

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC SCHOOL



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

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HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER

This policy handbook is limited in content. Emphasis has been placed on those things which are deemed most pertinent to the students, parents, and Holy Spirit Catholic School at the present time.

It would be impossible to anticipate all problems which may arise in the future. Yet, each year, a few distracting trends and circumstances show up on our school grounds. Anything that detracts from or disrupts the spirit, education, philosophy, or dignity of Holy Spirit Catholic School will be held to be unacceptable, even though not explicitly set forth in this handbook. Such situations will be dealt with in accordance with the principles implicit in our existing policies.

Any information that comes to the school which could endanger the life, health, or safety of a student, parent, or faculty/staff member will not be held in confidence.

In the absence of a policy in this handbook, the administration (in accordance with diocesan policy) reserves the right to determine policy should the need arise. All diocesan policies are listed in the *Policies and Regulations for Educational Institutions in the Diocese of Birmingham* apply to our school. In the event of inadvertent conflict, the diocesan policies supersede. The administration reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time.

August, 2025

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Holy Spirit Catholic School! In choosing Holy Spirit, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education. First and foremost our first priority as a school is to help form your children into holy disciples of Christ and eventually saints in Heaven. Our Lord created each one of your children to be saints, and at Holy Spirit we will strive to cultivate the amazing gifts He has given to each and everyone of your children.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of Holy Spirit Catholic School for the 2025-2026 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of Holy Spirit Catholic School during the 2025-2026 school year.

The faculty and staff of our school look forward to partnering with you to promote the academic excellence and spiritual development of the students who have been entrusted to our care. We are glad to partner with you this year. We promise our prayers and support and ask for yours as well.

May God bless us as we journey together to bring the best to our children.

Sincerely,
Mr. Josh Saibini
Principal

HOLY SPIRIT ELEMENTARY PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision for Holy Spirit Catholic School is to create an environment in which Gospel values are integrated into the life of our school community. We envision a school community where all people are welcome and encouraged to grow spiritually and academically.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Holy Spirit Catholic School family honors the dignity of each person and provides a strong foundation for life-long learning within the framework of a Catholic faith community.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Holy Spirit is committed to educating each student by promoting spiritual, academic, physical, emotional and aesthetic development in a Christ-centered environment.

Holy Spirit challenges students to develop their abilities to attain academic success.

Holy Spirit motivates students to live and serve as part of a Catholic faith community.

Holy Spirit encourages students to appreciate various cultures and creeds and to respect the diversity of God's kingdom.

Holy Spirit promotes a curriculum which prepares students to become life-long learners enabling them to become responsible, productive citizens.

Holy Spirit believes the school and family share the responsibility for preparing students for a life long journey of faith and learning.

PARENT'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

As partners in the educational process at Holy Spirit Catholic School, we ask parents to set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Gets to bed early on school nights
- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
- Is dressed according to the school dress code
- Completes class assignments on time
- Has lunch ordered or sack lunch every day

Your attitude toward the school and the teacher is most important because it will be reflected in the attitude of your child. Parents are asked to:

- Maintain a united authority between themselves and the school so that the teacher in the classroom is an extension of their parental authority.
- Remember that criticisms, complaints, gossip, and words spoken in jest or anger are absorbed by the child and often greatly influence his/her own attitudes. Also, gossip hurts the school.

- Be cognizant of the fact that obedience has to be taught. It cannot be learned at school if it has not been taught and insisted upon at home.
- Teach your child to develop responsibility and to accept consequences for his or her actions.
- Remember that each child is different and unique. It is very important to have an accurate assessment of your child's capabilities. High IQ has no particular relation to success. Success is determined from a combination of many character traits and the way in which they are developed. Your child will be successful if he is encouraged to work up to his ability and if he is not frustrated by expectations to perform on a higher level than his ability will allow.
- Teach your child respect for school personnel, for other students, and for the property of others.
- Always encourage your child to do a good job. Be pleased when he does his best, even if his best is average. Go over progress reports with your child. Allow him to take pride in his accomplishments. Do not over-emphasize his shortcomings. You add to your child's incentive when you show a sincere interest in his work.
- Be aware of and know your child's friends. Recognize that not all parents follow the rules of Christian living and common sense. Parents, through discipline and example, must teach and convince their children that they will be expected to obey certain rules regardless of what friends may choose to do or think.
- Help your child develop good study habits. A specific period of time allowed for homework helps the child in school adjustment. Study should be done in an orderly and quiet atmosphere. Papers should be checked for neatness.
- Develop and instill in your child the proper attitude toward school and learning.
- Consult teachers by holding individual conferences as needed, in addition to those routinely scheduled. It is also most important to withhold judgment on what appears to be a grievance until you get all the facts. Classroom teachers appreciate first calls. If necessary, contact the principal.
- Help your child in his school work in the area of developing self-organization and good study habits.
- Attend school activities involving your child. Accompany your child to other activities he wishes to attend and supervise him while he is there.
- Say no to your child when in order.
- Encourage your child to participate in extracurricular activities offered by the school.

There is no sure way to guarantee that your child will grow up to be the kind of person you would like him to be. The most likely way is for you to be the kind of person you would like him to be.

As the primary educators of their children, parents/guardians freely make the choice of a Catholic education for their sons/daughters. Registration at Holy Spirit Catholic School is an agreement

by the parent/guardian to accept and abide by the rules and regulations of the school and to support its mission and belief statements. A cooperative relationship between the Holy Spirit Catholic School personnel and a parent/guardian is essential for the overall education of a student. It is critical that a cooperative relationship be maintained through constructive dialogue with the parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian refuses to abide by the rules and regulations of Holy Spirit Catholic School, is unsupportive of its goals by word or action, or otherwise fails to meet his/her obligations according to school or Diocesan policies, the administrator may require the parent/guardian to withdraw his/her child or children from Holy Spirit Catholic School. Additionally, parents/guardians will be held to the same standards of respect as students are in regards to their interactions with administrators, teachers, staff, and students. This applies to members of a child's extended family as well.

ACCREDITATION

Holy Spirit Catholic School is fully accredited as part of the Diocese of Birmingham district accreditation through Cognia®.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum followed by Holy Spirit meets the requirements of the Diocese of Birmingham and the Alabama State Department of Education. In addition to the required courses, classes in art, computer, Spanish, library/media, music, and PE are provided.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Children of all denominations are welcome at Holy Spirit Catholic School. Catholic/Christian values and service to others are an integral part of the total school program. In addition to regularly scheduled religion classes, Holy Spirit provides many opportunities for each student to deepen his or her relationship with Christ. Students, with the faculty and staff, participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, morning and afternoon prayer, classroom prayer, and other paraliturgical activities.

Mass is usually held on Thursdays at 8:15am. and also on Holy Days that fall during the week. Parents and guests are always welcome to join us at Mass on these days.

ADMISSION POLICY

The State of Alabama and Holy Spirit Catholic School require that a child must meet the following requirements for admission:

- Kindergarten – 5 years of age on or before September 1
- 1st Grade – 6 years of age on or before September 1

Parents must furnish a certified birth certificate, social security number, and a health/immunization record when applying for admission. A non-refundable registration fee must be submitted with the completed application. New registration forms must be submitted each year. Students applying for admission must present a copy of the latest report card and any standardized test results. Applicants are evaluated on the basis of academic standing and social behavior. Teacher Recommendations from previous teachers are also considered. Holy Spirit reserves the right to refuse admission to any child who has been expelled from any other school. All new students are accepted on a one-quarter probation period. If, during this trial period, there

are any problems, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at Holy Spirit Catholic School.

In keeping with the Diocesan policy, Holy Spirit Catholic School admits Catholic and Non-Catholic students whose needs can be served by the school's program. Holy Spirit does not discriminate on the basis of gender, color, race, or national or ethnic origin. All students enrolled in Holy Spirit are required to participate in all religious programs and activities.

All applicants are given consideration and priority as follows:

1. Siblings of currently enrolled students
2. Active, practicing Catholic families of Holy Spirit or St. Francis parishes
3. Other Catholic families
4. Non-Catholic families

NOTE: During re-registration, currently enrolled students are given first priority.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Grading System

Grading is a method of communicating student learning and shall be based on the philosophy that students and not subjects are being taught. Any diversion from these guidelines is to be requested in writing from the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. It is the principal's responsibility to acquaint the faculty with the Diocesan and local grading policies and to supervise the implementation of these policies periodically, particularly during grading periods.

The following is the Diocesan Policy concerning Grading and is adhered to by Holy Spirit School.

Kindergarten and Grade One: Grading for Kindergarten and Grade One will be a checklist developed for all schools in the Diocese. Some flexibility of items will be available at the local level. The coding system for each skill will be:

MS	Meets Standard
AS	Approaching Standard
NS	Needs Support
X	Not assessed at this time

Grades 2 through 5: Teachers record letter grades on the report card for religion, reading/literature (language arts), Spanish, math, science, social studies, music, and physical education. They record grades of S, NI, or U for art and handwriting. Both percents and letter grades are listed on the interim progress reports. Percents or letter grades may be used on assignments, quizzes, and tests.

The grading scale will be as follows:

A	93-100
B	84-92
C	74-83
D	65-73
F	64 and below

Teachers determine the criteria for quarter grades, which include, but are not limited to, quizzes, tests, class participation/preparation. Semester grades are computed by averaging the first and second quarter grades.

Homework

Children can expect to have homework almost every day except Fridays. **Students are expected to be responsible** for writing down their own homework assignments in their planner as well as packing up the appropriate materials needed. Parents are strongly encouraged to review their child's homework every evening to reinforce the concept of homework as a valuable activity. **Parents are not to complete a child's homework, but rather assist as needed.** Every child is expected to return assignments on time. Consequences will occur if work is not submitted on time. Homework is part of the quarterly grade which may include studying for a test, reading assigned pages, or memorizing poetry or multiplication facts, etc. If there are parental concerns about the amount of homework given and the time involved, please contact the teacher or teachers involved. **Please note that students are not allowed to return to their classrooms after dismissal to retrieve homework materials.**

Tests

Tests are given in Math, Science, English, Reading/Literature, Social Studies, Spanish and Religion. Teachers may give tests in any of the remaining subjects. Teachers focus on the application of learning rather than the memorization and recall of information alone. Test anxiety is kept to a minimum with every effort made to foster a positive attitude and approach to tests.

Effort and Conduct

Good effort and conduct are expected. On the report card, these areas are reported as **S (Satisfactory)**, **NI (Needs Improvement)**, or **U (Unsatisfactory)**. A grade of **U** is given for serious misbehavior. Comments may be made for specific cases. If classes are basically self-contained, only one effort/conduct grade is given. Exceptions can be accommodated through comments.

Promotion and Retention

In order to retain a student in **Grades Two through Five**, the actual grades on the report card must indicate failure. If a student receives an "F" in either Reading or Math, he/she may be required to attend summer school or be tutored by a certified teacher over the summer in order to be promoted. In addition, a student may be required to repeat a grade if he/she has a yearly average of "F" in two or more of the following areas: Reading/Literature, English, Math, Science or Social Studies.

For **Kindergarten and First Grade** students who do not receive letter grades, the criteria for what constitutes failure is made at the local level with discussion between the teacher and principal. Each student's status should be clearly indicated on the final report card. Retention will be discussed among teacher(s), parents, and principal. A consensus will be reached. If there is disagreement, the decision of the principal is final. (Diocesan Administrator's Manual)

Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences

It is important that there be open lines of communication between home and school. Teacher conferences held with the parents/guardian, and at times with the student as well, are essential to keeping all concerned aware of the student's educational progress. These conferences are an integral part of the reporting system. At the end of the first quarter marking period, teachers discuss student report cards at scheduled parent conferences. The Diocese allows the school to dismiss early on two days for this purpose. Teachers notify parents of the scheduled appointment time and request that they adhere to the allotted conference time.

Parent-Teacher conferences are encouraged at other times during the year as well for better communication. If a conference is desired, please email the teacher directly. **Please do not phone teachers at home, drop in, or stop teachers during the school day while they are working with the children. Do not drop in on a teacher in the morning without it being previously scheduled.** For the safety of all students, teachers are not allowed to have discussions with parents while in the carpool dismissal line.

Honor Roll

The Honor Roll is a motivator to encourage students to achieve. Students in Grades 3-6 will be named to the A Honor Roll if they earn a grade of A in all subjects and the A/B Honor Roll if they earn a grade of A or B in all subjects. Honor Roll awards will be given at the end of each grading period.

Parents and students alike are urged to remember that being named to the Honor Roll is not the ultimate goal of education, nor is it a means to discriminate between certain types of students. Any child who performs to the best of his/her ability is considered a successful student.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Requirements

Attendance at school is a state law. There shall be a minimum attendance requirement for grading purposes. If a student is in attendance for less than 160 days in a year, the student's attendance record will be reviewed. Any student absent more than 20 days is subject to repeat the grade unless extenuating circumstances exist, and the principal gives special consideration.

Arrival: Students are expected to be punctual for school. Prior to the first bell at 7:50am, all students must report to their classroom. The tardy bell rings at 8:00am. **Students must be present in their classroom prior to the ringing of the tardy bell.**

Dismissal: At the end of the school day, the final bell rings at **3:05pm, at 1:00pm on early dismissal days, and at 2:15pm every Thursday.** Students not picked up by 3:30pm or 2:45 on Thursdays will go to the After School Care Program for supervision. Parents will be responsible for the payment of this service.

Check In/Out: Students who must leave school before the regular dismissal time must check out at the office. Only a parent or person designated by the parent on the Emergency Release Card can check out a student. Identification may be requested. No parent or other adult is allowed to

go to a classroom to get a student. If at all possible, please send a note to your child's teacher as early as possible if you know you are going to check him/her out of school. Parents or an approved adult must sign the student out on the online system prior to leaving the building with the student.

In order for the student to grow in skills and good habits, and make the most of the school day, checking out before the end of the day should only be a very occasional occurrence. Our instruction is provided from morning bell to afternoon bell, and checking out early disrupts this process. When students check out early on a regular basis, their learning opportunities are seriously compromised. In addition, attendance records will reflect absences or tardies for this time missed.

Any student missing more than 4 hours of the school day (beginning, middle, or end) will be considered absent. If a student checks in or out at 11:30, it is counted as a ½ day absence. Morning or afternoon tardies will be issued for students who arrive or leave within these hours.

***Please note that students may not attend after-school activities if they are not present at school on the day of the activity.**

Excused Absence or Tardy

A student who has been absent or tardy must provide the teacher with a written statement signed by a parent or legal guardian as to the reason for the absence or tardy. Attendance records are legal documents and must be accurate. Therefore, all absences and tardies must be recorded regardless of the reason.

Excused absences are:

- Illness (Please Note: **No student should return to school within 24 hours of having nausea symptoms or running a fever 100 or above.**)
- Serious illness or death in the immediate family
- Emergency medical or dental attention
- Medical or dental appointments (after-school appointments are preferred)
- Court appearance

Unexcused absences are:

- Oversleeping
- Running late
- Truancy
- Missing a ride
- Personal activities, attendance at sporting events, birthdays, or other celebrations

Any other absences must be submitted in writing to the principal for a decision.

Tardiness: Students are required to be in class by 8:00am. An adult must sign in a tardy student at the office. Consistent, unexcused tardies will result in disciplinary action. **Three unexcused tardies in one quarter will result in a demerit, which will then follow our Discipline Code. Each additional tardy that quarter will result in an additional demerit.**

We thoroughly discuss with our students the importance of being on time for school everyday. Please reinforce this with your child at home as well. Please work with your child to establish a regular morning routine so that getting ready for school and getting out of the house will be as stress-free as possible. This may involve getting clothes, book bags, or lunch boxes ready the

night before so that your morning is not so rushed. In addition to helping you leave on time, this routine will also help your child with his/her organizational skills.

Absences: If a student is absent, the parent or guardian must call the office by 8:30am to report the absence. If no call is received, absences will be verified by a phone call home or to the place of business after 8:30am. Any student who has been absent three consecutive days or has had excessive absences (as determined by the principal) must furnish a written doctor's excuse for all subsequent absences. A readmission notice from a doctor may also be required.

Make-Up Work

In the event of an excused absence, a teacher will allow a student time to make up work/tests (one day per day of school missed with a maximum of five school days). However, if an assignment, a long-term project, or test was assigned prior to the student's absence, the assignment will be due on the first day the student returns to school. Make-up work is the student's responsibility. Any student who has not completed the make-up work during the allotted time may receive zeroes for those assignments. Class work and tests may not be made up for unexcused absences. **Please note that no work is given in advance of an excused absence.**

When a student is absent, the parent can request homework to be prepared for pick-up. If the homework is requested at the time the parent phones the school to indicate a student's absence (by 8:30am), the work can be picked up on the same day after 2:30pm. However, if the phone call is received later in the day, work may not be ready until the next day.

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

Discipline Code

Students are expected to exemplify the Gospel values which form the foundation of our mission statement. Thus, they are to exhibit concern and charity for others as well as respecting the rights and dignity of all persons in the school community. Students are taught that their behavior has consequences and that they must accept responsibility for their behavior. Therefore, students are expected to demonstrate appropriate self-discipline and behavior.

All teachers use a variety of classroom management/behavior strategies. All methods of discipline seek to be educational rather than punitive. Teachers formulate their own classroom procedures, which are shared with parents at the beginning of the school year. Parents and students sign off on the procedures to indicate that the expectations have been read by both parents and students, and they agree to be governed by them. The administration reserves the right to deviate from this plan as needed.

Infractions - Demerits

An infraction is a violation of a law, rule, or pact. Infractions committed by students will result in the accumulation of demerits. The accumulation of demerits will have assigned consequences. Infractions will be considered minor, major, or serious depending upon the severity of the situation and will be communicated to the student and parents. Parents will be emailed and the demerits will be recorded within the FACTS system. Infraction notices will be sent home with the student on the day the infraction occurs. A parent must sign and return the infraction notice the next day. The parent keeps one copy and returns the top copy to school.

Minor Infractions: 1 Demerit include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to obey Classroom rules
- Failure to obey Cafeteria rules
- Failure to obey Recess rules
- Two Uniform Code violations in one quarter
- Three unexcused tardies in one quarter
- Writing and/or passing notes in school or class
- Disrespectful behavior in church
- Chewing gum or eating inappropriately in school, church or playground
- Inappropriate behavior in the hallways
- Bringing inappropriate/nuisance items to school (School reserves the right to determine what is considered inappropriate.)
- Running, pushing, shoving, yelling, or horse-playing
- Any other conduct that is inconsistent with the mission statement of Holy Spirit Catholic School

Major Infractions 2-3 Demerits include, but are not limited to:

- Dishonesty
- Disrespect in any form toward faculty or other adults
- Inappropriate physical contact between students
- Fighting, including provocations that are verbal and/or physical (may be deemed serious)
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Removing, hiding, or destroying another's possessions
- Harassment/name-calling or disrespect to other students (may be deemed serious)
- Defacing school property (may be deemed serious)
- Academic dishonesty/Plagiarism
- Copying or cheating on tests or schoolwork
- Any type of forgery or misrepresentation of parents' signature
- Abusive or inappropriate language or gestures
- Violation of acceptable technology usage guidelines
- Possession of any type of weapon or dangerous item (may be deemed serious)
- Any other major misconduct that is inconsistent with the mission statement of Holy Spirit Catholic School

Serious Offenses: 4-8 Demerits include, but are not limited to:

- Defiance/Open resistance to authority
- Harassment/Bullying (See School Safety)
- Threatening words or gestures made to another student or faculty/staff member
- Fighting
- Theft
- Possession of any type of weapon or dangerous item
- Violation of Diocesan Policy pertaining to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs
- Any other serious offense that is inconsistent with the mission statement of Holy Spirit Catholic School.

The school administration, in accordance with diocesan policy and state laws, will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning serious offenses committed by students. Any serious offense may result in a suspension or expulsion regardless of the demerit system. In addition, Holy Spirit Catholic School reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the course of the school day.

The following is the procedure for the enforcement of **the demerit system** within a quarter:

- First Demerit: Warning
- Second Demerit: Email home from the principal
- Third Demerit: Phone call home from the principal
- Fourth Demerit: Conference between parents and principal
- Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Demerit: Suspension (length determined by the principal)
- Eighth Demerit: Student is placed on probation for the remainder of the year
- Nine or more demerits may result in an expulsion

****The process begins again at the start of each new quarter, except for a probation.**

Suspension

Suspension is the temporary removal of a student from his/her regular program. The principal determines the length of the suspension. During in-school suspension, a student is separated from his/her class for the entire day and not allowed to participate in any activities with other students. The student completes assigned work in a separate area, under supervision. Out-of-school suspension is served under parental supervision.

In the case of an in-school suspension, all class work and tests may be completed and full credit will be given for the work. In the case of an out-of-school suspension, students will not be allowed on campus during the time of their suspension. Work will be given to the student. The principal reserves the right to determine when an out-of-school suspension is required.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the result of a very serious violation of the philosophy of Holy Spirit Catholic School. It warrants the removal of a student from the school for the remainder of the school year. Expulsion can also be used if a student who has been suspended previously has not shown any indication of improvement. Once a student is expelled, he/she may not be readmitted at any time. If a parent voluntarily withdraws a student from school due to disciplinary reasons, the student will not be readmitted at a later time.

DRESS CODE

Every student at Holy Spirit is encouraged to develop good grooming habits. Standards of neatness and appropriateness in clothing help support an atmosphere conducive to learning, work, and discipline. Respect for school and self is influenced by appearance. Students must present a neat, clean and modest appearance at all times.

Parents are held responsible for their child complying with the established dress code. Teachers are held responsible for monitoring the dress code at the beginning of each school day. Students who are out of dress code may be asked to call a parent to bring the appropriate item(s) to school. Students will receive a dress code violation for each offense. **Two violations in a quarter will result in an infraction with an additional infraction for each violation.** This will reset at the beginning of each quarter. The principal is the final judge for suitability of grooming and dress.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UNIFORM 2025-2026
Schoolbelles is our **EXCLUSIVE** uniform provider www.schoolbelles.com

Shirts, Pants, Shorts, Sweaters, Sweatshirts, and Fleece Outerwear: Students may only wear uniform items purchased from Schoolbelles. Schoolbelles has the uniform items for sale based on grade levels, and students may wear the items from the appropriate grade level store. All uniform items must be purchased through Schoolbelles. Shirts must be tucked in at all times. **A Schoolbelles Holy Spirit School logo shirt must be worn under all outerwear—sweaters, vests, sweatshirts, fleece jackets, etc. Monday through Thursday.** On Fridays students may wear a school spirit wear top with regular uniform bottoms. **Students should wear red polos or red outerwear on Mass days. Holy Spirit spirit wear “hoodies” may only be worn on Friday.**

Jumpers/Skirts/Skorts: Girls may choose to wear the jumpers, skirts, or skorts. Uniform polo shirt or white blouse with peter-pan collar may be worn under jumpers. Uniform polo shirt must be worn with skirts or skorts. The length of skirts, skorts, and jumpers must touch the top of the knee. Shorts must be worn under skirts and jumpers.

Belts: Plain brown or black traditional style belts. Uniform plaid belts may also be worn. Belts must be visible at all times.

Shoes: All students will wear tennis shoes, any colors except for neons. All shoes must be appropriate for indoor/outdoor PE activities. Ballet flats, slip-on “Tom®-type/Bob®-type” shoes or shoes with lights or wheels are not allowed. Boots may not be worn

Socks: Only solid white, black, or red mid-calf or crew socks are permitted. Socks with small logos, but no writing are allowed. Low-cut or ankle socks are not allowed. In cold weather, girls may wear solid red, white, or black footed-tights. Leggings are not allowed.

Heavy Outerwear: Cold weather jackets, hooded sweaters, and flannel shirts, etc., may not be worn in the school building during school hours. They may be worn to school and then removed once they reach the classroom.

Hats: Headwear (Hats, caps, visors, sweatbands, etc.) may not be worn during the school day or in the school building at any time. They may be worn to school and then removed once they reach the classroom.

Hair: Hair must be neat, clean, combed, and dry upon coming to school. Boys’ hair must be above the eyes, above the ears when combed straight down at sides, and may not exceed the top of the shirt collar in the back. Girls’ hair worn long must be kept out of the eyes. Sculptured haircuts are not allowed. Uniform headbands may be worn. When violations occur, students will receive a dress code violation. **Bows in girls hair should be school colors, moderate in size, and not distracting to the girl or others in class.**

Accessories: Chokers may not be worn. Nose rings, navel rings, or rings through any exposed area of the body, including tongues may not be worn during school hours. Permanent or

temporary tattoos may not be visible. Only one necklace and bracelet may be worn. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings/studs during school hours or at any school-sponsored activity or event. Girls may only have one piercing in each ear, and earrings may only be studs. Dangling earrings are not permitted. Girls' nails must be kept to a moderate length and nail polish must be clear. Make-up may not be worn. Any of the above listed jewelry must be simple.

Physical Education (PE) Attire: The regular school dress code is worn for PE class. Tennis shoes are required for PE. If inappropriate shoes are worn, children will sit out of PE. Girls wearing jumpers/skirts must wear appropriate shorts underneath. Jumpers/skirts may be removed for PE if properly fitting shorts are worn underneath.

FREE DRESS ATTIRE

On days when free dress is allowed to be worn to school, the following rules apply:

- Jeans/Pants must not have any holes.
- Shorts (when allowed) must be an appropriate length—no more than 2 inches above the knee.
- Shirts must have full sleeves—sleeveless shirts, shirts with spaghetti straps, shirts with cut-out shoulders are not allowed.
- All shoes must be tennis shoes.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Before/After School Care Program

This program is available from 7:00am to 7:30am and from dismissal to 6:00pm. The program provides professional care, supervision, recreation, and enrichment activities. Time is also set aside for homework completion. The cost for before school care is \$3.00 per day per child. The cost for after school care is \$14.00 per day per child. Students are expected to be respectful to adults and other students present. Failure on the part of the student to abide by the policies of Holy Spirit Catholic School and to cooperate in a Christian manner with all involved in the program may result in the removal of the student from this program. **To take part in the morning care or after school program the family must be set up in FACTS as all billing and payments for this program will take place inside FACTS.**

Birthdays

Birthday parties are **not** to be held at school. Only treats for the entire class may be brought to school in recognition of your child's birthday, but no further celebration is permitted. No gifts, balloons, decorations, flowers, etc. may be brought or delivered to school. Parents are asked to consult with the teacher prior to making plans and to please send a note confirming those plans. **Invitations to outside birthday parties may not be distributed at school.** In addition, Holy Spirit Catholic School assumes no responsibility for parties/events that take place outside of school and/or are not related to our school.

Cafeteria Conduct

Students are expected to keep the cafeteria as clean as possible. In order to accomplish this, the following cafeteria rules must be followed:

- Students are to put all used disposable articles in the containers provided.

- Students are not to misuse any cafeteria facilities, including equipment, chairs, and tables.
- Microwave ovens are not to be used to warm any students' food.
- Food or drink is never to be taken out of the cafeteria.
- Students who spill food or drink are expected to clean up the mess.
- Students are to be orderly, courteous, and respectful in the serving lines.
- Students may not, under any circumstances, allow other students to charge to their cafeteria account.
- Students participating in the hot lunch program may not give food to those students who brought their lunch from home.
- Students are not to share their lunch with other students.
- Students, parents, or school personnel may not bring in carbonated drinks.
- Students, parents, or school personnel may not bring in fast food items.
- Students are to remain seated until the teacher gives permission to leave.
- Students are expected to speak in a regular tone of voice without shouting.

Change of Address/Telephone Number

It is essential that the school office has at all times the correct address and telephone number for all families in the school. In the event of any change, including the number where you can be reached in an emergency, please notify the school office immediately.

Child Abuse Laws

Holy Spirit Catholic School abides by the Mandatory Reporter laws of the State of Alabama. This law mandates that all cases of **suspected** abuse and/or neglect be reported to the Department of Human Resources/Child Protective Services.

Classroom Parties/Activities

Several times throughout the school year, parents may be asked to help assist the teacher by supervising at a classroom party or other activity during the school day. While we certainly appreciate and welcome the willingness of our parents to volunteer here at school, we cannot underestimate the importance of **active supervision** for the safety of our children. Therefore, we ask parents who volunteer at school to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Please refrain from texting or talking on cell phones.
- Please do not handle any disciplinary matters. Any issues should be directed immediately to the teacher.
- Please refrain from having private conversations with the teacher or other parents while supervising the students.

Disbursement of Publications/ Information

With the principal's approval, Holy Spirit School may disburse information, flyers, advertisements, or other forms of communication to students/parents which may or may not be related to school or church activities. Holy Spirit is not responsible for the accuracy of any information disbursed and is not responsible for the safety or supervision provided at after school activities. Parents and students shall not assume that an event is "school sponsored/school supervised" because the information about the event or activity was disbursed through Holy Spirit School.

Drug Abuse, Alcohol, Smoking

The following is from the Diocesan Board of Education policy on drug abuse:

ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND TOBACCO**Purpose and Intent**

The constant teaching and tradition of the Catholic Church uphold the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person. As Catholics we believe men and women are made in the image and likeness of God. We believe our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. The Fifth Commandment, Thou shall not kill, forbids the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs that alters our consciousness and harms our bodies. This profound and overarching belief in the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of life is the foundation of the following Diocesan Policy pertaining to alcohol, tobacco and drugs:

It is strictly forbidden for any student to use, possess, or distribute alcohol, tobacco and drugs on school premises, in a school-owned vehicle, or during any school-sponsored trip or activity. This includes, but is not limited to, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, opiates, inhalants, mind-altering substances, drug paraphernalia, or controlled substances as defined by federal and state law for which the student has no prescription from a duly recognized medical authority or use of another person's prescription. Students found using or possessing alcohol, tobacco or drugs on their persons, in their personal effects or in their vehicles shall be subject to disciplinary action as outlined by the school's policies and regulations.

Implementation of this policy is consistent in each of the diocesan high schools. Our Catholic high schools provide a caring family environment that is free of alcohol, drugs and tobacco. Our school should present to the community a clear witness of our Catholic commitment to respect our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. Our Catholic faith also teaches compassion. The intent of the following regulations is not to punish but to encourage students to make choices consistent with a healthy lifestyle.

School officials have the responsibility to be proactive in providing and maintaining a safe school environment. In order to accomplish this, an important component is providing educational opportunities for parents, students and school personnel. All parents, students and faculty are responsible for attending the alcohol, tobacco and drug presentations offered by the school. By accepting admission into the school, parents assume the responsibility for cooperating with school officials in fostering in their children healthy lifestyle choices.

Disciplinary Regulations

The policy of Catholic high schools strictly forbids the possession, use and distribution of alcohol, drugs and tobacco. The consequence for violation of this policy is referral for suspension and/or expulsion. In each instance, the administrator's final disciplinary decision will be based on an investigation, evidence and consultation with the student and parents. Prescribed medications and other necessary medicines are distributed by the school in accordance with school procedures.

If a school official suspects that a student has violated the policy or may be associated with anyone who has, the school administrator will respond appropriately. For possession, use and/or distribution of a controlled substance, the school has the legal responsibility to notify appropriate law enforcement personnel. School administrators may:

- Search a student's, locker, personal belongings and/or vehicle;
- Require medical evaluation at a designated facility at the school's expense;
- Require additional medical evaluations at the parents' expense if the initial evaluation is positive;
- Require individual and/or family counseling, as needed.

In an effort to maintain a safe school environment, the school administrator may authorize random searches (by school personnel or local authorities) of students, their personal belongings, lockers, and personal vehicles. The administration may also authorize random medical evaluations at the school's expense.

Electronic Devices

The following policy is from the Diocesan Board of Education:

“Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Birmingham make every effort to assure that each student is safe while they are at school. Each school also tries to assure that the teaching/learning process is interrupted as little as possible. Since electronic devices can be disruptive to the teaching/learning process, these items should not be in the school building. If any are used, seen, or heard during school hours, they will be confiscated. Consequences will be decided by the principal.”

The above pertains to cell phones, radios, E-readers, iwatches, ipads, ipods, cameras, and electronic planners, but is not limited to these items. The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property.

Emergency Closing Due to Weather

In the event of severe weather or other emergencies, Holy Spirit Catholic School will make the decision regarding school closing or delayed start. While it is impossible to be certain of the impact of predicted severe weather, we will make an informed decision based upon the recommendations of the National Weather Service and Emergency Management Agency (EMA). Announcements will be made via email, phone blast, and local TV. If severe weather causes the school to close early, after-school care will also be closed.

Evacuation Procedures

Safety is important. In order to be prepared for a fire, tornado, or other such emergency, drills are held regularly at school. The drills are to give students practice in using precautions that should help them avoid possible injuries. An Emergency Action Plan is available in the office and all classrooms for parent review upon request.

Extra-Curricular Activities

After School Activities: In addition to the various sports activities available for students through city leagues, Holy Spirit provides opportunities for students to participate in Falcon Defense Karate, school and church choir, and Spirit Squad.

Book Clubs: Students in Grades 4-5 who wish to share their love of reading may join after-school book clubs. A variety of Book Clubs will be available according to grade, genre, or interest.

Children's Choir: Students in Grades 1-3 and 4-5, under the direction of Mrs. McClendon, meet after school from 3-3:45pm. The choir leads the congregation at school liturgies and performs at other special events during the year.

***Please note that students may not attend after-school activities if they are not present at school on the day of the activity.**

Field Trips

Students in Grades K-5 have the opportunity to participate in field trips throughout the year. Field trips will be age-appropriate and related to an aspect of the curriculum. Only students currently enrolled in the class participating in the field trip will be allowed to attend. **Because the role of a chaperone is to assist in the supervision of the students, younger siblings are not allowed to attend.** School disciplinary rules apply on all field trips. All field trips must be scheduled and approved by the Principal. The classroom teacher will arrange transportation. All students will be expected to assist in the cost of the transportation. When traveling by car, van, etc., students must wear seat belts and may not ride in the front seat.

A child must have a signed and dated Diocesan Indemnity Form before he/she leaves the school grounds. Students who do not present this form to the classroom teacher will miss the field trip and remain at school until the class returns. A telephone call will not be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip. All monies collected for the field trip are non-refundable. Students choosing not to attend a field trip must remain at home with the parent and will be marked absent for the day, unless directed otherwise by the teacher. The principal may deny a student the privilege of attending the field trip due to behavior or any factor that would hinder the trip for the other students.

Parents serving as chaperones and drivers must complete a diocesan background check form. They must also complete the diocesan Virtus training. Chaperones are responsible for reading the guidelines before each field trip, signing off to acknowledge your understanding, and strictly adhering to those guidelines while on the field trip. Failure to do so may result in the chaperone not assisting on further field trips.

For safety reasons, all students must travel to **and** from the field trip in the manner designated by the teacher (car, bus, etc.). If an emergency or extenuating circumstance arises, the parent of the child must notify the teacher on the trip if he/she wishes to have the child return to school in a different manner than he/she arrived.

Financial Information

Fees/Tuition: A registration fee is collected from newly registered students at the time of acceptance into the school. A pre-registration fee is collected from current students in February to secure admission for the upcoming school year. **The registration and pre-registration fees are non-refundable.** All financial obligations must be paid in order to pre-register for the following year. Post-dated checks will not be accepted.

It is the responsibility of each family to keep the Business Manager informed of the need to make any changes in the preferred tuition payment plan or adjustments in the tuition paid. Without such information, the following will apply when tuition payments are received late:

Families who miss a monthly payment due to insufficient funds or other reasons will be assessed a \$30.00 missed payment fee by FACTS and may incur a fee from their own financial institution. The missed tuition payment will be re-attempted by FACTS on the next payment date (5th or 20th of the month). In addition, families who have missed two monthly payments will be contacted by the Parish Business Manager and given 10 business days to bring the account current (No personal and/or business checks will be accepted as payment, only cash, cashier's checks or money orders). If the account is not brought current within that time period, the student will not be allowed to return to school until the account is brought current. In addition, report cards, records, transcripts, etc. will not be released if there is an outstanding financial obligation.

Returned Checks and Late Charges: Checks returned for any reason will be assessed a \$15.00 returned check fee. Payment for a returned check and fee must be made by cash, cashier's check or money order. A flat \$25.00 late charge will be incurred for any late payment.

Parent/Student Obligations: Obligations include tuition, before/after school care fees, lunch money, library fines, lost or damaged library or textbook replacement fees, property damage fees including damage to Chromebook's, extra-curricular activity fees, and any other obligations the student/parent have incurred. All payment of fees must be kept current in order for students to continue to participate in programs offered by the school. **All obligations must be cleared prior to distribution of report cards, registration, release of records, etc.**

Tuition Assistance: Limited funds are available for tuition assistance to all currently enrolled students who are parishioners of Holy Spirit Parish or St. Francis of Assisi Parish. All requests for assistance should be directed to the Business Manager to receive a FACTS financial aid packet. Parents are responsible for completing all forms and submitting them as directed. All information must be received by the deadline date. The tuition assistance committee, comprised of Holy Spirit and St. Francis representatives, meets to determine the assistance available for eligible families. All names are kept confidential. If a financial need should occur during the year, a family may contact your pastor individually. All information is held in the strictest of confidence.

Grievance Policy

Concerns of students and parents should always go through proper channels. Discussing a problem with others who are not involved does not help to eliminate the problem. On the contrary, it may only create more discontent and animosity between the parties who are actually involved. The steps to follow for dealing with complaints in a fair and mature way are to conference first with the teacher and then with the principal. If the situation has not been

resolved, one can conference with one of the pastors, and finally with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Birmingham.

Health and Medications

It is imperative that we have a family information sheet on each student. Information on allergies or health problems and phone numbers where parents can be reached are important. It is best that emergency numbers include family members or friends who live within the Tuscaloosa area. It is also imperative that the emergency numbers be kept current in the main office. Parents are advised to update this information as needed.

Anytime a child is seriously ill, he/she should be kept at home. Since a sick child will not be sent home without first notifying the parents or individual designated on school records, it is imperative that emergency information be completed and kept up to date. If circumstances warrant (such as in the case of communicable diseases), the principal may request a clearance from the doctor before readmittance of the student to school. Parents will be informed about any possible exposure to a communicable disease.

Limited First Aid is available in the front office. In the event of a major accident at school, an attempt will first be made to contact the parents or designated emergency person, then the local police, fire department, or emergency squad will be called and their instructions will be followed.

Whenever possible, it is preferred that parents administer medication to their own children outside of school hours. School personnel are not allowed to administer any oral medication to students without written consent of the parent, and the parent must supply the medication. Parents must bring all medication to the School Office with a prescriptive or medical form stating specific directions for administering the medicine. All medications, including cough drops and topical medication/ointments, must be in the original container. Otherwise, the medicine will not be administered. Once the medicine is no longer needed, the parent must collect it from the office and sign that it has been received. No medication is to be sent to or from school with a student.

If your child has been sent home sick, he/she cannot return until he/she has been fever-free, 99 degrees or below, (without Tylenol) for 24 hours. Students with a contagious disease (Head Lice, Pink Eye, Poison Ivy/Oak, Ringworm, etc.) may not return without a doctor's note.

Immunization Form

The Catholic Church does not prohibit the use of any vaccine, and generally encourages the use of safe and effective vaccines as a way of safeguarding personal and public health and out of concern for the common good. The Diocese of Birmingham understands though that there are children who may be medically ineligible to receive certain vaccines, and there may be moral objections to vaccines derived from cell lines of aborted children (*i.e.*, vaccines which contain these cell lines). We seek to balance, as best as possible, these doctrinal, moral, and medical concerns so that we can provide healthy environments for all students, faculty and staff in our parish and diocesan Catholic schools and early learning programs.

Code of Alabama, 1975, §16-30-4 outlines that boards of education and the governing authority of each private school shall require each pupil who is otherwise entitled to admittance to kindergarten or first grade, whichever is applicable, or any other entrance into an Alabama public or private school, to present a certification of immunization or testing for the prevention of those communicable diseases designated by the State Health Officer, except as indicated by a licensed

medical professional or by obtaining religious exemption based on objection in writing to specific tenets or practices of his or her faith.

As such, any child enrolling in or re-entering a school serving prekindergarten through 12th grades or an early learning program serving infant through K4 in the Diocese of Birmingham must provide an appropriate Certificate of Immunization on a form approved by the Alabama Department of Public Health. *A student without an appropriate Certificate of Immunization may not be enrolled in the school or early learning program, unless a medical or religious exemption have been obtained in accordance with requirements set by the Diocese of Birmingham.*

Alabama State Law (Act 1269) requires that children must be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, rubella, mumps, and varicella (unless otherwise exempted as provided by law, i.e., medical exemption, or religious exemption following diocesan policy).

Any child reporting on the first day of school without an appropriate immunization certificate will not be allowed to attend class. Appropriate certificates for enrollment, which will be available only from private physicians and the Health Department include: Certificate of Immunization (IMM-50, blue card) or Certificate of Medical Exemption (IMM-51, white card).

If there is a problem obtaining immunization records or getting an appointment for immunizations, a temporary form may be obtained for the local health department or private medical provider. This allows the student thirty (30) days to obtain records and/or receive immunizations.

Medical Exemption

For children enrolling in a Diocese of Birmingham school or early learning program with medical contraindication to any of the required vaccinations for school admittance, a Certificate of Medical Exemption, obtained from a licensed medical professional or the County Health Department must be provided. In addition, the Diocese of Birmingham will accept a letter provided by a physician who is licensed to practice medicine, surgery, or osteopathy that indicated an accepted medical contraindication to vaccination or an allergy to any of the ingredients used to formulate the vaccine, as consistent with the labeling of the vaccine as regulated by the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Any vaccination(s) required for school or program admittance not medically contraindicated must be obtained.

Religious Exemption

Students in schools or early learning programs in the Diocese of Birmingham may receive a religious exemption from vaccination under certain circumstances. Religious exemptions will be granted through diocesan procedure and are limited to those objections that are in adherence with the tenets of the Catholic faith as identified and accepted by the Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama. Specifically, exemptions may be granted to students whose parents demonstrate a sincere, conscientious objection to vaccines derived from descendent cell lines of aborted fetuses. Certificates of Religious Exemption issued by State or County Health Departments are not accepted.

This limited religious exemption only covers those vaccinations derived from descendent cell lines of aborted fetuses. All other vaccinations required for school or early learning program admittance must be obtained. A Certificate of Immunization showing the vaccinations received must be on file with the school or early learning program to be admitted.

Internet Policy

Internet and related technologies usage by all students, volunteers, and employees is set forth below. A separate policy and procedure statement will be given to each student, faculty member and volunteer with access to school computer usage for reading and signature. A new copy of this signed agreement is completed each school year. Access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action may be taken for any violations that are unethical and may constitute a criminal offense.

The following policy is from the Diocesan Board of Education:

The good name, reputation, and personal safety of each student, faculty, and staff member as well as the good name of each school in the Diocese of Birmingham as an institution of the Catholic Church, is vitally important. Two specific aspects of this are:

1. Internet activities (such as blogs, chat rooms, etc.) that a student may independently choose to participate in can make the student vulnerable to predators. We strongly advise our students to be very careful about the personal identification information they share via the Internet. We also advise parents to monitor these sites to be sure their child remains safe. Should information come to the school regarding a student sharing personal identification information and/or information concerning a student demeaning him/herself, the school will notify the parents and it will be the parents' responsibility to take action.
2. In order to protect each and every student as well as employees and the institution itself each student enrolled in a Diocese of Birmingham Catholic School is expected to treat the good name and reputation of each of the above with dignity and respect. The same is expected of each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in our schools. Public defamation of any of student, employee, or Catholic school by a student or parent/guardian is serious whether this be done orally, in writing, via email or on the web and whether it is done on a school computer or not and on school time or not. Therefore any student or parent found to be participating in any defamatory activity will be subject to disciplinary/responsive action by the school. This could include dismissal of the student whether the action is by the student or his/her parent/guardian.

(adopted 4-18-06)

Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices (sexting) face disciplinary action.

Students should at no time be involved in texting during the course of the school day. Students involved in texting at school face disciplinary action.

Artificial Intelligence

As a Christ-Centered Community, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) must align with the mission and values of The Diocese of Birmingham and the school. AI, as a powerful tool, can offer numerous educational benefits and opportunities for personal growth. However, it must be used responsibly, ethically, and harmoniously with our principles.

Students must:

- Use AI in ways that support the purpose of the assignment and personal growth.
- Use AI tools responsibly, avoiding content or actions that could cause emotional or reputational harm to oneself or others.
- Not share personal, sensitive, or confidential information with AI tools.
- Only use AI tools for school assignments or assessments when given permission by a teacher.
- Use the designated AI tool(s) if the teacher or the school has recommended a specific AI tool.
- May use AI outside of class to support understanding but never use it to complete or submit work.
- Be honest about when and how AI is used in schoolwork.
- Will follow the teacher's directions on how to cite AI and carefully check the content for accuracy and appropriateness if AI is used to assist with an assignment.
- Will ask the teacher before using AI if unsure whether AI is allowed or appropriate for an assignment.
- Understand that AI may provide inaccurate or biased results and will use it carefully and critically, taking full responsibility and ownership of all work submitted.
- Will not use AI carelessly or without purpose and will use them thoughtfully, respecting both the task at hand and our responsibility to care for God's creation. (AI tools require significant energy and resources to operate).
- Understand that this policy may be updated as technology and school practices change and follow any new guidelines shared by teachers or school leaders.

Misuse of AI in academic work is considered a violation of academic integrity and will be addressed by the school administration and faculty. School administration and faculty will decide on the consequences of AI misuse.

Library

The library is open to students every school day during regular school hours. Teachers may send individual students or small groups of students to the library provided a scheduled class is not in the library, and the librarian is present. Classes attend the library each week during regularly scheduled class periods. Students are expected to speak in quiet tones in the library and be respectful and courteous to adults and other students present.

Damaged or Lost Books: If a book has been damaged, it must be returned to the librarian for proper repair. **Please do not attempt to repair a book using household tape and/or glue.** Deliberate damage to bar codes, labels, or books will result in disciplinary action. The cost of a book, which has been damaged beyond repair, will be paid for by the student. This must be done before any more books may be checked out of the library. Students who lose a book are required to pay for the lost book before any other books may be checked out of the library. Students will not receive report cards until books are returned or payment cleared.

Lockers/Cubbies

Cubbies are provided for some students. Students are expected to care for their cubbies properly by keeping them neat and orderly. Students are not allowed to place stickers on or in their cubbies

or to tape anything to them. Students are expected to care for their cubbies properly. The administration reserves the right to inspect cubbies at any time.

Lost and Found

Parents are to label all supplies, personal articles, coats, hats, sweaters, lunch boxes, etc. If an item is lost, a student or parent may check the Lost and Found. Unclaimed items will be sent to Catholic Social Services.

Lunch/Milk Program

Students may bring a lunch from home or purchase hot lunches. Milk is available every day in addition to the cost of lunch. Holy Spirit participates in the federal Special Milk Program, which provides free or reduced milk to those who qualify. This program assists the school financially, so if you think your family may qualify, please complete the appropriate forms from the main office. Families will use the Family Portal within the FACTS system. The family must also have a FACTS financial account set up as well.

Students, parents or school personnel may not bring fast food items and carbonated drinks into the cafeteria. Parents/ students may not use the microwave. Students are not permitted to take cups and get water/tea. Due to health reasons, students are not allowed to share food or drink with other students. A doctor's excuse must be provided for students who are allergic to milk.

Parental Rights

The administration needs to be aware if a student's parents are divorced, separated, or if the student is in the custody or care of another person. If the parents are divorced, the custodial parent must provide the Principal a copy of the court order or agreement regarding custody and visitation rights. Any school information on said student will be shared with the parents accordingly. Whenever there is any change in the custodial rights of a parent or other custodian (whether temporary or permanent), the school must be notified immediately in writing; otherwise, the school will be entitled to continue to rely upon the original written arrangement that is on file. It is of great benefit to the child to have both parents involved in his/her education.

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO offers support in a variety of ways to the school family. The officers organize social functions and fundraising activities for parents, faculty/staff, and students. Parents are asked to volunteer their time and talents to serve on various committees that help the school and build community.

Permanent Records

A permanent record file will be maintained for each student containing academic transcripts, academic testing, and emergency information. The school will retain only these records in the permanent record when a student transfers.

Photo/Video Release

On occasion, students may be photographed or videotaped at school. The photos may be used in the newspaper, a magazine, or other publication, or for educational projects at school. Videos may be used for informational or educational purposes regarding the programs or curriculum at Holy Spirit School. **If you object or do not allow your child to participate in any photography/videography, please state this in writing to the director/school administration.**

Recess/Break

In order to provide the students with a short break from their academic studies, a recess time is part of the daily schedule. Students are allowed to eat a snack brought from home. Healthy snacks (granola bars, fresh fruit, raisins, pretzels, etc.) are preferred. No carbonated beverages are allowed. Due to health reasons, students are not allowed to share food or drink with other students. They are allowed unstructured time to play on the playground or run in the open area surrounding the playground. The older students take a short break in their classrooms. Also, when possible, teachers (Grades 4-5) take students outside for break.

Teachers explain all playground rules to their students at the beginning of the year. They also review these rules regularly throughout the school year. For safety purposes, students are expected to adhere to the following recess guidelines:

- After leaving the building for recess, students are to wait on the sidewalk for the previous grade to exit the playground.
- Play inside the fenced-in area and not by classroom windows.
- Refrain from throwing mulch, sticks, rocks, acorns, food, etc.
- Run only in the open areas of the playground, not around equipment.
- Keep hands to themselves. No undue roughness or horseplay.
- Students are not to hang by their knees from any playground equipment.
- Students are not to practice karate moves, cheerleading jumps, etc. while on the hard ground surface.
- Use the slide one at a time. May not be face down going down the slide. Do not stand at the bottom of the slide. Do not try to walk up the slide.
- Use the swings safely. No pushing, no swinging sideways or twisting. No jumping off or walking in front of the swings.
- Students are to pick up any trash on the playground.
- Students should wait until the bell rings to enter the school for a bathroom break – unless it is an emergency.
- When the bell rings, students are to walk quietly to their lines outside the school doors so the next class may use the playground.
- Open snacks may not be brought into the building unless they are in a resealable and spill-proof container.
- Supervising adults are to correct students for inappropriate behavior. If a student does not heed the warning, the adult will give a student “time out” on the sidewalk.

Snacks and Water Bottles

In order to provide students with a short break from their morning work, a snack time will be given each day. Students must bring a nutritious snack from home (granola bars, fresh fruit, raisins, pretzels, etc.). Due to health reasons, students are not allowed to share food with other students. Students should also bring a reusable water bottle to school everyday. **The water bottle must be sealable and sill proof. The popular Stanley water bottle with the straw coming out the top is not allowed.**

Release of Records/Transfer of Records

All material in the student's file is confidential and shall be accessible only to the principal, the professional staff, the legal guardian, the parents and the student after his/her eighteenth birthday. If a parent or legal guardian requests that an individual who normally would have the legal right to the possession of the student's records not be allowed access to the student's records, it is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to furnish the principal legal documentation preventing the release of these records to that individual. A copy of the student's permanent record card and the original health record will be released to a receiving school after that school applies directly by mail to Holy Spirit and after all outstanding financial obligations owed to Holy Spirit School are cleared.

School Property

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, computers, Chromebooks, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. Depending upon the nature of the situation, the student will also face disciplinary action.

School Safety

Asbestos

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires the inspection of every school in the United States, public and private, for asbestos-containing materials. An Asbestos Management Plan based on the inspection findings has been prepared and is available in the school office for your information.

Harassment

Holy Spirit Catholic School provides a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken seriously. Students making such threats (seriously or in jest or online) face disciplinary action.

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, implicit or explicit request for sexual favors, inappropriate verbal comments, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Verbal harassment involves derogatory or threatening comments, jokes, or slurs about a person's gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, physical characteristics, or family.

Physical harassment involves unwanted physical contact, slapping, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, hazing and any intimidating interference with normal activity or movement.

Visual harassment involves derogatory, demeaning, inflammatory, or threatening material, such as posters, cartoons, writing, artwork, and gestures.

Retaliation involves intimidation, coercion, discrimination, or retaliation in any form against an individual who reports or threatens to report harassment, or who testifies, assists, or participates in any manner in an investigation.

The principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face disciplinary action, suspension, and/or expulsion.

For unsubstantiated incidents, (by adult in authority), parents of all involved students will be notified of allegations, investigation results, and recommended follow-up action.

For substantiated incidents, (by adult in authority), appropriate disciplinary consequences will be applied to the harasser. Parents of all involved students will be notified of the incident, results, and school follow-up actions.

Telephone

Parents may call the school office at any given time during the day. An answering machine is available when the office is closed. Messages are retrieved each morning. Neither students nor teachers will be called to the telephone during class hours except in an emergency. Important messages will be taken by the office staff and relayed to the person concerned.

Telephone Policy

- Students may not use the school telephone without the expressed permission of the office staff.
- Students may call home for a forgotten lunch or for illness. A student **may not** call home for forgotten homework, after school clothes, etc.
- Students **may not** use cell phones during school hours.

Textbooks

The textbooks are rented yearly. Hardback textbooks must be covered. Contact paper or sticky covers are not permitted. No writing in rented textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost textbooks before any final reports or transcripts are provided.

TRAFFIC PROCEDURES

One of our highest priorities at Holy Spirit is the safety of all our students. Our morning and afternoon traffic flow plan is designed to unload and load students as safely and efficiently as possible. The plan can only work when everyone adheres to it. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our students safe.

MORNING DROP-OFF (See the back of your visor placard)

1. PreSchool

- Park at the parking lot between the Parish Hall and the school.
- Walk your student to the side door of the PreSchool/Elementary School (east end of the building).

2. Elementary (K-5th Grade)

- Drop off your student along the sidewalk.

- Pull all the way down and do not stop your vehicle in front of the steps coming in to the school.
- Make sure that your student exits your vehicle from the passenger side so he/she does not come near the flow of traffic.
- Please do not park and get out of your vehicle in the drop off lane.
- Please do not park at the parking lot in front of the PreSchool/Elementary School and walk your student to the front steps. This is a safety risk and it slows our traffic flow considerably.
- If you need to go into the school, park in the parking lot between the Parish Hall and the school and walk your student to the front steps.

AFTERNOON PICK-UP

1. FAMILY CAR TAG

- Each family will be issued a color-coded (lane color) car tag.
- Place car tag in visible spot on dashboard or visor. Leave the car tag visible until your student is inside your car.

2. LANES (See the back of your visor placard)

As you enter the **parking lot in front of the Preschool/Elementary,**

- **YELLOW LANE (PreSchool)**

Turn left into the parking lot between the school and the Parish Hall. Park and pick up your student at the side door of the Preschool/Elementary School building (east end of the building).

- **RED LANE (Kindergarten and 1st Grade)**

Move to the **middle lane**. Turn left in front of the steps of the school and proceed to the pick-up spot as directed.

- **GREEN LANE (2nd/3rd Grade)**

Move to the **left-most lane**. Turn left in front of the steps of the school and proceed to the pick-up spot as directed.

- **BLUE LANE (4th/5th Grade and MS/HS Siblings)**

Move to the **right-most lane** and proceed all the way around the parking lot. As you pass the school steps, form three (3) lanes. If you have MS/HS students, stay in the right-most lane.

If you have multiple students, follow the directions for the oldest student unless he/she has a PreSchool sibling.

3. Do not park or walk up to get your student. This is a safety risk and it slows our traffic flow considerably.

4. Have your student/s enter your car on the passenger side. Please do not park in the traffic line and get out of your car.
5. After collecting your student, with caution merge to the exit lane. Use left turn signal to alert traffic that you are attempting to merge.
6. Drive slowly in all areas of the school.
7. Please refrain from using your cell phone
8. If you have pets in your vehicle, please make sure they are restrained and remain completely inside the vehicle.

EARLY DISMISSAL

The same procedure for regular day dismissal will be used on 12:30PM, 1:00PM and 2:15PM Dismissal Days.

At the beginning of each school year, please notify the homeroom teacher in writing as to who is allowed to pick up your student/s. If there is a change at any time in your preference, please notify the office or the homeroom teacher in writing. We will not release any student to anyone who has not been previously designated by the parent without written permission from the parent.

Those students who have not been picked-up thirty (30) minutes after the dismissal bell will go to After-School Care Program. Parents will be responsible for the payment of such service.

Visitors

All visitors **MUST** report to the main office upon arrival, sign in, and receive a visitor's badge. No visitors are allowed in the classrooms without prior approval. They may not visit the classrooms before or after lunch. They must wait in the hallway outside of the cafeteria.

Withdrawal from School

If a student withdraws from school, the parent or guardian must notify the office. Notification must be in writing and indicate the date that the student will withdraw. On the student's last day of school, the principal will issue a withdrawal clearance. In addition, all obligations must be cleared before records are released. Parents will be held accountable for the enrollment contract unless the principal deems it necessary to do otherwise.

Social Media Parent Agreement

As a parent or guardian, I recognize that the use of the Internet comes with a corresponding responsibility to use it wisely both for myself and my child. I also recognize that sending my child to a Catholic school is a privilege that comes with the corresponding duty to act in a Christian way towards others. I therefore pledge to refrain from using the internet in any way that might disparage the school's administration or its teachers. If I have a problem with school personnel, I will take my complaints directly to the school's administration and not broadcast vile, hateful or disparaging remarks about the teacher(s) or administration. Broadcasting any such vile,

hateful or disparaging remarks is an indication of my intent to withdraw my child or children from the school and the principal has my permission to act accordingly.

Policy Statement from the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

Adopted July 9, 2018

Choose Act

The Rules and Regulations of the CHOOSE Act prohibit reimbursement of tuition directly to families. To assist us in carrying out and communicating this requirement, John Whitaker, General Counsel for the Diocese of Birmingham, has written this statement to include in all school handbooks for the 2025-2026 school year. As is required by law, any funds left in the Educational Savings Account (“ESA”) at the end of the academic year, i.e., June 30, will be returned to The CHOOSE Act Fund (the “Fund”). If a participating student leaves the school, any unused monies will likewise be returned to the Fund. No money provided through the CHOOSE Act program may be returned or refunded to the student, his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). Parent(s) or guardian(s) are responsible for any costs associated with an Educational Savings Provider invoice over and above the ESA balance.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The administration reserves the right to amend the policies and procedures as outlined in the **Parent/Student Handbook**. Parents will be notified of any changes by mail or a note will be sent home.

I/We, the undersigned, have read and agree to be governed by the **Parent/Student Handbook** for Holy Spirit Catholic Elementary School for the 2025-2026 school year. I/We understand fully the regulations contained therein and recognize the right of the school to establish rules and provide for their enforcement.

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

***This form MUST be signed and returned to the school.**

Family-School Agreement

The purpose of Catholic education is the formation of young people who will be good citizens of this world—loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel—and who will also be citizens of the world to come, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints. This is all done in an environment of academic excellence, where students learn how to become intentional, missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, grow in virtue and holiness, share the Good News of Christ's love with others, and join in the Catholic Christian community of the school. This Family-School Agreement is intended to further these purposes. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Birmingham are open to all students; however, we are first and foremost Catholic.

When enrolling their child(ren) in a Catholic school in the Diocese of Birmingham, parent(s) or legal guardian(s) (hereafter, “parents”) are asked to sign the Family-School Agreement. In signing the Family-School Agreement, it is understood that:

- a. All children are welcome in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Birmingham. As part of enrollment, parents must sign the Family-School Agreement.
- b. Our schools exist to pass on the Catholic faith in its fullness to students and to form disciples of Jesus Christ. Parents and schools are partners in this mission; parents are expected to cooperate fully in it and shall supervise their children in accordance with this agreement.
- c. As partners in this mission, students and their parents are all part of the school community. As such, students and their parents agree to live their lives in a way that supports, rather than opposes, the mission of the school.

The school joyfully exercises its responsibility to teach Catholic faith and morals in all fullness. Parents whose religious practices and beliefs run counter to Church teaching might experience conflicts as we maintain mission integrity. Sincere questioning of the practices and doctrines of the Catholic faith—whether by students or their parents—in order to more deeply understand them are welcome; but openly hostile or persistent defiance of Catholic truths or morality are a violation of the Family-School Agreement and may result in denial of admission or dismissal from the school.

2025-2026 Family-School Agreement
Diocese of Birmingham

As parents/guardians, we ask Holy Spirit Catholic School to help us in educating and forming our child(ren). We understand and agree that our child(ren) will be taught the teachings of the Catholic Church in their fullness. Our intention is to respect and cooperate with school policies and with those providing a Catholic-based education to our child(ren)—the priests, principal, teachers, parishioners, and all school personnel. We pledge our full cooperation with the school to prepare our child(ren) to be disciple(s) of Jesus Christ. We will make every effort to supervise our child(ren) in accordance with this agreement.

Name of Father/Legal Guardian

Signature:

Name of Mother/Legal Guardian

Signature:

Name(s) of Child(ren):

Grade:

 Holy Spirit Catholic School accepts your request and commitment for a Catholic education and formation for your child(ren). We acknowledge our obligation to assist you in your responsibility of educating your child(ren). We will make our best effort to form your child(ren) as disciple(s) of Jesus Christ, according to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Principal's Signature: _____

Date: _____