

St Rita Catholic School Family Handbook

2011-2012

"Saints striving to be *Saints*"

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FORWARD

The purpose of this Parent & Student Handbook is to familiarize you with the mission and procedures of St. Rita School, and to support and develop an ever closer relationship among students, parent, teachers, and the administration. It details policies that serve as a guideline to the daily operation of our school. These policy statements are necessarily general, and the administration reserves the right to (1) make specific applications as the circumstances arise, and (2) amend the handbook as necessary throughout the year. Notice of future changes will be announced.

We ask that you read this booklet carefully and keep it as a reference during the school year. It is hoped that this Family Handbook will serve as a helpful guide to those devoted to the education of the children of our school.

Mission Statement of St. Rita Catholic School

As members of the St. Rita Catholic School community, we strive daily for excellence in faith formation and academic achievement. We reflect and celebrate Christ in ourselves, Christ in learning, and Christ in others.

Philosophy of Catholic Education

Catholic schools make a unique contribution to today's Church and society by providing a God-centered education rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition. The school in cooperation and partnership with parents/guardians and in the context of the Catholic community strives to assist the student to relate faith and Gospel teachings to all aspects of human knowledge and life. Development of a Catholic Christian identity in the students is a basic aim of the Catholic school community. Religious instruction and formative experiences are a primary and essential part of the school's program directed toward leading the student to deepening faith commitment to Christ. Direct catecheses as well as involvement in liturgical and sacramental prayer and worship are both formative and instructional for the student.

The environment of the school is created primarily by the people of faith: students, parents/guardians, staff, and pastor, who build the school community. It is within this setting that the fourfold dimension of Catholic education, message, community, worship and service - become a reality. The focus of the school program is not merely the attainment of knowledge but the acquisition of values and the discovery of truth. This focus includes the higher level thinking processes, critical judgment and decision-making that enhance the student's responsible use of freedom, based upon Gospel values. The school program must concern itself with the whole child in development that is fully human and thoroughly Catholic. The school's curriculum focus is student-centered with a continuous progress emphasis that reverences the dignity of the student and serves the individual's developmental growth needs. Moreover, the development of Christian values as well as the principles of Church teachings on morality, justice, and life issues permeates and integrates all the subject areas and experiential dimensions of the curriculum. (References: Church in the Modern World; Declaration of Christian Education; Visions and Values in the Catholic School; The Catholic School; Sharing the Light of Faith and To Teach as Jesus Did.)

Philosophy of St. Rita School

All students of St. Rita School should be afforded the opportunity to develop a life exemplified by the life of Jesus Christ. St. Rita School provides a positive atmosphere where quality education and Catholic values are emphasized. We believe each person is a unique individual created by God. Because of this uniqueness, we strive to provide a positive and nurturing atmosphere in which all people can develop Christian values.

We believe in a holistic educational approach which fosters the academic, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development of all members of our St. Rita School community. Catholic values are emphasized by empowering staff and students to extend Christianity beyond the school and into the community. The goal of St. Rita School is to be an extension of the Catholic home, modeling healthy Christian values.

Goals of St. Rita School

To provide an environment which nurtures the growth of each student's relationship with God and community through prayer, liturgy, service, and academics.

To recognize the uniqueness and talents of each individual, thereby encouraging each child to reach his/her potential and to develop and maintain a positive self image of him/herself.

To guide our students in the use of their gifts to serve others as they become productive members of our community and society.

To encourage creative thinking and problem solving skills.

To provide an academic program which emphasizes personal growth and responsibility in a Catholic environment where students are taught the skills and processes needed to be successful in today's society.

To guide and motivate students in becoming self-directed, responsible, respectful, and independent learners, who choose to take personal responsibility for their education. To make learning an enjoyable, interesting, and meaningful experience for each student by individualizing instruction according to the student's need through tailoring the learning program to the individual's learning rate, style, experience, and abilities. To create an atmosphere which nurtures the Christian values of acceptance, friendship, compassion, and forgiveness.

To reinforce the Catholic values and attitudes upon which St. Rita School was founded.

Absence/Tardiness

When a student is absent from school, parents or guardians must phone the school office (815-398-3466) before 10:00 a.m. and state the reason for the absence. Classes begin at 8:15am. Students will be marked absent or tardy after this time. Students out of school for more than 2 hours during the school day will be marked tardy/absent accordingly. Valid reasons for a student's absence from school are personal illness, death or serious illness in the immediate family, suspension from school, other reasons that can be justified from an educational standpoint.

Regularity of attendance and punctuality are of prime importance to the child from the very first day of school. Absences and tardies are written on the child's report card for purposes of records.

A written statement giving reasons for the absence or tardiness must be brought to the student's teacher upon the student's return. These notes/letters will be retained in the office for one year. Should absence for any reason other than illness seem imperative, parents are requested to consult with the Principal and present a written reason for the absence.

Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during the summer or during long weekends or breaks in the school year to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility.

No student may leave the school premises during the school day at any time for any purpose without the written authorization of their parent or guardian and the approval of the office staff. No student is released unless the office knows the reason for the release, and the person to whom the student is released. The person taking the child home must come to the office to sign the student out. The school accepts no responsibility for any student who leaves the premises. Any student who leaves the premises without permission is automatically suspended from school.

The School office personnel approves the dismissal of students who are ill. Parents or guardians are notified when the illness is detected. They are expected to pick up the student or to make other suitable arrangements as soon as possible.

Students should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever will not be allowed to return to school the next day as this would not allow for the 24 hour protection of the entire school community.

The school cannot excuse any student during the school year for vacations or "time off." This will be documented as unexcused absence. If such an occurrence is absolutely necessary, however, a letter notifying the school of the student's impending absence must be received at the school office at least 24 hours before the student leaves. Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignment will be given in anticipation of a vacation.

Assignments given prior to other extended student leaves from school will be at the discretion of the teacher. Teachers are expected to provide make-up work to students when they return to school following an absence. Students have the same number of days as they were absent to make up late work following an absence. A single day's absence does not excuse a student from tests or other work on the day of his/her return.

If a student's extended absence necessitates an "incomplete" grade on a report card, the grade must be finalized in two weeks or it becomes an "F". It is always the student's responsibility to ask for make-up work. Teachers will be expected to provide a list of assignments only once for a particular absence.

If a parent wishes to pick up a student's assignments or have them brought home by another student, the parent must call the school office before 10:00 am. The assignment list will be prepared by the teacher for the end of the school day and left in the office.

A student who is not in his/her classroom by 8:15am will be marked as tardy. Every effort should be made by students to be punctual. A student who comes late to school (after 8:10am) is to enter the main door and stop in the school office to pick up a tardy slip for his/her teacher; a written note from the parent is also required explaining the cause of the tardiness. After a student receives a tardy three times or more in one quarter, a conference will be required with the Principal before a child can return to school.

Excessive absences of 40 days, or the equivalent of 40 days including tardies, can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year.

Activities/Ministries available through Parish, School and the Parochial League
(Activities are offered based on student interest.)

- Altar Servers (grades 5-8)
- Band (grades 4-8)
- Basketball (grades 5-8)
- Cheerleading (Girls, grades 7-8)
- Choir (grades 4-7)
- Lego League (grades 4-8)
- Safety Patrol (grade 7)
- Scholastic Bowl (grades 6-8)
- Scouts (grades K-8)
- Soccer (Coed Teams grades 5-8)
- String Orchestra (grades 3-8)***
- Student Council (grades 5-8)
- Student Newspaper (grades 6-8)
- Volleyball (Coed Teams grades 5-8)
- Yearbook (grades 6-8)

Admission

Students entering Pre-K must have attained the age of 4 years of age, and students entering kindergarten must have attained the age of five years on or before September 1st. All registrants must present an original birth certificate and a baptismal certificate at registration. All health record forms, including eye examinations, must be completed in compliance with the State of Illinois.

St. Rita School admits students of any race, color, sex, and/or national ethnic origin, and accords to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at school. St. Rita School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, athletics, and other school administered programs. (Diocesan Policy 5002). If, in the opinion of the school

authorities, the applicant's academic or other special needs cannot be met with St. Rita School's present available resources, the application can be denied.

Parents or guardians who choose to place their child(ren) in St. Rita School make a decision that involves commitment and financial sacrifice. The education for their child(ren) is a partnership between the parents or guardians and St. Rita School.

All new students are on probation for their first year of enrollment. Waiting lists hold over to the next year unless a parent or guardian requests that the student's name be removed. If a parent or guardian declines an opening after notification, the child's name will be removed from the waiting list. Final enrollment decisions are made by the St. Rita Pastor and/or the St. Rita School Principal.

Admission to St. Rita Catholic School

Students seeking acceptance into St. Rita Catholic School will be considered per the following tiered system:

1. Tier One – Current School Families
 - a. Current school families will have approximately two weeks to register beginning in late January. After this time period, current school families will not have priority over the other tier.
 - b. Non-students of current school families will also register during the time period of current school families.

2. Tier Two – Students Not Currently Enrolled at St. Rita

New families to St. Rita Catholic School will have approximately two weeks to register after the registration period ends for current families. If there are not enough openings available at the end of this time period for all new families, a drawing for available openings will occur. Preference in the drawing will be based on the following criteria:

 1. St. Rita Religious Education students who display regular attendance as overseen by the D.R.E.
 2. Other active registered St. Rita parishioners.
 3. Students from local Catholic parishes without affiliated schools.
 4. Students from another local Catholic parish, if that parish's school is full.
 5. Students who are not a member of a Catholic parish

New school families will be notified of their enrollment status at the end of this second period of registration.

If there are still openings available at the end of the two registration periods as identified above, students will be accepted based on time of registration.

Priority in registration will not be given to families who register for the following school year before the open registration time period.

Arrival and Departure

St. Rita School begins at 8:10am each morning. Because of liability concerns and no outside supervision until 8:00am, any student on the school premises before 8:00am. will be sent to the Extended School Program with parents or guardians being billed accordingly. Students will be escorted by a teacher into the school building at 8:10am.

St. Rita School ends at 3:00p.m. Any student not picked up by 3:10pm must go to our Extended School Program and parents will be billed accordingly.

When dropping off and picking up your child(ren) at school, parents or guardians are asked to show extra care in approaching and leaving the school parking lot. To ensure the safety of our children, cars should never be driven past the parking lot cones.

Students in Grades K - 5 should be dropped off and picked up in the upper church parking lot, directly against the curb between the Faith House and school building. Students in Grades 6 - 8 should be dropped off and picked up in the lower church parking lot, directly against the curb by the gym. Please do not pull into the parking lot next to the cafeteria as this area is used as a playground. For the safety of children, parents or guardians with students in K-8 should NOT escort their child(ren) into the school building. Parents should drive slowly and cautiously when dropping and picking up students.

Students enter and exit the building as follows:

Pre-K	Pre-K door, next to south Church entrance
Kindergarten & 1 st Grade	upper level, south entrance
Grades 2 - 5	upper level main lobby door
Grades 6 - 8	lower level door

Asbestos Management Plan

In accordance to Diocese of Rockford guidelines, the school has an Asbestos Management Plan available for review in the St. Rita School office.

Athletics and Extra Curricular Activities

St. Rita School provides organized sports for boys and girls in Grades 5 - 8. The following sports are offered: soccer, basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading. Students participating in these sports are required to have a yearly physical exam and a signed statement of fitness by a physician prior to participation in any sports. It is also mandatory that the families of these students have accident insurance coverage on file before participating in practices or games.

In the spirit of promoting the Catholic education mission of developing the whole person, students at St. Rita Catholic School are encouraged to participate in various extra-curricular opportunities, including Athletics. Students at St. Rita Catholic School are fortunate to have numerous opportunities for extra-curricular participation. However, since these opportunities require additional time and energy from students, and because academic achievement takes precedence over extra-curricular participation, there are certain academic expectations and standards students need to meet to demonstrate that they are capable of maintaining their

academic potential while participating in extra-curricular activities. Therefore, to participate in extra-curricular activities, including Athletics, students must maintain at a minimum an A, B, C, or D, in all core classes. Furthermore, to participate in extra-curricular activities students must be working at their ability. For example, a student participating in Athletics who generally earns As and Bs but is currently earning Cs and Ds is demonstrating that he or she needs to devote the time usually spent in extra-curricular activities to academics. In the case of a student not working to his or her potential, the teacher will recommend ineligibility to the principal. The principal will make the final determination in all issues of ineligibility. If a student is ineligible do to earning an F or not working to his or her potential, the following will occur:

1. After the teacher consults with the Principal, the Principal will notify the student that he or she is earning a failing grade and may not participate in extra-curricular activities until the grade improves (minimum one week of ineligibility).
2. Notification will generally be given to students, parents, the Athletic Director/extra-curricular facilitator and coaches by the principal on Thursdays with ineligibility beginning on Saturday of the same week. The ineligible student must meet with the teacher to develop an Action Plan for raising the grade. The Action Plan will include specific skills and strategies that will help the student improve his or her grade. A copy of the Action Plan will be sent home to parents. After grades have improved, the student should continue working on goals set forth in the Action Plan and continue meeting with teachers on a regular basis for help and to review goals.
3. If a student is ineligible twice in the same class during the same quarter, the student may not continue with extra-curricular activities for the rest of that semester (if in a club or group) or season (if in Athletics).

A student must be present for the day's classes to be eligible to participate in the practice or game on that day. If a student has a doctor's excuse prohibiting participation in P.E. class, he/she will not be permitted to participate in an athletic event that day.

Backpacks

Parents should instruct their children to properly wear backpacks so as to avoid possible back injury. Wheeled book carts/backpacks are not allowed as they become a potential trip hazard in the hallways.

Band and Orchestra

Students in Grades 4 - 8 are invited to participate in the band program sponsored by Music Education Services. Group lessons and participation in Rockford Area Catholic Schools band are a part of our band program.

Students in grades 3 – 8 are invited to participate in our school string orchestra program. Students may choose between playing a violin, viola, cello, or bass. Weekly lessons are given at school.

Bicycles

Bicycles are permitted as a mode of transportation to and from school. Students bringing bicycles are asked to walk their bicycles on school grounds and park them in the bike rack on the lower level. For the safety of all students, bicycles may not be ridden on the school grounds. Parents or guardians are reminded that all bicycles are brought to school at their own risk. Bicycles should be locked throughout the school day.

Birthdays

Students may bring a treat to share with their class. We recommend non-edible items (ex. pencil or bookmark) or edible store-bought items. Snacks that promote good nutrition are preferred. Consistent with Winnebago County Health Department recommendations, homemade baked goods should not include any type of dairy products – milk, creams, custards, cheese, etc. Dairy products, improperly stored and refrigerated, promote bacteria growth.

Refrigerator and/or freezer space is not available to store student treats.

Be aware that some students have allergies to peanuts, peanut butter and peanut oil; tree nuts such as almonds, cashews, and walnuts. Other students may have diabetes, a condition that restricts consumption of certain ingredients. Please check with each homeroom teacher as to the specific needs of individual students in a classroom. Teachers receive a printout of student medical concerns based on yearly parent input on the school registration form.

Balloon bouquets and other such gifts are strongly discouraged and will be kept in the school office until the end of the school day.

Invitations to parties may be distributed on school grounds only when EVERYONE in the class is invited (or all boys or all girls are invited).

Blogs

Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, MySpace®, Xanga®, Friendster®, Facebook®, etc., may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish.

Cell Phones

While St. Rita students are strongly discouraged from bringing cell phones to school, cell phones may be brought to school and to school sponsored activities under the following conditions:

- *Phones must be turned off during the school day, before and after school, during Extended Care, during school-sponsored activities and in the school building.
- *Cell phones may not be used for picture taking
- *Harassment or threatening of persons via the cell phone is not permitted
- *At no time should cell phones be used for game playing, Internet or e-mail access, text messaging, video movie displays, gambling or making purchases of any kind

Not following these rules may result in loss of privileges and disciplinary action.

Change of Address

Please notify the school office promptly concerning any change of address, phone number, or emergency information. This courtesy will help keep our records current.

Child Abuse Laws

St. Rita Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Illinois. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to the Department of Children and Family Services.

Christian Ministry

Consistent with our school mission, service to others is fulfilled through our all-school Christian Ministry projects and our structured Christian Ministry program. Students in PreK-3 through 4th grade participate in all-school or individual classroom service projects. Grades 5-8 students participate in a structured Christian ministry program requiring varied service hours. Service hours can be accumulated through uncompensated work at home, in the neighborhood, for the church or school and for the community.

Church Demeanor

Each teacher and parent is charged with the active and continuous teaching and refinement of reverent church behavior. Listed below are some fundamental procedures when teaching our Catholic faith to our children.

When entering the outside doors of the church, students should quiet themselves.

When entering the sanctuary students should bless themselves (a reminder of their baptism) with holy water, using the sign of the cross.

Before entering a pew, students should reverently genuflect facing the tabernacle as a sign of respect for God's presence. When genuflecting, a student should face the tabernacle, drop on one knee until it touches the floor, make the sign of the cross, stand up straight and then enter the pew. Once in the pew, students, while kneeling, should take a quiet moment of prayer before sitting.

Communications

The weekly family envelope will be sent home on Wednesday and/or made available through electronic files. Please carefully review this information every Wednesday evening for important information and school updates. We ask you sign and return the family envelope to school the next school day. Families will be assessed a \$2.00 charge when a new envelope is needed beyond the first one.

Concerns

The normal channel for concerns/complaints regarding St. Rita School shall be from parent or guardian or student to the person directly involved, then to the principal, and then to the pastor. Every effort will be made to satisfy the complaint at the earliest level. Complaints not resolved with the teacher or principal must be submitted in writing before further processing.

Contacting Teachers

The school office is open from 7:30a.m. to 3:30p.m. during the school year. Staff members may be contacted by telephone or email during the school day. Teachers will respond to messages and emails in a timely manner.

Requests for parent conferences may be made anytime by a parent through the office to discuss student or parent concerns. Teachers are available to meet with parents or guardians before or after school by appointment.

Curriculum

St. Rita School provides an extensive curriculum for our students. Included in our curriculum is Art, Computer Science, Language Arts, Math, Music, Physical Education, Reading, Religion, Science, Social Studies and Spanish. Students are required to attend all scheduled classes.

1. Computer Science

St. Rita School has a program for computer literacy for students in Grades K through Grade 8. The school is constantly expanding the use of technology within the daily classroom curriculum. *Smart Boards, or interactive white boards, are located in every classroom and are used to enhance curriculum through technology integration.* A variety of educational activities is offered including tutorial, graphics, word processing, database, and interactive multi-media. All students and their parents are required to sign an annual Acceptable Use Policy for computer usage (see Appendix).

2. Fine Arts

Some of the goals of the Music program include fostering an open attitude toward all types of music, playing instruments, participating in group singing, composing music, and studying areas of music history and music theory. A variety of Music programs are presented yearly.

Art is instructed as a separate class for students in kindergarten through eighth grade and is integrated into various subject areas. In addition, color, form, and media are studied and expressed in classroom art experiences.

3. Language Arts

The Language Arts program is structured to emphasize phonetic analysis, reading, listening, and communication skills. Emphasis is placed on written communication, grammar, creative expression, speech, reference materials, spelling and vocabulary.

4. Math

The Math program is designed on a skills continuum. Basic skills, problem solving, critical thinking skills, and real life application are incorporated into our Math curriculum. Pre-algebra and Algebra are a part of the curriculum for 7th and 8th grade students.

5. Physical Education

Skill development and efficiency of movement constitute a major part of the Physical Education program. The student learns to function in team and in individual activities, learns what the body can and can't do, and develops balance, coordination, and large and small motor skills. Physical Education is offered in Pre-K through 8th grade. A Health unit, as a component of the Physical Education Program, is part of the 6th, 7th and 8th grade curriculum.

6. Religion

The Religion program includes an experiential approach to understanding God's love for us and our response to God through the student's experience, the study of Catholic doctrine, sacramental preparation, activities, and community resources. Liturgy and prayer is considered a vital part of the school life at St. Rita School. Students plan and attend weekly Mass and each First Friday. Fifth through eighth grade students are responsible to complete community service hours per quarter. (Christian Ministry)

7. Science

The study of Science pursues a discovery and inquiry technique and stimulates the student's curiosity about oneself and the world. It stresses the scientific method of problem solving, critical thinking, and experimentation.

8. Social Studies

The program of Social Studies is a study of people's relationship to other people and to the physical world around them. It incorporates geography, cultural differences, government, history, economics, and current events. Emphasis is placed on Christian understanding and concern, divergent thinking, and interpreting events relating to national and world society.

9. Spanish

God's international love for all is expressed through this study of a second language. Students in grades fifth through eighth are exposed to grammar, speaking, literature, and culture through an instructional Spanish program taught by a certified Spanish teacher. Students in grades Kindergarten through fourth grade are exposed to the Spanish language and culture through a classroom video series.

10. Encore

Students in 7th and 8th grade participate in Encore, a weekly program providing students with learning experiences in areas outside of the traditional academic curriculum and after school extra-curricular programs. The program is based on both research of characteristics in successful middle school programs and the mission and identity of St. Rita Catholic School. The goal of the Encore Program is to introduce students to various life skills or interests which could be pursued in high school or later in life.

Discipline

Good discipline is a necessary factor in maximizing the learning environment. It is important that all students abide by school policies in order to maintain the outstanding and caring educational atmosphere that is characteristic of St. Rita School.

The School reserves the right to establish and enforce reasonable standards of behavior for all students involved in educational and recreational activities - whether during regular School hours, on School premises, in connection with School activities or otherwise. St Rita has the right to discipline students for situations that occur outside of the school day. Suspensions can occur for off campus/outside of school day incidences.

In the event of a violation of those standards, the School reserves the right to invoke appropriate disciplinary steps including, but not limited to, conduct and uniform referrals, detentions, suspensions, and expulsions. The level of discipline appropriate for a violation shall be determined case-by-case, based upon a review of a variety of factors including, but not limited to, the severity of the misconduct and the student's academic and behavioral record

The following is a non-exhaustive list of infractions for which students may be disciplined up to and including expulsion:

1. Violation of the School's policy on gang-related activities;
2. Violation of the School's policy on drugs and alcohol;
3. Violation of the School's policy on weapons;
4. Violation of the School's rules and regulations.

Students are expected to demonstrate Christian conduct on a consistent basis. They are to show respectful and cooperative behavior towards adults and fellow students, and they are always expected to respect the rights of others.

Students who knowingly and willfully disrupt the educational process, break established school and teacher rules, fail to do schoolwork, and/or violate the rights of others will be subject to (1) conduct/uniform referrals, (2) detentions, (3) in-school suspension, (4) out-of-school suspension, and/or (5) expulsion, depending upon the severity of the infraction.

(1) Conduct Referrals are sent to parents to alert them about some problem that occurred at school. Students will earn a detention after receiving three Conduct Referrals in one semester. If needed, teachers may also elect to withhold privileges (parties, programs, field trips, recess, and the like), with Principal approval, as disciplinary techniques.

(2) Detentions are assigned when more serious misbehavior occurs. Parents will be notified when detentions are earned. Detentions will be 45 minutes and served with the student's classroom or homeroom teacher. It is essential that they be served on the date assigned.

Students may be placed on a home-study program at the discretion of the principal. Also, students may be suspended and/or expelled for serious misconduct, including, but not limited to, fighting, stealing, cheating, violation of the computer Acceptable Use Policy,

possession/usage of drugs, tobacco, and/or alcohol, severe disrespect, gang involvement, vandalism, out-of-control or aggressive behavior, harassment, threats to harm others or property, setting false alarms, swearing/vulgarity, insolence, possession of contraband/dangerous items, possession of look-alike weapons or drug substances, laser-point pens, repeated violation of school rules, etc.

(3) In-School Suspension results in a student spending part of or the entire school day away from peers, but within school. Parents of students who have earned an in school suspension will be asked to either supervise their child in school during the day or pay the cost of a substitute teacher to supervise and work with the suspended student.

(4) Out-of-School Suspension results in a student not being allowed to attend classes or be present at school for a certain length of time. The student will not be allowed to reenter the classroom until a conference is held between the student, parents or guardian, and the Principal.

(5) Expulsion results in a student not being allowed to continue his/her education at St. Rita School. Only the Principal and Pastor can expel a student from St. Rita School. If a student and his/her parents or guardians disagree with the expulsion, they may appeal the decision. The Pastor makes the final determination as to the appropriateness of the consequence. Students whose parents have violated the Parents as Partners agreement in this handbook may also be expelled from St. Rita Catholic School.

Behavioral and Eligibility Policy

If students receive three Conduct Referrals in one semester for behavioral reasons (such as talking, disrespecting others, etc.) they will receive a Detention.

If the same student then receives three additional Conduct Referrals for behavioral reasons in the same semester they will receive an In-School Suspension for a day. They will also be ineligible for sports and extra-curricular activities for one week. Additional Conduct Referrals or Detentions could jeopardize students' participation in athletics or other extra-curricular activities

An extreme offense or special circumstances will be dealt with by the Pastor, Principal and Athletic Director.

Dress Code

The dress code of St. Rita School is implemented for the purpose of developing a healthy self-concept for all students by fostering a more accepting atmosphere.

The St. Rita School dress code applies throughout the school year including any field trips unless otherwise designated. If a child is not appropriately attired, parents and/or guardians will be notified so that corrections can be made promptly. There is no standard uniform at the Pre-K level.

St. Rita School uniform consists of:

1. The St. Rita School jumper, shift and skort is worn by girls in grades K-4. The St. Rita School skirt is worn by girls in grades 5-8. All jumpers, skirts, or skorts must be knee length.
2. Girls and boys in grades K-8 may wear navy pants. Pants should be traditional uniform style twill with no decorative pockets, outside stitching, or labels. No stirrup pants, low rise pants, knit pants or jeans can be worn. A plain navy blue, *dark* brown or black belt, free of rivets or excessive stitching, is to be worn on the slacks.
3. K-8 students can wear navy walking shorts until October 1 and again after April 30. A navy blue, dark brown or black belt (see description above) is to be worn on the walking shorts.
4. Plain collared true red or white polo shirts may be worn in grades K-8. Shirts are to be tucked in at all times. Turtlenecks are not a part of the uniform.
5. Navy blue Dennis Uniform ¼ zip fleeces may be worn over the school uniform. St. Rita gray hoodies may be worn on Fridays from November 1st through April 30th.
7. Navy blue or white tights/knee socks may be worn by the girls. Girls and boys may wear navy blue or white socks which must be visible above the ankle and above shoes.
8. Shoes must be safe, comfortable and soft-soled. If the shoes have eyelets, they must have strings, be laced and be tied in the proper manner. Shoes with rollers, such as ‘Wheelies’, are not permitted. Moccasins or ‘house shoes’ are not permitted. Boots may be worn outside in the winter months, but not in the school building. All shoes need backs.
9. Dyed hair or unusual haircuts are unacceptable. Traditional hairstyles only. Boys’ hair needs to be above the eyebrows, above the collar, and above the ears.
10. Girls may not wear dangling earrings - studs only. Girls may only have one earring per ear, and earrings must be located in the ear lobe. Boys may not wear any earrings. Girls or boys may not wear any accessories except for subtle religious necklaces. Only prescription/optometrist-issued eyeglasses may be worn.
11. Girls may wear only clear finger nail polish, and no fake nails. No make-up is allowed. Cologne and perfume are not allowed. Fake or real tattoos are not allowed.
12. All clothing must fit properly. No oversized or baggy looks are allowed. Pants and shorts must be worn at the natural waistline.

13. Any clothing or jewelry that is worn on the school premises that is contrary to the philosophy of the school can be banned by the school administration.

Uniform Enforcement

The failure of a student to follow the uniform policy undermines the educational environment at St Rita Catholic School. Violations of the uniform policy will result in the student earning an out of uniform referral. Depending on the nature of the uniform violation, a parent may be called to bring in appropriate uniform clothes before the student may attend class.

St. Rita School P.E. Uniform consists of:

Students in Grades 3-8 must wear navy blue or black gym shorts and the St. Rita gym shirt for gym class. All Students must wear gym shoes for gym class. It is recommended that a separate pair of gym shoes be kept for gym class. No black soled shoes are allowed, unless non-marking.

Non-Uniform Day Dress Code

Occasional “out of dress code” days will be held during the school year. In addition to the attire expectations stated above, the following guidelines are to be followed:

Girls: Dress, skirt, jeans or shorts. Dress or skirt length must be knee length. Modesty is essential - nothing tight or revealing is allowed. Shorts are permitted when summer uniform policy is in effect. All shorts must be “finger-tip length”. Blouses and dresses must have sleeves. No bare midriffs. No spandex.

Boys: Slacks, jeans or shorts (Shorts can be worn when summer uniform policy is in effect). Extremely baggy clothing is not to be worn.

Boy Scout and Girl Scout uniforms may be worn on meeting days.

All questions of appropriate school and uniform clothes are at the sole discretion of the Principal.

Drugs and Alcohol (Diocesan Policy 5150.1)

Students are prohibited from using or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at school, on the school grounds, or at any school related function. Included within the prohibitions set forth in this policy are the following:

1. Use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation or sale of drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol on school premises or with respect to school related activities;
2. Storing in a locker, desk, automobile, or other repository on school premises or in connection with school related activity any drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol;
3. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school premises or in connection with any school related activities.

The school reserves the right to require a student to undergo testing for the use of alcohol and/or drugs when a reasonable suspicion of such use exists. A reasonable suspicion of drug and/or

alcohol use may be based upon the observation of the student's behavior, information received regarding alleged alcohol or drug use and/or other indications giving rise to a suspicion of a violation of policy. A student's failure to cooperate in testing required by this policy or other violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the school.

Note: Possession or use of liquid white out/liquid paper is banned. Only correction tape can be used if allowed by the teacher.

Dual Reporting

The names and addresses of both parents or guardians will be in the student's file. In the case of a student whose parents' marriage has dissolved, a certified copy of the Order of Dissolution, as well as any subsequent modification of the order, is to be on file. Unless otherwise decreed in the order, information commonly made available to parents or guardians of any student in attendance will be provided to both parents or guardians upon request.

Equal Opportunity

The educational system of the Catholic Diocese of Rockford/St. Rita School is an equal opportunity educational institution. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national ethnic origin, or sex in the educational programs or activities.

Extended School Program

The Extended School Program (E.S.P.) of St. Rita Catholic School strives to construct an enjoyable atmosphere with varying activities, including board games, outdoor play, art activities and homework time in a Catholic-enriched, loving environment. The program's supervisor and staff members are experienced and trained adults who report directly to the school administrator. The children are served a nutritious snack each day.

St. Rita Catholic School students enrolled in Pre-K through 8th grade eligible to be enrolled in the E.S.P. during the school year. Each participating family must complete a registration form each year. There is a \$20.00 non-refundable family registration fee due when the form is completed. Children from families who have not filled out the registration form will not be accepted into the E.S.P., and all families, including coaches and other parent volunteers, are required to pay for this service regardless of the amount of time spent in the E.S.P.

A child in the St. Rita Catholic School E.S.P. needs to be accompanied by his/her parents/guardians each morning when he/she is checked into the E.S.P. The parents/guardian will be responsible for signing the child in for the day and entering the time the child arrives. The child will remain in the E.S.P. until 8:00am at which time he/she will walk to his/her classroom line-up location. The E.S.P. will be in session during the afternoons on days when school is in session for a half day. The E.S.P. will not be in session when school is not in session, including emergency days off.

A child in the E.S.P. will be released only to his/her parents/guardians or to an individual who has been authorized by the parents/guardians to pick up the child. Parents/guardians or the authorized person is required to sign the child out when picking him/her up in the afternoon.

After signing out, the child will remain with the parent as they leave the building. Pick up is through the cafeteria doors, not through the main doors of St. Rita Catholic School. Students with no pick-up arrangements by 3:10pm will automatically be sent to E.S.P. and billed accordingly.

A duplicate copy of your child(ren)'s health form is on file with the E.S.P. personnel. Parents/guardians or their emergency designates will be called if a child exhibits signs of illness or is injured during the E.S.P. period. Medication will be dispensed by trained St. Rita Catholic School office staff until 3:30 p.m. each day. Just a reminder that all medications must be in its original container marked with the child's name. The medication will be kept locked in the school office. If other arrangements are needed, please notify the E.S.P. Supervisor.

The E.S.P. is available for St. Rita Catholic School students only on all school days from 6:45 a.m.- 8:00 a.m. and from 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. On early dismissal days, the E.S.P. is available from time of dismissal until 5:30 p.m.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of expectations of children in the E.S.P.

- 1) Abide by the rules of good behavior to prevent harm to self or others.
- 2) Respect all staff members, other students and all property.
- 3) Share equipment and facilities with others.
- 4) Remain with a staff member at all times & notify him/her when going to another place.
- 5) Come to E.S.P. immediately after school unless parents/guardians have informed the staff of other plans.
- 6) Dress appropriately for indoor/outdoor play.
- 7) Learn to accept consequences for inappropriate actions.

If a child violates these standards, we will first take action by removing the child from the group and seating him/her for a TIME OUT period. If the child does not respond to this and the problem behavior persists, the parents/guardians will be called in for a conference with the principal and the E.S.P. supervisor. Should there continue to be problems, a second conference will be arranged with the principal and at that time the child may be dismissed from the E.S.P.

E.S.P. Fees

Registration Fee: \$20 per Family (Must accompany registration form)
Daily Fees: \$3.20 an hour per each child. (\$.80 per quarter hour)

Families will be invoiced monthly. Those not paying their fees on a timely basis will risk being dropped from the program.

Healthy snacks are included with the E.S.P. fee structure. These snacks are provided to each student in attendance on a daily basis. Also, on early dismissal days, a complete balanced and nutritious lunch is provided to each child scheduled to attend in addition to the regular snacks. The E.S.P. supervisor is Department of Health Food Certified and oversees the preparation of snacks/meals.

THERE WILL BE A LATE FEE CHARGE OF \$5.00 FOR ANY PART OF A QUARTER HOUR AFTER 5:30 P.M. ADDITIONALLY, ANY CHILDREN REPEATEDLY PICKED UP LATER THAN 5:30 P.M. RISK BEING DROPPED FROM THE PROGRAM.

St. Rita Catholic School will not offer overnight field trips, or sponsor any activities with the purpose of raising monies to fund overnight field trips, for any grade level during the course of the school year.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills are conducted during the school year at unannounced and varied times. All persons must leave the school in a quick, quiet and orderly fashion.

Tornado drills also will be conducted during the school year at unannounced and varied times. If a tornado warning is in effect when school is in session, students will not be dismissed until the warning has been lifted. If disaster occurs and students are not able to return to the school building, mass emails, and/or parent all-call phone messages will inform parents or guardians where their child(ren) have been taken for shelter.

Lock down drills are also conducted during the school year at announced and varied times.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important use of community resources to supplement the objectives taught in the curriculum. Permission of parents or guardians is required for students to take part in any field trip. If a permission slip is not returned by the due date, the student will not attend the field trip. All students are expected to be a part of a field trip; however, any student whose behavior has been inappropriate may remain at school at the determination of the Principal. Chaperones are selected and alternated by the participating teacher(s). Chaperones must be at least 25 years old. Children are not allowed to attend the field trips of other classes that they are not a part of, nor are other siblings allowed to attend. Teachers, in consultation with the Principal, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.

Gang and Gang Related Activities (Diocesan Policy 5131.27)

St. Rita School is a gang free environment. Gangs, as defined in this policy, include individuals who associate with each other primarily for criminal, disruptive behavior and/or activities prohibited by law and/or by the school's rules and regulations. Gangs, gang related activities and secret societies are not acceptable in a school setting as their presence interferes materially and substantially with the educational process and the maintenance of appropriate discipline and also may foster anti-social behaviors, attitudes and practices which may endanger the health, safety and welfare of students.

Students are prohibited from participating in any activity related to a gang or secret society while on school property or in conjunction with school related activities. Activities prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Soliciting and/or recruiting others for membership.
2. Participating in and/or inciting physical violence.
3. Extorting or soliciting money and/or services, requesting any person to pay for protection or the payment of dues.
4. Coercing, harassing and/or otherwise intimidating, threatening or causing harm to any person or thing.
5. Wearing, possessing, using, displaying in any manner, distributing or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign or other item commonly associated with membership in or affiliation with a gang or secret society.
6. Using any verbal or non-verbal communications (gestures, handshakes, etc.) suggesting or showing membership in or affiliation with a gang or secret society.
7. Engaging or failing to engage in any activity where such is intended to promote or further the interest of any gang or any gang activity or secret society including but not limited to, distributing literature, drawing or displaying gang related symbols on any surface, or teaching others to represent or act like a gang member or member of a secret society.
8. Any other activity which violates any law, rule, policy or regulation of St. Rita School or the Catholic Diocese of Rockford when such an act or activity is taken to further the interest of a gang or secret society.

For purposes of this policy, the school may also consider gang or gang related activities in which a student engages outside the school and /or separate from school related activities due to the potential repercussions on the school and other students of such conduct.

Violations of the policy may result, at the school's discretion, in discipline up to and including expulsion from school.

General Rules/Policies

1. No food is to be eaten except at assigned lunch times, or with special permission. No gum or candy is permitted during the school day.
2. All materials for class (books, pens, etc.) are to be taken to class daily. Students are not to return to lockers/classrooms for forgotten items, or to call home for these. Supplies are to be replaced as needed. Books are to be covered.
3. No student is permitted to enter any classroom before or after regular school hours without the explicit permission and supervision of the classroom teacher or principal. If students wish to have extra help from a teacher, they must make arrangements with the teacher prior to the actual personalized instructional time.
4. Students are not to use loud voices while in school. Behavior on all St. Rita premises is to be orderly. Students are not to skip stairs, or run. Pushing, pulling, and "horse-play" are not acceptable. Students are to keep their hands to themselves at all times.
5. Homework is due on the date assigned; however, exceptions may be made by the teacher for special circumstances. When students are absent, they will have as many days equal

- to the absence to make up missing work.
6. Students are to refrain from throwing snowballs, stones, or other potentially harmful objects. When outside, students are to play in a cooperative manner.
 7. All adults, including lunch and Extended Care supervisors, are to be given respect. All teachers and aides have authority over all students.
 8. Harassment of any type is not tolerated.
 9. Displaying good manners is an integral component in the promotion of a positive Christian approach to proper education and future life-skills. Students are to demonstrate good manners at all time, including proper table etiquette during lunch and appropriate greetings ('Good morning or Good afternoon') in the hallways.
 10. Students are expected to take pride in St. Rita School and are to assist in maintaining its cleanliness.
 11. No unnecessary items or valuables are to be brought to school (ex. money, toys, radios, cameras, etc.) unless permission has been given by the classroom teacher. Animals/reptiles are not to be brought to school. The school reserves the right to search lockers and desks without notice. iPods and other personal electronic listening devices and not allowed in school or on school ground.
 12. All fees are to be paid by the date required.
 13. Students may be photographed and/or videotaped from time to time; special activities may be taped for purposes of showing the activity publicly. Any parent who does not wish to have his/her child videotaped must notify the school office in writing so that the child will not be a participant in the taped activity.
 14. All students in grades 2 -8 are to use an assignment book each day; and parents may be asked to sign this book. All students are to follow the school-wide guidelines for acceptable written work.
 15. All work and activities completed by the student is the joint property of both the school and the student. The school may continue to use the work of students after the student has left St Rita.
 16. No one may use the school logo or the school name without written permission from the school.

Home and School Association

Communication and mutual support between parents or guardians and the school community is one key to a successful education program. For this reason, St. Rita School has a Home and

School Association. The Home and School Association provides: 1) Information to families that give directions, ideas and activities that positively impact family life and encourage the development of Christian values within the family; 2) Service by organizing parents or guardians to do needed projects at school; 3) Fund raising to meet the instructional needs of the school as identified by the Principal; 4) Support in encouraging the educational, moral, physical, mental and religious growth of the school. Home and School meeting are open to all families. We encourage parents or guardians to volunteer their time and to attend all Home and School Association events.

Homework

Because education involves study, all students are expected to spend a reasonable amount of time on school nights doing some type of homework. Homework is an extension of the learning process and enhances the study skills of the student and reinforces concepts learned. Minimum daily study time recommendations are as follows: Grades K – 2, fifteen minutes; Grades 3 – 4, thirty minutes; Grades 5 – 6, forty-five minutes; and Grades 7 – 8, sixty-ninety minutes.

See make-up work policy under “Absence”.

Inclement Weather

All school closings, delays in school openings or early dismissals due to inclement weather will be communicated to parents through via the school web site and mass emails. Athletic events, practices and other activities are canceled if school is canceled because of inclement weather.

Injury or Illness

If a child is ill or injured, a parent or guardian or a person authorized by the parent will be notified before the child is permitted to leave school. The parents, guardian or designated person must come to the school office to pick up the child.

Parents or guardians must write an excuse if they feel for some reason their child should not participate in physical education class for a day. A doctor’s excuse is needed when a child cannot participate in physical education class for an extended period of time as determined by the Principal. If a child is excused from physical education class, he/she will not be permitted to participate in after school athletics on the same day.

Inspection of Property (Diocesan Policy 5131.25)

In the interests of the health and safety of the School, its students and faculty and in furtherance of its educational mission, the School reserves the right to conduct inspections of all areas of its property and objects that are brought onto its premises. The School reserves the right to conduct these inspections on its own or to request the assistance of a third party in the inspection process.

This right to conduct inspections includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Lockers (including those that bear a student-provided lock)

2. Desks
3. Bags, purses, briefcases, “totes,” or other carrying devices brought onto School property
4. Vehicles located on School property
5. Any other equipment, device or property to which the use or access is allowed by the School
6. Any other item or property brought on to the School’s premises by a student or others

The failure to cooperate with or other interference with an inspection allowed by this policy shall be grounds for disciplinary action as determined appropriate by the School. Further, should an inspection identify weapons, illegal substances, other contraband or other material that is inappropriate for possession on this School’s premises (as determined by the School), the School reserves the right to notify appropriate law enforcement and/or other authorities as well as the involved student’s parent/guardian.

In conducting inspections under this policy, the School shall, to the extent reasonably possible, attempt to minimize the scope of the intrusion upon the involved student’s privacy. Nonetheless, the School reserves the right to determine the scope and extent of such an inspection. The School further reserves the right to require the assistance of other individuals, outside agencies and/or third party contractors in conducting such inspections.

Instructional Materials

Textbooks are supplied by the school. Since these materials are the property of the school, we urge parents and guardians to instruct their child(ren) to be careful in handling them. If through carelessness a student damages a book or if a book is lost, a replacement cost will be assessed which must be paid immediately. All textbooks must be covered throughout the school year in order to protect longevity.

Learning Disabilities

Students suspected of having a learning disability can be referred by either teacher, parent or guardian, or principal. A signed referral and documentation of learning interventions is necessary for individual testing to take place. The school psychologist, social worker, L.D. consultant and staff work closely with the child. At the conclusion of testing, a staffing is arranged between the child’s parents or guardians and the school team at which time results are shared and recommendations are made. Determination will be made at this time if the student can still be appropriately served at St. Rita, and if the student would qualify for in-school services.

Library

Students may check out only one book at a time, unless it is for a class project. Library books are due one week after they are checked out. If books are damaged or lost books are not found by the end of the year, fines for the books must be paid prior to the release of student records and year books.

Lost and Found

The loss of an article of value should be reported to the classroom/homeroom teacher or the

school office. Placing names on articles of clothing, boots and shoes is strongly recommended. Lost and found items not claimed will be taken to a charitable organization at the end of each quarter.

Lunch

If students are not getting a hot lunch, cold lunches are to be brought from home on a daily basis. Parents should ensure that their children have a nutritionally balanced cold lunch. If a lunch is brought to school after classes have started, it should be left in the school office. Fast food lunches and carbonated beverages are not allowed during students' lunch periods. White milk can be ordered on a yearly basis.

The Illinois Machine Shed, a local restaurant, serves hot lunch daily. The cost of the lunch is \$3.75, and ordering is done online through www.orderlunches.com. No refunds are given.

Table manners and courtesy are expected of all students. Students must show respect for and obey the directives of the cafeteria supervisors. Lunchtime behavior is to be quiet and orderly. Students are to stay seated. No food or lunch materials are to be thrown. Students are responsible for leaving the eating area clean. Misbehavior during lunch time may result in a student being denied the privilege of eating with his/her peers or enjoying recess time.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Appointments, including routine medical and dental examinations, are an interruption to the students' school day. Please make all appointments after 3:00 p.m. The school is to be advised in advance of medical examinations. A doctor's statement may be required upon return to school for medical examinations. All required medical documentation needs to be on file in the school office prior to the beginning of the school year.

Medication (Diocesan Policy 5130.1)

Medication is permitted and administered only according to the guidelines set by the State of Illinois and the Diocese of Rockford:

1. The parents or guardians shall complete the school-issued medication form providing the school with the physician's orders or prescription detailing: the name of the student, the type of disease or illness involved, the name of the drug, dosage, time interval in which the medication is to be taken, the date of initiation and the date of discontinuance, the desired benefits of the medication, the side effects and an emergency number where the physician can be reached.
2. The student's parents or guardian shall provide to the school administrator a written request authorizing the administration of the prescribed medication at school.
3. Medication shall be brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician. For prescription medication, the name of the student and the names of the physician, pharmacy and pharmacy phone number shall be indicated on the container.
4. The school shall provide a locked space for safe storage of the medication.
5. The school personnel shall keep a written record of all drug administration. This record shall include: what medication was given; to whom it was given; when it was given (date

and time); who administered the medication; the date of initiation of drug therapy in school. The information shall be placed in the student's health file.

6. No medications may be kept by students on their person, with the exception of Inhalers, which may be kept with student, with orders from physician.

No medication will be given by school personnel unless these regulations are followed. Over the counter pain medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, will not be dispensed to any child unless proper medication permission forms have been filed. School personnel will apply band-aids, antiseptic and soap and water when needed.

Even if medication is not taken during school hours, the school needs to be notified of all students taking prescription medication.

Multi-Cultural Assurances

No person at St. Rita School shall on the grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by the school.

Parents as Partners

As partners in the educational process at St. Rita Catholic School, we ask parents:

To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

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

To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example

To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems

To actively participate in school activities, such as Parent-Teacher Conferences

To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student

To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy

To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers

To meet all financial obligations to the school

To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health

To complete and return to school any requested information promptly

To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education

To support the religious and educational goals of the school

To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school

Parent's Role in Education

We, at St. Rita Catholic School, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life--physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of St. Rita Catholic School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at St. Rita Catholic School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 8), your child needs constant support from parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging and nurturing the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority.

If a student reports an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good, mature behavior and relationships.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for

homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

Pictures

No family is obligated to purchase pictures. Picture Day is a dress up day for all students and staff.

Recess and Play

When weather permits, all children in Grades K - 8 are to be on the playground during supervised recess. Children may not bring their own personal toys or balls for use at school, unless authorized by the teacher or office for special events. Children may expect to have inappropriate toys confiscated. Students are to dress appropriately for cold outdoor weather.

Every child who is well enough to be in school is well enough to play outdoors at recess time and participate in all gym classes unless a doctor's note is provided. If a child cannot participate in organized play for a day or so, the child will still be expected to be out in the fresh air with classmates. During inclement weather, including very cold winter days, all pupils remain indoors.

Religious Dimension

A distinctive quality of St. Rita School is its commitment to the building of a community of faith. The staff's ministry of educating our students is fostered in an atmosphere of a believing community that shares faith in Jesus, prayer, and service to others. Time is planned throughout the year for student and staff participation in these special events.

Students and staff attend the 8:30 a.m. Mass on Fridays as a total school community once per week. Parents or guardians, other family members and friends are invited and encouraged to attend this mass. Students and staff in Grades 2 - 8 have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. Masses for holidays and special days (ex. during Catholic Schools Week) are often in addition to the scheduled weekly masses. Stations of the Cross are attended on Friday afternoons during Lent. Prayer services also occur throughout the school year.

Reporting Student Progress

Reporting student progress is the result of daily evaluation of the child(ren)'s progress. A report card for each student will be distributed each quarter for students in grades Pre-K – 8th. Parent signed report card envelopes are to be returned to the school in a timely manner. Parent-teacher-student conferences are held at the end of the first quarter. In addition to this regular conference, arrangements for other conferences can be made by parents, teachers, or principal at any time during the school year by scheduling an appointment.

Parents will be able to access student grades and reports on-line through Teacherease via the

internet. Teacherease is a web-based grade book and e-mail service. The program allows parents and students to monitor grades 24 hours a day/7 days a week. In addition to grade monitoring, Teacherease includes e-mail communication capabilities with a teacher. In the event that families do not have access to the internet, hard copies of student progress will be generated and sent home per parent request.

Retention Policy

Students completing a grade's work to the extent of their ability generally are to be promoted to the next grade. When necessary, summer school and/or tutoring may be required for placement in the next grade.

To retain a child, the teacher must demonstrate that such retention is warranted and would be of benefit. When it is probable or certain that a student will not be promoted, the parent(s) or guardian will be informed and a written record of this notification will be kept on file in the school.

Prior to entering kindergarten, all students are given a kindergarten screening test. Based on the results of this test, performance in pre-kindergarten, and/or information received in students' records from previous schools, students may be required to wait an additional year before entering kindergarten.

Sacramental Preparation

Preparation for the first reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist will be done with students in Grade Two. Confirmation preparation will *typically* be done with students in Grade Eight. Parents or guardians should be directly involved in this special preparation of their child through attendance at parent meetings, discussion with their child, and through the completion of special projects. Eighth graders do participate in a retreat as part of their Confirmation preparation.

School Property

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and replacement and labor. Textbooks used by the students must have a proper book cover. Writing in textbooks is not permitted. The student will pay a fine or the replacement cost for damaged or lost textbooks before any final reports, transcripts or diplomas are presented.

School Records

A permanent record of each student is kept on file at school. The records include the following information: scholastic ratings, results of standardized tests and attendance records. A conference to review your child(ren)'s file may be arranged by contacting the principal. Records may not be removed from the school building.

Security

To keep the school building secure, all doors are locked during school hours. When entering the school building during school hours, please go to the front door and ring the door bell and

identify yourself. You must check in at the school office and receive a visitor badge. All visitors, including parents, coaches, and volunteers, need to follow this procedure. All visitors need to also check out from the main office and leave through the main school doors. Doors and hallways are monitored by cameras throughout the school.

Special Services/School Counseling Services

The Board of Education of District #205 provides St. Rita School specialized staff to work with students who need psychological, speech, and learning disability services. Catholic Charities provides St. Rita School the services of a social worker for counseling purposes (1 ½ days a week). Contact the principal for more details.

Stewardship for St. Rita Catholic School Families

As part of our Stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure, all families belonging to St. Rita Parish and attending St. Rita Catholic School are required to be active, participating members of St. Rita Parish. Active and participating is defined as follows:

For families, this means attendance at the weekend liturgies, usually at St. Rita Parish, and a strong practice of Stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure.

The Pastor determines whether a family is active and participating. Active and participating families will receive in-parish tuition rates. Non-active and non-participating families will receive out-of-parish tuition rates.

Student Health/Communicable Diseases and Guidelines for Attending School

The physical, emotional and psychological health of our students is a top priority. As an institution where many people can infect each other, certain precautions are necessary to protect everyone's health. Children who have definite signs of illness should not be sent to school. The following guidelines will apply:

Colds: A child with a "heavy" cold and a hacking cough belongs home in bed, even though she/he may have no fever. If your child complains of sore throat and has no other symptoms, she/he may go to school. If white spots can be seen in the back of the throat or if fever is present, keep your child home until a doctor approves return to school.

Fever: No child with fever of 100 degrees or more should be sent to school. Children with fevers of 100 degrees or more will not be allowed to remain in school. A child who had a fever may not return to school until the fever has been absent for 24 hours. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever will not be allowed to return to school the next day as this would not allow for the 24 hour protection of the entire school community.

Vomiting: A child vomiting at home may not come to school.

Diarrhea: A child with diarrhea may not come to school.

Rash: A rash may be the first sign of one of childhood's many illnesses. A rash or "spots" may cover the entire body or may appear in only one area. Do not send a child with a rash to school until your doctor has provided documentation stating that it is safe to do so.

When your child has contracted a communicable disease, please notify the school office immediately. Such diseases include measles, chicken pox, mumps, lice, fifth's disease, meningitis, and pink eye.

We do not have the services of a school nurse. If a child becomes ill or is injured at school, he/she will be cared for temporarily and parents will be notified. It is the responsibility of parents to provide proper transportation in case illness or injury requires a student to be dismissed early.

A child who leaves school due to illness may not return to school or attend school events during that same day.

Health Examinations and Immunizations (Diocesan Policy 5150)

1. Health Exam Required. Each Diocesan school student shall have a health examination within one year prior to entering pre-school; prior to entering kindergarten or the first grade; and upon entering the sixth and ninth grades; and upon entering a school pursuant to a transfer, regardless of the child's grade level.
2. Immunizations Required. Each Diocesan school student shall receive such immunizations against preventable communicable diseases as are required by the Illinois School Code and the Communicable Disease Prevention Act, at the time those immunizations are required to be received, unless one of the exceptions listed in paragraph 5 below is satisfied.
3. Proof of Health Exam and Immunizations Required. A child's parent/legal guardian must supply proof of both the health exam and the required immunizations no later than the beginning of the school year. Where proof is not submitted, the school will notify the parent/legal guardian that he or she has until November 15 of the current school year in which to have the child examined and receive the immunizations, and present proof of same.
4. Noncompliance with this Policy. Failure to provide proof of required health exams and immunizations shall result in the child being excluded from school until the parent/legal guardian presents proof of the exams and the immunizations, and the parent/legal guardian is deemed in violation of the Illinois School Code during the period of noncompliance.
5. Objections to Examinations and/or Immunizations.
 - a. A parent/legal guardian who objects to his/her child being examined and/or immunized is eligible to be exempt from exams and/or immunizations only as follows:

- i. **Medical Objection.** Any medical objection to an immunization must be presented by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches indicating the reasons, and signed by the physician on the certificate of child health examination and placed on file in the child's permanent record. Should the condition of the child later permit immunization, this requirement will then have to be met.

 - ii. **Religious Objection.** An objection based on religious grounds shall be presented to the school by the parent/legal guardian in writing signed by the parent/legal guardian, detailing the grounds for the objection. The objection must set forth the specific religious belief that conflicts with the examination and/or immunization. General philosophical or moral reluctance to allow examinations, immunizations, and/or screening shall not provide a sufficient basis for a religious exception to the requirement of exams and immunizations. Each objection will be addressed on a case by case basis. NOTE: In the event the objection to a vaccine is based on the vaccine containing aborted fetal cell lines, the school should inform the parent/guardian that the objection must be able to state that an alternative vaccine is not readily available to the parent/guardian's child.
- b. The school shall inform the objecting parent/legal guardian of measles outbreak control exclusion procedures in accordance with the Department's rules, Control of Communicable Diseases Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 690) at the time the parent/legal guardian presents the objection. 665.510

6. Determination of Objection to Examination and/or Immunization. The school is to forward all objections to the Diocese, attention Superintendent of Catholic Schools, for determination of whether the written statement constitutes a valid religious objection.

7. List of Non-Immunized Students. An accurate list shall be maintained at every school of all non-immunized students at the school who have not presented proof of immunity against diphtheria, pertussis (to age 6), tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, mumps, Haemophilus influenzae type b, hepatitis B, or Varicella.

These health records are to be in the school office by the FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. Failure to comply will necessitate exclusion from school. The principal and teacher should be made aware of individual students who have special health needs, including those students on prescription medication. Your communication of these needs is very important for your child's wellness.

School Telephone Use

Parents or guardians are requested not to call school for the delivery of messages to their child(ren) except in the case of emergency. Also, except in the case of an extreme emergency, a

student will not be called to the telephone during school hours. The phone is not intended for the general use of the students. After-school arrangements should be made before the student leaves for school in the morning.

Parents are requested not to call faculty and staff at home unless they have specifically been asked to do so.

Testing

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is administered to students in Grades 3-8 each year. The Cognitive Abilities Test is also administered to students in Grades 3, 5, and 7. Test results are recorded on the student's cumulative record and shared with parents.

Tuition (promulgated as a handbook addendum during the 2010-2011 school year)

Families can pay tuition in one of two ways:

- 1. Full tuition by June 30.*
- 2. 10 monthly payments through a bank draft withdrawn from August through May. Payments are withdrawn on either the 5th or the 20th of the month.*

Any family whose account, including tuition, extended care and all other school fees, falls two (2) months in arrears and has not arranged and committed to an alternative plan will be removed or restricted from extracurricular activities. It is the responsibility of the family to contact the school and request an alternative arrangement.

If an account is still in arrears after three (3) months, financial suspension will be imposed and the student may be required to leave school until all tuition and fees are paid. No school records will be released for any student until financial obligations are completed.

All student accounts must be paid by May 23rd to also avoid financial suspension. Students in their 8th grade year will not be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies until all financial obligations have been met.

Tuition and other expenses are to be paid on a year-to-year basis. Students will not be accepted for the succeeding year until expenses from the previous year have been paid in full or alternate financial arrangements have been made.

All payments are due by the exact date indicated. TMS will assess late fees if any payment is received later than the date agreed. TMS will also assess fees for payments denied due to insufficient funds.

Visitors

In order to keep the school environment secure, parents, guardians and all visitors are required to sign in/out at the school office when he/she enters the building before, during and after school hours. All visitors are required to wear a designated badge from the office. We ask that parents and guardians waiting for their child(ren) do so outside. Parents are not allowed to eat lunch with their children at school. All visitors, including parents, should only enter and exit through the main school door during, before and after school.

Volunteers

St. Rita School depends upon and appreciates its many volunteers. It is Diocesan policy that all volunteers with the school complete several Diocesan forms including a criminal background check and the “Protecting God’s Children” course and have it on file before they share their time. All volunteers are required to sign in/out at the school office when he/she enters the building for any reason and are required to wear a designated badge from the office.

Weapons....Possession of (Diocesan Policy 5131.29)

It is a violation of the school’s policies for a student to possess a weapon on school premises or at any time in connection with school-related activities. Included within the prohibitions of this Policy are the possession, sale, distribution, manufacture, receipt, seeking the sale or trade or use of any firearm, knife, martial arts device or other object which, in the school’s discretion, may reasonably be considered to constitute a weapon. Violation of this Policy may result, at the school’s discretion, in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the school.

Withdrawals

The following applies to students who transfer from St. Rita School:

1. The office should be notified in writing by the parents if a family is planning to move or planning to transfer their child to a different school.
2. Official school records are not given to parents, but are forwarded directly to the receiving school after the family has rectified all outstanding school matters. Students’ records will be forwarded no later than 10 days after the request for transfer.
3. There will be no refund of any student fees.
4. If tuition has been paid in full and the child transfers, a pro-rated refund will be given.

Right to Amend

St. Rita Catholic School reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be given to parents.

APPENDIX

INTERNET ACCESS POLICY

School-wide Computer and Internet Policies

Acceptable Use Policy

All use of the Internet shall be consistent with the Diocese's and School's goal of promoting educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. This Internet Access Policy and Authorization does not attempt to state all required or proscribed behavior of users. However, some specific examples are provided. The failure of any user to follow the terms of the Internet Access Policy and Authorization for Internet Access will result in the loss of privileges, disciplinary action (up to and including expulsion or discharge), and/or appropriate legal action. The signature(s) on the Authorization for Internet Access is legally binding and indicates the party who signed has read the terms and conditions carefully and understands their significance.

Terms and Conditions

1. Acceptable Use - Access to the Internet must be for the purpose of education or research, and be consistent with the educational objectives of the Diocese and School
2. Privileges - The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges, disciplinary action (up to and including expulsion or discharge) and/or appropriate legal action. The building administrator will make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated this Authorization and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time; his or her decision is final. Electronic communications, downloaded material and/or other information obtained or transmitted via the Internet may be monitored or read by School officials.
3. Unacceptable Use - You are responsible for your actions and activities involving the network. Some examples of unacceptable uses are:
 - a. Using the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contacts, or transmitting any material in violation of U.S. or State regulations.
 - b. Unauthorized downloading of software, regardless of whether it is copyrighted;
 - c. Downloading copyrighted material for other than personal use;
 - d. Using the network to identify, imply, or infer any gang activity;
 - e. Wastefully using resources, such as file space;
 - f. Invading the privacy of individuals;
 - g. Using another's user's password or account;
 - h. Posting anonymous messages or using pseudonyms or anonymous sign-ons; Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene performance, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, harassing, illegal material or other information and/or materials that are inconsistent with the objectives and/or teachings of the Diocese and/or School;

- i. Using the network while access privileges are suspended or revoked; and
 - j. Unauthorized subscriptions to Internet services such as list servers and newsgroups.
4. Network Etiquette - You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. Be polite. Do not become abusive in your message to others.
 - b. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, or use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.
 - c. Do not reveal the personal addresses or telephone numbers of staff, students or colleagues.
 - d. Recognize that electronic mail (E-mail) is not private.
 - e. Do not use the network in any way that would disrupt its use by other users.
 - f. Use and share computer resources courteously and efficiently.
5. No Warranties - The Diocese and/or School make no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service they are providing. The Diocese and School will not be responsible for any damages suffered. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, or service interruptions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet and the use of other services through the Internet is at your own risk. The Diocese and School specifically deny any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the service.
6. Indemnification - You agree to indemnify the Diocese of Rockford and School for any claims, losses, costs, or damages, including reasonable attorney fees, incurred by the Diocese and/or School relating to, or arising out of any breach of this Internet Access Policy and Authorization or otherwise from your use of the Internet services that are subject to the Policy and the Authorization form.
7. Security - Network security is a high priority. If you can identify a security problem on the Internet, you must notify the system administrator or Principal. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Keep your account and password confidential. Do not use another individual's account and confidential password. Attempts to log-on to the Internet as a system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk may be denied access to network.
8. Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges and other disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data for another use. This includes but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
9. Telephone Charge - The Diocese and School assume no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees, including telephone charges, long-distance charges, per-minute surcharges, and/or equipment or line costs.
10. Release of Liability - You agree to release the Diocese and/or School from any claims or liabilities arising from the use of the Internet services that are subject to this Policy and Authorization form.

AUTHORIZATION FOR INTERNET ACCESS

Name: _____

Grade: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Each student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) must receive the Internet Access Policy and sign this Authorization before being granted supervised or unsupervised access to the internet. Teachers and other staff must also sign as a condition of using the School’s Internet connection. Students, parents(s)/guardian(s) and staff need to sign this Authorization for Internet Access once a year while enrolled in the School or employed by the School.

The Internet Access Policy as well as the following statement must be read to a student if they are too young to read it themselves.

I have received training on appropriate use of the Internet and I have received, understand and will abide by the Internet Access Policy that is incorporated into this Authorization Form. I further understand that should I commit any violation of the Internet Access Policy, as determined by the School in its discretion, my access privileges may be revoked and disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. In consideration for using the School’s Internet connection and having access to public networks, I hereby release the Diocese, School and their employees and agents from any claims and damages arising from my use or inability to use the Internet.

Dated: _____ User Signature: _____

The following is required if the user is a student under the age of 18:

I have read the Internet Access Policy and this Authorization for Internet access and understand and agree that the terms of that Policy are incorporated into this Authorization Form by reference. I understand that access is designed for educational purposes and that the Diocese and School prohibit the access of materials that may be defamatory, inaccurate, offensive or otherwise inappropriate in the school setting or in violation of the Internet Access Policy. However, I also recognize that the Diocese and the School do not control the content of the Internet networks and it is impossible for the Diocese and School to restrict access to all controversial and inappropriate materials. I will hold harmless the Diocese, School, their employees and/or agents from any harm caused by materials or software obtained by my child via the Internet. I also agree, on my child’s behalf, to the terms of the Internet Access Policy; I affirm my child’s obligations pursuant to that policy and this Authorization and accept all responsibilities and/or liabilities arising from my child’s compliance or non-compliance with that policy and/or Internet use. I have discussed the terms of this Authorization with my child. I hereby request that my child be allowed access to the Internet.

Dated: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

REGISTRATION and FEES

A NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE OF \$75 PER FAMILY IS REQUIRED AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION. THIS REGISTRATION FEE IS NOT APPLIED TO TUITION.

TUITION SCHEDULE 2011-2012

GRADE LEVEL Kindergarten – 8 th Grade	ACTIVE PARISHIONERS*	NON-ACTIVE PARISHIONERS
FAMILIES WITH ONE CHILD	\$2,975	\$3,775
FAMILIES WITH TWO CHILDREN	\$5,100	\$6,925
FAMILIES WITH THREE OR MORE CHILDREN	\$6,350	\$9,850

GRADE LEVEL Pre-Kindergarten	PreK-3	PreK-4
TUITION PER CHILD (There Are No Discounts For Multiple Children)	\$900	\$2,300 (full day) \$1,300 (half day)

*It is Parish Policy that Active Parishioners must be supporting the parish through stewardship of **time, talent, and treasure**. Therefore, families that do not participate in parish stewardship will pay the non-active family tuition rate.

CONSUMABLE FEES

THE CONSUMABLE FEES ARE DUE AND PAYABLE AT FEE DAY

GRADES KINDERGARTEN THRU EIGHT	\$100 – PER CHILD
PRE-KINDERGARTEN	\$50 - PER CHILD

5% TUITION REDUCTION

Families paying the 2011-2012 tuition on or before **June 29th** will receive a 5% reduction in tuition, the consumable fee is not discounted. Tuition, not paid in full by **4:30 P.M. on June 29th**, will be divided into 10 equal installments and payable through TMS on either the 5th or 20th of each month from August through May.

A Parent's Prayer

My God, make my home a happy home, dedicated to You and founded on Your principle of unselfish love and sacrifice.

Grant me prudence in judgment, perseverance in effort and humility and strength in the performance of tasks.

Help me appreciate more fully the importance of "eternal values" and the joy of accepting "Thy will be done".

Direct me in teaching Your children and mine these sacred and essential truths and principles.

Assist me in guiding each of my children with love, understanding, wisdom and justice.

Give me courage to say "NO" to them when I should, regardless of their pleading and temporary sadness.

Increase my patience in correcting misbehavior and settling quarrels calmly and fairly.

Thus, O God, let my children see in me some faint glimmer of Your virtue and goodness.

May my conduct and speech inspire and encourage them in their steps toward You.

And one day, in Your mercy and love, may all of my family be united in Your eternal home, to live with You in perfect happiness and peace.

Amen

St. Rita of Cascia....Saint of the Impossible

Rita was born in the year 1381 at Roccaporena near Cascia, Italy. When quite young she felt the call to enter religious life, but at the age of fourteen she was promised in marriage by her parents to a young man of good will but rather restless in nature. Through her own goodness, Rita was able to smooth over the rougher side of her husband's character and they lived in harmony for eighteen years.

St. Rita's husband was murdered. Rita not only forgave his killers, but prayed to God that she would prefer the death of her sons rather than see them revenge the crime. As it happened, both died shortly after their father.

Now, totally alone, but filled with love, Rita thought of fulfilling the longings of her youth by seeking admission into religious life. Having overcome formidable difficulties, she was received by the Augustinian nuns in Cascia. Here she lived for her remaining forty years of life.

Throughout the final fifteen years she bore the mark of a thorn of Christ's passion. Rita died on May 22, 1456, which is observed as her feast day. She was noteworthy in that she experienced all the possible states of life and overcame the difficulties of each with a generous love and a profound spirit of penance, while always being a peacemaker and a healer of divisions. Her incorrupt body is preserved in Cascia in the shrine which now bears her name.

SAINT RITA OF CASCIA

Augustinian Nun

Saint of the Impossible