



# Parent Handbook

**Note to reader:**

The purpose of this handbook is to give a general understanding of the school's policies and procedures for students and parents. Policies and procedures are in place in order to create a safe and harmonious atmosphere for our students.

This handbook has been compiled as a joint effort between St. Joseph's Parish Education Committee and St. Joseph's teaching staff. Errors and omissions do not necessarily confer any rights, responsibilities or privileges of any member(s) of the community.

## **PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES**

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF THE VANCOUVER ARCHDIOCESE**

The Catholic School shares in the mission of the Church to proclaim and build the Kingdom of God. The Catholic School, as a faith community, is committed to excellence in Catholicity and in all areas that promote the development of the whole child to his or her full potential. The Catholic School strives to develop Christian leaders, responsible citizens and life-long learners.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

We are Christian educators, growing in the knowledge and love of God, sharing our God-given gifts to provide an environment where children may develop a personal relationship with God; where they learn to live the moral values taught by Jesus Christ and where they acquire knowledge and skills necessary to be fulfilled, responsible and contributing members of the community.

The Spirit of St. Joseph's School is one of Community. Everyone is working together: parents, teachers and students, supporting one another in the work and activities of school life.

### **OBJECTIVES**

St. Joseph's School strives to provide its students with a positive learning environment in the light of the Catholic Faith. The principal and staff endeavour to develop the school as a genuine Christian community with each member participating in an active manner for the common good of the whole community.

#### *Personal Development*

One of our goals is the development of well-mannered pupils with good work, study and play habits. Emphasis is on the virtues of self-discipline, self-respect, consideration of others and respect for authority, property and academic excellence.

#### *Appreciation for Multiculturalism*

We have dedicated ourselves to developing in our school community an awareness and appreciation of the variety of values and attitudes with regard to ethnic, religious and social differences which now exist within our Canadian society as a whole and particularly within our own multi-cultural area.

#### *Active Parental Involvement*

The school aims to support parents as the primary educators of their children and therefore tries to keep the lines of communication open regarding their children's progress in school activities and programs, current education concerns and religious activities. We also invite parents to attend our school liturgies, assemblies and other celebrations which are prepared by the children under the direction of their classroom teachers.

## **ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING**

We, as a staff, are convinced that there are specific, definable attitudes and behaviours of students, parents, and teachers which help distinguish superior schools. In order to help us attain the excellence for which we are constantly striving, we ask you to read and try to carry out what we consider to be reasonable expectations. These are listed below for your convenience.

### *Expectations for Students*

1. To arrive at school punctually each day, attend regularly unless ill, and behave appropriately.
2. To be prepared each day with all the necessary books, completed homework assignments and all other necessary materials as required by the classroom teacher.
3. To be considerate at all times of the rights of others – peers, staff and neighbours.
4. To make a sincere, concentrated effort to do the best one can according to his or her ability.
5. To wear the proper school uniform at all times, making sure the uniform is clean and worn with pride.
6. To bring a written note signed by a parent or guardian to explain the lack of uniform.
7. To respect and comply with all school regulations, whether written or unwritten.
8. To participate attentively and reverently in all religious functions of the school.

### *Expectations for Parents*

1. To ensure that their children are at school on time each day.
2. To insist that their children conduct themselves in an orderly manner at all times.
3. To respond promptly and affirmatively to any misbehaviour while maintaining good manners at all times.
4. To encourage responsibility in their children for bringing lunch, books, materials and homework assignments.
5. To encourage high effort in achieving individual potential and in the prompt completion of assignments.
6. To support the school, the principal and the entire staff in their efforts to build high standards of education in the school.
7. To supply the child with a written and signed explanation for any absences, lateness or lack of proper uniform including the gym strip and runners.
8. When there is a problem, to try and maintain a calm attitude when presenting the matter to the school.

### *Family Statement of Commitment*

In accordance with CISVA Policy 411, all families will be required to complete a Family Statement of Commitment. Partners (home, school, parish) in Catholic Education must work together to provide an environment where faith and learning go hand in hand leading the young people to be the best they can be.

### *Expectations of the Staff*

1. To provide a school and classroom atmosphere which is conducive to learning.
2. To teach the basic curriculum skills as laid down by the Ministry of Education.
3. To put special emphasis on religious instruction as well as mutual respect.
4. To provide, as far as possible, for children with special needs, within the school's means.
5. To respect the personal worth, dignity and characteristics of each child.
6. To keep parents and/or guardians informed of the progress, performance and conduct of their children.
7. To provide fair and just disciplinary treatment for all children as needed.
8. To maintain order, plan carefully, teach meaningfully and present role models who will be inspirations to the children.
9. To be mutually supportive of one another and exhibit a spirit of friendly, kind, and thoughtful appreciation for parents who are the first educators of their children.
10. To keep ever before us our spirit of care and concern for all those in our charge.

## **ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE**

### **SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP**

St. Joseph's School is accredited in British Columbia under the terms of the *Independent School Act*. St. Joseph's School is a member of the Catholic Independent Schools of the Vancouver Archdiocese (CISVA). As such, the school follows the policies as directed by the Superintendent's Office of the CISVA ([www.cisva.bc.ca](http://www.cisva.bc.ca)).

### **PARISH EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The administration and operation of the school are overseen by the Parish Education Committee (PEC). Parish Education Committee members are elected by the parish community on an annual basis. The PEC meets regularly on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm in the school. The principal is a non-voting member of the PEC and attends each meeting, giving a report of the school's activities and concerns. Parents who would like to bring forth an issue with the PEC must do so in writing at least seven days in advance of the meeting.

### **THE PRINCIPAL**

The principal is hired by the Parish Education Committee to oversee the running of the school, with particular emphasis on the mandate of education. The principal is responsible for: the day to day administration of the school; the academic program; religious instruction; fostering Christian community; working in partnership with the pastor, the Parish Education Committee, and the parents.

## **ADDRESSING CONCERNS**

In accordance with CISVA Policy 302, parents are asked to follow a specific sequence of steps in order to address issues which may arise.

Parents who have concerns should address the teacher or staff member who is involved directly with the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved in this manner, then it should be brought to the attention of the principal, who will make a judgement on the issue, in light of school and CISVA policies. The resolution will be made known in writing to all parties involved. If the principal's judgement is not accepted, the matter may be appealed in writing to the Parish Education Committee. The Education Committee will review the issue and make a decision regarding the outcome. The decision of the principal will be overturned only if school or CISVA policies were not followed. All people involved will be informed of the Education Committee's decision in writing.

## **DAILY OPERATIONS**

The daily schedule of St. Joseph's School is as follows:

Morning bell: 8:40am

Morning recess: 10:15 – 10:30am

Lunch break: 12:00 – 12:15pm: students eat quietly at their desks

12:15 – 12:40pm: students have play time outside (inside in poor weather)

Class dismissal: 2:45pm

Wednesday dismissal: 2:30pm (to allow for weekly staff meetings)

Office Hours: 8:30am – 4:00pm

Playground supervision: 8:15am – 3:00pm (2:45pm on Wednesdays)

## **LATECOMERS**

Continued tardiness is disruptive at the start of the day, not only for the tardy student, but for the entire class. In addition, students who arrive late at school miss important morning routines, such as announcements, homework collection, silent reading, journal writing, and, most importantly, morning prayer. Students are expected to be at school before the morning bell, ready to begin the day.

## **ABSENCE**

Regular attendance at school is expected of all students. When a student is absent from school for a partial or entire day, a written note that is signed and dated by a parent or guardian is required when the student returns to school. This is required by the government for the audit for grant purposes.

If your child is going to be absent, please telephone the school office before 8:45 in the morning (604-872-5715) or email the school at [stjosephsvancouver@telus.net](mailto:stjosephsvancouver@telus.net).

## **PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF**

St. Joseph's School provides supervision of the students from 8:15am until 3:00pm (2:45 on Wednesdays). There is no supervision before 8:15am or after 3:00pm. Parents need to ensure that their children are not on school property outside of those times, except for the purposes of extra-curricular activities. It is preferable that parents pick up the siblings of students who are involved in extra-curricular activities, as these children are not under supervision while the extra-curricular activity is in progress.

## **SCHOOL TELEPHONE**

The school telephone is a business phone. Students are discouraged from using it, except in urgent situations. Messages may be left with the office staff, who will pass them on to students and teachers at appropriate times. Students are not permitted to telephone for the delivery of forgotten items, such as homework, gym strip, or musical instruments. All after-school arrangements must be made before leaving home each morning.

## **VISITORS**

For safety reasons, all visitors to the school, including parents, are expected to report to the office as soon as they enter the school.

## **STAFF MEETINGS**

Staff meetings are held every Wednesday afternoon at 3:00pm. Students are dismissed at 2:30pm on those days and parents are expected to pick up their children at that time.

## **WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

Students who walk to school should follow an open, populated route which is the same each day. Parents can easily check the route if there is a delay in the child's arrival. All students should avoid taking shortcuts. Parents of students who walk to school or take public transit should write a note in September to inform the school of their child's regular, daily travel arrangements.

## **BICYCLES**

Students are permitted to ride their bicycles to school, but must dismount when they reach the school grounds. Bicycles are to be locked to the rack at the front of the school.

## **SKATEBOARDS/SCOOTERS**

Students may not ride skateboards, scooters or other wheeled transportation on the school grounds. If students use these items to get to school, they must be left at the school office upon arrival at school, to be picked up at the end of the day.

## **ELECTRONICS**

Students are not permitted to use electronic devices such as cellular phones, iPods, electronic games, etc. on the school grounds. If a student has a cellular phone for security purposes, it must remain turned off and in their school bags. All electronic devices are brought at the students' risk.

## **LUNCHES**

Parents who are dropping off lunches for their children must leave them at the school office; they are not to disturb the classes by delivering them directly to the children. In keeping with the healthy living initiatives from the Ministry of Education, junk food (such as candy and chips) is not permitted at St. Joseph's School. Students are not permitted to bring fast food or soda pop to school. Some parents choose to bring in food to celebrate their children's birthdays. This food must follow the guidelines for healthy eating; fast food and cakes or cupcakes with icing are not permitted and will not be distributed to the students. Parents must contact their children's teachers before bringing food into the classroom.

## **MEDICATION**

Staff members are not allowed to administer medication to students without written permission from the parents. If, for any reason, your child must be given medication during the school day, staff must have your written permission to proceed. This includes prescribed medication due to infections or allergic reactions, and non-prescription medication, such as pain relievers.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Articles that are found throughout the school are placed in the lost and found, which is located in the front hall of the school. Parents and students are encouraged to search for lost articles in that location. The lost and found is emptied several times during the year and the clothing is donated to charity.

## **WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Generally speaking, St. Joseph's does not close for bad weather. However, when there has been a heavy snowfall overnight, the school may close or alter schedules temporarily. Listen to CKNW (980 AM) from 6:30 – 8:30am for specific information about St. Joseph's School, or consult the school website ([stjoesschool-vancouver.org](http://stjoesschool-vancouver.org)) for announcements. Should the Vancouver Public Schools announce a school closure due to poor weather, St. Joseph's would be closed as well.



## **SCHOOL GROUNDS**

### **PLAYGROUND**

Students are expected to remain in specified areas of the playground at all times. Students do not cross back and forth from one playground to another, but remain in their assigned areas (intermediate students play at the front of the school, and primary students play at the back). All activities are confined to the playground except on rainy days. When it is raining, students will remain in their classrooms during recess and lunch breaks.

Running in the halls and on the stairways is strictly forbidden.

### **TRAFFIC SAFETY**

With the exception of staff cars and delivery vehicles, there is no driving or parking on the school grounds between 8:00am and 4:00pm each day. This is to protect our children, who, of necessity, must use the parking lot as a playground. There is no parking and no student drop-off on Fleming Street. The school zone on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue is for the purposes of student drop-off only; parents are not permitted to park in that area between 8:00am and 5:00pm on school days. Please cooperate with the school's traffic volunteers as they direct both children and cars to safety.

### **SMOKING**

Smoking is not permitted at any time on school premises, or within 6 metres of the grounds. This city bylaw is in effect at all times, including evenings and weekends.

### **OFF-LIMIT AREAS**

Some areas are off-limits to students, unless they are accompanied by a staff member. These include:

- the rectory
- construction sites
- staff room, unless accompanied by a teacher; during recess and lunch breaks, students must refrain from entering the staff room, but should seek assistance from the staff member who is on yard supervision
- computer lab
- boiler room and surrounding area
- teachers' resource room and audio-visual room
- teachers' desks and the desks of other students
- principal's office
- all storage areas
- the gym
- classrooms (before/after school and during breaks)

Playground balls may not be retrieved from the neighbour's yard at any time. The neighbours have said they will throw the balls over the fence when they find them.

Students are never permitted to throw stones or snowballs.

Clark Park is off limits unless supervised by a teacher.

## **CURRICULUM**

St. Joseph's School follows the curriculum that is prescribed by the BC Ministry of Education. In addition, because we are a Catholic school, we have scheduled daily instruction in Religion in each grade. We also offer a French Language program from kindergarten through grade seven.

The students are expected to place academics as a first priority in their lives. They are expected to put their full effort into their school work above the needs of extra-curricular pursuits.

## **RELIGION PROGRAM**

Our goal is to teach all of our students to love God and to see Christ in others, trying to love and serve them. Through the basic teachings of our Catholic faith, we strive to develop in our students an ability to weigh moral values with an upright conscience. This will be achieved through the daily experience of living in a Christian community, through the study of the Word of God and through participation in liturgical worship. Parents are expected to uphold the teachings of the Catholic faith by supporting our teaching, providing Christian moral teaching in the home, and by attending Mass every Sunday with their children.

Catholic students in grade two will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time. It is important for the school and home to work together to prepare the children for these important milestones in their faith.

Catholic students in grade seven will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, in which the students reaffirm their faith and become adult members of the Church. Students will perform forty hours of community service in preparation to receive Confirmation. Parents are asked to support the preparation of their children and to work closely with the school.

## **HOMEWORK**

Students are responsible for completing all homework assignments to the best of their abilities and returning them to school on the day that they are due. Daily reading at home is expected at every grade level.

Homework can be organized into two categories: formal and informal

Informal homework includes assignments that the teacher feels a student had a reasonable opportunity of completing during class time but did not do so, and must now complete at home in order to be ready for the next day's lessons.

Formal homework assignments are extra activities, such as projects, written assignments, or research work that are given by the teacher to extend student learning into the home.

Primary students will not be given formal homework until after Christmas of grade three. However, we do consider that activities to practise reading, printing, and mathematical operations could be given as assignments during the primary years.

The guidelines for homework that follow are intended to be an average for each week. The time required to complete extended activities or projects must be divided between the days before the due date. Projects are not intended to be completed in one evening.

Grade Three students will be given formal homework following the Christmas break. By the third term, they may be doing two hours of homework per week, on average.

Grade Four students may begin the year by receiving an average of two hours of homework per week and may have three hours of homework per week in the third term, on average.

Grade Five students may begin the year with an average of three hours of homework per week and may progress to four hours per week, on average.

Grade Six students may begin the year with an average of four hours of homework per week and may progress to five hours per week, on average.

Grade Seven students may begin the year with an average of five hours of homework per week and may progress to six hours per week, on average.

### **HOMEWORK REQUESTS**

Requests for make-up work are always to be made with consideration of the teacher, and should only be made if a student is absent for longer than one school day. Since teachers are busy with classes, they will not be able to accumulate homework assignments until school has been dismissed. Students should be able to call a classmate for assignments for a day or two. For absences of several days, teachers will allow students to have two days to make up the assignments that were missed due to illness.

### **LIBRARY**

The students attend library classes once per week and are able to borrow a number of books at one time, dependent on the grade level, for a borrowing period of one week. In addition, the library is open after school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, during which time the students who are accompanied by a parent or guardian may borrow books. Students are not permitted to be in the library without the supervision of a staff member. The students are responsible for caring for library books and returning them promptly and in good condition. Replacement costs will be charged to the students for lost or mutilated library books.

## COMPUTERS

Students are not permitted to use the computers without supervision by a staff member. They must use the computers for the purposes of school work only. In order to avoid potential problems with Internet access, we require all students who are in grades three through seven to read, understand, agree to, and sign an *Acceptable Use* policy. Only students who have returned this policy signed by their parent will be allowed to use the Internet in the lab or classrooms. The policy states that a student will use the Internet available in the computer lab or classrooms for learning purposes, and that, should it be discovered that a student is using the Internet for inappropriate purposes, his or her use of the computers in the lab or classrooms will be suspended for a period decided by the Administration. Internet abductions and child abuse over the Internet have increased substantially in the last few years. It is therefore important that parents, as well as educators, are aware of what their children are reading, writing and viewing over the Internet.

## INTERNET SAFETY RULES FOR PARENTS

- Put your computer in an area of the home where the monitor is visible to everyone. Don't keep it in a bedroom or secluded place.
- Talk to your children about what they are viewing. Show a real interest in the positive experiences they are having on the Internet.
- Children in chat rooms are especially vulnerable to predators, as predators often join the chat room and find a child who appears especially vulnerable and easy to deceive.
- Tell your children not to provide personal information over the Internet, such as name, address, school, phone number, teams they are members of, and so on. Predators research their victims and piece together information to find the child.
- Predators veer away from children who won't keep their secrets. Tell your child to be particularly wary of anyone asking them to keep secrets from parents, etc.
- Do not allow your child to connect his/her name and photograph together.
- Do not allow your child to send photographs of him or herself, as they can be manipulated and sent across the Internet.
- Tell children not to discuss personal matters with strangers over the Internet. Be especially wary of people who say they can solve your children's problems. This is a common promise of predators.
- At times our children feel particularly unhappy or vulnerable. Be sensitive to this and provide them with extra support at this time. They will then be less likely to turn to a stranger for support.
- Warn your children that people are not necessarily who they say they are over the Internet. The Internet provides anonymity and the opportunity to deceive.
- Together with your child, develop a list of people whom your child is allowed to contact over the Internet.
- Don't open attachments or e-mail from anyone whose name neither you nor your child recognizes. Attachments may contain pornographic images or files that can damage your computer.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are intended to augment the curriculum by expanding the horizons of the students and exposing them to new experiences. St. Joseph's School adheres to CISVA Policy 409 in planning field trips.

With respect to field trips, the preferred form of transportation to and from trip locations is a rented school bus; however, there are situations in which parent drivers are used to transport the students. If parent drivers are used, students who are less than nine years old or have not yet grown to be 145cm tall must be in a booster seat. Only parents who have submitted their driver's license and car insurance information to the office will be allowed to transport students in their cars. Parents who are driving must transport the students directly to and from the assigned location. They are not permitted to stop and purchase food for the children in their care.

Parents must give written permission for their children to attend a field trip by signing the permission slip issued by the school for each field trip. Students will not be permitted to attend an off-site activity unless the teacher receives this written permission.

Parents sometimes assist with the supervision of students on field trips. Teachers will assign a group of students to each parent, and that parent is responsible for guiding and monitoring the behaviour of these students throughout the entire trip, until the group returns to the school. For added security, supervising parents are requested to submit their cell phone numbers to the teacher and school office before leaving for the field trip.

## **REPORT CARDS AND STUDENT PROGRESS**

Report cards are issued three times each year, in December, March and June. The dates for the issuance of report cards are included on the yearly calendar. Parents may receive an interim report card when necessary, when the teachers need to report on exemplary work, or the need for remedial work. This does not necessarily involve all students.

It is our wish to strive, with your help, to provide a consistently high level of education for the students, and to build a cooperative relationship between the home and school. There are two formal meetings during the school year, including a parent-teacher interview in the first term and a student-led conference in the second term. Outside of those formal interviews, staff members will be pleased to meet with parents to discuss their children's progress or other related concerns. However, we do ask that parents make an appointment to meet the teacher; we discourage unscheduled visits, either just before or just after school, as teachers must tend to the needs of the students at those times and will not be able to meet with parents. Please call our school secretary at 604-872-5715 to make an appointment or to leave a message for a teacher.

Some students attend the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC) with parent permission. Parents of students who attend LAC are requested to attend one meeting per year to outline their children's Individual

Education Plans. Parents are encouraged to check in regularly with the LAC teachers to remain informed of their children's progress.

## **VACATION**

Government law requires elementary school children to attend school during the regular instruction period.

The school vacations consist of two weeks at Christmas time and one week at spring break. Parents are expected to adhere to those times for family vacations. Removing children for an extended vacation other than at school breaks is a hardship for the students. They miss valuable instructional time that cannot be made up when they return. In the event of a trip that is required for urgent family matters, a written request, signed by the parents, must be submitted to the school at least two weeks before the trip.

Students are expected to be able to transition smoothly back into the curriculum upon their return, to be prepared to write the necessary quizzes, tests, or to move on to a new unit of study. Teachers will not provide specific assignments during an extended vacation; students and parents are responsible for self-directed learning. The parents, or a hired tutor, should properly explain, carry out and correct the work, which should be collected in a folder and submitted to the teacher upon the student's return. Teachers will not assess the work that is completed during a vacation.

Government regulations require that elementary students be in attendance for a certain number of days of the school year. If a child misses more than a week of school due to illness, a certificate signed by a medical doctor must be sent to the school immediately following the illness. Failure to send the certificate may result in your child not receiving the grant. You will be billed for any portion of the government grant that the school does not receive as a result of your child's unexcused absence.

## **STUDENT REQUIREMENTS**

### **STUDENT SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

During the spring of each school year, parents will have the opportunity to order their children's school supplies (i.e. paper, pencils, pens, exercise books, etc.) for the following year from a company that will deliver the supplies directly to St. Joseph's School. If parents choose not to avail of this service, they are responsible for purchasing the identical list of supplies on their own. All supplies must be labelled with the child's full name.

All intermediate students must have a dictionary at school. All families must have a Bible and a dictionary that their children can use at home.

## UNIFORM

The school uniform is prescribed by the Parish Education Committee. Uniforms are to be worn faithfully and with pride by all students from Kindergarten to Grade Seven. All items should be labelled with the children's names.

Student uniform requirements are as follows:

Girls: St. Joseph's School kilt, tailored uniform blouse (no exceptions), navy blue monogrammed pullover sweater, navy blue knee socks or tights, plain flat dress black school shoes (shoes should be all black, with no embellishments, such as bows or extra metallic decorations; running shoes are not permitted)

Boys: St. Joseph's School navy blue twill pants (no exceptions), tailored uniform shirt (no exceptions), navy blue monogrammed pullover sweater, navy blue socks, flat dress black school shoes (no runners)

Summer: an optional uniform may be worn between Victoria Day and Thanksgiving.

The uniform items listed above must be purchased at Neat Uniforms 1050 Boundary Road, Burnaby, BC V5C 3B1 (604) 205-7560. Pants, blouses or shirts that are not from Neat Uniforms are not part of the St. Joseph's uniform and must be replaced immediately with regulation clothing.

Gym strip (available at St. Joseph's): non-marking running shoes, white sport socks, St. Joseph's School t-shirts, St. Joseph's School shorts. St. Joseph's hooded fleece sweat shirts and fleece pants are optional items that will be available for purchase from the school.

Students are expected to be in full uniform at all times and it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that this requirement is met. Students must wear school sweaters in the classroom, not hoodies or other sweaters. Shirts must be tucked in while students are in the school building. Gym shoes are for the gym only and are not to be worn at any other time. Running shoes may be worn at recess and lunch breaks in the playground area. Proper school shoes must be worn at all other times.

With the exception of holy medals and crosses, students are not permitted to wear jewellery. Girls may wear pierced earrings provided they are the smallest hoops or studs. Make-up and hair colouring are not permitted and haircuts must be conservative. Hair accessories must be either black, burgundy, navy blue, or the school plaid. Nail polish is not permitted. If there is any doubt, the staff will advise the student of acceptability. Written notices of uniform violation will be sent home to the parents, who are expected to rectify the situation immediately. Students who are repeatedly out of uniform will be referred to the principal.

If an unforeseen emergency prevents the wearing of uniform for one day, a written note that is signed by a parent must be submitted to the school office. The note is valid for one day only. Soiled uniforms are not an excuse for being out of uniform.

## **GOOD MANNERS**

We expect the students of St. Joseph's School to use good manners. The practice of using proper manners includes using appropriate, courteous expressions, such as: *please, thank you, excuse me, and I'm sorry*, among others. Students are also expected to be responsible members of the community, by doing such things as holding doors open for others, refraining from littering, and not interrupting others while they are speaking. Gestures, language and behaviour used by students must reflect proper manners; vulgar language and gestures will never be tolerated.

Chewing gum is not allowed at school or on the school premises.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS**

It is imperative that all contact numbers be kept updated with the school office. In the event that a home, work, or emergency number changes, please advise the office immediately. Home numbers and cell phone numbers are particularly important when a student does not arrive at school and the office has not been notified of an expected absence. These are the first numbers that are called to confirm absences.

In the event of a city-wide emergency, everything in our power will be done to keep the students together and safe until parents can be contacted.

The staff at St. Joseph's School adheres to CISVA Policy 418 in its preparations for emergencies. Our first priority is the safety and well-being of the students. There is an emergency plan in place and each staff member has a role to play in the event of an emergency.

### **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

In the case of an emergency in which the school must be evacuated (such as fire, earthquake, or other emergency), the students will be evacuated to Clark Park. In the event of a danger within or outside of the school, lockdown procedures will be followed, in which all rooms within the school will be locked in order to maintain the safety of students and staff members, and emergency personnel (such as police) will be called.

If parents are present in the school in the event of a lockdown or evacuation, they must follow the directives of the staff members in order to maintain the safety of everyone in the community.

Please note: After a complete emergency evacuation, students will be released **ONLY** to parents or guardians who have been designated in writing as having permission to pick up those students. Students will be released only through the temporary *Student Release Centre*, through written application.



## **RESPONDING TO STUDENT ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

It is the responsibility of all staff members to respond to either the suspicion or disclosure of abuse or neglect of children. St. Joseph's staff adheres to CISVA Policy 405. The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* requires anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be at risk has a legal duty to make a report to a child welfare worker or directly to the police if a child is in immediate danger. The staff adheres to the following three documents in responding to abuse or neglect: *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect* (BC Ministry of Children and Family Development); *Responding to Child Welfare Concerns* (BC Ministry of Children and Family Development); *Supporting our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse* (Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools BC). Schools will protect personal information regarding child abuse, neglect or violence against improper or unauthorized disclosure and use.

School personnel will report suspected child abuse, neglect or violence immediately. Everyone who has a reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be physically harmed, sexually abused or exploited, or neglected by a parent, or otherwise in need of protection is legally responsible to report promptly to a social worker. School personnel will inform the principal as soon as possible; cooperate with the resulting investigation; and support students who have experienced child abuse, neglect or violence.

## **FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS**

### **REGISTRATION**

Registration for the following school year begins in January of the current school year. Re-registration information will be sent home at the end of February. The forms must be returned with all necessary payments.

A registration fee of \$50.00 is payable upon acceptance of new students. This fee is non-refundable and serves to hold a place for a child, providing all other requirements of registration are met.

The admission requirements for St. Joseph's School adhere to those of CISVA policy and are as follows:

Because we receive a grant from the government to assist with operating expenses, we are required to have proof of citizenship or landed immigrant status for both parents and children. If we do not have these documents at the time of registration, the registration is not considered to be complete.

We try to keep the enrolment in each class to a reasonable number. In Kindergarten, our target enrolment is 24 students and for all other grades it is 30 students. Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, we have to exceed those target enrolment numbers; however, we make every effort to keep these numbers at the limits prescribed by the Parish Education Committee. In order to help us with our registrations, it is important that re-registrations and new registrations are received by the school office as early in the spring as possible. Late registration will not be accepted if the class size limit has been met prior to the end of May. A waiting list will be maintained through December of the current year.

## **TUITION FEES**

It is expected that parents will remain up to date on the payment of their tuition fees. If a family is having difficulty paying the school fees, the parents should discuss the issue with the principal or pastor. If a family is in arrears, they will be contacted by the principal, pastor or Chair of the PEC to settle the account in a prompt manner. The school has the right to withdraw the opportunity for re-registration of students for non-payment of tuition fees.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

When enrolling their children at St. Joseph's, parents agree to complete 50 hours of participation, in a variety of areas, such as maintenance, yard supervision, traffic patrol, as listed in the registration package. Parents who do not fulfill this requirement by the end of the school year will be invoiced at a rate of \$12.00 for each hour that is not complete.

## **FUNDRAISING**

In order to provide a high quality education for our students, St. Joseph's relies on money that is raised through our fundraising projects. Our government grant is used only for the operating expenses of the school; the tuition fees are used in that regard as well. In order to maintain our school and to complete capital upgrades, we rely on fundraising. As a condition of enrolment, each family must contribute \$250.00 per year to the school. We offer a variety of ways in which to accomplish this goal.

## **PRIVACY**

All personal information that is collected from parents or students is intended only for use in the school context. It is only collected for the purposes of education and is not distributed for any reason. Staff members are not permitted to share students' telephone numbers with other parents without written permission.

## **WITHDRAWAL OF ENROLMENT**

If for any reason a child must withdraw from St. Joseph's School, 30 days written notice must be given. Post-dated cheques will be returned. All accounts must be up to date prior to student records being forwarded to the next school.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

In establishing a policy regarding discipline, there are certain assumptions of fact: discipline is an expectation of the school community; self-discipline is a desirable goal and some students need to be guided toward this goal; these students need to be taught how to manage their behaviour; students need to know what behaviour is expected of them.

The aim of the school is to encourage the development of self-discipline. We expect our students to behave in a reasonable and responsible manner. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with promptly in a manner consistent with the following policy:

- a. The correction of unacceptable behaviour is primarily the responsibility of the teacher directly involved with the student(s).
- b. In order to modify students' behaviour, teachers will use the technique that is judged to be most suitable for the individual concerned and that is appropriate for use in a school.
- c. Detentions during breaks or after school, written reflections, exclusions from class activities, disciplinary notes, community service, and referral to the principal are examples of discipline techniques that are appropriate for use in a school.
- d. Students will be led to accept responsibility for their own actions and to accept logical consequences for continued poor behaviour.
- e. If the teacher cannot effect a change in a student's pattern of behaviour, that student should be referred to the principal, or, in his/her absence, to the teacher-in-charge.
- f. The parents may have been contacted prior to such referral. However, under most circumstances, when a referral is received, the administration will report the matter to the parents, either verbally or in writing.
- g. The parents will be asked to cooperate with the school in finding ways to encourage their children to behave in a reasonable manner.
- h. If the administration and the parents are unsuccessful in altering the behaviour pattern, the parents may be asked to withdraw the student from school for a specified period of time (as per CISVA Policy 426)
- i. In the event that parents will not or cannot cooperate, and that the student persists in behaving in an unacceptable manner, the principal will dismiss the student from school, and as such, may suspend the student if he/she concludes that:
  - a pupil is wilfully disobedient or disrespectful to a teacher or any other employee of the school carrying out responsibilities approved by the administration, or
  - the behaviour of a student has a harmful effect on the physical being or the spiritual character of other students
  - a student has wilfully or carelessly damaged or destroyed school property or has removed any school property without permission or authority
  - a student has wilfully and without reason been absent from school and, as such, has failed to carry out the learning activities that his or her teachers may require
- j. Only the principal or, in the absence of the principal, the teacher-in-charge, may suspend a student.
- k. In the event of suspension, the principal will suspend a student for no more than the remainder of the day of the offence, or for the following school day should the offence occur late in the afternoon, without consultation with the pastor and/or Chair of the Parish Education Committee.
- l. The principal has the responsibility of informing the parents or guardian of the student who has been suspended and in the normal course of events will report the suspension to the pastor and/ or PEC Chair.
- m. If, in consultation with the pastor and/or PEC Chair, the principal suspends a student for more than the balance of a day, the principal will communicate the length of the suspension to the parents.

- n. The action of suspending a student means that a student is dismissed from attendance at the school for a specified period of time, will be held responsible for all learning assignments completed by their class during this time, and will be re-admitted at the end of the suspension.
- o. In critical incidents of unacceptable behaviour, if the principal concludes that a student's behaviour may warrant expulsion, the Parish Education Committee will meet to consider such an action.
- p. The PEC will make a decision to expel a student only after prior consultation with the principal and the parents or legal guardians of the student.
- q. The parents or legal guardians of the student to be expelled will be informed of such action in writing prior to the expulsion taking place.
- r. The action of expulsion means that a student is permanently dismissed from attendance at the school.
- s. The parents or legal guardians have the right to appeal the suspension or the expulsion of their child to the Parish Education Committee, as per CISVA Policy 302.

### **PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

St. Joseph's School adheres to CISVA Policy 430 with regard to personal electronic devices. In order to promote respect for the dignity of all members of our school community and to enhance student achievement and safety, the use of a personal electronic device is strictly prohibited in the school or during school related activities, such as field trips, sporting events, etc. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to: cell phones, portable internet devices, handheld entertainment systems, digital or film cameras, audio or video recorders, etc.

Personal electronic devices are to be kept turned off in the students' school bags and are not to be used on the school grounds or during school events. In order to prevent the loss or damage of personal electronic devices, students are asked to leave their personal electronic devices at home.

Students who do not adhere to these requirements may have their personal electronic devices confiscated and may have further consequences. St. Joseph's School takes no responsibility for the loss, recovery, repair or replacement of any personal electronic device that is brought to school or to a school event.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Parents, students and other members of the school community are responsible for the proper use of photos of students. Parents must not post photos which include children other than their own on social networking sites (such as Facebook). Parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children do not post photos of other students on these internet sites. St. Joseph's School takes no responsibility for personal photos.

# **ADDENDUM TO PARENT HANDBOOK: 2016-2017**

## **Tobacco and Vapour Products**

St. Joseph's School works in compliance with the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act, which was amended as of September 1, 2016. To that end, tobacco and vapour products are not permitted on the school grounds, or within a six-metre radius of the school property.

Definition of a vapour product according to the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act:

A vapour product or electronic cigarette is defined as a device that contains an electronic or battery-powered heating element that can vapourize an e-substance.

An e-substance is a solid, liquid or gas that when heated by the element in an e-cigarette, produces a vapour for use in an e-cigarette. All e-substances are covered by the new legislation and it does not matter if the e-substance contains nicotine or is nicotine-free.

The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act (Section 2) states:

“...a person must not smoke or use tobacco, or hold lighted tobacco, in or on school property.”

“A person must not use an e-cigarette, or hold an activated e-cigarette, in or on school property.”

# Testing of Drinking Water

## Policy

St. Joseph's School will take reasonable steps necessary to resolve elevated lead levels that are outside established guidelines on any drinking water quality test results.

### Water Testing Requirement:

The testing procedure and amount of samples taken at the school will be determined in collaboration with the Regional Health Authority and Caro Analytical Services, and be based on risk.

### Mitigation

If sample results reveal lead levels above the maximum allowable concentration of 0.010mg/L as stated from the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality by Health Canada, the school, in consultation with their Regional Health Authority, will commence daily flushing immediately, or deactivate and place a 'Not in Use' sign on the water source. Other mitigation solutions may be used.

### Communication and Reporting Requirements

Should testing demonstrate elevated levels of lead, the school will immediately inform the Ministry of the issue. St. Joseph's School will work collaboratively with our Regional Health Authority to communicate the results of testing lead content in drinking water with parents, students and staff.

### References

British Columbia Ministry of Education Public School Policy "Testing Lead Content in Drinking Water of School Facilities" <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/testing-lead-content-in-drinking-water>

Health Canada "Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality" [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewhsemt/pubs/water-eau/sum\\_guide-res\\_recom/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewhsemt/pubs/water-eau/sum_guide-res_recom/index-eng.php)

## **Responding to Abuse or Neglect**

### **Policy**

St. Joseph's School adheres to CISVA Policy 405: *Responding to Student Abuse and Neglect*. St. Joseph's School policy prohibits any form of child abuse, neglect or violence. Anyone who has a reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be at risk has a legal duty to make a report to a child welfare worker or directly to the police if the child is in immediate danger. The safety of the child supersedes any need for privacy with respect to making a report to the proper authorities.

St. Joseph's School follows the directives and guidelines outlined in three documents: *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect* (BC Ministry of Children and Family Development); *Responding to Child Welfare Concerns* (BC Ministry of Children and Family Development – January, 2016); *Supporting our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse* (Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools BC).

Child abuse and neglect include: physical abuse, emotional abuse, emotional harm, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and neglect. The definitions for these terms are to be found in the *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect*. St. Joseph's also recognizes the impact on a child of witnessing violence at home, and staff are therefore attuned to signs of emotional harm associated with the experience.

### **Procedure**

The principal is designated as the Appointed School Official and the teacher-in-charge assumes that role in the principal's absence or in the event of a conflict of interest.

Staff members will report suspected child abuse, neglect or violence to a child welfare worker at the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), or at the Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agency. In the case in which a child is in immediate danger, staff members will call the police directly before contacting a child welfare worker. Staff members will inform the principal of the report as soon as possible and will document the incident in writing. Staff members will cooperate with the investigation conducted by MCFD and will support the student(s).

At the first staff meeting of each school year, the principal reviews both the local and CISVA policies of Responding to Student Abuse and Neglect. In addition, the principal reviews the three documents: *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect*; *Responding to Child Welfare Concerns*; *Supporting our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse*. Copies of these documents are located in the principal's office and in the staff room.

\*\*\*The student's confidentiality must be maintained at all times. The information about the disclosure must not be shared with other staff members.

Refer to CISVA Policy 405: Responding to Student Abuse and Neglect

## Anti-Bullying

In accordance with CISVA Policy 408, St. Joseph's School is committed to providing and promoting a learning environment that enables every student to feel safe, accepted and respected. St. Joseph's School works continuously to develop strategies that make students feel valued, respected and connected within their school community, while remaining consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church. This includes the protection of a students' physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness as well as protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

As referenced in CISVA Policy 408, the definition of bullying is as follows:

"Bullying is a pattern or repeated actions targeted at a person in a deliberate manner, intended to reduce the perceived power that person has over the situation or to harm that person. All acts of bullying have the characteristics of being dehumanizing, intimidating, humiliating, threatening, and evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress in the person being targeted."

### St. Joseph's School Bullying Prevention Protocol

St. Joseph's School is committed to maintaining respect for the human person. The school strives to provide a learning environment in which every students feels safe, accepted and respected. The school is committed to the protection of a student's physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness as well as protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

St. Joseph's School adheres to the CISVA Policy 408. The school's bullying prevention protocol is as follows:

#### Education, Awareness and Prevention

- The students receive formal instruction regarding bullying twice per year, in the first month of the school year, and around the annual "Pink Day" in which the school participates with the rest of the province.
- The instruction that the students receive is age-appropriate but consists of defining bullying and its characteristics.
- The topic of bullying is addressed regularly throughout the year through the Religion program, which promotes the Christian teachings of respect and love for all humankind. Bullying is addressed directly through other programs which are presented in the classrooms, including, but not limited to: the *I Am a Gift From God* program and the *FRIENDS for Life* program.
- The students are taught, through role play and shared stories, ways to recognize bullying; to report it; and to stand up against it.
- The students are reminded of the school code of conduct, which lays upon them the responsibility to report mistreatment of students of any kind.



## Reporting

- Staff members take seriously all allegations of bullying and investigate them thoroughly as a team:
  - alleged incidents are brought immediately to the attention of the principal
  - principal and teacher speak directly with the alleged victim and document in writing the details of the situation
  - principal and teacher speak directly with the alleged perpetrator and document in writing the details of the situation
  - principal and teacher interview alleged witnesses to the acts of bullying and document in writing the shared details
  - principal and teacher examine the details of all documentation to determine the best possible course of action
  - principal and teacher meet with the parents of the alleged victim and perpetrator (separately) to inform each party of the situation and the school's response
  - should it be necessary, the pastor and the Superintendent's Office will be informed and support enlisted
  - the incidents are recorded formally on the Bullying Report Form; one copy is held in the principal's office and one is held in the teacher's file of anecdotal comments; the principal's copy will be retained and the teacher's copy will be destroyed at the end of the academic year
  - with this manner of record-keeping, in which a common file of incidents is maintained by the principal, a history is kept should subsequent incidents occur

## Responding to Bullying

St. Joseph's School is committed to prompt and effective responses to bullying. The response will be age-appropriate and is seen as an opportunity for education for both the bully and the victim. The response will be firm, instructive and maintain the dignity of all parties involved.

- The parents of both parties will be informed and involved in the consequence of the bullying. Although the school will determine the consequence, the parents of the perpetrator will play a role in the consequence by supporting it at home. Should there be a pattern of bullying incidents by a particular student, the parents will be asked to play a larger role in terms of eliciting outside support in the form of counselling for the student.
- The parents of the victim will be given resources to support the education of the student at home. These resources will be used in conjunction with the education that the student will receive at school about standing up to bullying and working to prevent the occurrence of similar situations in the future.
- The consequences for the perpetrator will involve an aspect of community service and of education, depending on the age of the student. The community service aspect is an effort to make restitution for injuring the trusted relationship that the school community had with that student. The form of the educational aspect of the consequence will depend largely on the age of the student. Primary students will spend time with an individual staff member discussing bullying, its definition and its characteristics. Intermediate students will complete some form of

written report about bullying with the potential to present it to a younger class, at the discretion of the principal and teacher.

- the staff works as a team and therefore will be informed of the incident so that the team can aid in the education and prevention of recurring incidents involving this perpetrator and victim
- the behaviour of both the victim and the perpetrator will be monitored throughout the school (classroom, specialist classes, playground)
- special attention will be paid to the students' association with each other; respectful interaction will be expected and monitored; particular notice will be made of any ongoing power imbalance or intimidating/intimidated behaviour
- those students who were witnesses to the bullying will be educated about the potential positive role they could have played in the situation, and learn about ways that they can help in future situations that may arise

## **Responding to Emergencies**

### **Policy**

Educators are called upon to exercise a duty of care with their students at all times. The unique situation of an emergency calls upon educators to extend that duty in potentially extenuating circumstances.

As emergencies come in a variety of ways and may occur at any time, St. Joseph's School staff must be prepared at any moment to manage an emergency. St. Joseph's adheres to CISVA Policy 418: School Emergencies. The CISVA has adopted the procedures in *Responding to School Emergencies* as policy. As required, St. Joseph's has developed a Crisis Plan and an Emergency Plan, with teams to respond in each situation, whether it be an emergency, disaster, or critical incident. The school complies with all fire and building codes of the City of Vancouver.

### **Procedure**

The school conducts drills to prepare both students and staff for emergencies. Each year, the school will have: six fire drills; three earthquake drills; and two lockdown drills. The students are taught and prepared for emergencies before these drills are to take place, so that the students have confidence in their abilities to respond to each emergency situation.

Each staff member has a designated role to play in an emergency. The roles are designated with the titles that are used in *Responding to School Emergencies*. Each staff member is assigned to a role based on individual knowledge, skills and experience. Each person receives a written description of the requirements of his/her role; the roles are rehearsed at the time of the student drills.

The primary goal in dealing with an emergency is to maintain the safety of staff and students in the most effective manner possible in the situation.

Mitigation and hazard prevention are key to the safety of all members of the St. Joseph's community. To that end, a team has been designated to conduct regular safety checks of supplies, equipment, and potential hazard within the school, in order to minimize damage that may occur to persons in the event of an emergency.

In the event of an evacuation, teachers lead their classes out of the school building, according to the evacuation route, to the gathering site at Clark Park. Teachers then take attendance and report to the principal at the command post. Should there be students or staff who remain unaccounted for, the search and rescue team will be mobilized, as appropriate for the condition of the building. At that time, all team members are mobilized to set up their stations the students are escorted to the tennis courts on the lower field of Clark Park and move into their colour stations (family groupings). Emergency supplies are obtained and the comfort and safety of the children are paramount. The Command Post is set up to ensure that students are only released to those who are designated to pick up individual children.

Enough supplies have been stored to be able to keep staff and students on site for three days, in order to allow parents/guardians to make their way to the evacuation site to sign out their children.

Note: This policy covers emergency drill and response and student safety. See Student Supervision policy elsewhere in this handbook.

## **International Students**

### **Policy**

St. Joseph's School recognizes that international students from a variety of international backgrounds can enrich the school's culture by bringing their own experiences, insights, cultural expressions and perspectives. To that end, St. Joseph's accepts international students, provided that the following conditions are met, as per CISVA Policy 402:

- the school has sufficient facilities and resources and enrolment does not exceed 15% in a class
- fees for the program are paid upon registration
- the student has a valid study visa
- the student has medical insurance coverage through a private carrier

International students are expected to be committed to the school's mission and vision and willing to be integrated into the life of the school, its spirituality, language, curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

St. Joseph's School does not make homestay arrangements. It is the preference of the school to have international students living in Canada with a direct relative who takes full responsibility for the housing and education of the student.

In order to ensure that all the requirements for admission of an international student are met, a checklist will be completed by the school secretary. Unless all of the requirements are met, an official acceptance will not be issued.

See CISVA Policy 402 for further details.

