



SAINT JAMES
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

FAITH • EXCELLENCE • DISCIPLINE • FAMILY

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026 - 2027

St. James Catholic School

603 West Avenue

Gulfport, MS 39507

(228)896-6631

www.stjamesgulfport.com

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DIOCESE OF BILOXI MISSION STATEMENT

The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Biloxi will provide an education grounded in the moral teachings of the Catholic Faith, fostering Intentional Disciples of Jesus Christ, and ensuring academic excellence.

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St. James Catholic School is to form intentional disciples of Jesus Christ by nurturing each student's God-given gifts through Catholic faith formation and academic excellence.

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

St. James Catholic School envisions a vibrant Catholic learning community where Christ is the cornerstone of our faith and every student is inspired to discover, develop, and joyfully share their God-given gifts in service to God and others. In partnership with parents, the primary educators of their children, and our parish community, we are committed to educating the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, morally, emotionally, socially, and physically—so that each student may discover and fulfill God's purpose for his or her life.

We envision graduates who are faithful and intentional disciples of Jesus Christ, living lives rooted in integrity, compassion, humility, and respect for the dignity of every person. They pursue excellence with curiosity and perseverance, lead with courage and self-discipline, and serve others with joy. Guided by faith, nourished by the Parish's Eucharistic devotion, inspired by hope, and strengthened by love, they seek truth and justice and leave St. James prepared to make a meaningful difference in their families, the Church, their communities, and the world.

ST. JAMES PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The philosophy of St. James Catholic School, inspired by the Sisters of Mercy, is rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching mission of the Catholic Church. Guided by Sacred Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the teachings of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the rich tradition of Catholic education, we are committed to forming students in faith, knowledge, and virtue.

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and that the school and parish share in this sacred responsibility through a partnership founded on faith, mutual respect, and open communication. Together, we seek to help every child discover, develop, and joyfully share their God-given gifts while fostering the growth of the whole person—, spiritually, intellectually morally, emotionally, socially, and physically.

We believe every child is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses unique gifts, inherent dignity, and a God-given purpose. Therefore, we strive to provide a safe, welcoming, and academically challenging environment where students are

encouraged to pursue excellence, think critically, act ethically, and grow in wisdom and faith.

We believe that Catholic education extends beyond academic achievement. Our goal is to form intentional disciples of Jesus Christ who embrace Gospel values, respect the sanctity of all human life, demonstrate compassion and integrity, seek truth and justice, and joyfully serve others. Through prayer, liturgical worship, nourishment by the Eucharist, service, and daily witness, students are invited to deepen their relationship with Christ and actively participate in the life and mission of the Church. We believe that our faculty and staff are called not only to teach but also to model Christian discipleship. By fostering a faith-filled community grounded in love, respect, collaboration, and service, we seek to reflect the presence of Christ in every aspect of school life. As the saying reminds us, "Jesus is the unseen yet ever-present Teacher in our school."

We believe our ultimate purpose is to prepare students to become lifelong learners, responsible citizens, compassionate servant leaders, and faithful Catholics who discover, develop, and joyfully share their God-given gifts to build the Kingdom of God and positively impact the world.

ADMINISTRATION

Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

The Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi has ultimate authority on the interpretation of Diocesan and school policy, as well as administrative, ecclesiastical, and educational decisions. The Superintendent has jurisdiction over matters of education in the Diocese delegated by the Bishop of Biloxi. Principals act as the head of their respective schools but must yield to the Superintendent in all matters of education pursuant to the authority vested in her by the Bishop of Biloxi. Principals and teachers may not disobey a directive from these authorities or appropriate disciplinary action may occur.

Pastor

The pastor of St. James Catholic Church is head of the parish educational program. The school is not a separate entity but rather an extension of the parish. They are one. The school embodies the parish's mission, and the parish sustains and supports the school's vitality. This unity requires ongoing dialogue, shared planning, and cooperative effort to ensure that the parish and school advance together in service to the Gospel and the community. The Pastor's involvement is essential to the success of the school. The Pastor, in consultation with the principal, makes all appointments to the School Advisory Council and is an ex-officio member of that council. The Pastor is the final decision-making authority for the school in Pastoral matters and in matters delegated and directed by the Bishop and he considers the recommendations of the principal. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school, but this works most effective when sustained by close collaboration with the Pastor.

Principal

The primary responsibility of the principal is to foster a climate of Faith Community and to ensure that the unique charism of the Catholic school is maintained. The principal has overall responsibility of the management of the educational institution as guided by the local school advisory council, Diocesan Office of Education, and by the Mississippi Department of Education. The principal answers directly to the pastor and implements school policies. The decisions of the principal are final. No appeals of the principal's decisions can be made to local school advisory council.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

The School Leadership Team is selected each year by the principal. This team meets to plan faculty and staff retreats, discuss school matters, and work together to advance the mission of the school. In the absence of the principal, a member of the leadership team will be appointed as acting administrator.

2026-2027 Leadership Team

Lauren Ross, Principal
Kathleen Caswell, Library-Media Specialist
Stacey Cox, Pre-K4 Teacher and Preschool Director
Sindy Holder, 3rd Grade Teacher
Magen Sullivan, 2nd Grade Teacher
Torie Williams, 3rd Grade Teacher and Social Media
Priscilla Wyrwich, Computer and Spanish Teacher

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

School Advisory Councils (SACs) are established to support and advise school leadership—the pastor and the principal—in guiding Catholic education as a true ministry of the parish. The School Advisory Council provides a forum for discussion, discernment, and mission alignment. School Advisory Councils exist to support the mission of the parish and school, promote fruitful relationships between parish, school, and families, and to assist the school administration in decision-making.

The School Advisory Council, like that of the parish council, is only operative while in formal session and serves in an advisory capacity to the Pastor and principal. The function of a School Advisory Council is to provide a support mechanism to assist the principal in creating school policy. The School Advisory Council makes recommendations to the principal and Pastor regarding policy. In its meetings, the School Advisory Council does not address disciplinary issues, personnel issues, implementation of policy or any matters that involve the daily operation of the school. Those items will not become agenda items. The principal and Pastor may choose not to accept a recommendation of the School Advisory Council. The Pastor's decision is final.

The School Advisory Council advises the Pastor and the principal on the budget, including tuition rates, and understands the Diocesan Subsidy Plan for schools. The Council will work with the administration on fundraising activities, alumni participation and the overall health and well-being of the school.

2026-2027 School Advisory Council

Kate Spear, President
Dr. Michael Hulin
Mathew Marchand
Jordan Mathews
Jill Ryals
Alicia Thompson
Non-voting ex-officio members:
Father Ryan McCoy, Pastor
Lauren Ross, Principal

SCHOOL CLOSURE AND CONTINUITY OF EDUCATION

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, public health emergency, or any other circumstance that, in the judgment of the school administration, makes it infeasible, unsafe, or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, the school may temporarily suspend on-campus instruction. The school will resume educational services as soon as practical through distance learning, remote instruction, or other methods determined and/or developed by the school administration and faculty.

Because the school continues to incur significant operational expenses during such circumstances, including administrative, faculty, and staff salaries and other essential costs, tuition and applicable fees will remain due and will not be suspended, reduced, or refunded as a result of a temporary school closure or change in the method of instruction.

PARENTS AS EDUCATORS

St. James School is an extension of the education that begins in the home. Parents are the primary educators and thus are responsible for providing a family atmosphere filled with love, respect and desire for what is good. The family provides the learning atmosphere where the child develops his/her values, attitudes and love of Christ. Your attitude toward the school and the teachers is most important and will be reflected in your child. Therefore, parents are asked to:

- Maintain a united authority with the school.
- Be consciously aware of the fact that obedience has to be taught. It cannot be learned at school if it hasn't been taught at home.
- Have an objective idea of your child's capabilities. Your child will be successful if he/she is not frustrated into thinking that he/she is expected to perform higher than abilities allow.

- Teach your child respect for people and for the property of others.
- Encourage your child to develop good study habits.
- Monitor your child's television viewing in both amounts and content. Encourage active participation in family activities.
- Monitor your child's use of the computer and the Internet. Place the computer in a family-oriented place so you can see what your child is seeing. It is essential that you learn how to check on what your children are doing on your computer and what they are being exposed to when they go to the home of friends.
- Provide a good Christian example for your child through family prayer and attendance at your parish church regularly as a family.

ADMISSION, REGISTRATION, TUITION, & WITHDRAWAL

(School Board Approved 6/2/92)

Admission

Our policy in regard to our waiting list is to give preference to students in the following order:

- In-parish practicing Catholics with siblings currently enrolled in St. James School
- In-parish practicing Catholics whose children attend CCD or whose children have not yet reached school age
- In-parish Catholics
- Out-of-parish practicing Catholics with siblings currently enrolled in St. James School.
- Out-of-parish practicing Catholics.
- Non-Catholics with siblings currently enrolled in St. James School.

People having the same status will be accepted according to the date that they made the initial contact with the school, the earliest date of contact being taken first.

Registration

The Diocese of Biloxi requires all students of Catholic schools to receive the immunizations mandated by the State of Mississippi for entry to school unless a student is entitled to a medical exemption. A medical exemption is allowed when a child has a medical condition that prevents the child from receiving a vaccine. No other exemptions will be allowed. The purpose of this policy is to fulfill Christ's commandment to "love one another" and uphold the sanctity of life by endeavoring to protect our students and families through immunization.

A student is **not** considered officially registered in St. James School until all school records, Form 121 (immunization compliance), birth certificate, social security number, and arrangements for tuition have been received.

- Children entering **Pre-K2** must be two years of age by September 1 of the said school year.
- Children entering **Pre-K3** must be three years of age by September 1 of the said school year. **Children entering Pre-K3 must be potty trained.**

- Children entering **Pre-K4** must be four years of age by September 1 of the said school year. **Children entering Pre-K4 must be potty trained.**
- Children entering **Kindergarten** must be five years of age by September 1 of the said school year.

Immunization Compliance

The child is required by law (MS Code 37-7-301) to have a Form 121 from the Mississippi Health Department or your doctor's office marked complete for school. Registration is not complete without this immunization compliance form. **No child can enter the school building at the start of the school year without this form.**

In addition to the current school requirements, two doses of the Varicella-containing vaccine or history of typical varicella (chickenpox) will be required for **all Pre-K4 and first-time school entrants.**

The following vaccines are required for school entry for all children for the first time in Pre-K4 – GRADE 6:

5 doses of DTaP, unless the 4th dose is given on or after the 4th birthday.

4 doses of Polio, unless the 3rd dose is given on or after the 4th birthday.

3 doses of Hepatitis B

2 doses of MMR

2 doses of Varicella-containing vaccine or a history of typical varicella (chickenpox)

Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 students must have a current Form 121 with temporary compliance from the Health Department or doctor's office.

Registration Policy *(School Board approved 3/4/93)*

Registration fees must be paid no later than March of every year in order to hold a space for your child/children for the coming year. If a child is not registered by this specified time his/her space will not be held for the coming year. Tuition, cafeteria, and after school care fees must be paid in full to register for the next school year.

Non-discriminatory Policy as to Students:

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1962, Title VI of the Educational Amendment of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the St. James Catholic School policy assures that no one shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity of the school. St. James Elementary School reaffirms that it has a non-discriminatory policy with regards to race and sex, both in the enrollment of students and in the employment of teachers and staff.

Confidentiality Policy

St. James School will protect the confidentiality of all data in its records relative to handicapped children. Information, which could identify an individual child, will be maintained by this agency and will be provided to other agencies only in accordance

with the Family Rights and Privacy Act and EHA-B. As a parent, you are guaranteed the right to inspect any such information about your child and to challenge its accuracy. Access to this information is forbidden to any unauthorized person, without informed consent.

If you have any questions regarding the collection, maintenance, and use of data about your child, please contact the Principal.

PRESCHOOL TOILET TRAINING POLICY

All children entering Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 must be potty trained before the school year begins. Children who are having accidents daily are not considered potty trained. Children must be able to complete toileting activities independently by pulling up/down clothes and wiping themselves. Children should be dressed in clothing that he/she can easily manage independently. Children must be wearing underwear, not pull-ups. There are strict standards for changing and disposing of pull-ups and our Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 classrooms are not equipped for changing and disposing of diapers/pull-ups. When a teacher is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it is taking away from the learning time for all students and it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of class.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully potty trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. The children should have a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season in case of an accident. Parents will be notified if their child has a toileting accident. If the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time.

A Pre-K3 child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 4 weeks of school. A Pre-K4 child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 2 weeks of school. After the first 2/4 weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents:

- If one or two accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the issue needs to be addressed and corrected.
- If three or more accidents occur in one week, the parent will be notified with the understanding that if the issue is not corrected by the end of the second week the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely potty trained.
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified on that day; and if not corrected by day three, the child will have to stay at home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely potty trained.

TUITION

The tuition schedule outlines Active Parishioner and Standard rates. In order to qualify for the parishioner rate a family must be registered in St. James parish and be a supporting member of the community (attend church regularly and use the weekly envelopes).

All families must pay tuition and fees using the FACTS program to make annual, semi-annual, or monthly payments. Payments will be collected by FACTS on the 5th or 20th of the month, selected by the family. Families using the FACTS program will be charged an annual fee per family for semi-annual and monthly payments. This fee will be collected by FACTS prior to the first tuition payment and is non-refundable. The following policy is in place for families who are in arrears in their tuition payments. FACTS will attempt to collect tuition using a direct debit to each family's checking or savings account on either the 5th or 20th of the month. If funds are not available at that time, a second attempt will be made during the next processing cycle. During this collection attempt, the family will be charged a \$30 fee after the full tuition payment has been processed. If funds are not available during the second processing, the next cycle will include a payment for 2 months plus an administrative fee to FACTS of \$30.

If FACTS is unsuccessful in collecting the balance due for tuition and fees by the third cycle, the Principal and the Pastor will be notified. The Principal will send a letter to the family requiring the payment in full within 10 days. If full payment is not received within 10 days, the family will be required to withdraw the children from school.

Tuition Assistance

To apply for tuition assistance, an application with the FACTS Grant and Aid Program must be filled out; the forms and instructions are available on the school website at www.stjamesgulfport.com. Families receiving assistance are responsible for paying registration, book fees, and Blue and Gold tickets. There will be no exceptions.

CLASS PLACEMENT POLICY

St. James Catholic School is committed to creating balanced, supportive, and effective classroom environments in which every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Class Placement

Class placements are determined through a thoughtful and comprehensive process. **Students must have completed the registration process before a class placement can be assigned and a class placement letter issued.**

School administration and teachers consider a variety of factors when creating class lists, including:

- Academic needs and learning styles
- Social and emotional considerations

- Student relationships and peer dynamics
- Classroom balance
- Gender balance
- Student behavior and classroom needs
- Teacher strengths and teaching styles
- The overall needs of each class

Our goal is to create balanced classrooms that provide each student with the best possible opportunity for success.

Teacher Requests

St. James Catholic School does **not accept requests for specific teachers**. Teacher assignments are made based on the overall needs of the students and the balanced composition of each classroom.

We recognize that families may have positive experiences with particular teachers; however, making individual teacher assignments based on parent requests would make it difficult to create balanced classrooms and would not allow us to consider the needs of the entire school community.

All of our teachers are highly qualified, dedicated educators who care deeply about their students. Each teacher brings unique strengths, gifts, and talents to the classroom, and the administration has confidence in every member of our faculty.

Sibling Placement

St. James Catholic School does **not have a "follow the sibling" rule** for class placement. Siblings may be placed with the same teacher in some years and with different teachers in other years.

When determining class placements, the needs and overall balance of each grade level are considered rather than automatically placing siblings with the same teacher.

Friend Requests

Students and families may have preferences regarding which friends they would like to be placed with. While friendships and peer relationships may be considered as one factor in creating balanced classrooms, the school cannot guarantee that students will be placed with particular friends or groups of friends.

We encourage students to view a new class placement as an opportunity to develop new friendships, strengthen existing relationships, and grow in confidence and independence.

Final Class Assignments

Class placements are carefully considered and finalized by the school administration. Once class lists have been finalized, changes will not generally be made based on parent or student preference.

The school reserves the right to make changes to class assignments when necessary to address enrollment, staffing, student needs, or other circumstances affecting the operation of the school.

We ask families to support their children by approaching their class placement with a positive attitude and encouraging them to be open to new experiences, friendships, and relationships with their teachers.

ATTENDANCE

We ask that parents call the school office before 8:00 A.M. to notify the school of a child's absence or tardy. Our state textbook money is based on the average daily attendance of the students for the year. It is important for every child to be in school every day that he or she is not sick. In order to participate in any school-sponsored event, practice, game, or rehearsal that occurs after school hours, a student must be present in school on that day, for at least 66% of the day. Exceptions for extenuating circumstances must receive prior approval.

The attendance law of Mississippi ensures that parents/guardians have their children attend school unless absence is of absolute necessity.

- Must attend 66% of student's school day
- Certificate of Enrollment deadline of August 15
- Any day after the 3rd day must have medical excuse
- Only **5 excused absences** per semester unless extenuating circumstances or approved by the Principal
- Court petition may be filed at **8 unexcused absences**
- Absence Reporting Requirement is within close of next business day of unlawful absence
- A letter will be sent to the parent/guardian of any student who accrues 5 absences (lawful or unlawful) in a semester.
- If a student accumulates 8 unexcused absences during the school year, the school attendance officer, Ms. Kelly Jones, will be contacted. This may result in charges being filed against the parent/guardian for educational neglect.

Lawfully excused absences include the following:

1. Illness or injury.
2. Isolation ordered by county health officials or the State Board of Health.
3. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family.
4. Medical or dental appointment (**doctor's excuse must be provided**)
5. Court appearance.
6. Observance of religious events (absences must be approved by the administrator prior to the student's being absent).
7. School functions.

Unlawful absences

1. Any reasons other than those listed above are unlawful.

Tardies

The only excused tardy will be for students who check in with a written medical or legal excuse. The medical or legal excuse must be presented when the student checks in and will not be accepted at any other time. These rules are in accordance with the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law. When a student accumulates 5 tardies in a semester a letter will be sent or a mandatory meeting will be held with school administration.

The Principal's office may be reached by calling 228-896-6631 or fax 228-896-6638. Office hours are 7:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Monday through Friday.

Perfect Attendance

In order for a student to qualify for perfect attendance, he or she must be on time every day and stay the entire day. If a student is away from the school on a school sanctioned assignment they are counted as being present.

Change of Address

If you should move to a new address during the school year, please inform the school of your new address and telephone number.

Transfers/Withdrawals

If a student is transferring to another school, both the principal and the teacher should be notified at least one week before the transfer is to take place. All textbooks and library books need to be returned. All school/cafeteria fees must be paid before a student receives his/her report card. The student's cumulative record of grades and test results will be sent to the new school upon request of the school officials.

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

The school day begins at 8:00 A.M. and ends at 3:00 P.M. We urge you to make every effort to see that your child is dropped off and picked up on time.

IMPORTANT: Children not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be sent to After School Care at the parents' expense.

Before School Care

Before School Care is available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:40 a.m. in the cafeteria for students is PK-3 through 6th grade. Before School Care is free of charge.

Checkout Policy

- Students must bring a note from home when it is necessary to leave school early for medical appointments or other important reasons. This note should be given to their teacher, who in turn sends it to the school office.
- All visitors entering the school will check in at the office with the school secretary or principal to receive a visitor pass to designated area.

- Parents and/or visitors wishing to check a student out or return a student to school must be cleared by the office by signing the student in/out, and wait for the office manager, teacher, staff member, or principal to get the student from the classroom or return the student to the classroom.

Non-Custodial Parent Policy

This school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. “In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school related information regarding the child.” If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

Pick-up Authorization

For each child’s protection, the only people authorized to pick up a child are those designated by the parent/guardian on the registration card. If a child is to be released to anyone other than the person(s) listed, a written note-authorizing pick-up must be received prior to pick-up time. In the case of last-minute changes, a phone call will be acceptable.

Emergency information

It is absolutely necessary for us to have a person to contact in case parents cannot be reached in emergency situations. Everyone must add additional emergency contacts in FACTS in case you cannot be reached. Cell phone numbers are valuable. No student may leave the school premises during the day without a written request from a parent. When parents come to pick up children during the school day, they must come to the office to sign them out. Children are not allowed to leave the classroom until the parent is in the building.

Inclement Weather

The Diocesan Office will make the decision about the closing of school due to inclement weather and other emergencies. If conditions are local, we will follow the decision of the Gulfport City Schools. During bad weather, remain tuned to WLOX-TV Channel 13; they will be our prime transmitter of announcements.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Each teacher has established a set of classroom rules and consequences. If these rules and consequences are repetitively disregarded by a student, the student will be referred to the Principal and placed on the discipline ladder. Any misbehavior listed under the offenses that require disciplinary action will be placed on the appropriate step on the discipline ladder. The consequences for each action are clearly listed. We realize the broad differences in ages and the responsibilities of each. Therefore, we have developed a set of rules and consequences for Pre-K4 – 1st grade students and a set of rules and consequences for 2nd-6th grade students. However, students in all grade levels must follow the rules of the school and failure to do so can result in expulsion.

Pre-K4 – 1st Grade Students

Offenses

Open defiance, disrespectful to teacher or other adult school authority	Step 1
Disrupting Instructional Time	Step 1
Inappropriate behavior in Mass	Step 1
Inappropriate behavior in the hallway	Step 1
Continuous failure to follow classroom or lunchroom rules	Step 1
Running, pushing, yelling, or horse playing	Step 1
Name-calling or showing disrespect to other students	Step 1
Harassment, intimidation, or threatening of other students	Step 2
Defacing or injuring property that belongs to the school	Step 2
Profanity or vulgarity (acts, gestures, or symbols directed at another person)	Step 2
Bullying in any form	Step 2
*Physical abuse of a teacher or a student, such as biting, hitting, etc.	Step 3
Other misbehavior or patterned misbehavior as determined by the Principal	Step 1-4

**If a student bites or hits a teacher or another student three times in a week, the child will be sent home and may not return until the next school day. Disciplinary action of perpetual incidents will be handled by the administration.*

Any repeat offense will result in a student being placed on a higher step on the discipline ladder.

Consequences

- Step 1:** Contact parent and student conference with Principal. Discipline Referral will be sent home by the Principal and should be signed by the parent and returned the following day.
- Step 2:** Conference with teacher, parent, administrator, and/or counselor. A Discipline Referral will be sent home by the Principal and should be signed by the parent and returned the following day.
- Step 3:** Out of School Suspension (1-3 days-as determined by the Principal). A Discipline Referral will be sent home by the Principal and should be signed by the parent and returned the following day.
- Step 4:** The discipline committee will convene to determine if a student's actions warrant expulsion.

2nd- 6th Grade Students

Offenses

Open defiance, disrespectful to teacher or other adult school authority	Step 1
Disrupting Instructional Time	Step 1
Inappropriate behavior in Mass	Step 1
Inappropriate behavior in the hallway	Step 1
Continuous failure to follow classroom or lunchroom rules	Step 1
Running, pushing, yelling, or horse playing	Step 1
Name-calling or showing disrespect to other students	Step 1
Leaving class without permission	Step 2
Cheating on tests or school work (will also receive a "0" on assignment)	Step 2
Defacing or injuring property that belongs to the school	Step 2

Harassment, intimidation, or threatening of other students	Step 3
Profanity or vulgarity (acts, gestures, or symbols directed at another person)	Step 3
Bullying in any form	Step 3
Physical abuse of a teacher or a student, such as biting, hitting, etc.	Step 4
All cases of fighting at school, on the way to school, or at school activities	Step 4
Use or possession of dangerous objects	Step 4
Use or possession of fireworks	Step 4
Stealing	Step 4
Leaving campus without permission	Step 4
Possession of tobacco or tobacco related products at school	Step 5
Use, sale, or possession of drugs or alcohol on or near school grounds	Step 5
Gang activity or association	Step 5
Possession of a firearm/weapon	Step 5
Other misbehavior or patterned misbehavior as determined by the Principal	Step 1-5

Any repeat offense will result in a student being placed on a higher step on the discipline ladder even if their probationary period is over.

Consequences

Step 1: Contact parent and student conference with Principal.

A Discipline Referral will be sent home by the Principal and should be signed by the parent and returned the following day.

Removal from ladder if not referred to the office for five school days.

Step 2: Contact parent and After School Detention.

A Discipline Referral will be sent home by the Principal and should be signed by the parent and returned the following day.

Removal from ladder if not referred to the office for ten school days.

Step 3: Conference with teacher, parent, administrator, and/or counselor and After School Detention.

A Discipline Referral will be sent home by the Principal and should be signed by the parent and returned the following day.

Removal from ladder if not referred to the office for fifteen school days.

Step 4: Contact parent and Out of School Suspension (1-3 days).

A Discipline Referral will be sent home by the Principal and should be signed by the parent and returned the following day.

Removal from ladder if not referred to the office for twenty school days.

Step 5: The discipline committee will convene to determine if a student's actions warrant expulsion.

Uniform Discipline Ladder (2nd- 6th Grade Students Only)

Teachers will fill out a uniform violation notice. They will send the white copy home with the student for parents to sign, keep the yellow copy, and turn the pink copy in to the administration.

1st & 2nd Offense: Warning

3rd, 4th, & 5th Offense: After School Detention

Additional offenses will be handled by the administration.

A Uniform Violation Notice will be sent home by the teacher and should be signed by the parent. Students should show the signed form to the teacher the following morning.

CONDUCT

Parents

St. James Catholic School is considered a family. We work very hard to provide the highest level of academics and to form intentional disciples of Jesus Christ. The education of a child is a partnership between parents and the school. If, in the opinion of the school administration, that partnership is irreparably broken, parents may be required to withdraw their child(ren) from our Catholic school. This conduct includes, but is not limited to, physical behavior, social media activities, internet posts, Group Me, and interaction with local and national media. There are channels to discuss issues that may arise. Social media is not the appropriate forum and only serves to damage the school and the relationship between all parties. Do not create Facebook pages using the St. James name. We have one official school Facebook page that is used to disseminate school information.

Students

Conduct either inside or outside the school that is deemed detrimental to St. James Catholic School will result in discipline. This conduct includes but is not limited to, physical behavior, social media activities, internet posts and interaction with local and national media.

After School Detention

After school detentions will be held weekly on Thursdays by teachers on a rotating basis. After school detentions can only be re-scheduled if there is proof of a doctor or dentist appointment or if the Principal gives approval for other reasons. Further disciplinary action will be taken for students who fail to attend detention without approval from the Principal. If the student does not show up for his/her detention, the student will have an extra detention. Discipline referrals should be signed by the parent and returned to school the next day. If a parent arrives later than the departure time of the detention, the student will be placed in the After School Care Program and the appropriate fees will be assessed.

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

When Out of School Suspension is a consequence that a student receives, the student is prohibited from entering the campus for any reason. All work must be completed within two days of his/her return to school. The student is prohibited from participating in or attending a school-sponsored activity from the moment OSS is issued until the first full day back in regular classes. The length of OSS is determined based on the severity and the recurrence of the offense.

Expulsion

Any student may be recommended for expulsion at any time if the administration feels that the student's actions warrant such recommendation. If a student is recommended

for expulsion, it is required that the Discipline Committee be convened. The Discipline Committee is made up of the Principal, School Pastor, and two teachers (who are familiar with the student). The decision made by this committee is final.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY

St. James Catholic School is committed to providing a safe, caring, respectful, and Christ-centered environment for all students. Every student is created in the image and likeness of God and has the right to be treated with dignity, kindness, and respect. Bullying is not permitted at school, on school property, during school-sponsored activities, or through online communication when it affects the school environment. Students, faculty, staff, and families share responsibility for helping create a community where every student feels safe, included, and respected.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated behavior that is intended to hurt, frighten, embarrass, or exclude another person. Bullying generally involves an imbalance of power, such as differences in size, age, strength, social influence, or ability to intimidate.

Bullying may take different forms:

- Physical Bullying
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Tripping
- Damaging or taking someone else's belongings

Verbal Bullying

- Name-calling
- Repeated teasing intended to hurt or humiliate
- Threats
- Insults or degrading language

Social or Emotional Bullying

- Intentionally excluding someone
- Spreading rumors
- Deliberately embarrassing or humiliating someone
- Encouraging others not to be friends with or associate with someone

Cyberbullying

- Sending hurtful or threatening messages
- Posting mean, embarrassing, or harmful comments or pictures
- Using phones, games, social media, apps, or other technology to embarrass, threaten, or harm another person

What Bullying Is Not

Not every disagreement, conflict, or unkind action is bullying. Examples that may not meet the definition of bullying include:

- A disagreement between friends

- Accidental bumping, mistakes, or misunderstandings
- A one-time argument
- Friendly teasing in which everyone is participating and feels safe
- Normal conflict between students who have relatively equal power

Even when behavior does not meet the definition of bullying, students are still expected to treat others with kindness, respect, and charity. The school may address inappropriate, disrespectful, or harmful behavior even when it is not considered bullying. A single incident may also result in school consequences when the behavior is serious, threatening, or otherwise violates school policies.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Treat others with kindness, dignity, and respect
- Include others and avoid intentionally excluding or humiliating others
- Use appropriate and respectful language in person and online
- Speak up or report bullying or other unsafe behavior to a trusted adult
- Make responsible choices when using phones, games, social media, apps, and other technology
- Help create a positive and Christ-centered school community

Reporting Bullying

Students should tell a trusted adult if they experience or witness bullying. Reports may be made to:

- Teachers
- Administrators
- School staff
- Parents or guardians

Students are encouraged to report concerns as soon as possible. Reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and appropriately.

School Response to Bullying

When bullying is reported, the school may:

- Speak individually with students involved
- Gather information from students and witnesses
- Contact parents or guardians
- Meet with parents or guardians in person, when appropriate
- Provide counseling or other appropriate support
- Teach conflict-resolution, communication, and problem-solving skills
- Develop a plan to help ensure student safety
- Apply appropriate school consequences
- Take additional steps as necessary to address the behavior and restore a safe school environment

Reports of bullying will be investigated and documented in accordance with school policies and applicable requirements. Consequences will be determined based on the nature, severity, frequency, and circumstances of the behavior.

Support for Students

St. James Catholic School will support students who experience bullying by:

- Listening respectfully to their concerns
- Helping students feel safe and supported
- Encouraging healthy and positive friendships
- Providing appropriate emotional and social support
- Teaching problem-solving, communication, and conflict-resolution skills
- Monitoring situations when appropriate to help prevent continued concerns

Students who engage in bullying behavior will also receive guidance and support to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility, and make better choices.

Commitment to a Positive School Community

At St. James Catholic School, we believe that kindness, empathy, inclusion, forgiveness, and respect are essential to a healthy school community. We strive to follow the example of Christ by treating every person with dignity and compassion.

Together, our students, faculty, staff, and families can help create a school community where everyone feels welcome, safe, valued, and respected.

ACADEMICS

St. James Catholic School is accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education and Cognia. Our teachers are state certified and participate in the continuing certification program through staff development.

Curriculum structure follows that of the state structure, in that we teach for mastery those core objectives designated by the state. We do, however, teach beyond these basic objectives in order to offer our students the opportunity to achieve excellence. All major subject areas are taught in our school curriculum as well as Computer, P.E., Art, Music, and Spanish. Our students are given the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) during the spring of the year. The ITBS compares the academic performance of our students to other students across the United States.

Religious Teachings

The catechetical program offered at St. James School enhances our students' religious development for growing up Catholic in today's world. We incorporate concepts involving experiences in scriptures, church teachings, and meaningful participation in the communal, sacramental, and liturgical life of the church. The children are actively involved with the religious celebrations shared with our church.

Religious Duties

Since parents have conferred life on children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their children. It is particularly important in the Christian family that from the earliest years, children should be taught, according to the faith received in Baptism, to have knowledge of God, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor. Parents should clearly recognize how vital a truly Christian family is for the life and development of God's own people, and live out this Christian life by family practice of morning and evening prayers, Reconciliation and by going to Mass as a family on Sunday.

Children in grades 1-6 will attend Mass with their class once a week and students in Pre-K4 through 6th grade will attend an All School Mass once a month.

Grade Book

The FACTS electronic grade book is available online to record student progress. Grades are entered as formative or summative only. Formative grades are weighted at 40% and summative grades are weighted at 60%. Teachers will assign a fair amount of both formative and summative assessment opportunities. Grades will be posted to FACTS in a timely manner, no later than 5 days after assignments/assessments have been given/turned in. Parents can check grades online for students in Grades 1-6 using the FACTS Family Portal.

Grading Policy

Formative grades are minor grades that account for 40% of the final grade and include quizzes, daily work, homework, etc. Summative grades are minor grades that account for 60% of the final grade and include tests, projects, essays, and performance tasks. Every student will have one (1) summative grade for AR per quarter.

Report Cards

Parents are issued report cards of students' academic performance each quarter. These will be sent home in Wednesday Folders. The second report card (end of first semester) is distributed by means of a parent-teacher conference in January. This date is set on the calendar and school will dismiss at 11:30 a.m. that day for conferencing purposes. Parents are to schedule appointments with the homeroom teacher (an invitation to schedule will be sent by the teacher).

Honor Roll

St. James School recognizes academic achievement each quarter (by certificate) for students in Grades 1-6.

- A student must achieve a score of 85% or higher in all subjects.
- P.E., Computer, Spanish, Art, Music, and Conduct must be an E or G.
- Handwriting is excluded.

Grading Scale

Pre-K4 & Kindergarten	Will receive report cards that reflect their progress in terms of concepts that should be mastered at each level.				
1st-6th Grade Religion, Math, Reading/ELA, Spelling, Social Studies & Science	<u>A</u> 100-90	<u>B</u> 89-80	<u>C</u> 79-70	<u>D</u> 69-65	<u>F</u> 64 & Below
K-6 Art, Computer, Music, P.E. & Spanish	<u>E</u> 100-90	<u>G</u> 89-80	<u>S</u> 79-75	<u>N</u> 74-70	<u>U</u> 69 & below
1st-6th Handwriting	<u>E</u> 100-90	<u>G</u> 89-80	<u>S</u> 79-75	<u>N</u> 74-70	<u>U</u> 69 & below

Homework

Homework is a necessary part of the child's education as it affords an opportunity for independent personal application of something learned at school each day. Activities on weeknights, which interfere with homework, are to be discouraged.

Parents should make every effort to be present when homework is being completed. Your encouragement can be most helpful and can help build confidence in the child. Your signature in your child's assignment notebook is an indication that you have supervised his/her work. If your child has an unreasonable amount of homework, please check with his/her teacher.

Retention and Promotion of Students

Considerations for promotion are:

In Kindergarten,

- All Kindergarten standards must be met to be promoted to 1st Grade, including the assessment of maturity and readiness for the first grade learning experience.

In First Grade,

- Student's Reading and Math assessments
- Short inventory test
- Teacher judgment and how much outside help the student needs to work at the next level.
- Maturity

In Grades 2 through 6,

- 4 of the 5 major subjects (Reading, Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies) must be passed in order to be promoted.
- A minimum average of 70 in current subjects and working on grade level.
- Potential for doing work in the next highest grade level.
- Attendance (unexcused absences and tardies)
- Willingness to complete work.
- ITBS scores
- The amount of outside support the student needs to work at the next level.

Beyond these minimum proficiency requirements, we will work to ensure that all students will have the opportunity and essential learning experiences to achieve intellectual growth, develop a positive self-concept, increase competence and skills in communication, demonstrate decision-making skills, and acquire awareness that learning is a lifelong process.

The student's Reading and Math abilities on grade level are the main factors in determining promotion to the next grade. Reading and math should be performed on grade level with little outside support as in tutoring and constant parental help. Parents will be informed at the end of the first semester if there is a possibility of retention. The final decision to promote (or retain) a student shall be a joint decision by the teacher, principal and parent based on the above considerations.

If a student is following an action plan that warrants an instructional level class placement for specific subjects, a modified report card will be issued.

If a student is following an alternate plan that modifies curriculum, report card, and testing requirements, the student will receive a certificate of completion in lieu of a diploma upon completion of 6th grade.

STUDENT SERVICES

When learning difficulties or lack of progress of any student are noted, a team is assembled to review the concern. The team will include the teacher, parents, director of student services, principal, and anyone with special knowledge regarding the student's specific concerns. This team will assist the teacher in developing and monitoring interventions to improve student learning. If necessary, the team, through their documentation of efforts, will assist in obtaining assistance from the child's home public school district of residence.

Therapy Dog Program

St. James Catholic School offers the services of our therapy dogs, Maybel and Blanche, under the direction of their handler, Mrs. Amy Nimmo. If a child is not to be seen by Maybel or Blanche, a form must be filled out and turned in to the office. For more information about our Therapy Dog Program, please contact Mrs. Amy Nimmo, Director of Student Services, at animmo@stjamesgulfport.com.

Speech

Evaluations for speech/language will be coordinated with St. James Catholic School and the Student Services Department of the Gulfport School District.

Dyslexia Therapy

Dyslexia Screeners are administered to students in Kindergarten and First Grade. Students diagnosed with dyslexia may opt to receive dyslexia therapy during the school day through a private dyslexia therapist.

Education of Children with Special Needs

Consistent with the Gospel, Catholic schools are nondiscriminatory and believe that all children deserve an educational experience that includes the teaching of religious and moral values. However, due to limited financial resources, Catholic schools may not be able to effectively provide appropriate educational programs for some students. Federal law recognized this fact and therefore, while public schools must make all “reasonable accommodations” to educate all students, Catholic schools are called upon to make “minor adjustments” to the educational program. If a child has special needs, parents are free to request program modifications. Provided that the student is otherwise qualified for admission and if the required program modification constitutes “minor adjustments”, the student may be admitted. Any time it becomes apparent that a child requires more resources than available, the school will make this known to the parents.

504 Plans

Students with documented learning disabilities such as dyslexia or ADHD or other significant documentation of learning difficulty, can be provided with a 504 Plan giving them accommodations to better fit their academic needs. 504 plans are written by a team consisting of the principal, parents, and teachers. Specific accommodations vary based on the needs of the students and their classroom environment. All 504 plans are reviewed annually and are updated as needed. A 504 plan is NOT the same as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). St. James Catholic School is not able to provide the special education services required by an IEP.

Recess and Physical Education Policy

Children who have to remain indoors during recess or P.E. due to illness must present a written note from their parents.

Library

St. James is privileged to have the service of a full-time Librarian and well-stocked library.

- Preschool and primary students have regular scheduled story times in the library.
- All students in Grades 1-6 will be allowed to check out books from the library. Students in Kindergarten will begin checking out books second semester.
- Books may be checked out for a period of two weeks.
- The student must have the book with him/her when renewing it.

- Students are required to pay for lost books and fines are charged for damaged books.
- No book may be taken from the library unless it is checked out to the borrower.

State Textbooks

Since St. James has the use of state textbooks, the school must abide by state textbook laws governing the care and use of these books. Therefore, all state books are to be covered and students will be fined for any loss or damage. This rule applies to books rented to students by the school.

Volunteers, Coaches, and Sponsors

Any parent who wishes to volunteer, coach, or sponsor in any capacity at St. James School must submit their name for approval by the administration and School Advisory Council. Once approved, the parent must complete an online safe environment training in VIRTUS and consent to a background check. After passing the background check, the parent must sign a Code of Conduct.

Field Trips

Field trips are designed for academic value and alignment with grade-level curriculum. Individual student participation on a field trip is at the principal's discretion. Field trip details, including meal arrangements, will be communicated by the teacher in advance of the trip. Chaperones must sign permission slips, be fully compliant in the VIRTUS program, and be approved by the teacher.

Teachers along with the principal are the final authorities on executing any field trip. Parents should not collect money for field trips. Parents are highly discouraged from bringing siblings on field trips, as they can cause a distraction. According to the Diocesan policy, parents must release the school, parish, the Diocese of Biloxi, and all its official representatives from any and all liability in the case of an accident or injury involving a student, which is related to a trip. Children will not be allowed to go on field trips unless the child has returned the permission slip sent by the school. Parent's verbal consent on the phone is not sufficient. No faxes will be accepted for this event. All the insurance forms for car insurance, (this means a copy of the form you get from the insurance company stating your coverage), permission slips and money should be in the packet on the principal's desk. If a parent chooses to check out a student from a field trip, they must fill out the field trip travel release form.

School Programs

Participating in school activities and programs is mandatory. When the school or a class is sponsoring a program, we require children to participate. A child may not withdraw from such a program without a very good reason. A note should be written with an explanation. This is intended to prevent the upsetting of a program and to help the child acquire a sense of responsibility toward his/her school and classmates.

UNIFORM DRESS CODE POLICY

All students in PK2 through Grade 6 are required to wear the prescribed St. James Catholic School uniform on regular school days, St. James Catholic School-approved t-shirts on Thursdays, and appropriate attire on announced free-dress days. As representatives of St. James Catholic School, students are expected to wear their uniforms in a manner that reflects good character, virtue, and respect for themselves and others while consistently adhering to the school's dress code. The Principal reserves the right to make the final determination regarding all uniform and grooming questions, whether specifically addressed in this uniform dress code or not.

Students not in proper uniform will be handled in a consistent but sensitive manner depending on the student's grade level. A note or a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian to discuss the best way to handle the breach in the uniform code. Parents are asked to cooperate with school personnel when asked to assist with correcting improper uniform dress. Failure to comply with the uniform policy will result in a uniform violation. Students in Grades 2-6 will receive a warning for the first and second violations. Additional violations will result in detention.

Uniforms should be clean, neat, in good condition, and appropriately fitted. As a Catholic school, we strive to foster an environment that reflects the values of modesty, respect, and dignity. Therefore, skorts, skirts, jumpers, and dresses should be of an appropriate and modest length. Skorts, skirts, jumpers, and dresses may be no more than 4 inches from the floor when kneeling. Playground shorts must be worn under all skirts, jumpers, and dresses. Shirts must remain tucked in throughout the school day. White short-sleeved t-shirts may be worn underneath school uniform shirts. Students in grades 2-6 are required to wear a belt with uniform shorts or slacks. Students should wear shoes that are appropriate for school activities and physical education.

Only official St. James outerwear may be worn inside the school building. Students may wear a navy cardigan, navy sweatshirt, or navy fleece embroidered with the St. James crest. During cold weather, students may wear a solid navy jacket/coat outdoors - no logos are allowed, only the school crest. If the temperature falls below 32°F, students may wear a heavier non-uniform coat outside only. St. James School team jackets/sweatshirts must be school colors and be approved by administration prior to ordering and can be worn on Thursday St. James school t-shirt days. All jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, and outerwear should be clearly labeled with the student's name. To help identify misplaced items, school personnel may write the student's name on the tag of any unlabeled item.

Diocesan policy prohibits watches that can send or receive text messages, emails, or phone calls. Apple Watches, Fitbits, and similar smart devices are not permitted. Traditional watches are allowed.

The official school emblem or logos may not be reproduced without permission

from school administration, nor applied to an unapproved article of clothing. Uniforms can be purchased at our school-approved vendor, Educate and Celebrate. They are located at 8829 Lorraine Road (Suite 101), Gulfport, MS 39503. Their phone number is (228) 206-1901, and their email address is sales@educateandcelebrate.com. To view the uniform options or to shop online, visit www.shopeducateandcelebrate.com.

GIRLS – Grades PK2-6

UNIFORM

Tops

- Light blue polo style knit shirt with the St. James crest (short or long sleeves)
- Light blue rounded Peter Pan collar blouse (short or long sleeves) – *optional*
- School plaid jumper (no shorter than 4 in. from the floor when the student is kneeling)
 - *Playground shorts must be worn under skirts.*

Bottoms

- School plaid skort (no shorter than 4 in. from the floor when the student is kneeling)
- School plaid skirt (no shorter than 4 in. from the floor when the student is kneeling)
 - *Playground shorts must be worn under skirts.*
- Navy blue uniform shorts or slacks (uniform material only; no knit, cargo, or sweatpants)
 - *Students in grades 2-6 are required to wear a navy, black, or brown belt.*

Dresses (PK2, PK3, PK4, and Kindergarten students only)

- School plaid dress
- Pique knit polo dress (light blue or navy blue)
- *Dresses must be of a modest length. Playground shorts must be worn under all dresses.*

ACCESSORIES / OTHER

Socks & Tights

- Solid white, navy, or black socks (knee socks are permitted)
- Solid white, navy, or black tights are permitted under skorts, skirts, shorts, jumper, or dresses.
- Footless leggings are **not** permitted.
- Logos or designs are **not** permitted on socks or tights.

Shoes

- Black, navy, white, or gray athletic shoes
- Black, navy, white, or brown leather shoes
- No high-tops, cleats, boots, or high heels
- No lights, bells, rollers, or shoe accessories

- Velcro shoes are highly recommended for preschool students for safety reasons. They are required for PK2 students.

Outerwear

- Sweatshirt: solid navy with St. James crest
- Fleece: solid navy with St. James crest
- Pullover: solid navy with St. James crest
- Cardigan: solid navy with St. James crest
- Outside Cold Weather Jackets/Coats: solid navy with St. James crest, no logos
 - *Non-uniform outside coats are permitted to be worn outside only when the temperature is below 32 degrees.*

Hair

- Hair should be neatly groomed, out of the eyes, and free from excessive hairstyles.
 - Natural hair color, no colored hair extensions/attachments
- Hair bows and ribbons must be navy, light blue, yellow, red, white, or the official school plaid.

Jewelry & Grooming

- No makeup.
- No tattoos.
- No artificial nails.
- Light-colored and neutral-colored nail polish only.
- Jewelry is limited to single stud earrings, school-approved watches, conservative necklaces, conservative bracelets, and conservative rings.
 - *The school is not responsible for lost or damaged jewelry.*
 - *If the conservative jewelry is distracting to the learning environment, students may not be permitted to wear it.*

BOYS – Grades PK2-6

UNIFORM

Top

- Light blue polo style uniform shirt with the St. James crest (short or long sleeves)

Bottoms

- Navy uniform walking shorts (uniform material only; no knit or cargo)
- Navy uniform slacks (uniform material only; no knit, cargo, or sweatpants)
- Students in grade 2-6 must wear a solid navy, black, or brown belt

ACCESSORIES / OTHER

Socks

- Solid white, navy, or black socks
 - *Logos are **not** permitted.*

Shoes

- Black, navy, white, or gray athletic shoes
- Black, navy, white, or brown leather shoes
- No high-tops or cleats
- No lights, bells, rollers, or other shoe accessories
- Velcro shoes are highly recommended for preschool students for safety reasons. They are required for PK2 students.

Outerwear

- Sweatshirt: solid navy with St. James crest
- Fleece: solid navy with St. James crest
- Pullover: solid navy with St. James crest
- Cardigan: solid navy with St. James crest
- Outside Cold Weather Jackets/Coats: solid navy with St. James crest, no logos
 - *Non-uniform outside coats are permitted to be worn outside only when the temperature is below 32 degrees.*

Hair

- Hair should be neatly groomed and out of the eyes.
- Hair must remain above the eyebrows, above the shirt collar, and no longer than mid-ear on the sides.
 - *Natural hair color only, colored hair extensions/attachments are **not** permitted*
- No excessive hairstyles, rat tails, hair wraps, or similar fads.

Jewelry

- No earrings
- No tattoos
- Jewelry is limited to school-approved watches, conservative necklaces, and conservative bracelets.
 - *The school is not responsible for lost or damaged jewelry.*
 - *If the conservative jewelry is distracting to the learning environment, students may not be permitted to wear it.*

LUNCH PROGRAM

The lunch menu is sent home at the beginning of the month. The cost of lunch is \$5.00 per day. Lunch counts are recorded by the teacher in the FACTS system every morning. If a child is marked for a cafeteria lunch but a parent chooses to check a child out, the parent will be charged for the hot lunch.

A student may have two charges due to emergencies, but lunch tabs will not be allowed to run past two lunches. After these two, a student will need to bring their lunch.

The milk, water, and juice for snack break is \$90.00 for the year and is added to the tuition statement.

Students who bring sack lunches from home should bring milk, juice, or water, or they may purchase milk or juice for \$.75 cents to drink during lunch. **Carbonated drinks and candy are not allowed in the cafeteria.** If you bring in McDonald's, Chick-fil-A, Subway, etc., **it must be rewrapped in plain wrapping paper. Outside drinks should also be poured into unmarked cups.** This includes students and parents. Parents having lunch in the cafeteria **MUST** sit at the parent table with **their child only** and not at the lunch table with the other students.

Volunteer parents will assist in the cafeteria on Fridays with ice cream duty. We expect the children to obey them and extend them the same courtesy that they would to teachers.

****If a child has a medical condition-limiting intake of certain foods, please send a note from the attending physician.**

Lunch Prices... \$5.00 a day.

Charges of more than two days will not be allowed.

DROP-OFF AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Before School Care (7:00 a.m. – 7:40 a.m.)

Before School Care is free of charge for students in Pre-K3 through 6th grade. Before School Care opens at 7:00 a.m. and ends at 7:40 a.m. Parents will use the front of the school carline to drop their children off by the cafeteria door. Parents/Guardians of Pre-K3 students must walk their child in to the cafeteria and sign them in. Please do not drop off children unattended in the front of the school before 7:00 a.m.

Pre-K2 Morning Drop-off (7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.)

Pre-K2 students may be dropped off at the Parish Center between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. All Pre-K2 students must be signed in daily.

Pre-K4 – 6th Grade Morning Drop-off (7:40 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.)

Pre-K4 through 6th grade: Please use either the front of the school or the West Avenue area. The children can be dropped off along the covered canopy and walk to the front door and enter by the office. We recommend families with older students to use the West Ave. carline for faster drop-off.

Pre-K3 students must use the front of the school carline and drop their children off at the front of the school. All Pre-K3 students must be signed in every morning. Please display your orange printed name strips on the passenger side dashboard so that the teacher on duty can identify that your Pre-K3 child needs to be signed in.

Parents/guardians will be able to walk their children to their classroom during the first week of school only. After that time period, students will be dropped off in carline or walked to the front door of the school. Good byes should be said at the front door or in

the lobby of the school. We have staff members and Spirit Movers (6th grade students) who will walk the younger students to their classrooms. If you need to carry something to the classroom for a birthday celebration, please get approval from the administration or teacher on duty.

Be aware of the tardy sign, if it is out you will need to bring the child(ren) inside and write the excuse for them.

Afternoon Dismissal (2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.)

Each day, the student needs to know the plan for going home, where to be picked up, and who will pick him/her up. If a parent has an emergency and cannot follow through on the pickup arrangement, then we will deliver the message to the child concerning the new plan. We will not make it a daily habit of notifying a student what his afternoon pickup plan will be.

Parents should put their pre-printed name strip in the right corner of the car dashboard so that the teachers can read the name easily and get the children promptly. You will receive your name card at the beginning of the year. Please notify us if you need a new sign.

Dismissal Procedures

- All students will be dismissed at 2:45 p.m.
- Students in grades Pre-K2, Pre-K3, and their older siblings will be picked up at the Parish Hall by the Pre-K2 classrooms. Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 students must be signed out daily.
- Students in grades Pre-K4 through first grade will load into cars in front of the school.
- Children in grades 2, 3, 4, and their younger siblings will load at the East side of the building. (West Ave.)
- The place of dismissal will be determined by the oldest rider in the carpool, except in the case of carpools with fifth or sixth grade students. If there is a fifth or sixth grade student in the carpool, all of the students will dismiss on the church side.
- Any student not picked up by 3:00 p.m. in carline will be sent to After School Care.

After School Care

After School Care is available from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Any child in Pre-K2 through 6th grade who attends St. James School is eligible to attend. Pre-K2 After School Care will be in Pre-K2 classrooms in the Parish Center. Pre-K2 students must be signed out by their parents. Pre-K3 through 6th grade After School Care will be in the school cafeteria. Pre-K3 students must be signed out by their parents. More information is available in the school office. A snack and drink are served daily. **After School Care charges must be paid within 30 days or students will be denied participation in the program and a parent or guardian will be called for the student(s).**

On Staff Development days, students attending After School Care need to bring a sack lunch and a drink.

Children must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. After 5:30 p.m., a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, per child, will be assessed. ASC statements will be emailed each month. These charges can be viewed and paid through your Family Portal. Click on the Financial Tab, then on Balances. The ASC balance will be listed under Incidental Expenses.

After School Care Charges

Number of Children attending	Regular Hourly Rates Per Child	Regular Daily Total 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Late Fee Rates Per Minute after 5:30 p.m. (In Addition to Regular Rates)
1	\$5.00	\$12.50	\$1.00
2	\$4.50 each	\$22.50	\$1.00 each
3	\$4.25 each	\$31.88	\$1.00 each
4 or more	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Staff Development Days and Noon Dismissal Days Daily Rates not to exceed	
1 Child	\$20.00
2 Children	\$32.00
3 Children	\$46.00

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Diocese of Biloxi requires all students of Catholic schools to receive the immunizations mandated by the State of Mississippi for entry to school unless a student is entitled to a medical exemption. A medical exemption is allowed when a child has a medical condition that prevents the child from receiving a vaccine. No other exemptions will be allowed. The purpose of this policy is to fulfill Christ's commandment to "love one another" and uphold the sanctity of life by endeavoring to protect our students and families through immunization.

A child may not attend St. James School with any of the following symptoms: fever, undiagnosed rash, vomiting, lice, diarrhea, inflamed eyes and severe cold or sore throat. A child must be fever free, vomit free, and diarrhea free for 24 hours before

returning to school. A fever is defined as 100°F taken orally, or 102°F taken rectally (Mississippi Department of Health). A reading of 100.4°F on a no touch thermometer is a fever.

The school administrator is authorized to take the temperature of a student. If a child becomes ill or is injured while at school, the parent will be called and the child will be isolated from other students until picked up. If parents cannot be reached, the staff will attempt to contact other individuals listed on the emergency contact list. Because of the danger of transmitting a contagious illness or condition to others, children who are out of school due to chicken pox, mumps, and other contagious illnesses are required to turn in a report from their doctor or the Harrison County Health Department stating that they are no longer contagious.

Medication

Legally the school does not have the authority to administer aspirin or any other kind of medicine to students except under certain conditions. We will administer medication under the following rules:

- The office staff will administer medications that are in the original prescription bottle.
- Medication in zip lock bags will not be administered.
- A written medical release form must be completed and signed in order for St. James staff members to administer the medication. No child should have medication to take on his/her own. This includes cough drops.

Accidents

If a child has a minor injury, the staff person attending to the child will inform the parents. Accident report forms are written up on each child. If a serious accident occurs requiring medical attention, the staff will call 911, in the interest of the child's well-being, and parents will then be contacted. The paramedics will determine the appropriate action required. If the child needs emergency treatment, it will be at the nearest available medical facility. The parent will be responsible for all medical charges.

Emergencies

Emergency Policy – Fire, safety, and disaster drills are held regularly in accordance with state law. Regular instruction is given in the classroom regarding safety procedures in times of fire and severe weather conditions.

Video Surveillance

St. James School uses video cameras on site to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors and to safeguard buildings, grounds, and equipment. To protect the privacy of students, video footage will not be shared with parents.

Lice

Qualified personnel will make a periodic check of all students. You will be notified if your child is found to have lice or 'nits' and proper procedures are expected to be followed. Your child/children must be treated. Proof of treatment must be presented to the office before he/she may return to school. Please notify the principal if your child is found to have lice.

Hearing and Vision

Each fall, qualified volunteers check the children's hearing in grades PK4, K, 1st and 3rd and vision in grades PK4-6. If for any reason you do not want this done in school notify us early in September and plan to make arrangements to have it done yourself. We need to record the results of the check-up in the child's cumulative folder.

Asbestos Report

On August 25, 2011, St. James Catholic School was re-inspected in accordance with the Federal AHERA Regulations. Since the previous AHERA re-inspection, there have been no significant changes to the condition of known or suspect asbestos-containing material in the school. A complete report is available on file in the school office.

Bicycles

Children who ride bicycles to school are required to lock them.

Lost Property

Sweaters, jackets, etc. found around the building will be placed in the lost property box in the office. When items are not claimed after a period of time, they are put in the clothes collections that are donated to charity.

Invitations

The following is our policy in regard to the distribution of invitations to parties, etc. in school: Invitations may be distributed in school only if all children, or all the boys, or all the girls in the class are being invited. This will save some children the pain of feeling left out. You have to observe a child's disappointment at not receiving an invitation to appreciate what it means. The exchange of gifts at Christmas and other times should be kept outside the school setting.

Birthday Treats

Students may bring a sweet treat or parents may purchase ice cream from our cafeteria for the class to celebrate their birthday. Sweet treats must be limited to birthdays unless approved by the principal.

Snacks

Below is a list of acceptable snacks at St. James. We ask for your cooperation with this school policy in order that we may promote healthy eating habits and nutrition for our students:

Animal crackers, cheese, Cheez-its, chips-baked, cookies with low sugar, crackers, dried fruit, Fig Newtons, fruit (ready to eat), fruit bars, Goldfish Cheddar Crackers, graham crackers, granola bars made with unsaturated fat, Nutri-Grain bars, one-hundred calorie snack packs, popcorn, pretzels, Pringles-Fat Free, raisins, sandwiches, snack mixes of cereal and dried fruit, vegetables (ready to eat), and yogurt-low fat/low sugar.

Gum

Students are not permitted to chew gum on campus.

Classroom Party

There is only one classroom party during the school year, and it takes place at Christmastime.

End of the School Year Parties

Parties after school dismisses on the last day of the school year are not school sponsored. Parents of students in the class usually arrange these parties, but the party has no sponsorship from the school. Again, if all the students are invited, the invitations may be given out at the school. The invitation needs to clearly state that the school is not sponsoring the party.

COMMUNICATION

The school keeps parents informed of all activities and events through multiple portals (FACTS, website, Facebook, Instagram, email, newsletters, phone, text). All publications or notices of public or school-wide distribution must be presented to the administration for approval before issuance.

Use of School Name, Logo, Emblem or Mascot

The school's name, logo, motto, or mascot may not be used without the permission of the school administration. Such permission is subject to the requirement that all policies of the school and the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi be followed.

Chain of Communication

Effective communication must take place. In this regard, parents/guardians should first communicate directly with the teacher or staff member involved with issues regarding their child. Should, at any time, either party feel uncomfortable or intimidated by meeting alone, they may request that an administrator join them in the meeting. Parents/guardians should never engage a staff member in conversation regarding any child other than their own child. This behavior is a serious breach of professional conduct for a staff member and unethical behavior for all parties involved.

Email

The faculty and staff can be contacted directly by email. The address is the person's first initial and last name @stjamesgulfport.com (example: lross@stjamesgulfport.com). Teachers check their email each morning and afternoon before leaving for the day. Teachers will not interrupt instructional time to check email throughout the day.

P.L.U.S. (Parents, Loved Ones, and United Supporters)

The Parents, Loved Ones, and United Supporters (PLUS) organization at St. James Catholic Elementary School is a group of committed individuals who work together to enrich the educational and community experience of students, teachers and families.

Homeroom Parents

A homeroom parent representative is chosen by each homeroom teacher at the beginning of each school year. The homeroom parent will coordinate with the teacher to maintain open communication with parents to inform them of events and to assist in coordinating classroom activities that require parent support. Homeroom Parents also serve as a liaison between P.L.U.S. and the classroom teacher.

Social Media/Website

The school utilizes multiple social media platforms to share student activities and school announcements. All parents are encouraged to follow us on Facebook (St. James Catholic School) and Instagram (stjamescatholicschool). The school website (www.stjamesgulfport.com) has updated calendars, lunch menus, and other various resources for parents and community members.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

If a parent knows his/her child may have problems with a specific subject, or if there is information that will help a teacher better understand the child, the parent should set up a conference as soon as possible and speak with the teacher.

Parent-teacher conferences can be arranged at any time during the year, as needed, by sending a note to the teacher, emailing the teacher or calling the office during school hours. Do not wait for a major problem before making an appointment. The need for a conference is not reserved to problem situations. Parents and teachers need to have positive feedback, too. Morning drop-off is a busy time and not conducive to a productive parent/teacher meeting. Conferences should be scheduled at a convenient time that will be most beneficial to both the parent and the teacher. When a class has an interruption, it wastes the time of each student by getting them off task. Teachers and students should not be disturbed during the day when classes are in session.

Unless there is an emergency, please do not Facebook message, text, or call school personnel on their personal phones regarding school business. We encourage parents to contact the school office or to email your child's teacher with any questions or concerns.

Teacher Communication

Each teacher communicates directly through FACTS and other approved platforms. Each teacher sends home a weekly newsletter to keep parents aware of classroom news, assignments, reminders, and school activities. These newsletters are posted by Monday morning in the FACTS Family Portal and go home in print that afternoon.

Cellular Communication

FACTS Parent Alert will be used periodically to contact families/staff by telephone or text with schedule changes or school emergency communications. You must agree to these communications to be contacted. Please update your phone numbers and email contact information with the office as needed.

School Telephone Policy

Outgoing calls: Students may use the phone at the discretion of their teachers, who will, in turn, notify the office.

Incoming calls: Please do not ask for students to be disturbed from class to speak on the phone, except in the case of an emergency. Please note that all transportation change requests should be sent directly to the teacher in writing. However, in the event of an emergency, the office will accept the change and notify the child directly.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices Policy

Schools within the Diocese of Biloxi prohibit the use of all personal telecommunications devices including cellular phones and smart watches, by its students during the school day, unless an exception applies such as an emergency or exigent circumstance and the Principal expressly authorizes said use. **Cell phones and/or smart watches will be confiscated, and a parent must come pick them up from the front office.**

Messages for Teachers

Messages for teachers will be delivered to their mailboxes in the workroom during the day unless there is an emergency requiring that the message be delivered immediately. Teachers are not required to accept parent calls on their cell phones during school hours.

Student Deliveries

IMPORTANT...It is not our procedure to deliver flowers, balloons, or anything of that nature to the children for their birthday. Deliveries will not be accepted.

Student Visitors

All students visiting from another school during school hours must be obtaining service hours and must have prior permission from school administrators.

Wednesday Folders

Flyers and other important school information will be sent home in the white St. James folders on Wednesdays. Teachers will send home graded papers in the folder each Wednesday for parents to review. Folders should be signed by the parent/guardian, and papers do not need to be returned to the teacher unless requested (papers needing to be signed and RETURNED are labeled by the teacher). Outgoing enclosures for the Wednesday folder must be delivered to the school office no later than 3:00 PM Tuesday each week.

FACTS Family Portal

Every effort is made to keep parents informed of school happenings. The FACTS communication system is a major communication tool utilized by St. James Catholic School. The FACTS Family Portal is where you can access student grades, access school information and classroom newsletters in the resource documents section, and pay your tuition and any incidental fees charged through FACTS. The FACTS code for St. James Catholic School is SJC-MS.

CHILD ABUSE

Any person who knows or has reason to suspect abuse or neglect of a child by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person(s) responsible for the child's care, is required by law to make a report to the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services. The Mississippi Abuse Hotline is 1-800-222-8000.

ALCOHOL, SMOKING, AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

The use of alcohol, smoking, or the use of tobacco products and/or illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on and around the St. James Catholic School campus.

Mississippi Adult Tobacco Use on Educational Property Act of 2000

97-32-27. (1) "Adult" means any natural person at least eighteen (18) years old. (2) "Minor" means any natural person under the age of eighteen (18) years. (3) "Person" means any natural person. (4) "Tobacco product" means any substance that contains tobacco including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, smoking tobacco or smokeless tobacco. (5) "Educational property" means any public school building or bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field, or other property owned, used or operated by any local school board, school, or directors for the administration of any public educational institution or during a school-related activity; provided, however, that the term "educational property" shall not include any sixteenth section school land or lieu land on which is not located a public school building, public school campus, public school recreational area or public school athletic field. Educational property shall not include property owned or operated by the state institutions of higher learning, the public community and junior colleges, or vocational-technical complexes where only adult students are in attendance. SECTION 3. The following provision shall be codified as Section 97-32-29, Mississippi Code of 1972: 97-32-29. No person shall use any tobacco product on any educational property as defined in Section 2 of this act. Any adult who violates this section shall be subject to a fine and shall be liable as follows: (a) for a first conviction, a warning; (b) for a second conviction, a fine of Seventy-five Dollars (\$75.00); and (c) for all subsequent convictions, a fine not to exceed One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00) shall be imposed. Any adult found in violation of this section shall be issued a citation by a law enforcement officer, which citation shall include notice of the date, time and location for hearing before the justice court having jurisdiction where the violation is alleged to have occurred. For the purposes of this section, "subsequent convictions" are for violations committed on any educational property within the State of Mississippi. Anyone convicted under this act shall be recorded as being fined for a civil violation of the act and not for violating a criminal statute. It is the responsibility of all law enforcement officers and law enforcement agencies of this state to ensure that the provisions of this act are enforced. SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2000.

WEAPONS

Firearms and other dangerous weapons are strictly prohibited on the St. James Catholic School campus and at all school-sponsored activities.

PROHIBITION OF WEAPONS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY MS Code 97-37-17 (Senate Bill 3349)

"EDUCATIONAL PROPERTY" A public or private school building, bus, campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field or other property owned or actually used or operated for school purposes.

"STUDENT" A minor or adult enrolled in or suspended or expelled within the last 5 years from a public or private school, college or university.

FELONY \$5,000 and/or 3 years for possession of a gun, rifle, pistol, other firearm, dynamite cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine, powerful explosive, or causing, encouraging or aiding a minor to possess same.

MISDEMEANOR \$1,000 and/or 6 months for possession of a BB gun, air rifle, air pistol, bowie knife, dirk, dagger, slingshot, leaded cane, switchblade, blackjack, metallic knuckles, razors and razor blades (except for shaving), any sharp-pointed or edged instrument (except instruction supplies, unaltered nail files and clips and tools used only to prepare food, instruction and maintenance of school property), or to causing, encouraging or aiding a minor to possess same.



Note:

The administration reserves the right to amend this handbook as needed. Amended copies of the handbook will be distributed electronically and posted online (www.stjamesgulfport.com) as appropriate. Completion of online school registration by parents denotes understanding and acceptance of all policies outlined in this handbook. Inquiries about policies and procedures should be directed to the principal.

Handbook revised on August 23, 2026