

St. Nicholas of Tolentine
Catholic Academy

PARENT-STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2016-2017



ST. NICHOLAS of TOLENTINE

80-22 PARSONS BOULEVARD
JAMAICA, NEW YORK 11432

September 2016

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy. As always we strive to provide the best in values-based education to the children under our care.

As parents and guardians you are the primary educators of your children and we hope to work in partnership with you to provide for the social, emotional, educational and spiritual needs of our children. It is essential that a partnership be formed between home and school so that our students receive a consistent message.

Please review this handbook with your child(ren) to ensure that our mutual expectations are met. After doing so, please complete the form below and return it to school.

Thank you again and I hope you join me in looking forward to another successful year.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Lowenberg
Principal

Child's Name _____ Class _____

We have read and agree to follow the procedures of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy Parent-Student Handbook.

Signature: _____ September 2016

Please complete for each child registered

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that everything originates at the hands of a loving God. As a Catholic School and a vital part of the parish community, we share this belief with clergy, parents, administration, faculty and staff through our teaching of the doctrines of the Catholic Church.

We exist for our children and without them we have no purpose. We take pride in our culturally and religiously diverse student body that recognizes, promotes and nourishes the God-given talents of each individual. Focusing on the individual needs of each student, we seek to create a peaceful and mutually respectful learning environment where each child will be motivated and encouraged to develop as a whole person – spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally and physically. Our hope is that with this development there will grow an awareness of each student's responsibility to self, community, church and the world. This, coupled with basic learning experiences, will promote academic excellence.

The pastor, the Board of Directors and the principal are responsible for the establishment of local school policy. The curriculum is based on the Common Core Learning Standards and the guidelines provided by the Diocese of Brooklyn Office of the Superintendent ~ Catholic School Support Services.

We recognize parents as the primary educators of their children and strive to work with them as partners. We keep our families well informed of the progress of their children based on teacher evaluation and standardized testing.

While maintaining our identity as a Catholic school, we welcome families of other denominations for whom faith is essential.

Introduction

St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy admits students of any race, color and national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students on the school.

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint students and their parents with the general procedures of the academy to ensure its operation in the best educational interests of the students it serves.

ARRIVAL: The school doors open at 8 am each day except in the case of a delayed opening when they will open at 10 am. Students are due in class by 8:15 when the day officially begins. Parents are responsible for maintaining supervision of their children should they arrive earlier than 8 am.

Early drop off is available for an additional fee. Please contact the school office for details.

All students in grades k to 8 enter the school building through the parking lot until 8:15. Students arriving after 8:15 am are considered “Late” and this will be noted on the official register of attendance.

Prompt arrival at school for a smooth start to the school day is essential. Since younger children are not in control of their arrival, parents are urged to follow school policy in this area. Students in grades 5 to 8 who are late more than 3 times will have to serve detention for each subsequent lateness.

Parents dropping their children off or picking them up by car should park outside the cones in the parish lot. Do not park outside the school building on Parsons Blvd. as this will impede the school buses.

DISMISSAL: For safety and convenience dismissal times vary by grade as follows:

| | | |
|--------------|------|-------------------|
| Kindergarten | 2:35 | Cafeteria Doors |
| Grades 1 -4 | 2:45 | Parking Lot Doors |
| Grades 5 – 6 | 2:50 | Parking Lot Doors |
| Grades 7 – 8 | 2:50 | Junior High Doors |

Early dismissal is noon for all grades at the exits as above.

A parent or guardian must pick up all children in grades pre-kindergarten to 6 each day. Parents of children in grades 5 and 6 must inform their teacher in writing if the student has permission to go home alone.

Once students are dismissed for the day they should leave school/academy property as the school/academy does not provide supervision. An after school program is available at additional cost.

ATTENDANCE: Education Law of the State of New York mandates school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 16. The responsibility for compliance rests with the parents/legal guardians of the child. The school is required to keep an accurate record of daily attendance, absence and tardiness in the register of attendance in the manner approved by the Commissioner of Education.

St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy has developed an attendance policy in accordance with New York State Education Law Section 3205. This policy will uphold the philosophy and mission of our school as stated in this handbook.

Regular attendance at school is essential to the educational development of the child. This is especially important in the early school years so good habits can be developed and maintained. Diocesan policy is that continuing illegal absences, totaling five consecutive days or more, should be reported to the attendance officer of the local public school district office.

Whenever a child is absent from school, the parent is required to send a written explanation to the classroom teacher. These notes must be kept on file by the school for three years and may be submitted either in written form or electronically. Examples of legal absence are sickness, death in the family, attendance at health clinics, religious observance.

Absence for family vacation or other such functions are considered illegal and will be so noted in the Official Register of Attendance.

Excessive absence is a serious issue that may result in retention or the student not being permitted to re-register for the following year. Excessive absence is defined as 45 days or more in an academic year. If a pattern appears to be developing the principal will notify the parents and an appropriate attendance plan will be required. Should the problem persist it may necessary to file a report with the Department of Child Protective Services.

Early Dismissal: Students are expected to attend a full day of school and should only be taken home early in rare instances and for serious reasons (i.e. doctor's appointment, family emergency). Parents/guardians wishing to arrange for early dismissal must state the reason for

the absence in a note prior to the requested dismissal time, pick up the child in the school office and sign the child out. Students are not permitted to leave school unless accompanied by a parent or authorized adult.

School Closing: If the school has to be closed due to weather or other emergency, parents will be notified via their preferred means which should be registered with the school office. Information will also be posted on the school website.

Delayed Opening: In the case of severe weather that does not necessitate closing, the school, in the interest of the safety, may delay opening to 10 am. In this case parents will be notified as above.

Accident/Illness: If a child becomes ill or injured during the school day necessitating his/her being sent home, the school will notify the parent to pick up the child.

School personnel are not permitted to transport a child in their personal vehicles for any reason including the need for medical attention. If an ambulance must be called in the case of a serious accident or medical condition the parents will be notified and told the location the child is being sent.

Medicines: No teacher or staff member may administer medicine of any kind to a child. If a child has special medical needs please contact the school nurse.

Emergency Card: Parents are required to update emergency notification cards each year which are kept on file in the office and also available should an emergency arise requiring evacuation of the school according to the Crisis Management Plan of the academy. We encourage parents to provide as many means of communication as possible including home phones, cell phones and email addresses.

Communication: Good communication between school and home is essential. Parents are encouraged to regularly check the school web site for important announcements about the school in general and classes in particular including homework assignments and upcoming tests.

Parents should provide the school office with telephone numbers for texts and/or email addresses to receive important information regarding school closing, dismissals and other important events.

Parents are encouraged to register for the parent portal available on the school's Option C electronic notification system to monitor student progress on a regular basis. Parents may also communicate with school personnel via the school email system.

For information on any of the above please call the school office.

Early Drop Off: Parents wishing to bring their children to school before 8 am can register for Early Drop Off at an additional cost. Contact the school office for details.

Breakfast: The school participates in the New York City Breakfast Program. Please contact the school office for eligibility requirements.

Lunch: Free or reduced lunch is available, please contact the school office for information and eligibility. Students may also order lunch on a daily basis each morning. Further details will be provided at the start of the school year.

Students are given a lunch and recess period each day. Grades 3 to 8 use the school cafeteria while other grades eat in their classrooms. Students must treat the lunch parents with respect at all times and follow their directives. Additionally please be aware of the following:

- Students are expected to speak in a conversational tone and there is to be no yelling.
- Students must remain in their seats until dismissed unless they are purchasing food.
- Students must properly dispose of their garbage.
- Students are never permitted to leave school grounds for any reason during lunch or recess.
- Bottles or cans are not permitted.

Birthdays: Birthdays are important celebrations for children. Each teacher will inform parents of class policy for these events. Small items may be brought in for distribution such as cookies, cupcakes, doughnuts but please keep in mind that many children have food allergies especially to peanuts. Large items such as pizza are not permitted. Parents are also asked to provide napkins. The teacher will decide when during the school day the celebration will take place and parents are not permitted to attend.

Books: All student textbooks must be covered. If a book is lost or destroyed the family will be charged the cost of replacement.

Buses: School buses are provided by the City of New York, call the school to discuss eligibility for the program.

Bus drivers are not employees or agents of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy but rather of the carrier. However, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting their enrollment in the school while being transported. Please be aware of the following:

- Students may ride on their assigned bus only. Students not assigned to a bus may not enter the bus at any time for any reason.
- Students must go directly to and remain in their seat for the duration of the ride.
- Arms, hand and head must remain fully inside the bus.
- Parents must impress on their children the importance of the authority of the bus driver.
- Students must speak in a normal tone to their neighbor, no shouting or yelling.
- Profanity of any sort will not be permitted
- Property of other students must be respected at all times.

The principal may at his discretion remove or suspend bus privileges at any time in the interest of student safety.

Private Bus/Car Service: St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy will not assume any responsibility should a parent decide to employ a private car or bus service.

After School Program: An after school program is available to parents from dismissal to 6 pm each day with certain exceptions. Days that the after school program is not available are noted on the monthly calendar. Please call the school office for details and cost of the program.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices: The school recognizes the need for students to have access to cell phones for emergency use. However, they must be turned off and cannot be used during the school day except as permitted by the teacher for instructional purposes. Parents should not text or call students when they are in school. In the case of an emergency please contact the school office.

If a student is found to be using his/her phone during the day the teacher may confiscate it and give it to the principal who will secure it until it can be picked up by a parent. In the case of repeated abuse of this policy the phone may be kept by the principal for a period of time as his discretion.

St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy does not assume financial responsibility for lost or stolen electronic devices.

Property: Respect for personal and school property is required at all times. Anyone damaging personal or school property is subject to school penalties up to and including suspension or expulsion. Restitution to the school or other individuals may also be required.

The academy does not assume responsibility for personal property brought onto school grounds that may be lost, stolen or damaged.

Fighting/Verbal Abuse/Bullying: Fighting, verbal abuse and bullying are contrary to the philosophy of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy. Anyone found to have engaged in such behavior is subject to penalties at the sole discretion of the principal.

Disciplinary Procedures: In general classroom behavior is under the control of the teacher; however, for serious and/or repeated violations of school policy the following penalties may be imposed.

- Detention is assigned by the teacher or principal and is generally held during lunch/recess.
- Suspension is given for very serious violations of school policy and is at the sole discretion of the principal. In-school suspension means the student is kept out of class and is assigned to a separate area. At home suspension is outside of school. While on suspension a student is responsible for all work that is assigned to his/her class.
- Expulsion is the most serious penalty given by the school and is done by the principal in consultation with the Board of Directors of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy.

Any student who brings drugs, except those prescribed specifically for the student and registered with the school nurse, alcohol or a weapon onto school grounds is subject to suspension or expulsion. Additionally, police or other civil authorities may be notified.

Students represent the academy to the community at large and are expected to behave in keeping with the philosophy of the school whether in uniform or not. Students who in the judgment of the principal bring discredit upon the academy are subject to discipline dependent upon the seriousness of the violation. This includes but is not limited to cyber bullying or other inappropriate behavior.

School Security: All visitors including parents must register with the office upon arrival and sign out when leaving. Parents are never permitted to go a classroom without the express permission of the principal.

Photographs: No student, teacher or other school personnel is permitted to take a picture of a student without the express written consent of the child's parent or guardian.

From time to time, photographs are taken to mark special occasions such as Student of the Month presentation, academic awards or holiday celebrations. These pictures may be posted on the school website. A permission slip is sent home at the beginning of each year for this purpose. There is no obligation on the parent or guardian to give consent.

Conferences: Parents wishing to speak to a teacher or the principal should schedule an appointment at a mutually convenient time. This can be done via email or telephone. Parents should not enter the school building to talk to a teacher at arrival as this will interfere with proper supervision of the entire class.

Should a serious issue arise with a teacher it is always preferable for the parent and teacher to meet privately for a mutual, respectful discussion. The principal may also at times be brought into the discussion, but generally it is preferable for the parent to go to the teacher first.

Reporting Student Progress: Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's progress on a regular basis through the parent portal.

Additionally, report cards are available to parents at the end of the first and second trimesters in December and March. Progress reports are also sent home midway through the first and second trimesters.

Teachers are available for conferences when report cards are given. Details will be provided for each teacher and class for the scheduling of appointments. Parents will be notified at the end of the second trimester if there is a possibility of retention for a student for the following year.

Final report cards are given directly to students at the end of the school year. Parents of students who must attend summer school in order to be promoted to the next grade will be notified during the final week of the school year. Summer school, if required, may be done at St. Nicholas of Tolentine or another approved program such as in a public school.

Academic Honors: At the end of each trimester, students in grades 5 to 8 are presented academic honors according to the following criteria.

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Honors with Distinction: | Average of 95 or better with no grade below 90 |
| First Honors: | Average between 90 - 94 with no grade below 85 |
| Second Honors: | Average between 85 – 90 with no grade below 80 |

Additionally each class honors a Student of the Month, the criteria for this award is at the discretion of the individual teacher.

Dress Code: School uniforms may be purchased at:

Flynn and O'Hara Uniforms
The Shops at Atlas Park
800 Cooper Avenue
Glendale, NY 11385
718 326 2704

| | |
|--|---|
| Pre-K and Kindergarten: Grades 1 -6 | School gym uniform (t-shirt, sweat pants, sweat shirt, shorts Boys: Navy pants w/ belt White or blue knit shirt w/ embroidered emblem Black dress shoes Navy cardigan (optional) Girls: Blue Plaid Jumper Round Collar white or blue blouse Gray, white or navy knee socks or tights Black or navy dress shoes Navy sweater (optional) |
| Grades 7 – 8 | Boys: Gray pants w/belt White or blue dress shirt w/ gray tie Black dress shoes Navy cardigan or vest (optional) Girls: Blue Plaid skirt Round collared white or blue blouse Navy vest Gray or white knee socks or tights Black or navy shoes |

Gym uniform with sneakers is to be worn on days of Physical Education classes only.

Hair must be neat and well groomed and of one natural color with no designs or lettering. Jewelry is to be avoided with the exception of watches and religious items which must be worn inside the shirt. A single post earring is permitted.

NUT Days or no uniform today are given throughout the year either for individuals or the school as a whole. It is not possible to list all items that may or may not be worn on these days but proper decorum is required. Clothing with inappropriate messages or not in keeping with the school philosophy are to be avoided. It is always best to err on the side of caution in this area.

Warm weather uniform: navy blue shorts and short sleeved white or blue knit shirt may be worn from opening of school to Columbus Day and from May 15 until end of school year. Girls may also wear navy skorts during these periods.

Tuition: The academy relies almost exclusively on the payment of tuition to meet its own financial obligations so prompt payment is required. Financial assistance is available from a number of sources; please contact the office for details. Payment may be made by check, PayPal or credit cards.

It is the policy of all institutions within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn not to accept cash. Please help us comply with this policy. Statements are sent on a regular basis but balance can be checked at any time via Option C. Please contact the office for details.

Report cards will not be distributed to families with outstanding balances at the end of each trimester. Additionally, records will not be forwarded to other schools until balances have been cleared.

All tuition and fees must be paid in full by the end of the school year. Students in grade 8 may not be permitted to attend end of year activities including but not limited to class trips, parent/student dinner dance and public graduation if this requirement is not met.

The school also reserves the right to use an outside collection agency to collect fees that are in arrears.

Fundraising: Raising additional funds is essential to the programs of the academy so there are two mandatory events each year: one in the spring and one in the fall. Each individual student's family is responsible for a combined donation of \$100.

Field Trips: Field trips are a valuable part of the educational process and are held at various times throughout the year. Students need a signed parental consent to attend such trips. Dress code and other information specific to a trip will be sent to parents in advance.

Students not going on a trip will be provided with alternate instruction should parents so desire.

Religious Instruction/Observances: Although the academy admits students of all faiths and respects their religious traditions, all students must take Religion as an academic subject. Additionally, all students must attend masses and other religious services during the school year.

Classroom Rules: This handbook sets out the basic rules for St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy. Individual teachers will determine their personal classroom rules subject to the approval of the principal. These rules will be published on the school website and explained to parents at the start of the year. However, no classroom rule or procedure may serve to supersede any policies contained herein.

PARENT/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP: Parents, as the primary educators of their children form a partnership with the school based on mutual respect and cooperation. Failure to adhere to the policies outlined in this handbook by either parents or children may jeopardize continued enrollment in St. Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Academy.

The principal retains the right to amend this handbook.