



# Saint Stephen

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL

## Parent Handbook

### **Mission**

To partner with parents in the whole-person formation of their children, who are made in the image of God and destined for communion with Him.

### **Vision**

To form students who embody Jesus Christ, who are fully alive as seekers of truth, lovers of goodness, and creators of beauty.

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Revised 2022

*The provisions contained in this handbook may be changed at any time, with or without notice. This handbook is not an all-inclusive summary of all rules governing student conduct and behavior.*

**Contacts:**

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Principal: Elizabeth Black	eblack@ststephenparish.com
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**The Role of Parents in Catholic Education**

The parent/guardian has the primary and sacred responsibility to educate his/her child/ren in the Catholic faith. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

*Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to the responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery—the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the “material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.” Parents have a grave responsibility to give good examples to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them. Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of the Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents. (2223, 2226)*

It is essential to the child’s growth and development in the Catholic Faith that the parents/guardians live the life of faith at home. The effectiveness of Saint Stephen School’s education process depends upon this.

**Catholic Parents:**

1. Participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy EVERY Sunday (or Saturday evening) with their children. The third commandment tells us to keep holy the Sabbath. The Catholic Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass” (CCC 2180). The Eucharist is the source, the heart, and the summit of Christian life.
2. Persevere in prayer. Family prayer is vital. The Christian family is the first place for education in prayer.
3. Live a life of Christian witness. This means living a moral life that reflects the values and teachings of Jesus Christ.
4. Are faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the doctrines, dogmas, moral teachings, and social teachings of His church. This means that it is necessary to learn the teachings of the Catholic Church.
5. Strive to be Holy.
6. Read Scripture. Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ (St. Jerome)

## **ORGANIZATION**

The organizational structure for Saint Stephen School includes the Diocesan Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, Saint Stephen Board of Directors and pastor, principal, teachers, parents, and students.

### ADMINISTRATION

Saint Stephen School employs a professional, full-time principal. The major responsibilities include: leader of the school, faith leader, personnel director, educational leader, management/administration, public relations and planning and development. The administration is employed by the parish and has direct accountability to the pastor.

### FACULTY

The faculty of Saint Stephen School is comprised of professional educators. All teachers are qualified to teach in the subject areas to which they are assigned. The faculty is regularly observed and evaluated by school administration in accordance with diocesan policy.

### SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

When a teacher is out of school because of illness, professional meetings or personal business, a qualified, substitute teacher will be hired to take that teacher's place. Occasionally, it may be necessary for the administration to hire a long-term substitute. Whenever possible, a substitute who is familiar to the students will be acquired. The substitute will work closely with the classroom teacher and the administration to ensure a smooth and consistent transition. Substitute teachers are to be accorded the same respect as regular classroom teachers. Substitute teachers have permission to follow every part of the Saint Stephen discipline system. If substitute teachers have discipline concerns with students their names will be written down for the classroom teacher.

### RELIGIOUS FORMATION

The religious formation of children is the primary reason for the existence of Catholic schools. Thus, Saint Stephen School's religious education program is of special curricular importance. Scripture, doctrine, prayer, and Liturgy are related to children at their developmental levels, beginning with their own experiences. Prayer is interwoven throughout the student's day. Prayer begins and ends each day, experienced daily in religion class, before lunchtime and other parts of the day.

We attend Mass together as a school community twice a week, and family and friends are invited to attend school liturgies.

Students will have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation monthly. Special service opportunities, renewal/retreat days, and seasonal activities are shared throughout the year, as well. We sincerely invite all Saint Stephen families to make weekend Mass attendance a part of their routine.

## **ADMISSION**

Saint Stephen Catholic School accepts students of all religions or nationalities. An application packet is available in the school office or by request. Parents of new students must have a meeting with the principal to discuss enrollment and school policies. All enrollment forms and requirements must be completed prior to admission.

Once admitted and enrolled, parents must re-enroll their Saint Stephen School students for each successive school year. The priority for admission is as follows:

1. The currently enrolled students
2. Siblings of the currently enrolled students
3. The children of Saint Stephen parishioners
4. Other students and siblings if space is available.

## **ACCREDITATION**

Saint Stephen School is fully accredited through the Michigan Nonpublic Schools Accrediting Association.

## **ARRIVAL OF STUDENTS**

**Morning arrival will occur at the main Church doors on Rosewood Ave. and will be staffed from 7:45-8:00am.** Preschool students need to be escorted to the north church doors off the Franklin St. parking lot where they will be welcomed by a staff member until 8:05am. Late arrivals should enter through the main school doors and sign in with the front office.

## **ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY**

Regular school attendance and punctuality are very important for a student to establish good work habits and self-discipline so that he/she can be successful in schoolwork and life. Parents are therefore urged not to ask that a child be excused from school for vacation or appointments except for urgent reasons.

Absences are excused for personal illness, family emergencies, doctor/dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside of school hours, and pre-authorized absence approved by the principal. The parent/guardian is expected to notify the school of an absence before 8:30AM on the day their child is absent from school by calling the attendance line. Parents and students are responsible for completing assignments covered during the time of absence.

Students are expected to be at school on time every day so that teaching/learning can begin without disruption. Learning to be punctual is an important ingredient for success at school and in life. Tardiness due to a verified family emergency or other circumstances deemed acceptable by the principal will be excused. The parent/guardian should notify the school office when a student will be tardy as well as what time they are expected to arrive. Students who accumulate excessive absences and or tardies will receive a detention.

## **BAND & CHOIR**

In cooperation with the band director at Catholic Central High School, we are pleased to offer band for our students in grades 5-8. Choir is offered for students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **BICYCLES**

Students may ride bicycles to school as long as the bicycles are operated safely and according to traffic and school rules as follows:

1. Bicycles should be licensed.
2. Students must wear helmets.
3. Bicycles must be walked at street crossings.

4. Bicycles must be locked and kept at the school's bike rack during school.
5. Only one rider per bicycle is permitted.
6. Motorbikes, roller blades, or Heelys are not permitted.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors of Saint Stephen Catholic School is a board with limited jurisdiction. It is composed of nine –fourteen members who are appointed by the Pastor. The meeting schedule of the Board of Directors is available in the school office. These meetings are open to the public, but an rsvp to the front office is required a week in advance.

### **CALENDAR**

Each family will receive a calendar for the school year. The Monday Buzz is posted at the beginning of the week with upcoming events.

### **CARE OF SCHOOL BOOKS AND PROPERTY**

All school books are to be covered with clean book covers at all times. Students will be charged for lost or damaged books.

Each student is responsible for the proper care of the school. Any destruction and defacing of school property will be reported to parents or guardians who are responsible for the cost of repairs or replacement of the property.

### **CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE**

#### **Behavior and Discipline**

Saint Stephen School, as a Christian community, fosters and nurtures the proper atmosphere conducive to helping students develop and acquire academic and social skills as well as Christian virtues.

The classroom teacher is responsible for proper order and behavior in his/her classroom. Students shall recognize the authority of the teachers, and shall comply with Saint Stephen Catholic School's Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

This document has been developed so that parents, school staff, students, and school volunteers have a common understanding of what is expected from all students in regard to their conduct as students of Saint Stephen Catholic School.

#### **Saint Stephen General Rules for Student Conduct**

All Saint Stephen students are expected to:

1. Be honest, courteous, kind and respectful to others and property.
2. Follow directions and obey the authority of school staff and volunteers.
3. Remain on school ground and in the assigned area during school hours.
4. Attend school with proper grooming and wearing appropriate clothing according to the school uniform and dress code.
5. Complete and turn in all homework assignments on time.
6. Be punctual to school and to class, and be prepared to participate in all class learning activities.
7. Walk in the hallways and use a moderate voice level in the building.
8. Obey the classroom, lunchroom and playground rules.
9. Use only approved electronic equipment.

**It is unacceptable for Saint Stephen students to: (General Rules)**

1. Cheat on tests or homework.
2. Chew gum in school or on the playground.
3. Spit in school or on the playground.
4. Throw sticks, stones, ice, snowballs, or objects that can cause bodily harm or damage property.
5. Use or exhibit obscene language, gestures, art, writing, or articles.
6. Use of unauthorized electronic equipment such as (but not limited to) cell phones, radios, iPods, smart watches or Game Boys in the building or on the school grounds.
7. Destroy school property or the property of others. Restitution will be imposed upon students who violate this rule.
8. Exhibit behavior considered as a threat, harassing, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, or bully behaviors.
9. Steal or extort funds, good, or academic endeavors from another student.
10. Fight with or physically abuse another student.
11. Possess or use alcohol, drugs, prescription medicines, over the counter medicines, tobacco, matches, lighters, or other harmful material on school premises or at school activities.
12. Possess a gun, knife, or any other object that can be classified as a weapon on school premises or at school related activities. Violation will result in expulsion from school.

**BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCES**

**Forming the heart of the child to desire virtue is the long-term goal of our school and each of our staff. We promote a culture of respect for every person, a growth mindset, and a spirit of victory in our children by the way we work with each and every child. This task requires a great deal of prudence and examining each situation as it arises. Below are some of the concrete forms discipline takes.**

**QUIET LUNCH-** When a student is assigned to quiet lunch they will eat in the office and could spend their recess in the office, although we prefer they have recess time. During this time the student has the opportunity to think about their actions and talk through what they were thinking and feeling at the time of the incident.

**CONFERENCING-** May be required involving parent(s), teacher(s), student, and/or Administrator.

**BEHAVIOR CONTRACT/PLAN-** A student may be placed on a behavioral contract/ plan with a teacher or an administrator. The contract is designed to address the area of concern with a corrective action plan and a written commitment from the student to change with parental support.

**REMOVAL FROM THE CLASSROOM** is allowed as permitted

**DETENTION-** (used for students in third through eighth grade) Detention is a consequence assigned to students who choose to behave inappropriately, or who receive multiple warnings/referrals.

Detention is earned as an immediate consequence assigned to students who choose to behave inappropriately. A detention notice or an email from a teacher or administrator will be sent home to inform the parent(s) of the incident, and the time and date the detention is to be served.

If the detention cannot be served on the given date, parental notification of the need to

reschedule must be given to the teacher no later than the date the detention is scheduled to be served. If neither the form nor the parental notification is returned by the date of the assigned detention night, the detention cannot be served, and an additional detention will be issued to the student for missing the detention. (Therefore, they'll have 2 detentions to serve at that point.) Likewise, if a student does not show up to their assigned detention time, they will receive a new date for that time, PLUS an additional detention for the behavior of missing the original detention.

During detention, the student will be given a detention essay task to reflect on and write about their actions. They will write about what they should choose to do the next time they have a similar situation and/or what they could do to help themselves not be in the same situation.

**EXCLUSION FROM CLASS OR ACTIVITIES-** This may include participation in school-sponsored activities or performances. Parental and/or administration notification may be given regarding exclusion.

**IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION-** Students may be required to serve an in-school suspension assigned by an administrator. Parents will be notified in a timely manner. The student will serve the in-school suspension in the office and will receive all assignments for that day to be completed and turned in by the end of the day.

**EXPULSION-** Expulsion of a student shall be made upon the recommendation of the administration. A student may be expelled from school for breach of discipline, violation of the policies and regulations established by the Board, or when the presence of the student is detrimental to the best interests of the school. In addition, the pastor and administrator may expel any student whose presence in school would be injurious to the health or morals of other students or to the welfare of the school. In regard to due process rights, parents of the student may request a hearing before and prior to the final decision. Every consideration will be made in order to avoid expulsion of a student from Saint Stephen School. This may include referring the student and his or her family to a local community resource for counseling.

### **APPEAL PROCESS**

If the parents disagree with a decision made by the teacher, they must first meet with the teacher. If they are not satisfied with the outcome of that meeting, they may then meet with the principal.

If the parents disagree with the decision made by the principal, they must first meet with the principal. If they are not satisfied with the outcome of that meeting, they may meet with the Pastor.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Parents/guardians will receive communications from their child's teacher and the weekly Monday Buzz sent out through the office. Parents/guardians are also asked to check the student's Assignment Planner on a regular basis when applicable (grades 4-8).

Parent/Teacher communication is important in nurturing positive student academic and social growth. Teachers will contact parents for student concerns and parents or guardians are expected to do the same. If a face-to-face conference is necessary, it will be scheduled at a mutually acceptable time. Parents may request a meeting with the teacher or principal by sending a note or contacting the school office. The meeting/conference must be carried out in a civil manner: abusive behavior will not be tolerated. Parents/guardians should not interrupt the classroom during school hours. In case of an emergency the parents/guardians are to check into the school office for instruction.



## **DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS**

Dismissal of students in grades K -8 is at 3:00pm. Students will wait for their car ride in the small parking lot on Reed Street. Preschool students will be escorted by the teachers at 11:00am to the main school doors for parent pick up.

Students picked up after 3:15 will be brought to childcare and childcare rates will apply.

## **DRESS CODE (updates for ay2022 included in red ink)**

The uniform represents our school unity. It reminds us that we are here to learn and that we are all united in our mission.

As with all policies in this handbook, faculty members have the discretion to determine, in their judgment, whether the spirit of this policy is being followed in any particular case. Each homeroom teacher will be responsible for seeing that his/her students are wearing proper uniforms.

Students, except preschool students, must dress in accord with the school's uniform. Students who do not comply with the school's uniform will have their parents notified to bring proper attire to the student or take the student home for changing into proper school attire.

### **Girls K-8 Uniform**

Slacks:

Girls' navy slacks Dress or Docker style **with a modest fit (no tight or baggy pants)**

Khaki – Grades 6-8

No more than four pockets (two front, two back)

No patch or sewn on pockets

No flare, Zip-off, Capri style

Must have a waistband with belt loops.

Skirt/Skort:

Girls School Plaid ONLY (no khaki or navy)

Jumper/Skort – Grades K-5

Skirt/Skort – Grades 5-8

\*Skirt/skort must be within 3 inches of the knee

Shirts:

White short/long-sleeve buttoned down oxford or Peter Pan collar– **Optional Grades K-5.**

**Required Grades 6-8**

white, red, or navy short/long-sleeved polo – **Grades K-5**

white, red, or navy turtleneck – **Grades K-5**

Tights/Leggings:

Navy, White, Black, Red tights – Grades K-8

Navy or Black leggings – Grades K-8

No prints or designs on tights or leggings

Sweaters/Vests:

Navy, Red, White-crew or v-neck cardigan

**Navy blazer (Optional. Required for Mass/special events for grades 5-8 beginning 2023-2024) – Grades 5-8**

Socks:

Plain **dress** socks -Navy, Red, Black

Socks must be visible. **No ankle socks.**

Shoes:

**Black dress shoes (closed toe and heel). Should be a maximum of two colors (for example, loafer-type shoes with a leather string; if uncertain about style, please ask an administrator).**

## Boys Uniform

### Slacks:

- Boy' navy slacks Dress or Docker style **with a modest fit (no tight or baggy pants)**
- Khaki slacks **with a modest fit (no tight or baggy pants)** – Grades 6-8
- No more than four pockets (two front, two back)
- No patch or sewn on pockets
- No flare, Zip-off, Capri style
- Must have a waistband with belt loops.

**Black belt with a buckle worn with the boys uniform. REQUIRED for 3rd and up**

### Shorts (May be worn from May 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30):

- Navy – Grades K-8
- Khaki – Grades 6-8
- No more than four pockets (two front, two back)
- Knee length or capri style

### Shirts:

- White short/long-sleeve buttoned down oxford– **Optional Grades K-5.**  
**Required Grades 6-8**
- white, red, or navy short/long-sleeved polo – **Grades K-5**
- white, red, or navy turtleneck – **Grades K-5**

### Sweaters/Vests (optional):

- Navy, Red, White crew or v-neck cardigan

**Navy blazer (optional grades 6-8)**

**Ties (optional but encouraged for Mass days and all-school functions. Beginning 2023-2024, required Grades 6-8.)**

- Navy or Red Stripe – Grades 5-8

### Socks:

- Plain **dress** socks -Navy, Red, Black
- Socks must be visible. **No ankle socks.**

Shoes: **Black dress shoes (closed toe and heel).**

## Uniform Wear

**All parts of the uniform must be neat, clean, and in good condition free of stains or frayed hems and with no missing buttons.**

All shirts must be tucked in.

No sweatshirts, or hoodies.

Logos, pictures, or additional color (especially around the collar) are not permitted

Undershirts: White, no writing or print, short sleeve

No rain/snow boots are to be worn during the school day.

Students must bring proper shoes to change into for PE.

**More important events call for more important attire. For this reason students are encouraged to wear a tie or plaid skirt/skort/jumper on Mass days, any school assemblies, any field trips (unless alternative dress is authorized), and any school event outside the scheduled school day.**

Samples of school uniform clothes are available in the school office. We recommend purchasing slacks through Lands End. School Plaid is available for purchase through Lands End. Tops for uniform may be purchased in any store provided they fit the criteria.

**PLEASE MARK BLAZERS, SWEATERS, AND TIES WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.** We do everything possible to get a lost article back to its owner but it is frequently impossible without a name on the item. Unclaimed uniform pieces will go in the lost and found, which is cleaned every semester.

**Casual Days:** Casual days will occur on an “as needed basis” for field trips and other events that require non-uniform clothes. These days will be communicated through the *Monday Buzz* or by the teacher. The attire for school casual days should reflect our school vision of modesty and integrity in all things. Skirts, or skorts must be within 3 inches of the knee. Shirts for boys and girls must have sleeves, no tank tops, crop tops, no halter or spaghetti straps, no “muscle” shirts. Students may not wear sweats, or sweatshirts. Shorts should be knee length or capri style. Any clothing item deemed as inappropriate by the principal or teacher will require a call home for a change of clothing.

### **Personal Appearance**

Saint Stephen School students are to be well-groomed, neat, and clean. Distracting hairstyles, dyed hair, and make-up are not permitted. Hair should be kept clean and well-groomed.

Girls--No black nail polish is allowed. One necklace, one bracelet, one ring per hand allowed. Headbands must be solid uniform colored fabric (one color) and silver or gold colored metal. Headbands with brand names and/or logos are not permitted.

Piercings: earrings are the only piercings allowed, and only upon girls.

Students must bring shoes to change into if boots are worn to school.

Proper shoes must be worn for physical education activities.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING**

All closing due to severe weather conditions or other types of emergencies (electrical, water pipe breaks, etc.) will be communicated through our Infinite Campus instant messaging system. Families opt into receiving information via email, text, or voice message.

If school is closed, all after school and evening activities will also be cancelled (athletics, pack mtgs., etc.)

If there is a **Tornado Watch** students will remain in school and staff members will take safety precautions. In case of **Tornado Warning**, students will be kept at school and take shelter there; students could possibly be detained beyond the normal dismissal time. Please do not call the school so that telephone lines will remain open for any special needs. During severe weather conditions, parents are free to pick up their children by signing them out at the school office.

### **FIRE/TORNADO DRILLS**

Any person inside the school must leave the school building when the fire alarm sounds off. Teachers are to take their classes to the designated areas outside and remain there until the signal is given for re-entering. For a tornado drill, teachers are informed to take the classes to their designated shelter areas.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Class visits to places of cultural or educational significance give enrichment to teaching and learning activities. Classroom teachers plan and prepare their students for such field trips. Parents will be informed and, in some instances, encouraged to participate in the trips. No student may participate in a field trip

without a signed parent permission form. Phone calls for parent permission will be permitted at the principal's discretion.

If a private passenger vehicle must be used, the following must be verified by the driver.

- The driver must be 21 years of age or older.
- The driver must have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability that may impair the ability to drive safely.
- The vehicle must have a valid registration.
- The vehicle must have valid state inspection sticker (if this is applicable to your area).
- The vehicle must be insured for minimum limits of \$300,000, or \$500,000 Combined Single Limit (CSL).

A signed Volunteer Driver Information Sheet must be submitted to the principal for each vehicle used.

Student supervision on a field trip, in general, must have a ratio of one adult per ten students, and the school Code of Student Conduct is applied to all students.

Field trips are privileges and may be denied if standards of student academics or conduct are not met.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Saint Stephen School sponsors one main function to help raise money for the school. Our Monsignor Edward N. Alt Awards dinner is held in January. Money raised through this event goes directly into the school budget along with purchasing items needed in the school.

Saint Stephen Home and School Association sponsors the Education First Program. This program encourages students to make a difference in their community, home, or school while asking for support through a monetary gift or a spiritual gift. Money raised through this event supports our Home and School which in turn goes directly back to the school through support of various field trips, enrichment programs, and curriculum support.

### **HANDBOOK REVISION**

The principal reserves the right to amend the handbook, for just cause, at any time. Parents will be notified of changes through special school bulletin, letter, or through the Monday Buzz.

### **HARASSMENT**

School Board policy (#5012) requires all students to conduct themselves with dignity and respect for fellow students, teachers, school staff and visitors. Harassment of anyone, including sexual and racial harassment, will not be tolerated. Any student or parent who feels their child has been harassed should immediately report the incident to their teacher or principal.

### **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS AND SERVICES**

Parents/guardians are responsible for having their children properly immunized. Students can be excluded from school if they do not have an immunization record with the minimal doses.

All students will need to show evidence of a booster dose of diphtheria and tetanus vaccine if it has been 10 years since the last dose was administered.

In case of children not being immunized due to religious convictions or other objections, the parents/guardians must have a signed statement placed in the student's records.

Our students also receive these following health services at school through the Kent County Health Department: vision screening for students in grades 1,3,5, and 7; hearing screening for students in grades PreK, K, 2,4, and 6.

### **HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

The Saint Stephen Home and School Association is the parent organization within our school community. The membership is composed of the parents/guardians and our school staff. Objectives of the organization are as follows:

1. To advance the welfare of the students in the school through the coordinated efforts of parents, teachers and students.
2. To bring into closer relation through enhanced communication parents/guardians; students; faculty and administration.
3. To promote an interest in educational matters and an understanding of the mutual responsibilities of parents and teachers in education.
4. To encourage the high standards of Christian family living.
5. To provide financial aid and assistance for special projects, activities and events for the benefit of the school.

### **HOMEWORK GUIDELINES**

Grades K-3

Homework requiring paper and pencil or workbooks is not assigned on a daily basis in the early elementary grades. When assignments are given they generally will center around spelling, vocabulary words, skill drills, reading or memorization.

Grades 4-8

Regular daily assignments are part of the curriculum in grades 4-8. Completion of assigned schoolwork in an acceptable, timely manner is essential to success in school. This work is to be handed in on the due date in order to receive full credit.

The work assigned for home may be written, studied or involve working on a project and should take on average 30 minutes a day in grades 4-5 or 45 minutes in grades 6-8. It is intended to reinforce the skills developed during the day. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in reviewing with the student what has been learned each day. The penalty for missed assignments will be left to the teacher's discretion.

### **ILLNESS**

If a student is ill, he/she is to remain at home and the parent/guardian is to notify the school of the nature of the illness. A child who is well enough to be in school is well enough to participate in all school activities, including recess. We adhere to the Kent County Health Department's guidelines. If a student is ill while attending school, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the student.

### **INJURIES**

A student who incurs a minor injury (scraped knee, slight bruise, etc.) at school will be administered first aid. In the case of an injury that might require medical attention, a staff member will call the parent, guardian or designee of the injured student. In an extreme emergency health situation, an ambulance service will be called and the student will be transported to a hospital. To ensure that your child receives prompt medical attention in an emergency, we ask that you sign the Medical Treatment Release Form included in the registration packet. Parents/guardians or designees will be notified immediately of the situation and will be responsible for the costs incurred.

## **INSURANCE**

Supplemental health insurance is available for Catholic School students through Michigan Catholic Conference. Please call the school office for a form or more information.

## **LIBRARY**

Students, in grades K-5, have a regular 20-40 minute library period weekly. Students in grades 6-8 may utilize the library when needed. They have the privilege of using the library during assigned periods and at other times with the permission of the teacher. Fines or restitution will be imposed on overdue or lost library books/materials. Students are expected to show proper respect to the librarian, librarian volunteers, and books at all times. Failure to do so is a serious matter and will be dealt with at the discretion of the principal. The library staff is primarily volunteers. Anyone wishing to help should contact the librarian for an assigned time.

## **LICE**

We follow the state's recommendations of how to handle lice/nits. It is recommended that schools no longer send notification to the parent(s) whose student(s) is in a classroom with a student with lice. It goes against medical privacy and confidentiality, to share that information. Children are no longer mandated to stay home due to head lice. If the school becomes aware a student has lice, the family will be notified. If a family discovers their child has lice, they should let the school nurse know. The nurse is not mandated to communicate cases of head lice to anyone outside the main family, but if there are three reported cases within a classroom, there will be communication sent to the entire grade.

*What do you need to know?*

- Parents are to check for lice in each of their children's heads at least once a week.
- Lice do not jump. Lice cannot fly.
- Nits are non-transferable, because they are not yet live lice.
- Lice are almost always spread through direct head to head contact.
- Only ordinary household cleaning, such as vacuuming, washing bedding and clothing in hot water is needed.
- No special cleaners are needed to clean the home.
- There is no need for students to be sent home or to miss school. If parents find live lice or nits, treatment should be started BEFORE returning to school the following day.

*What is expected of parents?*

- PARENTS are the key to looking for and treating head lice! The MI Dept of Public Health advises parents to spend time each week carefully looking on each of their children's heads for lice or nits.
- If parents find lice, please notify the school (although it is parental choice) so we can take precautions in the classroom.

*If there are any questions regarding lice, nits, or any health concern, please feel free to contact the front office.*

## **LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS**

Daily prayer is the heart of a Saint Stephen education integral part of our spiritual life. Classes begin with prayer, and we pray together regularly as a school community. All grades participate in the celebration of the weekly school Mass held on Monday and Thursday mornings at 8:00am. Students take an active part in the preparation of the liturgies. Parents are encouraged to attend and participate in these celebrations.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost and found articles are kept at the top of the middle stairwell where they can be seen and claimed by students every day. Any items remaining unclaimed after a month will be donated to charity or discarded.

## **LUNCH**

Students ordinarily will bring their own lunch and eat at school. Parents are encouraged to provide their children with healthy lunches. Students must comply with Lunchroom Rules stated in the Code of Student Conduct. Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds during their lunch period, unless arrangements have been made and approved by the principal. Parents/guardians must sign the student out when leaving and sign the student in when returning.

Students may participate in the hot lunch program and milk program provided five days a week throughout the school year for a minimal cost.

## **MEDICATION**

If a student is required to take prescribed medication during the school day, state law dictates that the medication, in the original pharmacy container, must be brought to the school by the parent/guardian. A school medication form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian in order for the school to administer the medication.

Non-prescription medicines such as aspirin, Tylenol or other over-the-counter pain relief medications will not be administered at school without the parent/guardian's written permission and such medication must be provided by the parent/guardian.

## **NO PARKING ZONE**

For safety reasons, parking on the northeast (corner of Rosewood St and Reed St.) lot is prohibited between hours of 7:30 am and 3:30 pm as this area is also used as part of the playground. Parking is not permitted on Gladstone Ave. If you leave your car, you must park in the church parking lot or on the correct side of the street.

## **PESTICIDES**

Routine pest inspections are made after school hours by a professional service. If necessary, pesticides are applied at that time. If you would like to update your preferences, please notify the school office.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

At the end of each school year, students are promoted to the next grade level or retained at the same level based upon a joint decision made by teachers, parents, and the principal. Academic progress, age of the child, and maturity level are factors taken into consideration when these decisions are made. The principal reserves the ultimate right to retain a student in the same grade level if in his/her judgment, despite the objection of the parents, a student needs another year in the same grade level in order for the student to be successful in the next grade level. Such a decision will not be made without the full prior knowledge of parents and the teacher beforehand.

## **REPORT CARD**

Report cards are made available on Infinite Campus four times during the school year for grades K-8. Preschool students will receive assessments twice a year. Between card markings, teachers may send interim reports to parents.

## **SAFETY/SECURITY**

All visitors, parents, delivery persons, etc. entering the building must enter through the main entrance off Gladstone Ave. All those entering must check-in at the school office.

If there are any court-ordered restrictions with respect to custodial/non-custodial parents/guardians, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent/guardian to see that the principal has a copy of the official document in writing. The principal then sees that the respective teachers are aware of such information.

### **SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT**

Saint Stephen Catholic School is a smoke-free environment. No smoking is permitted in the school building or on school grounds.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES**

Saint Stephen students with disabilities may qualify for Special Education or for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act as described below:

#### ***Special Education***

Resident public school districts provide services for Saint Stephen students identified as having a learning disability defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Documentation, including current IEP, must be on file at Saint Stephen School and the local public school providing the services.

A student can access Special Education services at their resident public school district through proper evaluation and placement procedures. Either parent/guardian involvement in this procedure is required. To inquire about Special Education programs, please contact the principal or resource room teacher.

#### ***Americans with Disabilities Act – Section 504***

Saint Stephen School complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure that individuals will not be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. Students with disabilities may be served within the regular education program based on an accommodation plan developed by the school in conjunction with parents/guardians.

Documentation of a student's disability must be on file at Saint Stephen School. For ADD or ADHD students, the physician may provide needed documentation. The accommodation plan developed by the school staff together with parents/guardians must be included in the student's records. To inquire about creating a plan, please contact the principal or resource room teacher.

### **SPORTS PROGRAM**

The sports program is offered to students in grades 5 through 8. Girls' sports include basketball, volleyball, softball, cheerleading and soccer. Boys' sports include basketball, soccer, football and baseball. In some years track is offered for both boys and girls. Separate fees apply for our sports program: please see the Athletic Director for more information.

Students who wish to participate must follow all guidelines as listed in the Diocesan Athletic Association and Saint Stephen School Policy Handbook which include:

1. Parental permission is required.
2. Proof of physical examination.
3. Signed concussion form on file in the school office.
4. Waiver stating Saint Stephen School is not liable for mishaps or injuries incurred during athletic season.
5. In order to participate in Saint Stephen's athletic program, the student's performance must meet the guidelines in academics, conduct, and effort that are listed in the Eligibility Code.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

In accordance with federal legislation entitled “Family Education Rights and Privacy Act” (FERPA) we inform you that we keep the following records on your students at Saint Stephen School:

1. Educational records of currently enrolled students containing information such as academic grades, test scores, health records, address, phone, etc.
2. Psychological or sociological records, reports, and evaluations of current students are maintained in the school office. They are available to teaching personnel at the discretion of the principal.

Parents or legal guardians of students have a right to inspect and review these records. A parent or guardian may challenge the contents of these records should he/she believes the records to be misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or the right of the individual.

The procedure for inspecting student records is:

1. Notify the principal in writing stating which records you wish to review and arrange a time for such a review. By law, the school has a maximum of 45 days in which to respond.
2. A school official must be present during the review to answer any questions or challenges made.
3. Parents or legal guardians may request copies of the records but are not permitted to take the original ones from the files.
4. Challenges to the contents of a record must be made in writing to the principal.

## **TELEPHONE USE**

The Saint Stephen School telephone is located in the school office and is used for school business only. Students will be allowed to use the school phone for emergency calls only. If it is necessary for a student to have a cell phone, the cell phone must remain in the student’s backpack and be silenced during the school day. Cell phones are not permitted to be used during the school day. If a student is found using the cell phone during the school day, it will be confiscated for the day and their parents immediately notified.

## **TESTING**

NWEA MAPS tests are administered to all 2-8 grade students three times a year. The test is designed to measure the student's basic skills in Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Results of this testing are shared with parents and teachers for teaching/learning improvement and planning.

## **TUITION AND REGISTRATION FEES**

Registration fee (\$200.00) is non-refundable. If students are transferred out of Saint Stephen School during the school year, tuition will be prorated on a per diem basis.

Tuition payment options are:

1. Full year payment – due by September 1
2. Semester payment – First payment due September 1. Second payment due January 15
3. Automatic Monthly Debit/Coupon – Due monthly – July 15 through May 15

If you prefer a different payment plan, please submit your preference in writing with your signature to the business office for approval.

Failure to pay tuition on a timely basis or make appropriate arrangements could result in your child/children being denied further admission to Saint Stephen School.

Families having financial difficulty meeting their tuition commitments must contact the school office to schedule a meeting with the principal to discuss a payment plan.

## **VIRTUS**

Parishes and schools within the Diocese of Grand Rapids participate in the VIRTUS Protecting God's Children program. **If you volunteer in any capacity with children or young people within the diocese, you are required to attend a VIRTUS Training session sponsored by the Diocese.** At the beginning of a new school year it is important to review the five step plan that has been put into place to ensure a safe environment for children and young people.

*Step 1: Know the Warning Signs*

*Step 2: Control Access*

*Step 3: Monitor All Programs*

*Step 4: Be Aware*

*Step 5: Communicate Your Concerns*

Parents play a key role in this plan! Children and young people naturally tell their parents when interactions with other adults are uncomfortable or make them feel uneasy. In addition, through the Teaching Touching Safety Program children and young people are trained to report their discomfort or uneasiness with a parent or another trusted adult. It is then up to the adults to communicate these concerns to the school. This plan works very well, but it can break down if the parents and other trusted adults do not **communicate concerns**.

At the beginning of this school year ask yourself... "Are there things you have overlooked? Have you talked yourself out of a concern about some interaction because you know the person or you can't imagine that he or she would do any harm?" [i] The question that many adults struggle with is what constitutes a "concern?" Simply put, a concern is anything that you observe that gives you an uneasy feeling. The VIRTUS program defines concerns as: *Situations that give rise to uneasiness, uncertainty, apprehension, or an anxious state of mind. Concerns arise when a person is troubled by an observation that may affect the welfare or happiness of someone* [ii].

**Parents - please do not hesitate to Communicate Your Concerns!** If you become aware of a situation that makes you uneasy, uncertain, apprehensive, or anxious; please contact your school principal and he or she can help you determine how to best address your concern. Together, we can ensure a safe environment for children and young people.

[i] Doty, S. *Practical Reminders About the Plan*, VIRTUS Online.

[ii] *Protecting God's Children™ for adults, Facilitator Manual*, p. 68, VIRTUS © 2001

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Parents are expected to provide volunteer assistance when appropriate. Volunteer help from non-parents is always encouraged and welcome. If you have a background or skill in arts, crafts, athletics, clerical work, writing, public speaking, story telling, business, etc. – or if you can perform as a teacher aide or give a presentation on some specific topic, you are invited and encouraged to let us know. We would be very grateful for your services. Please contact the school office or Home and School Association with your interests. All volunteers are required to complete the necessary documents, which will include a background check.

## **WEBSITE**

Check out our website at [www.ststephenschoolgr.com](http://www.ststephenschoolgr.com) for all the latest school news and updates.

*I have read and agree to the Saint Stephen Parent Handbook.*

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student (if in 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade): \_\_\_\_\_