



# FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025

God Calls Us to Love Each Other  
#BEKIND

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# WELCOME

Dear Families,

We welcome you to Academy of St. Benedict the African. Our spirit has been a force of stability in this community for decades past and for decades to come. We are pleased to have you join our dynamic family. We look forward to our partnership, as we work together to provide a rich educational experience for your child.

We created this handbook to help you and your child become familiar with our customs, procedures, and policies. It is our hope that you will read it carefully and share it with your child. Please let us know if you have questions; we are here to help you in any way we can.

It is important that you know the statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. We will attempt to keep the school families informed of all changes as soon as possible. Some changes may have to be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances. **All decisions are at the discretion of the principal and administrative team.**

We have an exciting school year ahead of us all!

**\*\*WE ARE A NUT FREE SCHOOL**

Academy of St. Benedict the African school operates under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Chicago. As such, school administration, faculty, and governance board are bound to implement and follow all policies in the Handbook for School Administrators. Local school policies and procedures found the Academy of St. Benedict the African Family and Faculty Handbooks are additional directives developed to govern the local needs of the school and may not contradict Archdiocesan and/or Office of Catholic Schools directives.

# 2024-2025 Family Handbook

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Enrollment as a student in the Academy of St. Benedict the African implies the willingness of both parents and students to comply with the policies and regulations of the school, including religious practices.** In order to realize the school's aim, parents and students must agree with and support the philosophy of the school. The Academy reserves the right to dismiss any student who fails to respect these regulations or who otherwise, by his/her conduct or neglect of study, does not strive to realize the standards of the school. This handbook is provided to serve as a reference. The responsibility to administer the policies and procedures outlined herein rests with the administration.

Young children are exposed to many models; these models include parents, teachers, religious leaders, entertainers and friends. It is our hope that we will offer a model that will give Christian Witness to our living of the Gospel.

## **PURPOSE**

This handbook is a reference to familiarize families with the customs, policies, and procedures of the Academy. *Academy of St. Benedict the African school operates under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Chicago. As such, the school administration, faculty, and governance board are bound to implement and follow all policies in the Handbook for School Administrators. Local school policies and procedures found in the Academy of St. Benedict the African Family and Faculty Handbooks are additional directives developed to govern the local needs of the school and may not contradict Archdiocesan and/or Office of Catholic School directives.*

We, at the Academy of St. Benedict the African, believe that a Catholic Christian educational community aims to develop the total child: spiritually, socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically. We believe that the curriculum should:

- a) foster parent awareness of student progress;
- b) strive to create or enhance in each individual a positive self-concept;
- c) incorporate aspects of Christian values;
- d) teach the basic skills of critical thinking and self-direction that are necessary to function as a contributing member of our changing society; and,
- e) incorporate technology within Archdiocese of Chicago and Common Core State Learning Standards.

## **AMENDMENTS**

Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The school principal will attempt to keep the school families informed of all changes as soon as practical. Some changes might have to be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.

# CURRICULUM

## **CURRICULUM AREAS**

Religion	Science (Biological/Physical/Health)	STEM
Language/Reading	Social Studies	Art
Mathematics	Library	
Vocabulary	Handwriting	Physical Education

Academy of St. Benedict the African is guided by the curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Common Core State Standards. Class schedules at each grade level align to the weekly time schedule for elementary schools, published in the Office of Catholic Schools Handbook for School Administrators, which provides a guideline for the minimum number of instructional minutes allotted weekly to each subject area at each grade level.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Physical education is part of the curriculum. All students are expected to participate and are excused only for authorized medical reasons, as indicated by a letter written and signed by a medical doctor. Students are to be dressed in the appropriate attire, including the official school gym uniform and appropriate gym shoes, for each weekly physical education class.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

In order to continue preparing our students to progress through the education system and to enter the work world with the best possible foundation, it is important for the school to use contemporary electronic technologies to improve and enhance the curriculum. These goals are to be achieved with the support and supervision of parents/guardians, teachers, and support staff. The use of these technology resources is a privilege, not a right.

**\*\*Parents/Guardians are primarily responsible for the student's appropriate and ethical use of technology outside of school. However, the inappropriate use of technology outside of school may subject the student to disciplinary action. Inappropriate use of technology may include, but is not limited to, harassment of others, use of the school name, remarks directed to or about students, teachers, or staff, or offensive communications including videos, photographs, and threats.**

Unauthorized costs incurred for online purchases charged to the school are the responsibility of the student and her/his family. Students who lose, break or otherwise damage their Chromebooks will be charged \$250 to replace it. Also, all students in grades 3-8 must have a Chromebook case.

I/We have read the school technology guidelines and have discussed them with my child(ren). In consideration of the privilege of my child (ren) using the school's electronic communications system and in consideration of having access to the public networks, I / we hereby release the school, its operators, and any institutions with which they are affiliated from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or

inability to use the system, including with <sup>in</sup> out limitation, the types of damage identified <sup>in</sup> the <sup>the</sup> Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).  
I/We understand that access to the school technology resources is not a private activity and that the school will monitor student activity on any of the school resources including but not limited to the computer system, e-mail system, and other electronic devices and programs.

I/We have read the school's technology procedures and regulations and agree to abide by these provisions. Violation of these provisions may result in suspension or revocation of system access. I / We also understand that any actions taken through the school network that are in violation of the school disciplinary code will be handled in accordance with the code. Appropriate legal authorities may be contacted if there is any suspicion of illegal activity.

All students have their own device and are responsible for its care - including the charger.

**PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS MUST SIGN AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE SCHOOL ACCEPTABLE USE PROCEDURE FORM. THE PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST SIGN THE FORM AT THE END OF THIS HANDBOOK.**

Our school hopes that you will follow us on our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages. However, to protect the safety of our students, we ask that you please not "tag" any students on these pages. We make a conscious effort to ensure that the first and last name of students are not attached to their images when used for marketing purposes.

### **PHOTO RELEASE**

On occasion, the Academy of St. Benedict the African uses photos, audio/video recordings, and/or academic work of students in school publications to share information about the school. School publications include, but are not limited to: the website, school yearbook, student academic work, advertisements, annual reports, posters, newsletters, bulletins and other public relations material. In addition, local news organizations may hear of our activities or events, and our school may invite or allow them to photograph or record our events. By attending our school, your child's photo, audio/video may be published in any format including group or individual photos/recordings. A letter must be written to exclude your child our media release.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

### **THE WAY CHILDREN LEARN**

We believe children develop at different rates of learning through visual, auditory, hands-on exercises, and by example. We make every effort to address each individual's uniqueness in our instruction.

### **ROLE OF THE STUDENT**

We believe that students should actively participate in the learning process appropriate to their levels of development. Students are responsible for their own behavior and must show respect to the school community. The Academy of St. Benedict the African strives to educate all students within the limits of the school's educational program.

### **ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

We believe that the role of the teacher is to be a facilitator using a variety of methods and strategies. We also believe that teachers are active learners and should strive to continue their professional education to ensure they implement current best practice strategies as they teach. It is expected that teachers will communicate with parents regularly regarding their child's performance.

## **ROLE OF THE PARENT**

We believe that the role of the parent is to work with the teacher to promote positive intellectual pursuits and learning as it relates to Christian ethics, social justice, cultural awareness, and academics.

## **CLASS SIZE**

We adhere to the guidelines of the Office of Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Because of the various requirements for learning, size may increase or decrease for some subjects or levels.

## **EXPECTATIONS AND OBJECTIVES**

All students, parents, teachers and all personnel involved in the operation of the Academy are expected to abide by the norms of the Catholic faith, morals, and canonical teachings. It is expected that each family will become actively involved in school and Church to reinforce the values and attitude for living a truly Christian life.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF PHILOSOPHY**

To implement the Philosophy of The Academy of St. Benedict the African, the following objectives have been determined:

1. To provide for the intellectual growth of the students through:
  - a. a curriculum designed to motivate students to want to learn,
  - b. a professionally qualified and dedicated faculty, and
  - c. a respect for the uniqueness of the individual evidenced by a variety of teaching techniques and differentiated instruction.
2. To provide for the spiritual and moral development of the students by providing:
  - a. formal religious instruction,
  - b. frequent participation in liturgical services,
  - c. a values clarification and morals education program,
  - d. a respect for life program which aims to respect:
    - 1) God, Law and Order, Nation and others,
    - 2) the dignity and rights of self and others, and
    - 3) material and non-material resources, and
  - e. the daily example of the faculty and staff who model those Christian values that we are attempting to impart to the students.
3. To enhance the psychological and emotional development of the students through:
  - a. school-wide efforts at building self-esteem and self-worth and preventing bullying,
  - b. a concerted effort to develop an attitude of self-awareness and self-acceptance in each student, and
  - c. providing counseling services for students and their families.
4. To provide for the students' physical development and to develop good sportsmanship through:
  - a. a quality physical education program, and
  - b. a variety of extra-curricular sports activities.
5. To develop a sense of responsibility in students, and to promote a Christian impact on the local community through:
  - a. a positive approach to classroom discipline with emphasis on self-direction, and
  - b. opportunities for service.

6. To provide opportunities for parents to cooperate actively with the school through:
  - a. Parent Volunteer programs,
  - b. family-centered activities, and
  - c. general parent meetings and special interest sessions.

## **CATHOLIC IDENTITY**

The Catholic school is an apprenticeship in Christian living that provides for the students a complete formation in the Christian life through teaching the message of the Gospel, participating in the life of the community, developing a spiritual life of prayer and worship and reaching out in service to others, especially the poor.

Catholic schools shall provide an environment that supports the development of proper formation of conscience and the development of virtue. The school will prepare students for their role as responsible citizens with the capacity to be leaders in the Church and society. Catholic schools shall provide opportunities for students to participate in community service projects or service learning based on the social teachings of the Catholic Church and a sense of stewardship for the common good.

Respect for the beliefs of other ecclesial communities and faith traditions is fostered. The teaching of religion is always within the context of the doctrines and traditions of the Catholic Church. Full and active participation in all dimensions of the school's Catholic Identity, including but not limited to daily prayer, liturgical services, and Religion classes, is a condition of enrollment. Students have at least one class per week in our school chapel. This chapel was blessed by Cardinal Cupich in January 2023, and it is a beautiful space for prayer.

### **RELIGIOUS DIMENSION**

As a Catholic school, we hope to realize the three-fold purpose of "Christian Education": to teach doctrine, to build community, and to serve.

## **ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION**

Archdiocesan schools admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in these schools. Archdiocesan schools do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, loan programs, athletic or other school-administered programs. [Schools may admit students who are not Catholic provided that these students will not displace Catholic students and that both students and parents clearly understand that participation in Catholic religious instruction and school activities related to Catholic Identity of the school are required.](#)

[Any student and/or parent/guardian who believes that any school employees or agents of the school has discriminated against their son/daughter should bring such complaint to the principal of the school and/or the pastor. If the alleged violator is the principal of the school and/or the pastor, then you should direct your complaint to the Regional Director for Vicariate VI in the Office of Catholic Schools.](#)

Schools endeavor to accommodate all students within the limits of the school's educational programs.

Verification of age must be provided through an official copy of the child's birth certificate. Before accepting a child for admission, school personnel must verify that the person enrol-

ling the child is the legal guardian.

Under no circumstances shall children under 3 years of age (by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year) be accepted. **All PK students must be fully potty trained.**

The Academy accepts students, as space is available. Catholic students will be given first consideration. The decision for admission or readmission of a student rests with the administrator. Order of admission shall be as follows:

1. Brothers and sisters of students currently enrolled in ASBA
2. Legacy students
3. All others as space provides.
4. The school complies with applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination and all applicable Illinois school code including, but not limited to:
  - The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (29 USC 621 et seq.)
  - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 USC 2000e et seq.)
  - Applicable sections of the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5]
  - Relevant case law including Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202, 102 S.Ct. 2382 (1982)
  - 23 ILL. Admin. Code Part 425
5. If a child from Academy of St. Benedict the African has gone missing, the school will flag the birth certificate. This will notify the school secretary when any information is requested about the student. The school secretary will immediately report this request to the local authorities. ASBA will not forward the records of any student transferring out of the school whose records have been flagged. The requested school will notify authorities of this request.

## **GUARDIANSHIP OF A STUDENT**

Before accepting a student for admission, school personnel must verify that the person enrolling the child is the legal guardian. If someone other than the parent/guardian seeks to enroll a child, school personnel must be presented with a court order appointing the person as legal guardian of the child.

## **AGE OF ADMISSION**

Illinois State Law requires that a child entering Preschool must be 3 years of age on or before September 1 of that year. A child entering Kindergarten/Early Childhood 5 must be 5 years of age on or before September 1. A child entering first grade must be 6 years of age on or before September 1.

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Information regarding registration can be obtained from the Office. School contractual and financial agreements are signed at the time of registration. Non-refundable application/registration fees are required at the time of registration and are billed separately from tuition.



## **PROBATIONARY ENROLLMENT**

Probationary enrollment is the supervision and evaluation of the pupil's progress or conduct for 60 days, after which a determination is made as to continued enrollment. A student on probation (academic or disciplinary) will meet at times designated by the teacher or principal. Parents may be requested to be present. During this probationary period students are expected to maintain passing grades, have no major disciplinary issues, or require accommodations that the school physically or financially is incapable of supporting. Students with special learning needs may be accepted if the school has the staff and ability to make the necessary accommodations for the child's academic growth and success. During the 60-day probationary period, if the school determines the student is unable to perform with adequate growth in this environment, any prepaid tuition will be prorated and refunded.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW STUDENTS**

1. Original, government-issued Birth Certificate (must be submitted within 30 days of enrollment)
2. Baptismal Certificate (if Catholic)
3. Report Card and Standardized test information from previous school
4. Current immunization records and physical examination
5. Dental Exam Form
6. Vision Exam Form
7. Interview with the principal with recommendation from prior school

## **TRANSFERS FROM/TO ANOTHER SCHOOL**

For incoming transfers: Records from the student's previous school will be requested within 14 days of student enrollment.

For outgoing transfers: A transfer may not be issued to an unnamed school. Parents must furnish the name and address of the new school and a new home address if they are moving.

The reason for the transfer must be identified on the child's record. In order that records are processed without delay, all outstanding financial obligations should be met. Personal checks will not be accepted less than two weeks prior to the date of the transfer request. Unofficial transfers will be issued for students with outstanding financial obligations. Records, official or unofficial, will be available within ten days of signed written request.

**\*\*\*Please note that transcripts for high school applications will not be released until the family bill is current.\*\***

## **TUITION**

### **Preschool:**

Preschool tuition is billed monthly and agreed upon in the family financial contract. Tuition must be paid in advance of attendance. Families utilizing Illinois Action for Children are responsible for making their monthly co-pay, as well as any uncovered fees, by each monthly due date. Late fees will be applied five days after the due date. Please refer to the Parent/Guardian Contract for details. **The Academy of St. Benedict the African is a license-exempt child care center and not licensed or regulated by DCFS.**

### **Kindergarten/Early Childhood 5 through Eighth Grade:**

Tuition for Kindergarten/Early Childhood 5 through Eighth Grade students is charged at an annual rate and billed monthly, according to each individual family's financial agreement. Late fees will be applied to all accounts with overdue payments. Please refer to your Parent/Guardian Contract and your signed Financial Agreement for details.

**General Policies:**

The tuition management company, FACTS, will manage our families' tuition accounts. Please refer to your personal FACTS agreement for details related to your account management. FACTS accept mailed money orders or checks, automatic payments debited from a checking or savings account, and credit card payments online, and over the phone; our School Office accepts payments via cash, credit card, or money order. Payments may be made on our website. Service charges may apply. The school does not accept personal checks. Please refer to the Parent/Guardian Contract and your signed Financial Agreement for details. Service fees may apply.

Invoices and financial statements will be sent to each family directly from FACTS via email or US mail. Should you question the accuracy of your statement at any time, please contact FACTS or our School Office right away. There will be a charge of \$50 if research is required extending back beyond thirty days from the date of inquiry.

**The Academy, under the direction and with the support of the Archdiocese of Chicago, reserves the right to exclude students from school for delinquent tuition. No report cards, diplomas, or awards will be issued to a child, nor will the child be permitted to participate in school ceremonies, athletic banquets, events, and other activities, when the family has an outstanding bill.**

It is the policy of the school that

1. No assignments will be given in advance for students leaving for exclusion due to non-payment of tuition.
2. Tests/quizzes are not given prior to a student's leaving.
3. Upon returning from a required absence that is not at the end of an academic grading period, students will be given three school days to complete and submit all missed assignments and to take all tests/quizzes. This time frame may be extended depending on the amount of time the student had been absent.
4. Teachers can require tests/quizzes to be taken earlier than three school days provided that parents were notified of the requirement prior to leaving.
5. No extra credit activities will be given or accepted in place of missed assignments that are not completed within 3-4 days of return.
6. If an absence falls at the end of an academic grading period, the student will not be able to make up any missed homework, tests, or quizzes for a grade.
7. It is the parents', rather than the school's responsibility, to initiate and receive all non-emergency leave communication.

## **EXTENDED DAY**

Extended Day charges for students in Kindergarten/Early Childhood 5 through Eighth Grade are based upon student attendance and are billed separately from tuition. **Morning care** is available from 6:15am to 7:15am and is billed at a rate of \$10/student/day. **Afternoon care** is available from 3:00pm to 6:00pm and is billed at a rate of \$20/student/day.

Please refer to the Extended Day Handbook, your Parent/Guardian Contract, and your signed Financial Agreement for details. Late fees will be applied to all accounts with outstanding balances, including balances resulting from unpaid Extended Day charges.

**NOTE:** Questions you may have regarding your bill, must be brought to the Business Office within **30 days** of receiving the bill. There will be a fee charged for any inquiries after 30 days.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Tuition alone does not provide the revenue needed to operate the Academy of St. Benedict the African. Therefore, fundraising is vitally important. Each family is required to do \$200 (net) worth of non-deductible fundraising each year, half of which (\$100) must be completed by December 15<sup>th</sup>, with the entire amount due by February 15<sup>th</sup>. Any portion of the fund-raising obligation that is not met will be added to each family's tuition statement and will be considered an additional part of that family's financial obligation for the year.

## **PAWS PROGRAM**

**PAWS: Parents Assisting With Service.** Family involvement in their child's life at school is a crucial part of our mission. Families may get involved in a variety of ways, including volunteering in a classroom, chaperoning a field trip, contributing to a school carnival/event, etc. Each family will have a page in the designated PAWS Binder located in the front office. Each family will only have to complete **6 PAWS** by June 1st. PAWS are to be considered an additional part of that family's financial obligation for the year. Graduation fees will only be accepted from families who have completed all of their PAWS. If more than 6 PAWS are completed, there is no carryover.

There will be a new set of PAWS opportunities each week. PAW opportunities are published on the weekly Family Update and posted in BLOOMZ.

**All PAWS are completed through the main office.**

Document your activity for the PAWS (e.g. volunteered on field trip, raked leaves, donated water, etc.) in the main office only.

This is a way for everyone to participate more fully in the ASBA community!

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

The Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Catholic Education, has established guidelines for school records. These guidelines describe your rights with regard to the records of your child that are maintained by the school. These rules include:

## **RIGHT TO INSPECT**

You have the right to look at your child's permanent record, which includes report cards, health records, attendance records, and biographical information (name, address, etc.). Parent must submit a written request to inspect records and shall identify as precisely as possible the education records to be inspected. The principal will respond to each request within a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed 45 days after it is received.

Under Illinois law, a non-custodial parent cannot be denied access to the school records of his/her child, unless that parent is prohibited by an order of protection from inspecting or obtaining the records. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. Records are locked in the inner office. Records are maintained according the Archdiocesan policy: Student permanent records must be maintained in the school or in the Archives and Records Center of the Archdiocese for seventy-five (75) years after graduation, transfer, or any other permanent withdrawal from the school.

## **RIGHT TO PREVENT DISCLOSURE**

The school will not disclose anything to third parties from your child's record unless (a) you consent in writing prior to the disclosure, or (b) the information is directory information which you have not requested be keep confidential, or (c) the information is requested by a school to which your child is officially transferring, or (d) the request for the information meets one of the limited circumstances described in Guidelines for School Records.

## **RIGHT TO REQUEST CORRECTION**

You have the right to present evidence that the school should amend any part of your child's record which you believe to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of student rights. If the school decides not to change the record, you may insert an explanation in the record.

Once your child is 18, she/he obtains all of the above rights.

## **BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROGRAM**

The Academy of St. Benedict offers a breakfast 7:15-7:40 AM and a lunch program, in which all students are expected to participate. **Exceptions are made only for documented medical reasons, as written and signed by a doctor.** This program is governed by Federal guidelines and overseen by the administrator. Water, 100% juice or milk are the only allowed beverages at lunch. **Only water is allowed in the classrooms.**

**\*\*Please no fast food for breakfast or lunch. We are a nut-free school.**

## **ACADEMIC PROCEDURES**

### **GRADING PROCEDURES**

The grading system differs for Primary, Intermediate, and Junior High. The method of grading and evaluation is explained on the report card and/or by the teacher(s) involved. Report cards issued by the Office of Catholic Education are used. Students in grades 4-8 must maintain a 2.0 average in order to be recommended for promotion to the next level. (Please refer to material under summer school/retention heading.) Parents have access to PowerSchool.

### **HONOR ROLL - Grades 3 and up**

A student will be on the honor roll if she/he has a GPA of 3.0 or higher. A student will NOT be on the honor roll if she/he has a GPA of 3.0 or higher if she/he receives a C-, D, or F in CONDUCT or any special class.

### **MIDTERM PROGRESS REPORTS**

Student progress reports in grades 3-8 are given mid-way through the marking period. This is the teacher's indication to the parents of the child's progress. The parent will receive two copies of the progress report. One is for the parent to keep. The other should be signed and returned to the child's teacher. These reports are very important. Parents and teachers may choose to request a conference at midterm as well.

### **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

The Academy administers iReady, the Archdiocese of Chicago approved testing program; this testing generally three times each year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) as part of our Response to Intervention program. Student in grades 3-8 with Tax Credit scholarships, take the IAR test, as required by the law.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN – TEACHER CONFERENCES**

There are three required report card pick-up conferences. Please refer to the calendar for specific dates. Sign ups for conferences are done on Bloomz. Teachers will notify families when sign ups are open.

A teacher or parent may request a conference at any time to discuss academics or behavior. Teachers are ordinarily available from 7:00am – 7:15am and after 3:00pm, depending on the availability of the teacher. Teachers are not able to meet parents during any time that they are responsible for supervising students. To assure that concerns are properly addressed, conferences should be scheduled between parents and teachers in advance at mutually acceptable times.

### **SUMMER SCHOOL/RETENTION/SPECIAL TESTING DECISIONS**

The decision to retain is made on a case-by-case basis. Parents shall be notified that this possibility exists no later than the end of the second trimester. Notices will be sent home during the final trimester of the term. The school maintains the right of retention after consultation with parents.

Summer school classes may be RECOMMENDED or MANDATORY for any child who is working below his/her grade level in reading and/or math. Upon completion of summer classes, report cards or other pertinent data are to be returned to the school office by mid-August for review. Failure to send a child to mandatory summer school may result in specific consequences determined by the administrator.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and must comply with all Archdiocesan Safe Environment Requirements (see Safe Environment Requirements for Volunteers) . School chaperones are reminded that they are to serve as role models while on the trip. Additionally, ALL school rules apply during field trips. Students with a C- in conduct or lower will need a chaperone or will stay at school while the class is out.

[Field trips are educational and are an active part of the curriculum; students are expected to attend.](#) The school requires written consent of the parents before a child is

permitted to go with his/her group. A form requesting permission will be sent home in advance of the trip and should be returned promptly. Students are usually transported by bus and pay their own fare as well as necessary fees. Permission slips must be signed by a parent/guardian and submitted to the teacher no later than 24 hours prior to the departure on the date of the trip. Chaperones must pay the required trip fee. Buses will depart on time and will not wait for students/chaperones not present at departure time. All field trip fees are non-refundable.

## **MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT POLICY**

Textbooks are loaned to students on a yearly basis. Students are expected to keep books in good condition. Students may never write in or deface text or other non-consumable books. Students will be charged for any book deemed by school personnel or administration to be purposely damaged. Students and/or their parents will be charged to repair or replace desks, technological equipment, chairs, and any other school equipment damaged by acts of vandalism. This includes any cost incurred by Academy of St. Benedict the African to repair damage to walls, plumbing, windows, or any other property belonging to St. Benedict the African.

## **HOMEWORK AND STUDY**

Homework assignments will vary depending on ages and teacher requirements. The average amount of homework per grade should be 10 minutes times the grade number (e.g., second grade = 20 minutes, third grade = 30 minutes, etc.) . Parents support the school by offering assistance, providing a quiet place to work and study, and by checking work for neatness and accuracy.

The purpose of homework:

- give students opportunities to practice and reinforce skills.
- prepare students for a new topic,
- enhance classroom learning.

Teachers at each grade level shall communicate, in writing, homework expectations to the students and to parents/guardians. Homework assignments are designed to be completed by the student independently, and therefore parent/guardian involvement should be kept to a minimum.

## **COUNSELING**

Counseling services are available for students and families. Sometimes this may be recommended by your child's teacher. The family may also request counseling; please speak with your child's teacher or a member of the administration for further information.

- Graduation Requirements
- Diplomas will be awarded to those students who have: completed the school's academic requirements,
- achieved a passing grade on the Constitution of the United States and the State of Illinois examination,
- adhered to the school's code of conduct
- returned all school materials, and
- participated in the 8th grade retreat

Diplomas will not be awarded until all financial obligations, including Fundraising and PAWS, are completed in full. A detailed list of graduation fees will be given out at the Eighth Grade Parent meeting.

## **Eighth Grade Graduation –**

Eighth grade is an exciting year! Many students and families are eagerly awaiting graduation. ASBA is excited to sponsor the following as part of the graduation fee.

- Candle and Ribbon and Reception
- T-Shirts & Sweatshirt
- Awards
- Cap, Gowns and Tassels
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trip
- Retreat
- Send off breakfast
- Jr. High BBQ (7 & 8 grades)
- Graduation Ceremony

While graduation activities can become a focus, our goal at ASBA is to prepare your child for their next academic step. The focus of this year is preparing and applying for high school. Our work with High School Bridge will necessitate many meetings.

**\*\*\*Please note that transcripts for high school applications will not be released until the family bill is current.\*\* Teachers and the office need 10 school days to process transcripts and references.**

## **DISCIPLINE & Self Management**

A positive, respectful approach to discipline is the hallmark of a Catholic school. Discipline techniques that respect the dignity and self-esteem of the individual student are essential to the philosophy of a Catholic school. Some characteristics of positive discipline include:

- Students learn decision-making skills related to their own behavior and choices.
- Discipline techniques are based on teaching appropriate behavior and effective consequences rather than power and punishment.
- Student self-esteem is maintained and enhanced.
- Students share in classroom responsibilities.
- The environment encourages self-discipline and self-control.

In classroom management, teachers shall always endeavor to be firm, just, consistent, impartial, positive, and sensitive to the needs of the individual student. To aid in this process, our school utilizes Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS) to create a positive school climate centered on teaching students to be kind, responsible, and safe through the creation of school & classroom rules.

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. Self-discipline is considered essential to the learning process. The children are expected to cooperate and to be respectful to all other persons, including both adults and children. They are expected to keep their lockers and desks in order and assist in maintaining their classrooms and the entire school building.

16 very specific skills will be taught to students, one per week, in an effort to build community.



School and classroom rules, aligned with **Restorative Justice** and **PBIS**, and expectations will be communicated to students and parents.

Conduct which is detrimental to or negatively affects the mission and reputation of the Catholic school, whether inside or outside of school, may result in corrective disciplinary measures.

Catholic school students are responsible to the school staff for maintaining exemplary behavior in school, at school-sponsored activities, and while going to and from school. In addition, student conduct in or out of school that reflects negatively on the Church or Catholic school may be subject to disciplinary action, particularly when the names of the school, its teachers, or students are impacted by the behavior in or out of school.

Students will be subject to disciplinary action for:

- actions gravely detrimental to the moral, spiritual and physical welfare of other students;
- actions which are detrimental to the school's reputation;
- grave offenses which may include a violation of criminal law;
- actions so outrageous as to shock the conscience or behavior of the community.

## **SUSPENSION**

Suspension is the isolation of the pupil from some or all school activities. Suspension may be in or out of school. This punishment is severe and will be imposed for serious cases of misbehavior. The administration has the sole authority to suspend a student. Parents will be notified of this action. A conference will be scheduled before the student is readmitted to classes or school.

## **EXPULSION**

Expulsion is the termination of the student's privilege to attend the school and requires the transfer of the student to another school. Expulsion is a last resort and the sole authority to expel a student rests with the administration.

## **VIOLATION OF THE FOLLOWING COULD CONSTITUTE SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION:**

1. **chronic disrespect to teachers or other staff members**
2. **harassment, bullying, intimidation, coercion, force, or threats of other students (verbal, written, or over the internet)**
3. **arguing, fighting, cursing, swearing, or creating a disturbance**
4. truancy, habitual tardiness
5. smoking, drinking alcohol, or possession of drugs, alcohol, etc. on school grounds or at school sponsored events (in such an event, the police will be notified)
6. theft and vandalism
7. Academic dishonesty
8. recruitment of, membership in, or display of symbols of gangs on school property or at school sponsored events
9. carrying or use of guns, knives, or other weapons (real or toy) (in such an event, the police will be notified)
10. leaving the school building or property without authorization

Students will never be subjected to corporal punishment or the withholding of food. The principal and assistant principal have the final decision in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rule or procedure for just cause at his/her discretion.

### **CELL PHONES and OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

**All cell phones and smartwatches must be turned into the office upon arrival.** There is no need for phones or smartwatches at school.

- Electronic devices are capable of accessing the Internet and bypassing the school's content filtering safeguards.
- Some electronic devices could be used to set off an explosive device and interfere with an emergency response.
- Students could violate the privacy of others through the use of unauthorized photographs and/or videos.
- Students can bully or harass others through the use of electronic devices.
- The learning environment could be disrupted causing students to not hear emergency directives or announcements.
- The integrity of test and examination grades could be compromised by cheating.
- Parents/Guardians may wrongfully assume that the school shall take financial responsibility for loss or theft of the electronic device.

Consequences for the use of restricted electronic devices during school hours will subject the student to disciplinary action, which may include suspension and/or expulsion.

**The school maintains no responsibility for damage or loss.**

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS/ITEMS FROM HOME**

Students may NOT bring hand held video games, radios, stereos, headsets or any other audio/video equipment to school. These items are not allowed on school buses, the playground, or in the school building without the specific permission of school personnel or administration. Furthermore, students should not bring expensive and bulky toys and clothing items of importance to school. **The school will not be responsible for replacement of these items in case of loss, theft, or damage.** Items confiscated by school personnel or administration MUST be reclaimed by a parent/guardian at the teacher's discretion.

### **NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED ACTIVITIES**

The responsibility for non-school-sponsored activities belongs to the student's parents. The school is not liable for any incident that may occur or stem from these events.

## **PARENTAL COOPERATION**

It is essential that families cooperate with teachers, staff, and administration. Lack of cooperation/support or the undermining of school personnel and/or policies by parents/guardians/family members may warrant that a family be asked to withdraw their child from school and/or not be permitted to re-enroll. This cooperation extends to all contract obligations, agreed upon at the time of enrollment. Tuition and fee payment schedules, including coupons, fundraising obligations, church attendance, parent-teacher conferences, parent participation, adherence to all school policies outlined within this Handbook, etc., are included. Each family keeps one copy of the school contract for personal reference.

## **SERIOUS VIOLATIONS**

### **WEAPONS**

To uphold the dignity of the human person, the sacredness of human life, and provide a safe, secure environment:

- Students shall not carry, possess, or use weapons in school, or on school premises.
- Weapons include but are not limited to the following: knives, handguns, brass knuckles, "billy clubs," bats, pipes, sticks and any other object that causes bodily harm.

School authorities have the right to inspect and search lockers, desks, parking lots and school property.

Parents/Guardians of the students involved shall be notified **immediately of any violation**. Students who violate these directives are subject to suspension and/or expulsion.

School officials are required to report weapon violations to the local police. The weapon is turned over to the local police jurisdiction.

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT NOTIFICATION**

**Local law enforcement and/or the Illinois State Police will be notified in the event of any of the following:**

- **Drug violations or other drug-related incidents**
- **Firearm incidents**
- **Instances of battery committed against school personnel at the school**

## **HARASSMENT**

The administration and staff of the Academy of St. Benedict the African believe that all students and employees are entitled to work and study in school-related environments that are Christ-centered and free of harassment.

The school will treat complaints of harassment seriously and will respond to such complaints in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Harassment of any type will not be tolerated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension, expulsion, or termination.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment by one employee of another, by an employee of a student, by a student of an employee, or by one student of another is unacceptable conduct. Employees or students

who engage in any type of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline, including suspension, termination, or expulsion.

Retaliation in any form against an employee or student who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary action.

Any employee or student who knowingly makes false charges against an employee or a student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse, or embarrass that individual shall be subject to the sanctions for misconduct set forth above.

## **BULLYING**

As Catholics we believe in the dignity and respect of each individual created in the image of God. Bullying is contrary to Gospel values and has no place in the Catholic school community.

Bullying is:

**any intentional, repeated, hurtful act or conduct (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) including communications made in writing or electronically, occurring at school or outside of school during non-school time, directed toward another student or students, that has or can be reasonably predicted to:**

- place the student or students in an unreasonable fear of harm to the student or student's person or property;
- cause a substantially detrimental effect on the student or student's physical or mental health;
- interfere substantially with the student or student's academic performance; or
- interfere substantially with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school

**Bullying** can take many forms, including violence, harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, cyber stalking, theft, public humiliation and retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.

**Cyber bullying** can include all of the above as well as the use of electronic tools, devices, social media sites, blogs, and websites to harm a student or students with electronic text, photos, or videos.

Bullying acts or conduct described above can include the following:

- **Physical** which includes, but is not limited to, punching, poking, stalking, destruction of property, strangling, hair pulling, beating, biting, spitting, stealing, pinching, and excessive tickling;
- **Verbal** which includes, but is not limited to, name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossip, and threats, whether in person or through any form of electronic communication and the Internet;
- **Emotional** which includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, perceived sexual orientation, manipulation of friendships, isolating, ostracizing and peer pressure;
- **Sexual** which includes, but is not limited to, many of the emotional acts or

conduct described above as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact or sexual assault.

No student shall be subjected to bullying:

- during any school sponsored education program or activity, while in school, on school property, on school buses or school vehicles, at school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities
- through the transmission of information from a school or home computer network, or other similar electronic school or home equipment.

All members of the Catholic school community, parents/guardians, teachers, staff, administrators and others, are expected to work together in preventing bullying and promoting Gospel values in a Christ centered environment. Students are expected to participate in age appropriate educational programs developed by the school that address bullying and teach respect for all. As part of our school's Anti-Bullying Program, we maintain four rules:

- 1) We will try to help students who are bullied.
- 2) We will try to include students who are left out.
- 3) We will not bully others.
- 4) If we know that someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

We look forward to partnering with families to prevent bullying at our school. Please contact us immediately, if you have any concerns. Bullying by a student or students may result in suspension and/or expulsion from the school.

## **GANG ACTIVITY**

Gang-related activities are contrary to Catholic Social Teaching and have no place in the Catholic school. Intimidation and/or disrespect of any person are unacceptable.

The following may be subject to disciplinary action:

- intimidation and threat of physical harm of others;
- symbols that may be gang-related in the manner displayed, including but not limited to jewelry, jackets, sweatshirts, caps or other forms of clothing;
- display of signs/symbols on paper, notebooks, textbooks, and other possessions that may be gang-related; and
- conduct on or off premises that may be gang-related.

Parents/Guardians are notified when their children are either suspected of being involved in gang-related activities or are a victim of gang-related activity.

Gang activity may result in probation, suspension, and/or expulsion.

The principal has the authority and responsibility to investigate and report suspected gang activity to local law enforcement.

## **SEARCHES OF SCHOOL PROPERTY**

All property of the school, including student desks, computers, and lockers, as well as contents, may be opened, searched or inspected at any time without notice. School personnel have an unrestricted right to search this property as well as any containers, book bags, purses, or articles of clothing that are left unattended on the school campus.

## Uniform Policy - This is required

<b>For all students:</b>		
Light Blue polo - must have a logo or name \$15/main office		
Navy blue slacks, walking shorts, or skort	Please, no jumper or dress	
School hoodies (available at school) or spirit wear hoodies are allowed daily. Plain (no logo) navy blue sweaters may be worn.		
Gym uniforms must be worn on gym days	Martinellis on 95th in Evergreen Park sells the gym uniform	
A gym uniform sweatshirt may be worn over a polo.	No outside sweatshirts allowed.	
Gym shoes - every single day - no lights	Traditional gym shoes - no Yeezys or Crocs, boots or sandals	
White, blue or black socks		
No jewelry except girls may wear small stud or hoop earrings. No makeup is allowed.	Boys MAY NOT wear earrings.	
No baseball hats or other hats in the building		
No nail polish, acrylic nails, or fake nails allowed		

School uniforms define us as a school community. There are no exceptions unless it's a kind or a spirit day which will be announced ahead of time and noted on the app banner. Please check your child's uniform before leaving the house.

The uniform also allows students to be focused, as we believe that excellence happens on purpose.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to be present and on time every day that school is in session. School attendance is compulsory in the State of Illinois. The responsibility for compliance with the law belongs to the parents/guardians for children 6 through 16 years of age. Students must arrive by 8:45 to be admitted to school.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

The school day officially begins at 7:45am. Dismissal is at 3:10 pm.

## **TARDINESS**

A student is considered TARDY when she/he is not in the classroom **at his/her desk ready to begin the day's assignments when the second bell rings at 7:45 am.** It is of vital importance that children are on time for all classes every day. We will not admit students after 8:45 AM.

## **STUDENT ABSENCES**

Frequent absenteeism handicaps a student's progress. Absences must be kept to a minimum. If a child is to be absent for the day, the parent or guardian should notify the school office in the morning or use Bloomz. Chronic absenteeism may result in mandatory attendance at summer school. Please complete the form on the app to notify the school of any absences or tardies.

**\*\*A WRITTEN EXCUSE FROM THE PARENT MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE TEACHER WHEN THE STUDENT RETURNS TO SCHOOL. \*\*See addendum**

## **EARLY RELEASE OF CHILD FROM SCHOOL**

Before an individual student can be dismissed early from school, she/he **must present a written request from his parents/guardian stating the reason, time, and person to whom she/he is to be released.** The school suggests that medical and dental appointments be scheduled after hours if at all possible. **Every minute matters and early dismissals are discouraged. We will not dismiss between 2:40-3:10, unless we have proof of a appointment.**

## **MEDICAL**

When the school becomes aware of a student with a contagious/communicable disease, the school shall notify the appropriate parents/guardians in writing. Appropriate information on the disease may be attached to the school's notification, if the information is provided by a health care source such as a hospital or licensed health agency.

Health professionals determine the incubation period for contagious diseases/conditions. Students excluded from school due to a communicable disease must present a written and signed statement from a physician indicating that the student is non-contagious and may return to school.

Serious illness, accidents or other circumstances that might necessitate prolonged absences, should be reported to the school at once. In these cases, **STUDENTS MUST PRESENT A DOCTOR'S STATEMENT OF RELEASE UPON RETURNING TO SCHOOL.**

## **FAMILY TRIPS**

Parents planning a vacation that requires the child's absence from school should notify the principal well in advance of departure. Make-up work preceding and following the vacation will most likely be given. In addition, the Office requests a written note before the planned absence.

## **EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

It is extremely important that the school has **ACCURATE** emergency numbers to call if you cannot be reached. Please notify the persons whose names you have submitted. If any of your phone numbers change at any time, the school Office should be notified IMMEDIATELY IN WRITING.

**School Mobile APP - this is our hub - please download!**

## **SCHOOL APP & BLOOMZ**

The Academy of St. Benedict the African utilizes Bloomz and our app as a means of communicating pertinent information to our families quickly and efficiently. When we use this system, you will receive a call (or text message) from our main phone number (773-776-3316) with a recorded message imparting the essential information. In order to ensure that you receive all necessary communications, please be sure that your contact phone numbers for parents/guardians and for emergency contacts are always up-to-date. When receiving a call from the school, please take the call or let it go to voicemail and then listen to the message.

**Bloomz** is the school communication portal. All families are expected to be connected.

## **POWERSCHOOL**

The Academy of St. Benedict is using PowerSchool in the 2024-2025 school year. This online student information system enhances communication between families and school staff. Please ensure we have the proper cell phone and email for custodial parents.

## **CHILD CUSTODY**

Should one parent have sole custody of a child, the child's other biological parent is still the legal guardian of the child unless guardianship has been taken away legally by the court. A parent who has been granted sole custody of a child in a divorce proceeding is not necessarily the sole legal guardian of the child.

A non-custodial parent is not prohibited from participating in school activities, volunteer activities, recitals, performances, parent meetings and other events, unless an order of protection is in effect that prohibits the parent from having access to his or her child, to school information about the child, and/or unless the parent is a registered sex offender.

Likewise, a grandparent or a stepparent is not the legal guardian of a child unless appointed by a court order. When a document calls for the signature of the parent or guardian, a signature of a stepparent or grandparent does not suffice.

In the absence of a court order, a school should provide the non-custodial parent the opportunity for a parent-teacher conference. The conference should be scheduled at a time other than that of the custodial parent unless both parents do not object to the same conference. Likewise, the sharing of school information with the custodial parent pertinent to the child should also be provided to the non-custodial parent in a timely fashion.

## **CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

School personnel, by law, are mandated reporters of allegations/suspicious of child abuse/neglect and must make reports to the Department of Children and Family Services whenever any such circumstance exists.

The *Illinois Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act* mandates that school personnel report all suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services.



Illinois law requires school personnel to notify DCFS even if there is a suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Thus, the school professional need not have proof or convincing evidence of the abuse; merely suspicion of abuse make a call to DCFS necessary. Furthermore, Illinois law protects school professionals from litigation if the DCFS call was made in good faith.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN AND EMERGENCY DRILLS**

The School Safety Plan outlines the procedures that staff and students will follow in the event of a variety of potential emergencies and crisis situations, including fire, tornado/severe weather, intruder, weapons incident, and others. Students are instructed by school personnel as to correct safety procedures and precautions, and emergency drills are conducted on a regular basis so that staff and students may be prepared in the event of an emergency. A record of drills and evacuation time is kept in the school office. The School Safety Plan is reviewed regularly and updated as necessary and is available to review upon request.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

In the event of inclement weather, please refer to the following stations, which provide computerized emergency closing information:

**TELEVISION: WGN (9)**

**ONLINE: [www.EmergencyClosings.com](http://www.EmergencyClosings.com) , Bloomz , Facebook and our website and our app.**

## **SECURITY**

### **GENERAL SAFETY**

When parents drop-off children at school, it is expected that parents will watch their children enter the school building, and that the child will remain on school property. Students are not permitted to leave school grounds to visit their friends at home, go to the store, etc. Cars are not permitted to drive on the parking lot when children are present or as specified by the administrator. **Parents are to be mindful of street traffic when dropping off or picking up their children.** Street safety can be discussed at home as well, including the importance of crossing at corners only. Please be patient!

### **VISITORS**

Due to privacy concerns of other parents and students we do not allow parent visitors in the classrooms. We have found when a parent visits a classroom it creates undue pressure and stress on everyone. However, we do offer a drop in, where administration will walk the hall with you, poke our heads in for a minute and then leave, just so the student knows that home and school are on the same page and have the same expectations.

### **Lost and Found**

Articles are turned in to the designated lost and found area. It is advisable to mark your child's name on all items of clothing that could be lost or misplaced: hats, coats, sweaters, boots, gym clothes, gym shoes, etc. This is in the main office and lunchroom.

## **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION**

The Academy does not recommend, nor refer, families to companies providing student transportation.

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

Parents are expected to inform school personnel IN WRITING if their child has any illness, disease, physical injury, or any condition requiring special attention.

In cases of SUSPECTED communicable disease including COVID, students will be excluded from participation in ALL school activities. Students should not be sent to school until all symptoms of a contagious disease have been treated. **A DOCTOR'S STATEMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO ADMIT STUDENTS AFTER HAVING BEEN SUSPECTED OF HAVING A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.**

The Academy will follow **Policy 152 (Communicable Disease)** of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Schools in the Archdiocese follow the guidelines set forth by the City of Chicago, Cook County and Lake County Health Departments and the State of Illinois.

All children in Illinois shall present proof of having had a health examination and received such immunizations against preventable communicable diseases as required by the Department of Public Health. **These records are to be presented to the school before the first day of school.**

If a child is not in compliance with the health and immunizations requirements by the first day of school, the principal shall exclude the child from school until the child presents proof of having had the health examination and presents proof of having received required immunizations.

## **HEALTH EXAMINATIONS AND PROOF OF IMMUNIZATION**

All children in Illinois shall have a health examination as follows:

- **immediately prior to or upon entrance into any public, private or parochial pre-school or transferring from outside of the State of Illinois,**
- **prior to entering Kindergarten/Early Childhood 5 or the first grade,**
- **upon entering sixth grade.**

Students not in compliance will be excluded from school by October 15<sup>th</sup>. The school will report to the Illinois State Board of Education, by November 15<sup>th</sup>, information on students' immunizations and health examinations.

## **DENTAL EXAMINATIONS**

All children in Kindergarten/Early Childhood 5 and the second and sixth grades shall have a dental examination by a licensed dentist. Parents/Guardians seeking an exemption to this requirement must submit the **Dental Examination Waiver Form**, provided by the State of Illinois Department of Public Health, to the school administrator. The school will report to the Illinois State Board of Education, by June 30<sup>th</sup>, information on students' required dental examinations.

## **EYE EXAMINATIONS**

All children enrolling in public, private or parochial school for the first time or entering kindergarten shall have an eye exam. Proof of having been examined by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a licensed optometrist is to be submitted to the school. Parents/Guardians seeking an exemption to this requirement must submit the **Eye**

**Examination Waiver Form**, provided by the State of Illinois Department of Public Health, to the school administrator. The school will report to the Illinois State Board of Education, by June 30<sup>th</sup>, information on students' required eye examinations.

## **ACCIDENTS**

All students should know how to contact their parents at all times. Emergency information provided at registration must be updated if changes occur. It is understood that those people identified as emergency contacts may act "IN LOCO PARENTIS", unless written notification is given to the administrator stating otherwise. These people may be contacted for:

accidents/emergencies, school closings, or failure to be picked up.

## **STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

The school is not responsible for accidents that occur to students during school activities. The student's family insurance should be used for school accidents. Students who participate in school sponsored sports and activities are required to demonstrate proof of accident insurance.

## **MEDICATION PROCEDURES**

### **OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS – ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the administration of medication to their children. The administration of medication to students during regular school hours and during school related activities is discouraged unless necessary for the critical health and well-being of the student. Teachers, administrators, and administrative staff shall not administer medication to students except as provided in the School Medication Procedures. Documentation including a current, completed Medication Authorization Form must be on file. Copies of the School Medication Procedures and Medication Authorization Form are included in each family's annual registration packet. \*\*For students with epi-pens, in case of emergency, a staff member will administer the epi pen.

Student with asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or other chronic conditions must have an action plan on file, updated yearly by their doctor. All medications must be in the original containers with the Rx label on the medication and kept in the main office.

## **SMOKING/TOBACCO**

The Archdiocese of Chicago acknowledges the importance of student and staff health and wellness and its relationship to the educational and academic achievement. It further acknowledges and understands that use of tobacco and all related products including the presence of secondhand smoke present a health risk and environmental hazard. To protect the health of staff and students, it is the policy of the Archdiocese of Chicago to remain tobacco free on school premises at all times, 24 hours a day, in school buildings, school vehicles and school grounds. This policy shall be promoted by the Archdiocese of Chicago and enforced by the administrator at the local school.

No individual, including students, staff members, or school visitors, is permitted to use any tobacco product at any time, including non-school hours:

- in any school building or school vehicle;
- on school grounds and/or property of the school which may include athletic fields and parking lots.

Individuals who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY**

**Substance** is defined as illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia, anabolic steroids, tobacco, chemicals, inhalants, solvents, prescription or over-the-counter drugs used for purposes other than those for which they are indicated or in a manner or in quantities other than directed.

**Substance abuse** means the consumption or use of any substance for purposes other than the treatment of sickness or injury as prescribed or administered by a person duly authorized by law to treat sick and injured human beings.

**Illegal Violations:** The possession, use, delivery, transfer, or sale of tobacco, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, illicit substances, chemical or any substance designed to look like or represented as such by students, on school premises, in school buildings, on school buses, or at school-sanctioned events is expressly forbidden. Law enforcement will be notified.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS**

When employees or volunteers accept a position in the Catholic School system, they are expected to complete the list of all the tasks/trainings outlined below in order to be in compliance with the Archdiocesan mission to protect children and young people. Details on these requirements may be found at [www.archchicago.org](http://www.archchicago.org). **Volunteers are not fingerprinted.**

- Complete an online criminal background check.
- Employees are cleared and screened using Sexual offender registry -IL State Police
- Present themselves for digital fingerprinting within three business days of hire (Employees only).
- Attend **Virtus/Protecting God's Children for Adults™**.
- Read and sign Code of Conduct.
- Complete Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking Form (CANTS).
- Complete Mandated Reporter Training.
- **Any person not receiving clearance is not eligible for employment or volunteering.**

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONDUCT**

As partners in the education of children, the parent/guardian in the local school community is expected to demonstrate respectful behavior at all times with faculty, administration, support staff, students, and volunteers whether on or off school grounds or at school-related events. If, in the opinion of the principal, that partnership is no longer viable, the school reserves the right to require the parent/guardian to either remove their child(ren) from the school or not accept registration for the next school year.

Unacceptable behaviors include, but **are** not limited to: harassment, verbal abuse, assault of or threats to the faculty, administration, staff, students and volunteers of the school. If you have a concern regarding the behavior of another child at our school, please contact the principal. Under no circumstances should a parent speak to any child but his or her own child with a behavior concern.

Parents/guardians who post defamatory or threatening statements about the school, its staff or students on social media can be required to remove the offensive material or withdraw their child(ren) from the school.

Ordinarily, a student is not to be deprived of a Catholic school education on grounds relating to the actions/attitudes of a parent/guardian. However, one of the following actions may be required to permit the continuation of the student in the school:

- schedule meetings between school staff and the parent/guardian outside of regular school hours in a monitored setting;
- conduct school business with the other parent/guardian of the student.

When, in the judgment of the principal, as confirmed by the pastor or juridical person, the behavior of a parent/guardian seriously interferes with teaching, learning or a positive school environment, the administrator may:

- inform the parent/guardians of their right to be present on school grounds is temporarily or permanently suspended;
- dismiss the child(ren) of the parent/guardian temporarily or permanently from the local Catholic school.
- require that parents/guardians participate in conflict resolution counseling/family counseling until more appropriate behavior is achieved.

### **Birthdays**

As a school that cares deeply about our students' health, we do not allow cupcakes/sweets for birthday celebrations. Instead, please consider sending individual packets of pretzels, Goldfish, crackers, or the like. Non-food items like pencils, bubbles, sticker, etc are a nice option, too. As a reminder, we are a NUT FREE school.

# Academy of St. Benedict the African

## Addendum Statements for School Handbook, 2024-2025

### Non Discrimination Statements

As per Illinois PA 102-0360, the Academy of St. Benedict the African does not prohibit hairstyles that are historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

The Academy of St. Benedict the African allows student athletes to modify their athletic or team uniform for the purpose of modesty in clothing or attire that is in accordance with the requirements of their religion, cultural values or modesty preferences. If a student chooses to modify his or her athletic or team uniform the student is responsible for all costs associated with the modification of the uniform and the student shall not be required to receive prior approval from the school for such modification.

### Social Media

Students and their parents/guardians are advised that the school, by Illinois statute (Illinois Public Act 098-0129), may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a **social networking website**. The administration and faculty may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's rules and/or disciplinary policy. The school may require a student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

### Attendance/Tuancy

Daily school attendance is compulsory in the State of Illinois for children 6 through 17 years of age. Therefore, all students enrolled in grades K-8 are required to attend school **daily**. The responsibility for compliance with the law and the school's policy belongs to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child.

If the student is absent without an excuse, or if the school has reason to suspect the validity of the excuse, school officials will investigate the situation and take appropriate action. A student is considered truant when he/she is absent from school for a school day or portion of the day without a valid cause.



**Built on Love, Hope, Spirituality, and Excellence**

### **Student Attendance Policy**

School attendance is fundamental to the academic success and spiritual growth of our students. For this reason, students are expected to attend school on a daily basis for the school term, unless an absence is excused. A student is absent from school when he/she is not physically present on a required student attendance day. A student is tardy when he/she is not physically present at the posted opening of a regular required student attendance day.

### **Reporting Process Absences**

Any day that a student is absent from or tardy to school, the student's parent/guardian must call the school office at 773-776-3316 or use the form on our app to report the absence. 0 minutes of the opening of a regular student attendance day to report the student's absence or tardy. If a parent/guardian fails to report a student's absence, it will be recorded as unexcused. The school will contact the parent/guardian if a student is absent and a notice of absence is not received within 60 minutes of the opening of the student attendance day.

A student absence will be excused if it is due to: (1) student illness (including mental/behavioral health); (2) observance of a religious holiday; (3) death in the immediate family; (4) a family emergency; (5) other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the principal; (6) other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional or physical health or safety; and (7) other reasons approved by the principal. Absences due to medical reasons may be required to provide medical documentation. If medical documentation is required and is not provided, the absences will be marked as unexcused. Students whose absences are excused will be allowed to make up missed assignments. An unexcused absence is as an absence from school for a reason other than those listed above as an excused absence. Students will lose credit for assignments on school days or for classes from which the absence was unexcused.

### **Tardies**

Students are expected to be in class on time so they maximize their learning opportunities. Students that arrive at school after the first bell has rung are considered tardy and must report to the school office upon their arrival. After reporting to the office, the student will be permitted to join his/her class. Tardies are recorded in the school office and are reported on the student's report card. Excused tardies are not counted. Students may accrue up to 5 each semester – Excessive absences or tardiness will be addressed on an individual basis and may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Early Dismissal**

If it is necessary for a student to leave school during the school day, the student's parent/guardian must call the school office at 773-776-3316. Students to be dismissed early from school will be picked up from the school office. No early dismissals after 2:30 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday or after 2:00 on Wednesday.

### **Excessive Absenteeism**

Excessive absenteeism means absences that total 10% or more of school attendance days in the current school year including both excused and unexcused absences. We will periodically review our student absence data to determine if any students are excessively absent and, if so, we may call the parent/guardian to discuss the reasons for the excessive absences. Additionally, if appropriate, the school may provide the parent/guardian with a list of resources where they may obtain counseling or social services that will encourage daily attendance and promote success.

If there is no improvement in attendance or cooperation by the student or parent guardian with its efforts for their child, the student may be withdrawn from the school.

By dating and signing this contract you agree that you have read, understand, and agree to adhere to all of the policies in the 2024-2025 Family Handbook, particularly:

- The stipulations described in “Health Examinations and Proof of Immunization” section.
- The school’s guidelines regarding the “Acceptable Use of Technology” found on page 6.
- The school’s Media and Photo Release policy regarding the use of pictures and video of the students found on page 6.
- The school’s uniform and dress code policy.

Parent Name (please print)		Parent Name (please print)	
Parent Signature		Parent Signature	
Date			

*Important: Please sign and turn into the main office. Thank you!*