

*Parent/Student Handbook
2011-2012*

Forward to Parents

Welcome to St. Michael School. Together we share the responsibility and the privilege of passing on the rich tradition of faith and providing the educational excellence each child deserves. By choosing to send your child/children to St. Michael School you have demonstrated your trust in us. For this, and the many ways you show your support and spirit of cooperation, we are grateful.

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with a copy of school rules and policies and other general information. A common understanding of rules and policies by all concerned – parents, school staff, and students – is essential.

We recommend that you study this handbook carefully, discuss it with your child, sign and return the Acceptance of Terms page, and retain the handbook for future reference.

We realize that there is no way that we can foresee every event or circumstance that may occur, therefore the administration of St. Michael School reserves the right and obligation to make decisions in the best interest of all.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND REGULATIONS

ADMISSION

A child must be:

- four (4) years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted into the Pre-K 4 program;
- five (5) years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted into the Kindergarten program; and
- six (6) years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted into First Grade.

The admission of a student who wishes to transfer from another school is determined after the needs of the student are discussed and the reasons are verified by the school from which the student wishes to transfer. Students who wish to transfer to St. Michael School may be admitted on a probationary basis for six (6) weeks. If the student does not show a willingness to accept the conduct and academic requirements of the school, he/she will be asked to leave.

REGISTRATION

Registration of current and new students takes place in the spring. New students are required to bring the following:

- Birth certificate
- Baptismal Certificate (if applicable)
- Immunization record

For older students, besides those items mentioned above, the following are required:

- Recent Report Card
- Test scores

A registration fee of \$100 is due at the time of registration and is **non refundable**.

WITHDRAWALS

The procedures for withdrawal are as follows:

1. Authorization from parent or guardian
2. Return of all schoolbooks and property, and payment of all dues.
3. Withdrawal and transfer card completed by the school office.
4. Release form signed by the parent or guardian for all records.

TUITION AND FEES

The School Advisory Council sets tuition and registration fees. St. Michael Catholic Schools' tuition is paid either annually or monthly. If the tuition is paid monthly it is due by the fifteenth of each month. The school recognized that there are conditions which may occur that cause one to fall behind in their payments. If this should occur, please call the rectory business office (979-725-6714) or the school office (979-725-8461) so that we can work with you. **Failure to do so, and allowing three months tuition to go unpaid, may result in the school notifying you that your child or children may no longer attend St. Michael Catholic School.**

All tuition and fees must be up to date before report cards are given out at the end of the year. Arrangements are to be made with the pastor if tuition and fees are not paid before the end of school.

The School Advisory Council set the following rates for the 2011-2012 school year.

REGISTRATION FEE: \$110 per child for Pre-K4 through Grade 8

TUITION RATES FOR PARISHIONERS – Kinder through Grade 8

1 child: \$245 per month
2 children: \$330 per month
3 or more: \$390 per month

TUITION RATES FOR NON-PARISHIONERS – Kinder through Grade 8

1 child: \$300 per month
2 children: \$390 per month
3 or more: \$490 per month

TUITION RATES FOR PRE-K4: \$260

SPORTS FEE: \$10 for football
\$10 for volleyball
\$10 for basketball
\$10 combined if playing soccer, track, or softball
(These are one-time fees for students in grades 5-8. They are due on the first day of school.)

BUS FEES: St. Michael School provides afternoon bus transportation. Bus rates are paid monthly and are as follows:

One student: \$40.00
Second student: \$25.00
Third student rides free

Students who ride occasionally (three times a month or ten times during the year): **\$2.00 per ride**

LUNCHES: Pre-K-3rd gr.-\$1.45 4th-8th-\$1.55 Milk/Juice \$ 0.30

STUDENT INSURANCE

All students in St. Michael School are covered under the insurance policy approved by the Diocesan School Office and School Advisory Council. A fee is attached to the registration fee to cover the insurance. More complete coverage is available if the parents choose to pay the higher premium.

ACCIDENTS

Accidents in the school building or on the school grounds during any school related activity should be reported to the person in charge and the school office personnel. Proper medical action will be taken.

LUNCH PROGRAM/CAFETERIA

The Federal Lunch Program is in operation in the cafeteria to provide hot and well-balanced meals. Meal tickets are to be purchased in the school office. No lunch money is collected in the cafeteria and charges are to be avoided.

During lunchtime, fast food items and sodas are **not permitted** in the cafeteria when the Federal Lunch Program is in operation.

SAFETY RULES

In order to insure the safety of our students all are to abide by the following rules:

1. The street between school and church is closed to traffic from 10:00-12:40 pm.
2. Students are not to pursue playground balls that go into the street unless given permission by the playground monitor.
3. Students are not allowed to play in the parking lot before school and dismissal time.
4. Students board the buses in the designated area.
5. Adults delivering or picking up students should do so in the lane marked for this purpose.
6. Stopping in the middle of the street or driving into the parking lot is not permitted.
7. All outside doors will be locked after 8:15 am, except for the main office door and the door leading to the playground area in the main building.
8. Parents who pick up their child before school is out, or bring them late to school are to check them in or out at the office.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be present and punctual for all classes. A student who has been absent is always at a disadvantage because it is impossible for the teacher to repeat the lectures or to provide the learning experiences missed. When requesting that a student be dismissed from school for any planned reason, parents are to submit a request in writing to the teacher well in advance of the planned absence. Students are responsible for all assignments missed during their absence.

Students are considered absent for the morning if they leave **before or arrive after 10:00**. Students who leave before or **arrive after 1:30** are considered absent for the afternoon. On early dismissal days, the students must be present for the entire morning and afternoon sessions to be counted present. Students need to be present in school 90% of the 180 (162 days). Students who exceed 18 absences are in danger of repeating their academic year. This is left to the discretion of the principal.

Excused absences, according to the Texas Education code 21.035, include:

- Personal sickness
- Sickness or death in a family
- Quarantine
- Weather or road conditions which make traveling dangerous or any other **unusual** cause, for example:
 1. Doctor appointment
 2. Religious days such as Yom Kippur

When a child is absent, the parent/guardian is to notify the school office by 9:00 am that day.

Pupils who have been absent from school **must on their return to school, bring a written note or excuse**. The note should contain the date of absence and reason for the absence. Failure to notify the school for reason of absence will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused.

Once on the school grounds, no child may leave the grounds **during school hours**. Exceptions are:

1. Parent, guardian, or person designated by parent takes child out of school for legitimate reason.
2. Express permission of principal

All children must be dismissed and re-admitted through the school office for any absence during the school day, and only authorized personnel will be allowed to release a child through the school office.

Unexcused absences include vacations, trips, etc. A student taken out of school for any of the above-unexcused absences will be expected to make up schoolwork on his/her time. **Teachers are not responsible for reteaching any new skills missed during the student's absence.** Parents must prepare the student to take any test missed during the absence.

According to the Texas Educational Code 21.041, a student may not be given credit for a class or classes if the student has more than five days of unexcused absences during a semester.

TARDINESS

Tardiness creates a disruption of a class that has already begun. Students must be in school and in their classrooms on time. A student who arrives after 7:55 a.m. is tardy.

Unexcused tardies are to be avoided. Students who arrive after 7:55 are tardy and must report to the school office.

- A. **Excused tardies** include medical and dental appointments.
- B. Any student in grades 1-8 who accumulates 5 unexcused tardies will have 30 minute after school detention. Another 30 minutes of detention will be assigned for each additional five (5) tardies.
- C. Any student with five (5) or more unexcused tardies will not be eligible for Perfect Attendance.

Unexcused tardies in excess of eleven (11) will require a parent conference.

STUDENT ILLNESS

In case of student illness or similar emergency, the school office will notify the parent or guardian to make arrangements for the child to be picked up immediately. When a parent cannot be contacted, persons who are listed for emergency contact will be notified.

COMMUNICATION

Since it is impossible to foresee all events that might occur during the school year, parents are kept informed through the school newsletters and memos sent home periodically. Please encourage your child to be responsible for bringing any notes that are sent through them to you.

SCHOOL POLICIES

NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

St. Michael School does not discriminate in admissions or employment practices on the basis of sex, race, color, age, national or ethnic origin or disabling condition. St. Michael School is in compliance with the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, and other federal statutes for non-discrimination in its employment and admissions practices.

STUDENT RECORDS

St. Michael School adheres to the *Buckley Amendment* (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regarding access to student records.

STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St. Michael School enrolls students from another catholic school who live within the parish boundaries, both parishioners and non-parishioners. Exceptions can be made if the parents/guardians work or have a business within parish boundaries.

A registration fee of \$110 is due at the time of registration and is **non refundable**.

MEDICATION

Provisional Enrollment

All immunizations should be completed by the first date of attendance. The law requires that students be fully vaccinated against the specified diseases. A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by this rule. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school.

A school nurse or school administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and the school shall exclude the student from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

Guidelines for Excluding students from School

Exclusion Guidelines	Return to School Guidelines
Oral temperature of 100° or above	Fever free for 24 hours
Vomiting, nausea or severe abdominal pain	Symptom Free
Marked drowsiness or malaise	Symptom Free
Sore throat, acute cold or persistent cough	Symptom Free
Red, inflamed or discharging eyes	Written physician release
Acute skin rashes or eruptions	Written physician release
Swollen glands around jaws, ears or neck	Written physician release
Suspected scabies or impetigo	Written physician release
Any skin lesion in the weeping stage	Covered and diagnosed as non-infectious
Earache	Symptom Free
Pediculosis	Lice and nit free
Other symptoms suggestive of acute illness	Written physician release

Prescription Medication

Prescription medication will be properly identified with the prescription label from a pharmacy. This label will include:

1. Student name
2. Medication name
3. Directions concerning dosage
4. Route of administration (i.e.: oral, topical, right eye, left eye, IM (intramuscular), etc.)
5. Time that the medication is to be given
6. Length of time medication is to be given (duration)

Non-prescription medications

Non-prescription medication (over-the-counter) must be in original container, with visible directions, and displaying the student's name. Parent request for administration of such medications must be consistent with directions for use on the package.

With the use of cough drops, they must be in the original container, and labeled with the child's name and written directions from the parent. Parent request for administration of cough drops must be consistent with directions for use on the package.

Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Head lice can spread rapidly. Students found to have head lice must be excluded from school immediately. It is strongly recommended that the school follow a "nit free" policy for readmittance to school.

Head lice are transmitted through close, personal contact. Also, through the use of common brushes, combs, and hair ornaments, and the sharing of hats, headbands, or other apparel. Despite

opinions to the contrary, head lice are found in frequently shampooed hair and on persons with good personal hygiene habits.

Each female head lice lay 50 to 150 eggs. Since these eggs hatch within one week, the infestation builds rapidly. Check the hair in bright light, preferably sunlight, as the lice are small, grayish-white insects, one-sixteenth to one-eighth inch long. They are dependant upon human blood for sustenance. The nits or eggs are smaller, yellowish-white particles attached to the hair shaft with a waxy, waterproof substance.

If lice are present, the entire family should be inspected and undergo simultaneous treatment. You may phone a physician for treatment and advice or see the pharmacist in a local drug store. Some medications and medicated shampoos will only kill the adult lice. Others will kill both the adult lice and the eggs, which is recommended. Depending on the severity, number of applications, and methods of application, all eggs are not always killed or eliminated. Combing the hair with a fine tooth comb (some medications include it) is recommended after the medication has been applied (follow directions). In more severe cases, it may require manual removal of each egg. It is strongly recommended that school follow a “nit free” policy – that is, students are not allowed back into the classroom until the hair and scalp are free of nits (eggs). Make a careful visual check to insure that all eggs have been removed. Many lice shampoo preparations recommend a second shampooing 7-10 days after the first.

If head lice have been experienced, it is recommended that beds, bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, etc.) rugs, upholstered furniture, etc., be inspected. There are prepared sprays on the market that can help eliminate the problem.²²

In recent years, as head lice have become increasingly resistant to traditional pharmaceutical interventions, many non-traditional treatments, such as oil or mayonnaise, are being purported as effective. It is strongly recommended that parents be advised to seek medical or pharmaceutical advice before trying one of the “new” home remedies, some of which may be unsafe or ineffective.

Additionally, there is now concern in the medical community about the toxicity of shampoos and treatments containing pesticides. According to the National Pediculosis Association the surest, most effective method of controlling head lice is manual removal of lice and nits.

Basic First Aid

Washing with soap and water, use of ice packs and/or bandages are the treatments used for minor injuries. Parents are called in the event of a head injury or any injury judged to be of a more serious nature.

DISCIPLINE BEHAVIOR POLICY

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The primary purpose of discipline is to create a learning environment for all students. Students are to act in such a manner as to make St. Michael School a center of Christian social living and to enable themselves to acquire the fullest education possible. Behavior that is harmful to the good order of the school, to themselves, or to their peers is to be avoided. Unacceptable behavior at school or any school-related activity constitutes the following:

1. **Disturbing Class:** Any disturbance that interferes with another student's opportunity to learn, including, but not limited to: talking, making noises, out of seat, eating in class, slamming books or lockers, playing with toys, or throwing spit wads.
2. **Does not Cooperate:** Argumentative, refusal to follow directions, ignores or defies authority figures
3. **Disrespectful:** To any teacher, aide, other student(s), religious traditions, or any other legitimate authority
4. **Uniform Violation:** Improperly dressed or not following the uniform dress code policy
5. **Chewing Gum:** Students may not chew gum at school

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

The students are responsible for the following:

- Raise hand and wait to be called upon
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to self
- Have all necessary materials – textbooks, assignments, supplies, etc.
- Stay in seat at appropriate times
- Follow directions
- Respect teacher and classmates
- Keep books and other supplies off the floor (safety hazard)
- Leave unnecessary materials at home, such as toys, video games, etc
- Keep all textbooks covered
- Pay for any damage to school property for which they are responsible

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Each teacher handles classroom discipline. Consequences for not following the guidelines set up by each teacher constitute the following:

- Verbal warning
- Disciplinary Charts
- Time out
- Note to parents
- Detention
- Office visit (frequent or serious infractions)

SEVERE DISRUPTIONS (Include but are not limited to):

The following instances of misconduct qualify as a severe disruption whether they occur during the school day or at a school related activity.

- Committing an assault
- Stealing, damaging or destroying property
- Using abusive, obscene or vulgar language or obscene gestures
- Leaving the school grounds or the site of a school activity without permission
- Cheating
- Damage to school property
- Committing any illegal act
- Possessing or using dangerous items including drugs, alcohol, tobacco, knives, matches, guns, etc.
- Committing misconduct in church, during the Liturgy or other prayer services
- Improper use of the internet
- Improper use of cell phones

Harassment/Bullying

Harassment is contrary to the Catholic faith and detrimental to the education process. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (**seriously or in jest or online**) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Threats

Any threat of bodily harm or threat of the possession of a weapon shall be taken seriously. Students, parents, and staff shall be responsible to report to the administration any knowledge of verbal or written threats. Any such threats and any false reports of such threats may result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

CONSEQUENCES

The principal will deal with severe disruptions and/or behavior in a manner appropriate to the age of the student and the severity of his/her behavior. Methods used by the principal may include but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- Student/principal conference

- Student/parent/principal conference
- Detention
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion (dismissal from school)

PLAYGROUND

Students are to obey the following rules:

- Play in designated areas only
- Follow the direction of the supervisor
- Play games that are not dangerous
- Keep playground free of all litter
- Never go out into the street
- Never leave the playground without the expressed permission of the playground monitor
- Use playground equipment properly
- Always be respectful of teachers and playground supervisors

CAFETERIA

Students are to obey the following cafeteria rules:

- All students report to the cafeteria for lunch and remain there until dismissed by a teacher.
- Students enter and leave the cafeteria in an orderly manner
- Proper table manners are to be observed
- Students are not to waste, throw, or play with food
- Students do not touch food on another student's plate
- Students are to leave their tables clean, free of trash when finished, and chairs pushed under the table
- Students are not to share food with one another

BUS BEHAVIOR

Students are to adhere to the following rules while riding the bus.

- Riders are to be prompt and ready to board the bus after the last school bell rings.
- Riders are to be seated when the bus is moving
- Riders are to sit up straight and not put feet on the seat in front of them
- Riders are to respect the bus driver and peers at all times
- Riders are to never use or exhibit abusive, crude or improper language or behavior
- Riders are to keep arms, legs, and heads inside the bus while riding
- Riders are to never shout or scream at anyone inside or outside the bus
- Riders are to keep the bus free from trash, never throwing anything inside or outside the bus
- Riders are to not have sharp objects out of their back packs while riding the bus
- Riders are to keep their belongings with them while on the bus
- Food or drinks are not allowed on the bus
- Riders are to put all trash into the trash cans

CONSEQUENCES

When a bus rider breaks one or more of the bus rules, he/she will be given a dated warning stating which rule was broken, signed by the bus driver and the principal. This warning is sent home and is to be signed by the parent and returned to the office before the student may resume riding the bus. If a student receives more than three (3) warnings during a semester, he/she will not be allowed to ride the bus for the remainder of the semester. The principal reserves the right at any time to take away bus-riding privileges from any student for serious misconduct at any time.

UNIFORMS

Uniforms speak of pride and spirit in your school. When wearing the uniforms the shirts are to be tucked in at all times. Blue jeans are to be solid and not tight, frayed below the soles or low-waisted. Shorts and/or skorts are to be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee.

Girls

- Dark blue (navy) or khaki slacks, walking shorts, skorts, capri pants
- Dark blue (navy) or khaki jumpers
- Blue jeans (pants or capris only) – not on mass days
- Kelly Green and/or white short sleeve or long sleeve polo shirts (only)
- Black or brown belts
- Athletic shoes

Boys

- Dark blue (navy) or khaki slacks or shorts
- Blue jeans (pants only) – not on mass days
- Kelly Green and/or white short sleeve or long sleeve polo shirts (only)
- Black or brown belts

- Athletic shoes

T-shirts, turtleneck shirts, etc., worn under uniform shirts is limited to the following colors: white, green, blue, or gray

Church Attire

- Uniform slacks, khaki capris, uniform skorts or jumpers (navy blue or khaki) with the school uniform shirt. No blue jeans or shorts.

Winter Wear

- Black, blue, green or gray warm-ups or wind suits may be worn

P.E. uniforms for Grades 5-8

- Black mesh shorts (required length)
- Solid gray or PE shirt available for purchase at Marti's Gifts

Spirit Day (Thursday)

- Sports jerseys, cheer uniforms, cheer squad shirts, or St. Michael spirit T-shirts can be worn

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

- Cleanliness and neatness are absolute requirements
- Any style of dress, article of clothing or hairstyle (out of eyes and not touching collar) which interferes with, or disrupts the learning process is unacceptable
- Clothing with logos suggestive of cults, beer or drug commercials or any slogans, images or symbols contrary to the school's philosophy and Christian values.
- Shirts are to be tucked in at all times
- Mini skirts, short split skirts, tight leggings pants or tops exposing the waist are not permitted at any time.
- Makeup is discouraged in school; if worn, it is limited to 7th and 8th grade girls only and is to look natural.

SCHOOL PARTIES

Christmas parties are held in all classrooms the last day before classes dismiss for the holidays. Rooms Mothers/Fathers help plan the parties with the classroom teachers. Simple Valentine parties may be held in grades PreK through grade four.

PARTY INVITATIONS AND BALLOON OR FLOWER BOUQUETS

Students in Grades 5-8 are not allowed to hand out Birthday or other invitations to parties held outside of school. Students in Grades PreK-4 may hand out invitations if all are invited. Students receiving balloon or flower arrangements will receive them after school in the office.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILL

When the alarm is sounded for a drill, students must go to their assigned place in silence and quickly without running. They are to remain there until the signal to return is given.

ATHLETICS

St. Michael School participates in and follows the rules of the Diocese of Victoria Athletic League (DVAL). Sports include football, volleyball, basketball, soccer, track, softball, cheerleading, and dance team. Good Christian sportsmanship must be exhibited at all times by coaches, students, and parents. The principal reserves the right to remove any student from a particular game, sport, or from any team for serious disruptions, infractions, or any just cause he/she deems serious enough. Permission forms (signed by parent/guardian), physicals, and sports fees, must be in the school office prior to any athletic activity.

ATHLETIC POLICIES

Participation in athletics requires the following:

- Students are to maintain a 70% in all their classes, and demonstrate proper attitude and behavior.
- Students are eligible under the Athletic Eligibility Policy.
- Students are under the direct supervision of the coaches or designated sponsors while participating in athletic events.
- Students are to have permission from the coach to leave the premises of an athletic event (practice or game).
- Students are to return with the same driver/chaperone with the exception of returning with a parent or someone authorized **in writing** by the parent with the coach's permission.
- Parents who volunteer to drive students to athletic or other events are to have the required information filed in the school office and have attended the Safe Environment Training session required by the Diocese of Victoria.
- Parents/drivers are always to drive safely and have seatbelts for each occupant.
- Parents/drivers are to see to it that alcohol, drugs, or other improper substances are **not** present and/or consumed at any school function or athletic event.
- Parents and students are to clean up their areas after each event.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Cumulative averages are taken each week (Monday to Monday). In order for a student to be eligible a student is to have a passing grade in each subject (70 or above). If a student fails one subject, he/she may practice that week but not play in the game that week. A student failing two subjects may not practice or participate in any games during the week or weeks of ineligibility.

ATHLETIC PHYSICALS

All students who participate in any school sponsored athletic event throughout the school year are to have a physical before participating in that sport (this includes practice prior to participation in games). Any student who does not have their physical prior to the school year **may not practice or play** in the sport until their physical is complete.

ATHLETIC UNIFORMS

Since athletics holds equal importance at St. Michael School, sports jerseys, uniforms, T-shirts, cheerleader or dance team uniforms may be worn to school on the day of each sporting event. If Mass falls on this day, cheerleaders and dance team members are to dress properly for the Liturgy and then change into their uniforms after Mass. The principal has the discretion of designating other times when athletic uniforms may be worn.

CHEERLEADERS AND DANCE TEAM

Students (usually seven) in grades 6-8 are selected by outside judges as cheerleaders. The dance team is open to students in grades 5-8. Cheerleaders and dance team members are to maintain satisfactory academic work, be responsible, and demonstrate qualities of leadership, courtesy, respect, poise, and friendliness. To be eligible to try out for cheerleader, a girl is to obtain three teachers' signatures that teach them and be a member of the dance team prior to trying out for this position.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND INFORMATION

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are distributed quarterly. The grading scale for **grades 2-8** is as follows”

94-100:	Excellent Achievement	G:	Good Progress
85-93:	High Achievement	S:	Satisfactory Progress
75-84:	Average Achievement	N:	Needs Improvement
70-74:	Low Achievement		
69/Below:	Unsatisfactory		

The grading scale for Grade 1 is as follows:

E:	Excellent Progress	-:	Indicates Weakness
G:	Good Progress	+:	Indicates Strength
S:	Satisfactory Progress		
N:	Needs Improvement		
U:	Unsatisfactory		

CONDUCT CODE

S: Satisfactory N: Needs Improvement
U: Unsatisfactory

ACADEMIC HONOR ROLL

HIGH HONORS is awarded to students in grades 4-8 who have all grades on their report cards within the range of 94-100 and have no “U’s” in conduct.

HONORS is awarded to students in grades 4-8 who have all grades on their report cards within the range of 85-100 and have no “U’s” in conduct.

A student with three or more “N’s” (Needs Improvement) in conduct will not be allowed on the Honor Roll.

HOMEWORK

The amount of homework assigned depends on the grade level of the student. **Reading, which is essential for all subjects, is to be done daily at home.** Parents are to help provide a good study atmosphere for their child.

In grades 5-8, if homework is missing without a very good reason, the student will receive a “0” and must make up the missing work. Five “0” in any class earns a detention.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Participation in P.E. is mandatory for all students in accordance with the Texas Educational Agency (TEA) and Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (T.C.C.E.D) requirements. A signed note is needed for a student to be exempt. If requests from parents for exemptions are too frequent, a doctor’s request will be mandatory. Students in Grades 5-8 are to wear the designated PE uniform.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

In order for a student to be promoted from one grade to the next, he/she need to attend school for at least 162 of the 180 days required of a school year and be passing all the basic academic subjects of Religion, Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. Students who are not passing one subject will be promoted on the condition that the student attends summer school/tutoring. Students who fail two or more subjects will be retained. If summer work is required, a written verification from the tutor/teacher verifying that the student did attend and satisfactorily completed the required work must be turned in to the Principal's office prior to the beginning of the new school year.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled prior to the distribution of report cards at the end of the first nine weeks. Parents and teachers are encouraged to arrange conferences at other times when convenient and necessary. The purpose of these conferences is to enable both parent and teacher to help the student.

TEACHER REPORTS

Teacher's Reports (progress reports) are sent out midway between report cards to make parents and students aware of the student's progress.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The curriculum followed at St. Michael School is adopted and approved by T.E.A. (Texas Education Agency) and TCCED (Texas Catholic Conference Education Department) for all parochial schools in the Diocese.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks used at St. Michael School are those officially adopted and recommended by the Diocesan School Office. Textbooks are loaned to students and those textbooks that are not consumable are to be covered.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Attendance at Mass on Fridays and other special days is an important mandatory part of the school day and is not optional. Participation in other weekday Masses may also be arranged. During the day, teachers will lead the students in prayer to begin or end an activity. Communal Reconciliation services or individual opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation may be arranged. Students take part in monthly rosary and during Lent participate in the Stations of the Cross. Service projects in and out of the community are also a vital part of religious growth at St. Michael School.

ROOM MOTHERS/FATHERS ACTIVITIES

Room parents are asked to help with the following activities:

1. Night on the Town gala
2. All Saints Carnival
3. Thanksgiving: Share-A-Meal
4. Christmas parties

5. Catholic Schools Week special activities
6. Field Trips
7. Individual class parties approved by the principal
8. End-of-School parties/field day

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are to be related to the curriculum, have an educational purpose, and serve to enhance learning. Classroom teachers with the approval of the principal plan these trips. A field trip is a privilege. The school reserves the right to permit or deny a student the privilege of participation in a field trip. Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of such outings. Only students having signed permission forms will be allowed to participate. The school may accept a signed permission slip that has been FAXED from the parent/guardian, but may not accept a permission slip that has been transmitted via electronic mail. Signed permission slips must accompany supervising personnel on field trips to provide information in case of an emergency. When possible, school buses are used on field trips; otherwise, volunteer drivers arranged by the teacher and room parents must provide adequate transportation. Generally, educational trips taken by students in the primary grades should be within a close distance.

Since the school is responsible for the students while on a school-sponsored trip the following is required.

- Orderly behavior at all times
- Proper attire
- Proper respect and cooperation with the driver, teacher, guide or other adult in charge.
- All misconduct on the trip is to be reported to the teacher and principal by the chaperone so proper action may be taken.
- Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on any school related trip.
- Drivers are to have completed the Safe Environment training required by the Diocese of Victoria.

REGULATION ON ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUGS, AND WEAPONS

1. No student shall possess, use, or attempt to possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances on school premises during any school term or off school premises at a school-related activity, function, or event.

Definitions:

“Use” means a student has smoked, ingested, imbibed, inhaled, drunk or otherwise taken internally a prohibited substance recently enough that it is detectable by the student’s physical appearance, actions, breath, and speech.

“Under the influence” means a student’s faculties are noticeably impaired, but the student need not be legally intoxicated.

- a. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to tobacco products, marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
 - b. Alcohol or alcoholic beverage
 - c. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other volatile chemical substance for inhalation (including, but not limited to white-out)
 - d. Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drug, including facsimiles of drugs or alcohol
 - e. Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action including expulsion.
 - f. Lockers and other personal property may be searched by administrators for alcohol, drugs, and other controlled substances.
 - g. A student who uses, in the manner prescribed by school policy, a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for the student's use shall not be considered to have violated this policy. (Please note that any prescribed medication used by someone other than for whom the medication is prescribed is considered an illegal drug.)
2. The transmittal, sale, or attempted sale of what is represented to be any of the above-listed substances is also prohibited under this policy. Students involved in such actions shall be expelled from school.
 3. No student shall possess any form of a weapon or facsimile of a weapon, including but not limited to a gun, knife, or stun gun.

AIDS Policy

Based on the current opinion of the scientific and medical community, AIDS is caused by a virus known as HTLV-III/LAV which attacks the body's immune system, thereby leaving the individual vulnerable to opportunistic infections. A person afflicted with AIDS suffers a variety of virus and/or fungus-caused illnesses that debilitates the body resulting in a substantially high mortality rate often within three years after diagnosis. The spread of the virus has occurred through the exchange of bodily fluids (blood, blood by-products, or semen) between individuals, and no evidence exists to indicate the spread of the virus through casual contact.

Recognition of a student or employee with AIDS is not reason alone enough for exclusion from school. Each person will be evaluated as an individual case, and exclusion from the school and exclusion from the school environment will be based upon the person's physical limitations, psychological activity patterns, and the opinion of a panel of responsible persons designated by the Superintendent of Schools. In the case of a student, the panel shall be comprised of the student's parent, the school's physician, the school's nurse, the student's physician, and the

principal of the school where the child attends or will attend. The Superintendent may appoint additional persons if he/she deems it appropriate and necessary. In the case of an employee, the panel shall be comprised of the school's physician, the school's nurse, the employee's physician, the principal of the school, and a representative of the Superintendent's Office.

If a student has been diagnosed as having AIDS and has any of the following conditions, he/she shall be excluded from attending school:

1. Vomiting
2. Lack of toilet training
3. Tendency to bite
4. Open sores
5. Other medical conditions conducive to spreading the virus

CHILD ABUSE LAWS

St. Michael School abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services. All personnel and volunteers who work with or have contact with the students are required to attend the Safe Environment training as mandated by the Diocese of Victoria.

APPEALS PROCESS

Although the Diocese of Victoria endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within its schools, it recognized that misunderstandings or differences of opinion sometimes occur. Ideally, such matters can be resolved informally by a parent or guardian by meeting with the immediate authoritative person to discuss the matter. If, however, the matter is not then settled to the parent or guardian's satisfaction, and the parent or guardian believes the dispute to be a misapplication or misinterpretation of a school related policy, only then may the parent or guardian institute a formal grievance. A formal grievance must be in writing and must be received in five (5) working days following the occurrence of the event on which the grievance is based. Please contact the principal for a copy of the Diocese's current *Complaint Procedure for Students and Parents* for further details. Also, please note that current policy supercedes and replaces all previous policies and statements regarding institution and processing of formal grievances within the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Victoria.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones that are brought to school are to be in the off-mode and kept in the back pack at all times during the school day. Failure to abide by this rule will result in the phone being picked up and turned into the office, the parent notified, and this privilege lost for the student.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

**Office of Catholic Schools
Diocese of Victoria
St. Michael School**

Mission Statement of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Victoria is dedicated to the teaching mission of the Catholic Church through service and leadership to the schools of the Diocese. We proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and promote the ideals of message, community, and service. We encourage and support school administrators in their ministry and management. We provide assistance, information, and direction for the enhancement of quality education in the Catholic schools that strive to instill values for lifetime.

Introduction

With Jesus, the Great Communicator, and in the spirit of our Christian tradition, we recognize that we live in a new media age, immersed in a new culture with an evolving language. We propose to make use of the most effective, most powerful means to communicate the integration of faith and culture, which is at the center of Catholic values and education.

The use of new technologies presents new possibilities and challenges for the mission of the Church and Catholic education.

The Church views emerging technologies as gifts of the Spirit to this age and challenges “God’s faithful people to make creative use of new discoveries and technologies for the benefit of humanity and the fulfillment of God’s plan for the world...” *Aetatis Novae*, #2, #3; Rome 1992

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR INTERNET USERS

Catholic schools are using new technologies, electronic resources, and Internet access to enhance student learning and to provide a quality educational experience for all students. Internet access and activities in the schools are strictly limited to educational use and are teacher supervised and monitored.

In keeping with the purpose of the Catholic schools to promote values for a lifetime, the schools will instruct about and guard against inappropriate, unethical, and illegal use of the Internet by the student or the adult user.

In order to ensure the proper use of the Internet and its resources, it is necessary that each user (and also his/her parents, if the user is a student under 18 years of age) sign the attached Internet agreement before the user is allowed to access the Internet at school.

ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Student and adult* access of the Internet with either school accounts, school-sponsored accounts, or adult personal accounts in the school setting is strictly limited to educational purposes. In cases where remote access using a school account or school-sponsored account is available, the access is still limited to educational use. Acceptable use adheres to the Children's Internet Protection Act, and may be further governed by the policies of the Data Acquisition Sites or other Internet service providers. Students, including those 18 and over, are not allowed to access personal accounts at school but are subject to the provisions of this policy. *The term adult refers to administrators, faculty and staff members, parents, volunteers, and other school-affiliated adults. It does not include students who are 18 years of age or older.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

It is the school's responsibility to maintain contact with the Internet provider, ensure educational use not open access to the Internet, provide for teacher in-service opportunities, address security and discipline issues, supervise and monitor student access, guard against the access of objectionable material, and to comply with all technology protection measures of the Children's Internet Protection Act. The school shall take measures to provide for the safety and security of minors if using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications. The school shall forbid and take measures to prevent unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.

USER RESPONSIBILITY

Each user is responsible for all the information that is sent and received under his/her account and/or school account. Passwords are to be guarded and not displayed nor shared with others. In addition, the user must strictly adhere to the copyright laws. Unethical and/or illegal activities will not be allowed. Unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," is strictly forbidden. Internet privileges will be revoked for those who violate the educational intent of Internet access.

ONLINE CONDUCT

The user agrees to not submit, publish, and/or display and defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or otherwise illegal material; nor shall the user encourage the use, sale, or distribution of controlled substances. Any use in violation of any local, state, or federal law is also prohibited and is a breach of the terms and conditions of this policy. Also, any commercial use is strictly forbidden.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Disciplinary Action for inappropriate use of the Internet with a school computer or a personal computer on school premises will result in loss of Internet privileges for the period of time as determined by the school personnel authorized to make such determinations. In certain cases, if the inappropriate use violates other school or diocesan policies, further disciplinary measures may be taken.

AGREEMENT FORM

The attached Internet User Agreement Form governs the user's access of the Internet resources with a school account, school-sponsored account, or adult personal account accessed with a school computer and/or personal computer on school premises. The signed form must be on file at the school before Internet access is permitted. Signing the form indicates that the user will abide by the rules governing Internet access as stated in this Internet Acceptable Use Policy and will not hold the school, its personnel and/or Diocese of Victoria or any of its personnel liable in the event of breach of this policy by the user.

Note: The Diocese of Victoria reserves the right to modify this policy as needed.

Diocese of Victoria

How to Protect Children from Child Abuse

A Parents Guide

Provided to you by:
The Office of Safe Environment
Diocese of Victoria
1505 E. Mesquite
Victoria, Texas 77901
361-573-0828

Diocese of Victoria

HOW TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM

CHILD ABUSE

We are all deeply concerned about the general welfare of our children. There are many challenges that confront today's youth and child abuse is one of these. Child abuse is a fact in our society and a matter of great concern for most parents. Fortunately, child abuse is preventable and parents can help their children master prevention strategies.

The "3 R's"

Three underlying principles to effective youth protection strategies:

- 1. Recognize. The child needs to be able to recognize the situations that may result in abuse.*
- 2. Resist. The child needs to be able to assert the right to resist the abuser.*
- 3. Report. The child needs to be able to tell an adult when he or she has encountered abuse and to feel confident that the adult will take actions to prevent further abuse.*

Recognize Situations

Traditionally, children have been told of the risks associated with strangers. As we have come to learn, child abuse is committed most often by a family member or person who is known to the child, often in a position of authority over the child. Therefore, if we teach only to be wary of strangers, we are not protecting our children as completely as we must. Children and youth need to understand that they have a right to refuse adults or persons of authority (i.e. baby-sitters, teachers, aunts, uncles) when they are touched on the private parts of their body or in ways which make them feel uncomfortable or frightened. The exercises in this booklet will help to prepare your child to identify situations requiring caution.

Resist the Abuser

Interviews with child molesters document that when children resist advances made by the molester, the molester will usually abandon further attempts with that child. A relatively low incidence of child molestation involves the use of physical force. Children need to be trained to

say “NO” or “yell” and get away when inappropriately approached by anyone—friend, relative, or stranger.

Tell an Adult

Children and youth need to be taught to tell their parent, teacher, or other trusted adult whenever they encounter questionable situations or attempted abuse. Since adults do not always listen when a child talks to them, the child needs to be told to keep on telling until someone listens.

Sometimes, a child may not be able to talk about what has happened but will communicate in other ways. For example, the child may go out of the way to avoid being alone with a particular person, such as a babysitter. This is a kind of communication to which parents need to be sensitive as it may be an indicator of abuse.

When a Child Discloses Abuse

If your child becomes a victim of abuse, your initial reaction can be very important in helping him or her through the ordeal. The following guidelines may help you:

- ❖ Don't panic or overreact to the information disclosed by your child.
- ❖ Don't criticize your child or claim that you child misunderstood what happened.
- ❖ Do respect your child's privacy and take your child to a place where the two of you can talk without interruptions or distractions.
- ❖ Do reassure your child that you believe him or her that he or she is not to blame for what happened. Tell the child that you appreciate being told about it and that you will help make sure it will not happen again.
- ❖ Do report the incident to the police or Child Protective Services, and encourage your child to tell the proper authorities what happened. Try to avoid repeated interviews, which can be very stressful for the child.
- ❖ Do consult your pediatrician or other child abuse authority about the need for counseling to assist your child.

Finally, if abuse happens to your child, do not blame yourself or your child. Individuals who victimize children are not readily identifiable; they come from all walks of life and all socioeconomic levels. Often, they present a nice image—they may even go to church and be active in the community. The molester is skilled at manipulating children, often by giving a child excessive attention, gifts, and money. Most abuse occurs in situations in which the child knows and trusts the adult.

Teach Your Child to Be Assertive

It is important that your child understands the right to react assertively when faced with a situation he or she perceives as dangerous. When teaching your child self protection skills, make it clear that although some of the basic strategies involved seem to contradict the sort of behavior you normally expect of your child, these strategies apply to a situation that is not normal. When feeling threatened, your child must feel free to exercise the right to:

- ❖ Trust his or her instincts or feelings.
- ❖ Say “no” to unwanted touching or affection, say “no” to an adult’s inappropriate demands and requests.
- ❖ Withhold information that could jeopardize his or her safety.
- ❖ Refuse gifts’ be rude or unhelpful if the situation warrants. Run, scream, and make a scene.
- ❖ Physically fight off unwanted advances.
- ❖ Ask for help.

It’s important to remember that these are protective strategies designed to give youth the power to protect themselves.

The following exercises will help to clarify when it is appropriate to apply these strategies.

Exercise 1: What If...

In this exercise the parent sets up situations that the child should recognize as potentially dangerous. Once the parent describes a situation, the child tells what he or she would do if ever confronted in such a way. Suggested actions are listed with each situation.

Situations and Suggested Actions for Each

1. What if you are home alone and the telephone rings; a voice on the other end asks if your parents are home. What do you do?
 - a. Tell the caller your parents are busy and cannot come to the phone.
 - b. Take a message and the phone number of the caller.
 - c. If the message needs an immediate response, call your parent.
 - d. Do not tell the caller you are home alone.

2. What if an older child hangs around your school and tries to give pills to younger students. What do you do?

- a. Tell your teacher.
- b. Tell your parent even if you told the teacher.
- c. Stay away from the person with the pills.

3. What if you are home alone (or with your brother or sister) and someone knocks on the door and asks to read the electric meter. This person is not wearing a uniform or identification. What do you do? (Alternate situation: If the person were wearing a uniform, would the responses be different? Probably not.)

- a. Keep the front door or screen door locked.
- b. Do not open the door to anyone without permission from a parent.
- c. Tell the person to come back later when your parent can come to the door. Do not let the person know your parent is away.
- d. Use the telephone to call a neighbor and ask for assistance.

4. What if someone comes to you and says that your parent is sick and you must go with him or her. What would you do?

- a. If at school, go to the principal or your teacher for assistance and verification.
- b. If at home or somewhere else, call the emergency number-parent's employer, neighbor, close relative-for assistance and verification.
- c. Do not go anywhere without verification from someone in authority whom you have been told to trust.

5. What if you are in a public restroom and someone tries to touch you. What do you do?

- a. Yell "STOP THAT" as loudly as you can.
- b. Run out of the room as quickly as possible.
- c. Tell your parent, a police officer, security guard, or other adult what happened.

6. What if you are walking to school in the rain. A car stops and the driver asks if you want a ride. What do you do?

- a. Stay away from the car. You do not need to go close to the car to answer.
- b. Unless you have your parent's permission to ride with the person, say "No, thank you" If the driver persists, say "No!"
- c. Tell your teacher when you get to school and tell your parent when you get home.

7. What if you are playing on the playground and an adult comes up to you and asks you to help find his or her lost puppy. What do you do?

- a. If you do not know the person, stay away and go directly home.

- b. Even if you know the person, do not help. Adults should ask other adults for help. Before you assist, you must get your parent's permission.
- c. Tell your parent what happened.

8. What if you are walking down the street and someone comes up to you and wants to take your picture. The person asks you to come to his or her house. What do you do?

- a. Stay away from the person and say in a loud voice, "No, I don't want my picture taken!"
- b. Do not ever go into anyone else's house without your parent's permission.
- c. Tell your parent about the person.

9. What if an older child you know invites you to play a game, and to pretend that he or she is the doctor and you are the patient. This child tells you to take off your clothes so that the "doctor" can examine the "patient" What do you do?

- a. Keep your clothes on.
- b. If he or she persists, yell and get away.
- c. Tell your parent.

What-If Exercises for Older Children

1. What if you get on a bus by yourself and a person sits down next to you and puts a hand on your thigh. What do you do?

- a. State in a clear, loud, firm voice, "No. Take your hand off"
- b. Move to the front of the bus near the driver.
- c. Tell the driver and tell your parent when you get home

2. What if, while collecting on your paper route, a customer offers you a beer, puts his or her arm around you, and says you have a fine body? What do you do?

- a. Tell the customer, "I don't like that, take your arm off me" and get away.
- b. Tell your parent when you get home.

3. What if a family friend offers you a ride home and, instead of taking you home, drives down a dead end street, parks, and starts rubbing your leg?

- a. Tell the person "NO! STOP!" in a firm, loud voice.
- b. Get out of the car, go to the nearest telephone (if you are too far away to walk home), and call your parent. Always carry enough money to make a phone call, or a cell phone.
- c. Tell your parent what happened.

4. What if you are babysitting for a couple that your family does not know well and

the couple returns home late at night. While driving you home, your employer makes suggestions that make you feel uncomfortable. What do you do?

- a. Refuse to comply. Ignore the driver.
- b. If the driver stops the car and makes inappropriate advances, say "NO", get out, go to the nearest phone, and call your parent or the police department. Again, always carry enough money to make a phone call, or carry a cell phone.
- c. Do not baby-sit for these people again. It is much safer to baby-sit for people known to you or your family.
- d. Tell your parent what happened.

Exercise 2: My Safety Notebook

This exercise will help your child be prepared to avoid situations that could lead to abuse or molestation. The safety notebook can be a loose-leaf notebook or pages fastened together with staples for which your child has made an original cover. The safety notebook provides a place where your child can list emergency telephone numbers, including parents' work numbers and a neighbor or friend's number to be contacted when parents are unavailable. In addition, your child can list the safety rules that you have discussed together. Encourage your child to decorate each page with pictures and drawings that illustrate some of the rules. He or she may also want to list other kinds of safety guidelines, such as rules for bicycle safety.

"My Safety Notebook" is intended to be a fun activity for getting across some serious concerns. It is a personalized reference that can reassure your child in how to respond when confronted by a potentially dangerous situation.

Exercise 3: Child Abuse and Values

While we teach children the core values of respect, kindness and helpfulness, we must make it very clear that no child is expected to place himself/herself in potentially perilous situations. In addition to teaching and modeling the values children need to be prepared to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous situations. A few reminders:

A. If a teacher, coach, or other youth leader, ever asks a child to do something he thinks is bad, the child has the right to say "No!" and tell his parent.

B. Sometimes people who really do not need help will ask for it in order to create an opportunity for abuse. Children should be aware of the rules of safety so that they can recognize situations to be wary of; for example:

- 1) It is one thing to stand on the sidewalk away from a car to give directions, and something else to get in the car and go with the person to show the way to go. A child should never get into a car without his parent's permission.

2) It may be okay for a child to help a person when there are other people around, but he should never go into another's house unless he has permission from his parents.

3) The child may be taught to be obedient, but a child does not have to obey an adult when that person tells him to do something that the child feels is wrong or that makes the child feel uncomfortable. In these situations, the child should talk with his parent or another trusted adult about his concerns.

Exercise 4: Family Meeting

The most important step a parent can take to protect his or her child from abuse is to establish an atmosphere of open communication in the home. A child must feel comfortable in bringing to his or her parent any sensitive problems or relating experiences in which someone approached the child in an inappropriate manner or in a way that made the child feel uncomfortable. Studies have demonstrated that more than half of all incidents of child abuse are never reported because the victims are too afraid or too confused to report their experiences.

It is important that your children be allowed to talk freely about their likes and dislikes, their friends, and their true feelings. One way to create open communication is through family meetings at which safety issues can be addressed by the entire family. (The "What If . . ." exercises could be done in the context of a family meeting, as could the development of the safety rules for "My Safety Notebook")

As we address the basic rules for child safety, it is important to stress that traditional cautions about "strangers" are not sufficient to protect our children. Child abusers are usually known to the child. Therefore, a more appropriate protection strategy is based upon teaching children to recognize harmful situations or actions. Discuss the following safety rules with your child:

- If you are in a public place and get separated from your parent (or authorized guardian), do not wander around looking for him or her. Go to a police officer, a checkout counter, the security office, or the lost-and-found area and quickly tell that you have been separated from your parent and need help.
- You should not get into a car or go anywhere with any person unless you have your parent's permission.
- If someone follows you on foot or in a car, stay away from him or her. You do not need to go near the car to talk to the person inside.
- Adults and older youth who are not in your family and who need help (such as finding an address or locating a lost pet) should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.

- You should use the buddy system and never go anywhere alone.
- Always ask your parent's permission to go somewhere, especially into someone else's home.
- Never hitchhike.
- Never ride with anyone unless you have your parent's permission.
- No one should ask you to keep a special secret. If this happens, tell your parent or teacher.
- If someone wants to take your picture, tell your parent or teacher.
- No one has the right to touch you on the private parts of your body (parts which would be covered by a bathing suit,) nor should you touch anyone else in those areas. Your body is special and private.
- You have the right to say "No!" to someone who tries to take you somewhere, touches you, or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way. These are some simple safety rules that can be approached in the same non-frightening manner in which you tell your child not to play with fire. They emphasize situations common to many child molestation cases.

Computers and Child Abuse

If your child is alone with his computer - do not assume he is safe. Cyberspace can be dangerous. If your child uses a computer and talks on a network or bulletin board your child can be at risk of child abuse.

It is possible and often very easy for children to access pornographic pictures and stories on their computer. They can even download and print this material. Exposure to pornography is inappropriate for children of any age and can be harmful to their development.

Abusers are using the computer to reach children and make friends with them. When a child begins to feel comfortable with this new friend they may forget that their computer "buddy" is really a stranger. Abusers are very good at making friends with young children. While most computer users are trustworthy people, you cannot be certain who is on the information highway with your child.

You can prevent child abuse by computer if you caution your child not to give out any personal information over the network (such as full name or address). Tell them not to answer any personal questions about themselves. Instruct your child to inform you if someone requests personal information or makes comments that leave your child with uncomfortable feelings.

Know your child's friends, even their e-mail ones. If your child is going to meet someone face to face that they first met through a computer network - check it out. Go with your child. Be aware and supervise just as you would if they were meeting any other stranger.

Consider placing your home computer in a central location, such as the kitchen or family room so that the screen is openly visible. This aids in direct supervision of computer usage as well as deters a child from accessing inappropriate material.

Consider also limiting the amount of time your children and teenagers are allowed to spend solely with the computer. Psychologists warn us that children who spend excessive time with computer or video games may have increased difficulty in relationships with other persons. Pediatricians caution us that excessive sedentary time at computer and video based activities contributes to health and learning problems.

A word about reporting

If you know or suspect that abuse has resulted from computer contact, you should immediately report it to your local police department. Because more than one geographical area may be involved, federal law enforcement authorities may also be contacted by the police. This new type of abuse requires special attention. Working together we can keep our kids safe.

Report Abuse or Neglect of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities.

1-800-252-5400

- Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it.*
- If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency.
- You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

What is Abuse?

Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child

What is Neglect?

Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

How do I make a report?

1. Call the abuse and neglect hotline at 1-800-252-5400.
2. When you make a report, be specific. Tell exactly what happened and when. Be sure to record all injuries or incidents you have observed, including dates and time of day and keep this information secured.
3. Reports should be made as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before bruises and marks start to fade. It is important for the investigators to be able to see the physical signs.
4. Give the agency person any information you have about the relationship between the child and the suspected abuser.
5. Please provide at least the following information in your report.
 - Name, age, and address of the child
 - Brief description of the child
 - Current injuries, medical problems, or behavioral problems
 - Parents names and names of siblings in the home

Will the person know I've reported him or her?

Your report is confidential and is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides for immunity from civil or criminal liabilities for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as your report is made in good faith. Your identity is kept confidential.

What if I'm not sure?

If you have reason to suspect child abuse, but are not positive, make the report. If you have any doubts about whether or not it is abuse, call the hotline. They can advise you on whether the signs you have observed are abuse.

If church personnel is involved:

1. Contact civil authorities.
2. Contact the bishop or chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria at 361-573-0828 or Rev. Gary Janak at (979) 543-3770 or Sr. Emile Eilers at (361) 575-7111, Coordinators of Pastoral Care and Outreach.

Written allegations may be sent to:

Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Victoria
P.O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903
Marked "Personal and Confidential"

ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS

This is to verify that we parents and children listed below have received, read, and discussed the policies, rules, and regulations outlined in the St. Michael School Parent/Student Handbook and agree to abide by them.

Parent Signature

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

DATE: _____