



Parent/Student Handbook and Calendar 2016-2017

St. Joseph Academy

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Lakeland, FL 33813

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www.sjalakeland.org

Principal—Jessica Bruchey, M. Ed.

Pastor—Father Ramon Bolatete

St. Joseph Academy in Lakeland, is a pre-Kindergarten 3 through 8th grade Catholic Elementary and Middle School under the Diocese of Orlando. The curriculum stresses academic achievement within a Christian community where the child feels that he/she is loved and respected by his/her peers as well as the teacher. Vatican II texts are used so that our theology is in compliance with the bishops of the world. United with each other in meaningful liturgy and prayer, the students can further come to an understanding of the Christian life. At St. Joseph Catholic, we are attempting to "teach as Jesus did." The Diocesan curriculum guidelines, with the Common Core State Standards, are followed for the teaching of all secular subject areas. The curriculum is marked by current content and fresh approaches to methodology. We strive to offer a program which makes use of many sources of reading material, a wide variety of audio-visual and technology tools and a multi-text approach to the content areas.

ST. JOSEPH ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

St. Joseph Academy, a Christ-centered Catholic community, rooted in faith, knowledge, and values, inspires students to live the gospel message in school, the community, and the world and to achieve academic excellence through relevant and challenging curriculum.

Goals

St. Joseph Academy has set the following goals to achieve our mission:

Goal I: Catholic Identity: continually seek opportunities to integrate elements of faith with the learning process as each individual is challenged to live the gospel message in the school, the community and the world with the Catholic Identity committee providing our guidelines.

Goal II: Ownership & Governance: establish a uniform mission and vision, along with St. Joseph Parish and Foundation, which will ensure a cohesive, productive, and financially secure environment for the on-going formation of the Christian person.

Goal III: Enrollment: implement and fund a marketing and recruitment plan which is designed to increase enrollment while maintaining the unique characteristics of a small Academy.

Goal IV: Curriculum: provide a curriculum, which is conducive to the highest possible level of academic achievement while integrating spiritual development of each enrolled individual.

Goal V: Staffing: ensure a qualified, caring, and informed staff, committed to the academic and spiritual formation of each individual in attendance.

Goal VI: Facilities: provide a safe, secure, and clean environment which is conducive to the teaching and learning process and provides for technological advancement.

Goal VII: Finance: maintain financial viability through effective budgeting, solid financial management, financial reporting, and an effective teaching/ learning program and environment.

Goal VIII: Development / Public Relations: will prepare and update annually a Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) that is designed to effectively market the Academy and to provide sufficient revenue for the Academy, the foundation, and the church through charitable donation, fundraising and grants.

Goal IX: Academy in Community: provide opportunities for students to develop community involvement.

Goal X: Technology: utilize technology integration as a tool for curriculum enhancement, marketing, and communication.

Parent's Role in Education

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

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life. Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at St. Joseph Academy, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 8), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home, or within the home, will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and security. **It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments.** This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

In Pope Benedict XVI's address to Catholic Educators he said, "Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 4). This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church." Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

Accreditation

St. Joseph Academy is accredited through the Florida Catholic Conference. According to the guidelines of the accreditation conference each teacher in grades PreK-8 holds either a Bachelor or a Master's degree. Certification by the State of Florida is a requirement of all teachers.

Admission Information-- Nondiscriminatory Policy

St. Joseph Academy 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 the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

As openings become available, the following priorities will be used to accept students to St. Joseph Academy:

1-Currently enrolled students, 2-Members of St. Joseph Catholic Church, 3-Members of other parishes, 4-Students transferring from another Catholic School, 5-Non-Catholic students

The final acceptance is determined by the principal in consultation with the teachers, based on entry tests (if needed), records from the previous school, interview with the student and parent, and available space. To be eligible for tuition subsidies, all Catholic parents must be registered, active, and contributing members of their respective parishes.

All students entering St. Joseph Academy for the first time will be accepted on probationary bases for a trimester. This is to ascertain a student's ability to adjust to the school philosophy and curriculum expectations.

Children entering Pre-Kindergarten 3 must be three years old by September 1. **Students must be toilet trained.**

Children entering Pre-Kindergarten 4 must be four years old by September 1.

To enter Kindergarten, a child must be five years old by September 1.

To enter the First Grade, a child must be six years old by September 1 and must have successfully completed Kindergarten.

Requirements include:

*Verification of active parish affiliation/stewardship

+Use of weekly envelopes and confirmation of registration by pastor

*Health Records

+HRS FL Certificate of Immunization (blue card)

+HRS Student Health Examination (yellow sheet) dated after 9/06

*Birth Certificate (original)

*Social Security Card

*Baptismal Certificate (Catholic applicants only)

*Transfer students must also present a transcript or report card and standardized test scores from the previous school, as well as teacher and principal/counselor evaluation forms at the time of registration.

Academic Probation

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies (subject average below a C) may be placed on academic probation. **Students on academic probation cannot participate in extra-curricular activities**, including games and practices for sports and musical, until the principal has determined eligibility and reinstatement. The principal is the only person able to reinstate a student from academic probation.

After Care: See Falcon's Perch

Asbestos Response Act

In accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), 40 CFR763.95 (g), the management plan for asbestos-containing materials as developed by Law Engineering is available without restriction for your inspection at the school's administrative office. We ask that you make an appointment if you wish to review the plan.

Attendance Policy

A student's absence from school interferes with his/her academic progress. Being tardy also impedes the learning process. The principal and guidance counselor review excessive tardies for students each trimester. Attendance regulations are based on Florida state law. All students are required to attend 180 days of school. Excessive unexcused absences may be reported to the Department of Child and Family Services. A written statement giving reasons for the absence or tardiness **must** be brought to the student's teacher upon the student's return. Should absence for any reason other than illness seem imperative, parents are requested to consult with the Principal and present a written reason for the absence. The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to

schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility. **Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignment will be given in anticipation of the vacation. Vacations are considered unexcused absences. Students who are absent due to illness have one day for each day of absence to make up the missed assignments, quizzes or tests. For example, a student who was absent three days would be given three school days to complete the missed work.** Arrangements for regular classroom tests missed because of an absence are to be made with the individual teachers. **These tests must be taken within one week of the original test date.**

When a student is absent for **three or more days due to illness**, a parent may call the school office before 9:30 AM to arrange for homework assignments. Homework assignments may be picked up at the school office between 3:00 PM – 3:30 PM. For short absences, students should make arrangement with classmates regarding assignments. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school.

Absence During the School Day

Students needing medical appointments during school hours require a written note by the parent. Parents are required to sign out their child. If the child returns to school during the same school day, he/she must be signed back into school in the office. Students may not participate in a sports or school event on the same evening of a school absence or leaving school early due to illness.

Academic Information--Curriculum

The curriculum is based on guidelines developed by the Orlando Diocese within a framework of Christian principles. All academic programs of St. Joseph Academy are governed and evaluated by the Diocese of Orlando Office of Schools and the Florida Catholic Conference. Time allotments for subject areas follow the standards set by the Florida Catholic Conference, which is the accrediting agency for all Florida Catholic schools.

Grading Scale

For students in grades 3-8: $A = 90 - 100$, $B = 89 - 80$, $C = 79 - 70$, $D = 69 - 60$, $F = 60$ or below

Middle School Academic Honors: Honors are based on the grade in the subjects of ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science, Religion, and Spanish at the end of each trimester. The honors are as follows:

Principal's Honors: All grades 95% or higher; *High Honors:* All grades 90%-94%; *Honors:* All grades 80%-89%.

Before Care: See Falcon's Perch

Birthday Observances

Students in Grades Pre-K through Grade 8 may come to school dressed out-of-uniform on their birthday or half-birthday. If a student's birthday falls on a Mass day, the student will not be allowed to dress out on Mass day, but may choose another day in the week to dress out. Students are expected to be dressed appropriately for school. Invitations to parties are given to all members of a class or mailed to individual students if all students in the class are not invited. **Parents may send a small treat on the occasion of a child's birthday to be shared with classmates.**

Board of Education

This board is an advisory body that assists in the support and counsel of all school planning at St. Joseph Academy. The Diocese of Orlando Office of Schools sets policy for all Catholic schools in the Orlando Diocese.

Book Bags

All book bags/back packs must fit in the student's cubby or locker. Large, wheeled book bags generally do not fit and create a safety hazard in the classroom and will be sent home for a book bag that will fit.

Car Pool

Student safety at drop off and pick up are of the utmost concern to all staff. Faculty and staff take great responsibility in ensuring that all students go home with the appropriate adult. Policies and procedures are in place for the safety of all children. **Adults entering the drop off and pick up line agree to abide by those policies and procedures.** All cars must have a car tag clearly displayed in the front windshield on of the car. Each family is given two car tags at the beginning of the school year. Families in a car pool must give the car pool family a car tag to pick up their child. The school office will only distribute car tags to the legal guardian of a student. Additional car tags may be picked up in the school office. If an adult comes through car line to pick up a student without a car tag, he/she must be prepared to present picture identification. If an adult fails to comply with such request, the student will not be dismissed to the care of that adult.

Students are to be dropped off along the curb on Pennsylvania Avenue. Once a student arrives at school, s/he may not leave the premises during the day without the written permission of a parent or guardian and the approval of the office. This includes students who stay for Falcon's Perch (After Care). Parents must sign out all students dismissing early at the office. **No student is to be dropped off or picked up from the grass lot across from the school on Frank Lloyd Wright Way.**

Parents are asked to pay close attention during the car line process. **Cell phones are not be used at this time.** Please follow the traffic directions given by the teachers on duty. It is the responsibility of the parent to contact car pool members and after school care agencies when a child is absent, leaves school early, or needs other arrangements to be made. Homeroom teachers should be advised in writing if a child is to go home in a different car pool or by a different means on a given day. Students who have a learner's permit or driver's license are not permitted to drive on school property. **Walkers and bike riders will only be dismissed from the office.**

Cellular Phone Policy

Students are permitted to bring a cell phone to school. Cell phones must be kept in the student's school bag or in the Main Office, and **must be turned off** until a **student leaves the campus**. Cell phones are not to be used in school without expressed teacher permission. If a student violates this procedure the cell phone will be taken from the student and will need to be retrieved by a parent/legal guardian from the school office. An after school detention will be given to the student on the second violation (and each successive) of this policy. If the rule is violated more than two times in a school year, the phone will be dropped daily in the principal's office and retrieved at the end of the day. **If the cell phone was used in class for texting or taking pictures, it will be dropped off each morning to the principal after the first violation.** If the cell phone is not dropped in the office when this rule goes into effect, it will be returned on the last day of school. **Students may not use their cell phone camera at any time without permission.** Apple Watches, or variations of that technology, are not permitted at school. The principal will call the parent to retrieve the watch from the school office and the same consequences occur as using a cell phone.

Cheating/Plagiarizing

Cheating and plagiarizing of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. An alternative assignment or assessment will be given to any student who cheats.

Child Abuse Laws

St. Joseph Academy abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Florida. Diocesan Policy #PS006 and Florida Statutes Chapters 415 and 232.50 requires any clergy, religious or lay employee or volunteer who knows or has cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to any form of abuse or neglect by any person, to contact the Florida Department of Children and Families on the same calendar day, respond to the local DCF, call back with additional information and to cooperate with any and all authorities in the investigation of any child abuse report. This law mandates that all cases of **suspected** abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

Communication

In order to insure that all communication from school reaches home in a timely manner, St. Joseph Academy emails all correspondence. The weekly Falcon Frenzy newsletter is sent electronically to parents by Friday afternoon, please be sure that the school office has the most up to date email address for your family.

Conferences

One Parent-Teacher Conference is held each year. In some cases, the student may be asked to attend the conference with the parent. Parents requiring additional conferences during the school year may make arrangements with the individual teachers.

Counselor

A certified guidance counselor serves the needs of students and parents through class and individual consultation.

Emergency Closing

If it should be necessary to close the school because of inclement weather affecting the entire county, Diocesan policy states that the school will follow the directive of the local county school system. Please look for an announcement to be made over local radio or television stations and on the school website (www.sjalakeland.org). Please be aware that St. Joseph Academy students may return to school following a weather emergency prior to public schools.

Emergency Plan/Drills

St. Joseph Academy has a plan for emergencies including fire, weather, and security. Training is held annually for all faculty and staff. State law requires that fire drills be held monthly. Weather drills are held periodically. Security drills are held a minimum of four times a year. In the event of a lockdown emergency, St. Joseph Academy has a crisis plan in place, and follows the directions given by local law enforcement when present. The plan includes procedures that promote safety and security of students and staff. In addition, the plan ensures that school facilities and equipment are safe and in good condition in compliance with the "Safe Passage Act (Section 229.8348, Florida Statutes)". All teachers and staff are aware of the procedures to follow to keep your children safe.

Falcon's Perch: Before and After Care

St. Joseph Academy has a before and after care program called Falcon's Perch. Before care is in the Dining Hall beginning at 6:45. The cost is \$2.00 per family for before care. After Care is \$5.00/hour per child. After care for preschool students begins at noon and immediately following school for elementary students. Students must have attended school during the day to attend Falcon's Perch. Falcon's Perch closes at 6:00 PM. Falcon's Perch for K to 8 students begins at 3:00 and ends at 6:00 Parents are charged **\$5.00 per hour for after care**. Students who are not picked up by **6:05 will be billed \$15 until 6:20 and \$1.50 per minute after 6:20**. Cash, check or money orders are acceptable forms of payment. The Falcon's Perch fees are due within one week of receiving a statement. St. Joseph Academy reserves the right to dismiss any child from the Falcon's Perch program for failure to pay fees or inappropriate behavior. If a question regarding your bill arises please call the school office.

Field Trips

1. Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.
2. The Diocese of Orlando strongly encourages the use of buses for field trips.
3. **The principal has the right to exclude any student from participating in off-property trips or events. Alternate plans for the learning day for the student will be approved by the principal since all field trips are for educational benefit.**
4. Volunteers driving on field trips must have current finger printing clearance and have submitted, at least two weeks in advance, an **Authorization for Motor Vehicle Records Form** that is submitted to the Diocesan agency for the expressed purpose of evaluating whether the adult can drive on field trips. Drivers must also have viewed the Safe Environment Video and submitted the quiz results to the school office. Drivers cannot take side trips on the way to or from the field trip. For example, trips to a fast food restaurant are not allowed, unless they are a part of the field trip.
5. All grades do not always have the same number of field trips.
6. Field trips are permissible for all grades when advanced planning, location, and the experience insure a successful learning opportunity.
7. Siblings or additional children cannot attend a field trip.
8. Individual teachers, in consultation with the administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
9. A written **official permission slip**, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission **cannot** be accepted. **Note:** a fax does not take the place of an original signature.
10. A **telephone call** will **not** be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.
11. Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the field trip form. Field trips are academic, therefore students not attending may have written work/research to complete and turn in the following day.
12. Students who are participating in the field trip must ride the bus/car pool to and from the field trip with their class. Students not on the bus or assigned car pool may not participate in the field trip and will be counted absent for the day.
13. All monies collected for the field trip are **non-refundable**.
14. **Student cell phones** are **not allowed** on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.

Financial Obligations

The supporting parishioner tuition is subsidized partially through parish support. Parents must be a supporting member of the parish, attending Mass, **using their envelopes**, and involved in Parish life in order to receive subsidized tuition. At the beginning of each school year the supporting parish will be requested to verify the status of the registered Catholic steward. Tuition is subject to change based on that information.

A RETURN FEE OF \$25.00 WILL BE ASSESSED TO YOUR ACCOUNT FOR ANY RETURNED CHECK.

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL TUITION QUESTIONS TO THE SCHOOL ACCOUNTING OFFICE at 686-6415.

You may apply for financial assistance by clicking on the white FACTs box on the school homepage (www.sjalakeland.org) *The application deadline for Aid Assessment to factstuitionaid.com is April 15.

Tuition Payment Options:

Payment Options:

- Pay in full by JULY 1, or
- Pay ½ annual tuition by July 1, and the remainder by December 1, or
- Enroll in the FACTS® Tuition Management Service. Payments begin in July.
- All Application Fees and Registration Fees are **NON-REFUNDABLE**.
- Tuition and outstanding balances for the school year must be current in order to register for the following school year.

FACTS® Tuition Management Service Overview

- There is an annual non-refundable \$38 administrative fee for enrollment in the Facts® program per family. This fee will be added to your tuition collected by FACTS® on the first scheduled payment—please do not make this payment to the school.
- Your enrollment form to FACTS® must be returned with your registration.
- All families not selecting the FACTS® tuition plan in their registration packet will be expected to make direct payment (either in full or half payment) to St. Joseph Academy no later than July 1
- FACTS will collect tuition using a direct debit to each family’s checking or savings account on the 1st or 15th. If funds are not available at that time a second attempt will be made during the next processing cycle. During this second attempt, the family will be charged a \$25 fee before the full tuition payment has been processed. If FACTS is unsuccessful in collecting the balance due for tuition and fees by the third cycle, the principal and the school board finance committee will be notified. Unless documented proof of financial hardship is provided by the family, the principal will notify that payment is needed in full within 10 days. If full payment is not received within ten days the family will be required to withdraw the child(ren) from the school. **Student records will not be forwarded for any student if a balance of fees is owed to the school.**
- **Multi-child discounts may not apply to students on McKay, Step Up, and PLSA scholarships.**

Tuition Assistance

It is the goal of St. Joseph Academy to provide opportunities for financial assistance to families. Although tuition assistance funds are limited, financial assistance is available to families who demonstrate a need. Families seeking financial assistance must complete an application for financial aid by April 15th. The application is available on our school website (sjalakeland.org) by clicking the white FACTs box. Tuition assistance is distributed in early June.

Food Allergy Policy

St. Joseph Academy recognizes that life threatening food allergies are an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with food allergies. In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening allergic reactions, St. Joseph Academy will maintain a system-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions and maintain an Emergency Action Plan for any student(s) whose parent/guardian, and physicians have informed the school in writing that the student(s) has a potentially life threatening allergy. **Parents are requested to refrain from sending birthday or celebration snacks that contain nuts.**

Gifts

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture only creates hurt feelings among other students. If something is brought in, it will be held in the school office until the end of the school day. Invitations for slumber parties or birthday parties should be sent to the homes of students via the U.S. mail unless an invitation is being given to every student in the entire class.

Health Concerns

Please advise the school if your child has a special health concern such as an allergy, asthma, epilepsy, and recent surgery or any condition requiring administration of medications. If your child requires medication at school, a medical form must be filled completed and signed by a physician. A doctor’s note is required if a student is to miss physical education class. Any limitations that student may have that prohibit full participation in physical education classes must be brought to the attention of the health office. Please remember that students must be free of a temperature over 100 degrees within the last 24 hours without anti-fever medication. Additionally, students should be kept at home if they have had any cases of vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours. Students who come to school before the 24 hours have lapsed will be sent home.

In the event a student has a bathroom accident during the school day, a parent will be notified and requested to come assist the child to clean up. Faculty and staff are not permitted to clean or touch any student private body areas.

Homework Policy

Homework is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences. Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Catholic Schools within the Diocese of Orlando require enrolling students to submit a Florida Department of Health Certificate of Immunization as provided for in Florida Statute 1003.22 as a condition precedent to acceptance. Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Orlando do not recognize a religious objection to this immunization. In accordance with the Polk County Health Regulations, all students enrolled in a school must have a current HRS Student Health Examination (yellow) and State of Florida Immunization Record (blue) on file with the school before a child can enter on the first day. They must be up to date with immunizations appropriate for their age.

GRADE(S) 2016-17	REQUIREMENTS
Prekindergarten	Student Health Examination 1MMR 1 Varicella (or documented case of chickenpox) Hepatitis Series (2 or 3 depending on availability) 1HIB DPT series must be started Polio series must be started
Kindergarten	Student Health Examination (within the year) 2 MMR 2 Varicella (or documented case of chickenpox) Hepatitis Series DPT (total of 5) Polio (total of 4)
Grades 1-6	2 MMR DPT (total of 5) Polio (total of 4) Hepatitis Series Varicella (or documented case of chickenpox)
Grade 7-8	2 MMR DPT (total of 5) Polio (total of 4) Hepatitis Series TDaP

All students enrolling in St. Joseph Academy for the first time are required to have a physical examination by a physician.

Library

The school has a well-equipped automated library and media center. Students are encouraged to use the library for curricular enrichment and pleasure reading. Borrowed books are to be returned on time and in good condition. Fines will be levied on missing or damaged books. Students may also check out books via Big Universe, our e-book program.

Lockers

Each student is assigned a locker or cubby in which to store clothing and textbooks. In order to maintain a quiet atmosphere for class, students are allowed to go to their lockers only at specified times. The school reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time.

Lost and Found

Any items found in the school building or on the school grounds should be placed in the Lost and Found basket. **Periodically, parents are reminded to check Lost and Found and then remaining items are donated to charity.**

Lunch Program

Hot lunch is served daily in the Dining Hall. Students participating in the lunch program must set up an account online from our contracted food service, SLA. Money is not accepted in the lunch line (special food purchases may be an exception to this rule). Students may bring their lunch from home any day of the week. Milk, water, and juice are available for purchase each day.

Medication

If a child must take any medication in school which is prescribed by a doctor, that medication must be delivered to the office by an adult in the container received from the pharmacy and must have on its label the following information:

Child name

Administration amounts

Number of times/day to be administered

A medical authorization form must be picked up in the school office or the doctor could complete a form. The school cannot dispense medication without the authorization form. **Students cannot carry medications** (including lozenges, cough drops, aspirin, inhalers ointments, etc.) or keep any medications in their backpack or desk.

Off-Campus Conduct

The administration of St. Joseph Academy reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the course of the school day, including but not limited to appropriate usage of social media.

Office Records

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the School Office in writing of any change of address, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete, and up-to-date.

Parent Custody

If parents are divorced or separated, the school presumes that both parents have access to the children unless one parent can provide written, court-ordered (or other legal form) evidence reflecting a different arrangement. A copy of the document providing such evidence must be kept on file in the school office.

Parent Organization (PTO)

This organization works to support and enhance the educational ministry of the school. Fund-raising, parent education, and building community are goals of this organization.

Promotion Policy and Retention Policy

Advancement to the next grade in St. Joseph Academy is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level. Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of **all** subject areas. Students who have earned an average below 60 in **any** subject area cannot be promoted to the next grade.

Report Cards/Progress Reports

Report Cards are important tools for communication. Report Cards will be given three (3) times during the academic school year at the conclusion of every trimester. The final report card is distributed through the school office after the year has ended. All school related financial obligations must be met prior to the release of the last report card. **Progress Reports** will be given mid-way between each trimester. Additionally, parents are strongly encouraged to use Rediker to monitor their child's grades a minimum of three times per week.

Sacramental Program

The sacramental life of the children of the Catholic tradition is an important component of the religion program at St. Joseph Academy. Religious instruction is included in the curriculum each day. Preparations for two sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist, form the core of our efforts in Grade 2. In accordance with the diocesan guidelines, candidates for First Eucharist will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist. Sacramental Catechesis is intended for all members of the Christian community, takes place within the community, and involves the whole community of faith. Parish Church is the center of worship in the community. It is the place where all Sacraments are celebrated. The liturgical life of the Church revolves around the sacraments, with the Eucharist at the center. (*National Directory of Catechesis*) Parents are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are only conferred to students baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition.

School Hours

Grades Pre-K-3 & PreK-4—8:00 AM – 12:00 PM; Grades Kindergarten through grade 5—7:50 AM-3:00 PM; Grades 6 through 8 – 7:50AM-3:15PM. Students not with their homeroom class in the Dining Hall at 7:50 AM are considered tardy.

At St. Joseph Academy, we work in partnership with parents to enable each child to develop as an independent learner. Parents should allow their child(ren) to enter the school building on their own each morning. Various classes invite parent involvement or visitation on particular occasions. The school doors are opened for students at 7:35 AM. Car line begins at 7:35. Students arriving before 7:35 are required to attend Before Care in the Dining Hall. Parents are charged \$2/family each day for Before Care. Please check the school calendar and weekly newsletter for early dismissal dates. Parents are to make arrangements for their child(ren) to arrive at school on time and be picked up at dismissal time. Students not picked up by the end of car line (3:30 PM) will be sent immediately to the After School Care Program. **Students cannot be left unattended on the school property.**

School Logo

The school logos may not be used without the expressed written consent of the school administration.

School Office Hours

The school office is open on all school days from **7:30 AM – 4:00 PM.**

School Property

The parent of a child who destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. No writing in hardback textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented.

Search of Students and their Property

The Diocese of Orlando affirms that, consistent with the Diocesan Mission Statement, each Catholic school has a special responsibility for the conduct of students and for ensuring the right of teachers to teach and students to learn in a safe and caring Christian environment. Given the Diocese's dedication to create and maintain a safe environment, students will not have any expectation of privacy with respect to any and all property brought on school grounds or to school events. The search of a student's person or any item carried by the student is permissible when there is any suspicion that the student may be carrying contraband. Contraband is defined as any weapon, dangerous object, illegal drug, drug paraphernalia or other item prohibited by law or by school policy. All property of the school, including student desks and lockers, as well as contents may be opened, searched, or inspected at any time without notice. School personnel have an unrestricted right to search this property as well as any containers, book bags, purses, or articles of clothing that are left unattended on the school campus. Searches may be conducted by authorized school personnel, police, or other appropriate officials with the approval of the principal, including random searches.

Service Hours--Parents

Upon acceptance, all families agree to complete 20 service hours during the school year. Each family **MUST** do 2 service hours for the Carnival. The service hour agreement sets our school apart from all other schools and has many benefits. It shows students that their parents are present and involved. It is the reminder to all that the time of each of us is equally important and valuable. Everyone has something to give. Anyone performing service hours at school must be fingerprinted and have viewed and submitted the quiz results for the Diocesan Safe Environment Training Video according to Diocesan policy. Families are responsible for keeping track of their service hours using the Family Service Hour Log Sheet. At the end of each trimester, families will be asked to submit the form for recording purposes.

In determining whether a particular service "counts" as hours a general guideline is to let common sense be your guide. If it has been requested by a faculty or staff member or a room parent or committee chair—it counts! If it is a service that has been requested and would otherwise require the school to hire someone to perform—it counts. If it is goods or a donation that has been requested—it counts. Some examples are: parent attendance at PTO meeting—2 service hours; chaperoning a field trip or working in the cafeteria—hour for hour spent; donation toward auction items for Denim & Diamonds—one service hour per \$10 spent. Examples that do not count toward service hours: Donating toward teacher gift; donating to Food Pantry. All other activities are to be documented as the amount of time spent doing the service.

Service Hours—Students

Students in middle school (grades 6, 7, 8), in keeping with the school philosophy that we give service to others, must complete 10 service hours. Failure to complete service hours will affect the Religion grade and Religion Effort grade. Additionally, students involved in the National Junior Honor Society are expected to complete an additional 20 service hours each school year.

Sports Program

St. Joseph Academy offers the following sports: boys' and girls' soccer, basketball, flag football, and girls' volleyball. Students in grades 5 to 8 are eligible to participate in sports. A participation fee of \$25 per sport per student will be assessed at the beginning of each sport season. All athletes are subject to academic and conduct eligibility requirements. **Students that do not maintain a 70 average in any subject**

area cannot play sports. A student who is involved in a sport and is placed on academic ineligibility can no longer play or practice with the team until they are released from academic probation by the principal. **No student will be permitted to try out or play on a team, until s/he has submitted a medical form in which a doctor clears the student for play. This medical form must be submitted each school year. All medical conditions that could affect playing and/or health should be noted.**

Student Conduct

In accordance with the stated philosophy of the school, which emphasizes deep respect for the human dignity and uniqueness of every individual, each student will be considerate of the rights of others in all interactions. All students are expected to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school which are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility. This requires courtesy in all personal relationships, promptness in fulfilling obligations, concern for the environment, and many other factors which the students' sense of appropriateness will indicate to them. The principal reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an action if any doubt arises. Conduct referrals are given for major violations of the conduct code. Detentions, if given, are to be served on the date assigned. Students assigned detention may not be involved in any extra-curricular activity on the day of the detention if the detention has not been served.

Items such as, but not limited to, questionable books and pictures, white-out, knives, guns, matches, cigarettes, radios, toys, trading cards, pagers, laser lights, cameras, palm pilots, CDs, iPods or other mp3 players, or anything that will detract from a learning situation are not allowed at school at any time. If a student chooses to violate this rule, they alone are responsible if the item is lost or stolen.

The School Administration, in accordance with state laws, will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of these items in the school. **Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) when the final report card is picked up of the school year.**

Discipline

It is our policy to work with all children in a positive way. We encourage students to develop responsible behavior and self-esteem through good decision-making with the ultimate goal of self-discipline. All disciplinary action taken by the administration or teacher is intended to help the child accept his/her responsibility for being a student in our school. Parents will be informed by phone, email, or written note.

St. Joseph Academy Student Responsibilities

- Students have the responsibility to attend school regularly
- Students have the responsibility to treat others with respect
- Students have the responsibility to treat school property and the property of others with respect
- Students have the responsibility to respect the privacy of others
- Students have the responsibility to listen courteously to the opinions and points of view of others
- Students have the responsibility to come prepared to learn with all the necessary materials

Follow the four R's—reverent, respectful, responsible, right choices

Consequences for Misbehavior

We encourage students to develop responsible behavior and self-esteem through good decision-making skills with the ultimate goal of self-discipline. All actions have implications for self and others.

Consequences are seen as a supportive way to teach accountability, trust, honesty, and respect.

Each teacher will determine the discipline consequences for misbehavior in their classroom. Consequences for misbehavior may include, but not be limited to, (1) loss of recess, (2) time spent in a time-out chair, (3) silent lunch with teacher or silent lunch table in the cafeteria, (4) conversation with parent(s), (5) detention assigned by the teacher.

Major infractions for all students are enforced with referrals by the principal in cooperation with the teacher(s) or faculty member(s).

Behavior Code

Our behavior code is intended to create an atmosphere that is safe and conducive to academic progress and the personal development of all students. Students are expected to:

1. Show consideration, courtesy, respect and proper care to all school personnel and fellow students as well as their property.
2. Attend class on time.
3. Refrain from picking up and/or throwing or kicking sand, stones, or other potentially harmful objects.
4. Dress in accordance with the school dress code. (see Uniforms and Dress Code)
5. Avoid all activity that involves violence, vandalism, stealing, offensive language, gestures, or disrespect in any way.
6. Gum chewing is not permitted while on school premises, including Falcon's Perch and field trips.
7. Weapons of any kind are not allowed on school property.

Detention

Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. The day, date, and time of the detention are at the discretion of the Principal. Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, ballgames, etc. **Students who are scheduled to serve detention are ineligible to play sports or participate in extra-curricular events on the day of detention if the detention was not served.**

Expulsion

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter. Students who pose a threat to themselves or to others may be expelled from St. Joseph Academy. Students who possess drugs and/or alcohol at school or at any school function face suspension and/or expulsion

School Safety & Harassment or Bullying

St. Joseph Academy provides a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (**seriously, in jest, or online**) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

According to Stopbullying.gov, In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people; And
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Harassment/Bullying of any type is not tolerated. The administration investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Engagement in online activities such as, but not limited to, MySpace.com®, Xanga®, Friendster®, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish. ****Please be mindful that there are some parents who do not wish to have their child's photo on any social media or websites. Because of this, Parents or volunteers at school photographing events are asked to refrain from posting pictures on Facebook or any other social networking sites that contain images of students other than the family's own child(ren).**

Anti-Harassment Policy

Harassment is contrary to Gospel values and has no place in the Catholic school. All students are entitled to study in a school environment that is Christ-centered and free of harassment. Harassment occurs in many ways, including, but not limited to: verbal and written threats, bullying, cyber-bullying, emotional, psychological, physical, racial, and/or sexual. The school will treat complaints of harassment seriously and will respond to such complaints in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Harassment of any type will not be tolerated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Procedure/Guidelines

The following examples are a non-exhaustive list of possible forms of harassment: 1. Verbal or written: comments such as hurtful name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossip, and threats, whether in person or through any form of electronic communication; 2. Bullying: characterized by aggressive behavior toward another, intentional repeated hurtful acts over a period of time, imbalance of power (real or perceived) between the bully and the victim; 3. Cyber-bullying: using electronic communications to do the act of bullying (i.e. email, texting, social network, on-line chats); 4. Physical includes: punching, poking, strangling, hair pulling, beating, biting, spitting, stealing, pinching, and tickling; 5. Emotional: rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, manipulation, isolating, ostracizing, and peer pressure; 6. Sexual: exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact and sexual assault, sex-ting, unwanted touching, inappropriate social networking; 7. Racial includes, but is not limited to, actions based on personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation; 8. Jokes, stories, pictures, cartoons, cyber rumors, drawings or objects which are offensive, tend to alarm, annoy, incite, abuse of demean an individual or group. Harassment also includes any other form of treatment or conduct that could create an offensive, intimidating, or hostile environment or otherwise be unwelcomed by a student or group of students. School shall include in their regular instructional programs lessons that teach the dangers and consequences of harassment. Special assemblies or speakers may be part of the curriculum to inform and educate students. St. Joseph Academy shall be proactive in dealing with incidents of harassment, working closely with families, parents, and guardians.

Student Records

St. Joseph Academy adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a five school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the St. Joseph Academy Office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.

Technology

All parents and students must read and sign the Diocese of Orlando Acceptable Use Policy (DNAUP) which can be found on the school's website. Students cannot access the computer without signed DNAUPs.

Telephone

Permission to use the telephone for emergencies must be obtained from the teacher. The office phone is a business phone and students are permitted to use it only in case of an emergency. **Forgotten homework, athletic equipment, reminders of early dismissals, etc. do not constitute emergencies.** Arrangements for after-school visits with friends should be made at home. Please encourage your child to be responsible for the materials needed for his/her day at school. Delivery of messages and forgotten materials to the classroom causes a disruption for all children in a class. Messages to students and teachers will be relayed only during transition times throughout the day. Students are not permitted to call or text a parent from their cell phone for any reason unless express permission is granted by a faculty or staff member.

Testing

The Iowa Assessment is given in Grades 2 through 8. The ACRE Test (Assessment of Catechesis Religious Education) is given to students in Grades 5 and 8. Middle school students (grades 6-8) may be given a maximum of two major quizzes or tests per day.

Title IX

St. Joseph Academy adheres to the tenets of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Transfer of Students

Notice of withdrawal of a student should be made by the parent in writing to the Principal in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare necessary information and settle accounts. **No student records will be forwarded to another school until all accounts have been settled.** (See previous section on Student Records for transcript information.)

Uniforms and Dress Code

The Academy uniform has been a traditional sign of a Catholic school student. The uniform policy is established to develop an image of pride and school spirit among students, as well as to give the students an identity as members of St. Joseph's student body. In addition, uniforms tend to place all students on an equal footing regardless of socio-economic backgrounds.

Uniform components (skirts, skorts, jumpers, blouses, and shirts) must be purchased through **Risse Brothers** uniform store, **2525 Drane Field Rd. Suite 11, Lakeland, FL 33811**. Please label all clothing so that it can be returned if misplaced. All students must be in uniform every day.

There will be out-of-uniform days (NUT or No Uniform Today days) which will be announced during the course of the school year (a dress code for such days is included in this section). The administration reserves the right to request a change of clothing for inappropriate dress on days that students are permitted to dress out of uniform. If there is a time when the prescribed uniform cannot for some legitimate reason be worn, a note from the parent/guardian must be written to the principal. Students who are out of uniform without this excuse will be sent to the office and the parent will be called to bring the proper clothing. There is a special uniform for Physical Education classes, also to be purchased through Risse Brothers.

Physical Education Uniform: Navy PE shorts, PE uniform shirt, sneakers with socks. The Effort grade on the report card will be affected for students who fail to dress in the required PE uniform.

General Uniform Guidelines

- Solid navy blue or khaki/tan shorts or pants with belt loops. Cargo style shorts or pants are not permitted.
- Solid royal blue knit uniform shirt with collar. MUST have school logo
- Solid white or black socks must be worn. They may be "no show" socks, and should NOT have a logo or secondary color.
- Solid white or black sneakers/athletic style shoes are to be worn with laces matching the color of the shoes. High top shoes are not permitted, unless a medical condition requires them. In such an instance a doctor's note is required.
- Solid navy sweater
- Long sleeve polo with school logo
- Only one necklace, one watch, and one bracelet may be worn at a time.
- A solid **white** t-shirt may be worn under the uniform shirt. The sleeves cannot extend beyond the uniform sleeve. PE uniforms should NOT be worn under the regular uniform on PE days.
- A solid, plain navy, brown or black belt must be worn with all uniform shorts and pants for students in third to eighth grade. Belts must be placed through the belt loops and be visible. No large buckles or metal decorations are allowed.
- All shirts must be tucked in and the belt visible.
- Sweatshirts, sweaters, and hoodies may only be worn from November 1-March 1.
- **Scout Uniforms** – Students may wear the scout uniforms on meeting days.
- Sports team uniforms tops may be worn on game days. Students not participating or on academic probation must wear their school uniform.

Girls' Uniform Guidelines

- Plaid skort or Plaid skirt. Short length may not be shorter than 3” above the bend of the knee (back of the leg). Skirt length may not be shorter than 3” above the bend of the knee (back of the leg)
- Girls are to wear a skirt on Wednesday for school Mass. Skorts and shorts are not permitted to be worn by girls on Mass days.
- Navy or white tights may be worn in the colder months under skorts or skirts. Leggings and yoga pants are not permitted.
- No radical hairstyles or hair colors are permitted. No highlights or alterations to natural hair color are allowed. No elaborate hair decorations are allowed.
- No head coverings, sweat headbands, armbands, or warm-up jackets, etc. are allowed.
- Girls may wear **one** post earring per ear lobe, which cannot be larger than a dime. For safety reasons, hoop or dangle earrings may not be worn.
- No makeup of any kind may be worn.
- No ankle bracelets may be worn
- If nail polish is worn, all fingernails must be one color. Accent nails, designs, and dark polish cannot be worn. Additionally, nails must be natural. No acrylic or fake nails are permitted.

Boys' Uniform Guidelines

- Boys may not wear earrings.
- Boys' hair must be above the brow, not past the mid-point of the ear, and cannot touch the shirt collar. Additionally, no designs, lines, or Mohawk-type styles are permitted. This includes buzz cut sides and long top, center pieces.
- Boys must be clean shaven. Sideburns cannot be below the mid-section of the ear.

Winter Uniforms

Students can only wear St. Joseph Academy sweatshirts or sweaters in the classroom. Long sleeve polos are available to purchase but not mandatory. Students (boys and girls) can wear uniform pants on cold days (below 45 degrees), even to Mass. Unless the student has PE on a cold day they cannot wear sweatpants (except PreK 3 & 4) instead of the school uniform. Middle school students NEVER wear PE sweats in place of uniform clothes even on PE days. If wearing a t-shirt under the uniform shirt it must be solid WHITE. The sleeves of the undershirt may extend beyond the uniform sleeve. Jackets, coats, hats, scarves, and gloves are outer wear and are not worn inside the classroom.

Guidelines for Dress-out Days

Dress-out days are allowed during the school year to foster enthusiasm for clubs, athletics, academic programs or celebrations. It is expected, however, that all students dress appropriately for school and church. The following guidelines are to be followed in selecting clothing for Dress-out Days. As with all else, the administration reserves the right to make the final decision on what is and is not considered appropriate casual wear.

Unacceptable Clothing
Immodest shorts (Short length may not be shorter than 3” above the bend of the knee (back of the leg)
Sloppy or ragged clothing
Tank tops, muscle shirts, or tube tops
Cap sleeve is acceptable
Spaghetti straps
Low-cut or revealing shirts/pants/jeans/shorts/dresses/skirts
Exposed abdomens (even when arm is raised)
See-through clothing
Exposed underwear of any kind
Lace-up blouses/dresses
Tight or revealing clothing including yoga pants, pjs, lounge pants
Clothing posing a safety problem
Any clothing that advertises alcohol, drugs, tobacco, obscenities, or promotes alternative music/lifestyles (or suggests any of the above)
Boots, Flip-flop or skate shoes
Students cannot wear or bring any article which would cause a learning disruption or that violates school standards

Good Rule for dress out days: If you think you shouldn't wear it, don't.

ALL UNIFORM REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES ARE SUBJECT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Visitors

School visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must come to the main office. For the safety and security of students, each person is required to sign in at the office when he/she on campus for any reason. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to wear a designated badge that may be picked up in the office. Visitors and/or volunteers are to sign out at the time of departure. All volunteers must have had their fingerprints cleared through the Diocese of Orlando and view the Safe Environment Video (and submit the quiz results to the school office) before coming onto the school property.

Volunteers

All individuals who volunteer in the school or want to visit classrooms must complete and clear the Diocesan mandated finger print background check. Finger printing is available only through the LIVE SCAN process and is completed at a deanery location or diocesan offices. **Finger printing is valid for 5 years.** Any individual who drives for field trips must have submitted and cleared (yearly) the Authorized Driver Form available in the school office. Volunteers must also view the Diocesan Safe Environment Video and submit quiz results to the school office.

Withdrawal Policy

- Families must notify the school in writing if a student is withdrawn from the school. **If a student has attended any portion of a month, or the school is not notified in writing that the student has withdrawn, the family is responsible for the entire month's tuition.**
- The school will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance.
- Just as parents have the right to withdraw a child, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if deemed necessary.

Right to Amend St. Joseph Academy reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via the Falcon Frenzy.