

Parent/Student Handbook

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School

Lumberton, NM

Mission Statement

The Mission of St. Francis of Assisi School is to teach and live the Gospel message of Jesus Christ through family involvement in worship, evangelization, education and service.

Philosophy

St. Francis students will learn how to live as Jesus lived, with an open heart and respect for the rights of people of all cultures and a willingness to be of service to others. Students will contribute to the community spirit of the school as team members, cooperating with the administration, teachers and support staff. Parents are the primary educators of their children. St. Francis of Assisi School complements their role by educating and nurturing the whole child: spiritually, morally, intellectually and physically. Using the teachings of the Catholic Church, St. Francis of Assisi School strives to impart a love of the Gospel and of learning so that students emerge as lifelong learners.

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Abuse

Every staff member is legally required to report any knowledge or suspicion of child abuse to a child abuse agency immediately, or as soon as practically possible by telephone, and to prepare and send a written report.

Admission Policy

St. Francis of Assisi is a private Catholic school. Its Advisory Board is responsible for the academic, religious, and financial policies of the school. It is open to all children whose parents/guardians are willing to comply with the school's mission. It is also important that the child is willing to assume the role of a responsible student. No student is denied admission solely on the basis of sex, race, nationality or ethnic origin.

Athletics

St. Francis School Athletic Program will seek balance and moderation for both girls and boys. The program is never to interfere with the student's attendance in class or their general academic progress. Policies in writing will be given by the coach to the participants and parents/guardians. The policies will be approved by the principal and will include behavior, practice, game, and spectator rules. A current medical form must be on file for each player. For games that are away, written permission must be given for players riding with individuals other than their own parent/guardian. If they do ride with another person, that person must have had Virtus training and a background check. Good sportsmanship must be shown at all times. Students who are absent from class or are checked out early may not participate in a practice or take part in a game that day.

In the event school is dismissed early or canceled due to weather, all practices are canceled.

Attendance

Punctual and regular attendance at school is expected. The school day begins at 8:00 AM with prayer and announcements. Prayer is an essential part of a Catholic school's identity. A student is late if he/she arrives after 8:00 am. Late arrivals disrupt class procedures and the student has to "catch up", which puts him/her at a disadvantage. If a student is late, he/she must report to the office for a tardy slip before reporting to class.

A phone call before 9:00 am from the parent or guardian is required in any case of absence. If a call is not made to the office, office personnel will call to find out why the student is absent. When the student returns to school, he/she is to bring a note from the parent/guardian or doctor explaining the reason for the absence. No student will be admitted to class without a note from the parent/guardian or doctor.

Unexcused absences must be made up. Make up day is Friday. In the case of absence for any reason, the student must make up the work missed to the satisfaction of the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to ask for assignments. **It is important to remember that students who are tardy, signed out early or are frequently absent, miss in-class instruction and may have lower grades as a result.**

If a student is absent more than 20 days in a school year, the student may be retained. A conference will be held with parents after 15 days of absences have accumulated on the student's record. According to New Mexico law, HB 212, the School Reform Act is the legislation that governs Academic Improvement Plans. The law states that students not attaining academic proficiency levels must participate in academic improvement programs established by the school districts.

Excessive tardiness will warrant parent notification and a serious attempt must be made to eliminate it. In cases of extreme tardiness, the student will be retained to make up the missing school hours on a specific day. The parent or guardian will be notified of such a situation. Three times tardy equals one absence. Early checkout is also disruptive of the learning process. Three checkouts or tardys will count as one day absent.

Breakfast/Lunch Program

St. Francis School participates in the Federal School Breakfast/Lunch Program. Currently, the school is on the Community Eligibility Program (CEP), which means that all meals are free to all our students.

In the cafeteria, each student is expected to practice the general rules of good manners.

- Courteous behavior
- Leaving the table and surrounding area clean and orderly
- Putting trash in proper containers
- Eating all food before leaving the area
- No snack foods, such as Cheetos or cookies, are allowed in home prepared lunches.
- Water or milk only is permissible for drinks. Other beverages, even if sent in school lunches, will be confiscated.

Curriculum

The academic program at St. Francis School is designed in accord with Diocesan and New Mexico State standards. All students receive instruction in required courses. The principal has the primary responsibility of developing the curriculum with the help of the faculty.

Dances

- Students ask the classroom teacher(s) first, at least 2 weeks in advance.
- If teachers approve, students then ask the principal.
- If the principal approves, students find a minimum of two chaperones.
- Chaperones must have Virtus training and a background check.
- Posters, flyers, etc., should be displayed at least one week prior to the dance.
- Dances are open ONLY to St. Francis students in grades 6, 7 & 8.

Discipline

Discipline at St. Francis of Assisi School is motivated by the belief that a Christian response to daily living should be in the hearts and minds of its students. We place emphasis on the virtues of love, justice, truth, forgiveness, obedience, and a deep respect and concern for other people.

Each classroom teacher develops and implements his/her own discipline policy. Students who misbehave will receive an assignment to be completed at school or at home. The assignment will be an admission of the misbehavior and a positive statement or action. If the assignment is not turned in, the student will remain after school to complete it. Students will not miss recess as a form of discipline.

The following behaviors are considered serious and will result in a conference with the principal and parents/guardians:

- Fighting on school grounds during school hours
- Theft
- Serious disrespect or insulting behavior or language toward a staff member
- Seriously threatening, insulting, or being disrespectful to other students
- Bullying and/or causing physical harm to others
- Consistent disregard for the school rules
- Defacing or damaging school property. Parents/guardians are responsible for damages.
- Bringing to and/or using tobacco, alcohol, drugs, matches, fire crackers, knives, or other weapons to school
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Other behavior that is seriously detrimental to the school, including repeatedly disturbing the learning atmosphere of the classroom.

A student who is in violation of these rules will be required to attend a meeting with the parent/guardians and a plan will be submitted to improve the behavior of the student. If behavior does not improve in the time agreed upon, or if the student's behavior becomes increasingly

worse, expulsion may occur. Not that New Mexico law states that a student who is expelled may not return to school, any school, for one year after the date of expulsion.

*Schooling is a supplement to, not a replacement of
parental responsibilities. Wholehearted parental
support and cooperation are necessary for student success.
The family is the primary educator.*

2500 PARENT AND STUDENT DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

This policy and process does NOT apply to:

- 1. Disputes between a school employee and employer (see policy 3297); and**
- 2. Disputes involving illegal harassment (including sexual harassment), safe environment, retaliation, reporting suspected child abuse, or hostile work place (see policies 3710, 3711, 3261, 3254).**

Disputes often arise in schools due to misunderstandings, differences in judgement, opposing interpretations of school policy, or alleged inequalities in the relationship between and among students, parents, teachers, and the principal. All parties involved in a dispute are expected to manifest good faith in their efforts to resolve disputes by maintaining an atmosphere of mutual understanding, confidentiality, and Christian charity.

TO RESOLVE DISPUTES:

STEP ONE: Disputes shall be presented within ten(10) school days of the incident that caused the dispute to the person most directly responsible for the matter involved in the dispute. The disputing party must declare that he/she is presenting a dispute according to policy 2500. For example, a parent complaint regarding a teacher's homework policies should be taken directly by the parent to the teacher for resolution.

STEP TWO: If the dispute cannot be resolved at Step One to the satisfaction of the disputing party, the complaining party within ten(10) school days of the response given at Step One may present his/her dispute to the principal for review and decision according to policy 2500. If the dispute is concerning an employee, the principal shall advise the employee of the nature of the complaint. The employee shall be given ample opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of facts as he/she sees them. The principal shall conclude his/her review of the dispute and render his/her decision within ten(10) school days of the referral described in this step.

STEP THREE: If the dispute cannot be resolved at Step Two, the complaining party within ten (10) school days of the principal's decision in Step Two may present the dispute to the school's pastor (rector for diocesan schools) for his review and decision. The pastor/rector shall conclude his review of the dispute and render his decision within ten(10) school days of the referral to him described in this step.

STEP FOUR: If the dispute cannot be resolved at Step Three, the disputing party, with then(10) school days of the pastor's/rector's decision at Step Three, may petition the Superintendent of Catholic Schools in writing for his/her review of the dispute. The superintendent, at his/her sole discretion, may decide to review or not review the dispute in question. If the superintendent chooses to review the dispute, he/she shall render an advisory recommendation to the pastor/rector in writing within ten(10) school days of receiving the written petition unless the superintendent determines that additional time is required to adequately investigate and resolve the dispute. Normally, the school pastor's/rector's decision is the final ruling on a dispute.

LENGTHEN DEADLINES: Any request to lengthen the time deadlines set by this policy must be submitted in writing to the superintendent for approval.

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Dress Code

We believe that the student's grooming and style of dress directly affect their attitude and behavior. St. Francis of Assisi School has a dress code for all students as follows:

- Shirts-long or short sleeve red or white polo shirt with collar. No turtlenecks or dress shirts. When clothing is layered, the under layer must be red or white without any design.
- Girls may wear appropriate length skirts.
- Slacks - navy blue, black or khaki; no jeans style or skinny jeans. Slacks must fit properly
- Shorts-navy blue, black or khaki knee-length shorts; no jeans style
- Shoes-athletic style or dress shoes
- Sweatshirts-a red or white sweatshirt without a logo may be worn in cold weather in class. Black St. Francis athletic award sweatshirts may be worn. No hoods or hats may be worn at any time.
- Accessories should be in good taste.

Drug Policy

Federal law mandates that no drugs are in or near any school. 6.12.4 NMAC prohibits tobacco use, alcoholic beverages or use, and illicit drug possession or use by students, school staff, parents, and school visitors in school buildings, on school property (including playground) and at school functions away from school. **Consequences will be severe for infraction of this rule.**

Electronics

Cell phones may NOT be brought to school. If a student must call a parent/guardian, the school phone is available and all teachers have cell phones and all contact numbers listed on the enrollment form. Unfortunately, cell phones in school lead to cyberbullying and inappropriate social media use. We are committed to the safety and well-being of all students.

Emergencies and Accidents

No child will be sent home without proper notification of the parent/guardian. In order to act according to this precaution, however, the emergency contact form must be accurate at all times. Please update this information, especially phone numbers, whenever necessary.

If an accident occurs, the parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. If the parents/guardians desire any particular emergency procedure for their child(ren), they should make it known on the medical form. In case of illness or accident during school hours, students should report directly to the school office if possible.

Events

During St. Francis of Assisi School-sponsored events, all students must stay inside the school building at all times. Students will be sent home if found away from the event site.

Field Trips

Educational field trips may be scheduled periodically throughout the school year. Parents/guardians will receive timely, complete notification about any intended field trip, including athletic events. No student will be permitted to participate in a field trip unless the official school permission slip is signed and has been received in the school office. **Telephone permission will not suffice.** Students who do not participate in a field trip are expected to attend school and complete the assigned work given by their teacher.

All field trips must be approved by the principal and sponsored by a faculty member. All school regulations apply to these activities. Christian behavior is expected of all students on these trips.

If a student is failing a class because of missing assignments he/she is not eligible to go on a field trip.

Parent/guardian drivers and any other adult chaperoning a field trip must have had Virtus training, available through the school at specified times. A background check is required as well for a fee of \$18.00. Driving on a field trip is a form of service to the students; the school cannot afford to pay for fuel.

Fire Drills and Intruders

Fire drills are conducted monthly. When a drill is underway, students are expected to leave the building promptly, silently and follow the designated route. Teachers and students are responsible for recognizing signals and following directions for exiting buildings. During the first weeks of school the faculty and students are instructed and informed of fire regulations. Each teacher will carry a roster and take roll call after the students have reached their designated area on the school grounds.

Intruder drills are scheduled periodically. Procedures for Lockdown are posted in each classroom. In the event of an intruder, our safe place is the Good News youth building (formerly Gomez 7 to 11) on Highway 64. This is where parents would pick up their children if such an event were to occur.

Grading System

4=Exceeds Standards/Expectations - makes applications and inferences beyond expectations

3=Meets Standards/Expectations consistently and independently

2=Progressing toward meeting Standards/Expectations

1=Needs Improvement

N=Not assessable at this time

Eight Grade Promotion Requirements

Students in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Gallup must achieve 75% mastery (3) of essential competencies to advance to the next grade. (Diocesan Policy 5142.6) Essential competencies include, but are not limited to, Math, Grammar, Writing, and Reading.

Health

The school does not have a nurse on duty. Only basic first-aid is available in the school office. School personnel are not allowed to administer any medication to a student. Currently, the school secretary is permitted to dispense medication with medical and parental permission to a student. This includes dispensing Tylenol and Ibuprofen. All medication must be brought to the office.

Every effort should be made to arrange health appointments outside of school hours. If appointments must be made during school hours, a note from the parent/guardian is required and the student signed out in the office.

Homework

Homework is a reinforcement and/or continuation of the day's lessons. The cost of daily planners is included in the annual registration fee. If lost, replacement cost is \$5.00. These organizers help keep students on track and parents informed. Some have areas for parent/teacher comments.

Honor Roll, Effort Roll, Principal's Roll

The Principal's Roll is given to students with no grade lower than 4 in the core subjects: Math, Grammar, Reading and Writing. Honor Roll students have all grades of 3 or 4. Effort Roll students have no grade below 2. Awards are given quarterly, usually the morning of parent/teacher conference day, by the classroom teachers and principal.

Library and Computers

The library is an important part of St. Francis of Assisi School. It is open daily for the faculty, students, and parents. Students and faculty are responsible for the books borrowed. Parents will be charged for lost or damaged books.

Acceptable use policy must be signed by anyone using a computer. Parents will be charged for lost or damaged computers.

Parent Cooperation and Involvement

- Be aware of what is happening in the school and following the calendar.

- When there is dissatisfaction with a faculty member, first confer with the faculty member. If that is unsatisfactory, contact the principal and then, if necessary, the school board
- Attend parent/teacher conferences for each grading period. If other conferences are needed, make an appointment with the appropriate staff member.
- Cooperate in fundraising projects such as contributing to the concession stand during home sports games, bingo, fall festival, or giving of your time at the concessions.
- Promptly pay tuition each month.

Registration

Registrations are accepted each spring for the following year; forms are available in the office. A yearly fee is due at the time of registration. The fee is nonrefundable. Both former and new students must register.

Kindergarten students must be five years old by the first day of school of the current year. Rare exceptions to this norm may be made by the principal.

Kindergarten screening will take place at the time of registration. All new students must bring a transcript, birth certificate, Baptismal certificate, updated immunization record, and social security card. All new students, with their parents/guardians, are asked to come in for an interview at the time of registration.

School Office Hours

The school office is open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, or later if necessary. An appointment with the principal may be made through the school secretary. If a parent is unable to come during school hours, other arrangements may be discussed with the secretary or principal.

School Schedule

School supervision begins at 7:30 am each day. The school is not responsible for children who are on the grounds before that time. Breakfast begins at 7:35 am. Opening prayers and the Pledge of Allegiance begin at 8:00 am. Dismissal is at 3:30 pm. **STUDENTS MUST BE PICKED UP BY 4 PM.**

School Visitation

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the school any time after they have reported to the office. Covid prevention procedures prohibit visitation at this time.

Searches

The school reserves the right and duty to conduct a search of a student and the physical plant and grounds of the school (including lockers, desks, and autos) whenever the school's administration determines that there may be a potential threat to the health, welfare, or safety of any student, member of the staff, or visitor to the school. (Diocesan Policy 4821)

Snacks

Only healthy snacks will be allowed at St. Francis School with principal/teacher approval. Teachers may choose to allow students of any age to bring healthy snacks to school to enjoy during class time. No snack foods such as Cheetos or sweets such as cookies or candy are allowed in home prepared lunches or snacks. ONLY milk or water are allowed. All other beverages will be confiscated. This policy is in accordance with National School Lunch program.

Spiritual Activities

St. Francis of Assisi School holds Eucharistic celebrations throughout the year during school hours. Of course, students who are Catholic should attend Mass on Sundays as well. St. Francis of Assisi is a Catholic school and all activities are undertaken with an intended awareness of and gratitude for the loving presence of God.

Telephone Use

Telephone use is available for emergency use only. *Forgetting something is not considered an emergency.*

Textbooks

Books are on loan to the students using them and the students are responsible for seeing that they are returned in good condition. Parents/guardians of students who badly damage or lose textbooks will be required to pay for them at replacement cost.

Title I Reading

Title I Reading Support

St. Francis of Assisi School has revised its Title I Plan for reading support.

Goal: To maximize student time with teacher(s) to increase reading skill in all core subjects. The school chooses students to receive Title I services using the student's score on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The criterion used is percentile 41 or below on the reading test. The school also uses Renaissance STAR test data for grades 3 through 8. To determine placement in Title I for grades K-2, the school uses the Scholastic Kindergarten Readiness or the Scholastic School Readiness test. Students who score marginally ready or below receive services. In addition, the school uses the Renaissance STAR Early Literacy test for grades K-2. Teacher input is also considered in grades K through 8.

The goal of the current plan is to maximize student time with teacher(s) to increase reading skill in all core subjects. To this end, teachers will differentiate instruction in all core subjects. Differentiated instruction will include grouping students in a variety of ways: (Covid prevention permitting)

1. An experienced teacher and an aide will assist teachers in the classroom.
2. The program, *Imagine Learning*, used for Title I instruction for the past 6 years, is overseen by an experienced teacher who writes learning plans for each student.
3. Students identified as eligible for Title I services, are in a classroom setting rather than a pullout. The classroom teacher is responsible for communicating literacy growth to students and parents, especially during parent/teacher conferences.
4. Other strategies include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Leveled groups - currently (2021-2022), the Title I teacher is using leveled books in individual or small group instruction.
 - b. Mixed groups - students can and do learn from their peers. Covid prevention has made this option impossible for the time being.
 - c. Listening skills - currently, the Title I teacher reads aloud to hone students' listening skills.
5. The plan uses Imagine Learning with fidelity to program hallmarks (BOY, MOY, and EOY) concurrently with STAR testing (BOY, MOY, EOY).

Toys

Students may NOT bring toys or any electronic devices to school. They will be confiscated.

Transportation

Traffic control is highly necessary to prevent injury/accident. Students are to remain in the gym with their teacher and will be called as their ride arrives.

Any deviation from a student's usual method of transportation requires a note or phone call from the parent/guardian stating the change on the day it is effective.

Tuition

Tuition rates may vary from year to year and are not refundable. The school depends on tuition to meet its budget needs. Before school begins, August tuition and the annual registration fee are to be paid.

Families are encouraged to plan ahead for monthly tuition and to make payments during the summer months. St. Francis of Assisi school accepts major credit and debit cards.

Volunteer Requirements

3431 Background Clearance

Before beginning volunteer service, those volunteers that are mandated to be background cleared by policy 3714* must submit the authorization for background check AND BE CLEARED.

3432 Safe Environment Code of Ethics

Before beginning volunteer service, school volunteers must review and sign the Diocese of Gallup Safe Environment "Code of Ethics." Prior to starting volunteer services, these volunteers must complete the three hour Basic Safe Environment Training Course approved by the Diocese and obtain a "Certificate of Completion."

3433 Safe Environment Training for School Volunteers

After gaining the "Certificate of Completion" for the Basic Safe Environment Training Course, all school volunteers, except those volunteers who are identified as having no student contact, must renew their Safe Environment training annually. They must also access and read the updates provided by the *Virtus* program. Volunteers must submit to a criminal background check every five (5) years.

*3724 Background Clearance for School Volunteers

The Diocese of Gallup requires all schools to submit a criminal background check for volunteers with the following responsibilities:

- A. All school volunteers who have unsupervised access to students. This includes unsupervised volunteers at school, at school sponsored events, and on field trips (e.g., field trip drivers and chaperones);
- B. All classroom volunteers whether they are supervised or not;
- C. All volunteer coaches and assistant coaches, whether they are supervised or not, and;
- D. All overnight activity chaperones.

Weather

Students will not be permitted on the playground or anywhere outdoors if there is lightning, with or without rain.

Delays or days off due to inclement weather will be texted to parents/guardians by teachers and will be announced on TV Channel 4, station KOB, by 7:00 am. The TV announcement will say St. Francis Elementary School to distinguish it from St. Francis school in Gallup.

Parent/Student Handbook

Each family shall receive a Parent/Student Handbook. Each classroom shall also have a handbook available at all times for the teacher and students. Parents/Guardians and students must sign the contractual agreement to support these school policies and return it to the office.

Updated 2/3/2022



Contractual Agreement

After reading the St. Francis School Parent/Student Handbook, please sign and return this agreement to the school office.

We are familiar with the rules and policies of St. Francis School as presented in the Parent/Student Handbook. We will cooperate with the school and uphold the entire contents of the Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Date

