Program .....	7
<b>HEALTH, SAFETY, and EMERGENCY POLICIES .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Visitors to School .....	8
Live Scan .....	8
Child Protective Services and Law Enforcement Access .....	8
Child Abuse Reporting Procedures .....	8
Buckley Amendment .....	8
Emergency Card .....	8
Health Record .....	8
Health Screening .....	8
HIV/AIDS .....	8
Illness and Injury .....	8
Immunizations .....	9
Insurance .....	9
Medical Appointments .....	9
Medical Conditions .....	9
Medications .....	9
Readmission after an Illness .....	9
Smoking .....	9
Student Confidentiality .....	10
Traffic Pattern .....	10
Pupil Pregnancy .....	10
Abortion .....	10
<b>CURRICULUM.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Extra Curricular .....	11

Cheerleading .....	11
Family Life Education.....	11
Family Presence at Weekly Mass.....	11
Field Trips .....	11
Grading .....	11
Honor Roll.....	12
California Junior Scholarship Federation (CJSF).....	12
Promotion.....	12
Retention .....	12
Graduation.....	12
Homework.....	12
Middle School Homework Policy .....	13
Internet and email regulations for use .....	13
Academic Honesty .....	13
Plagiarism.....	13
Testing.....	13
Tutoring.....	14
Minimum Day Schedule:.....	15
Performance Rubric.....	15
Sacramental Preparation.....	15
School Liturgy.....	15
<b>DISCIPLINE .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Abuse of Teachers.....	15
Assault .....	15
Classroom Discipline Plan .....	15
Detention .....	15
Harassment.....	16
Student to Student Harassment.....	16
Student Threats.....	16
Probation, Suspension, Expulsion .....	17
Suspended Students.....	17
Transfer on Grounds of Parental Behavior.....	17
Parent/Teacher Agreement .....	18
<b>ATTENDANCE.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Absence and Tardiness.....	18
Homework Requests .....	18
Extended Absences .....	19
Arrival/Dismissal/Supervision of Students.....	19
Parking .....	19
Release of Pupils.....	19
<b>COMMUNICATIONS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Access to Student Records .....	19
Appointments with Faculty Members .....	19
Classroom Visits .....	19
Contacting Teachers.....	19
Family Message Envelope.....	19
Back to School Night .....	20
New Parent Orientation.....	20
Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	20
Parent-Teacher Group (PTG) .....	20
Progress Reports.....	20
Report Cards .....	20
Student Records .....	20
Telephone Messages .....	20
Use of School Name.....	20
Visitors to Schools .....	20
Visitation of Students during School Hours .....	20

<b>STUDENTS.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Ambassadors for Christ .....	20
Student Council.....	20
Student Stewardship .....	21
Bicycles/Skateboards .....	21
Cell Phones .....	21
Gum.....	21
White Out/Rubber Cement.....	21
Locker/School Property.....	21
Lost and Found.....	21
Lunch Program.....	21
Lunch Time .....	21
Telephone Use.....	21
Textbooks.....	22
Toys.....	22
Vandalism .....	22
Personal Appearance of Pupils.....	22
Uniform Code .....	22
 <b>CRISIS PLAN.....</b>	 <b>23</b>
In the Event of an Emergency .....	23
Student Evacuation Procedures .....	23
Instructions for Parents.....	24
 <b>SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM .....</b>	 <b>24</b>
 <b>PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN.....</b>	 <b>24</b>
Reporting Child Abuse.....	25

The Principal reserves the right to amend this handbook. The introduction or revision of policies will be printed in the weekly newsletter, Chalk Talk and published on the school website, [www.sfs-vista.org](http://www.sfs-vista.org)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Accreditation

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School participates in the accreditation process formulated by the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Participation in this process assures continued school improvement through on-going self-study and evaluation. The school completed its last self-study in 2008 and was granted the highest accreditation for the full six-year period.

### Philosophy

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School identifies message, community, service, and worship as the educational foundation upon which a partnership of home and school is built. Recognizing parents as primary educators, and teachers as facilitators for learning, our students develop within an educational program rooted in Catholic faith that imparts knowledge, values, and life skills according to the individual needs and abilities of each child. Education is a process that transcends the immediate future and with this shared vision, we strive to instill in our students a life-long commitment and societal responsibility to the Christian ideals of peace, justice, equality, and respect for all life.

### Mission Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School is called to provide a nurturing environment where students can grow spiritually, intellectually, socially, psychologically, and physically. Through a dedicated partnership of parish, parents, and educators, we strive to prepare our students to become productive, global citizens of the twenty-first century. Placed within the foundation of our philosophy, we share the vision and common goals exemplified in our motto *Excellence in Catholic Education*.

### Schoolwide Learning Expectations

#### The Students of St. Francis of Assisi Parish School will know and understand:

##### Stewardship -As Time, Talent, and Treasure by

- Participating in building a community of faith
- Recognizing God's gifts
- Demonstrating an Attitude of Gratitude
- Reaching out to others in need

##### Faith and Worship -As Knowing, Loving, and Serving God by

- Developing a prayer life using formal and informal prayers
- Living the teachings of our Catholic faith in words and actions
- Respecting the dignity of all life
- Participating in liturgical celebrations

##### Scholastic Achievement -As Striving for Academic Excellence by

- Assessing academic performance
- Exceeding expectations
- Knowing how to write and speak well
- Applying technology skills

#### The Primary Grade Students of St. Francis of Assisi Parish School will know and understand:

##### Stewardship ~ As Time, Talent, and Treasure by

- Building a community of faith
- Being thankful for God's gifts
- Helping others in need

##### Faith and Worship~ As Knowing, Loving, and Serving God by

- Participating in Church services
- Living our Catholic faith in words and actions
- Respecting all life

##### Scholastic Achievement ~As Striving for Academic Excellence by

- Growing in knowledge and skills
- Using technology
- Writing and speaking with fluency

### Notice of Non-Discrimination

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School, in the Diocese of San Diego, mindful of our mission to be witnesses to the love of Christ for all, admit students of any race, color, and national and/or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the schools. St. Francis of Assisi Parish School, in the Diocese of San Diego, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national and/or ethnic origin, age, sex or disability in the administration of educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. Likewise, St. Francis of Assisi Parish School, in the Diocese of San Diego does not discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of sex, age, disability, race, color, and national and/or ethnic origin. (Diocesan Policy 501)

### **Parents as Primary Educators**

Parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. The school supports, enhances and complements this role. Parents should be kept informed of the progress of their children by means of report cards, progress reports, conferences, open house, and carefully prepared programs, which demonstrate materials and methods employed in school. It is the responsibility of the parents:

- To establish a home environment that teaches the moral values, religious habits, social skills, self-discipline, and commitment to learning upon which a successful Catholic school education is based.
- To make a wise and informed choice of schools for their children, keeping in mind that each school has its own character, tone, and strengths.
- To be fully informed regarding all aspects of their children's developmental progress, and, where needed, to take and support the appropriate remedial action.
- To make every effort to establish and maintain a collaborative and mutually supportive relationship with the school which they have selected for their children.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

No person shall be admitted as a student in any Catholic school unless that person and his/her parents or guardians subscribe to the school's philosophy and agree to abide by the educational policies and regulations of the school and the Diocese. (Diocesan Policy 502) It is important to remember that St. Francis of Assisi Parish School cannot accommodate the needs of students who demonstrate severe grade level, emotional, or behavioral deficiencies. Recommendations can be made for specialized testing for academic deficiencies caused by specific learning disabilities. Referrals for alternative school placement are also available. The administrator makes the final determination regarding acceptance.

### **Assessment**

A written admissions test is administered to all prospective students to determine whether St. Francis of Assisi Parish School can serve that student's needs. Report card grades from the previous school are considered in the admission process.

### **Age of Admission**

Preschool: A child who is 3 years old by September 1, and who is toilet trained

Kindergarten: A child who is 5 years old by September 1, and developmentally ready

First Grade: A child who is 6 years old by September 1, and developmentally ready.

The principal and teachers determine developmental readiness using standardized screening processes. The principal makes the final determination regarding grade placement.

### **Priority of Admission**

Siblings of students already enrolled in St. Francis of Assisi Parish School will be given additional consideration. Admission of students to St. Francis of Assisi Parish School is based on the following priorities:

- Registered and contributing members of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, who regularly attend Mass, as verified through the use of weekly church envelopes.
- Catholic families from another parish
- Non-Catholics

### **Returning Students**

Returning students will be re-admitted to school provided all tuition and fees from the previous year have been paid

### **Stewardship/Non-Stewardship**

St. Francis Parish holds that practicing time, talent, and treasure are examples of your Faith in which you as a parent fully participate and support the life of the church and the true values of Catholic education. Time/Talent hours and the St. Francis Parish envelopes (Treasure) will be recorded weekly. If you have not supported your school and parish for the past year with regular weekly contributions and volunteer hours, you will be placed on the non-stewardship rate for tuition. Families with outstanding balances at other Diocesan schools will not be admitted until all accounts are settled.

#### Time & Talent Stewardship Criteria:

- Regular family attendance at Sunday Mass
- Involvement in school and Parish activities/events
- Role modeling to your children the act of giving your time and talent to others

#### Treasure Stewardship Criteria:

- Regular, consistent giving to your parish (goal: 5% of your annual gross income)
- Financial support to other Catholic charities (goal: 5% of your annual gross income)
- Role modeling to your children the act of providing financial support to your parish community.

## FINANCE POLICIES

### Tuition

There are currently three rates of tuition:

- St. Francis Stewardship
- Out of Parish/St. Francis Non-Stewardship
- Non-Catholic

Tuition is determined in conformity with Diocesan Policy. Every parent of a student in St. Francis of Assisi Parish School signs a written agreement to pay a specified tuition and fees amount. As part of the tuition agreement parents agree to comply with all school and Diocesan policies and regulations.

Three options are available for the payment of tuition:

- Annual Payment-One payment in full due by June 30.
- Semi-Annual Payments- Two equal installments. (Due by June 30 and January 30)
- Monthly Payments-Automatic monthly deductions from your checking account through the F.A.C.T.S. Tuition Management Company. Ten (Sept-June) or Twelve monthly payments (July-June) are made for the convenience of families and are not to be interpreted as payment for a particular month. There is a \$38 annual fee to enroll with F.A.C.T.S.

Tuition does not fully cover the costs of educating each child at St. Francis. To defray the additional costs, we rely on fundraising. Although participation is not mandatory, we ask that you support the fundraising opportunities.

### Registration

An annual non-refundable registration fee is required to guarantee space for your child.

### Tuition Assistance

Limited assistance based solely on financial need is available to new and currently enrolled students in grades K-8. Assistance can only be extended to registered contributing St. Francis parishioners.

### Financial Assistance from Neighboring Parishes

Students from a parish without a school who attend another parish’s school shall be charged a higher tuition rate reflective of the parish subsidy to the school. The neighboring parish in which such families are registered and active is strongly encouraged to assist in paying on behalf of such students, the differences between the parish and non-parish tuition rate. (Diocesan Policy 316)

### Requests for Reimbursement

Any and all requests for reimbursement for expenditures, refunds, lost checks; etc must be made in writing within the same fiscal year as incurred or issued. The fiscal year is July 1-June 30.

### Stewardship Hours

Active involvement in the life of the school and parish is expected of all parents. Each family is asked to volunteer 40 hours of their time to the school or parish.



### NEW! After School Care Program

The After School Care Program supports working parents by providing planned, safe, and caring supervision beyond the regular school day. Any child in K-8 who is enrolled in St. Francis of Assisi Parish School is eligible for the After School Care Program, which operates from 12:00 p.m.-5: 30 p.m. on all school days, including minimum days. Parents are billed on a regular basis.

#### CHILD CARE RATES for 2009-2010

Morning Care	K-8	Before 7:15am	\$5.00 per family/per day
		7:15-7:45am	No charge
Kinder Care	K	12:00-2:45pm	\$5.00 per family/per day for non-working families No Charge if both parents work outside the home
After School Care	K-8	2:45-5:30pm	\$10.00 per family/ per day
Minimum Day		12:00-5:30pm	\$15.00 per family/per day
Late Fee	K-8	After 5:30pm	\$3.00 per minute

#### Billing Information:

Minimum charge \$5 for 1 hour or less. Billing notices are sent home on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month. Payment is due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. A \$25.00 late fee if received after the 20<sup>th</sup>. After School Care Billing begins 15 minutes after dismissal time. KinderCare Billing begins at 12:15pm. For all Billing questions –always ask Miss Kathy first. Once your child is signed out of After School Care they may not stay to play with their friends. Once your child is signed out of After School Care you may not sign them back in. After School Care closes at 5:30pm. A \$3.00 per minute late fee will be charged. Please do not distract Miss Kathy’s attention away from supervising the children, by having long conversations, conferences, etc. Miss Kathy cannot heat up snacks, popcorn, etc in the microwave or oven during regular afternoon care. She can heat up KinderCare lunches on non-minimum days. Miss Kathy cannot administer medication to students.

## **HEALTH, SAFETY, and EMERGENCY POLICIES**

### **Visitors to School**

All persons entering a school shall go first to the school to obtain proper authorization to visit the school. Parents who wish to observe classroom procedures must obtain permission from the principal. Parents should confer with teachers after school or at other appointed times so as not to interrupt class instruction. (Diocesan Policy 140)

### **Live Scan**

Live Scan is an electronic fingerprinting process designed as a background check for criminal history. All St. Francis personnel and volunteers, to include field trip drivers and chaperones must be LiveScanned, in order to be eligible to supervise children.

### **Child Protective Services and Law Enforcement Access**

The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act gives Child Protective Services authority to interview children at school. In Section 1174.3 the Penal Code sets forth: "Whenever a representative of a Child Protective Agency deems necessary, a suspected victim of child abuse may be interviewed during school hours, on school premises, concerning a report of the suspected child abuse that occurred within the child's home." Although it is certainly appropriate to notify parents that an interview has taken place, it is not necessary to receive the parents' permission before allowing access to children.

### **Child Abuse Reporting Procedures**

In accordance with Diocesan Policy and California law, school faculty members are obligated, under penalty of fine and jail term, to report the reasonable suspicion of physical abuse, emotional abuse, emotional deprivation, physical neglect, inadequate supervision, or sexual abuse and exploitation. In this very serious and narrow legal area, the school will not contact parents or legal guardians in advance of making a report to legal authorities, which would be the procedure followed in most other legal matters.

### **Buckley Amendment**

This school voluntarily complies with the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Non-custodial parents will be given access to unofficial copies of student records, and staff will be available to discuss the student's records, unless a court order providing otherwise is filed with the school. Divorced parents must file a notarized copy of the custody section of the divorce decree with the school; such a procedure helps to protect the rights of everyone in the family. If one parent does not want the other parent to receive the school's communication materials, the school must have a court order on file stating this.

### **Emergency Card**

All students must file the emergency card, listing medical conditions and the names of two people who may be contacted in the event neither parent can be reached in an emergency or illness. Emergency cards must be submitted by Thursday of the first week of school each year. Students who have not submitted the completed cards will not be admitted to class on Friday. If there are any changes (address, phone number, etc) to this information throughout the school year, please notify the school office, in writing. Emergency Cards must contain current information, in case of illness or accident.

### **Health Record**

A cumulative health record is kept on file for each student. All significant health conditions and student medications should be listed on the annual Emergency Card and updated as necessary.

### **Health Screening**

The Health Office offers the following examinations:

- Vision: Annually for grades K, 3, 5 & 8
- Dental: Annually for all grades
- Scoliosis: Annually for all students in grade 5, grade 7 girls only, grade 8 boys.
- Audio: Annually for grades K, 3, 5, and 8

### **HIV/AIDS**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School follows the policies of the Diocese of San Diego in placing students infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which leads to Acquired Immune Deficiency (AIDS) or AIDS-Related Complex (ARC). These students are treated with respect and dignity. Every effort is made to protect the confidentiality of their records. Decisions regarding placement are made in consultation with the student's physician, counselor, parents, principal, pastor, and Diocesan Director for Schools.

### **Illness and Injury**

Parents are notified when a student is ill or has an injury, which requires medical attention. If a parent cannot be reached, an adult listed on the emergency card is contacted. No student is released without this contact. Students are signed out through the Health Room, or the school office.

### **Immunizations**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School has a "NO SHOTS---NO SCHOOL" policy. No student may be admitted unless he/she has complied with California immunization and health screening requirements. Up-to-date immunization records must be presented to the school office prior to the student entering school.

#### Preschool:

- |                                 |           |               |  |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------|--|
| • Medical record form completed | • DPT     | 5 doses       |  |
| • DPT                           | 4 doses   | • Polio       | 4 doses                                      |
| • Polio                         | 3-4 doses | • MMR         | 2 doses                                      |
| • MMR                           | 1 dose    | • Hepatitis B | 3 doses                                      |
| • HIB                           | 1 dose    | • Varicella   | 1 dose or physician documentation of disease |

#### Kindergarten:

#### First Grade:

- A complete physical examination, within 18 months prior to admission, performed by a physician or nurse practitioner.
- A Health Department form completed at time of physical. The school will provide this form.

#### Transfer Students:

- All transfer students are required to submit a copy of their up-to-date immunization record before admission.

### **Insurance**

A student insurance program is provided for all students. The program assists in the medical expenses incurred due to an accidental injury sustained by children while attending school, traveling to and/or from school, or participating in a solely school sponsored and supervised activity. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to request the Insurance Claim Accident Form and submit it to the appropriate claims office.

### **Medical Appointments**

A student who has a medical/dental appointment should bring a note to the teacher indicating the date/time of the appointment. The note will be sent to the Health Office and the child will be notified in the classroom when the parent comes to pick up the child. After the appointment, the student is to be re-admitted through the Health Office/School Office. Medical/Dental appointments are considered excused absences if the parent/guardian submits documentation from the physician upon returning to school. Parents are urged to schedule appointments during non-school hours.

### **Medical Conditions**

Students having medical conditions that need monitoring (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, etc.) must have that information clearly defined on the emergency card with instructions in case of an emergency. The Authorization for Medication Administration form must be completed by the student's physician authorizing medical intervention.



**NEW!** St. Francis School is committed to meeting the needs of all students, in so far as possible. There are some conditions, however, for which the school cannot provide the necessary resources.

### **Medications**

Medications shall not be furnished to students by the school. School personnel cannot administer any medication without the express written permission of the parent/guardian, stating the student's name, name of the medication and dosage. If a student must have medication during the school day, the following procedure is to be followed:

- A release from the doctor or parent stating the nature of the medication.
- Prescription medication must be in the original container and have the affixed label including the student's name.
- Non-prescription medication must also be in the original container.
- A Completed Medication Release Form must accompany *each medication* and will be kept in the student's file.
- A new Medication Form needs to be signed for each new prescription.
- All medications will be kept in the Health Office or School Office. No medication may be kept in the classrooms, student lockers, or book bags. This includes over-the-counter medications, cough drops, etc.
- Student medication must be self-administered (Diocesan Policy 370)

### **Readmission after an Illness**

A pupil who has been absent from school because of a reportable communicable disease must have a permit issued by the Public Health Department, a physician, or a nurse, before she/he is readmitted to school.

### **Smoking**

Schools are smoke-free environments. The San Diego Schools strictly enforce smoke-free environments in their schools. School personnel and adults must be off school grounds to smoke. Possession or use of tobacco by students is strictly prohibited and constitute grounds for probation, suspension, or expulsion.

### **Student Confidentiality**

Teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them as long as no life, health, or safety is at risk. Parents will be notified of teacher concerns.



### **NEW! Traffic Pattern**

A traffic pattern for drop off and pick up of students has been designed and approved by the local police department, for the safety of all children and adults. We strongly urge all visitors to our campus to observe the rules of the traffic pattern. Please follow the direction of the Student Safety Patrol and adults on duty for the safety of everyone. All students are to be dropped off and picked up from the church parking lot. All students are to wait on the sidewalk nearest the church. Parents and drivers are not to use the Rollins Way road as an alternative. Enter the church parking lot at the upper entrance, off of Valencia, adjacent to the Vista Entertainment Center. A single file line of cars following the road allows for the safety of the children entering or departing from a vehicle. Students should not cross between cars at any time. The designated crossing area is to be used.

If you choose to park your car, please use the upper and lower parking lanes only. Do not use the center rows. This area, when used to park, impedes the flow of traffic. When walking with your small children, please hold their hand, and do not allow them to run in the parking lot. Too many near accidents have occurred in the past.

### **Pupil Pregnancy (Diocesan Policy 560)**

A primary purpose of Catholic education is to guide our students' growth in Christian values and moral conduct. It stresses that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that the sanctity of family life is enhanced through a fulfillment of God's plan as expressed by a loving and permanent commitment. Premarital sexual activity is contrary to these values. However, when a pregnancy occurs outside of marriage, the total school community should seek to offer support to the pregnant student and/or the student father so that the pregnancy can be brought to term. The reality of the situation, in all its dimensions, is to be treated in a Christian and humane manner. Elementary students involved with a pregnancy have changed their *status quo* and thus some of their obligations, responsibilities, and priorities. They have accepted the responsibility of bringing a new human life into the world. Such responsibility necessitates a change in status. In order to insure the best interests of the elementary student(s), parents, and the school community, the following guidelines will be implemented.

- When pregnancy is known to school personnel by whatever means, the principal must meet with the girl and her parents and/or guardians. The student is encouraged to begin appropriate professional counseling consistent with Catholic teaching to assist with the circumstances of the pregnancy and with making choices for the future of both parents and the new born child. Additionally, the girl will be referred to her pastor for advice and counseling.
- If the father is identified, and if he is a student in a Catholic school, the principal of that school must meet with him and his parents and require that he be involved in a counseling program similar to that provided the mother. Also, he will be referred to his pastor for his advice and counseling.
- The school should assist the pregnant student to make arrangements for continuing her education by referring the student to an alternate program.
- The principal, in consultation with the Director of Schools and, in the case of parish schools, the pastor, shall review all aspects of each case and make a determination based upon its unique circumstances as to the date when the girl is to leave the school.

### **Abortion**

The teaching of the Catholic Church is clear regarding the inviolable right to life of all human beings, the reverence and respect owed to each person including those conceived and not yet born, and the morally indefensible procurement of abortion. Abortion, which disregards innocent human life, is incompatible with and contradictory to the fundamental teachings of the Church, the mission of the Catholic school, and the values that ought to permeate Catholic education. Catholic teaching does not accept that anyone may justifiably arrange for or procure an abortion for oneself or for another person, be forced or pressured into having an abortion, or influence or coerce another to have an abortion. Moreover, given the already existing network of prenatal programs and pregnancy counseling available in the Diocese of San Diego, there is no acceptable reason why any student should be coerced into having an abortion. Therefore, the involvement of any student in procuring or assisting in the procurement of an abortion is cause for such student to be dismissed from school. Furthermore, if any student's parent or guardian coerces and/or assists in the procurement of an abortion for his or her daughter or any other student, that parent or guardian's son or daughter may also be dismissed. (Diocesan Policy 561) In accord with the above policy, each situation regarding abortion will be handled on an individual basis, applying the following suggested procedural guidelines.

1. If it becomes known to any member of the school community that a student is contemplating or planning an abortion, that member of the school community is to advise the student to contact the administrator or counselor designated for the purpose of facilitating pregnancy counseling. In the case of a parochial elementary school, the designated person will usually be the pastor or his associate. All reasonable encouragement should be given to the student to save the life of her unborn child. In all circumstances, the mother of the unborn child is to be treated with compassion and respect.
2. If the student proceeds with the abortion or if a student makes known that she has undergone an abortion, or that he or she has assisted in procuring an abortion, the administrator, teacher or counselor to whom this fact is made known is to contact the Director of Schools for further guidance as to handling the situation.
3. Each school is to make explicit in the Parent/Student handbook the above statement of policy on abortion. Without jeopardy to the above guidelines, the school retains the right and the responsibility to promulgate and implement disciplinary measures, including expulsion, for public and overt breaches of Catholic moral teaching. (Diocesan Policy 562)

## CURRICULUM

### Extra Curricular

Students in grades 5-8 are invited to participate in supervised after-school sports, student council, C.J.S.F., (grade 7 and 8) safety patrol, and other extracurricular programs, which may be offered after dismissal. However, participation in any of these activities must never interfere with schoolwork. A student must be in school on the scheduled day of any sport or activity in order to participate in that particular sport or activity. Obedience, respect, cooperation, and sportsmanship are mandatory.

### Cheerleading

The Office for Schools, Diocese of San Diego, prohibits any type of cheerleading in our elementary schools, kindergarten through grade 8 that involves stunts, lifts or gymnastics. No elementary schools may sponsor or participate in competition involving this type of cheerleading. The Office for Schools does recognize cheerleading as an opportunity to “lead the cheers” at athletic and other events where the school spirit is enlivened by enthusiastic leadership. (Diocesan Policy 595)

### Family Life Education

The subject matter of the Family Life curriculum is integrated into the study of Religion, Social Studies, and Science, when appropriate. All parents have the opportunity to review the Family Life textbooks. All Family Life lessons follow Catholic Church teachings. Parents have the right to request that their child be removed from the biological component of Family Life in order to present this information to the child at home. This must be indicated on the permission slip, which is sent home annually. Prior to making this decision, parents are encouraged to discuss this option with the teacher and principal. It is recommended that each child receive this education both at home and at school, so that the child views his/her sexuality as a gift from God, which is discussed with respect in both places.

### Family Presence at Weekly Mass

As a Catholic school, we recognize that there is no greater opportunity for parent-directed religious education than the presence at Sunday Mass. As a Parish School, it is understood that weekly Mass attendance provides tremendous opportunity for community building in a Christ-centered environment. It is, therefore, essential to our mission as Catholic educators, in partnership with parents for the Catholic education of children, that families attend Sunday Mass on a weekly basis. As the primary religious educators of their children, parents are encouraged to consistently follow through on this most serious obligation.

### Field Trips

Field trips are privileges. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements. Every field trip must have specific educational goals clearly related to the curriculum. No student shall be allowed to participate in any field trip without express written permission from the parent/guardian, utilizing the specified field trip permission form. A separate permission slip must be obtained for every trip. Telephone calls will not be accepted in lieu of the proper forms. Parents always have the right to refuse to allow their child to participate in any given field trip. Overnight trips for students in the elementary schools are not recommended, encouraged, or endorsed by the Office for Schools. The only exceptions are Sixth Grade Camp and Fifth Grade Astro Camp.

### NEW! Grading

Effective 2009-2010 school year, a new Diocesan Report Card is being implemented throughout the Diocese. The new percentages will now be aligned with the Catholic and public high schools.

Percentages	Letter Grades for K- 3	Letter Grades for 4-8
93 –100	O	A
90 – 92	VG	A-
87 – 89	G+	B+
83 – 86	G	B
80 – 82	G-	B-
77 – 79	S+	C+
73 – 76	S	C
70 – 72	S-	C-
67 – 69	NI	D+
63 – 66	NI	D
60 – 62	NI	D-
0 – 59	U	F
Not Evaluated	NE	NE

### At Progress Report time:

Students must maintain a minimum of a C average to remain eligible for sports, dances, and extracurricular activities. Any student falling below this minimum will be placed on probation for the period of one week. During the probation week, the student should make every effort to improve the poor grades, and may not attend any school sponsored extracurricular activity (to include, but not limited to: dances, Student Council, sports, etc.) At the discretion of the classroom teacher, coach, or principal, the probation time may be extended if a student’s grades do not improve.

**At Report Card time:**

Students must maintain a minimum of a C average to remain eligible for sports, dances, and extracurricular activities. Any student falling below this minimum will no longer be eligible to participate in any school sponsored extracurricular activity until the next quarterly Report Card.

**Honor Roll**

Students in grades 6-8 are eligible to receive academic honors. An "A" or "B" is required in each subject (Handwriting is averaged into Language Arts), including Responsible Behavior, General Study Skills, and all Conduct grades. (Please note that this is not an A or B average)

**California Junior Scholarship Federation (CJSF)**

"The purpose of this organization shall be to foster high standards of scholarship, service, and citizenship on the part of California students" Qualifying students must have 12 points. The following are the requirements for membership in CJSF:

- Qualifying Subjects: Math, Science, Social Studies, Religion, Language Arts, and Literature.
- "A" = 3 points. "B" = 1 point. All letter grades from the previous report card must be a "C" or better.
- A letter grade of "D" or "F" shall disqualify the student for that quarter.
- Grades earned in P.E., Art, Music, and Computer are not considered for membership.
- Membership is granted for the quarter following the one in which the letter grades were earned.
- Membership may be renewed in all quarters for which the student qualifies.
- Honor membership shall be awarded to students who qualify for membership in CJSF for six quarters (to include letter grades earned in the fourth quarter of grade 6, the 4 quarters of grade 7, and the 4 quarters of grade 8).
- Membership and Honor Membership for the current 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be determined on the basis of letter grades earned during the school year.
- Ten hours of Student Stewardship service per quarter is also required for the service requirement.
- A student must also receive at least a grade of B- in Citizenship/behavior/conduct requirements.
- It is the students' responsibility to submit the documentation for CJSF to the classroom teacher one week prior to the end of each quarter.

**Promotion**

Only those students who satisfactorily complete the work of a particular grade in the basic skill areas shall be promoted to the next grade. Credit for courses shall not be given solely on the basis of "seat time". Ordinarily, pupils who satisfactorily complete the prescribed courses are promoted to the next higher grade at the end of the school year. Exceptions are made at the discretion of the principal. Students receiving an F in 60% (3 out of 5) or more of the core subject areas (Religion, Math, Social Studies, Science, and Language Arts) will not be promoted to the next grade. Out of consideration for the students' self-esteem, those students in grades 3-8 may be asked to transfer to a different school, rather than be retained at St. Francis. (Diocesan Policy 522)

**Retention**

In case of slow progress, each student will be considered individually. Any decision concerning non-promotion must be made after considering all facts related to the student's development (emotional, physical, social, intellectual, and academic). It is at the discretion of the principal, whether the school can continue to meet the educational needs of the individual student.

**Graduation**

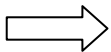
Graduation exercises at the elementary and secondary level shall be dignified and simple and shall take place no earlier than the week preceding the closure of school. (Diocesan Policy 528) Our parish school will continue to focus its priorities on providing a simple, dignified graduation ceremony that begins with Liturgy, followed by presentation of diplomas, and a reception to honor the graduates, families, guests and faculty. The celebration of the graduates from our school strives to keep in perspective that we are celebrating an 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation and promotion to high school. Certainly this day is an important day in the life of the child, but it is not on the level of a high school or college graduation. It is expected that all eighth graders, anticipating graduation, abide by all school policies, which includes all uniform policies. If an 8<sup>th</sup> grader chooses to disregard school policy, the final report card will be amended to reflect an "F" in Responsible Behavior. In addition, any recommendation to high school will also be amended.

With respect to graduation parties, the school does not support, sponsor, or participate in any fundraising events for private graduation parties. We ask that parents keep in mind that some families cannot afford the expense of graduation, therefore, do not make arrangements for the use of limousines, formal attire, tuxedos, or other expense-laden fees.

**Homework**

Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday. Assignments should be completed neatly, carefully, and returned promptly. If a student is experiencing difficulty, or spending too much time in its completion, the teacher should be contacted. The Diocese of San Diego recommends the following guidelines for homework:

- Kindergarten: 15 minutes
- Grades 1-2: 30 minutes
- Grade 3: 45 Minutes
- Grades 4-5: 60 minutes
- Grades 6-8: 120 minutes



### **NEW! Middle School Homework Policy**

Students can expect between 1 ½ - 2 hours of homework, Monday through Thursday, to include written work, assigned reading, and studying. Due to the increasing challenges in the curriculum, it is recommended that students also use weekend time to study, and work on long-term projects. Collaboration among the Middle School teachers will keep in balance the amount of homework assigned. Late assignments will be expected within twenty-four hours of the original due date, but will receive zero credit, and the student will spend the following Monday, Tuesday and/or Wednesday in after school detention. Parents will be notified the week prior to the detention.

### **Internet and email regulations for use**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School's computer lab provides access to the Internet specifically for student research use. Through our responsibility to the students, the administration has contracted with a firewall company that patrols the World Wide Web for sites that are inappropriate for persons under the age of eighteen. The school has and shall continue to use every means possible to ensure that each student is properly supervised and not exposed to materials that may be offensive or inappropriate for him or her. However, there is no foolproof method available to be 100% effective in this effort. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. The network is provided for students to conduct research. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege - not a right. Access entails responsibility. Network storage areas are treated like school lockers. School and network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. St. Francis School reserves the right to impose consequences for inappropriate use of technology outside of school. Inappropriate use includes harassment, use of school name, remarks directed to or about teachers, offensive communications and safety threats. The following acts are not permitted:

- Sending, displaying, or searching for hateful, or pornographic messages or pictures
- Viewing or sending inappropriate or obscene materials will not be tolerated
- Using obscene language or profanity
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Engaging in promoting violence, racial, gender or other slurs
- Receiving or transmitting information pertaining to dangerous instruments such as bombs, automatic weapons, other illicit firearms, weaponry, or explosive devices
- Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws
- Using other's passwords, folders, work or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the network for commercial purposes
- Accessing areas considered as borderline or transmitting personal information without written parental consent
- Knowledge of and failure to report such violations may result in loss of access to the Internet and may be subject to additional disciplinary action to include but not limited to, suspension or expulsion.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students at St. Francis School should pursue their education with honesty and integrity. A student's work and achievement should be the result of his/her own efforts. The following methods of academic dishonesty are not allowed and may result in a loss of credit for any specific assignment and disciplinary actions.

- Copying another student's homework
- Cheating on quizzes, tests or any other major assignment
- Plagiarism

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism means using someone else's ideas or words as if they are your own. A passage, an interpretation, or a finding in research that is not your own must be properly documented. Students who plagiarize on any paper for any class will receive a zero on that assignment. All students are taught the proper use of documentation in their Language Arts classes. Works cited from the Internet should be properly documented. Since honesty and integrity are extremely important values in the search for knowledge, these are the same values that all St. Francis students are expected to uphold. Plagiarism can be any of the following:

- Copying another's work verbatim (word for word without acknowledgement).
- Paraphrasing another's work without acknowledgement.
- Patching together a paper using different sources without acknowledgement of all those sources.
- Using someone else's idea or information that is not public domain or commonly known as your own idea.

### **Testing**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School utilizes Standardized Testing, as adopted by the Office for Schools. Standardized test results are entered on the student's permanent record cards, and are used for evaluation of curriculum only. It is not the philosophy of the school to publish or use test results for comparison of students, teachers, or other schools.

**Tutoring**

Where circumstances require the tutoring of a child, it is Diocesan policy that parents assume responsibility for engaging private tutoring. Teachers, as professionals, ethically do not accept remuneration for the tutoring of a student assigned to their class(s). All tutoring for personal financial gain is conducted off the school/parish site.

**Minimum Day Schedule:**

On the first Friday of each month and other designated days, a minimum day schedule is observed for all grades. Dismissal is at 12:00 Noon. This day allows for faculty in-services and meetings. Reminders can be found in the monthly calendar, school website, and weekly newsletter.

**Performance Rubric**

<b>EXPECTATIONS - GRADES K-3</b>	
O	Consistently accomplishes tasks and exceeds expectations.
VG	Fully accomplishes tasks. Occasionally exceed expectations.
G	Substantially accomplishes tasks.
S	Partially accomplishes tasks.
NI	Little progress demonstrated. Does not meet expectations.
U	No progress demonstrated. Does not fulfill assigned tasks.
<b>EXPECTATIONS - GRADES 4-8</b>	
A	Consistently meets or exceeds grade level expectations. Performance is significantly higher in content and proficiency.
B	Generally meets grade level expectations. Level of performance may occasionally exceed expectations in some areas.
C	Meets minimal grade level expectations. Level of performance fluctuates.
D	Does not meet grade level expectations. Level of performance is less than satisfactory and needs immediate improvement.
F	Fails to meet minimal grade level expectations. Plans for immediate improvement must be made.

**Sacramental Preparation**

All incoming students must present an original copy of their Baptismal Certificate at registration time. Students baptized in a different faith, and wishing to become Catholic, must contact the Religious Education Office to attend Christian Initiation for Children (CIC) sessions offered by the parish. Additional instruction will be required for any student in grades 3-8 who have not made their First Communion. Parents of students intending to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and/or First Eucharist must attend the St. Francis Parish Sacrament Preparation Meeting, as a condition of their child/children receiving these sacraments. Check the weekly Chalk Talk for dates. Students who completed a preparation program while in high school reserve the Sacrament of Confirmation, in accordance with Diocesan Policy, for reception. Preparation classes are held under the direction of the Parish Religious Education Office and the Youth Group Minister. Eligible students are encouraged to contact the Religious Education Office (945-8010) for further information regarding requirements and class dates.

**School Liturgy**

Religious worship is an integral part of a child's growth and central part of the identity of a Catholic school. Full participation is expected in word and song. On a weekly basis, the Feast of St. Francis, and Holy Days of Obligation, students will attend the 8:00a.m. Mass. Parents, friends, relatives, and families are encouraged to join us. Students are required to be in Full Dress Uniform during these times. In addition to attending Mass, students are encouraged to participate in Reconciliation Services offered by the Parish.

**DISCIPLINE**

Discipline is maintained in a classroom or school when pupils work cooperatively with the principal, teachers, and companions towards the attainment of the class and school objectives. However, it should be noted that the legitimate interest of the school extends beyond the school day and beyond school hours. (Diocesan Policy 541)

**Abuse of Teachers**

Any parent, guardian, or other person who insults or abuses any teacher in the presence or hearing of other school personnel or students and at a place which is on school premises or public sidewalks, streets, or other public ways adjacent to school premises or at some other place if the teacher is required to be at such other place in connection with assigned school activities, is guilty of misdemeanor, and is punishable by a fine of not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.00). (EC 44812) (Diocesan Policy 571)

**Assault** (EC 44014) (Diocesan Policy 572)

Whenever any employee of a school is attacked, assaulted, or menaced, by any pupil, it shall be the duty of such employee, and the duty of any person under whose direction or supervision such employee is employed who has knowledge of such ties of the county or city in which the same occurred. Failure to make such report shall be a misdemeanor punishable by fine of not more than two hundred dollars (\$200).

**Classroom Discipline Plan**

Each teacher posts a Classroom Discipline Plan covering rules specific to each grade.

**Detention**

A student may be detained after the daily school session for violation of various class and school regulations according to the school's detention policy. (Diocesan Policy 545) After School Detention will be held Monday through Thursday 2:45-3:45pm. Students will contact parents by telephone on the day of the assigned detention. Faculty members will supervise the detention in an assigned classroom. Students not picked up by a parent at 3:45pm will be released to After School Care. All After School Care charges begin at 2:45pm.

## **Harassment**

Harassment in any form, including sexual harassment is prohibited. Any student or faculty member who believes that he/she has been the object of harassment, or has witnessed such behavior should notify the principal. The principal will take immediate action. Harassment is any form of conduct that is not welcome and is personally offensive. A student is subject to disciplinary action if involved in any form of harassment directed towards another student or faculty member. (Diocesan Policy 573)

## **Student to Student Harassment**

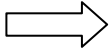
The Diocese of San Diego affirms the Christian dignity of every student. It is the policy of the diocese to provide an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect. Harassment is unacceptable conduct. This policy addresses harassment occurring in a school environment in which an individual is subjected to treatment which is hostile, offensive, or intimidating because of the individual's race, creed, color, national origin, physical ability, gender, or other personal characteristics. A charge of harassment shall not, in and of itself, create the presumption of wrongdoing. However, acts of harassment will result in disciplinary action up to, not excluding expulsion. Students found to have filed knowingly false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including expulsion. Depending on the nature and extent of the charge, if reasonable suspicion of misconduct is determined, the parents of the alleged harasser will be called to take the student home pending conclusion of the investigation by the school.

## **Student Threats**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School takes any threat to oneself or others very seriously. Threats communicated verbally, in writing or electronically could result in suspension or expulsion. St. Francis School follows the Diocesan policy regarding student threats.

1. Any and all student threats of harm to self or others must be taken seriously.
2. Whoever hears the threat will report it to the principal immediately.
3. Police will be notified immediately.
4. The parent or guardian of the student who has made the threat will be notified immediately.
5. The student will be kept in the principal's office under supervision until the police/parents arrive.
6. The parent or guardian of any student who has been mentioned as a potential victim, as well as any adult who has been mentioned, either verbally or in writing, will be notified immediately.
7. The student will work from home and will not be considered for readmission to the classroom unless and until the following steps have been complete.
  - a. The principal must receive a report from the police, wither written or verbal. The report should include notification of whether the child will be charged with any crime as well as an assessment of the child's access to weapons.
  - b. A comprehensive mental health evaluation and risk assessment must be conducted by an independent psychiatrist or psychologist. If a psychiatrist performs the primary evaluation, he or she will determine whether it is necessary to utilize a psychologist for psychological consultation or testing. If a psychologist performs the primary evaluation, he or she will determine the need for psychiatric consultation.
  - c. The principal will, after obtaining the permission of the parents, provide the mental health care professional with all relevant facts, including but not limited to aggressive behavior, details of the threat as known to the principal, copies of any drawings or writings, disciplinary history of the student, behavioral concerns, and the names of any known victims or potential victims.
  - d. The principal will receive a written comprehensive, detailed evaluation and report and documented treatment plan from the mental health care professional stating the basis (factual and risk factors and testing results) upon which it has been determined that the student does or does not pose a danger to self or others. The report must also address the concerns raised by the principal to the mental health care professional. The evaluation and report must be delivered to the principal. The principal will share them with legal or mental health care consultants, as well as any members of the school or parish administration who will assist the principal in the decision regarding readmission of the student to the school.
8. If the psychiatrist or psychologist recommends re-admittance, and if the principal is satisfied with the report given, the principal will after due consideration, including a conference with the parents, decides whether to re-admit the child. The outcome of the investigation, including police and mental health reports will be considered as determining factors in the decision whether to re-admit. This decision will not be finalized until after an initial meeting with the parents. The decision will not be made or announced at that meeting. Any decision on whether to re-admit will require consultation with the pastor.
9. Disciplinary action including suspension/expulsion will be administered as appropriate.
10. If the student is re-admitted to the school, the mental health care professional must at the principal or pastor's request provide a follow-up assessment of the student within 30 days. The principal must be provided with a copy of the follow-up assessment and evaluation and with any recommendation for therapy, counseling, or other treatment. Cooperation with recommendations for continuing care will be a condition of re-admittance and continued enrollment.
11. Counseling will be made available to children who are victims of the threatening behavior or who observed the threatening behavior if it is determined that such counseling is needed and parental permission is granted.
12. Documentation from the mental health care professional concerning the student is to be placed in a separate, confidential file and will not be a part of the student's academic or disciplinary file. Only the principal and/or pastor should have access to these files. This documentation will be kept for a period of one year beyond the time when the child leaves the school as a result of expulsion, withdrawal by parent/guardian, or graduation before being destroyed.

This policy will be reviewed periodically or as needed to accommodate changes, as mental health professionals are continually addressing the area of risk assessment for violent or potentially violent behavior.



### **NEW! Probation, Suspension, Expulsion**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School follows Diocesan Policy and California law with regard to placing students on probation, suspension, and expulsion. The principal is the only person who has the authority to suspend, expel, or place a student on probation and reserves the right to make exceptions for cases in which mitigating circumstances call for a different response than the policy suggests. Reasons for expulsions include, but are not limited to, the following offenses committed by pupils:

- Actions gravely detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of other students
- Incurable or disruptive behavior which impedes the progress of the rest of the class
- Damage to, or theft of school or private property
- Infliction of, or threatened physical injury to another person
- Possession or sale of weapons, explosives, fireworks, drugs, including controlled substances and intoxicants
- Possession or use of tobacco
- Commission of obscene act(s) or engagement in habitual profanity or vulgarity
- Disruption of school activities
- Defiance of school authorities
- Habitual truancy
- Hazing
- Immorality in talk or action
- Conduct, before, during or after school, detrimental to the reputation of the school
- Other inappropriate behavior or conduct unbecoming a Christian student.

#### *Specific Guidelines*

- A student may be placed on suspension for serious misconduct, on campus or off campus during school related activities, or for continued misconduct after having been placed on probation.
- The principal must approve a suspension and the pastor must be informed.
- Since the grounds for suspension ordinarily differ only in degree from the grounds for expulsion, the possibility of expulsion or a recommended transfer for continued or repeated misconduct must be clearly stated to the parents and student.
- The length of any suspension is left to the discretion of the principal in accordance with the nature of the conduct and all circumstances.
- Full credit shall be given for all work accomplished by the student prior to the time of expulsion.
- A suspended student has the right to make up all assignments and tests missed during the period of suspension, and upon satisfactory completion, to be given full credit.
- The final decision to expel a student rests with the principal and pastor.
- The student may be suspended from a particular class and required to report to a specific place on campus during that time.

The Diocese approves the following Measures of Discipline:

- |                               |                        |              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| • Conference with student     | • Denial of privileges | • Suspension |
| • Conference with parents     | • Detention            | • Expulsion  |
| • Assignment of special tasks | • Probation            |              |



**NEW!** The Principal reserves the right to waive and/or deviate from any all disciplinary regulations for just cause at her discretion.



### **NEW! Suspended Students**

Students who have been suspended are not allowed on campus during the suspension period. Missed homework and classwork will be given to the student upon completion of the suspension. Full credit can be earned if all completed work is submitted to the teacher in the time allotted: one day for every day of suspension or absence.

### **Transfer on Grounds of Parental Behavior**

Normally a child is not to be deprived of a Catholic education or *otherwise penalized* for actions of parents. However, in rare instances, parents may so persistently and overtly refuse to cooperate with school staff, policies, regulations or programs, or may so seriously interfere in matters of school administration or discipline as to reduce significantly the school's ability to serve their own or other children. In such cases, after reasonable effort to elicit the minimum requisite parental cooperation and after appropriate consultation with the pastor, the principal shall recommend to the parents that they transfer their child. If the parents refuse to accept the recommended transfer, the procedures for (a) notification, (b) conferencing, (c) written documentation shall be followed as in cases for disciplinary expulsion. (Diocesan Policy 549)



### **NEW! Parent/Teacher Agreement\*** (Taken in part from St. John Chrysostom School Handbook (Bronx, NY))

Because St. Francis of Assisi Parish School is a faith community, parental cooperation and good parent-teacher relations are essential. As a faith community, our first priority is to ensure that each of us – teachers, administrators, parents, guardians, and other care-givers have the child’s best interest at heart.

While we as a school excel in many ways, no one within our community is perfect, and problems and misunderstandings will occur. When a problem or disagreement arises, we will make every effort to contact the parents or guardians to clarify the situation. Parents, guardians, and family members who experience problems or are confused with some matter regarding their child’s educational experience are asked to show similar respect by striving first to learn the reasons behind a policy or inquire about the teacher’s position or decision before judging or forming an opinion. Those who are not satisfied with what they have learned are asked to approach the principal to further investigate the matter. In this way, positive resolutions can be reached.

Parents and guardians are asked to follow these guidelines for expressing concern over a school matter:

1. If the problem involves routine procedures such as homework, class assignments, classroom or playground behavior, or student-to-student problems, the parent is asked to contact the teacher first. The best way to do this is through a phone call to the school office where a message will be given to the teacher to return the call. For a variety of reasons, parents should not attempt to discuss a difficult or serious matter in front of students, especially while the teacher is in the classroom or serving any duty during the regular instructional day.
2. If the problem is more serious, the parent or guardian should inform the principal in writing or with a phone call. Only signed notes or callers who identify themselves will be taken seriously. Due to school responsibilities, the principal may not be available immediately; therefore, patience in setting personal appointments or in expecting a return phone call is requested. Since concern for students is uppermost in all our minds, we will make every effort to address parental concerns in a timely manner. We simply ask that parents understand that many children and other parents may require our immediate attention at the time.

All faculty members of St. Francis of Assisi Parish School promise prompt attention to problems, privacy in discussing matters, professional courtesy and respect when problems are presented, and a sincere effort to resolve problems in a Christian manner. We promise to approach problems and misunderstandings in a manner that expresses genuine concern for the welfare of the child and his or her fellow students spiritually, psychologically, academically, and physically.

With this in mind, parents and guardians are expected to show the same concern and respect for the faculty of St. Francis of Assisi Parish School, as well as the other children and families of our community. We will not tolerate assaults (verbal, physical, emotional and psychological, harassment of a staff member, students, or parents) – in person, by phone, or through electronic communication. Nor will we tolerate intimidation or verbal abuse of any member of the community – in person or in writing.

Commission of any of the above acts on the part of a faculty member will lead to appropriate Diocesan-approved disciplinary actions. Likewise, misconduct on the part of a parent, guardian, or family member may lead to one of the following actions:

- a) limiting or refusing permission to enter or use the school grounds or facilities
- b) requiring that an impartial party represents the child’s interests on school matters
- c) initiating procedures requiring the family to withdraw the child from the school
- d) refusing school re-registration of the child

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Absence and Tardiness**

Instruction begins at 7:45am for students in grades 3-8. Instruction begins at 8:00am for students in K-2. Students arriving after the bell has rung, will be marked tardy. If a child is going to be absent, parents are required to call the Health Office before 7:45 a.m. A student who has been absent or tardy is required to present a written excuse stating the reason for the absence, signed by his/her parents or guardian. A student who has been absent 15 or more days in a quarter, and who has not made up the academic work, will not receive a grade in the class or classes missed for that quarter. A reasonable extension to complete missed academic work may be granted by the principal after evaluation of individual circumstances. (Diocesan Policy 362) Parents are urged to keep such requests to a minimum and are encouraged to make appointments during vacation periods or after school hours.

A pupil absent from school because of television or movie contracts is considered as an ordinary absence.

If a pupil has been absent without explanation, and it is impossible to contact parent or guardian, he/she will be kept on the Pupil Attendance Register as actively enrolled for the duration of the school year. The attendance officer of the local public school district shall be notified so that the possibility of truancy may be investigated. (Diocesan Policy 511)

### **Homework Requests**

For students who are absent due to illness, parents need to call the school prior to 9:00am to request that the homework be prepared for the student during the absence. The prepared work may be picked up in the office after 2:45 p.m.

### Extended Absences

If for family reasons, parents need to take their children out of school temporarily, the teacher will discuss with the parents the possible effects of such an absence. A Request for Extended Absence Form must be filled out prior to the absence. Parents are encouraged to plan family travel at a time when it will not interfere with the child's education. Homework is given to students going out of town for an emergency only. Teachers are not obliged to plan assignments for students going on a family vacation during the school session. Completing all make-up work is the responsibility of the student.



### NEW! Arrival/Dismissal/Supervision of Students

Students must not be on the school/parish grounds before 7:15 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m., unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, or involved in a school-sponsored activity. Morning supervision is provided from 7:15 a.m. - 7:30 a.m. in the Computer Lab. Any student arriving before 7:15am will be billed for daycare. Students must be picked up by a parent or authorized adult by 3:00 p.m. each school day. (12:15 p.m. on minimum days). We ask that you follow the Traffic Area pattern and use the designated crosswalks to prevent any accidents between cars or students. On Rainy Days, parents are asked to pick up the students in the classrooms. Students must not leave school grounds during normal school hours without school office and parental permission. During sports practices, younger siblings may not "hang out" or sit on the sidelines to watch the practice. All students not directly involved in an activity must go to Daycare. Any student found on campus after 3:00 p.m. will be escorted to After School Care. Parents will be billed accordingly. Billing begins at 2:45 p.m. Students may not wait in the parking lot, school office, bushes, church, Wendy's, or any other unsupervised location.

### Parking

Parents and visitors are asked to use the main Church parking lot. The Rollins Way parking lot is reserved strictly for faculty and parish staff between the hours of 7:00am and 3:00pm.

### Release of Pupils

Students are only released to parents or legal guardians through the school office or health office. Parents may authorize the release of their child to another adult by sending a written request to the school office. Students may not go home with another student or individual, without the express written consent of both sets of involved parents.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Access to Student Records

Access to student records is granted only by the principal and only to parents/legal guardians, or others allowed by law. All requests to view a student record must be made in writing, to the principal, with 24 hours notice. Non-custodial parents will be given access to unofficial copies of student records and faculty will be available to discuss the student's records, unless a court order providing otherwise is filed with the school. Separated or divorced parents are required to file a notarized copy of the custody section of the divorce decree providing direction about the non-custodial parents' right of access to the child.

### Appointments with Faculty Members

If you have a question regarding a classroom situation or procedure, please discuss it with the classroom teacher. Our faculty members are very responsive, understanding, and are willing to help handle a "small problem" before it becomes a "BIG PROBLEM". If there is a question related to SCHOOL POLICY, contact the principal. It is far better to discuss all such matters with those in authority than to discuss it with other parents in the parking lot. Please make appointments with teachers and the principal in advance, whenever possible.



### NEW! Classroom Visits

Interruptions during instructional time are detrimental to the learning process. Any classroom visit must be scheduled through the principal at least 24 hours in advance. All visitors must first report to the school office. Parents are asked to bring their child's forgotten items, such as lunches, books, homework, etc, to the Health Room or School Office. The student will be contacted to pick up the item at recess or lunchtime.

### Contacting Teachers

Many of our teachers are involved in the local community, and as a result, their phone numbers are often made available to the public. However, we ask that you **DO NOT CALL TEACHERS AT HOME**. You can reach any faculty member through the school email. The email address for all faculty members consists of their *first initial and last name@sfs-vista.org*. In addition, you can always leave a message at the school office.

### Family Message Envelope

Communication between the school and home is essential for maximum cooperation and understanding. We strive to maintain an efficient system of communication through the use of the school website and Family Message Envelope. This large brown envelope is sent home every Friday with the oldest child in the family, and contains important school information. In order to maintain our efficiency, parents should promptly return the Family Message Envelope on Monday.

**Back to School Night**

Back to School Night is held at the beginning of each new school year. Parents are notified of the time and location and are encouraged to attend. This event gives you the opportunity to meet your child's teacher, visit the classroom and talk with other parents. You learn first-hand about the educational program of your child and enjoy the company of other parents.

**New Parent Orientation**

This informative evening, held in August, for all of our new incoming parents, is designed to answer many questions that a new family may have regarding policies, procedures, and events at St. Francis of Assisi Parish School.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Formal Parent-Teacher conferences are held once a year. All parents are required to attend this conference in order to establish a good pattern of communication. Parents or teachers are encouraged to request additional conferences throughout the school year.

**Parent-Teacher Group (PTG)**

The Parent-Teacher Group (PTG) is an integral part of the school community it serves. It helps fulfill the commitment to build parish life and the spirit of the Catholic school. The mission of the PTG is to support faculty, administration, students, and parents by analyzing the current needs of St. Francis of Assisi Parish School, setting annual goals, and planning objectives in order to accomplish the current goals. Please feel free to contact any of the PTG members for assistance.

**Progress Reports**

Progress Reports will be sent home at mid-quarter for any student receiving a grade lower than a "C" (NI in primary grades). Progress Reports can be sent home at other times, as needed, and must be signed and returned to the classroom teacher on the next school day. Parents are reminded that the Progress Report is not a report card, but rather an indication of progress to date in a specific area.

**Report Cards**

Report Cards are issued four times a year, at the end of each grading period. Parents must sign the Report Card and the Envelope and return it to school on the next school day. Any requests for grade reconsiderations or recalculations must be made in writing to the principal within one week of the receipt of the grade.

**Student Records**

Official transcripts are mailed to the receiving school or delivered by a school official. Student records are never given to parents or students for delivery to the new school.

**Telephone Messages**

Teachers and/or students cannot be called to the phone during school hours. A message for a teacher and/or student may be left with the school secretary.

**Use of School Name**

No use of the school name may be made without the express permission from the principal or pastor. Additionally, no one may speak for the school to any public media without the written permission of the principal or pastor.

**Visitors to Schools**

All persons entering the school must first go to the school office to obtain proper authorization. Visitors who wish to observe classroom procedures must obtain permission from the principal. Parents should confer with teachers after school or at other appointed times so as not to interrupt class instruction.

**Visitation of Students during School Hours**

Persons, agencies, or organizations desiring to contact individual students during the school day are to receive permission from the principal. The principal must cooperate with all lawful authority. The school may not be used by a non-legal guardian for the exercise of visitation rights. (Diocesan Policy 580)

## STUDENTS

**Ambassadors for Christ**

The Ambassadors for Christ Corps is a leadership program of selected students from grades 6-8 who exemplify outstanding accomplishments as a Christ-like role model.

**Student Council**

The Eighth Grade class is the Student Council. It is their responsibility to model good leadership skills for the entire student body.

### **Student Stewardship**

Students in grades K-5 are ENCOURAGED to submit documentation for a minimum of 10 Student Stewardship Hours per grading period, for a minimum total of 40 Student Stewardship Hours per school year.

Students in grades 6-8 are REQUIRED to submit documentation for a minimum of 10 Student Stewardship Hours per grading period, for a minimum total of 40 Student Stewardship Hours per school year. Students may not be compensated financially for service hours. Documentation for Student Stewardship Hours is to be submitted to the classroom teacher one week prior to the end of each quarter. It is the responsibility of the student to submit the documentation to the classroom teacher on time. Late submissions are not accepted.

### **Bicycles/Skateboards**

Any student who rides a bicycle to school must follow these safety rules, which are strictly enforced:

- State law requires that a safety helmet be worn at all times while riding a bike
- Students must walk their bike upon entering the school or church property
- Bicycles must be securely locked in a designated area
- Students must have parental consent to ride their bike to/from school
- Skateboards, Roller blades and Scooters are not allowed on school or parish property at any time.
- Failure to observe these rules may result in denial of bike riding privileges and confiscation.

### **Cell Phones**

Student use of cell phones on campus is not permitted. The possession of a cell phone on campus is allowed only if it remains in the student back pack and is turned off at all times, to include: before, during, and after school. The cell phone will be confiscated if this policy is not adhered to or if the phone is discovered in a student locker or on the person at anytime. During school sponsored dances, cell phones will be checked in at the host table, and may only be used to call parents for transportation arrangements or emergencies in the presence of the faculty chaperone.

### **Gum**

Students are not allowed to chew gum on the school grounds before, during, or after any school-sponsored activities.

### **White Out/Rubber Cement**

Due to the hazardous chemicals, at no time, may students use "white-out" or rubber cement.

### **Locker/School Property**

Middle School students are assigned a locker in which to keep his/her personal belongings. Only St. Francis School locks may be used on the lockers. The administration reserves the right to remove any other lock. All unauthorized locks will be cut off. Students may not change lockers without permission. Students should not share their lock combination with other students.

St. Francis School is not responsible for loss or theft of personal items. All lockers will be kept free of graffiti; students may not write inside or outside of lockers. Students are required to make restitution for damage done to lockers.

Desks, cupboards, lockers, computer files, cabinets, and textbooks are school property. The parish owns all equipment and has the right to search at any time, for any reason. A student has exclusive use of but not proprietary rights. School administration has the right of inspection and reserves the right to search on suspicion of a threat to the health, welfare or safety of other students. School principals or designated officials have the right and duty to protect the health, welfare and safety of students against drugs, weapons and other contraband materials. All searches must be reasonable and related to the school official's duties. (Diocesan Policy 583)

### **Lost and Found**

The Lost and Found is located in the Health Room. Articles found and not claimed, will be given to the used uniform coordinator or donated to St. Francis Charities. While reasonable effort is made to identify the owners of lost articles, responsibility rests with the student. To avoid problems with lost uniform and school supplies, please label everything that can be labeled.

### **Lunch Program**

Hot lunch for all students (PS-8) may be purchased through the school office. A monthly order form is sent home in the Family Envelope usually on the third Friday of each month. The order form and payment are due in the school office by a specified deadline.

### **Lunch Time**

Students may not leave the school grounds during lunchtime unless accompanied by a faculty member/parent/guardian and signed out in the Health Office or School Office.

### **Telephone Use**

Telephone use by students is limited to emergency reasons only. Forgotten homework, lunches, uniform items, sweaters, books etc., are not considered emergencies. Students may not use the phone to make arrangements to go home with a friend. With proper permission, there are telephones in the school office and at After School Care for student use. Students are NOT to use their cell phone at any time while on campus.

**Textbooks**

Textbooks are numbered and assigned to each student. All books must be covered with a durable book cover. No contact paper or adhesive covers allowed. Brown paper bags work very well. Lost or damaged books must be reported and paid for immediately. A fine will be assessed at the end of each school year for all damages to textbooks assigned to students. The fine shall not exceed the replacement value of the book.

**Toys**

Electronic devices, games, MP3 players, iPods, CD's, toys, cards, etc. are not permitted on campus at any time and will be confiscated.

**Vandalism**

Students and their parents shall be liable for all damages to equipment or school property caused by the student. (Diocesan Policy 550)

**Personal Appearance of Pupils**

Emphasis is placed on good taste, neatness, cleanliness, and modesty. If a pupil frequently offends against normal standards of dress, grooming or hygiene, and has been corrected in this regard, the cooperation of parents should be sought to correct the problem. Lack of improvement in personal appearance or failure to comply with the stated regulations and guidelines is grounds for dismissal of a pupil during the school day. (Diocesan Policy 585)

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their son/daughter is in uniform when arriving at school. Students will be checked for uniform compliance throughout the day. These uniform policies apply to all St. Francis students, K-8, for the entire school year. If students choose to disregard this policy, they will serve detention and their Responsible Behavior grade on the report card will be negatively affected.

**Uniform Code****Monday - Thursday Uniform Choices**Grades K-3 Girls

- Red plaid jumper & white polo
- Red plaid skort & white polo
- Navy blue walking shorts & red or white polo
- Navy blue pants & red or white polo

Grades 4-8 Girls

- Navy blue skirt & red or white polo
- Navy blue walking shorts & red or white polo
- Red plaid skort & white polo
- Red plaid skirt & white polo

Grades K-8 Boys

- Navy blue pants & red or white polo
- Navy blue walking shorts & red or white polo

**Full Dress Uniform (Required on Fridays and other designated days.)**Grades K-3 Girls

- Red plaid jumper, white polo, red sweater with logo

Grades 4-8 Girls

- Navy blue skirt, white polo, red vest with logo

Grades K-8 Boys

- Navy blue pants, white polo, red vest with logo

**REMINDERS**Pants/Shorts

“Uniform style” pants and shorts may be purchased at stores other than the Uniform Company. Pants with large side pockets (cargo pants) and pants with tears, rips, or holes are not acceptable.

Polo Shirts

The polo shirts no longer require the school logo and may be purchased at stores other than the Uniform Company. Faded shirts (color or logo) are not acceptable.

Shoes

Shoes must be appropriate for school. No boots, sandals, open-toed shoes, or platform heels.



**NEW! Socks**

Solid red, white, or navy blue Crew length or Knee high socks only. Crew length socks must cover the ankle. Sports socks are not acceptable. Girls may wear plain, red, white, or navy blue tights (no designs)

**Belts**

Navy blue, brown, or black cloth or leather belt is required for students in grades 3-8 with the pants and shorts. The entire length of the belt is to be worn inside the belt loops. No designs, studs, initials, or decorations are allowed on the belt or the buckle.

**Boys' Hair**

Hair must be above the eyebrows, collar, and ears. No longer than 3" in length. No dyed, tinted, colored, highlighted, streaked or shaved designs allowed.

**Girls' Hair**

Hair must be above the eyebrows, not unruly or obscure the vision. No dyed, tinted, colored, highlighted, streaked, or shaved designs allowed.

**School Emblem**

The school logo is required on the sweater, vest, sweatshirt, and sweatpants (K-2).

**Jewelry/Accessories/Make-up**

A plain watch and/or a small, simple religious medal or cross, on a simple, plain chain may be worn. Girls may choose to wear one pair of small, stud-type earrings. One earring per ear (on the earlobe). Hoops, dangles, or other ear ornaments are not permitted. Boys may not wear earrings. Students may not wear make-up or nail polish to school or during after school activities. (This includes nail ornaments, acrylics, airbrush designs, or French manicures, etc.) Jelly-type bands and/or hair bands worn as bracelets are not permitted.



**NEW! Skirt length/Short length/Baggy pants**

The length of the skirt and shorts may not be shorter than 2" above the ground when kneeling down and may not be rolled at the waist. Pants and/or shorts are to be pulled up to the waistline. Baggy, drooping pants/shorts, worn below the waistline are not permitted.

**Jackets/Sweatshirts**

The St. Francis jacket is the only authorized jacket allowed on campus. St. Francis sweatshirts are to be removed while in church. Jackets with faded color or logo are not acceptable.

**Cold Weather: (November-February)**

Only students in grades K-2 may wear St. Francis sweatpants on cold days. K-8 Girls may choose to wear navy blue uniform style pants during the cold weather Monday-Thursday. A plain, white, cotton turtleneck may be worn UNDER the polo shirt or the sweatshirt.

These uniform policies apply to all St. Francis students, Kindergarten through Grade 8, for the entire school year. If students choose to disregard this policy, they will serve detention and their Responsible Behavior grade on the report card will be negatively affected.

For all uniform needs contact:

[WWW.TRUEGRITS.COM](http://WWW.TRUEGRITS.COM)

858-535-0022

9823 Pacific Heights Blvd.

Mira Mesa

**CRISIS PLAN**

If an emergency situation should occur before or after school hours, please listen to your radio for instructions of school closures. As a general rule, St. Francis of Assisi Parish School will follow the same procedures as Vista Unified School District. St. Francis of Assisi Parish School has a complete Crisis Response Plan with procedures and contingencies, which apply directly to students and faculty members.

**In the Event of an Emergency**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School maintains a comprehensive Crisis Response Plan outlining detailed direction for supervision of students in the event of a disaster. The primary objective is to prepare our students, employees, and visitors to react in emergency situations. Our goal in a crisis response is to minimize injury and loss of life to every student, employee, or visitor.

This Crisis Response Plan has been designed by taking the latest crisis response information from a variety of nationwide sources. This up-to-date information will enable the employees and students of St. Francis of Assisi Parish School to be on the "Cutting Edge" of crisis response. It will assist the learning environment by effectively dealing with crisis and limiting potential threats to our students and faculty.

**Student Evacuation Procedures**

The blacktop playground has been designated as the Student Evacuation Area. If it is not possible to utilize the playground area, a secondary location will be designated by the principal.

If the crisis occurs while students are in the church, hall, or building other than the classroom, students will be evacuated to a safe area. When it is safe and possible to do so, the students will be moved to the primary Student Evacuation Area. Students will be supervised in specific group areas designated by the first letter of their last name (A-H; I-P; Q-Z).

### **Instructions for Parents**

In the event of a disaster, or situation requiring crisis plan activation, parents will be asked to go directly to the Parish Hall to wait for further information. The safety of students is first and foremost our priority, and until we have specific information regarding the immediate plan of action for the crisis at hand, it is helpful to have the parents in one location. As information becomes available, it will be communicated directly to the parents in the Hall.

A copy of the Crisis Response Plan is available to parents in the School Office and on the school website. Parents are encouraged to read the Crisis Plan and become familiar with the process.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish School has implemented a safe environment program, as prescribed by the Diocese of San Diego, to ensure that its children and young people who worship, study, or participate in its activities can do so in the safest and most secure setting possible. A safe environment program begins with screening all adults who work with children and young people on a regular basis.

### **PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN**

#### **Definition:**

*What constitutes child abuse?*

There are four major types of child maltreatment:

- **NEGLECT**
- **PHYSICAL ABUSE**
- **SEXUAL ABUSE**
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs including physical, medical, educational and emotional needs.

**Physical abuse** is physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result punching, beating kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting, or otherwise harming a child.

**Sexual abuse** includes activities such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

**Emotional abuse** is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance.

#### **Prevention:**

*What action, policies, and procedures prevent child abuse?*

Education and information are the keys to preventing child abuse. A safe environment program includes the ongoing training of children and young people with age appropriate education pertaining to their personal safety and with direction as to when they should seek assistance from a trusted adult. Catholic schools and programs of religious education in the Diocese of San Diego will cooperate with parents to provide this education to their children. Teachers and catechists will introduce their students to safe environment education in age-appropriate ways from kindergarten through high school. Parents will be provided materials to assist them in carrying out this education process.

#### **Identification:**

*How does one identify instances of child abuse? What signs should one look for in a child who may be abused? What signs should one look for in a person who may be abusing a child?*

The following are some signs of child abuse:

- Unusual or suspicious injuries
- Sexual language or behavior beyond what is normal for the child's age
- Specific comments or complaints about abuse
- Lack of basic needs for food, clothing, and medical care
- Poor hygiene
- Lack of supervision for long periods of time

Children who are **physically** abused may:

- Be nervous around adults
- Be watchful, as though they are preparing for something bad to happen
- Have difficulty playing
- Act aggressive to adults and other children
- Be unable to concentrate at school
- Suddenly underachieve or overachieve at school
- Find it difficult to trust other people and make friends
- Arrive at school early or leave after the other children

Children who are **sexually** abused may:

- Behave differently when the abuse starts
- Care less about their appearance or their health
- Talk or act sexually at too early an age
- Be secretive or stop talking about home-life
- Start soiling themselves
- Be unable to sleep
- Suddenly find physical contact frightening
- Underachieve at school

Children who are **neglected or emotionally** abused may:

- Have difficulty learning to talk
- Find it hard to develop close relationships
- Be overly friendly with strangers
- Be unable to play imaginatively
- Think badly of themselves
- Underachieve at school

Remember: None of these signs proves that child abuse is present, since any of them may be noticeable at one time or another. But when they occur repeatedly or in combination with one another, the child may be suffering abuse. Most abuse occurs in the family home. Parents, siblings and visitors can all inflict abuse.

**Response:**

*What action should one take when one believes that child abuse may be occurring?*

It is not your responsibility to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, or to determine whether the child is in need of protection. It IS your responsibility to report Suspected Child Abuse!

**Reporting Child Abuse**

Call the County Social Services Department's Child Protective Services Child Abuse Hotline at **(858) 560-2191** or **(800) 344-6000** to report situations in which you suspect that a child has been abused or appears to be at risk of being abused.

Your report will be investigated and steps will be taken to protect the child and preserve the family unit. The SDPD will be informed if abuse is involved. If you know that abuse has occurred, you should call SDPD directly at **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**. For further information you can call the SDPD Child Abuse Unit at **(619) 531-2260** on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If the abuse is in progress you should call **9-1-1**. The police will investigate, take steps to protect the victim, prosecute the abuser, and inform the County Social Service Department.

*What are the laws and policies regarding the reporting of child abuse?*

Report of a child abuse or neglect is made without incurring civil or criminal liability “unless it can be proven that a false report was made” and the person making the report “knew or should have known that the report was false.”

Failure to report may result in a misdemeanor charge punishable by fine or imprisonment. (CA. Penal Code, 1161-2)