

# St. Didacus Parish School

## 2019-2020

### Parent/Student Handbook

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*We at St. Didacus Parish School recognize that a Catholic education is one of the most effective ways available to assist parents in the education of their children. We believe that Christ is the center of our school. He is the unseen but ever present teacher, the model for our faculty and staff, and the inspiration for our children and their parents. We provide a quality Catholic education that endeavors to enrich the spiritual and intellectual development of our students. We strive to prepare them to be the Catholic leaders of the future – in their parishes, their communities and their world.*

Revised August 2019

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## **ST. DIDACUS PARISH SCHOOL**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

St. Didacus Parish School shares the common mission of Catholic education to proclaim the message of Jesus, to create Christian community, to worship God, and to serve one another and the world. Our school supports and enhances the parents' role as the primary educators of their children.

We engage students from all cultural backgrounds in a developmental curriculum promoting spiritual growth, academic excellence, and social responsibility. The school identifies its wider community as faculty and staff, students, families, parish, interested outside individuals and groups, neighbors, and alumni. Within this dynamic, the young learner develops as a whole child, grounded in God's love, preparing to shape his/her life in a pattern of excellence, morality, service, and commitment.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Didacus Parish School is a Catholic elementary school engaged with parents, community, and children in the ongoing educational development of the student. We empower the student to be spiritually, academically, and socially prepared to live today and tomorrow, both morally and effectively.

### **SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS**

1. A Christ-centered person who:
  - a. knows, respects, and values Catholic beliefs
  - b. respects and appreciates God's gifts
  - c. understands that moral choices have consequences
  - d. answers the Gospel's call to serve others
2. A life-long learner who:
  - a. uses information, technology, and media respectfully
  - b. learns independently and cooperatively
  - c. practices critical thinking, problem-solving, and computational skills.
  - d. applies organizational skills to achieve short and long term goals
  - e. knows the importance of physical well-being
  - f. demonstrates his/her best effort in using his/her God-given gifts
3. An effective communicator who:
  - a. reads for understanding
  - b. writes and articulates ideas clearly and correctly
  - c. actively listens
  - d. has experienced a wide range of activities in the fine arts
4. A responsible citizen who:
  - a. is reliable, trustworthy, and courteous
  - b. demonstrates an awareness of cultural diversity
  - c. learns and practices civic responsibility both locally and globally

## HISTORY

In 1939, St. Didacus Parish School was dedicated under the leadership of Msgr. Luke Deignan. There were six classrooms and an enrollment of 160 students for all eight grades. Sister Rita Jane Dosch, a Sister of the Holy Cross, assumed the duties of principal and House Superior, assisted by four other sisters.

In the school year 1940-1941, with an enrollment of 220 children, the school community added a ninth grade. The first graduating class of twenty students received their diplomas on June 13, 1941. Enrollment in 1941-1942 was 250 children; the following school year saw an additional ten students. Msgr. Deignan died of a heart attack in December of 1968; the new pastor name was Msgr. Charles P. Young, who arrived at the end of the school year in June, 1969. After thirty years of service to St. Didacus Parish School, the Holy Cross sisters were recalled to their Mother House. At this critical point, Msgr. Young was successful in bringing five Sisters of Mercy to San Diego from Tuam, County Galway, Ireland. The enrollment at that time was 339 students in Kindergarten through eighth grade.

In 1969, the Evaluation Committee recommended that a central library be established. During the next few years, the community's population was aging, and enrollment went down to 188 students. In March of 1972, a new room was built to house a kindergarten in order to attract younger families.

In September of 1972, arrangements were made to bus students from Mira Mesa and the Scripps Ranch areas. By 1977, enrollment was 334 students. During the late seventies and early eighties, a computer center was established, equipped with ten computers, and individual classroom computers were installed.

St. Didacus Preschool opened in 1992 in the former library, and was licensed for 15 children, ages 2.5 to 5 years, and in 1993, the kindergarten returned to the main building, and preschool expanded into the kindergarten building, allowing licensing accommodations for 30 children.

One by one, the Sisters of Mercy either returned to Ireland to retire or to teach there; some went into parish work in the San Diego Diocese. In 1995, Sr. Maire Naughton, the last Sister of Mercy at St. Didacus Parish School, left to teach at Nazareth School. The Convent was then named Mercy Hall, in tribute to the nearly thirty years of service of the Sisters of Mercy. For a brief planning period, the building was used for offices and storage. Then in October of 1996, the new Media Technology Center was completed. Known as the Magdalen Room, in honor of Sr. Magdalen Flannery, this large room accommodated the computer holdings and the library. Mercy Hall now houses the Magdalen Room, combination art room/science lab, the athletic office, the bookkeeper's office, the faculty room and lounge, a teacher work room, the PTG office and PTG storage, and an educational resource room.

The San Diego City Council and People for Trees worked with the school to plant six trees in the large playground in the fall of 1998, and the Preschool planted an ash tree in memory of longtime parishioner Mickey Daley. The spring of 1999 saw the adoption of the school spirit name, the "St. Didacus Padres" – especially fitting as the name "Didacus" is in fact the same as "Diego," our city and Diocesan patron saint.

The school development team continues to advance the school in the surrounding community. In the 65<sup>th</sup> year of its existence, over \$70,000 was raised for new technology for the school, including laptops for the teachers, new computers for the lab, a movable laptop cart, Smartboards and projectors and a central server for the school.

In 2006, permission was received from the city to close the alley that runs through the campus, making the school a closed campus.

Lay principals Dorothy Jean Woody, Andrea Deebes, Linda Armstrong, Marian Jacobs, Lynn Scherer, Rosemary Watson and Elizabeth La Costa all served between the years 1987 and 2007.

In Fall 2007, Sister Mary Kiely, OFM, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis in Philadelphia, assumed the leadership of the school, and Elizabeth La Costa returned upon Sister Kiely's retirement from administration. In July 2013, Maria Tollefson replaced Elizabeth LaCosta as principal. In October 2017 Maria Tollefson got sick and passed away. Christine Dean became the Interim Principal for the rest of the year. In July 2018 Christine Dean became the Principal of St. Didacus Parish School.

The school received its most recent WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation of a full six years, and is fully accredited through the year 2022. The school is also fully accredited by WCEA (Western Catholic Education Association).

## I. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

### ACCREDITATION

St. Didacus Parish School is fully accredited by the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). In February 2016, St. Didacus Parish School participated in the three day WCEA/WASC Accreditation Process and received a clear, six year accreditation.

### ATTENDANCE

**A. Absence:** California school law requires that students attend school regularly, unless they are specifically excused for a good reason. Students should be absent only for illness/injury or emergency. Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a successful education.

**B. Extended Absences:** When a parent plans for a student to be absent for any reason whatsoever, it is mandatory that, prior to the absence, a note be sent to the principal, the student's teacher and the office explaining the reason for the absence. It is up to the discretion of the student's teacher on whether assigned work will be given prior to the extended absence or missed work will be assigned after the absence.

**C. Illness/Injury:** If your child is absent due to illness or injury, please call the office and inform the secretary before 9:00 a.m. This only needs to be done on the first day of an absence. The school will call your home/office after 9:00 a.m. to check on an absent child if we have not heard from you. Always send a written excuse, listing the dates and reason for the absence, to the teacher the day the child returns to school (California Education Code regulation). These notes must be kept on file for a year following the absence and are noted on the child's permanent record card

**D. Tardiness:** It is the parent's responsibility to see to it that the student arrives at school before 8:00 a.m. Children will be considered tardy if they are not with their class when the bell rings at 8:00 a.m. Students should report to the office for an admit slip if they arrive after the 8:00 a.m. bell. All tardies and absences are recorded on the student's permanent record card. Excessive absences or tardies may result in non-promotion or discontinuation of enrollment. Local Catholic High Schools include tardy/absence records as part of their admission decision. Excessive tardies in a quarter may result in a parent/principal conference which may result in a period of probation.

**E. Release of Students During Class Hours:** No student is permitted to leave the school grounds at any time during school hours or to be released from class without a written and signed request from the parent to the teacher and the office. This request should include the time you will pick up your child. We will send for your child when you arrive. School staff will get the student – please do not go to the classroom as it disrupts instruction. The parent must meet the student at the school office and sign the student out before the student may leave the school grounds. The school assumes no liability in cases where students leave in violation of this policy. If this policy is not respected, parent will be asked to withdraw his/her child from the school.

**F. Doctor/Dental Appointments:** Doctor and dental appointments should be made after school hours if at all possible. If a student is to be taken off campus during school hours, the above-listed release policy will be followed. The school requires that students have a note from the doctor's/dentist's office when returning to school, otherwise, the absence is not an excused absence. The student should take this note to the office when he/she returns to school. Parents are reminded that frequent absences of this type are detrimental to the student's class work and should be kept to a minimum. Appointments or unexcused absences should not conflict with the dates of standardized testing in September, January, and May and we ask for your cooperation in this.

**G. Truancy:** Any student who is absent from school without a valid excuse for more than 3 days, or who is tardy in excess of 30 minutes each of 4 days or more in one school year, is truant and may be reported to the attendance office of the local school district.

**H. After-School Activities:** Any student involved in after-school activities, e.g. sports or other school-sponsored programs, is never to leave campus (to go to a nearby store, or walk home and return to school) except with the adults charged with their care. A student who does not comply with this policy is liable for dismissal from the said activity. School uniforms (school shorts, polo shirts) are to be worn at practice. Free dress is not permitted. For some practices, the teacher/coach will provide clothing guidelines. If a student leaves school (illness) or is absent from school, he/she may not attend or participate in any extra-curricular events after school or that evening.

## **BICYCLES**

Students in fourth grade and up may ride bikes to school. Students must walk bikes on the school grounds and use safety procedures at all times. Students must wear a helmet. Bikes must be locked and the bike racks must be used. The school accepts no liability for bicycle damage or theft.

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

All books (hard and soft covered) must be covered. Students are not to write in any textbook or workbook, unless directed to do so by the teacher. Most textbooks and library books are the property of the school. Lost or damaged books must be replaced at cost to the student. School book bags or backpacks are to be used every day and are required of all students. No rolling backpacks until 5<sup>th</sup> grade. No suitcases or hard-cased rolling backpacks.

Students are not allowed to chew gum anywhere, at any time, on school premises because of the problem it poses to floors, carpets, furniture, playground, sidewalks, and academic materials. Detention and/or fines will be issued for infractions of this rule.

The school has been built, equipped and maintained at great expense to the parish and school community. Buildings and equipment should be kept in good condition. Any damage to school property is the direct responsibility of the student and his/her parents.

The school is not responsible for any non-school items. Unless approved by the administration, students are not to bring any personal electronic equipment (permission must be obtained from administration and teachers), athletic equipment, radios, CDs, cameras, toys, trading cards, or any such equipment to school.

## CARS/PARKING

Please follow the directions of the Safety Patrol when driving on the school grounds from the Felton St. entrance. Cars may ONLY make a right turn into the back parking lot off of Felton Street. No vehicle is to be parked on the large playground during arrival or dismissal times, or during the school day because it becomes a hazard during physical education classes and fire drills. Parents are not allowed to use cell phones during drop-off and pick-up. This is necessary for the safety of the children. **Double parking is not allowed on 34<sup>th</sup> Street in front of the school, nor is parking allowed in residential driveways or apartment parking lots.** These spots are private property and residents will call to tow any cars parked there illegally.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00 a.m.	Daycare opens
7:55 a.m.	Students should be on the <b><u>small playground</u></b> . (Preschoolers to preschool building)
8:00 a.m.	Bell rings. Morning assembly and prayer. (Students are tardy after 8:00 a.m. bell.) Instruction begins.
10:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Kindergarten recess.
10:15 – 10:30 a.m.	Recess (grades 1 – 8)
12:00 – 12:40 p.m.	Lunch
2:45 p.m.	Dismissal
3:00 p.m.	School grounds must be cleared. Any student not picked up or involved in a supervised after school activity is taken to daycare.
6:00 p.m.	Daycare closes

Children arriving between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. – including those accompanied by their parents – enter the school grounds via the Day Care entrance on 34th Street (if on foot), or the large gate (if in a car) on Felton St. If adults bringing children to school have business in the School Office, he/she may send the child in through the Day Care door, while the adult enters through the main double doors to reach the office, or through the doors that open to the small playground. Students are NOT to enter the school through the main double doors. Between 7:30 and 7:55 a.m. all students are to report to the auditorium. There is no charge for daycare between 7:30 – 7:55 a.m.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is extremely important that the school secretary be notified when there is a change in your address, phone number(s), or email so that emergency information remains up-to-date in case of an emergency.

## **EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM**

St. Didacus Parish School conducts an extended care program both before and after school hours, with a separate charge (\$6.00 per hour). For preschool, the charge is \$8.00 per hour. Students not picked up after 6:00 p.m. will be charged at the rate of \$1.00 per minute. Please contact the school office for details, program hours, and fees.

## **HARASSMENT, POLICY FOR STUDENT TO STUDENT**

The Diocese of San Diego and St. Didacus Parish School affirm the Christian dignity of every student. It is the policy of the diocese and school to provide an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect. Harassment is unacceptable conduct. This policy addresses harassment occurring in a school environment when an individual is subjected to treatment which is hostile, offensive or intimidating because of the individual's race, creed, color, national origin, physical ability, gender, or other personal characteristics.

A charge of harassment shall not, in and of itself, create the presumption of wrongdoing. However, acts of harassment will result in disciplinary action up to, and including expulsion. Students found to have filed knowingly false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including expulsion. Depending on the nature and extent of the charge, if reasonable suspicion of misconduct is determined, the parents of the alleged harasser will be called to take the student home pending conclusion of the investigation by the school.

Disciplinary action for harassment will follow the Student Discipline Policies.

## **ILLNESS OR INJURY DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

**A.** Families are notified immediately of serious injury or sudden illnesses that occur during school hours. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that families keep the Emergency Card information up-to-date. Any change in phone numbers, alternate contact persons, addresses, doctors, etc. must be communicated to the office, in writing, when the change occurs. If it is impossible to reach a parent or responsible person, St. Didacus Parish School reserves the right to select emergency care providers. No liability shall attach to such decision in the event parents cannot be reached. Any expenses incurred will be borne by the child's family. The school will not be responsible for anything that may happen as a result of false information given to the school. ***If your child has allergies, or any other condition necessitating special arrangements, this should be noted on the emergency card.***

**B.** If parents are going out of town, the school office must be notified of the responsible person in charge of their children. A written note with instructions and dates of parental absence should be sent to the school office in advance.

**C.** If an injury occurs, the same procedure will be followed. In addition, supplemental insurance forms are available from the school secretary and must be completed as soon as possible after the accident.

## **LUNCH PROGRAM**

A reasonably priced (\$5.00) nutritious hot lunch, with milk or water, is served Monday through Friday in the school auditorium. A monthly menu is sent home in the Family Envelope and families may purchase the lunches, if they so desire. If a student forgets his or her lunch, a sandwich will be provided and a bill will be

sent home to the parents that day. We ask parents not to bring in fast food lunches since they are often not nutritious, and they disrupt the lunch routine, as other students are distracted. Lunches are not to contain soft drinks, high energy or high caffeine drinks, glass bottles, food that must be heated, candy or other empty calorie foods. In addition to lunch, parents should send a healthy snack for recess to reinforce the child's energy level. If a student stays for after-school sports or other programs, it is especially important to provide adequate nutrition.

## **MEDICATIONS**

All medication, including aspirin, non-aspirin or inhalers, must be kept in the school office accompanied by written instructions, signed and dated by the parent and doctor, regarding dosage and the procedure for administering. Please mark the medication with the student's name in large, easy-to-read letters. Enclose the medication and instructions in a plastic bag and bring it to the school office. A student is not permitted to have any type of medication in his/her possession. Parents or guardians should notify the teachers, in writing, if the student needs to take medication (to be dispensed from the school office) during school hours for a temporary period; students taking medication on an ongoing basis should have written information to that effect in the school office. The school will also not supply any over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, cough drops, Motrin, etc.

## **MINIMUM DAYS**

Staff meeting days (normally the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month) will be minimum days. Students will be dismissed at 12:00 noon. Half-day schedules may also be followed on certain days for special meetings, in advance of holidays, or at the discretion of the Principal and/or Pastor. Parents will be notified in advance.

## **OFFICE PROCEDURES**

School office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily from mid-August through the month of June. During the month of July and for the first week in August, the school office will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. When school is not in session (e.g. during vacations), the office is not staffed. Phone messages may be left on the office phone number and will be responded to as soon as possible.

## **PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER AVAILABILITY**

Principal/parent/student meetings: The principal is available to meet with any parent or student. Please call the office for an appointment.

Teacher/parent meeting: teachers are available to meet with parents and students before or after school at a mutually agreeable time by appointment only. Please call the school office to schedule an appointment, or send a note to the teacher in advance of the day and time you wish to meet. Trying to speak with a teacher right before school or right at dismissal often interferes with the teacher's supervision responsibilities or class preparation and should be avoided if at all possible. Teachers are not expected to respond to emails and/or phone calls on weekends and holidays.

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

The Diocese of San Diego requires that all parents view the video on “Protecting Our Children” and receive the brochure on “Preventing, Responding, and Reporting Sexual Misconduct”. In the spring of each school year, students receive instruction and parents receive information on the “NO-GO-TELL” Program. All volunteers are to have a background check and take the Safe Environment Training through [cmgconnect.org](http://cmgconnect.org). Information on this training can be obtained from the school office. Any parent driving students on a field trip is required to complete the Defensive Driving training, also found on the [cmgconnect.org](http://cmgconnect.org) website.

## SUPERVISION

Parents are asked not to have their children on the school grounds before 7:30 a.m. when supervision begins, unless children are in the extended care program. Upon dismissal at 2:45 p.m., students are to leave the school grounds immediately, unless they are requested to stay by a teacher, or are in detention, or are participating in a school-organized activity. Students/siblings are not to be on playground equipment before or after school. *Please notify the school office in writing (special form in the school office) if your child walks or rides a bike home at the end of the school day.* **For liability reasons and the safety of our students, student walkers must live within a mile from the school campus and cannot be permitted to walk to local business establishments to wait for parent pick-up.** Supervision ends at 3:00 p.m. or at 12:15 p.m. on minimum days. The school accepts no liability for providing supervision before 7:30 a.m. or after school hours unless a child is under the direct supervision of a staff member, coach or enrolled in the St. Didacus Extended Care Program. Any student on the school grounds before/after school hours will be escorted to the on-site extended care program, and parents will be billed accordingly. Also, any child staying after school for Homework Club must first be checked into extended care first. Our insurance liability ends at 6:00 p.m. and the appropriate authorities will be notified if any child is left at school after 6:00 p.m. Supervision is provided when students are taking part in the after-school programs or practices. If such an event is cancelled, parents will be called to pick up their child/children and the children will be escorted to the extended care program. Students are never to be in any room (classroom, library, auditorium) without a staff member present to supervise.

## SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE

All students in diocesan schools participate in the student accident insurance program. This Catholic Mutual insurance plan provides **supplemental** benefits for students injured at school, on the playgrounds, while participating in athletic games, and while directly going to or coming from school-sponsored activities. In the event of illness or injury during school hours where medical treatment becomes necessary, the parents’ insurance policy provides the primary insurance coverage. Supplemental insurance is intended to cover any expenses not paid for by the parents’ primary medical insurance. Claim forms are available in the school office or from the bookkeeper.

## USE OF SCHOOL PHONES BY STUDENTS

Students are not permitted to use school phones without school staff permission. If an emergency arises, the office secretary will place the call for the student. Students are generally not permitted to call home for forgotten items, or to make arrangements for after school.

**USE OF CELL PHONES: We discourage cell phones on campus, as they are distracting and disruptive to the learning process. If a student must have a phone for after school arrangements, it must be turned OFF while on school grounds and is to be given to the school office before school**

**begins and may be picked-up when the student leaves campus. It is not to be turned on until the student leaves the campus. If a student is seen in possession of a cell phone, the phone will be confiscated, given to the principal and a parent must come and claim the phone. Those who violate any of the rules regarding cell phone use outlined here or in the discipline policy may forfeit their privileges of bringing them to school.**

## **II. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

### **CURRICULUM**

The curriculum at St. Didacus Parish School follows national/state/NCEA/Common Core standards for elementary schools. It includes a course of study for each of the following subject areas: Religion and Family Life, Reading and Literature, Language Arts (spelling, vocabulary, the writing process, handwriting, grammar), Mathematics, Science and Health, Social Studies/History, Computer Skills, Music, Art, and Physical Education.

Students requiring modifications and accommodations of the curriculum/grading, must have an up-to-date ISP (Individualized Student Plan) on file with the office.

### **GRADING POLICY**

The administration and faculty of St. Didacus Parish School seek to measure total student performance. In conjunction with the Diocesan guidelines for the grading system, written grades are given for each student so as to keep students and parents aware of the student's progress in the completion of the curriculum. Cumulative quarter grades are posted on the report card, and individual grades for specific work are written on that student's work. Grades are based on such areas as class work, homework, test and quiz performance, class participation, effort and conduct, independent and group work, special projects, appearance of completed work, attitude, etc. The school looks for and encourages the best from each child. Frequent communication among the student, teacher, and family is encouraged. Any matter involving a student's work or behavior must be discussed with the teacher first, before being brought to the attention of the principal. Any conferences with teacher or principal are by appointment only.

### **HOMEWORK**

**A.** Homework is designed to reinforce the learning and instruction and has an essential place in the educational program. Homework is assigned daily, for the most part, unless a long-term project is assigned. It is intended to reinforce concepts and skills that have been presented in class, foster students' creativity and discipline through enrichment projects or research, guide the student to work independently and to accept responsibility for completing a task in a timely manner – all considered as preparation for life skills and further education.

**B.** Homework timeframes include the following: Grades K – 2: 15 – 30 minutes; Grades 3 – 5: 30 – 60 minutes; and Grades 6 – 8: 60 – 90 minutes. If home study exceeds these amounts on a consistent basis, please contact the teacher.

C. Students will be held responsible for any assignment missed due to an absence. Parents may request assignments for a student who is ill by calling the school office before 10 a.m. The work may be available in the school office by 3:00, but this will only be done at the teacher's discretion. If a teacher cannot make the work available, the student will receive the missed work when he/she returns. In absences, the parents must accept the responsibility for the student's lack of schoolwork and the resultant lowered grades. To receive credit for work missed during absences, the work must be made up. It is the student's/parent's responsibility to obtain the required assignments and to arrange for quizzes/tests missed.

## HONOR ROLL

At the end of each academic quarter eligible students are recognized on the Academic/Principal's Honor Rolls.

**Academic Honor Roll:** This roll includes students in grades 5-8 who earn a 3.5 – 3.79 GPA in the seven basic subject areas (Religion, reading/literature, language arts, spelling/vocabulary, math, social, studies, and science). No grade below a "B-" is acceptable.

**Principal's Honor Roll:** This roll includes students in grades 5-8 who earn a GPA of 3.8 – 4.00 in the seven basic subject areas (same as above). No grade below a "B" is acceptable (B- not acceptable).

The GPA is calculated using the following scale:

A = 4.00	B+ = 3.33	B- = 2.67	C = 2.00	D+ = 1.33	D- = 0.67
A- = 3.67	B = 3.00	C+ = 2.33	C- = 1.67	D = 1.00	

## HONOR SOCIETIES

Both the California Junior Scholastic Federation and the National Junior Honor Society have active chapters on the St. Didacus campus. A combination of grade point average and exceptional character and behavior qualify one for membership, as outlined in the societies' constitutions. Students in the seventh and eighth grades are eligible for membership by the semester. A CJSF honor cord is worn at graduation by eighth grade students who have qualified for membership in at least three of four qualified semesters. NJHS students wear a gold stole. NJHS recognition at graduation is based on earning membership 7 out of 8 quarters.

## MASS ATTENDANCE (WEEKENDS)

As a Catholic school, we recognize that there is a great opportunity for parent-directed religious education in the celebration of Saturday night or Sunday Mass. It is essential to our mission as Catholic educators in partnership with parents that families attend Mass on a regular basis. As the primary religious educators of their children, families are encouraged to consistently follow through **on this most serious obligation**. With the addition of a Christian Action Program, the 10:00 a.m. Mass on (normally) the first Sunday of each month has been designated as a School Family Mass. Each class (K-8) will be responsible for the readings, ushering, etc.

## MISSION ACTIVITIES

St. Didacus Parish School actively participates in the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA). This branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith creates opportunities for young people to become

aware of the needs of people around the world. This program fosters an awareness of, and concern for, human and spiritual needs, and develops a spirit of generosity and sharing. Various activities are held throughout the year to provide opportunities for students to give to those who are less fortunate by contributing their time, talent, or treasure in such experiences as bake sales, collection drives or other forms of giving.

## **PARENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES**

A formal parent-teacher conference will be scheduled at the end of the first report card period, usually in November. This conference is mandatory. Appointments will be scheduled for parents, and students may be required to attend. Other conferences may be scheduled throughout the year at the discretion of either teacher or parent, by appointment only, and are recommended any time a parent or teacher recognizes a need. Informal contact by note, phone, or visit is welcomed with the reminder that arrangements must be made in advance for a visit with the teacher.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

**A.** The physical education program has been designed to increase flexibility, agility, and endurance, promote a healthy lifestyle, improve physical conditioning, and create an environment where good sportsmanship is practiced and encouraged.

**B.** All students in kindergarten through eighth grade are required to actively participate in the physical education program. If there is a medical reason for non-participation or limited activity, a written notice from a doctor to this effect, listing the restrictions and the length of time the restriction is to be allowed, must be on file in the school office each year. The parent also must provide a copy of the notice for the classroom teacher and the PE teacher. Students who are well enough for regular class (e.g. colds or returning to school after being sick), but not for strenuous activity will be excused from active play during PE, recess, and lunch, and may be excused from active play for the day, provided the parent sends a written, dated, and signed note requesting such privilege; such requests are to be exceptional, but will be honored.

**C.** Students must be in proper attire on the days scheduled for PE. Failure to comply will result in a reduction of the grade for that day's class. (See the section on Uniform Requirements)

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Progress reports will go home in the family envelope or homework folder at the mid-term of each quarter (additional reports may be sent at other times if the teacher deems it appropriate) to students who are experiencing difficulties. The Progress Report must be signed and returned to the classroom teacher the next day. It is the responsibility of the parent and student to inquire at that time as to the steps to be taken to correct any deficiency. Teachers of grades 4 – 8 use an on-line grading program (TeacherEase) which is updated on a weekly basis. Parents are expected to check grades on a regular basis.

## **PROMOTION AND RE-ADMITTANCE**

**A.** To be promoted, a student must have passing grades in all core academic subjects; that is, he/she must demonstrate competency in the grade level requirements in order to advance. In some cases, summer school will be required before a student can be promoted to the next grade.

**B.** At the end of the school year, students who have exhibited a spirit of cooperation and effort in conduct and studies are invited to return to St. Didacus Parish School for the coming school year.

## **REPORT CARDS**

**A.** Report cards are distributed quarterly. The grading scale is that which is defined and mandated by the Diocese of San Diego Office for Schools. These report cards are to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school within the week they are given.

**B.** If a student is absent more than 12 days during a report card period, he/she will not receive grades for that period without special arrangement with the teacher and principal. An incomplete grade on a report card will remain on the report card until all missed work is completed according to the requirements of the grade and the guidelines of the teacher.

## **RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION/LITURGIES/PRAAYER**

**A.** The educational mission of the Catholic Church and the reasonable expectations of parents require that the Catholic school be distinguished by an atmosphere and a formal program that relate religious belief and practice with the normal development and education of children. Regular religious instruction is an integral part of the educational program for all students at all grade levels.

**B.** School liturgies are important in developing a Catholic school spirit and are celebrated once a month for the whole school at St. Didacus Parish Church. Each Wednesday, two classes attend 8:30 a.m. Mass with the parish. Other seasonal or special prayer services or Masses may be scheduled as the opportunities arise. Students are involved in the preparation of these Masses, para-liturgies, and prayer services. Our emphasis is on providing a religious education for all students. Beginning in September, the 10:00 a.m. Mass on (normally) the first Sunday of the month has been designated a School Family Mass. Each grade (K-8) will be responsible for the readings, ushering, etc.

**C.** Fostering a prayer life is an essential part of our program. As a Catholic school community, we recognize the importance of both formal and informal prayer. From the opening assembly with prayer, to the closing of the day, prayers are said regularly. Specific prayers are learned each year as part of the religion curriculum in each grade, and additional prayers and prayer forms may also be introduced.

**D.** In response to the service commitment in the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, all middle school students in grades 6-8 are required to complete ten service hours per semester. Service hours will count towards the student's religion grade (project grade).

**E.** Our parent-led Christian Action Program consists of three different elements: Family Masses, Mornings of Prayer, and Service. Family Masses fall on (normally) the first Sunday of each month. Every class is assigned a month where they attend and celebrate the Mass with their families, and the students, along with their families, take part in the service. Mornings of Prayer occur twice in the school year: once during Advent, and once during Lent. This gives the students an opportunity to learn and grow in their faith and learn more about the church's Liturgical Year. For the Service element, all students of all grade levels are asked to participate in two grade-appropriate service-oriented activities or outings. Examples of this might be making cards for children in a hospital, or providing meals to homeless teens through Stand Up For Kids. Parents are also asked to participate in at least one Christian Action Program activity each year.

## **RETENTION**

If a teacher determines that a student is experiencing grave difficulty with grade-level learning expectations, that teacher will confer with the principal in a timely manner, and by the first quarter report card (early November), or before, a conference will be arranged with parents, teacher and principal to discuss the options for the child to be successful. If retention is to be considered, parents are notified as early as possible so that if tutoring or other programs can be planned to assist the child, they be put into operation before retention is considered. Retention of a student will be effected only after consideration related to the student's development, and consultation between the teachers, principal, and family.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

**A.** Families of students in the second grade will participate in the Sacramental Preparation program, which readies Catholic students for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist. The second grade teacher, working with the pastor, principal, and parish director of religious education, schedules these events in conjunction with the parish faith formation program to prepare the children for the reception of these two sacraments. There are regularly scheduled meetings which parents must attend because the parent is the primary educator of the child.

**B.** Children not in second grade, who wish to receive Baptism, Reconciliation, or First Eucharist, can speak to their teacher or the principal. With the families, arrangements can be made to accommodate such students, with the help of the pastor, parish director of religious education and the classroom teacher.

## **SUMMER READING AND MATH**

Summer reading and a math program are to be completed by each student over the summer as part of the curriculum. These assignments support our philosophy of the importance of lifetime learning as a goal and is of value for our students. The students' reading, writing and math skills are sharpened over the summer by the work on these assignments. Because students review the math concepts of the previous year over the summer, teachers are able to lessen review time at the beginning of the year and get into the grade level material more quickly. Students receive a grade for the work done which has a significant impact on their first quarter grade.

## **TESTING**

Standardized tests adopted by the Diocese of San Diego Office for Schools are administered to all students during the year (grades K-8). The newly adopted Renaissance STAR 360 Assessments will be administered in September, January and April. Grades five and eight take the ACRE test – Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education. The purpose of these standardized tests is to measure each child's academic achievement as compared with national and local Catholic school norms. Tests, both formal and informal, help to evaluate programs and curriculum needs. Parents receive copies of the results for their child showing strengths and weaknesses. Details about the dates and times of testing will be sent home in advance. We ask

that you not schedule doctors or other appointments during these dates. It is important that each child is present for every test to insure a more accurate record of his/her achievement. These national testing programs are not recorded as either pass or fail, nor are they used for grading purposes, but rather they are measures of student learning in the subject matter.

### **III. ADMISSIONS POLICY**

#### **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

**A.** St. Didacus Parish School admits students of any race, color, and national/or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of this school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national/ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic, or other school administered programs.

**B.** Since the Catholic schools of the Diocese of San Diego are established by the Diocese and maintained by the parish as religious schools, preference is given to practicing members of the Parish Catholic community. Preference in admission shall be given to the children of active supporting members of St. Didacus Parish. In the case of Catholic students, preference shall be given to the admission of siblings of students already enrolled in the school.

**C.** No person shall be admitted as a student unless that person and his/her family subscribe to the school's philosophy and agree to abide by the educational policies and regulations of St. Didacus Parish School and of the Diocese by signing the Registration and Philosophy Agreements of the school. These agreements state that parents will uphold the standards of the school, recognizing the parents' responsibilities as primary educators of their children, and the importance of maintaining a Christian atmosphere in the home, by supporting the policies of the school and the curriculum being taught. We encourage a structured learning environment, prayer, family worship, and active peace in the home. We stress active communication with the principal, teachers, and other school staff, and compliance with all school, Diocesan, and state regulations. We also stress active participation by parents in the parent/teacher group and the fundraising activities of the school. Parents who consistently resist or ignore these commitments put at risk their child's continued enrollment at St. Didacus Parish School.

**D.** An interview with the principal is required for all new applicants. Approval of the principal is necessary in order to be admitted to St. Didacus Parish School. The administration and staff of the school may not be able to accommodate those students who demonstrate severe grade level deficiencies or behavioral problems. We will recommend and assist parents in alternate school placement if we cannot meet the needs of the student.

**E.** Parental support is essential. Parents must agree to actively support the spiritual and academic standards of the school and to participate in school functions, fund-raisers and the volunteer programs. Because we affirm the role of the parent as the primary educator, most especially in the area of religious and moral formation, it is essential that families recognize the importance of family prayer and weekly participation in the Sunday celebration of the liturgy and a commitment to the school's philosophy, rules, and regulations.

**F.** Newly admitted students must have a completed application form, including school contract, baptismal and birth certificates, and a report card from the previous school, if applicable. Immunization records and

physical exam forms are due before the first day of school. It is California state policy that no child will be admitted without an immunization record. (San Diego Public Health Department and California School Immunization Law, Health and Safety Code, Sections 120325-120375)

**G.** The administration may refuse admission or grade placement if the child is not ready developmentally or if the testing finds that the child is substantially below grade level. All new students will be placed on academic and behavior probation for at least one quarter.

**H. A child must be five years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to kindergarten, and six years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to first grade.** Such evidence shall be in the form of a birth or baptismal certificate, duly attested, a passport, or an affidavit of the parent, guardian or custodian of the child. (Education Code, Sec. 10504) Any child transferring from another school must provide all report cards from that school before admittance is accepted. Health records and transcripts are requested from the previous school by the principal.

**I.** California law requires specific health screening and immunization procedures for all students admitted to school. The school office will present information on all necessary records. A physician's certificate, indicating that the student has been immunized and the dates of immunization and health exams, is required. A student who lacks the required immunization and health forms will not be admitted to school. (Health and Safety Code 120335)

**J.** It shall be the responsibility of the parent of each student to inform the school office in writing concerning the medical welfare of a student. Any allergies, hypersensitivities (drugs, antibiotics, bee stings, food, etc.), or chronic illness should be reported on your child's health history form on file in the school office. Other health factors pertaining to your child should also be reported.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. Specifically, this includes the responsibility:

- to establish a home environment which teaches the moral values, religious habits, social skills, self-discipline, and commitment to learning upon which successful Catholic schooling is based;
- to be fully informed regarding all aspects of their children's developmental progress, and where needed, to take and/or support the appropriate remedial action; and,
- to make every effort to establish and maintain a collaborative and mutually supportive relationship with the school which they have selected for their children.

St. Didacus Parish School has the correlative responsibility to guide, assist, support, and complement parents in their efforts to meet these responsibilities. Of particular importance is the school's obligation to assist parents in gaining the information and insight necessary to make informed judgments regarding the religious and moral education of their children.

**Spiritually**, St. Didacus Parish School expects parents to actively support the religious formation that the school, as a Catholic institution of learning, seeks to develop in the students. Parents can foster spirituality by taking time to talk to their children about God and sharing their own faith, praying together, participating in the celebration of Mass together on Sundays and Holy Days, being knowledgeable about the religious concepts the student is learning, participating in that part of the sacramental program offered for parents for the purpose of the reception of a sacrament (Baptism, Reconciliation, and Holy Eucharist), and continually reaching out to develop their own faith life. Our Christian Action Program is designed to help involve parents more deeply in the spiritual formation of the students. Parents will conduct mornings of prayer

during Advent and Lent, supervise grade level service projects, participate in the monthly School Family Mass, and attend special parent workshops.

**Practically**, parents, teachers, and students are all members of the total school community. With the help of parent volunteers, and parent participation in school functions, all members of the school community will benefit. Each family is expected to be involved. Minimum responsibilities include:

- a willingness to volunteer your services and to help build a strong school community by giving of yourself
- an active interest in, and participation in fund-raising activities
- regular attendance at PTG meetings and other meetings held to foster your child's education or religious growth
- open communication with, and trust in, the teacher involved including questions, concerns, doubts, etc., or with the principal regarding school policy
- support of the school's educational programs by fostering good study habits and stressing the importance of study at home
- respecting school rules and policies, discussing them with your children and stressing compliance.

### **Financial Responsibilities:**

**A. Tuition and Fees:** Tuition constitutes the primary source of income for St. Didacus Parish School. It is imperative that it be paid promptly as the school depends on it for its operating budget. Late fees are assessed if payments are delinquent and progress reports and report cards will not be released, nor will eighth grade students be allowed to participate in graduation exercises if tuition is not current. If a family's tuition account is three or more months delinquent the school may withhold academic services from the student(s). FACTS is the tuition collection method used by the school and details are available in the office or from the bookkeeper. Every effort is made to keep tuition rates as affordable as possible. The financial responsibilities of enrolling a child in St. Didacus Parish School include – an optional initial testing fee, an annual registration fee (non-refundable, and due at time of registration), tuition (paid annually or monthly through the FACTS tuition management program), uniform, supplies, and support of PTG fund-raisers. The policy regarding late or missed payments is delineated in the agreement signed by all parents at registration (and re-registration each year). At the time of re-registration each spring, all commitments to the school must be cleared or up-to-date or a student will not be considered re-registered. These commitments include: all tuition payments, minimum levels of PTG fund-raisers, scrip, service hours, extended care payments, miscellaneous fees (texts, library books, camps, etc.). The deadline for completion of PTG fund-raisers, scrip, and service hours is April 30.

**B. Registration Fee:** A registration fee is paid upon registration or re-registration; this covers processing of registration, standardized testing, photocopying of materials and records throughout the year, student insurance, educational materials and supplies, costs associated with new texts, textbook rental, lab fees, and physical education equipment. Registration is not considered confirmed until this fee is paid, and it is non-refundable.

**C. Other Fees:** Sixth grade camp, eighth grade graduation and retreat, and other fees which may be associated with field trips will be assessed during the year and payments in full are required before any student can participate in the function. If such fees are not paid in full when due, the student's report card may be withheld until such time as payment is received in full.

Eighth grade fees, including graduation fees, tuition payments, and parent commitments are due and payable on pre-determined dates which will be announced to parents in advance. These are complete fees, and no part

of the fee is refundable for any reason. Eighth grade fees must be paid in full prior to the date of the Baccalaureate Mass/Graduation; otherwise, the student's report card and diploma may be withheld and, in some cases, the student may be barred from participating in graduation activities unless prior arrangement has been made with the principal.

**D. Volunteer Service:** As part of their commitment to the school, each family is required to contribute thirty (30) hours of service between May 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. Preschool families are required to contribute fifteen (15) hours of service. The school depends on the dedicated efforts of its families in contributing this assistance. Hours are logged on a form that is available in the office and is submitted to the office prior to April 30<sup>th</sup> in order to be credited appropriately. A donation of goods or cash may also be credited against this obligation and must be logged and submitted to the office prior to April 30<sup>th</sup>. Volunteer service hours are valued at \$15 per hour and any donation of goods costing \$15 will be counted as one hour of service. Parents agree to pay a fee of \$15 per hour for any service hours not completed by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Volunteer hours may be accumulated by helping the school in any of the following ways: classroom and and/or teacher assistant, participating in planning and coordinating special events, serving as an officer or committee member of the PTG, room parent, after-school sports coach, hot lunch worker, office assistant, transportation for class field trips, etc. Families may contact the school office, the child's teacher, or PTG for other ideas.

**E. Scrip Rebates:** The sale of scrip is an important fund-raiser for the school. Families purchase gift cards with participating businesses, and in return, those businesses donate a percentage of the card value (rebate) back to the school. Scrip can be purchased in the school office, or online at ShopWithScrip.com. Families are required to earn \$130 in scrip rebates between May 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. Preschool families are required to earn \$65 in rebates. Families that are unable to reach that goal must pay a fee equal to the remaining balance on their account.

**F. Fundraising Activities:** When registering or re-registering their child(ren) each year, families pledge to support the fundraising activities of the school. Fundraisers generate needed revenue to support the school's operating budget. Families are expected to participate in certain fundraisers at a level determined by the principal and the PTG. A fee in lieu of participation will be due to the school on May 1<sup>st</sup> for any balance remaining on this commitment.

## **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

St. Didacus Parish School provides some tuition assistance through donations from the parish, the generosity of people who contribute to the school, and the Bishop Flores Fund. The amount is limited and is only a partial assistance program. The pastor and principal must approve all applicants for tuition assistance. Applications are available through T.A.D.S. (Bishop Flores) at re-registration time.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Students at St. Didacus Parish School are expected to respond fully to the religious, academic, behavior, social, and physical requirements of the school not only on campus, but also at extra-curricular activities, school-sponsored programs, and to and from such activities. Students are seen as ambassadors of their families, their school, their church, and their neighborhood, and their behavior must reflect the highest standards of the school.

## **IV. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **ABUSE OF TEACHERS**

Any parent, guardian or other person who insults or abuses any teacher in the presence or hearing of other school personnel or students and at a place which is on school premises or public sidewalks, streets, or other public ways adjacent to school premises or at some other place if the teacher is required to be at such other place in connection with assigned school activities, is guilty of a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine of five hundred dollars (\$500.00). (EC 44811).

### **ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS**

**A.** A student's parents or legal guardians have the right to inspect all of their child's records in the presence of the principal or his/her delegate; and any behavioral records will be inspected in the presence of the person qualified to interpret the records. Challenges to the content of the student's permanent record are concerned with the correction of data in the student record, not with the substantive decisions on academic grades. Such challenges are to be settled through proceedings at the local school site. The family of the student may file a written request with the principal to correct or amend any information in the child's record which is seen as inaccurate, or an unsubstantiated personal conclusion.

**B.** Official transcripts are mailed from St. Didacus Parish School to the receiving school, including the high schools of potential graduates. Official transcripts are not given to parents, guardians, or students for delivery to the school. An unofficial copy of the child's report card may be given to the student's parents or guardians upon request.

### **ALCOHOL/SMOKING POLICY**

In order to maintain a positive and wholesome atmosphere, St. Didacus Parish School has adopted a policy that no alcohol will be permitted at any school function on campus at which students may be present. Smoking is not permitted at any function, or in any building on the school grounds.

### **ALTAR SERVERS**

Boys and girls in grades four through eight may be altar servers. This privilege is highly regarded, and the pastor trains candidates for this important service. The servers assist at all school Masses, and when parents so commit, also assist at parish Masses, funerals, weddings, and other special ceremonies. The parish staff publishes a monthly schedule, and families are responsible for seeing that the servers arrive at church consistently and on time.

### **ATHLETIC PROGRAM**

**A.** In addition to the regularly scheduled PE classes, the school administers participation in various sports and leagues with other Diocesan Catholic schools throughout the school year. Such activities are in addition to the school day. Practices and games are after school or on the weekends. Parent volunteers may coach, and are supervised by the school's athletic director. All coaches must go through the Safe Environment training with a background check. A \$50.00 registration fee is charged for each junior varsity and varsity sport and a \$35.00 registration fee is charged for the pee wee soccer teams.

**B.** Typical sports played include volleyball, football, soccer, pee-wee soccer, softball, and basketball. The athletic program is designed to promote physical fitness, team spirit and cooperation, and wholesome recreation. The students gain experience with healthy competition, working as a team, gracious winning and losing, and the challenge of commitment to a season of practices and games.

**C.** All behavior, student and adult, at practices and games, is consistent with the philosophy and spirit of St. Didacus Parish School.

**D.** To remain eligible for a team, a student must maintain a “C” or better on all major subjects (religion, literature, language arts, math, science, and social studies). Behavior and Study Skills must be a “S” level or better. Teachers inform the students and the Athletic Director of ineligible players on a regular basis; the Athletic Director keeps the coaches and parents informed. Ineligible players cannot attend practices or play in any games until their averages show improvement. Ineligibility does not carry over from one year to the next.

### **BOOKBAGS AND EXTRA SPORTS EQUIPMENT**

Students are to carry texts, binders, and school supplies in durable backpacks. Extra athletic uniforms and supplies may be brought in duffle bags or backpacks. These supplies are only those required by the athletic director and may not include personal sports equipment. The school is not liable for any personal property brought to school by students or parents. No roller backpacks in grades K-4 and no suitcases.

### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

In accordance with Diocesan policy and California law, school staff is obligated under penalty of fine and imprisonment to report the reasonable suspicion of emotional or physical abuse or neglect, inadequate supervision, or sexual abuse and exploitation. According to the law and the seriousness of the situation, the school will not contact parents in advance of making a report to legal authorities.

### **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME**

Each Tuesday, the school sends home the Family Envelope, which contains all important school information. This is given to the oldest or only student in the family. The envelope must be returned, signed and dated, the next day, with responses to all pertinent forms included. Typically, the envelope contains the principal’s newsletter, items from the PTG, hot lunch order forms, scrip order forms, grade-level communications, and other important information. **Please read it carefully as it is the school’s primary means of communication with you, the parents and families.** Duplicates may be requested when there are two households for a child. Contact the school office if you would like an additional copy sent home. Information is also available on the school website and via email (VerticalResponse) as well.

### **COUNSELING SERVICES**

St. Didacus Parish School does not have an on-campus counselor. However, the school can recommend to school families the services of Catholic Charities.

## **DISCIPLINE**

**A.** Discipline in a Catholic school is an essential aspect of Christian development. Discipline is a positive teaching opportunity – one in which the families, students, and the school staff are in accord. Founded on the Assertive Discipline Program, St. Didacus Parish School’s expectations for all students are directed by the belief that each child has the full right to learn, play, and grow, and that no other child has the right to interfere with that process. Inherent in this belief is that every teacher has the full right to teach each student, and no child has the right to disrupt that vital activity. Discipline is necessary in order to educate students to an appreciation of the importance of developing responsibility and self-control, provide a classroom situation conducive to learning, and help build a sense of community. Discipline provides moral guidance within the framework of the teachings of the Catholic Church and growth in self-discipline based upon Christian values. Reverence for others and respect for property are important student attributes. The common good of the school requires conduct conducive to the fulfillment of spiritual, academic, and social goals, as well as the preservation of good order. It is the aim of the disciplinary process to help the students understand that their decisions have consequences, and thus further the development of personal responsibility.

**B.** School-wide expectations are posted in the school, and classroom expectations are displayed in each classroom. Students at St. Didacus Parish School are expected to act so that their behavior reflects favorably on the individual and the school. This includes behavior while on any school-sponsored activity: field trips, the playground, at sporting events, etc. and these basic expectations are of doing one’s best and respecting others. Each person must recognize and accept his/her individual responsibilities and obligations in accordance with school regulations allowing a harmonious school atmosphere.

**C.** At Back-to-School Night, each teacher distributes and discusses the school and classroom expectations and consequences; parents are to review and sign these sheets. It is understood that parental involvement, trust in the school, and support in the area of discipline, as in all other areas of school policies and procedures, is a necessary component of the program at St. Didacus Parish School. When parents, teachers, administration, and staff are in accord regarding these policies, success is possible. If questions arise, please contact your child’s teacher first, as the principal will not discuss any issue with a family that has not already been addressed with the teacher in question.

**D.** Our discipline plan recognizes that children need consistent, clear standards. Positive reinforcement of correct behavior is part of the process, while consequences for inappropriate behavior may include detention or a conference with parents and student. The procedure for approved disciplinary measures include (ranked in order of severity):

- warning the student about inappropriate behavior
- detention after school
- teacher conference with parent/student
- conference with principal (teacher/parent/student)
- assignment of special tasks or contract between teacher and student
- denial of privileges and removal from positions of responsibility
- probation
- suspension
- expulsion

Please note that after serving three (3) detentions, the student will be required to attend Saturday School upon the next violation that would warrant a detention.

E. Specific guidelines which apply to all students and which are grounds for disciplinary procedures, whether committed on campus or off, are:

- disrespect shown to a teacher or adult in charge
- disrespect of anyone on campus
- failure to adhere to classroom or school rules
- leaving the grounds at any time during the school day or before an on-campus after school sponsored activity without written permission from parent/guardian and clearance from the office
- students entering unsupervised classrooms, hallways, or any school building or room
- fighting, kick-boxing, and imitations of such
- defacing school property (e.g. desks, walls, furniture etc.) or one's property or that of others
- misuse of the internet/social media on or off campus
- use of unacceptable language such as profanity or obscenity
- tackle football or other rough play
- students leaving the classrooms without permission
- riding skateboards, skate shoes or bicycles on school grounds
- gum chewing
- actions occurring off campus, but within activities related to school, shall be dealt with as if they occurred at school.

#### **POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC DISCIPLINE ITEMS:**

**Cheating:** Any student caught cheating (including plagiarism of any type) may receive an automatic zero and/or lowering of grade on the test or assignment and will be sent to the principal who will contact the student's parents. The student may appear before the Discipline Board composed of the principal, vice-principal and a teacher from the primary, intermediate, and middle school grades.

**Bullying:** Bullying will not be tolerated at the school.

**Student Threats:** The Diocese and school take student threats seriously. If a student makes a serious threat of harm to self or another student, the principal will be notified immediately. If the principal is not available, the vice principal or supervise teacher will begin procedures. The police will be notified, parents will be contacted and the student will not be readmitted until a comprehensive mental health evaluation and risk assessment are conducted by an independent psychologist or psychiatrist.

F. Suspension from school is not ordinary punishment. It will be used when other corrective measures have failed **or a serious offense is committed**. Parents will be notified of the suspension and the reason for this disciplinary measure. A student may be placed on suspension for serious misconduct, on campus or off campus, during school related activities, or for continued misconduct after having been placed on probation. Lack of cooperation with the suspension plan could lead to expulsion. Official suspension means that the student is sent home immediately with a parent/guardian for the entire period of the suspension. Students lose the right to participate in any school activity on or off campus for the period of the suspension. Students must make up any work missed during the loss of class time.

G. A student may be expelled from school for misconduct of a serious nature calling for immediate dismissal without suspension or for a repetition of conduct for which the student has been suspended one or more times.

**H. Grounds for suspension and expulsion include, but are not limited to:**

- actions gravely detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of other students
- incorrigible or disruptive behavior which impedes the progress of the rest of the class
- use of cell phones or other social media for the purpose of harassment, cheating, threatening or any other use deemed abusive
- habitual or persistent violation of school regulations
- continued willful disobedience, habitual profanity or vulgarity, open and persistent defiance of the authority of the school personnel, or assault or battery upon a student, upon school premises or while under the authority of school personnel, or any theft or force or violence directed toward school personnel at any time or place, shall constitute good cause for suspension or expulsion from school (Calif. Education Code)
- smoking or possession of tobacco on school premises
- harassment
- fighting
- bullying or threatening another student, verbally, or in written form, including on the computer, internet or cell phone
- possession, use, or sale of narcotics or other drugs on school premises or elsewhere (Calif. Education Code)
- possession or use of alcohol or other intoxicating substance on school grounds or elsewhere (Calif. Education Code)
- willful destruction or defacing of school property (and the parent or guardian is liable for all damages so caused by the minor) (Calif. Education Code)
- when other measures or correction fail to bring about proper conduct
- theft, extortion, arson, hazing, or habitual truancy
- possession of dangerous weapons on school grounds.

**I. SATURDAY SCHOOL**

Saturday School is assigned at the discretion of the Discipline Board or the principal. Three (3) detentions will necessitate Saturday school for any student who commits another violation where detention would normally be given.

**J. Students can be disciplined for conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school.**

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

**A. Earthquake Supplies:** The school is equipped with the necessary materials that might be needed in case of an earthquake.

**B. Emergency Closing:** In the event of an emergency necessitating closing school during regular hours, the students and faculty and staff will proceed with practiced procedures. If the situation is such that it is safe and advisable that children be picked up, only those adults identified on the student's emergency card will be permitted to pick up students. If families are unable to reach the school grounds, school personnel will remain with the students for the number of hours required by the school and emergency regulations. During this time, every effort will be made to communicate with the family to arrange safe pick-up of students. Parents/guardians of students who live in more than one household must notify the school of release

information for those students. St. Didacus personnel will release students to the first adult who arrives and is identified on the Emergency Card.

## **FAMILY DIRECTORY**

A family directory is presented to each family for their convenience. The directory includes student/key family name, cross-references for that name, phone numbers, address, email, child's grade, and parent names. A family may opt to delete certain of these items, or may choose not to participate in the directory at all. The information in the directory is considered confidential to our school families, and is to be honored as such, and is not to be used for any out-of-school promotions, sales, etc. Information is to be used only for authorized school activities and classroom matters, as approved by the classroom teacher. The principal should be made aware of and approve all outgoing parent correspondence to other parents. These restrictions apply to e-mail addresses also.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

**A.** Students will be allowed to go on school-sponsored field trips **only** if their field trip permission slips have been sent in signed by the parent or guardian. Permission for a student to attend a field trip may not be given verbally (e.g., over the phone). We are able to accept a faxed or emailed permission slip (Fax number: 619-284-1764). Students not attending a field trip will complete their work under the supervision of another classroom teacher, at the school. **Field trips are a privilege and not a right, as they are in addition to the regular curriculum. Students can remain at school under the care of another teacher if their behavior does not warrant the privilege.**

**B.** Volunteer drivers and chaperones for school field trips must pass a background check and take the Safe Environment Training and Safe Drivers Training through [cmgconnect.org](http://cmgconnect.org) and provide proof of insurance, minimum \$100,000 - \$300,000 liability, and Driver Information sheet verifying that the driver is at least 21 years of age. In addition, individual seat belts are required for each passenger, and booster seats for any student who is under 8 years of age OR under 4'9" in height. No siblings, school age or younger, are allowed on school-sponsored field trips. Each driver must carry the original permission slips/medical release forms for the students riding in that car; the teacher will have copies of all permission slips. The children in each car are the responsibility of the driver for the entire trip. No teacher will drive any of the students. Drivers must go directly to the site to be visited and return to school immediately after. Stopping for treats or other side trips is not permitted.

## **FORGOTTEN ITEMS**

To minimize distraction and interruptions in classroom learning time, any forgotten items brought to school during the day must be left, with student's name and grade, in the school office. Parents may not take these items directly to the classroom. The secretary will see that the child gets the items.

## **GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS**

St. Didacus Parish School receives a small amount of federal and state funds (Title monies) for student assisted instruction, staff professional growth, and technology/AV materials.

## **LIBRARY**

**A.** The school’s library faculty coordinator and teachers schedule regular weekly classes and visits to the school library depending on the availability of parent volunteers. Students may borrow books. The library parent volunteers and teachers strive to connect student interests and the school curriculum to the books in our library. Additional books are gained through the School Book Fair and other donations.

**B.** If a book is lost or damaged, the student is responsible for the cost of its replacement.

**C.** Parents may assist in the library as part of their volunteer service hours.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Please label all uniform and supply items with the child’s name. Items that have been found on school grounds are kept on the Lost and Found table in the auditorium. If these items are not claimed, they are distributed to the Uniform Exchange or given to local charities.

## **OFFICIAL SCHOOL/PARENT GROUPS**

It is the school’s policy that all parent group meetings are held on campus.

**A. Advisory Board** -- The Advisory Board consists of parents and community members whose goal is to advise pastor and principal in matters concerning school policy, business, technology, and maintenance issues. This board networks its efforts with those of the PTG Board. The Board meets every other month, beginning in September.

**B. Development Board** -- The Development Committee is concerned with the long-range planning and development processes to ensure the continued existence of St. Didacus Parish School. The Development Committee, with the pastor and principal, also implements development plans which include community, alumni, financial planning, outreach, public relations, and other avenues which identify, inform, invite, involve, implement, invest in, and improve St. Didacus Parish School. The focus of the Development Committee is “the meaningful involvement of people in our mission and vision for the future.”

**C. Parent-Teacher Group** -- All parents and guardians of children in the school are automatically members of the Parent-Teacher Group at St. Didacus Parish School. The PTG is an important source of support for both school staff and parents on many levels – spiritual, educational, and financial. Parent participation in the many activities sponsored by the PTG promotes increased communication within the school and parish community. Throughout the year general PTG meetings are held and parents/guardians are asked to attend; parents will be notified of dates and times of these meetings and unless otherwise noted, children do not come to PTG meetings. The purpose of the PTG is to bring about a closer relationship between school, home, and parish based on an appreciation of the ideals of a Catholic education by providing volunteers to carry out many school programs and events, and a solid organization to improve the school’s fund raising efforts.

**D. PTG Board** -- The Parent-Teacher Group Board consists of parent and staff representatives and meets monthly. The pastor, principal, and a teacher are ex-officio members. The board is responsible for planning fund-raising efforts and special events at the school. Board members are vital liaisons in communicating ideas and concerns from home to school and from school to home. Though the board provides critical input to the principal and pastor, it acts in an advisory capacity only as the principal, in consultation with the pastor, makes decisions regarding the operation of the school.

## **PARTIES**

**A.** Class parties to celebrate special days will be permitted for Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. Room parents will arrange these parties after consulting with the teacher. No other class parties during school time are permitted without prior approval from the principal.

**B.** Please do not send or bring party invitations to school to be distributed **unless everyone in the class is invited (the entire class or all the girls or all the boys)**. The disturbance in the classroom and the instructional program caused by these parties is detrimental to the learning process. Failure of parents to abide by this request places an unreasonable burden on the students and the teachers. Mixed parties involving students in the upper grades held on weekends or after school are discouraged because of the difficulty of guaranteeing appropriate adult supervision.

## **SCHOOL PICTURES AND YEARBOOK**

The school photographer takes pictures of all students in the fall (church dress uniform required). Families are given the opportunity to purchase these pictures, though there is no obligation to do so. Package prices are sent to all families in advance and must be ordered at the time of being photographed. Whether or not the family purchases individual pictures, all students' pictures will appear in the school yearbook, printed in May. The yearbook is for sale to all families. This hardcover book features all the classes from preschool through eighth grade, and a wide variety of photographs from the year's activities and events.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL**

The Student Council, made up of elected representatives from grades 5 through 8, serves as a link between the school and the student body, the student body and the community, school, and home. Under the guidance of the Student Council Moderators (faculty members), the Student Council meets to plan and carry out activities in service, school spirit, fund-raising, and communications involving the varying needs of the student body at all grade levels, including preschool. The Student Council publishes a newsletter; represents St. Didacus Parish School at public functions; and acts as hosts and hostesses for special events (school ambassadors). Students learn about leadership and service by being part of the organization. Student Council members must have and maintain a minimum 2.5 grade-point average (GPA) and at least a G in behavior.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are purchased by the school and loaned to the students. All books must be covered and well cared for. Students may not mark or damage the books in any way. Books, lost or damaged, must be replaced at cost by the student/family.

## **TRAFFIC CONTROL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

**A.** In the morning and afternoon, students must be dropped off/picked up (in cars) in the large playground with parents following the directions of the Student Patrol Leaders for entry and exit of the school's parking lot. No parking is allowed on the large playground. Every effort is being made to protect the safety of the students. Parents are not allowed to use cell phones during drop-off and pick-up. **Double-parking on Felton or 34<sup>th</sup> Street is both illegal and dangerous.** The San Diego Police Department will ticket violators. **NO LEFT TURNS** off of Felton Street into the large playground. Please approach the large playground

from the **SOUTH** on Felton and make a **RIGHT** into the lot to avoid traffic congestion. Students expecting to be picked up at the end of the school day will be escorted to the small playground/alley and parents are to follow the same procedures at the end of the day as they did in the morning. Parents are reminded that any student not picked up by 3:00 (full day) or 12:15 (half day) will be escorted to Extended Care, and parents will be billed accordingly. The school assumes no responsibility for supervision of any child left on the school grounds unless he/she is in a school-sponsored program or Extended Care.

**B.** If students arrive between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. on foot – including those accompanied by their parents – they must enter the school grounds via the daycare entrance on 34th Street or the drive through drop off using the Felton Street entrance. All students must report to the school auditorium. If adults bringing children to school have business in the School Office, he/she may send the child in through the daycare door, while the adult enters through the main double doors to reach the Office, or through the doors opening to the small playground. Remember, there is no parking on the school grounds. Please be courteous to those who live in the surrounding homes and apartments and their traffic needs, as our school is a neighbor here in Normal Heights. Students arriving between 7:30 and 7:55 a.m. must also report to the school auditorium.

**C.** Parents coming to pick up their child/children, we ask that you wait in the small yard where the students will be dismissed. Please do not wait in the school hallway as this is disruptive to teaching/learning time and distracting during closing prayer.

## **UNIFORM POLICY**

St. Didacus Parish School believes that a uniform and dress code are necessary both as an economic consideration for families and also as a lesson in Christianity. To de-emphasize material goods based on what one wears is a way to foster an appreciation of the individual worth of each student.

All students must be in the appropriate uniform everyday unless it is a non-uniform (free dress) day. It is the responsibility of parents to see that children are neat, clean, well-groomed and in complete uniform. Parents will be called if there are violations of the uniform code, and students may be detained in the school office until the student is dressed properly. A uniform infraction notice may also be sent to parents. Three uniform infractions will result in a detention.

**A.** Grooming standards: Students who come to school without proper attention having been given to personal cleanliness and neatness may be sent home to be properly prepared for school, or shall be required to prepare him/herself before entering the classroom.

- Shoes are to be firmly fastened, clothes are to be cleaned and free from rips or missing buttons, shirts and blouses are to be tucked in, no make-up of any type, nail polish, nail tips, or artificial hair coloring.
- Boys' hair must be cut evenly throughout, above the shirt collar and out of their eyes in the front. Boys must be clean shaven, no facial hair. No student should appear in school with a hairstyle, color, or length that is opposed to our standards of neatness and good taste. No grooming gels, sprays, etc. are to be used in the hair to spike it long and upright; nor are they to be used to excess. "**Fad**" haircuts are not permitted.
- No jewelry is to be worn with the exception of a watch, or (for girls only) post earrings, with one earring post in each earlobe. A small, simple, gold or silver crucifix, may be worn as a necklace, but it must be tucked under the school shirt at all times.
- No long-ribbon or decorative headbands for girls.
- No sweaters other than the regulation one, are permitted to be worn in the classroom or church.

- No outer wear jackets, including the school official jackets, can be worn in the classroom or church.
- All students are to go to and from school in the school uniform and are not allowed to change to other clothes after school hours while on school property or in a school-sponsored event.  
Exception: Coaches may allow students (with written permission) in extra-curricular activities to change for practices

**B: Uniform requirements:** All uniform pieces worn by students must be clean and in good repair at all times. All items with the school logo must have the current school logo.

**Boys: Must have at least one of each of the following uniform pieces.**

- Navy twill pants - only Educational Outfitters acceptable.
- Navy twill walk-length shorts - only Educational Outfitters acceptable.
- White, red, or navy short or long-sleeved polo shirt with school logo
- School sweater (grades K-6 **red** cardigan or **red** long sleeve V-neck pull over, grades 7-8 **navy** cardigan or **navy** long sleeve V-neck)
- Black or navy belt is optional wear for all students.
- PE uniform consists of uniform navy shorts and school polo shirt.
- Dress uniform consists of long pants, uniform polo shirt and school sweater worn on Wednesdays and Mass days.

**Girls: Must have at least one of each of the following uniform pieces.**

- Dunbar plaid jumper (for girls in grades K through 4 only) or Dunbar plaid skirt (girls in grades 5 through 8 only) or skort (K-8). **The hem of the skort/skirt must fall at the top of the knee or below. Please have uniforms hemmed accordingly.**
- Navy twill walk-length shorts with cuff - only Educational Outfitters acceptable. The length may not be altered.
- White, red, or navy short or long-sleeved polo shirt with school logo
- School sweater (grades K-6 **red** cardigan or **red** long sleeve V-neck pull over, grades 7-8 **navy** cardigan or **navy** long sleeve V-neck). Girls in grades 7 and 8 may wear a navy vest sweater. On church dress days the vest sweater must be worn with a white oxford collared blouse or French cuffed white blouse. On other days it may be worn with the school white polo shirt.
- Black or navy belt is optional for all students.
- PE uniform consists of navy uniform shorts and school polo shirt.

Dress uniform consists of a Dunbar plaid jumper or skirt or skort with white, red or navy short or long-sleeved polo shirts and school sweater on Wednesdays and Mass days. On other days, navy twill shorts, or Dunbar plaid jumper or skirt or skort may be worn with your choice of white, red, or navy short-sleeved or long-sleeved polo shirts with the school logo.

Outerwear uniform pieces that may be purchased. (**At least ONE is required for cold days**)

- ❖ Navy zip-front polar fleece jacket with school logo
- ❖ Navy nylon jacket with school logo

**No other outerwear is acceptable**

**Footwear:**

- Boys: Solid color white crew socks- No ankle sport or low (no show) socks  
Shoes: (no logos) – low top only. Solid black lace up athletic shoes with black laces;  
Formal: Black leather dress shoes with black laces are optional for all students.
- Girls: Solid color white anklets or knee socks; white tights- No ankle sport or low (no show) socks

Shoes: (no logos) low top only; solid black shoes with black laces or black low heel Mary Janes (heel no higher than 1 inch). Girls in grades 7 and 8 may wear black slip-on shoes (heel no higher than 1 inch). Ballerina soft style shoes are not permitted.

**PLEASE MARK ALL ITEMS OF THE UNIFORM WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME IN INDELIBLE INK.**

**NON-UNIFORM (FREE – DRESS) POLICY**

Occasionally students are permitted an out-of-uniform day as a treat and a privilege. With this privilege goes the responsibility of appropriate attire. Extremes of any sort are to be avoided. The same expectations as those for the uniform policy are applied to non-uniform days. Since proper dress is conducive to proper behavior, free-dress must be modest, appropriate and in good taste. In general, these items are not to be worn on non-uniform days: tight-fitting garments, sandals or shoes that do not cover the feet or backless shoes, bare midriffs, spaghetti straps or cut-off tops, excessively short hemlines or shorts, transparent or clingy fabrics, low-slung shorts or pants, over-sized pants, leggings, sweat pants or sweat shorts, sport team logo shorts, shirts, or clothes with sayings/ads on them. School jewelry policies are still in effect on free dress days. Clothes must be clean, well-fitting, modest, appropriate, and non-distracting. The decisions of the principal/teachers as to what is acceptable dress for any student will be final. Those in violation of this policy may lose the free dress privilege for the next free dress day, and, in certain cases, may be asked to have the secretary call home for a change of clothes. It is your responsibility as parents to see that your children are neat, clean, well groomed, and in appropriate dress.

**VISITORS**

All persons entering the school must enter by the main double doors on 34<sup>th</sup> Street. All visitors (even parents, relatives, workers, etc.) must first go to the office to introduce themselves, and then sign in the guest book in the main hall. The school requires this because safety is of the utmost importance. If a person is dropping off an item for a child or for an activity, we ask that he/she come through the main doors and leave the item with the secretary in the office and we will see that it is delivered, unless otherwise directed by office personnel. It is imperative that we know exactly who is on our school campus, and for what purpose. In this day of heightened awareness for children's safety, we know you would want no less than that cautionary responsibility. Parents who wish to observe classroom procedures must obtain permission from the principal and arrange a time with the teacher.

**Class Work Standards for St. Didacus Parish School  
What does good work look like in this school?**

**Grades K-4**

- age appropriate heading
- neat
- loose leaf paper
- no cross outs on final copies
- cursive after ½ year 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- proper spacing between words
- follow rules of spelling, mechanics and grammar
- all work in math must be done in pencil and student must show all work
- indent paragraphs and do not skip a line between paragraph

- black and blue ink pens only –grade 4 only
- homework must be neat and legible with the correct heading

**Grades 5-8**

- typed, double spaced, in Times New Roman or Arial 12 point font or written in cursive
- proper heading
- title if applicable
- no cross outs or white out on final copies
- follow rules of spelling, mechanics and grammar
- all work in math must be done in pencil and student must show all work
- indent paragraphs and do not skip a line between paragraphs
- loose leaf paper, clean and neat
- black and blue ink pens only
- when not typed work, the work must be completed in cursive
- homework must be neat and legible with the correct heading

**Responsible Behavior Grades**

Each week the teachers will evaluate student behavior. This evaluation will include responsibilities and behavior both in and out of the classroom. The following guidelines will be used:

<u>Behavior</u>	<u>TeacherEase</u>	<u>Description</u>
Outstanding	10	Always prepared and on task, follows school rules, no missing assignments/homework, goes above and beyond what is expected of students
Very Good	9	Always prepared and on task, follows school rules, no missing assignments/homework
Good	8	Usually prepared and on task, follows school rules
Satisfactory	7	Often on task, needs occasional redirection
Needs Improvement	6	Earns a detention, has several missing assignments, needs frequent redirection
Unsatisfactory	5	Earns two or more detentions, earns a conduct referral, has to be sent to the principal

**The principal reserves the right to amend the handbook for just cause.**

**St. Didacus Parish School**  
**Acknowledgment of Receipt/Reading of Parent-Student Handbook**  
**School Year 2019-2020**

**Parents and Students:**

**Your signatures on this form indicate that you have received and have read the 2018-2019 Parent-Student Handbook.**

**This form is to be returned to school by Monday, August 26, 2019.**

**Only one signed form per family is required.**

**Parent Name (Print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Students in Grades K-3 may print their names.**  
**Students in Grades 4-8 are to sign their names.**

**Student Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_