



SAINT THERESA CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Saint Theresa Catholic School is committed to Catholic faith formation, academic excellence, and service in a nurturing, Christ-centered environment.

ST. THERESA CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Introduction

We are blessed and honored to welcome you as a valued member of St. Theresa Catholic School. To answer some of your questions concerning the school's policies, the school has prepared this Parent-Student Handbook. Please read it thoroughly and retain it for future reference. The policies stated in this handbook are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school, as are all other policies, procedures, or programs of the school. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in policy. However, the school has the right to add, delete or revise any school policy or procedure with or without notice. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, and none of the policies or provisions should be construed as such. If you have any questions about the school's policies, please ask the principal for assistance.

Mission

“St. Theresa Catholic School is committed to Catholic faith formation, academic excellence, and service in a nurturing, Christ-centered environment.”

Vision Statement

St Theresa Catholic School provides a Catholic education to students in grades Pre - K 3 to 8th grade, and in the spirit of Mother Luisita we form our students to encounter the joy, love, and truth of Jesus Christ.

Philosophy

St. Theresa Catholic School, as an integral part of Church of the Little Flower Parish, exists to guide families and nurture souls into the heart and mind of Jesus, and as such, has as its primary mission to assist parents in the spiritual development of their children at the service of the family for life. In light of our parish patron, St. Theresa, we seek to provide an atmosphere in the school that facilitates the growth of a simple, true, and unwavering faith. Directed toward the formation of human persons in view of their journey to eternity, the good of that society to which they belong, and in the duties of which they will, as adults, have a share. Our curriculum from early childhood, PreK3 through 8th-grade is based upon a commitment to the holistic development of our children regardless of race, color, class, or creed. The religious studies program, academic curriculum, and discipline system are designed to bring about our goals and objectives. It is the shared responsibility of the teachers and families at St. Theresa School to believe and practice this same philosophy and to cooperate to achieve the goals of the school.

STRATEGIC ANCHORS

1. **Joyful, family atmosphere** -We are an extension of the domestic church, forming our children and families in a joyful environment where they are loved and nourished.
2. **Safe and Beautiful Campus** - We prioritize the safety of our students who are educated in historical buildings on our beautiful campus in the heart of Coral Gables.
3. **Personal Encounter with Christ** - We provide a strong spiritual and sacramental foundation that nurtures our students' and families' faith and relationship with Jesus Christ.
4. **Catholic Intellectual Tradition** - We form our students in the Christo - centric intellectual tradition of the Catholic Church. Students develop a love for Truth, virtue and respect for the dignity of every person.
5. **Academic Excellence** - We offer a rigorous 21st century curriculum, proven by data and student success.
6. **Affordability** - We commit to maintaining a cost - effective, high - quality Catholic education for our families

CORE VALUES:

1. **Joyful:** We reflect our trust in God's providence and the deep gladness that comes from living a life of faith, hope, and love.
2. **Family Spirit:** We express the warmth, unity, and mutual support that flow from seeing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, forming a community rooted in love and respect.
3. **Faithful:** We are called us to remain steadfast in our relationship with God, living out His truth with trust, perseverance, and commitment to our Catholic identity.
4. **Humble:** We are invited to recognize our dependence on God, to serve others selflessly, and to lead with a spirit of gratitude and openness to growth.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Spiritual Goals:

To aid the children in:

- Realizing God's personal love for them through the study of our Catholic faith and values.
- The development of a loving relationship with God.
- The development of a deep and true devotion to our Lady.
- The development of a love for and loyalty to the Church.
- Living the faith as witnesses to Christ in the world.

Spiritual Objectives

We strive to implement these goals by:

1. Providing a religious curriculum that is rooted in the truth of God's unconditional love, through the sequential presentation of the whole of salvation history.
2. Providing opportunities for personal and communal prayer, use of Scripture, reception of the Sacraments, preparation and participation in the celebration of Mass, and in special devotions.
3. Providing opportunities to learn the role of our Lady in salvation history and promoting love for her through the study and appreciation of the rosary and scapular.
4. Guiding the children to internalize their knowledge of the Church as Christ present in the world by providing experiences of a true and active faith community.
5. Promoting attitudes of true service to others through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

Intellectual Goals

To aid the children in:

- Mastering of basic skills.
- Student-centered learning.
- Acquiring the skills needed to recall, organize, synthesize, apply, and evaluate information.
- Mastering critical thinking skills through a variety of educational methods.
- Developing their creative abilities, interests, and God-given talents.
- Developing a love for learning (a healthy curiosity and thirst for knowledge)

Intellectual Objectives

We strive to implement these goals by:

1. Sequential mastery of basic skills.
2. Promoting learning situations that develop the children's interests while encouraging inquiry and critical thinking skills.
3. Socratic Thinking strategies
4. Differentiated Instructional Strategies to address the varying needs of students.

Sociological Goals

To aid the children in:

- Basic value of respect for self and others based on our Christian ethic.
- Love and respect for their culture and that of others.
- Self-direction and leadership.
- Developing a true sense of concern and responsibility for others.
- Appreciation of and loyalty for their country.

Sociological Objectives

We strive to implement these goals by:

1. Providing an atmosphere of deep respect and courtesy and by presenting curriculum and activities in a manner that appreciates the contributions of all.
2. Helping the children to apply Christian moral standards as the criteria in solving life situations and world issues.
3. Encouraging age-appropriate independence through self-discipline in studies and classroom responsibilities.
4. Providing the children with opportunities for leadership and responsibility through classroom duties, student council, and other extra-curricular activities.
5. Fostering attitudes of good citizenship through the study of and appreciation for our democratic form of government, as well as the lives of those who have contributed to the betterment of our country.

Aesthetic Goals

To aid the children in:

- Appreciate and respond to the true, the good, and the beauty of the world by creative expression of their God-given talents.
- Appreciate and develop a taste for the fine arts.

Aesthetic Objectives

We strive to implement these goals by:

1. Teaching the children about the beauty of the world, nature and culture, and the need to protect and care for it.
2. Teaching a curriculum that exposes the children to the fine arts through creating and participating in art, music, and cultural experiences.

Physical Goals

To aid the children in:

- Developing coordinated healthy bodies.
- Understanding the dignity of the human person through Theology of the Body
- Developing positive attitudes toward physical change and growth.
- Creating in the school an atmosphere of concern and care for health and safety.
- Valuing the practice of good personal hygiene and cleanliness.

Physical Objectives

We strive to implement these goals by:

1. Providing physical education classes that endeavor to meet their needs, along with the option of after-school sports activities.
2. Providing a curriculum that teaches positive growth, development, and respect for life.
3. Encouraging responsibility for the safety of themselves and others.
4. Promoting the good habits of personal hygiene, cleanliness, health and nutrition.

School Traditions



Patroness

Saint Theresa, the namesake of the School as well as the parish of Church of the Little Flower. St. Thérèse of Lisieux is our school patron saint because of her special love of the missions, and her complete confidence in God for everything. We at St. Theresa Catholic School work hard to follow St. Therese's example of seeking God through humility, confident of His love. We try to see the value and holiness in little things, realizing that the little things are not always so little after all.



School Mascot

The Musketeers: Musketeers represent collaboration and strength. The name of our Musketeer is Louis (pr. Loo-wee) and is named after the father of St. Therese, our Patroness, St. Louis Martin.



School Logo

A revised school logo (2017) was adopted. It contains the original 1925 motto "Virtus et Scientia" (Virtue and Knowledge (the Sciences)) with the school's name. A rose of falling rose petals is in the center, representing St Therese, the patroness, in her famous quote: "I shall let fall a shower of roses". The Carmelite shield surrounds the rose with the three stars of David as a way of integrating St Therese's Carmelite spirit.



School Anthem

To You, Saint Theresa

*To you, Saint Theresa
Our voices are raising
A pray'r of petition
To lead us to God.
In faith may we travel
Throughout our life's journey,
Until we reach the final goal:
Our heav'nly home.*

*O may we remember
The days gone before us,
And those who have helped us
By showing the way.
With hearts ever loyal
To dear St. Theresa,
Go forth to serve God's family
In unity.*

ACCREDITATION

St. Theresa Catholic School is fully accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference (FCC) and the National Council for Private School Accreditation. It also holds membership in the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) and other Curricular-based Associations to enhance the learning environment.

ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICIES

Admissions

Given the mission of St. Theresa Catholic School as an agent of Catholic Christian formation, the school will accept only those students whose parents demonstrate an understanding of the specifically Catholic nature of the school and a desire to participate in that mission. Since St. Theresa is a parish school, it gives preference in application to families who are active members of Little Flower Parish.

Some students may not be accepted because the school's educational program and facilities are not able to meet the needs of the child. When the school cannot accept all applicants, those students not accepted are encouraged to enroll in the parish Religious Education classes (R.E.).

Entrance Age

According to Archdiocesan policy and the state of Florida, a child entering Kindergarten must be five years of age on or before September 1 of that year. A child entering the first Grade must be six years of age on or before September 1 of that year.

Re-Registration

Re-admission of students each year is not automatic but the invitation is extended to all those who are progressing in the school program. Students who do not have excessive absences or lateness to school, and whose parents have complied with school policies in a positive manner, attend and take the children to Mass each week, participated in faithful Stewardship Service toward their parish and school, and have completed their financial responsibilities to the school.

Open Admission Policy

The school has an open admission policy. No person, on the grounds of race, color, disability or national origin, is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the receiving of services. Nor does the school discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender, or national origin.

Section 504 – Policy Statement

St. Theresa Catholic School complies with the mandate of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in certain programs and activities. Pursuant to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, St. Theresa Catholic School will make those minor adjustments that can accommodate students with disabilities to the school's educational programs and activities.

The school's designated 504 Coordinator and contact information are as follows: Dr. Jaclyn Don Caceres, 305-762-1019. Parents with questions regarding the school's disability accommodations or related items should contact the 504 Coordinator. Parents may file a grievance as to any decisions related to a disability accommodation and request an internal hearing and review by sending a written notice addressed as follows:

Dr. Jaclyn Don Caceres, Associate Superintendent
Office of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Miami
9401 Biscayne Blvd
Miami Shores, FL 33138

The internal hearing and review will seek the prompt and equitable resolution of disability discrimination complaints.

Undocumented Students

A student's enrollment and/or graduation from school does not confer a legal status nor does it serve to regularize an undocumented student. Although the Archdiocese of

Miami may assist with the completion of an I-20 form, the school does not guarantee or confer any privileges or rights available to documented legal residents. Parents should consult with immigration legal counsel if they have any questions as to immigration status.

Parental Cooperation

The school views the education of a student as a partnership between the parents and the school. Parents and students are expected to comply with the school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials, whether it be at school events, on or off school campus, or on social media or other public forum. Just as a parent can withdraw a child from the school if desired, the school has the right to administratively withdraw a student if it determines at its discretion that the parent or student partnership with the school is irretrievably broken.

Parent Covenant

At St. Theresa Catholic School, we believe that parents play a crucial role in the educational journey of their children. As primary educators, parents are instrumental in shaping their children's values, behavior, and academic success. Our school community is grounded in the teachings of the Catholic faith, and it is essential that both parents and students embody the values and expectations set forth by our institution. The Parent Covenant, which is to be read and signed by each school family member, outlines the expectations for parents, highlighting their vital role in supporting and upholding the values and goals of our parish school community.

Use of Photos

The school reserves the right to use student or parent photos in any school or Archdiocesan publication including but not limited to print publications, videos, or websites including Facebook, Instagram and other social media websites. Any parent who does not want his or her child's picture or video to be used accordingly must notify the school's principal in writing prior to the beginning of the school year. **By executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, Parents HEREBY CONSENT, authorize and grant permission to the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their agents, employees or duly authorized representatives to photograph or videotape students and parents and CONSENT to their publication for any purpose deemed proper by the school, including but not limited to, use on the internet.**

Additionally, Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the use of student or parent photos.

Video Surveillance

St. Theresa Catholic School uses video surveillance cameras throughout the campus. Cameras may be located in areas including, but not limited to, entrances, exits, classrooms, hallways, common areas, outdoor areas, parking areas, athletic facilities, and other areas used for school operations. The School's surveillance cameras record video only and do not record sound or audio. Video recordings may be reviewed by authorized School personnel for legitimate school purposes, including safety, security, student discipline, investigation of incidents, protection of property, compliance with School policies, and cooperation with law enforcement or other appropriate authorities when deemed necessary by the School.

Students and parents/guardians are hereby made aware that they may be recorded by the School's video surveillance system while on campus or participating in School-related activities. Video recordings are the property of the Archdiocese of Miami and the School, and will be maintained, accessed, disclosed, or destroyed in the School's discretion, consistent with applicable law and School policy. Recordings are not generally available for inspection by students, parents, guardians, or third parties, except as required by law or as otherwise determined appropriate by the School.

SCHOOL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

SCHOOL OFFICE AND PARENT NEEDS

The school office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. each school day. The office is for business that is not already handled by the teachers. Parents may come in person or call the office. To contact teachers for messages, absentee homework, or to schedule an appointment, parents may write a note, call the school office, or e-mail the teacher.

For the safety of students and faculty, as well as for the good management of our large student body, all parents and guests are requested to check in at the school office and obtain an Visitor ID badge before proceeding into the school for business.

Parental Custody Agreements and Court Proceedings

Saint Theresa Catholic School is a faith-based community committed to the spiritual, academic, and emotional well-being of each of our students. We believe that children flourish when the adults in their lives act with charity, discretion, and peace. Because parental disputes can be disruptive and harmful to children—especially when they occur on campus—this policy exists to keep the school focused on its mission and to prevent custody or timesharing disagreements from occurring at school. This policy applies to the parents and the legal guardians of students.

A. School Policy on Parental Timesharing Arrangements

The school will not take sides in parental timesharing arrangements. Consequently, it will not undertake responsibility for interpreting, mediating, negotiating, or enforcing parental timesharing schedules or custody arrangements. However, in limited cases, the school may apply explicit court orders that prohibit a parent's contact with a child including no-contact and restraining orders. At its discretion, the school may take steps to prevent adult conflict from occurring in view of students or disrupting learning, worship, or school operations.

B. Parent Responsibility for Timesharing and Custody Matters

Parents have a serious responsibility to their children—and to the school community—to manage custody and timesharing arrangements without involving school faculty or staff. Accordingly:

- Parents are solely responsible for policing and enforcing their own timesharing arrangements, exchanges, and parenting-plan requirements.
- Parents must not ask, pressure, or expect teachers, administrators, coaches, or staff to:
 - “Take sides,” “verify compliance,” or determine which parent is “supposed” to have the child on a given day;
 - Refuse a child's release to a parent based on an alleged schedule violation;
 - Serve as intermediaries, messengers, or “record-keepers” for family court matters; or
 - Facilitate confrontations, negotiations, or discussions about custody on campus, at school events, or through school communication channels.
- Parents are required to resolve disputes privately (and, when needed, through their legal counsel, mediation, or the court) and not through school personnel.

C. School Access and Release to Parents

To protect student safety while remaining neutral in family disputes, the school will generally follow these standards:

1. **Equal parental access absent restriction.** Unless the school has on file a current, valid court order that restricts a parent's contact with the student (e.g., an injunction for protection, no-contact order, or other court-ordered restriction), the school will generally treat each legal parent as having access to the student, school records, and school activities consistent with applicable law and ordinary school procedures.
2. **Verification and safety procedures still apply.** All adults—including parents—must comply with campus security procedures (sign-in requirements, identification checks, visitor rules, and supervision expectations).
3. **Authorized pickup procedures.** For student safety, the school will release students to individuals permitted by school procedures (e.g., verified parent/guardian and/or individuals listed on the school's authorized pickup permissions), and consistent with any court order on file. The school's safety protocols are not an enforcement mechanism for timesharing; they are for student protection and orderly operations. Decisions about which individuals may be included on the school's authorized pickup list should be made by the parents. Disputes over such lists should be addressed by the parents (and their legal counsel and/or court order as necessary).
4. The school is not responsible for "holding" a child to resolve a dispute. If a parent appears for pickup and the school has no restraining/no-contact order or other court-ordered restriction on file, the school is not responsible for adjudicating competing claims about which parent's day it is.
5. High-conflict situations. If repeated conflict occurs on campus or at school events, the school may require additional boundaries (for example: separate conference schedules, separate event check-in instructions, communication limitations, or a school-developed interaction plan) as a condition of continued enrollment, so that school remains a place of peace for students.

D. Court Orders, Injunctions, and Documentation

Parents must promptly provide the school with updated copies of any court order affecting: parental contact, pickup restrictions, supervised contact requirements, or communication limitations. If the school receives a valid restraining order/injunction/no-contact order restricting a parent's contact with the child or the other parent on campus, the school will follow it to the extent reasonably practicable and consistent with student safety and school operations. If an order is unclear, the school may ask the parents to obtain clarification. Until then, the school will follow its standard procedures and campus safety rules. In accordance with Florida law, the school will make student records and in-person conferences available to both parents unless a court order specifically revokes this right, in which case it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the court order to the school. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the address(es) where student records should be sent.

E. Testifying in Divorce or Custody Proceedings

In recognition of the importance of the matrimonial sacrament to the Catholic faith, parents agree not to compel the attendance, testimony, or deposition of any school or church employee in any divorce, custody, or other legal proceedings which may in any way involve the dissolution of marriage or the determination of parental/custody rights. A violation of this policy will constitute a breach of the parental cooperation requirement.

In the event that a parent or legal guardian breaches this policy, any school or church personnel who are required to attend legal proceedings may be represented by an attorney. In addition, any and all legal fees and costs incurred by the school will be charged and become the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

F. Conduct Expectations and Campus Safety

St. Theresa Catholic School expects all parents to model respect and self-control consistent with the school's Roman Catholic faith and values. Parents may not argue, negotiate custody, or engage in hostile communications on campus, at drop-off/pickup, or at school events. Parents must not involve students in adult disputes or request that students carry messages or documents between parents. In cases where a conflict arises at school, the school may separate parties, end a meeting/event participation, restrict access to campus for the remainder of the day, and/or require future communication through designated channels. If safety is threatened or a disturbance occurs, the school may contact law enforcement.

Compliance with this policy is an integral component of the school's overarching parental cooperation requirement in which parents and legal guardians are expected to comply with the school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials.

Counseling Services

The school is required to have a counselor on staff to provide instruction in the classes and to provide individual counseling when warranted. Any parent who does not want their child to be seen by the counselor should indicate this wish in writing to the principal at the beginning of the school year.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance for the full school day (more than 3.5 hours a school day) is a legal requirement, and an obligation of parents, students, and school staff to enable every

student to learn at his/her best. St. Theresa Catholic School takes these policies seriously. The marking of attendance, late arrivals, and early dismissals is a **legal** requirement and mandatory for the school, noting that the student is under the care of the school or with the parent/guardian. Students are expected to attend school the entire day. **Excessive absence or tardiness may be cause for non-acceptance or re-registration may be denied.**

Absence

When a student has been absent, a written excuse signed by the parent or guardian is required, and these will be kept on file. **A student who has excessive absences from school more than 20 days in a year (or 5 days per quarter), the school administration may confer with the Archdiocese to determine if the student may or may not be promoted to the next grade unless the principal grants an exception, and determines a way in which the student may receive additional instruction.**

Chronic absenteeism may result in loss of any scholarship monies awarded to families.

The principal has the right to refuse an excused absence in cases where the parents' reason for keeping the child out of school does not seem valid. An "incomplete" mark may also be given for the semester in question. Excessive absence may prevent a student from receiving honors and awards.

Parents should phone the school office before 9:30 a.m. (305-446-1738) whenever the child is absent (excused or nonexcused). However, a *WRITTEN EXCUSE FROM THE PARENT IS STILL REQUIRED* when the child returns, in order for him/her to be admitted to the classroom. This note must include the date(s) of the absence, and must be signed by the parent or guardian. A child who has had a communicable disease must have a written release from the doctor. The school may report truancy to the Archdiocese of Miami when there is an extended absence without written explanation from the parent.

Tardiness

Students must be in line for morning exercises before the second bell at **7:45 a.m.** After that time, students are marked tardy (late arrival).

In the case of a rare emergency, a tardy may be excused. However, whether a tardy is excused or not excused, the student's late arrival must be marked as the child was not in the custody of the school. **Students who arrive after the morning bell must obtain a tardy slip before proceeding to class. Lateness may also be marked on the absentee record as below.**

When there is excessive lateness, defined as more than five (5) in a quarter, the Principal may require a conference with parents and may have an action plan created. Excessive lateness or absence may be cause for students not being able to participate in different student activities (e.g.: Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, clubs, sports) and/or disciplinary action up to probation and/or

denial of re-registration. Students who may be on scholarships may or may not have their funds revoked if there is an issue with tardiness.

Marking of Attendance, Tardy, and Early Dismissals

Whether arriving late or being dismissed early from school, attendance will be marked in the following manner: each section of time equals 1/4 day: 7:45 to 9:35, 9:35 to 11:15, 11:15 to 12:55, and 12:55 to 2:45. Late arrival will be marked up to 8:45 a.m.; after that time, attendance will be marked as 1/4 or 1/2 day absence according to the above times.

Early dismissals will be marked in the same manner. Early dismissals of less than 1/4 day, will be noted on the attendance card and marked as an "afternoon absence." **Late arrivals and early dismissals will count against perfect attendance.**

Release of Students

It is the responsibility of each parent/guardian to insure that his/her child is picked up from school at the proper time. Parents or legal guardians are required to complete a dismissal form. This form specifically lists all persons authorized to pick up the child from school. The school reserves the right to require proper identification from anyone who is listed on this form coming to the school to pick up a student who is not personally known to the teacher or administrator (or her delegates) and to refuse release of the child without it. The school follows the guidelines set forth in the Buckley Amendment pertaining to the release of students.

Early Dismissal

Only the parent or guardian may request, in writing, special permission from the principal regarding the early dismissal of his/her child for valid reasons. Requests to release a student early from school are given in advance to the school office. A special slip for dismissal is then filled out by the office personnel and parent/guardian before the child leaves the school. Parents present themselves at the school office to pick up the child and school personnel will call the child over the P.A. to come to the office. Except for Pre-K children, parents or other guardians are not allowed to go to the classroom for pick up.

Due to traffic and office business, parents are discouraged from picking up students after 2:15 p.m. on regular days, and after 11:15 on short schedule days.

School Work Missed

School work missed due to illness must be made up within a period of 2 days times the number of days absent. **It is the responsibility of the student to approach the teacher or check on MyPowerHub to request this missed work. This does not include projects unless the project was due during an absence.** Students or parents may request these assignments on the day of the absence by e-mailing the teacher, or calling the school office before 10:15 a.m. for pick-up before school dismissal. Late requests must wait for the next day. **Students in the block schedule are expected to obtain their absentee work the very next day of attendance at school.**

Vacations

There are regularly scheduled vacations and holidays in the school calendar, which is based on mandated days by the State of Florida and the Archdiocese of Miami. Please check these ahead of time and plan accordingly. **Permission *may not* be given by any teacher or the Administration for students to be absent for extra vacations or holidays.** These decisions are the responsibility of the parents. Prolonged unauthorized absence can and does affect students' grades and academic standing. The school cannot be responsible for the results of these absences. Because the lessons must be taught, class work and homework will not be given ahead of time for these types of absences; if the days are numerous, the parents may need to acquire the assistance of a tutor to teach the missed classes.

Truancy and / or Being Out of Class

Truancy is being absent without prior knowledge or approval of parents or the leaving of the school grounds without school approval. Truancy at St. Theresa's also includes being out of the supervising teacher's care without permission. This is a serious cause for disciplinary action. By law, three days of truancy is reportable to state authorities; no student may leave the school grounds or the classroom during the school day or during after-school activities without teacher or administrative permission and supervision. To be out of the classroom within the school grounds during the school day, a hall pass must be obtained. For permission to leave the school grounds for necessary appointments or early dismissals, see **Early Dismissal**.

Student Supervision

Supervision at St. Theresa Catholic School begins at 7:00 a.m. and ends after school dismissal at 3:15 p.m. (School supervision ends at 12:20 p.m. on 12:00 pm dismissal days).

Saint Theresa Catholic School is privileged to offer two After School pick up Programs: Late Pick up Care that ends at 4 pm and After School Care that ends at 6 pm. (on 12 pm dismissal days, Late pick up ends at 1:30 pm and Late Pick Up ends at 3 pm). If students are not enrolled in one of the school's After-School Programs, they must go home quickly in the manner designated by parents, i.e. car pick-up, bus service, or walk to a neighborhood address. Students who do not go home on time by 3:15 pm (or 12:20 pm on 1 pm dismissal days) and are not enrolled in any of our After School Programs are taken to the Late Pick Up Care and a fee is charged, \$10 per half-hour, which is due at time of pick up.

Administration will notify the parents/guardian if any student who is not enrolled in an After School Care Program (Late Pick Up Care or After School Care) and has accumulated a total of three late pickups in a given quarter, the student will automatically be enrolled in one of the After Care Programs, and be committed to the fees that apply.

Parents are asked for their child/ren's dismissal procedure at the beginning of each school year. The staff will not depart from this without a signed release from the parents. **When**

there is a change in a student's normal procedure for going home, the office should be notified in the morning by the parent and in writing. This is for the security of every child and to give the parents reassurance. We do not allow students to change their routine "ad lib", such as to go to friends' houses, or go in a car with someone else. Any change must be made known to the office **in the morning in writing.**

Students may NOT stay after school to watch after school games unless accompanied by a parent.

Lunch

The school uses SAGE Dining Services (<https://www.sagedining.com/>) for lunch. Lunch service is incorporated in the child's tuition costs at the beginning of the school year.

Home lunches may be brought if the parent wishes to do so.

Nut-Containing Products

Due to the increase of various allergies to nut-containing food products, the school or cafeteria service does not sell nor distribute foods containing nut products. Through the use of reasonable means to better accommodate allergies to nut products, we ask faculty, staff, students and parents to practice caution when bringing food from home that contain nut products. If parents and students do bring such items, it is necessary that the teacher situate students away from the allergic student.

Messages to Students

In case of emergencies, messages for students are left with the school office, who will see that they are delivered. Classroom instruction is not to be interrupted. Parents/Guests do not go directly to classrooms without a Visitor ID from the office when they have an appointment with the teacher or other staff member.

Telephone use by Students

Student emergencies are reported to the classroom teacher, school nurse or Principal and the office phone is used to contact parents if necessary. Students are not permitted to telephone home for homework, forgotten articles, to ask permissions, or to change their personal scheduled arrangements. School phones are reserved for school business and emergencies. Students are **not** permitted to bring **cell phones on campus. If for exceptional cases cell phones are brought to campus, they must be turned in to the homeroom teacher in the morning and can only be picked up when leaving. Any student found with a cell phone during school hours (from 7:45am – after being picked up at dismissal in the afternoon) may have it confiscated. If this is the first offense, the parent will be required to retrieve the phone. After the first offense, the phone may not be picked up until the end of the school year.**

Monthly Bulletins and Communication

Parent bulletins and calendars are posted each month on MyPowerHub or on the School's web site. These bulletins acquaint the parents with important dates and events that are to

take place during the month as well as updated any changes that are needed. The monthly bulletin is the school's most essential means of communication with parents or guardians. Parents/Guardians are asked to please print, post and refer to the calendar and newsletter throughout the month.

School Supplies

School supplies will be published in MyPowerHub and/or the school website during the summer months. **There are specific supplies required for each grade level.** We do not want the children to bring anything not on this list, unless notified specifically by the teacher for a particular project.

STUDENT RECORDS

Notification of Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should complete the Request for Release of Student Records and submit it to the School principal (or appropriate school official) identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or

company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

Transfers and/or Withdrawals

When transferring out of St. Theresa Catholic School, Parents are to notify the school in writing, using the school's Withdrawal Form. The signatures of both parents (or of those who have legal educational decision making power for the child) are required.

Transcript requests must be made at least 24 hours in advance on a form obtained in the school office.

Lost and Found

A Lost-and-Found area is located in the school cafeteria hallway. Students and parents are encouraged to look there for misplaced or lost sweaters, uniforms, shoes, etc. We always have numerous items not claimed. Articles not claimed at the end of each month will be given away or sent to the missions.

Parent / Volunteer / Guest Dress

Due to Communicable protocols, adults who visit the school may be limited and will be determined by the school administration if allowance is approved.

All adults who visit the school to volunteer their services or to conduct business in the office are expected to dress in a manner that shows respect for the professional and Catholic atmosphere of our school. It is very important that adults show a modesty in dress that conveys respect for the human body. Visiting or volunteering at school includes chaperoning field trips, assisting teachers with student activities, attending Church functions with the students and coming to the office on business or to drop off items for students.

STUDENT CONDUCT

St. Theresa Catholic School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and disciplined learning environment. In order to uphold these standards, the school administration is empowered to fully investigate allegations of student bullying, misconduct, threats of violence, and other concerns that may impact the school community. As part of this process, school administrators may conduct inquiries, review relevant information, and interview students as necessary. Students are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation. The school may also involve parents or guardians at its discretion. The failure to comply with an investigation or provide truthful information may result in disciplinary action.

In addition, students and Parents are expected to behave consistent with the mission, philosophy and spirit of the school and the moral teachings of the Catholic faith as determined by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Miami. Because the school cannot anticipate all conduct that violates this policy, it reserves the right to take any form of (1) student disciplinary action, including administrative withdrawal, and/or (2) restrictions against any behavior that violates this policy, even if not specifically stated in this handbook.

Discipline

Catholic School Discipline

Discipline in a Catholic school is considered an aspect of moral guidance and character training and not a form of punishment. The purpose of discipline is:

1. To guide students in the following of Christ and Gospel values
2. To promote character training, i.e. to cultivate the virtues that insure self-control and to redirect disorderly tendencies.
3. To promote a classroom situation conducive to learning.

Consistent communication between home and school is encouraged to enable the children to grow in their human and spiritual character.

Discipline is maintained when students work cooperatively with the principal, the teachers, and companions toward the attainment of class and school objectives.

(However, it should be noted that the legitimate interests of the school extend beyond the school day and school hours. That is, home and school are to be reinforcing each other in philosophy and values. Students need to remember that they represent both their school and their families no matter where they go and whatever they are doing.)

For this reason, we strive to effectively teach our students that order and organization are absolutely necessary in a teaching-learning situation. Teachers and staff members also teach and guide students toward appropriate behavior and help them to understand that disrespect toward anyone, inappropriate behavior, property damage, and nonconformity to rules will not be tolerated.

Conduct

Students and Parents are expected to behave consistent with the mission, philosophy and spirit of the school and the moral teachings of the Catholic faith as determined by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Miami. Because the school cannot anticipate all conduct that violates this policy, it reserves the right to take any form of (1) student disciplinary action, including expulsion, and/or (2) restrictions against any behavior that violates this policy, even if not specifically stated in this handbook.

Discipline (Grades Pre-K—3)

While the younger children do not follow a formal demerit system, the school teaches and expects the same kind of appropriate behavior and self-control. The classroom measures and consequences are determined by the teacher and administration and applied as is age appropriate.

Discipline (Grades 4-8)

After classroom and school policies are reviewed and made clear, students are responsible for their actions. An appropriate warning may be given once or twice. Then, inappropriate student behavior may result in a demerit or a major demerit as explained below. Discipline measures in regard to demerits and its consequences are determined by the teacher and principal depending on the circumstances of the particular incident(s).

DEMERITS

The school may issue two different type of Demerits: Regular and Major. Habitual demerits may result in a conference with the parents, student, teacher and administration or possible home suspension or Administrative Withdrawal depending on the seriousness of the infractions. **Demerits may result in automatic reduction of their Conduct in the Report Card.**

When a student receives a demerit, the teacher and student sign the demerit slip, which is sent home with the student to be signed by the parent, and returned the next school day. **Students and/or parents may disagree with a demerit; however, the signature is required representing the reception of the demerit slip. Even if a signature is refused, the demerit stands on record.** Consistent communication with the teachers helps ensure that the receiving of demerits is greatly diminished.

Consequences for Demerits

In order to guide students who receive demerits and to take their school behavior more seriously, the administration, teachers and teacher aides reserve the right to provide consequences for demerits given. This may include Saturday detention, removal or probation from student clubs or athletics, or any other consequence as deemed

appropriate given the circumstance and/or seriousness of the demerit. Administration may also place a student on **probation**. Students who are on probation not only follow the demerit system, but also follow the guidelines stated on their probationary contract. **Students and parents (where required) who do not successfully fulfill the probation agreement, may be asked by the school administration to leave the school.**

Regular Demerits

Examples of inappropriate behavior resulting in a **Regular Demerit** may include (but not exhaustive) inappropriate iPad usage, chewing gum, disruptive behavior in the classroom, hallways, morning assembly, recess, or cafeteria; being out of uniform, tardiness to class without a pass, littering; in possession of electronic devices, cell phones, or other items not needed in school; improper language (written/verbal), writing or passing notes in school; disrespect toward teachers, adults in charge, or fellow students.

Though examples are listed, the Principal and/or teacher /instructional aide has the right to determine the appropriate form of issuing a regular demerit depending on the circumstance of the particular incident.

Major Demerits

Examples of inappropriate behavior resulting in a **Major Demerit** may include fighting (no matter “who started it”), cheating on a test or any other school work; plagiarism; forging a signature; stealing; serious disrespect; making fun of teachers or students, whether spoken, written, or gestured; refusing to obey; truancy; possession of cigarettes, vaping materials, alcohol, drugs, pornographic materials; disrespectful pictures or drawings; weapons (or any object which could be used as a weapon); writing on or damaging school property; open defiance of the authority of the teacher or any other school official; unacceptable behavior in church.

Though examples are listed, the Principal or teacher has the right to determine the appropriate form of issuing a major demerit depending on the particular circumstance of the particular incident.

Any other behavior or circumstance, deemed unacceptable by administration may also result in a demerit or major demerit. The student is considered a student of the school at all times. A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school, may be disciplined by school officials. The principal reserves the right to determine the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken.

Good Manners

Students are expected to exercise courtesy, respect, and good manners always. It is very helpful to the students if these manners are also taught and reinforced at home. Otherwise, they have the appearance of something that is only for school or special occasions instead something important for daily living. The following is a very basic list of

manners that we try to implement and practice at St. Theresa School. As the need arises, other items are taught and emphasized.

1. Greet any adult or fellow student, with “Good Morning”, “Hello”, or “Welcome to St. Theresa School.” (If you know the person’s name, use their name with the greeting)
2. Answer any adult with “Yes, Ma’am” or “No, Sister”, and answer a question with the adult’s name. Never say “yeah?”, “huh?”, or “what?”
3. When called from a distance, go to the person calling you. Do not answer while walking away or yell from another room.
4. Stand up when an adult enters the room or classroom, when answering a question for a teacher or staff member, unless the teacher tells you it is a drill or another exercise. This is for the benefit of the whole class, not just for the teacher.
5. Use “pardon me” or “excuse me” when you have not heard something. Use this also when stepping in front of anyone, whether adult or your own peers.
6. Step back from the door to allow an adult to enter first. Hold the door open if you arrive before the adult.
7. Offer to help carry books, packages, etc. for your teachers, staff members, Sisters, etc., unless you are managing your own heavy objects. Do the same at home for parents or other adults.
8. Never read items on teachers’ desks. Never open envelopes addressed to someone else, especially your parents or teachers. This is illegal as well as showing a great lack of respect.
9. In the cafeteria:
 - a. Elbows off the table;
 - b. Take small bites and chew with mouth closed; swallow before speaking;
 - c. Don’t play with food;
 - d. Keep place neat;
 - e. Remove trash, food leftovers, and plates before leaving cafeteria ask to be excused from the table.
 - f. Appropriate voice volume.

PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

The Catholic school promotes friendship, charity, kindness, love and respect for self and others. However, student inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing or embracing which connote more than simple friendship, are not permitted in school, at school dances, or at any school event. Those who violate these rules may be subject to disciplinary measures, including detention, suspension or administrative withdrawal. The administration reserves the right to determine what is, or is not, appropriate behavior in a Catholic school.

Articles prohibited at school

Only those items needed for classroom use should be brought to school. Items that are hazardous to the safety of others, interfere with school procedures, or are not needed in class will be impounded. Impounded items will be returned to the parent, if requested.

Skateboards, skates, and the like are not allowed at any time at St. Theresa. We also may not allow any type of game balls (e.g. basketballs, volleyballs, etc.) brought from home, unless a coach or teacher requests them. We discourage the children from bringing any kind of toy, large or small, to school. This interferes with the students' concentration and the purpose of school. However, a teacher may allow a share day, request games for rainy days or recess time.

Students are not permitted to bring the following: Magazines, cameras, or other types of electronic devices, to school, unless requested by the teacher for a classroom project. Likewise, the students are not to bring any permanent markers (e.g. Sharpies), liquid White Out, toys, or articles not requested by the teacher. In the case of special projects, the teacher will indicate the time to bring these things.

***Cellular phones**

Cell phones may not be allowed in school. If a cell phone is brought to school for extreme cases (with parent written consent), the student will drop off his/her phone to their homeroom teacher at the beginning of the school day and picked up at dismissal.

Students are NOT to use the phone from the moment they come on campus until they leave the school grounds. Necessary emergency calls are to be made through the school office. The above items are also not to be brought on field trips.

If a student is caught with a cell phone before, during or after school, it will be taken away and held in the principal's office. Parents will need to pick up the phone if this should happen on the first offense. If this should happen again, then the principal may hold the phone until the end of the school year.

Note: The school is NOT responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged phones and the parents/students take the risk of bringing it on campus.

Fines

Fines are charged for the following:

- Lost or Damaged iPad (amount determined in Technology Agreement)
- Lost/destroyed textbooks (price of the book)
- Damaged textbooks (amount determined by the Principal)
- Marked, damaged, or defaced desks (amount determined by Principal)
- Marked, damaged, or defaced uniforms (amount determined by Principal)
- After Care/Late Pick Up: If not registered and the child needs to go to these areas, or are late in picking up: The cost of one day of being in either program.

SUSPENSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL

Reasons for Administrative Withdrawal with mitigating circumstances are reasons for suspension. Reasons for Administrative Withdrawal (not exhaustive):

1. Actions gravely detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of other pupils.
2. Habitual profanity or vulgarity.
3. Fighting, assault, battery, or any threat of force or violence, directed toward any school personnel or pupils.
4. Open, persistent defiance of the authority of the teacher or administrator.
5. Continued willful disobedience.
6. Use, sale or possession of narcotics.
7. Use, sale, distribution or possession of any alcohol for beverage purposes on or near school premises.
8. Smoking, vaping or having tobacco or vaping paraphernalia.
9. Stealing.
10. Willful cutting, defacing or otherwise injuring in any way property, real or personal, belonging to the school.
11. Truancy.
12. Possession of a weapon on school grounds (i.e. gun, knife or **any other object that poses as a weapon, including toy weapons**).
13. Harassment or threats, verbal or written, including e-mail messages or internet postings.
14. Any other reason as deemed reasonable of Administrative Withdrawal by the school administration.

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

The school is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, at assignments outside the school, or at school-sponsored events. All students are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student must immediately report the incident to his/her principal. If, however, the principal is the individual who is believed to have engaged in the inappropriate conduct, the student should notify the Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of Miami. If an investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the school will take corrective action based on the circumstances.

THREATS OF VIOLENCE

The disciplinary consequences for a student whose verbal or written comments, including email messages, that threaten serious bodily harm to another student or member of the faculty or staff or destruction of property, may include, but not be limited to:

1. Immediate suspension from the school;
2. Reporting to law enforcement;
3. Treatment or consultation by a psychologist or psychiatrist at the parents' expense and/or by the school counselor, both of whom may be asked to submit a written evaluation. If it is determined that the child was serious about the threat and has the capacity to carry it out, the child may be administratively withdrawn from the school. If it is determined that the child did not seriously intend to do harm to others, the child may be allowed to return to the school, at the discretion of the school principal.
4. If allowed to return to school, the child may be placed on probation with an indication that, should a similar threat occur, the child will be administratively withdrawn from school;
5. The school should inform the Office of Catholic Schools of these cases. The school may submit an informational report to the police.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The school is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all of its students. As such, bullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Therefore, this policy prohibits any unwelcome verbal or written conduct or gestures directed at a student by another student that has the effect of:

- (1) physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student;
- (2) damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property;
- (3) placing a student in reasonable fear of emotional or mental harm;
- (4) placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or
- (5) creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or the Catholic mission of the school.

1. Definition

- a. **Bullying** is the willful and repeated harm inflicted upon another individual which may involve but is not limited to: teasing, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking, innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, social isolation, gestures, cyber-bullying or other verbal or written conduct. Cyber-bullying includes the following misuses of digital technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting

inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images or website postings (including blogs and social network sites). Bullying reflects a pattern of behavior, not a single isolated incident.

- b. This definition includes students who either directly engage in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student's act of bullying.

2. Scope

- a. This policy prohibits bullying that occurs either:
 - i. on school premises before, during, or after school hours;
 - ii. on any bus or vehicle as part of any school activity; or
 - iii. during any school function, extracurricular activity or other school-sponsored event or activity.

3. Reporting Complaints

- a. Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying to the school immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported to the school principal. The principal will provide the student/parent with the Bullying Complaint Report Form which must be completed, dated and signed by the complaining party so that the school may initiate further inquiry, when appropriate.

4. Disciplinary Action

- a. Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, administrative withdrawal, and/or notification to appropriate authorities. The disciplinary action may be unique to the individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the principal's discretion.

False reports or accusations of bullying also constitute a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate remedial action which may include, but is not limited to, the assessment of costs incurred by the School in its investigation and review of any reports deemed to have been made in bad faith.

Bullying/Harassment Investigation Disclosures. While the School generally prohibits the nonconsensual disclosure of information contained in educational records, limited exceptions apply including for the disclosure to victims of bullying or harassment when disciplinary sanctions or other measures relate directly to the victim. Parents hereby consent and acknowledge that the School may, pursuant to this exception, disclose to the victims of harassment or bullying, and to their parents, any information related to

disciplinary sanctions and/or bullying at issue regardless of whether the matters disclosed are part of an educational record.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The use or possession of illegal drugs or illegal mood-altering substances, alcoholic beverages, drug-related paraphernalia, or the abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs by any student on school property or while attending or participating in any school-sponsored activity or at any time the student is wearing a school uniform is forbidden. Transgression of this rule will result in disciplinary action, which may include administrative withdrawal from the school, even for a first offense.

Any student selling drugs on school property or at school functions may result in a disciplinary response, up to and including administrative withdrawal.

The school is committed to a drug-free environment. This commitment may, under some circumstances, prompt a need for testing of students for evidence of substance abuse. It may also involve the use of drug dogs and other methods in the discretion of the school administration which seek to deter the use and/or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol.

If a student exhibits the symptoms, or is suspected of substance abuse, the school may require that the student undergo substance abuse testing at the parents' expense. If the results of the test suggest abuse (and the substance was not used on or brought to campus or a school-related activity), the school will normally use this information to help the student seek assistance. Refusal to participate in such a test may result in administrative withdrawal from the school.

At times, the school may choose to conduct random drug testing of the student body at the parents' expense.

A school may conduct random searches as set forth in this handbook.

Smoking/Vaping

It is a violation of Florida law for any minor to knowingly possess any tobacco product, nicotine product, or nicotine dispensing device. In addition, the use of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and vaping carry known health risks that can be very serious. The use of any tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and/or vaping in any form is prohibited on school property and at any school events. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary consequences which may include administrative withdrawal from school.

Search and Seizure Policy

The principal and his/her designee has access to any lockers, handbags, electronic devices, cell phones, book bags, desks, cars or any other object that is brought onto the campus of the school or any school-sponsored event, and may remove or confiscate any object which is illegal or contrary to school policy.

Weapons

Weapons are not permitted anywhere on school grounds or at any school activity. Any student who brings a weapon to any school activity, who is in possession of a weapon, or who threatens others with a weapon may be administratively withdrawn from the school. Any item used to threaten or cause bodily harm may be considered a weapon. In particular, the possession of any instruments or objects that can be used to inflict serious harm on another person or that can place a person in reasonable fear of serious harm will be considered weapons. Included in this category are BB guns, Airsoft guns, and toy or replica guns represented as real guns. Also included in this category is the possession or storage of items which are prohibited at school, including but not limited to ammunition clips, bullets or cartridges, flammable liquids, combustible materials, poisonous substances, mace, pepper spray, and any other items which may result in injury.

Confidentiality

Teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake. In these cases, parents will be promptly notified of teacher concerns.

Confidentiality Statement

School officials including teachers, administrators and other paraprofessionals in the performance of their duties will have access to student educational records. **Parents/Guardians by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE AND CONSENT** to the disclosure of such records including the nature and existence of a disability, a medical/educational diagnosis, or any associated minor adjustments or accommodations made to such school officials with a legitimate educational interest in the information.

SCHOOL UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE

The wearing of a uniform is an integral part of Catholic School discipline; whether in brick-and-mortar attendance, Blended learning or Virtual Learning. Students in uniform are less pressured at school by clothing trends and peer comparisons and it greatly aids in good order and concentration on schoolwork. "A person tends to act as he/she dresses." All students are expected to be in complete uniform from the first day of school, and to continue throughout the entire year. Students are expected to arrive in complete uniform each morning and to remain in full uniform (including tie and tucked in shirt) until they are in their car at the end of the day.

All Students in grades PreK3 to Grade 8 are also expected to be clean and well-groomed, which includes keeping shoes clean and polished, and clothing neat, in good repair and ironed. Hair is to follow specific guidelines. Students who are "out of uniform" may receive a uniform infraction.

Uniform Guidelines

The school partners with Flynn O'Hara Uniforms (www.flynnohara.com) for its approved uniform articles and will provide a list for parents. Shoes may be purchased at any store.

GIRLS PreK3 – PreK4

- **CULOTTE:** Elastic back in plaid - Length to knee
- **KNITS:** (Polo) Navy short or long sleeve with white embroidery of school logo/name
- **JACKET:** Navy Fleece with embroidery
- **SWEATER:** Navy Cardigan, navy pullover or navy vest with embroidery
- **SHOES:** Black Mary Jane with Velcro fastener
- **SOCKS:** White knee high or crew socks (no ankle or sport socks)

BOYS PreK3 – PreK4

- **PANTS:** Khaki pull-on with embroidery
- **SHORTS:** Khaki pull-on with embroidery
- **KNIT:** (Polo) Navy shorts or long sleeve with white embroidery
- **JACKET:** Navy Fleece with embroidery
- **SWEATER:** Navy Cardigan, navy pullover or navy vest with embroidery
- **SHOES:** Black Velcro Oxford shoe - *Recommended (no black sneakers)*
- **SOCKS:** White, navy or black crew socks (no ankle or sport socks)

P.E. (PK-3 - PK-4)

- **P.E.SHORTS:** Green mesh with logo-***Worn to school on PE day PK4 only***
 - **Optional: Pre-K:** May wear culottes or shorts with PE shirt
- **P.E. SHIRT:** *Worn to school on PE day*
 - Solid Gold with logo
 - Solid Gold Long Sleeve Tee with Musketeers on sleeve
- **SWEATS: For PE only:** Green screened top & pants with logo

ALL SHORTS MUST HAVE EMBROIDERED LOGO

KINDERGARTEN GIRLS

- **JUMPER:** Sweetheart neck in plaid with embroidery - *Required for Mass*
 - Jumper must meet the knee as measured at the bend of the back of leg
- **SHORTS:** *Optional*. (Must be worn with blouse, tie and belt)
 - Navy Bermuda with embroidery (may **not** be worn for Mass)
- **BLOUSE:** White short or long sleeve round collar with navy embroidery
- **TIE:** Navy Cross tie
- **SOCKS:** White crew or Knee Hi socks - *No sport or ankle socks*
- **JACKET:** Navy fleece with embroidery - *Must purchase Iron on Labels or Monogram*
- **SWEATER:** Navy cardigan, V- neck pullover or V-neck vest with embroidery
- **BELT:** Plaid belt to be worn with Bermuda shorts
- **SHOES:** Black Mary Jane with Velcro fastener (no patent leather)

KINDERGARTEN BOYS

- **SHORTS:** *Optional*. (Must be worn with oxford, tie and belt)
 - Khaki Bermuda style with embroidery (may **not** be worn for Mass)
- **PANTS:** Navy with embroidery - *Required for Mass in Kindergarten*
- **KNIT:** Navy short or long sleeve with navy embroidery
- **BELT:** Black
- **JACKET:** Navy fleece with embroidery
- **SWEATER:** Navy cardigan, V-neck pullover or V-neck vest with embroidery
- **SOCKS:** Navy, black or white crew (*no ankle socks*)
- **SHOES:** Black Velcro oxford shoe - *Recommended* (no black sneakers)

(PK-K) ALL STUDENTS P.E.

- **P.E. SHORTS:** Green mesh with school shield logo (worn to school on PE day)
- **P.E. SHIRT:** (worn to school on PE day)
 - Solid Gold dry-fit option with logo
 - Gold long sleeve tee with Musketeers on sleeve
- **SWEATS:** for PE only: Green screened top and pants (may wear on cold days below 40)

ALL PANTS AND SHORTS MUST HAVE EMBROIDERED LOGO

GIRLS GRADE 1st – 6th

- **JUMPER:** Sweetheart neck in plaid with embroidery - *Required for Mass*
- **Jumper must meet the knee as measured at the bend of the back of leg**
- **SHORTS:** *Optional* (Must be worn with blouse, tie and belt).
 - Navy Bermuda with embroidery - May **not** be worn for Mass
- **BLOUSE:** White short or long sleeve round collar with navy embroidery
- **TIE:** Navy Cross tie
- **SOCKS:** White crew or Knee Hi socks -*No sport or ankle socks*
- **JACKET:** Navy Fleece with embroidery
- **SWEATER:** Navy cardigan, navy pullover or navy vest with embroidery

- **BELT:** Plaid belt for Bermudas
- **SHOES:**
 - Recommended black tie, Velcro or Mary Jane *for 1st - 4th*
 - Black or Cordovan penny loafer or black tie shoes Sketcher type *for 5th - 6th*

BOYS GRADE 1st – 6th

- **PANTS:** Navy with embroidery (*Required for Mass*) -*Must have shirt tucked in and worn with a belt. No Oversized pants*
- **SHORTS:** Optional (*Must be worn with oxford, tie and belt*).
 - Navy Bermuda with embroidery - May **not** be worn for Mass
- **OXFORD:** White short or long sleeve with navy embroidery
- **TIE:** Navy striped tie
- **BELT:** Black
- **SOCKS:** Black, White, or Navy crew socks -*No sport or ankle socks*
- **JACKET:** Navy Fleece with embroidery
- **SWEATER:** Navy cardigan, navy pullover or navy vest with embroidery
- **SHOES:** Recommended black tie, Velcro *for 1st - 4th*
 - Black or Cordovan penny loafer or black tie shoes Sketcher type *for 5th and 6th*

ALL STUDENTS (Gr. 1-6)

- **P.E. SHORTS:** Green mesh w/ school shield screen -*Worn to school on PE day*
- **P.E. SHIRT:** *Worn to school on PE day*
 - Solid Gold dry fit option with screen print
 - Solid Gold Long Sleeve Tee with Musketeers on sleeve
- **SWEATS: For PE only:** Green screened top & pants- *May wear on cold days below 40.*

ALL PANTS AND SHORTS MUST HAVE EMBROIDERED LOGO

GIRLS GRADES 7th - 8th

- **SKIRT:** Pleated skirt must meet the knee as measured at the bend of the back of leg
- **OXFORD:** **7th and 8th graders must purchase 1 white long sleeve oxford*
 - White short or long sleeve oxford with navy embroidery
- **SWEATER:** Navy, navy pullover or navy vest with embroidery
- **JACKET:** Navy Fleece with embroidery
- **TIE:** Navy tie -*Cannot be below waist*
- **SOCKS:** White crew or Knee Hi sock -*No sport or ankle socks*
- **SHOES:** Black or Cordovan penny loafer or black tie shoes Sketcher type

BOYS GRADES 7th - 8th

- **PANTS:** Navy with embroidery- *Shirt must be tucked in & worn with a belt.*
- **OXFORD:** *7th and 8th graders must purchase 1 white long sleeve oxford*
 - White short or long sleeve with embroidery
- **SWEATER:** Navy cardigan, navy pullover or navy vest with embroidery
- **TIE:** Navy Striped Tie with crest
- **BELT:** Black

- **SOCKS:** Black, White, Navy crew socks -*No sport or ankle socks*
- **JACKET:** Navy Fleece with embroidery
- **SHOES:** Black or Cordovan penny loafer or black tie shoes Sketcher type

GIRLS AND BOYS P.E. UNIFORM (Gr.7-8)

- **P.E. SHORTS:** Green mesh with screen “ST” logo-*Worn to school on PE day*
- **P.E.SHIRT:** *Worn to school on PE day*
 - Grey/Gold dry-fit gym shirt with the Musketeer logo and “St Theresa Musketeers”. Either long or short sleeve options
 - Solid Gold Long Sleeve Tee with Musketeers on sleeve
- **SWEATS: For PE only:** Green screened top & pants

ALL SHORTS AND PANTS MUST HAVE EMBROIDERED LOGO

Cold Weather Uniform

Girls may wear the regular school uniform with tights or socks. All students must wear their blue school fleece or jacket over their regular uniform. Navy Blue jackets and sweats may be worn with PE uniform in PE days. Heavier jackets may be worn on top of (not in place of) the school sweater. These should be taken off inside the classroom and the regular uniform worn.

P.E. Uniforms and School Activities

Students come dressed in P.E. uniform on the assigned P.E. day/s, unless Mass is being celebrated or there are other special activities. Students receive their P.E. schedule at the beginning of the school year. **P.E. uniform warm up suits may only be worn in cold weather only during P.E. time over the shorts.

Hair Styles

The use of popular hairstyles, jewelry, etc. leads to preoccupation with personal appearance and distraction during school. These things are also not in keeping with the wearing of a uniform; therefore, their use is discouraged. **Simplicity** should be taught and encouraged. Both boys and girls are expected to keep their hairstyles neat and combed. Hair dye/natural or artificial coloring/highlights is not permitted for girls or for boys. Any hair cut infraction and consequence will be addressed via communication with parents.

Boys are to keep their hair cut neatly and evenly in a simple style. No “latest” styles such as multi-layered styles, shaved, close crew cut (no shorter than #2; scalp is not to be visible), or any other “faddish” type of styles allowed. The hair is to be kept short (off the neck and ears, hair on top is no longer than 2” long, and out of face) and combed in a traditional style.

Girls’ hairstyles are likewise to be simple and neat. Unusual cuts, extreme or latest styles, etc. are not permitted. Coloring, dying, highlighting and spraying the hair is also not appropriate for this age and is not permitted. Hair spray is not permitted at school. Ribbons/hair accessories that are appropriate should be simple and coordinate with the uniform. Extra-

large bows, headbands with “ears” and other similar accessories should not be worn. The school administration has the right to determine what is appropriate and what is not.

Jewelry

Girls may wear a single pair of “stud” earrings. **Dangling or hoop earrings are not permitted** for the sake of safety and simplicity. No rings or bracelets may be worn. Boys may not wear earrings. A small crucifix or holy medal may be worn on a silver or gold chain under the shirt. Otherwise, no necklaces are allowed. 7th & 8th grade girls may wear one bracelet. One watch is permitted. No watch necklaces or pendants allowed. No Smart Watches are allowed. No other jewelry is permitted with the school uniform.

Make-up

Students may **NOT** wear make-up. Clear nail polish only is permitted. These items tend to lead to a preoccupation with personal appearance and sophistication not appropriate to elementary students to the detriment of the development of academic skills and discipline. Perfectly clear lip balm for chapped lips is allowed.

Nails are to be kept short (no longer than just visible from the back of the fingers), and clean. **Acrylic, gel nails** and/or colored nail polish are not permitted. Girls having acrylic or gel nails may receive a uniform infraction and will be asked to remove them at an appropriate time frame. Only during 8th grade promotion will a “natural” and approved color be given for this event.

Non-Uniform Dress Days

Explanation: The purpose of non-uniform dress is to help our students learn to dress modestly and in the attire appropriate to a Christian and to the circumstance for the day designated. It is not a day to display the latest fashion trends. **Additional jewelry and/or make up which is not permitted for regular school days is also not permitted** on these special days. In addition, no jeans, leggings, or sandals are allowed. While we expect that parents will guide their children and check them before coming to school, we also expect each student to be fully responsible for his/her appearance. ***It is not necessary*** to purchase new clothing for these occasions as specified dress is permitted according to what most students should already have in their wardrobes.

Any dress down days: students will wear PE shorts with their respective dress down shirt.

*****It is not the responsibility of the school to correct inappropriate styles of dress. Students who wear inappropriate clothing will call parents for their school uniform. Uniform Infractions may be given for students in all grades (PreK3-8) for not wearing the appropriate uniform or hair style.**

Uniform Infractions

- Students may receive a demerit (Grades 4-8) based on a certain number of uniform infractions as determined by the teacher or administration.
- Students in all grades may receive uniform infractions for not complying with hair, nail and/or uniform policies as well as giving students a reasonable time to correct the infraction or further consequences may ensue.
- Hair cut notices may be issued in all grade levels.

RELIGIOUS FORMATION

As a Catholic parish and school, it is hoped that every family is serious about the spiritual life of each of its members. Church of the Little Flower and St. Theresa Catholic School help families grow in their relationship to Christ and His church. Families are encouraged to grow beyond what is merely mandated as most basic.

When families make a sincere, determined and consistent effort to love Christ and to seize the many opportunities available for personal and community prayer, Scripture reading, conferences and discussions, retreats, spiritual reading, classes, etc. they will ground themselves in what is needed to persevere as a family on their journey through time toward eternal life.

Mass Attendance

Because St. Theresa Catholic School serves Catholic families, it is expected that its students are practicing their faith. Since this obligation is part of the third commandment and a precept of the Church, participation in Sunday Mass is considered basic and taken most seriously for any practicing Catholic. The Mass schedules in parishes combined with the number of Catholic churches everywhere we may go on a weekend make Mass available to us anywhere. (Visit www.masstimes.org for a list of masses anywhere). All staff members assist in the effort to promote participation in the Faith among our students and their families.

Dropping envelopes off at church or the parish center, without participating at the complete Mass, certainly would give a wrong message to our children. Students have their own Mass envelopes as a way of showing that they too can participate and be active members of the Church.

Masses/Liturgies during School Time

The students celebrate Mass all together once a week, usually at 9:30 a.m. or scheduled as deemed by the Pastor. The day is normally a Friday, but because of the school calendar or special feast days, another day may be chosen. Each class takes a turn hosting and preparing the liturgy. Students may invite and encourage their parents to join us. Other prayer services and devotions are also celebrated, such as the Stations of the Cross and the May and October Rosaries. These liturgies and prayer services are not replacements for participation at Sunday Mass, but are added opportunities for our children to grow in their relationship to God and the Church.

Mass/Liturgies outside School Time

Because St. Theresa Catholic School is a parish school, emphasis is placed on active participation of students and families on the parish level. To assist in this, the school has a designated homeroom grade to be represented on designated Sundays at the 9:00 am Mass (and for grades 6-8, the 5:30 pm Youth Mass). Families and homeroom teachers are encouraged to be present during this designated day.

Confessions

St. Theresa Catholic School is blessed to have weekly confessions for the students. These are scheduled as deemed by the pastor.

However, it is also the responsibility of the students and parents to receive the Sacrament of Penance regularly. Here at St. Theresa's the opportunity is available every Saturday after the 8:00 a.m. Mass in the Church. Other parishes also have weekend schedules. Teachers make frequent reminders and prepare the students. Special Penance services for the students in the school are celebrated as often as the opportunity is available. However, a family serious about its members' spiritual development will go regularly (considered to be once a month) outside of school.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The general instructional program is as follows when school is either 100% in session or Blended Learning; however, due to varying school related activities, the instructional time may change and parents will be notified.

7:43 a.m.	Line up bell
7:45 a.m.	Morning Assembly on Tuesdays and Thursdays Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays will be indoor prayer and announcements via the School Broadcast system (school day begins)
8:00 a.m.	Homeroom Period for grades 5-8 begins with prayer and announcements Homeroom Exchange for grades 5-8
8:00 a.m.	Class begins
10:45 a.m.	Lunch begins (classes are scheduled)
1:15 p.m.	Lunch ends
2:20 p.m.	Pre-K (2:20 pm) and Kindergarten (2:30 pm) are dismissed
2:45 p.m.	Dismissal

Early Dismissal Days:

Every First Friday of the month, the school will have 12:00 p.m. dismissal for faculty and staff meetings and for Staff Professional Learning Community (PLC) and Professional Development.

Other designated early dismissal days will be listed in the school calendar. There may be times when Administration may need to announce an unexpected early dismissal. This will be announced ahead of time so that families may adjust to these schedules. Students are expected to go directly home unless enrolled in one of the school programs.

Textbooks

All texts are to be properly cared for. Hard cover textbooks may not be written in or highlighted. Textbooks are rented so as not to waste good books. Students may also have access to electronic or online textbooks if available. **Students are responsible to keep textbooks covered at all times and to take care of these expensive materials. Book covers are to be kept clean and neat throughout the year.**

Curriculum

Beginning in Pre-Kindergarten and continuing through Grade 8, the curriculum in the Archdiocese of Miami includes instruction in the following areas:

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Spanish (World Language)</i>
<i>Science</i>	<i>Social Studies</i>	<i>Physical Education</i>
<i>Art</i>	<i>Music</i>	<i>Language Arts</i> (Literature, Reading, Grammar, Handwriting, Spelling)

The curriculum and minimum time allotments are policies of the Archdiocese of Miami.

CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATIONS

In keeping with the school's philosophy and mission, it is recognized that some students require special learning accommodations. The school is blessed to have a Strategies Program to assist students with learning needs. In order to provide educationally sound and academically appropriate learning accommodations for these students, the following procedures need to be followed:

1. The student must be formally evaluated by an outside testing agency of the parents' choice.
2. The results of the evaluation and any prescribed remedies must be made available to the school.
3. If remedies that require curriculum accommodations are prescribed, the teacher(s), school administrator(s), parents, and a testing agency representative will meet to formulate a plan of action.
4. The plan will be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure its effectiveness.
5. Any evaluations must be renewed every three years in order to keep prescribed accommodations available.

Learning accommodation are made for the student that reduces the amount of work required and/or increases the amount of time allowed to complete the work in the areas of Math and/or Language Arts.

If it is determined that the school, despite its best efforts, is unable to meet the needs of the student, the family will be requested to seek alternate placement for the student.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Homework is given only to reinforce a skill that has been mastered. The school has reasonable guidelines in the event homework is given. This applies to 100% return to school, 100% Virtual and/or Blended.

1. **Pre-K to Grade 1** receive a weekly homework sheet. This sheet will also contain pertinent reminders and teacher communication.
2. **Grades 2 - 6** use an agenda book in which the student writes all assignments, projects, upcoming tests, etc. (Grade 1 may begin writing their homework in the second semester). Teachers reinforce this skill as is age appropriate. **It is the child's responsibility to write this information.** Parents who need to know the assignments need to check the agenda book or MyPowerHub.

**** Reading, whether alone or reading to an adult, studying flash cards, etc. is part of homework also, not just the written assignments.**

Amount of Homework

Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten: 15 minutes as assigned by teacher; parents are encouraged to read to/with the child.

Grades 1 and 2: 30 to 45 minutes *total* consisting of:

- a. written assignment(s) each day.
- b. some kind of study or reading.

Grades 3 and 4: 30 to 60 minutes *total* consisting of:

- a. written assignment(s) not to exceed 30 minutes
- b. study or reading, no more than 30 minutes.

Grades 5 and 6: 45 to 90 minutes *total* consisting of:

- a. written assignments; all together not to exceed 60 minutes.
- b. study or reading in one or two subjects not to exceed 30 minutes.

Grades 7 and 8: 60 to 120 minutes *total* consisting of:

- a. 60 minutes written work, maximum.
- b. 60 minutes study or reading, maximum.

Parents are asked to realize that extra work brought home may not be assigned homework but unfinished class work. Students should not form the habit of taking class work home for help from parents or others.

****** Students in the After School Program are given one hour for homework. This time should be in the style of a quiet study hall. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to guarantee that homework is completed. This is up to the student.

Homework Deadlines

Homework is due on the day set by the teacher. Ordinarily this is the next day as it is practice work to prepare for class. If it is not done, the ALT grade may be lowered. **No makeup work is permitted.** In addition, students who do homework during class or who copy from another student do not receive credit, but may have his/her ALT grade lowered. See below for detention policy for students in Grades 5-8 who do not turn in homework assignments.

Students who were ill or had a real and unforeseen emergency are given another due date for class work and homework assignments. **It is the child's responsibility to ask for absence assignments** as soon as he/she returns to school or can check on MyPowerHub. The time given is ordinarily 2 days times the number of days absent. No extensions past this date are to be given. If answers to assignments have already been given to the rest of the class, alternate assignments may be given to absentees. **However, if the student was present when the assignment was given and absent on the due date, the assignment is to be given on the due date, or, at the latest, the next morning.** Older students using the block schedule are expected to obtain any missing assignment/s for the absent day/s via Google Classroom, and come prepared with all missing work on the next day of attendance.

Homework Not Turned In

Grades K - 4: Teachers will notify parents with a note (either by school standard form or in the agenda book) every two (2) days of missing homework. After five (5) missing days another notification will be made, either by note in the green folder or by a phone call.

Grades 5, 6, 7, 8: Students may receive a Saturday detention when a total of 2 homework assignments are missed within a quarter. Students report to the library in full school uniform from **7:30 – 8:30 am** for 2 missed assignments or from **7:30 – 9:30 am** for more than 2 missed assignments. Attendance is **mandatory** and will be excused only due to severe illness, high school entrance exams or placement exams. Failure to attend Saturday detention may result in **suspension** the following Monday. **When a student receives multiple Saturday detentions, the principal may meet with the family in regard to further disciplinary action.**

How to Approach Homework

Teachers will make every effort to make homework "self-sufficient." Parent involvement should be limited to an occasional "interview" on a special topic or to giving some direction on a project. The projects are to be done totally by the student. Homework is to reflect the work or lessons done in class and children are to listen and make sure they understand directions. They are to do the homework, study, etc. by themselves. Figuring out the approach to assignments, remembering what they learned in class and applying their learning to independent assignments as best they can is extremely important to the learning process. This process is more important than the "grades" because it is these skills that last a lifetime, not the actual facts. Parents may also check for quality, encouraging pride in what is given to the teacher i.e. neatness, formation of numbers, handwriting, etc.

Long range projects should be done in increments. And, these are to be entirely done by the children. Home involvement is a great ideal but children are too dependent on it (so are the parents!) and they are not learning to use the skills they should be applying. The projects may be less than picture perfect, but advantages of using their own minds will be far greater. Any projects or assignments that are not turned in at the appropriate time may receive a drop in grade as per the classroom policy.

In the event any projects or assignments are not completed or turned in, the teacher will notify the parents in writing prior to no credit being given.

COMMUNICATING PROGRESS

MyPowerHub:

Teachers may post weekly assignments on MyPowerHub by the end of the week. Parents and students are responsible to check MyPowerHub in order to help updated on homework and projects. Please note: these may change as the students progress in their academic work, so it is still necessary to write homework assignments in student agendas.

Assignments may also be posted Google Classroom.

Electronic Grades

In **grades 3-8**, student grades will be posted on MyPowerHub frequently. The purpose is to communicate ongoing progress of the students. PreK and Kinder have their own form of communication of grades.

Phone calls or e-mails by parents or by students to teachers about homework are not to be made, nor is it permitted to come back after school, or before school, for forgotten work and/or books.

It is important that teachers, as well as parents, do not “rescue”, but stick to the policies. If the concept of teamwork is applied, students will be learning to take pride and responsibility in their own work. The same policies are to be followed throughout the school in order to help students become more responsible and capable.

Parental help should be given in the form of checking the quality of the work and assisting younger children with the dictionary, etc. *Do not* give answers or prod the students. Students need to complete homework independently because it involves necessary learning and thinking skills. Homework also gives the teacher feedback regarding student understanding of classroom instruction. Homework done by someone else is cheating, and both the student and the teacher get a false picture of what kind of learning is actually taking place.

Private Tutoring, Coaching or Lessons

Except as specifically noted in this Handbook, the school does not sponsor, oversee, or otherwise provide private tutoring, coaching, therapy or other similar private lessons or services. Parents who engage school staff members for the provision of these services do so at their own risk and expense and are hereby advised that such services are outside the scope of the staff member’s employment with the school. **Parents, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the provision of private tutoring, coaching, therapy or other similar private lessons or services, regardless of where they may occur.**

Progress Communication

The school will provide regular communication about each child’s progress such as Home/School folder, email, Google Classroom, or MyPowerHub. Each homeroom teacher will communicate to the parents at the beginning of the school year how this regular communication will take place.

Conferences

Parents who would like a conference with either the teacher, principal, or an assistant principal should send a note or e-mail requesting a day and a time, or call the school office to have an appointment set up. Teachers' phone numbers will not be given out for this purpose. Students or parents are not to call teachers at their homes or cell phones.

If parents come to school to try to see the teacher “for a moment” without having made an appointment, they need to be aware that the teacher may not be able to see them because of other appointments, yard supervision duties and other teaching responsibilities. Even if a teacher makes the effort to see the parent “for a moment” he/she will not be well prepared to discuss issues of importance regarding the child’s progress, and the parent may find this type of conference less than beneficial.

To take care of matters of importance it is essential that both the parent and the teacher be prepared for the discussion. Teachers and parents are also asked to refrain from using social occasions to discuss concerns regarding a child. Social occasions are not an appropriate venue in which to engage in problem solving or even informal “school talk”.

PROGRESS REPORTS

St. Theresa School uses the Quarter system for the school year. Each quarter of the year contains approximately 45 teaching days.

In lieu of hardcopy progress reports, students in grades 2-8 will have their grades posted on MyPowerHub for ongoing viewing for parents.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued at the end of each quarter, four (4) times a year. Pre-K through 2nd grade do not receive grades but a Progress Report on various skills. A portfolio assessment is kept for each student. Students in grades 3-8 receive percentages. The purpose of the report card is to report the child’s achievement in mastery of material. The student’s achievement may or may not reflect his/her potential or ability.

Grading Scale

As of the 2026-2027 School year, the Archdiocese of Miami has put out a new grading scale for primary, elementary and middle school. Updated report cards have also been distributed. Parents and students will receive more information on the updated scales/report cards before the first quarter ends.

Extra Credit Work

Students may not to do "Extra Credit" work for the purpose of bringing up a low grade. Students and parents are to understand that there are consequences to grades that are low and to make up work just to raise it is not sending an appropriate message.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic Dishonesty is a form of stealing - it is taking work or thoughts from another. Students may feel the pressure to cheat because of parental, peer, or teacher expectations. Students may also cheat because they have not taken the proper responsibility to be prepared on their own. Students are expected to do their best: their own individual best,

not what is expected of someone else. Anyone found cheating, copying homework, class work, or exams, or giving such material to other students, may receive a major demerit and/or no credit may be given, regardless of the assignment.

Plagiarism, the copying of another's published or unpublished work (or thought) from books, magazines, internet, etc. is also stealing/cheating. The inappropriate use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) programs for writing papers will also be considered plagiarism since the child him/herself did not actually write the paper. It is against the Ten Commandments and the law. However, AI may be allowed as a tool with the teacher's discretion.

Honor Roll

Any student in grades 5 through 8 with an A or B average and appropriate Active Learning Trait grades may receive Honor Roll recognition. Honor Roll is awarded on a quarterly basis and in the final report card.

In order to receive Honor Roll, a student must meet the required criteria:

First Honors

1. Receive 95% or above in each of the major subject areas:

Religion	Social Studies
Language Arts	Science
Mathematics	Literature
Algebra (93%)	

2. Receive 88% or above in each of the Special Area class:

Art	Physical Education
Music	Foreign Language

3. Conduct: TBD

Second Honors

1. Receive 88% or above in all subject areas and in each Special Area class.
2. Conduct: TBD

Awards

An end-of-the-year Awards Assembly is held at Graduation time for Grade 8. Students in Grades 1-7 will receive their awards in their homeroom.

- **Perfect Attendance:** is awarded to a student who has not missed school and has not been tardy or dismissed early during the entire school year.
- **Most Improved:** Grades 1-8 to those who show remarkable progress.
- **Best Conduct:** Grades 1-8 to one boy and girl per homeroom.
- **Highest Average Certificate:** For Grades 1-2, we will recognize achievement in the various subject areas. Grades 3-8 for highest mark in the final average of each of

the following areas: Religion, Reading, English, Handwriting, Science, Social Studies, Math, Music, Art, Spanish and Physical Education.

- **First Honors:** Grades 5-8 (Please refer to Honor Roll Policy previously stated).
- **Second Honors:** Grades 5-8 (Please refer to Honor Roll Policy previously stated).
- **Overall Highest Average Award:** Grades 3-8 to the student who has reached the highest numeric average. All subject areas, regular and special are considered. Active Learning Trait grades are also taken into account.
- **Emilio Pachon Award:** In honor of one of our students who passed away, the school presents the Emilio Pachon Award to the student who demonstrates courage, virtue and the ability to face challenges with faith and example.

Eighth Grade: Receives all the above, plus an award for Athletes of the Year, *Most Service Rendered*, *Most School Spirit* and *Second Highest Average*, *Carmelite Award*, *Graduates of Distinction* and other appropriate recognition.

Sports Awards: Student Athletes will be recognized at the end of each sport season with their participation certificates and special recognition at school assemblies. The Archdiocese also holds a yearly Mass and recognition ceremony for the schools' top athletes. Varsity Athletes will have a special ceremony in May of each year.

PROMOTION/RETENTION

Students are usually promoted at the end of each school year when sufficient success in mastery of skills and subject matter is achieved. When a child is in danger of not being promoted due to lack of mastery, a letter is sent to the parents at the end of the first semester and the 3rd quarter to notify the parent of this possibility. Parents should also confer with the teacher regularly. Any student receiving an F average in two major subjects is in serious danger of not receiving promotion and/or receiving a recommendation for a different school placement.

Every reasonable effort will be made to address this problem with parents: conferences with the Principal and/or teachers with recommendations for professional assessments, for specific tutoring, etc., as well as for possible classroom help. Consistent and ongoing communication with parents is our policy here at St. Theresa's as well as the expectation that parents will follow the recommendations made for the child's assistance and progress.

The following protocols apply to our students:

1. An "F" in any two major subjects may be cause for non-promotion and non-acceptance at the high school level (for 8th grade students), or non-promotion for students in the other grades.
2. Any 8th grader receiving multiple "F"s, resulting in a 59 or below average will not receive a diploma will have to attend another school before advancing to high school. Any other grade level student receiving multiple "F"s resulting in a 59 or below average will not advance to the next grade.
3. Anyone receiving one "F" in a subject will not advance to the next grade level until the completion of summer school for the failed subject or for 8th grade, will not receive his or

- her diploma until the completion of summer school for the failed subject.
4. For summer school, the school requires:
 - a. 1st – 6th grade: 30 hours
 - b. 7th-8th grade: 45 hours
 - c. Proof of attendance of summer school must be provided prior to coming back in the fall. The summer school teacher must be a certified teacher and provide his or her Florida certificate number.

Graduation

Graduation from St. Theresa School indicates that a student has successfully completed the course of studies offered and demonstrates probable success in high school. It is not an "automatic" ceremony. Therefore, we encourage our students to "be their best" right up to the final days. Graduation activities are a gift from the school and are determined by the administration. The students earn participation in these various activities by their behavior, cooperation and attitude. Any or all of them can be revoked for disciplinary or academic reasons. These activities consist of a class picnic/fun day, the Graduation Mass and Reception, and the Awards Ceremony.

TESTING PROGRAM

Besides the regular testing in the curriculum, standardized testing is administered to each child in Grades 2-8 at certain times of the year.

Grades 2-8	TerraNova
Grade 2-8	ARK (Assessment of Religious Knowledge)

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips planned with an educational objective may be sponsored by Archdiocese of Miami (ADOM) school authority provided that they are safely conducted, adequately supervised and do not represent an unreasonable financial burden on the school or the individual student. Field trips of educational and/or cultural value that are directly related to the curriculum may be taken by each grade during the academic year. **One field trip is included in tuition fees at the beginning of the year.** Field trip permission forms will be sent home prior to the field trip giving the date and times, the place to be visited, and the mode of transportation. Parents are to sign and return the form if they wish their child to participate. No student may go on a trip without the signed consent of a parent or guardian. Verbal consent over the phone will not be accepted. The school uniform is usually worn. Other clothing is permitted for certain trips at the discretion of the principal. "On campus field trips" where special programs and activities are brought into the school for the students are also encouraged. St. Theresa School normally uses a bus service for field trip transportation.

Field trips may be limited due to any current communicable diseases present and CDC guidelines and will be communicated to the parents as the field trip is planned.

Parent Chaperones on Field Trips

1. Students must remain under the supervision and policies of the teacher. This means that parent chaperones must follow the guidelines given by the teacher to ensure proper supervision and order.
2. Parent chaperones will be chosen at the discretion of the teacher. There will be no more than seven (7) parents/guardians (per grade level or two adults per classroom) that can attend a given field trip at one time. However, if additional parents are needed, these will be chosen according to teacher needs and type of field trip, and ability to care for several children. The reason for this is for the teacher to have proper control of the group as well as cover liability issues.
3. Parents who accompany field trips are required by policy to have the following completed **before** the date of the field trip:
 - A. Fingerprinting done by the Archdiocese of Miami Department of Schools
 - B. The completion of the mandatory **Virtus Workshop** (certificate of completion must be presented)

If either of these two items are not completed before the date of the field trip, the parent will not be able to attend the field trip.

4. Parents are expected to support the school philosophy and the rules or directions of the teacher; parents must follow the same directions given to the students. Parents who fail to comply with the expectations of school policy will be asked not to participate in any other field trip.
5. Parents' example during these occasions is extremely important as it reinforces the message of respect and obedience to school policies. **Parents must dress modestly and appropriately as an example of an STS parent.**

Special Note

Unless a field trip is part of the curriculum and arranged by the school, the trip is not part of St. Theresa School. **Examples of trips and activities not arranged or held by the school (but not limited to) are a Disney trip, St. Augustine Trip, Islands of Adventure trip, a dinner-dance, etc.** These are private parties **not** connected to the school and will take no responsibility for them.

Parents/Guardians, students, and other parties are strictly prohibited from using the school's name and logos (e.g., shield, mascot, initials, or anything similar) for any non-school-sponsored events or purposes without the express written consent of the school. This includes, but is not limited to, the above events, the creation or sale of merchandise, promotional materials, and digital or printed publications.

Families may not meet on the school grounds as part of the "meeting place". Parents need to carefully consider that any event of this nature presents great liabilities for those hosting them. This is true also in conjunction with the recommendations in regard to mixed parties as noted later in this handbook.

Transportation Arrangements

Parents hereby acknowledge and agree that the school does not provide or arrange for student transportation to or from school, except as specifically set forth in writing by the school. Student transportation to and from school each day is a parental responsibility. The school does not authorize or endorse any private transportation arrangements. In limited and documented circumstances, a parent may engage a commercial transportation company to transport a student from school; however, any such engagement requires the written authorization of the school and the execution of school documents allowing for such an arrangement. Except upon the written consent of the school, parents should not utilize internet-based rideshare transportation services (such as Uber or Lyft) to transport students to/from school and school-sponsored activities.

Intellectual Property Protections

The name, logos, seals, mascots, slogans, designs, uniforms, and other identifying marks of St. Theresa Catholic School are valuable property of the School. These marks are used to identify the School, its mission, programs, activities, students, teams, and community. Parents, guardians, students, family members, volunteers, alumni, and other persons may not use the School's name, logos, seals, mascots, slogans, or other identifying marks for any purpose without the School's prior express written authorization. This restriction includes, but is not limited to, use on merchandise, apparel, websites, social media accounts, flyers, signs, banners, fundraising materials, promotional materials, team materials, event materials, or any other printed, digital, or commercial materials. No person may create, sell, distribute, advertise, or purchase for resale any merchandise or materials bearing the School's name, logos, or other identifying marks without prior written approval from the School. Parents/ guardians are also expected to ensure that any merchandise, apparel, or other items bearing the School's name, logos, or identifying marks are purchased only from vendors who have been authorized by the School to use those marks. The fact that an item is available for purchase from a vendor, website, or third party does not mean that the vendor or item has been approved by the School.

Participation in Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities

The school recognizes the following co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (including official athletics activities and school dances):

School Clubs:

Altar Servers	Student Council	Spelling Bee
Safety Patrol	Scouting	Broadcasting Team
Sports Program	Yearbook – Grade 8	Thespians Club
Intramurals	Geography Club/Bee	
Respect Life	Choir: -Girls -Boys -Children's, Honors	
National Jr Honor Society	LINKS Club	
After School Enrichment Programs (Varies as needed)		

Major School Activities

Fundraisers (Golf, Fair, Gala, Fishing)	May Crowning
Festival of Praise	Field Days
Christmas Pageant	Trike-a-Thon (PreK4)
School Masses and 9 am Sunday Masses	Living Stations of the Cross
Other School Approved Activities	

Athletics (as of 2026-2027 school year)

JV Boys Baseball	Varsity Boys Baseball	JV Girls Volleyball
Varsity Girls Volleyball	JV Boys Flag Football	JV Girls Flag Football.
Varsity Girls Flag Football	Varsity Boys Flag Football	JV Boys Basketball
Varsity Boys Basketball	JV Girls Basketball	Varsity Girls Basketball.
JV Girls Soccer	Varsity Girls Soccer	JV Boys Soccer
Varsity Boys Soccer	Primary Girls Soccer.	Primary Boys Soccer
Primary Boys Baseball	Primary Boys Basketball	Boys/Girls Track & Field (JV, V, Primary)
Boys/Girls Cross Country (JV, V, Primary)		
Intramurals (Fall/Spring)	Varsity Girls Softball	

Parents acknowledge that participation in these co-curricular and extra-curricular activities may be inherently dangerous and, the school cannot ensure the safety of all students involved in its activities and programs.

Prior to participation in any athletic activity, each student must complete the Parent Consent and Release of Liability form and a physician's certificate to the effect that the student is physically fit for participation in the sport. Participation includes pre-season conditioning, open gym, tryouts and practice. **Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to participation in any co-curricular or extra-curricular activities, including all athletics activities and school dances.**

The school is not responsible for student participation in any co-curricular and extra-curricular activities not identified above. Parents hereby acknowledge that students who participate in any such program or activity do so at their own risk. Parents further acknowledge that the school does not control or sanction any such program or activity and that it shall not be held liable for any injuries or damages sustained by students or others arising from participation in such program or activities.

For purposes of this handbook, a co-curricular and extra-curricular activity is defined as a group of individuals dedicated to a particular interest or activity, and a league is defined as a group of teams or individuals participating in an athletic activity.

Athletics Program

Any boy or girl who has the permission of his/her parents, meets Archdiocesan Health requirements and is progressing successfully in academic studies is eligible to try out for any sport which is sponsored by the school. Students may not be eligible for a tryout if the tuition account is in arrears. Before the beginning of any season, a permission slip is sent home. Students pay participation and uniform costs. The fee is established by the Athletic Department at the beginning of each school year. Prior to participation in any sport, each student must complete the Parent Consent and Release of Liability form and a Medical Release Form to the effect that the student is physically fit for participation in the sport. Participation includes pre-season conditioning, open gym, tryouts and practice. In order for students to participate in after-school sports, he/she must have the following criteria:

- For any sport that begins in the month of August/September: must turn in the Parent Consent and release of Liability form and the Medical release form prior to the start of the season.
- For any sport that begins in the month of October through March: must turn in the appropriate forms by the day of the tryout.
- An overall average of "C" or better on the report card in each of the following subject areas: Religion, Language Arts, Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies.
- Athletes cannot have more than one D in a core subject.
- An overall C average on the report card in the following subject areas: Art, Music, Physical Education, and Spanish.

Discipline and Athletics

Any other disciplinary issues may ensue if a student athlete is not in compliance with behavioral, academic or other issues as determined by Administration, the Athletic Director, Coach and/or teachers.

Eligibility for Sports

Eligibility for sports will be determined before/during tryouts for each sport and again at the quarter report card. Students who qualify for sports but then suffer a drop in grades may be suspended from participation.

- Students who earn a grade lower than a "C" in a core subject during the quarter may

be ineligible to participate until the following quarter pending on a grade of “C” or better on the report card.

- Students who earn a grade lower than a “C” in a core subject in the final report card may not be eligible to participate until the second quarter of the next school year.

It must be understood that all students who try out for a team will not necessarily make the team. **Parents** are **not** permitted to attend tryouts. Administration/Athletic Directors will normally not discuss tryouts with parents. The school participates in the All Catholic Conference, which is a competitive league, not a recreation league. It must be understood that playing time is at the discretion of the coach.

Once a student makes a team, they are expected to pay the team fee before the first game. Uniforms will not be handed out to students until payment is received. Students are expected to be at every practice and game.

- If a student misses practice or a game due to a medical/family emergency it will be considered excused
- If a student misses practice or game due to any other reason than a medical/family emergency it may be considered unexcused.
- It will be up to the Head Coach and the Athletic Director if the student will be suspended from participation. The School Administration reserves the right to have the final decision in these disciplinary manners.
- Sports fees will be determined on a year-to-year basis and will use the ADOM approved Arbiter Pay for these fees.

It is of utmost importance for a student to be achieving academically and behaving appropriately in school to be able to participate in after-school sports. Student Athletes and Parents are expected to comport themselves in keeping with the values of good sportsmanship, fair play, healthy competition, respect for coaches, officials and other players as well as behavior appropriate to a Catholic School. Inappropriate conduct during a game by students or parents may result in disciplinary action. Sportsmanship is a vital ingredient for all team sports.

Technology Use

The school may provide its administrators, faculty and students with access to technological devices (e.g. computers, tablets, etc.) various information technology resources including email and Internet access in order to enhance the teaching and learning environment of the school and to improve the school's operations. Students must use these resources in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of the school and Catholic teachings. Therefore, students must abide by the following general rules of conduct:

1. Respect and protect the privacy of others:
 - a. Use only assigned accounts and passwords;
 - b. Do not share assigned accounts or passwords with others;
 - c. Do not view, use or copy passwords, data or networks to which you are not authorized;
 - d. Do not share or distribute private information about yourself or others.
2. Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic resources:
 - a. Observe all network security practices;
 - b. Report security risks or violations to the school principal;
 - c. Do not vandalize, destroy or damage data, networks, hardware, computer systems or other resources;
 - d. Do not disrupt the operation of the network or create or place a virus on the network;
 - e. Conserve and protect these resources for other students and Internet users.
 - f. The use of SmartGlasses (or equivalent devices) is not allowed on school premises without the permission of the administration.
3. Respect and protect the intellectual property of others:
 - a. Do not infringe on copyright laws including downloading or copying music, games or movies;
 - b. Do not install unlicensed or unapproved software;
 - c. Do not plagiarize.
4. Respect the principles of the Catholic school:
 - a. Use only in ways that are kind and respectful;
 - b. Report threatening or discomforting materials to the school principal;

- c. Do not access, transmit, copy or create materials that violate the school's code of conduct (such as indecent, threatening, rude, discriminatory or harassing materials or messages);
- d. Do not access, transmit, copy or create materials that are illegal (such as obscene, stolen, or illegally copied materials or messages);
- e. Do not use the resources to further any other acts that are criminal or violate the school's code of conduct;
- f. Do not use the resources for non-educational purposes such as visiting chat rooms, social websites or networks;
- g. Do not send spam, chain letters or other mass unsolicited mailings;
- h. Do not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business or political campaigning without prior written approval from the school's principal.
- i. Do not engage in any form of cyberbullying.

SUPERVISION AND MONITORING

The school and its authorized personnel may monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that users are secure and in conformity with this policy. The school reserves the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks or on any technological devices used by students on campus in order to further any administrative concern. It may also use this information in disciplinary actions and may furnish evidence of a crime to law enforcement.

UNACCEPTABLE USE OF OUTSIDE TECHNOLOGY

The school expects students to use information technology and social media (including, but not limited to, the Internet, email, instant messaging and text messaging) in a responsible and ethical fashion in compliance with all applicable laws and with Christian moral principles, both in and out of the school setting. Accordingly, students may not post, place, upload, share, or communicate any images, photographs, statements or inferences relating to or including profanity, vulgarity, indecency, illegal use of drugs, illegal use of alcohol or other illegal or illicit activities. Additionally, students may not use information technology for the purpose of defaming, threatening, teasing or harassing any other student, staff member, parent, faculty member, or other person. This includes, but is not limited to, texting and communications on social networks. In addition, this rule applies to communications both during the school year and while students are on vacation or summer breaks. Students are responsible for all materials and communications made on personal websites and on social media, and the materials and communications should be consistent with Christian moral principles, including any materials or communications posted on their sites by other individuals. Moreover, any unauthorized use of the school's name (or

common names associated with the school) or any likeness or image of the school or its employees or agents is strictly prohibited.

Consent

Many technological devices used at school have the capacity to generate audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, and other similar reproductions of images, likenesses, and/or sounds. The use of any such recordings and reproductions is governed by school policy. Parental/guardian execution of this Handbook constitutes an express consent and waiver as to any such recordings and reproductions incidental to the use of any technological devices on school property or at school events.

Consequences for Violations

A violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privilege to use the school's information technology resources and any additional consequences at the principal's discretion including administrative withdrawal.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence refers to systems that simulate human decision-making processes without direct human intervention. These systems include chatbots, machine learning algorithms, and automated tools. Generative Artificial Intelligence refers to technology that creates content including text, images, video, and computer code by identifying patterns in large quantities and training data, and then creating original material that has similar characteristics. These AI tools have great potential but also have potential risks and ethical implications. St. Theresa Catholic School recognizes the growing impact of AI on education and this policy aims to guide our students in the responsible and ethical use of AI within our community.

Before using AI, students should engage in three steps: (1) Consultation. Students should always consult with their teacher prior to using any AI tool to determine if the task, assignment, or assessment can be completed with AI assistance. (2) Documentation. If granted permission to use a Generative AI tool, students must document their interaction with it by cutting and pasting the conversation into a separate document that can be shared with their teacher. (3) Citation. Where its use is permissible, students must cite the use of the Gen AI tool.

AI tools may not replace a student's work and students should be mindful to engage in ethical practices when using AI, carefully consider the validity of any AI generated content, and ensure their work product reflects their original thought and understanding. The presentation of AI generated content without a teacher's approval will be considered academic dishonesty and will result in disciplinary consequences.

Text Messaging/Telephone Calls

The school may use text messages and automated telephone calls to alert parents/guardians of important information related to the school's mission, operations, and activities. Parents/guardians acknowledge and consent to the receipt of these messages when providing their telephone numbers.

Sexting

The electronic transmission or receipt from one minor to another of any photograph or video that depicts nudity may constitute illegal sexting. Students engaged in sexting will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences which may include administrative withdrawal from school. In addition, the school administration may report instances of sexting to the Florida Department of Children and Families or local law enforcement for appropriate investigation as to violations of law. The electronic transmission of sexually explicit language by a student may also constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Asbestos

Federal Law requires that the school notify its constituents of the status of asbestos, and this is to be done in a separate mailing/communication. Therefore, you receive the following:

Prior to the end of 1988, all schools within the Archdiocese of Miami were inspected by the firm of Law Engineering in accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA).

As required by the Federal law, the three-year cycle for asbestos re-inspection has been completed. Schools within the Archdiocese of Miami were inspected during the 2024-2025 school year by the firm ARS Environmental, Inc. St. Theresa Catholic School latest inspection was on July 19, 2024, and was found to be in full compliance with the federal standards and the school does not anticipate taking any asbestos-abatement action this year.

In further accordance with AHERA 40 CRF 763.93 (g), the Management Plan for asbestos containing materials as developed by Law Engineering is available without restriction for your inspection at the school's administration office or at the Archdiocese of Miami Pastoral Center, 9401 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami Shores, Florida.

HEALTH CARDS

Each student will have on file two Health Cards. These cards must list any particular health concerns or medication of which the school personnel should be aware. Without notification, each student is expected to participate in all activities and curricula.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A student who has been absent from school because of a reportable communicable disease must have a permit issued by the Public Health Department, a physician, or a nurse, before he/she is re-admitted to school. The Principal may re-admit a pupil absent because of non-reportable communicable diseases, such as (but not exhaustive) chicken pox, German measles, and influenza.

Communicable Diseases and Related Items

Attendance at school and participation in school activities poses some risks including the transmission of communicable diseases. Although the school has taken various measures to reduce the risks of transmission, the possibility of infection from communicable diseases is nonetheless present. Parents expressly assume such risks by allowing their children to attend school and participate in school activities and/or by coming onto the school campus and attending school activities themselves.

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or any other circumstances which in the judgment of the school administration make it unfeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus- based education, school educational programs shall resume as soon as practical by way of distance learning and/or other methods adopted by the school administration and faculty. Due to the school's continuing financial obligations related to its operations, there will be no suspension, reduction, or refund of tuition in these circumstances.

Injuries / Illness

If a child has been injured at school he/she should report the injury, immediately to the teacher, health personnel, or Administration. Care will be given, the incident investigated appropriately, and parents notified if necessary. Student insurance covers these injuries if reported immediately. Accident insurance forms for injuries sustained at school are given upon request. Parents are responsible to follow up on any claims made.

After a serious injury, the school is to receive written clearance from both the parents and doctor before the student will be permitted to engage in physical activities.

PHYSICAL EXAMS

Children entering Pre-K, Kindergarten or First Grade must have a complete physical examination before being admitted to class. The results of this exam are to be reported on forms obtainable from the school office.

Head Lice

Head lice, especially among young children, seem to be a regular occurrence in elementary schools. Children play in grassy and sandy areas, handle pets, and are in close body contact throughout the day. While bothersome, this condition is not a cause for alarm. However, to avoid the further spread of lice, and to ensure prompt relief for the young "victims", children must be dismissed from school. Descriptions of the problem and suggested remedies will be given to parents of primary children at the beginning of the school year. **Discourage children and older students from touching each other's hair, sharing combs and brushes, using blankets, stuffed toys, etc. that are not one's own.**

Immunizations

The Archdiocese of Miami requires that, prior to attendance in school, each student present or have on file with the school a certificate of immunization for the prevention of those communicable diseases for which immunization is required by the Department of Health. A Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680) completed by a health care provider licensed in the state of Florida and participating in Florida Shots is required to document the administration of prescribed immunization doses.

The Archdiocese of Miami does not accept immunization exemption requests based upon religious, philosophical, personal, or other reasons. Medical-related immunization exemption requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Such requests must be made through submission of the Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680) and signed by a health care provider licensed in Florida and who regularly sees the student for medical care. Medical exemptions are only approved for legitimate documented medical needs. The Archdiocese reserves the right to not accept any medical exemption request.

Should there be an outbreak of a communicable disease at school, students with medical immunization exemptions may be asked to remain home throughout the incubation period of the disease.

Each family is to have two emergency cards filled out and updated yearly. One card is kept in the school office and the other in the health room. In the event of sickness or injury, the parents or another person indicated on the Emergency Card will be called. **It is extremely important to name someone who can pick up and care for a sick or injured child.** Failure to notify the school of readily available adults who have authority to care for the children can be considered neglect.

Medications Guidelines

Except as authorized by the school, students are not permitted to carry or distribute any prescription or non-prescription drugs or treatments, including aspirin, on the school grounds or at any school function. The administering of medicine to a student outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should only be delegated to school personnel when necessary and authorized by the school. Parents should ask their physicians if it is possible to prescribe medication so it can be administered at home. Only when necessary will the school allow the administration of medication on campus, and only under the following guidelines:

1. An authorization form must be completed and submitted by a parent or legal guardian of the student. The name of the medication and dosage should be indicated on the form.
2. Medications to be dispensed at school should be labeled with the child's name and the exact dosage. The name and telephone number of the physician should also be on the label.

3. While the school may monitor a student taking the medication, the school will not remind students to come and take their medication.

Exceptions to this policy may be made for the use, supply and administration of an epinephrine auto-injection (Epipen), or as otherwise authorized in writing by the school. In particular circumstances, the school may agree to administer medication or otherwise provide health care interventions that go beyond a minor adjustment for a particular student. In those cases, Parents hereby release the school, the Archdiocese, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the provision of those health care interventions that are beyond minor adjustments.

CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local law enforcement agency. Reports should be made to Florida's Department of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

In addition to contacting DCF, abuse may be reported to the Safe Environment Office of the Archdiocese by calling 305-215-6635 or emailing abusereporting@theadom.org.

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will seek to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews on school property. However, please note that, under Florida law, DCF and local law enforcement have the discretion to conduct unannounced interviews and to disallow school staff member's presence during these interviews.

ABUSE REPORTING

As caregivers and advocates of minor children, all teachers and staff members are required by law to report suspected child abuse, whether it is physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect. No staff member or employee of St. Theresa School can be held liable for making such reports. Indeed, any staff member who becomes aware and does not report, may be liable for serious penalties, as silence contributes to the crime. St. Theresa's will follow the procedures and support any follow-up actions required by authorities. Parents need to be aware that names of any reporters, should they be known, may not be given out and any incurred investigations may not be discussed except with the release of the investigating authority.

Cooperation with Legal Authorities

It is the practice of the school to cooperate with any local, state, or federal investigators or law enforcement officers that contact the school in the course of any criminal investigation. The school will attempt to notify the parents of any student sought to be interviewed in the course of a criminal investigation on the school premises, unless directed by the investigator or law enforcement officer to the contrary, which is usually the case in investigations involving sexual or physical abuse. The school will attempt as well to have a representative present during such an interview, unless this is not permitted by the investigators, which is often the case in investigations involving sexual or physical abuse.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES:

St. Theresa Catholic School has preparation procedures for the teachers and students at school, for extreme weather and for other safety emergencies. In general:

1. The Archdiocese of Miami, Department of Schools, will send directives in the event of extreme weather conditions and other emergencies. Therefore, please do the following:
 - Listen to the TV news, radio stations, or Internet sites;
 - DO NOT call the school or convent for school information; even if the public schools are in session, Catholic Schools may or may not be in session. If the recommendation by the Archdiocese of Miami is to evacuate or release the children, St. Theresa School will release the children. Phone lines need to be free for the school to contact you, if necessary.
 - Saint Theresa Catholic School will use the *PowerSchool's School Messenger* phone system to notify all parents of any current directives that may arise.
 - For "rumor control" or more information, use either of these two numbers:
(305) 468-5900 OR 3-1-1
2. In the event of extreme weather, **or any other emergency**, when school is already in session, the school will stay in contact with the media, weather authorities, **or any other mandated authorities, such as police**. Teachers will follow school procedures for safety. However, if family need requires it, parents may call the school and ask to pick up the children early. (If you choose to pick up children early, do this before 2:00 to avoid additional confusion in the office or traffic lanes). **If early dismissal is recommended for the entire school, procedures for phone communication phone relays will be utilized, via the children's emergency cards and/or the *School Messenger* Emergency Broadcast system. In the case of a national emergency, parents will not be permitted to pick up the children as an early dismissal.**
3. In the case of an emergency situation, in which we are advised to stay in our present locations, the school will do the following:
 - A "lock down" procedure: all access to the school will be secured, and children will remain with the teachers and staff until further notice by authorities.
 - When we are advised to dismiss students, parents will be notified by the *School Messenger* phone system. Please make sure the school has all necessary phone numbers and persons listed who have permission to pick up your children. It is imperative that you give updated phone numbers and caregivers as soon as a change becomes effective.
 - Also, indicate another family who may take your child(ren) in the case that you are required to remain at your job or location.
 - Students will then be released to parents and caregivers, as listed on your emergency cards and contact information.
 - Parents and other caregivers will be asked to wait outside the school; no one will be permitted inside. Parents/Guardians may be directed to various entrances; watch for signs indicating the last name of the child(ren).
 - Valid identification must be presented to school personnel before release. Realize that

this procedure may take some time, so everyone is expected to calmly cooperate.

4. If there would be a **situation that prevents the use of the telephone**, or *School Messenger*, parents would come for the children as soon as it is possible and safe for them to do so. Again, children will remain at school, in as safe a manner as possible, until clearance is received to dismiss them and release them into parents' care.
5. **Other situations that require an extraordinary early dismissal** (e.g. power outage, or another non-emergency situation) the school will use the *School Messenger* and/or emergency contact number system. The regular school day dismissal procedures will take place. Kindergarten and PreK students will have a designated place in which parents can pick them up since they will not be allowed to use the regular Indian Mound Trail gate to dismiss. Due to safety for the children, parents/guardians will not be allowed to use the main walk in gate to pick up their children unless there is a serious emergency that would warrant the administration's discretion to allow this.

CAMPUS SECURITY

Like every school who is concerned about safety, St. Theresa Catholic School has established procedures to insure the safety of our students and staff.

1. All school entrances, including the front gate, are locked from 7:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The front entrance gate is locked at all times; admittance is through a buzzer and Visitor Pass system. The faculty parking lot (off Sevilla Avenue) is locked from 7:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. To avoid being locked in, parents and guests are to use the Indian Mound Trail parking lot, across from the Parish Center.
2. **Coral Gables Police** monitor scheduled outdoor Assemblies as well as throughout the school day until after school activities are completed.
3. After admittance through the front gate, parents, guests, and service personnel are to come to the school office to announce the nature of business, and receive a Visitor I.D. badge, before proceeding into the school. Service personnel are requested to wear their company's uniform and/or with ID.
4. The staff has been instructed to direct anyone back to the office, especially those we may not recognize, who is not wearing their Visitor Pass or has permission being on grounds.
5. The students are also instructed not to open the front gate to anyone and to report to staff anyone who may be a stranger or are in the wrong place.
6. A separate restroom has been reserved for guests and service personnel. Adults may **not** use the children's restroom during the day.
7. A code, recognized by school staff is utilized when necessary to identify unwelcome strangers on campus or when emergency assistance is needed.
8. Saint Theresa Catholic School is not responsible for any lost or stolen articles left in cars or any other area of the school.

Parents are requested to reinforce these procedures at home while maintaining a sense of security and trust. The school desires that our children are safe but also free from excessive anxiety or lack of trust in the adults who care for them.

Other Policies

Home and School Board

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to be engaged in school activities, volunteering and service as an example to our children on the importance of a strong, Catholic family atmosphere.

One area of participating is being involved in the Home and School Board. Home and School Board members represent St Theresa Catholic School Parent Association (all parents/guardians) and show by example their support of the mission and vision and policies of St Theresa Catholic School and Church of the Little Flower. Home and School Board members meet at least twice a year but monthly is the norm.

Positions are either elected or appointed for a two-year term with the option of being elected or appointed for another two-year term.

Elected positions are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Nominations are given by the Parent Association at the last quarter of the school year. A Nomination Committee will determine those who will be placed on the ballot. The number of nominees will be determined by the Nomination Committee with the approval of the Pastor and Principal.

Due to the spirit of being on Home and School Board and representing the entire Parent Association in a spirit of trust and unity, nominees are not to “campaign” for their positions and are to show public support (Social Media, campaign paraphernalia, for example) for any candidate elected or appointed. Parents/Guardians may inquire about the respective candidates to elicit more information to make a better-informed vote. Appointed candidates are appointed by the Principal and Pastor with the advice of the Home and School Board members if needed.

Safety in Private Spaces

St. Theresa Catholic School complies with the requirements of §553.865, Florida Statutes, The Safety in Private Spaces Act. Except where facilities are specifically designated as unisex, the school's bathroom and locker room/changing facilities are designated exclusively for use by biological females or biological males. Any student who willfully enters a school restroom or locker room/ changing facility designated for the opposite sex and refuses to depart when asked to do so by any school personnel will be subject to disciplinary consequences as established by the school principal unless a specific statutory exception applies. This handbook provision shall be considered a part of the school's code of student conduct.

School Sponsored Events

The school does not sponsor, oversee, or in any way control parties or social functions at private residences. School-sanctioned events, including all field trips, excursions, or parties, are specifically identified in this Handbook or are identified in the school calendar and/or written notices generated and distributed by the school.

Parents, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to attendance at parties or social functions at private residences or from participation/attendance at events not identified in the school calendar or in written notices from the school, including field trips, excursions, or parties.

Students engaged in conduct that is contrary to the mission and philosophy of the school may be subject to disciplinary action regardless of whether the conduct occurred at a school-sponsored function.

Students/families engaged in non-school-sanctioned events are not authorized to use the school name, initials, logo or any other reference to the school for the non-sanctioned event(s) (examples but not limited to: clothing, invitations, flyers, accessories, social media) nor are they allowed to promote said event(s) or use the school for a meeting place for said event(s). School personnel are not authorized to attend said event(s). If such is the case, students/families may be subject to disciplinary action.

Parties / Treats in School

For major holidays, classroom celebrations may be arranged by Administration with teachers and room parents. These occasions are kept simple. Children are not deprived in any way and an extravagant display would not be in keeping with a Christian philosophy of sharing and simplicity in material goods. Any celebration not planned or approved by Administration is not permitted and will be refused. Always check with Administration before planning or making any purchases.

Birthday Treats

Kindergarten children may have a class treat for their birthday, such as cupcakes, donuts or cookies; the teacher will distribute these before lunch in the classroom. No cakes, punch, pizza, pastelitos, etc. are permitted. It is also discouraged for parents to bring gifts, etc. for the class, as this is not possible by every family. **Balloons may not be brought to school. See the PreK Addendum for details regarding PreK.**

Community Service Activities

Community service activities are not school activities and St. Theresa Catholic School does not mandate or direct any specific location or locations in the community where these services are to be performed. Students are free to select the location where they wish to perform community service so long as the location and the activity meet the requirements of the school. St. Theresa Catholic School does not operate or control the locations where students choose to perform community service and consequently the school, its agents, and affiliates do not assume responsibility for any injuries, damages, or losses incurred in the course of performing these services in the community. Students perform these services at their own risk.

Mixed Parties

The school does not sponsor or condone mixed parties involving boys and girls of the intermediate and upper grades, and particularly those held in the evening with dancing, etc. Psychologically, socially, and emotionally, many children are not ready for this type of socialization and are made to feel the need to imitate behavior of much older people and sometimes, follow behavior not in keeping with our Catholic values (types of clothing, certain kinds of dance, less than respectful or modest ways of treating each other). These occasions usually bring **negative distraction and other effects to the students also during the school day**. Some of the effects seen in school include **the pressure for boy/girl exclusive relationships, gossiping about others, excluding other friends, mean comments, passing notes in class, abuse of telephone use at home, obsession with social media and even peer pressure among parents**.

We do encourage age-appropriate gatherings that are under the guidance and watchful eye of parents, giving the students security and safety. Most middle graders enjoy activities with their own gender, and when mixed, picnics, bar-b-cues, sports activities, skating, amusement parks with rides, etc. in the day-time are more comfortable. Strictly speaking, this matter of parental-sponsored parties is one of a home decision, yet it is hoped that home and school are "speaking" the same message.

Invitations to parties

Invitations to parties **are not allowed to be distributed anytime at school**. Because invitations can become an exclusion issue with students and cause hurt feelings and distraction in class, students must mail them from home. There are also legal implications to the distribution of invitations to private events on school grounds.

Advertising by Outside Vendors/Businesses

St. Theresa School does not permit advertising by businesses/vendors, unless it is information from a company in direct relationship to the school and those it serves, and, with the permission of the principal. An example of this would be the uniform company providing services to families. With the principal's permission, brochures or flyers may be placed in the office literature holder for parents to freely peruse.

SCHOOL FINANCES

Tuition

Tuition is the main source of revenue for the school. St. Theresa Catholic School uses FACTS, a tuition management service that has all accounts computerized. This allows our accounting office to be up to date and provides various options for payment. Detailed information is given to each family at the time of registration. **All families are expected to use FACTS if not paying in total at the beginning of the year.** All families are asked to be faithful and on time with payments. The school is providing an essential service to the family and relies on the tuition income to meet its operational expenses. If there is difficulty in meeting the commitment on time, please notify the school promptly.

Tuition statements are given monthly. If it happens that a family's account is not up to date, a personal communication from the accountant or principal may be sent. **If the matter remains unresolved, the child(ren) may not be permitted to attend school until the commitment is cleared. Cafeteria, Sports, and After School accounts are also expected to be maintained up to date.**

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The satisfaction of all financial obligations to the school, including tuition and fees, constitutes a material condition for continued enrollment in the school. The school may disallow students from taking quarterly, semester, or final examinations if the parents or legal guardians fail to meet any financial obligation to the school. In addition, the school may withhold the issuance of transcripts or any other student records and/or disallow participation in or access to school activities, and/or administratively withdraw the student if any financial obligations are not met.

Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE to be responsible for the full balance of tuition and any related fees regardless of any scholarship that may be available. Should such scholarship awards not cover the entire balance due or otherwise not become available, Parents/Guardians agree that they remain responsible for the full tuition amount and fees. Additionally, with respect to these scholarships, any student with a disability does not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended.

SCHOOL FINANCES AND UNEXPECTED CIRCUMSTANCES

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or any other circumstances which in the judgment of the school administration make it unfeasible, unsafe, or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, school educational programs shall resume as soon as practical by way of distance learning and/or other methods adopted by the school administration and faculty. Due to the school's continuing financial obligations

related to its operations, there will be no suspension, reduction, or refund of tuition in these circumstances.

Fundraising

Tuition payments alone do not suffice to financially support the school. Therefore, the cooperation of all is encouraged in fundraising projects: the Parish/School Fair, the Golf Tournament, the Gala Dinner Dance and the Fishing Tournament. All of these efforts have been very successful here at St. Theresa's, but even more so, they gather the parents, faculty and staff together in a wonderful family spirit.

There are other small fundraisers throughout the year sponsored by students, Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, and/or parent groups. Additional activities may be added by the school or Home and School as the need arises.

Charities In order to incorporate the practice of generosity and charity in the teaching of Catholic values, students also help many people in various programs:

1. Respect Life - usually in October. Students donate money toward baby cribs and bring baby clothing and care needs. This enables expectant mothers to choose life for their children instead of a possible abortion.
2. Other Charities that reflect the mission and philosophy of St Theresa Catholic School will be taken into consideration. Even though the school would like to help everyone that is in need, it is pertinent that the school review its plan so that it may reasonably assist in a prudent and considered manner. Not all charities may be able to be assisted. The Administration has the right to determine which charities may be assisted in a given year.

POLICY ON ELECTRONIC PAYMENT APPLICATIONS AND ONLINE GIVING PLATFORMS

No student or family member may solicit funds in the school's name unless such solicitation has been authorized in writing by the principal.

All fundraising platforms for school-related charities or fundraising events are to be Archdiocese-approved and registered with the parish or school. Additionally, no student, family or fundraising committee may use personal electronic payment and online fundraising platforms to raise funds as per ADOM policy.

Parent Stewardship Service

Because families are part of Church of the Little Flower parish school, Stewardship is a guiding principle for demonstrating how we support the community in which we serve. We contribute our time, talent and treasure as a function of our dedication to St. Theresa School. Children learn more from our actions as we set the proper example of

involvement as well contributing to the school's mission of forming the students in a nurturing, Christ-centered environment.

STEWARDSHIP HOURS

Each family is asked to contribute some type of service to our parish family. **Families are required to participate in at least ten (10) hours of Stewardship each year, four (4) of which are done at the Parish/School Fair.** This commitment helps provides service to the school and the parish, thus showing that the school and families are part of a proactive mission of forming the children holisitcally. Forms suggesting various types of family service activities are given at the beginning of the year. Additional opportunities are available as projects arise. Parents are welcome to get involved anytime by contacting one of the Home & School Board Coordinators.

TRAFFIC PROCEDURES

The safety of the children is the primary goal in all traffic procedures. Efficiency is also important to do the large student body with many families. The property and safety of our surrounding community neighbors must also be considered. Traffic procedures have been designed with, and approved by the City of Coral Gables.

It is essential that all families comply with the daily procedures and with all directions given by police officers and school staff on duty directing traffic and/or supervising children.

It is also essential that **all drivers be aware of the movements of children as they enter and exit their cars**. For this reason we ask that drivers (parents, grandparents, older siblings, aunt, uncles, etc., etc...) **refrain from cell phone usage while dropping off or picking up students**.

Courtesy and patience set a good example for the children and show a wonderful Christian witness. With a student body of close to 1000 from over 600 families, patience and courtesy are necessary for the safety of everyone.

The school is located in a residential neighborhood, therefore it is required that:

- Drivers may not honk horns during the pick-up procedure
- Drivers do not block neighbors' driveways
- Drivers do not park along the streets surrounding the school

Cars are not to be parked on Palos, Indian Mound, Valencia, or on the roundabout between Indian Mound and Valencia per Coral Gables Police Department. Local speed limits must be strictly enforced, as do Stop signs. Indian Mound is a one-way street during school arrival and dismissal times.

Morning Arrival Procedure

In the morning, parents may choose from two options for drop-off locations, either using Indian Mound Trail or Sevilla Avenue:

1. **Student drop-off along Indian Mound Trail:** This requires that the adult remain in the car while the student/s exit and walk directly into the schoolyard via the double gates. The first car stops at the first cone and all succeeding cars line up as far forward as space allows all the way to the corner of Indian Mound Trail and Sevilla Avenue. **As soon as the car is stopped, students must exit; do not wait to drive to the first cone as other cars are waiting.** Students carefully close the car door and then proceed to walk in the protected zone to the double gates of the schoolyard.

Parking in the lot across the street and children walking is discouraged because this slows the cars following the above procedure. However, if this is used, students must wait at the cross walk until direction is given to proceed across the street, and then

walk in the protected zone to the double gates and into the north lot. **The front walk-in entrance to the campus is not used for arrival or dismissal. Pre-K in room 107 can use the walk in gate for arrival purposes.**

2. **Drop-off area in the south lot, off Sevilla Avenue:** This requires that parents follow the "U" shaped in-and-out pattern. Drive in as far forward and as far to the right as possible next to the cones. **No parking of cars is permitted.** This lot is reserved for school personnel. Parents are asked to remain in the car and drop children at the cones. Children enter the school through the doors near the entrance to the library and proceed out to the morning assembly area in the north lot. **Students and/or parents are not to use the cafeteria doors or the driveway gate** adjacent to the cafeteria, nor the gates on Palos Street.
3. **Stopping:** Parents who have appointments or office business are asked to park in the parking lot across the street from the Parish Center - corner of Indian Mound Trail and Sevilla Ave. Parking in the teachers' parking lot may result in being locked in.
4. **Pre-K Students:** Parents who are escorting Pre-K children come in the Pre-K Gate (Sevilla parking lot) and leave the children in the classroom. Parents may not park on Palos Street (not permitted by the city), but should use the parking lot behind Comber Hall. **All students older than Pre-K are expected to walk into school by themselves or with siblings through the doors near the library entrance.** Parents will be asked to "let them go." See the PreK Addendum for more details.
5. All students are expected to be in their proper areas for outdoor and/or indoor Morning Assemblies by the time the second bell rings at 7:45 a.m. Gates are closed at this time, and children are late. Late students must line up at the front entrance gate to receive a tardy slip.
6. Students who arrive late to school after the Morning Assembly bell, will be marked late. Please note the policy on tardiness in this handbook.
7. Students arriving after 8:00 am must then come to the office for tardy/admittance slip. Students with them proceed to their classrooms independently. **Parents are not to accompany late students into the campus even on rainy days.**

Rainy Mornings

Indian Mound Trail: Cars who normally drop off students along Indian Mound Trail will drive in the gates on these days and proceed through the "loop" and under the awning behind Our Lady's Terrace. Please follow any instructions given by the staff. Please be careful in driving forward as other cars are also nearby. Cars drive out of the schoolyard making a **right** turn.

Sevilla Avenue: Use the same procedure as in good weather, except that cars stop at the Library awning and students exit into the school. If the line is already full, the cafeteria awning may also be used and students enter into the Cafeteria.

- When weather is not severe, cars are encouraged to use the "normal" routine, with students using umbrellas or ponchos, to cause the least amount of stopping and lateness as possible. Parents are NOT to walk the students into the yards.
- Please do not block driveways of residents or park on private property of neighbors. Also, please do not park in the streets. It is essential that we keep the traffic moving.
- Lastly, please obey the laws, speed limits and verbal directions of police and school staff in order to protect everyone, especially the children.
- Police may give out citations or tickets if any traffic/parking laws are violated and the school will not be held responsible for these violations.

Afternoon Pickup Procedure

The school will continue to use the PickMyKid Safe Smart dismissal program and follow these protocols until further notice. The following procedures are done for both regular and 12 pm dismissal days.

Pre-K and Kindergarten

1. Dismissal for Pre-K and Kindergarten children takes place at **2:15 (for Pre-K) and 2:30 (for Kindergarten)**. Pre-K students will be picked up via car and are dismissed from the Pre-K classrooms. Kindergarten children are walked to the Indian Mound gate and parents/guardians may wait there. Parents may **not** pick up "by hand" at the main walk in gate after 2:40 p.m. Dismissal for the entire school begins at 2:45 p.m. so the North Lot must be clear at that time.
2. If the child in Pre-K and Kindergarten is part of a car pool, the driver must pick up this child first and return to the car, then drive to the appropriate lot (by last name; see below) to pick up the other children in the car pool.

Grades 1 through 8

1. Students in **Grades 5—8** are permitted to **walk home**. A younger child may be permitted to walk home with an older sibling at the parent's discretion and with written permission. **Students who walk home must be children who live in the neighborhood of the school and are able to walk home without an adult.** Parents who wish this type of dismissal must fill out an information sheet at the beginning of the school year giving the home address and name of adult in the home. Students are then issued a pass that must be shown to the supervisor at the Sevilla Walker Gate each day.

Children may not be "walked out" to a parked car, or walk to neighborhood streets/Church to be picked up. Walkers should bring rain gear in the event of inclement weather, since they walk home in this weather. Students may not wait in the parking lot across the street. If this becomes an issue, students may have walking priveleges taken away.

2. Car pick up, whether it be by a parent for a family, or by a designated adult for a car pool with more than one family represented, will be divided according to the first letter of the last name of the oldest child in the group riding in the car. **Parents are requested to post an 8 ½ x 11 card on the dashboard - with the printed last name of the car pool as well as the student number for PickMyKid. Provide this card to any other relative/guardian picking up the student/s.**
 - **Students in grades 4-8** will be picked up in the south parking lot, bordering on Sevilla Avenue.
 - **Students in grades K-3** will be picked up in the north lot, bordering on Indian Mound Trail.
 - All siblings and/or other children riding in the same car are to go to the same pick up area as the youngest child in the group. (Drivers may vary, but student groupings will remain stable).
 - PreK students will be assigned to one of the two lots depending on siblings.
4. Drivers of cars to either the north or south lots will be asked to follow the same basic procedure.
 - Do not park on the street - this will cause traffic congestion and safety hazards when backing out against cars coming properly into the lots. In addition, children will not be released outside of the two yards.
 - Please follow the directions of the adult and student safety patrol moderators.
 - A U-shaped pattern will be followed in both lots. When driving in, pull as far to the right and as far forward as possible.
 - Adults must remain in the car at all times. If you need assistance, wave down a nearby traffic monitor. Driver will give the name of the carpool to the teacher on duty and the student will meet their car at the cone.
 - **When the children are not present when you arrive, you may be asked to loop around again. Please cooperate with these directives so traffic can keep moving.**
 - When all children are seated safely in the car and the doors are closed, the driver may pull out and exit through the passing lane. Please **do not use cell phones** during pick-up time.
 - After 3:15 p.m., all unsupervised children who remain on school grounds, and not involved in an After School program, will be escorted to the Late Pick Up Care Program. Parents will be charged for late pick-up since the staff is paid for this service. No child may be left unsupervised at any time.
 - **Cards with the last name of the car pool are to be visible in the windshield.**
 - Early release of students for convenience reasons is not permitted. Doctor's appointments or other emergencies require a written note to the school office and are marked on the child's attendance record. Early dismissals are to be **requested in the morning**, and the child **dismissed between 2:00 – 2:30 p.m.** Early dismissals are granted only for rare emergencies and these must be noted on attendance records.
5. Parents are responsible to explain drop-off and pick-up procedures to any other adult

designated to drive the children to and from school. The school cannot assume responsibility for confusion in this matter, and disregard for established procedures will jeopardize the safety of your children.

6. If parents have a change in their normal drop-off or pick-up routine, they must let their child(ren) know before he/she leaves for school in the morning. If there is an emergency and the parents' plans change, they may call the school office and email the child's homeroom teacher and the child(ren) will be notified.
7. Any child in After Care or Late Pick Up programs must pick up their children according to the guidelines for each program. Failure to do so may result in a late fee of \$10 per 5 minutes. The purpose is for staff members who are working overtime to ensure the safety of the children.
 - a. Students not registered in After Care or Late Pick Up will incur the same late fee; if a student not registered in our After Care programs is consistently being picked up late (determined by Administration), then the student will automatically be enrolled in one of the programs and the fee will be billed to the parent. This ensures the safety and liability of our children at all times.

Rainy Day Pick Up Plan

1. Drivers who pick up Pre-K and Kindergarten children follow the same procedure as for good weather. *Pick up time for Pre-K children by an approved escort is at **2:15 p.m and 2:30 pm for Kindergarten.***
2. Students from Grades 1 - 8 who are waiting to be picked up by car will follow a procedure similar to their normal dismissal. Drivers who pick up students in the north lot off Indian Mound, follow the normal day procedure but stop at the awnings where students are escorted to the cars. Students are seated in classrooms and will be called to the car. South Lot drivers come in Sevilla and stop at the long awning outside the Library, in light rain, or outside the cafeteria, if the rain is heavy. Assistants will be present.
3. In both cases, school personnel are using PickMyKid and megaphones and walkie-talkies to call the children. Parents are encouraged to display the name and PickMyKid student number of the car pool clearly to them. Faculty members assist with umbrellas. Parents or designated drivers are asked to be very patient, as this takes time. **Parents, grandparents, or other caretakers are not to walk in to pick up students as this causes confusion and congestion on these days. In any weather, when other persons are sent to pick up students, please explain the procedures to them.**
4. **PreK has more detailed directives for rainy day pick up located in the PreK Addendum.**

VOICING CONCERNS

From time to time, parents may have questions regarding school policy or situations regarding their own child. Please use the following procedures for handling these concerns in a respectful and timely manner:

1. Parents/guardians are to seek facts for themselves, not rumor from other parents or other people; and not through social media. Parents are to talk about their own child(ren) and their concerns.
2. Parents/guardians are to discuss the matter with the proper person, such as the classroom teacher as soon as possible.
3. After meeting with the specific teacher, if a parent/guardian believes further resolution is needed, they are to contact the Assistant Principal in charge of the grade level involved.
4. If satisfaction is still needed, parents/guardians are to make an appointment with the Principal through the Office/Admissions Director.
5. If parent/guardian concern warrants further action, they are to make an appointment with the Pastor.
6. If the concern involves a student or family other than another parent's own child, they are requested to see the Principal.

In most cases, the problem can be resolved with little difficulty. The school administration does not ignore or retreat from parental concerns. Recommendations and possible solutions will be explored and implemented to the best of our ability. The remedy of problems and the maintenance of a solid Catholic school environment according to stated philosophy and guidelines is what is sought. However, we recognize that not all decisions will be popular ones, nor can all needs possibly be met within the school. In that case, another school environment may be the solution for a child and/or for parents.

SCHOOL POLICY AND THE PRINCIPAL'S RIGHT TO AMEND

Any student action that is not in keeping with the philosophy/ objectives of St. Theresa Catholic School is subject to the review of the principal and may lead to withdrawal from school.

Since situations could arise that were not foreseen at the time of writing this Handbook, the school reserves the right to initiate, change or modify the policies as needed. St. Theresa Catholic School publishes any revisions in the school newsletter and other bulletins, and in directives given to the students. Parent and students will be notified of any amendments. However, the school has the right to add, delete or revise any school policy or procedure with or without notice.

The Principal and/or Pastor is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rules for just cause at his/her discretion.

It is expected that all Parents and Students will cooperate and support these policies in a positive manner. When this is not the case, the family may desire to choose another school situation that meets their needs. St. Theresa Catholic School also reserves the right to recommend or require parents/guardians to withdraw from a working relationship with the school.

ELECTRONIC ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Periodically, the school may require that parents or guardians make electronic acknowledgments confirming the receipt and/or acceptance of various policies, procedures, notices, releases or updates. Any time a parent/guardian makes an electronic acknowledgment by clicking "submit" or "accept" on an electronic document, that individual is agreeing that he/she has read, understood, and agrees to be bound by the contents of the electronic document. Electronic acknowledgments and signatures are valid and binding and may serve as consent to the contents of any electronic communication. Parents and guardians are responsible for reviewing the contents of any electronic document prior to making any electronic acknowledgments. In addition, **Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE** to receive and be bound by electronic acknowledgments.

Parents and Students are required to sign and date a copy of acknowledgment of this handbook upon entrance and/or re-registration to the school. In case of shared custody, BOTH parents are required to sign upon entrance and/or re-registration to the school unless there is another legal document allowing only one parent to sign.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PARENT HANDBOOK ADDENDUM

Welcome and Philosophy

Our Early Childhood Program reflects the belief that every child is created in God's image and likeness, with unique gifts and abilities. We nurture spiritual, social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth through developmentally appropriate, play-based learning in a Catholic environment. Families are partners in this journey, and together we build the foundation for lifelong faith and learning.

Curriculum and Learning Approach

We align our curriculum with:
Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards
Florida Catholic Conference Early Education Program Standards
NAEYC best practices

Our curriculum weaves Catholic values, daily prayer, and Gospel teachings into play-based, child-led learning experiences. Teachers thoughtfully design environments filled with opportunities for literacy, numeracy, science, and hands-on exploration to inspire curiosity and a sense of wonder in God's creation. Using ongoing, research-based assessments, learning experiences are continually tailored to support the unique needs and growth of every child in our care.

Daily Schedules and Routines

Consistent routines help children feel secure. A typical day includes:

- ✓ Morning welcome and prayer
 - ✓ Center-based learning and outdoor play
 - ✓ Snack and mealtimes
 - ✓ Rest/nap time
 - ✓ Closing prayer and dismissal
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Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

- Pre-K drop off begins at 7:15 a.m. Children must be in class by 7:45 a.m.
- It is in the best interest of children that they are on time and able to participate in the opening activities of the group as this sets the tone for the rest of the day and aids in smooth transitions.
- Students are to be dropped off through their designated carline. The teacher will help escort the students out of the car.

- Students arriving late will have to sign in at the main office.

Dismissal

- Pre-K students are dismissed at 2:00 p.m.
- Students in Pre-K will be picked up through their designated pick up line. The teacher will help place the student in the car. Parents must then pull forward to the designated buckle zone to safely secure their child before entering community traffic.
- Late pick up and aftercare is available. Students need to be registered. Late Pick up is up to 4:00 p.m. Aftercare is up to 6:00 p.m.

Authorization for Pick-Up

- Children will only be released to their parents and those persons listed on the registration form as emergency contact/alternate pick-ups.
 - A photo ID will be required of someone whom we do not know. Staff have access to all student files to ensure that children are dismissed only by those listed on the emergency contacts. A signed note must be given to the teacher or office prior to releasing your child to someone who is not listed on your child's registration form.
-

Toileting and Self-Care Policies

We encourage and support toileting independence in alignment with Florida DCF and ADOM guidelines.

- **Developmentally appropriate support:** Toileting skills develop gradually from infancy through preschool. Teachers provide age-appropriate guidance, encouragement, and support at each stage of development.
 - **PK3 and older:** Children entering PK3 and PK4 programs are expected to be toilet trained and able to manage their toileting needs with minimal assistance. Occasional accidents are understood as part of development and will be handled calmly and respectfully.
 - **Partnership with families:** Open communication between home and school helps maintain consistency and supports your child's success.
 - **Extra clothing:** Families are asked to provide several complete changes of clothes (including socks and shoes) to keep at school for use if needed.
 - **Encouraging independence:** At all ages, teachers gently guide children toward greater self-care skills, promoting confidence and a sense of accomplishment.
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Health, Illness, and Safety

- **When to Stay Home:** Children must stay home if they have:
 - A fever of 100.4°F or higher (must be fever-free for **24 hours without medication** to return).
 - Vomiting or diarrhea (must be symptom-free for **24 hours without medication** to return).
 - Any undiagnosed or contagious rash.
 - Any communicable illness (e.g., flu, chickenpox, pink eye, strep throat, stomach virus).
 - Head lice or nits.
 - Eye discharge (eyes must be clear to return, even with a doctor's note).
 - Excessive nasal or ear discharge.
- **Absences:** Parents should notify the teacher by email if their child will be absent.
- **Physician's Note:** Required for any absence of **3 or more consecutive days** or after a contagious illness to verify the period of contagion has passed.
- **If a Child Becomes Ill at School:**
 - Parents will be contacted to pick up their child **immediately**.
 - Staff will assess the illness, keep the child comfortable, and monitor until pickup.
- **Medication Policy:** Medication will only be administered with written parental consent and physician instructions. (If Applicable)
- **Health & Safety Practices:**
 - Frequent handwashing is practiced daily.
 - Monthly emergency drills are conducted to ensure preparedness.
- **Exposure Notifications:** If a child in the program is diagnosed with a communicable illness, parents will be notified with the illness name and symptoms for awareness.

Immunizations

The Archdiocese of Miami requires that, prior to attendance in school, each student present or have on file with the school a certificate of immunization for the prevention of those communicable diseases for which immunization is required by the Department of Health. A Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680) completed by a health care provider licensed in the state of Florida and participating in Florida Shots is required to document the administration of prescribed immunization doses.

The Archdiocese of Miami does not accept immunization exemption requests based upon religious, philosophical, personal, or other reasons. Medical-related immunization exemption requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Such requests must be made through submission of the Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680) and signed by a health care provider licensed and located in the state of Florida. Medical exemptions are only approved for legitimate documented medical needs. The Archdiocese reserves the right to not accept any medical exemption request.

Before attending school, all students are required to have a valid immunization record on file in compliance with the Florida Department of Health guidelines.

Should there be an outbreak of a communicable disease at school, students with medical immunization exemptions may be asked to remain home throughout the incubation period of the disease.

Students without the required documentation will not be allowed to attend until all immunization requirements are met.

Communication with Families

- **Partnership and Respect:** We value open, respectful communication and strong partnerships with families to support each child's growth and development.
- **Classroom Updates:** Teachers provide regular updates through [classroom apps, newsletters, or folders] to keep families informed about daily experiences, learning, and upcoming events.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

- Held 2–3 times per year to discuss your child's progress, screenings, assessments, and overall development.
- Dates will be shared in advance, and families will have opportunities to sign up for a convenient time.
- Additional conferences may be scheduled as needed to support your child's success.

- **Addressing Concerns:** Sensitive matters should first be discussed directly with your child's teacher. If further support is needed, families are encouraged to reach out to school administration.
 - **Ongoing Communication:** Families are welcome to schedule a meeting with teachers at any time to discuss questions, concerns, or celebrations.
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Positive Behavior Guidance and Social-Emotional Development

Our Approach:

- We use positive guidance strategies that reflect the dignity of each child and model Christ's love.
- Teachers encourage self-regulation, problem-solving, and making amends when needed.
- Clear and consistent limits are set with kindness and respect.
- Prohibited practices include corporal punishment, shaming, food withholding, and punitive toileting methods.

Positive Guidance Strategies:

- Redirecting children from inappropriate behavior toward positive choices.
- Teaching appropriate social-emotional skills to address challenges.
- Reassessing the environment, activities, and supervision to support positive behavior.
- Using positive language and celebrating appropriate behaviors.
- Maintaining consistent, age-appropriate consequences for classroom rules.
- Building and maintaining strong, supportive teacher-child relationships.

Family Partnership:

- Parents will be notified if disruptive behaviors arise.
- Conferences may be scheduled with the Teacher and family to discuss strategies for supporting the child.
- A specialized team may be formed to create a plan that promotes the child's success.

Prohibited Practices:

- Any form of corporal punishment (e.g., hitting, spanking, shaking, rough handling).
- Isolation where the child cannot be seen or supervised.
- Binding, tying, or restricting movement.
- Using or withholding food or beverages as punishment.
- Demeaning or humiliating toileting practices.
- Emotional abuse, threats, profane language, or verbal abuse.

Expulsion & Suspension Policy

Our program is committed to creating a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where all children can grow, learn, and thrive. We align with the Florida Department of Children and Families and the Office of Early Learning's position on supporting children's social-emotional and behavioral health through positive practices.

● **Our Commitment:**

- Promote positive, developmentally appropriate classroom environments.
- Prioritize the social-emotional well-being of all children.
- Encourage developmental screenings and referrals for additional support as needed.
- Support parent involvement and partnership in addressing their child's needs.
- Provide professional development for staff on alternatives to expulsion and suspension.
- Collaborate with early childhood mental health consultants and interventionists when appropriate.
- Track and analyze data on expulsions, suspensions, and dismissals to ensure fair, thoughtful decision-making.

● **Parent Cooperation**

The school views the education of a student as a partnership between the parents and the school. Parents and students are expected to comply with the school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials, whether it be at school events, on or off school campus, or on social media or other public forum. Just as a parent can withdraw a child from the school if desired, the school has the right to administratively withdraw a student if it determines at its discretion that the parent or student partnership with the school is irretrievably broken.

While every effort is made to avoid expulsion or suspension, the program reserves the right to discontinue a child's enrollment for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Failure to follow the policies and procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook.
- A child's needs exceed what the program can safely and effectively support within current staffing and resources.
- Behavior that poses a serious risk to the health and safety of the child, other children, or staff.
- Parent or guardian behavior that is disruptive, unsafe, or violates childcare licensing regulations (e.g., vulgarity, intimidation, harassment, or interference with program operations).

We strive to work closely with families to address challenges and seek solutions before reaching this point. Every decision to terminate enrollment is made thoughtfully, with the best interests of all children and staff in mind.

Nutrition and Mealtime Expectations

- **Parent-Provided Snacks:** Parents are asked to provide nutritious snacks for their child's mid-morning and lunch. Please ensure all snacks are cut into small, bite-sized pieces to avoid choking hazards.
- **Nut-Free Facility:** To protect children with allergies, our program is a **nut-free environment**. Any food items containing nuts or nut-based ingredients will be sent home unopened.
- **Mealtime Practices:**
 - Teachers model gratitude and lead children in prayer before meals.
 - Mealtime is treated as a social and learning opportunity where children practice self-help skills and table manners in a supportive environment.

Rest Time Procedures

Daily rest/nap time is provided. Students will need a fitted sheet, blanket and pillow. Items may be purchased through the teacher.

Celebrations, Birthdays, and Holidays

- **Religious Observances:** Classroom celebrations and activities reflect the liturgical calendar and Catholic traditions.
 - **Birthday Celebrations:**
 - All treats must be **store-bought** and **free of any nut ingredients** to protect children with allergies.
 - Homemade treats are not permitted.
 - Birthday celebrations are for your child and their classmates only; 2 family members or outside guests are permitted to attend in classroom celebrations
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Transition to Kindergarten

Teachers and administrators support a smooth transition by:

- Building readiness skills
 - Offering parent resources
 - Coordinating visits to Kindergarten classrooms when possible
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Family Involvement Opportunities

Families are welcomed to participate in:

- Classroom activities
 - Faith-based events
 - Volunteer opportunities (must meet ADOM Safe Environment requirements)
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Possessions from Home

Jewelry Girls may wear a single pair of "stud" earrings. **Dangling or hoop earrings are not permitted** for the sake of safety and simplicity. No rings or bracelets may be worn. Boys may not wear earrings. Students may wear a small crucifix or holy medal on a silver or gold chain under their shirt. Otherwise, no necklaces are allowed.

- **Toys and Personal Items:** Toys from home are not permitted unless a teacher has requested an item for a specific classroom activity or event. Please check your child's pockets before school to ensure small items such as toys, coins, or other objects are not brought to school.

What Students Need Daily

- Each child is assigned a labeled cubby for personal belongings.
- A **complete change of clothes** (shirt, shorts/pants, socks, and underwear) must always remain in the cubby.
- Students will need nap **sheets**, which can be purchased through the program (includes carrying pouch). Sheets will be sent home every Friday for washing and must be returned the following Monday in their pouch.
- **Labeling:** All personal items, including clothing, water bottles, and nap mats, must be labeled clearly with your child's first and last name.
- **Water Bottles:** Water bottles must have a secure cap and be labeled with the child's name.
- **Prohibited Items:** Bottles, pacifiers, and sippy cups are not permitted at school.

Parent-Student Acknowledgement Form

Saint Theresa Catholic School *Parent-Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form*

I, as Parent or Legal Guardian, acknowledge that I have read the entire contents of the Parent-Student Handbook including the Early Childhood Parent Handbook Addendum and understand the consequences of any violations of the rules and policies of the school.

I agree to cooperate with the school in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook. I also understand that the school has the ultimate authority over the administration of the school and the interpretation of the school's rules and policies. Moreover, I further understand that all of the school's policies whether written or verbal are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school with or without notice.

I also hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms of the **RELEASES** outlined in the School-Sponsored Events Policy, the Participation in School Athletics or Organizations Policy, and the Use of Photos Policy.

(Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name)

(Date)

(Signature Parent/Legal Guardian)

(Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name)

(Date)

(Signature Parent/Legal Guardian)

(Print Student Name)

(Grade)

(Print Student Name)

(Grade)



School Information

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Social Media and Website: (Scan the QR Code)

