PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027

153 Eddywood Street
Springfield, MA 01118

Accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges

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August 2026

Dear Parents and Students of St. Michael's Academy,

Welcome to the beginning of a new and exciting school year filled with wonderful possibilities!

The purpose of St. Michael's Academy's Parent-Student Handbook is to acquaint you with the policies and regulations that we follow on a daily basis in order to ensure the safety and positive learning process of each student attending St. Michael's Academy. This Handbook touches upon every aspect of a student's life while he/she is entrusted to our care: spiritual, academic, behavioral and societal.

This document is meant to be an organizational guide toward understanding the global stance which St. Michael's Academy adopts in educating its youth. All school policies are in effect for the duration of any given school day and extension thereof. St. Michael's Academy reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents/guardians via the weekly e-newsletter and highlighted in red on the digital version for the current school year.

The staff of St. Michael's Academy teaches a non-violent approach to problem solving. Parents and students are expected to adopt the same non-violent approach in all aspects of daily life, thus connecting the home and the school in a viably consistent way.

You are asked to thoroughly read this handbook, become familiar with our policies and regulations, and discuss them with your child(ren). It should be readily accessible in your home and should be used as a reference.

Once both parents/guardians and students have had an opportunity to review our handbook, it is required that the form be signed and returned to the school office where it will be kept on file for the remainder of the school year. Non-return of form will imply consent to all policies.

Thank you for your cooperation. We look forward to working closely with you as together we make St. Michael's Academy the very best environment for your children to learn and grow!

Sincerely,

Ms. Ann E. Dougal, Principal

St. Michael's Academy

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2026-2027

August	31	Monday	School begins - Students in Grades 1-8
August	31	Monday	Before and After School Program begins
September	01	Tuesday	**SCHOOL IS IN SESSION - Parents must provide transportation**
September	02	Wednesday	Kindergarten and Preschool students begin
September	07	Monday	School closed – Labor Day
October	12	Monday	**School closed - Observance of Columbus Day**
October	30	Friday	School closed - Diocesan In-Service Day
November	03	Tuesday	**SCHOOL IS IN SESSION - Parents must provide transportation**
November	10	Tuesday	School closed - Parent/Teacher Conferences
November	11	Wednesday	**School closed - Veterans Day**
November	25-27	Wed.-Friday	School closed - Thanksgiving Break
November	30	Monday	School reopens
December	21	Monday	**SCHOOL IS IN SESSION - Parents must provide transportation**
December	22	Tuesday	**SCHOOL IS IN SESSION - Parents must provide transportation**
December	23	Wednesday	**SCHOOL IS IN SESSION - Parents must provide transportation**
December	23	Wednesday	Noon Dismissal - Last school day before Christmas Vacation
January	04	Monday	School reopens **- Parents must provide transportation**
January	05-06	Tues.-Wed.	**SCHOOL IS IN SESSION - Parents must provide transportation**
January	15	Friday	School closed - Teacher Professional Development
January	18	Monday	**School closed - Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Birthday**
February	15-19	Mon.-Friday	School closed - Midwinter Vacation
February	22	Monday	School reopens
March	12	Friday	School closed - Parent/Teacher Conferences
March	26	Friday	School closed - Good Friday
March	29	Monday	School closed - Easter Monday
April	19-23	Mon.-Friday	School closed - Spring Vacation
April	26	Monday	School reopens
May	31	Monday	School closed - Memorial Day
June	17	Thursday	Noon Dismissal - Tentative End of School Year *

*Calendar subject to change

PHILOSOPHY

St. Michael's Academy is founded on the roots and traditions of the Catholic faith.

> *"The Church is a community of people assembled by God, whose members share the life of Christ. Within this assembly, all enjoy a basic equality. All are called to holiness. All are united by close spiritual bonds. All share one Lord, one faith, one baptism."*
>
> (Sharing the Light of Faith)

We seek to fulfill Christ's command to proclaim the Gospel to all people by the manner in which we live our lives: by our actions and words. Through the Christian witness of our school community, we teach a faith that is living, loving and active.

> *"The school should be a focal point for the many educational and social efforts on behalf of children, young people and adults..."*
>
> (Sharing the Light of Faith)

WE BELIEVE:

- that through the teachings of our Catholic faith, together with moral and spiritual values, we cultivate a faith - oriented person who accepts, honors and gives daily witness to God's gift of life.

- that children are made aware of their unique and inherent gifts and talents. The teaching and reinforcing of basic skills built upon a foundation of discipline and tradition strengthens each child in the creative learning process.

Our philosophy demands that each child be provided with intellectual stimuli designed to impart knowledge, skills and values which enhance an ever - developing relationship with God and with others.

WE BELIEVE:

- that the teachings of our Catholic values and principles, imprinted on the hearts, souls and minds of our students will make them aware of their Christian commitment.

> *"Jesus challenges us to reach out beyond our culture to the stranger...to people who look and live very differently from us, reminding us that we are all made in the image and likeness of God."*
>
> (Justice and Peace Education)

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT AND PLEDGE

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of St. Michael's Academy to teach and share the traditions of the Roman Catholic faith and promote academic excellence within a safe and nurturing environment that welcomes and respects individuals of all backgrounds, cultures and faiths. In partnership with parents, we guide students to develop their fullest potential, as responsible citizens of the world, instilled with a strong set of moral values, a sense of service, and a love of learning.

SCHOOL PLEDGE

Today as a student at St. Michael's Academy, I promise to follow in the steps of Jesus by:

- Doing my best in all my work
- Respecting myself and others
- Caring and helping others in my school and community

PARENT/GUARDIAN WITNESS STATEMENT

The Church through the ages has consistently called its parents to understand and appreciate their special dignity as God's instruments of His love to their children. In recent years, the Church has, in its official teaching, given even greater prominence to the importance of this truth.

The second Vatican Council in its "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" stressed the importance of the parents providing the first experience of their faith to their children.

> *"They (Christian husbands and wives) are the first to communicate the faith to their children and to educate them; by word and example they train their offspring for the Christian and apostolic life."*

The Council Fathers even more emphatically expressed the irreplaceable role of the parents in communicating the Faith to their children in its "Declaration of Christian Education":

> *"Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educator is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it."* (Paragraph #3; October 28, 1965)

Therefore, it is with a complete awareness of the Catholic Church's vision of my vocation as a Catholic parent, that I enroll my child in St. Michael's Academy. In so doing I acknowledge and accept my privilege and responsibility to be the primary religious educator of my children. I understand St. Michael's Academy is a way in which my Church seeks to share and assist me in my vocation. However, I know that no matter how clearly and effectively St. Michael's

Academy communicates the truths of our faith, unless my children see these truths take flesh in our family, there is little hope that the faith will take root in their hearts. I believe that St. Michael's Academy can deepen, enrich, and re-enforce a Faith that my children experience in their home. I understand my own witness as essential to the religious development and growth of my children.

Aware of the dignity of my call from God and with a reverent awe for the responsibility which is mine, I commit myself to be in word and deed the first teacher of my children. Practically, I understand this to mean:

1) to participate consistently and actively in the Sunday Eucharist;
2) to speak to my children about things of God, and to make prayer an integral and important part of the environment of our home;
3) to participate and cooperate, as St. Michael's Academy requests, in the religious education and especially the sacramental preparation of my children;
4) to accept my responsibility to support the moral teachings of the Catholic Faith in order to not contradict in my home what is proclaimed in the school;
5) to teach my children by work and example to have a love and concern for the needs of others, especially the poor;
6) to do my fair share in financially supporting St Michael's Academy.

WITNESS STATEMENT FOR NON-CATHOLIC PARENTS/GUARDIANS WHO HAVE ENROLLED THEIR CHILD(REN) IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

I enroll my child at St. Michael's Academy with an awareness that:

- the first purpose of St. Michael's Academy is to communicate the Catholic Faith to a new generation;
- St. Michael's Academy sees itself as a partner with the parents in teaching their children;
- the Catholic community sees the parents as the primary educators of their children;
- personal and social morality that St. Michael's Academy teaches to its students can only be effectively learned if it is reinforced in the primary learning center of the home.

Therefore, by enrolling my child in St. Michael's Academy, I accept the following responsibilities:

- in order to know what my child is being taught, to attend programs that the school encourages in order to help me become more knowledgeable about the Catholic Faith;

- to speak to my child about the things of God and to make prayer an integral and important part of the environment of our home;

- to participate and cooperate with school programs that enable parents to take an active role in the religious education of their child;

- to accept my responsibility to support the moral teachings of the Christian Faith in order not to contradict in my home what is proclaimed in the school;

- to teach my child by word and example a love and concern for the needs of others, especially the poor;

- to meet my financial responsibilities in supporting St. Michael's Academy.

PARENT'S PRAYER

God, Great Parent of all people, help me in my task of parenthood. Help me to see my children's problems through their eyes.

Keep ever before me my own childhood so that I will not expect too much. Send your Holy Spirit that I may receive the graces I need.

Give me the patience of the silent stars. Give me a sense of humor.

Help me to win them through love instead of compelling them through fear. Help me to teach them to see straight and to play the game according to the rules. Help me to live my own life above doubt and skepticism. Help me to radiate faith in the basic goodness of life. Help me to keep the ideals of youth aglow in my own life.

Give me the strong hand for guidance when youth falters and would turn back. Help me to teach them to live bravely and to meet defeat courageously. Help me to teach them that the value of their lives will be measured by the service they give.

Help me to teach them that true happiness is found, not in things, but in the unfolding of their minds and their souls. Help me to make my life go on in theirs, bigger, finer, nobler, than I ever dared to be.

I ask all this through Your Son and my Brother, Jesus. Amen.

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ACADEMIC PROBATION

St. Michael's Academy students are expected to meet the rigors of our high academic standards. Our mission is to provide students with a well-rounded educational foundation which includes high moral values, a sense of service, and a love of learning.

New Student Probationary Period

All new students entering St. Michael's Academy are placed on a probationary status for the first quarter of the school year. During this time, teachers will closely monitor academic performance, behavior, and overall adjustment to the SMA environment. Middle school students in particular will be formally evaluated at the first quarter progress reporting period, and appropriate support or intervention strategies will be implemented if needed. At the end of the first quarter, students will either be released from probation or continue under observation with additional support as determined by the school team.

Traditional Academic Probation

The administration and faculty of St. Michael's Academy are committed to assisting each child with his/her educational endeavors. **However, it is understood that if a student is capable of "A" or "B" work – which is supported by standardized testing results and other objective data – on a consistent basis but does not perform as such, the resulting report card grades will obviously reflect this lack of effort and consistency on the part of the student**. (Please also refer to the Honor Roll policy.)

In the event that a student does not meet our standards, academic probation will be instituted. At the elementary level these instances are addressed on an individual basis where the parents, teacher(s), and administrator will define appropriate steps for achieving success.

At the middle level, a student is placed on academic probation for failing two or more core academic classes during any one of the four quarters of the academic year. A student may also be placed on probation if she/he received a combination of Ds and Fs in three core content areas. Academic probation may be instituted mid-quarter and this action may extend through the end of the marking period or the action may be implemented at the end of the marking period with probation extending through the mid-quarter of the next marking period.

During the probationary period, the student and parent will be required to work together to meet the following expectations:

1. Check FACTS, our on-line grading system, to monitor daily/weekly progress toward the student achieving a 70% or higher average. We require parents to have a FACTS SIS account independent of the student's account.
2. Commit to having the student attend either before or after school support sessions at least one day per week with the classroom teacher(s) where the student's average is below 70%.

In addition to these steps, weekly progress reports will be sent home, requiring the parent's review and signature. These progress reports must be returned to school as an indication that the parent is aware of his/her child's progress.

At the end of the probationary period, the parents, teaching team, and administrator will meet to review the student's proficiency in the core area(s) of concern and a new determination of academic status will be established.

Student Athletics: Sportsmanship and Academic Eligibility in the Middle School

Participation in athletics at St. Michael's Academy is an opportunity for students to develop teamwork, discipline, perseverance, leadership, and positive sportsmanship. Student athletes are expected to represent themselves, their families, their school, and their teammates with respect, good character, and a positive attitude. While our elementary athletic program places an intentional emphasis on team achievement, sportsmanship, and working together, participation in athletics also carries the responsibility of maintaining academic progress.

All student athletes must maintain a minimum C minus average in all classes in order to remain academically eligible. Eighth grade students whose current grade average falls below a C minus will be ineligible to participate in weekly games until their academic performance meets the required standard. Student athletes will be monitored weekly throughout the season to ensure that they continue to meet academic eligibility requirements. Additional information regarding athletic expectations, eligibility, and monitoring will be provided at the parent meeting for each sport.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance in all classes is essential to the learning process and establishes good work habits. Students are expected to be in attendance every day of the school year. Parents/ guardians have a legal obligation to ensure that their child is in attendance each day school is in session.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts states that parents/guardians are required to ensure children attend school. Laws outline the responsibilities of parents, guardians and other adults to monitor and prevent children's absence from school.

Please note: A leave of absence for students in grades kindergarten through eight is defined as time taken during the school year, outside of the designated school holidays, when a student is not in attendance at school. This practice is strongly discouraged by the Administration of St. Michael's Academy. Parents are encouraged to schedule vacations on the regularly scheduled vacation dates. Long absences create a hardship for the student. ***Parents must assume the educational responsibility of their child(ren) should they choose to take their child out of school during required times.***

Absence Policy

Students are expected to be in school everyday. When a student is absent s/he is not learning. Per the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, there are no "excused" absences, only "documented" ones. Even when your child goes to the doctor it is not considered an "excused" absence.

In the case of illness, if a student is capable of completing assignments at home, a parent/guardian may call or email the school and request work assignments with the intention of having the work completed prior to returning to school. Requests should be made before 8:00 am the day of an absence.

One of the major components of education is consistency; therefore, each day builds on the previous day's instruction and practice of skills. Every student who must be absent from school for one or more days is expected to fulfill the academic assignments given during the absence. ***Students will be given the same number of days to make up missed work, quizzes and/or tests as the number of days they were absent. In grades 4-8, it is the responsibility of the student to inquire as to the work missed.***

However, if a student is too ill to do assignments at home, upon returning to school, the previous policy stated will be in practice. Students who need to be absent for prolonged illnesses will be given extended periods to complete assignments as current assignments will also need to be attended to. The length of the extension will be at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

Parents/guardians are to make every effort to schedule doctor and dentist appointments outside of school hours. ***In order to be considered present for the day, a student must be in school for a minimum of 50% of the academic day.***

A student may not be absent for more than **nine** (**9**) days during each semester (half of the academic year). More than **eighteen** (**18**) absences in an **academic year** may result in a student not being promoted to the next grade.

The school should be notified on the day of the absence. Emails may be sent to attendance@smaspringfield.org and should be received no later than 8:00 am the date of the absence. The school office will make contact with a parent/guardian either at home or at work concerning unaccounted absences. This policy is to ensure the safety of each student.

Upon returning to school from any absence, if an email has not already been sent to the school, a student must be accompanied by a note, written and signed by the parent/guardian, explaining the absence(s).

Absence Notes

Acceptable documentation is a written note from the doctor's/dentist's office, court official, or obituary notice.

Notes or emails from parents/guardians regarding an excused absence will be considered adequate written documentation ONLY if the following information is included:

- Student First and Last Name
- Student Grade and Homeroom
- The reason for the absence from the excused absence list
- Parent First and Last Name

Excused Absences

- 1 or 2 day student illness may be documented by a parent
- 3 or more days of student illness requires a doctor's note before returning to school)
- Medical or dental appointment - preferred direct written documentation from the provider
- Death in the immediate family
- Legal matters requiring the student's personal appearance

Unexcused Absences

An undocumented absence occurs when a student is absent and no notification of absence has been received by the school office personnel or it is not an approved absence.

Parents are encouraged to schedule vacations on the regularly scheduled vacation dates. Long absences create an unnecessary hardship for the student.

Parents must assume the educational responsibility of their child(ren) should they choose to disregard this policy. Teachers will not distribute individualized assignments/lessons prior to the student's departure, since assignments are based on the instructional needs of the students.

Parent Notification Policy

When students are absent from school for significant periods of time the following protocols may be instituted:

5 days absent - You may receive a letter from the school and a personal reminder from the student's homeroom teacher on the importance of consistent attendance.

10 days absent - You may receive a letter from the school and a personal call from the school counselor. A discussion will ensue regarding how to support improved attendance.

15 days absent - You may receive a letter from the school and an immediate conference may be scheduled with the family, teacher, counselor and administrator to discuss the current

standing of the student. Discussion at this time will include student progress, previous employed strategies to improve attendance, as well as the development of a formal attendance plan.

18 days absent - You will receive a letter from the school and an immediate conference will be scheduled with the family, teacher, counselor and administrator to discuss the current standing of the student. The principal will review documentation to determine if student retention is warranted. Additional discussion may include termination of student enrollment at St. Michael's Academy.

Tardy Policy

Tardiness is the absence of a student in the classroom at the time the regularly scheduled session begins (when the bell rings). It is a reasonable expectation that in order for a learning activity to exist, each student must arrive to class on time (punctually). A student who is tardy to class not only places his/her own learning in jeopardy, but also interrupts the learning of other students.

School Schedule and Tardy Procedures:

- 8:00 a.m. First bell rings. All students arrive and begin to move toward their classroom where they have the opportunity to participate in the school breakfast program.
- 8:30 a.m. Second bell rings. All students should be in their classrooms.
- 8:31 a.m. Students arriving at this time are TARDY. ***It is mandatory that students arriving at this time sign the tardy log at the main office.***

BICYCLES

When traveling to and from the SMA campus, students must obey all traffic regulations. The school assumes no responsibility for bicycles. However, provisions have been made to safeguard bicycles by requiring that they be properly parked and locked in the rack provided for such. **Bicycles are never to be ridden on the SMA campus. Students must walk their bicycles on campus and leave them in the designated area.**

Parents who wish to allow bicycle riding to and from school should inspect the route for safety. **Helmet use is mandatory throughout Massachusetts**. Failure to observe rules may result in loss of permission to ride a bicycle to school.

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

The Diocese of Springfield ("Diocese") and the Catholic School Office ("CSO") believe that each Catholic school in the Diocese of Springfield must be aware that its purpose is rooted in the mission of the Church. Each Catholic school, in fulfilling its role within the educational mission of the Church, must share and live out, through Catholic Christian tradition, the message of Jesus Christ and be committed to providing an integrated Catholic educational environment that permeates all aspects of its daily life and operations.

Each child should be challenged to reach his/her full potential, develop a love of learning and learn in an environment that fosters respect and understanding of one another. It is essential that

a safe, positive and productive educational environment be established where students can achieve the highest academic standards and where no student shall be subjected to Bullying, Cyber-Bullying or Retaliation. Bullying, Cyber-Bullying or Retaliation or other disruptive or violent behaviors constitute conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and embracing environment. Pastors, principals, faculty, staff and volunteers are expected to demand that all students behave appropriately and treat others with civility and respect. Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Retaliation are not to be tolerated.

Accordingly, Bishop William D. Byrne, Bishop of Springfield, (the "Bishop") hereby promulgates this Bully Prevention Policy (the "Policy") which shall be applicable to all Catholic parish schools and all other Catholic schools over which the Bishop has authority to appoint trustees, directors, governors or officers (each herein sometimes referred to as a "school"). The Diocesan Bullying Prevention Policy and supporting documents may be found on the SMA website.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Every student must understand that proper behavior is always required in the school building, on the playground, and on school buses. This rule applies to the use of **ALL** school property as well.

Students are expected to treat school property in the classroom, lavatories, lunchroom, hallways, and the exterior of the building as if they owned a part or all. **A pride of place is expected at all times.**

Any student responsible, in any fashion, for damaging or destroying any school materials or school property, as well as damaging anything on the school bus, will be held accountable for the damage caused and will be subject to disciplinary action by the principal as well as held responsible for repair and/or replacement of damaged articles.

A City Ordinance made effective in December 2000 defines graffiti as a public nuisance and specifies penalties and other enforcement tools to protect public and private property from graffiti vandalism. Persons applying graffiti on school property or on the school bus are responsible for removing or paying for the removal of graffiti and for restitution for damages. Additionally, fines shall be imposed, and the parent/guardian will also be held responsible for the payment of fines.

CELL PHONE, SMARTWATCH, AI GLASSES USE

If a student needs a cell phone after school due to walking home from school, entering a house where no one is home, or attending sport practices or games, he/she must turn the cell phone to the "off" position for the day. The cell phone must not be in the student's possession (on the person of the student) at any time during the school day, without prior approval by the teacher or administration. **Smartwatches or AI glasses are not acceptable.**

St. Michael's Academy students are expected to fully comply with this school policy while under school supervision. If a student fails to comply with this policy, **the cell phone/smartwatch/AI glasses will be confiscated and will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s). If the problem persists, further disciplinary action will be taken by the administration.**

The school is NOT responsible for lost, misplaced, stolen, or broken portable communication devices or for any unauthorized use of such devices.

Possible escalation of consequences for unsanctioned cell phone and smartwatch usage:

- Cell phone/smartwatch is confiscated and administration is notified. Cell phone/smartwatch is returned directly to the parent and a conference is held to discuss the school's cell phone usage expectations.
- Cell phone/smartwatch is confiscated and returned directly to the parent at the end of the week.

CONFERENCES

Teachers welcome the opportunity to discuss student progress/concerns with parents/guardians. Conferences ***should never be impromptu*** and should be scheduled at a mutually convenient time for both the parent/guardian and teacher(s).

Formal or informal conferences may be scheduled, by appointment, before and after school hours. However, they should not occur **immediately** before school or **immediately** following dismissal. Teachers need to use the time prior to the opening of each school day for immediate preparations, conferencing with the principal or supervision duty. At the end of the day, teachers must be at their stations supervising an orderly and safe dismissal from school.

At the end of the first marking period, typically in November of each academic year, all St. Michael's Academy families are scheduled for mandatory parent-teacher conferences to receive the 1st quarter report card. There is a second conference during the 3rd quarter, typically in March of each academic year. The spring conference is focused on student growth throughout the year and is not directly related to a report card or progress report. The Academy does its best to schedule these conferences around parents' work schedules so that at least one adult from each family is available to meet with the homeroom teacher.

Both teachers' and parents' time is valuable. If something prevents you from attending a scheduled conference, please inform the teacher or school as early as possible.

CORI and VIRTUS ONLINE SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

In response to the Charter for the Protection of Children as adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Dallas in June of 2002 and revised in 2005, the Diocese Safe Environment program includes:

- The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People: A Policy of the Diocese of Springfield
- The Code of Conduct for All Those Ministering on Behalf of the Church
- Comprehensive background checks on
    - All existing and new employees of the Diocese and entities associated with the Diocese
    - All existing and new volunteers who have contact with children
- Educational awareness programs designed to:
    - Increase awareness of child sexual abuse
    - Increase our ability to prevent child sexual abuse from occurring in our schools, parishes and communities
    - Allow you to commit to being a part of a community that will protect all of God's children.

All employees of the Diocese, parishes and schools, as well as all volunteers who have contact with children, are required to participate in and comply with all aspects of the Virtus Online Safe Environment Program.

CURRICULUM and INSTRUCTION

The curriculum at St. Michael's Academy is sequential, incorporating parts of the Massachusetts State Frameworks, Common Core Curriculum and Diocesan Guidelines for Instruction, and addresses the needs of the students.

Religion

Primary emphasis is placed on the spiritual development of each student. The religion program encompasses the tenets of the Catholic Faith as well as traditional prayers and lives of the Saints. Various Church holidays and seasons are highlighted both school wide and in individual classrooms, for example:

- each class studies the Rosary during the months of October and May since these months are especially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. During this time, a decade of the rosary is prayed daily for various intentions. Students are taught to focus on the mysteries of the rosary at this time;
- students participate in para-liturgical services in order to focus on Thanksgiving and the season of Advent;
- students pray and learn about the Advent church season using the Advent wreath and other appropriate Advent preparation materials;
- students are led in prayer, sacrifice and almsgiving during the season of Lent;
- students are instructed about saints, those holy men and women who have made valuable contributions to humanity and to our Church family;
- students are instructed as to the meaning and lived significance of the scheduled Sunday liturgy.

Liturgical Celebrations

The student body attends monthly Masses. Classes also worship together for holy days, Catholic Schools Week, and other special events throughout the school year. Non-Catholic students respectfully attend religious functions along with their Catholic classmates.

Parents are welcome to attend any and all functions prepared and executed in conjunction with the religion program.

Safe Environment - "Circle of Grace" Program

The "Circle of Grace" program is taught in the Preschool – Grade 8. This diocesan approved program is the mandated diocesan curriculum for all of the Catholic schools. The program strives to improve self-reliance, raise self-esteem and help students to master personal

safety skills while reassuring them that most adults are kind, safe and committed to their well-being.

Language Arts

The program used at St. Michael's Academy is literature-based incorporating reading, writing, listening, and speaking aspects of communication. The program has specific goals and objectives. Reading and writing are not taught in isolation of each other. Particular attention is given to the continued development of reading skills across all of the content areas. Students are taught to use/develop: phonemic awareness, critical thinking skills, analysis, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing.

Penmanship & Handwriting

Pride in work includes legible penmanship and formal handwriting appropriate to each grade level. Students are taught how to hold a writing implement and form letters correctly. Formalized cursive writing is taught in third grade and continues through grade eight. Attention to detail and fine motor development are benefits of neat penmanship and handwriting.

Mathematics

St. Michael's Academy offers mathematics classes that encourage students to explore, conjecture, reason logically, solve non-routine problems, communicate about mathematics and connect ideas within mathematics and between mathematics and other disciplines. Students investigate problems both independently and in cooperative groups. The program aims to develop personal self-confidence and a disposition to seek, evaluate, and use quantitative and spatial information in solving problems and making decisions. The program follows a spiraling progression, grades preschool to eight.

Science

The purpose of science education is to enable students to draw on a wide range of skills, habits of mind, and subject matter knowledge for informed participation in modern day society. Through investigation and inquiry, students develop an understanding of earth science, life science and physical science.

Students in preschool through grade five study an overview of earth science, life science and physical science according to diocesan curriculum guidelines, the Massachusetts science frameworks, and the Next Generation Science Standards. Students in grades six through eight are taught science concepts through a thematic approach incorporating inquiry and experimentation focusing on Earth science in 6th grade, Life science in 7th grade, and Physical science in 8th grade.

Social Studies

The primary purpose of the social studies curriculum is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good, as citizens of a culturally diverse and democratic society in an interdependent world.

Students in preschool through grade five study the family unit, community with its privileges and obligations, early exploration and colonization, and United States history – its regions, government and interdependence. Grades three through five also work on map skills including the study of landforms and how to read longitude and latitude.

The curriculum at the sixth-grade level focuses on ancient civilizations and geography, seventh grade on early U.S. history, and eighth grade on U.S. history and local government.

Art

Students, preschool through grade eight, learn the elements of Art as stipulated and mandated by the Massachusetts Frameworks for Art. Students experience various mediums and study world-famous artists and their works.

Computer

The use of computers is integrated into teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers and students use computers for research, presentations, enrichment, reinforcement, independent learning and assessment. Computers are used in whole-class settings. The program is in accordance with the diocesan curriculum guidelines and the Massachusetts computer frameworks.

We are pleased to allow students of St. Michael's Academy access to the internet. To gain access to the internet, all students must obtain parental permission and must sign and return a form to their homeroom teachers. Access to the internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards. Families should be warned that some materials available via the internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to people. While our intent is to make internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. We believe that the benefit to students with access to the internet in the form of informational resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed any disadvantages. Students who are offenders of this policy could be denied internet access/use at St. Michael's Academy.

The network is provided for students to perform research. Access to network service is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege and not a right. Access entails responsibility. Individual users of the school's computers are responsible for their behavior and communications over the networks. Additionally, all students are given access to use either the school Chromebooks or tablets. It is presumed that all computer users will comply with school standards and will honor the agreement they have signed. It is expected that students will not access sites with objectionable material.

Teachers will guide students toward appropriate materials and monitor the information and websites accessed.

All students at St. Michael's Academy are required to sign an internet "Acceptable Use" policy form.

Acceptable Internet Use Policy for Grades Pre-K to 8

The use of the school's Chromebooks or tablets is a privilege given to all students at Saint Michael's Academy. Each student is expected to take this privilege seriously and abide by all the rules stated below.

This privilege includes:

- The use of the Chromebooks or tablets for learning.
- The use of the Chromebooks or tablets for classroom activities.

There are two categories of offenses:

- Misuse of the Chromebooks or tablets.
- Use of the system with the intention of doing harm to the computers.

The rules to be followed are listed below:

- A student must treat all computer equipment and materials with care and respect.
- While using a Chromebook or tablet, students may only use those applications assigned to them.
- A student may not copy, move or remove files or programs from the school's Chromebooks.
- A student may not download or print large files.
- A student may not add programs to the school's computer.
- A student may not use a flash drive to transfer files to the school's computer without permission. **This is to prevent viruses.**
- Students are expected to abide by the rules pertaining to copyrighted materials.
- Students are not allowed to check their own personal email accounts while accessing the internet through the school's computer system.

- Students are not allowed to access social networking sites (TikTok, Facebook) while accessing the internet.

Acceptable Network Use Policy

The internet is an electronic communication network that provides access to an immense number of unique resources in a global community. By providing internet access to our students, our goal is to promote educational excellence in the school through resource sharing and communication. Students are encouraged to access educational resources, gather data and engage in learning activities.

These services are provided as privileges. All school Chromebooks and tablets are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner. The code of conduct of Saint Michael's Academy applies to internet activities and this acceptable use policy provides an opportunity to educate the user on the school's expectations. The responsibility of the user should therefore be considered an extension of the behavior code.

Students who log on to the internet at school are responsible for all activities while using it. Users should exercise caution when revealing personal information. To ensure personal safety and the safety of others, users should not publish their school or home address or phone number over the internet. If students experience any concerns over communication they have received from others while at school, they should seek assistance from the computer teacher or their homeroom teacher.

The school cannot always control the content of the information available on the internet. **Filtering software may not always be available**. Should a user discover material on the internet that is inappropriate in the school environment, he or she should not download or transfer this material and shall not identify or share the location of the material with other students. They should immediately inform the computer teacher or their homeroom teacher.

Unethical or illegal use of the school computers will be cause for disciplinary action, including revocation of privileges. Examples of such inappropriate uses include unauthorized access into private files, destruction of other students' files, violation of copyright laws, use of inappropriate language, and transmission of searches for obscene material.

Consequences for Unacceptable Use of Computers For St. Michael's Academy

If a student violates any part of this policy, the consequences will be:

First Offense: Student will lose his/her computer privileges for one week. Parents will be notified. Any assigned work will be completed with pen and paper using traditional texts and resources.

Second Offense: Student will lose his/her computer privileges for one month. Parents will be notified. A parent/teacher conference will be required prior to the student returning to the Chromebook or tablet.

Third Offense: Computer privileges will be revoked for one term. Parents will be notified. A meeting with the principal, teacher and parents will need to take place prior to the student regaining access to the school Chromebook or tablet.

Final note to parents or guardians: The Internet is a powerful learning tool, but it should not be used indiscriminately or without supervision. While your child is at school, every effort to assure that this resource is used appropriately will be made by the teacher, but ultimately the responsibility lies with the student and parent.

Damage and Replacement Costs: Families are responsible for covering the cost of any damaged, broken, or lost technology used by the individual student. A replacement fee will be assessed based on the damaged, broken, or lost technology. A full Chromebook replacement fee for the 2026-2027 school year is **$450.**

Foreign Language

Foreign language study is part of the general curriculum for all students. Age-appropriate instruction integrates listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture. Foreign language classes emphasize the importance of communication, cultural and career values of understanding and communicating in more than one language. All students, preschool through grade eight, participate in a second language program – Spanish – at St. Michael's Academy.

Health Education

Health education is offered in preschool through grade eight as part of the physical education curriculum. This program endeavors to provide knowledge that changes attitudes and promotes optimal health by developing sound health habits. Self-esteem, decision-making and awareness of personal and social values are integral components of health education. Students learn that one's personal health includes social, environmental, psychological, genetic and personal life-style factors.

The curriculum is in accordance with the diocesan health guidelines and an adaptation of the city of Springfield's health program.

Music

Students, preschool through grade eight, learn the elements of music through singing, music reading, playing instruments, listening and responding. Through the Community Music School, students are also provided with the opportunity to participate in learning the violin, drumming and chorus in grades 2, 3, 4 (respectively). Additionally students participate in learning the recorder at 4th and 5th grades and have a variety of choir experiences available to them outside of the regular music class offered.

Physical Education

Physical education is an integral part of a person's total education. It contributes to the development of the individual by means of physical activity. It is a planned sequential program, preschool through grade eight. Learning experiences are designed to fulfill the growth, development, and behavior of each student. It promotes necessary skills and mental attitudes that enable students to maintain physical fitness throughout their adult lives.

Students are not excused from participation in a scheduled gym class unless a note from a parent (specifying the short term physical need) or a physician form is submitted stating the reason for exclusion.

Students are required to dress in weather appropriate, St. Michael's gym uniforms on the day of their scheduled class. Those students not dressed appropriately are subject to class penalties which will directly impact the grade earned in this class.

Title I

Title I services are available to **Springfield residents** in grades kindergarten through five who are in need of short- or long-term reading and mathematics remediation in order to successfully master needed skills.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is a fundamental virtue instilled in the students of St. Michael's Academy. This academic integrity is based on the trust between teacher and student. By writing their name on an assignment, students pledge that, unless properly cited, the work is entirely their own.

Academic dishonesty in all its many forms can be broad and complex. No policy on academic honesty can list and describe every possible transgression. St. Michael's Academy expects that each student will strive for the highest of academic standards.

If a student is uncertain about the guidelines for academic honesty, students should discuss these questions with a teacher. Penalties to academic dishonesty will be dealt with on a case by case basis and may include but are not limited to: requesting the assignment be completed again, a secondary assignment being given, a failing grade or a parental conference.

Original work is expected to be turned in by all students. Resources such as AI, calculators, school based apps, and parental help should be utilized sparingly. When in doubt, simply send a note to your child's teacher asking for further guidance.

Together we can maintain and uphold the rigorous academic standards established here at St. Michael's Academy.

DISCIPLINE

St. Michael's Academy provides an educationally sound environment for all students. It is expected that all of its students will conduct themselves in a Christian, socially responsible manner. An orderly, respectful learning environment is important for students and staff to feel secure and safe and, consequently, for all to achieve and experience academic success. All school staff members set high standards of behavior, treating students with courtesy and respect, thereby promoting reciprocal behavior in students.

Students are expected to conduct themselves with **COURTESY and APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR** at all times during the school day and any extensions thereof. This standard includes behavior in the **classroom, hallways, cafeteria, bus, school yard, school-sponsored events, and especially in the church setting.**

Parents/legal guardians are held to the same standard as students with regards to respect for teachers and staff. Enrollment of the child in the school implies a partnership between the school and parents/legal guardians and child. **If the partnership breaks down, parents/legal guardians can be required to withdraw the child from the school.**

Politeness is a must. Respect is due each teacher, staff member, volunteer and student at St. Michaels' Academy. School time is to be a quiet time; therefore, loud talking, pushing, shoving, teasing, bullying, harassing, will **never be tolerated.**

It is expected that each student will take school pride to heart. When something is broken or damaged, it is expected that a student will report the incident to the school office in order that things may be taken care of for the general safety of everyone.

Disciplinary action will be taken for the following infractions:

- lack of exhibited respect for authority figures; refusal to follow directions from principal, teachers or other school staff members;
- verbal, physical and/or emotional harassment of classmates (name calling; attempted harmful or unauthorized touching of another person);
- violation of civil rights: students have the right to be free from discrimination based on race, national origin, religion, gender, disability, sexual harassment, sexual orientation;
- using/selling drugs;
- carrying any object which has the potential to be used as a weapon;
- violent actions of any kind which can be interpreted as placing another person in harm's way;
- use of electronic devices during school hours constitutes grounds for confiscation and, depending on the circumstances, appropriate consequences taken by the administration;

- bus misconduct;
- vandalism;
- profanity, obscene language, possession of obscene material;
- fighting;
- smoking;
- possession of laser pointers;
- repeated violation of the school dress code;
- classroom disruption;
- truancy;
- cheating, including but not limited to, the use of AI to write or complete student work;
- forging signatures.

Repeated disruptive action(s) of a student/students in a particular situation may constitute grounds for suspension or expulsion.

DRESS CODE

All St. Michael's Academy students are expected to be neatly dressed during the school day to reflect the values of self-respect, good taste, neatness, cleanliness, modesty, and safety.

In acknowledging that the responsibility for the good grooming and hygiene of students remains with the parents/guardians, we additionally expect that parents/guardians see that the students adhere to the following requirements. These have been established to help the students develop self-confidence, form a school community, and avoid unnecessary **distractions** so as to remain focused on the learning process.

Uniform Policy for Boys and Girls

All students in grades kindergarten through eighth must wear the SMA school uniform provided by Blake's School Uniform in Springfield (782-4123 or www.blakesschooluniform.com) and online by Donnelly's School Apparel (1-800-498-0045 or www.DonnellysClothing.com).

Preschool Students:

September-October / May-June: Gray t-shirt and navy blue shorts, each with the school insignia.
November-April: Gray long-sleeved t-shirt worn with any of the following combinations: navy blue pullover fleece sweatshirt and fleece sweatpants, navy blue zip-front jacket and track pants, each with the school insignia.
Outerwear: School insignia must be on all clothing.
Footwear: Running shoes – laced or velcroed – for safety and comfort during playtime.

Students in grades Kindergarten - Five:

Girls – Plaid, box pleat **knee-length** jumper worn over a red short- or long-sleeved polo shirt with school insignia. Girls may wear solid colored black, navy blue, or red ankle-length **straight-leg** leggings underneath their jumpers. (No exposed skin).

September-October / May-June: (optional) Red short-sleeved polo shirt with school insignia worn tucked into navy blue **knee-length** walking shorts.

November-April: (optional) Red short- or long-sleeved polo shirt with school insignia worn tucked into navy blue twill slacks. Pants must be worn ***appropriate to the size of the student*** (not too loose, not too tight) and ***must be worn at the waist level.***

Boys – A red short- or long-sleeved polo shirt with the school insignia worn tucked into navy blue twill pants. ***Pants must be worn at the waist level***.

September-October / May-June: Red short-sleeved polo shirt with school insignia worn tucked into navy blue walking shorts. Pants must be worn ***appropriate to the size of the student*** (not too loose, not too tight) and ***must be worn at the waist level.***

Students in grades 6-8:

Girls - Red short- or long-sleeved polo shirt bearing the school insignia, worn tucked into a plaid **knee-length** box pleat skirt. Girls may wear solid colored black or navy blue ankle-length (no exposed skin) **straight-leg** leggings underneath their skirts.

Boys - Red short- or long-sleeved polo shirt with the school insignia worn tucked into khaki appropriate sized uniform twill straight legged pants. ***Pants must be worn at the waist level. No cargo pants. No elastic at the ankles.***

September-October / May-June: Red short-sleeved polo shirt with school insignia worn tucked into khaki walking shorts. Shorts must be worn ***appropriate to the size of the student*** (not too loose, not too tight) and ***must be worn at the waist level***.

Physical Education Uniform for girls and boys, grades kindergarten - eight:

September-October / May-June: Gray t-shirt and navy blue **knee-length** shorts, each with the school insignia.

November-April: Gray long-sleeved t-shirt worn with any of the following combinations: navy blue pullover fleece sweatshirt and fleece sweatpants (no leggings), navy blue zip-front jacket and track pants, ***each with the school insignia***.

Layered gym uniforms must all contain the school insignia.

Student Appearance - All Students

- School uniforms are to be worn in preschool through grade eight beginning with the first day of school.
- Uniforms must always be neat and clean in appearance, in good repair, and the size and fit must be appropriate.
- At all times, **shirts may not be worn layered** and must be tucked into the slacks, shorts, or skirt during the school day.
- Spiritwear
  - SMA Spiritwear T-shirts may only be worn on Fridays (not Gym days Monday-Thursday).
  - **Spiritwear with hoods** is considered **outerwear** for grades 4 to 8 and **may not be worn in 2nd floor classrooms**.
  - "Outerwear" includes the following:

Socks

- Socks are required to be worn by boys and girls at all times.
- Socks or tights must be a complementary color: red, white, blue, black, gray or tan in color. NO PRINTS

Shoes

- ❖ Flat shoes that can be laced, tied, velcroed, or buckled are the only shoes allowed.
- ❖ Shoes must be a complementary color: red, white, blue, black, gray or tan.
- ❖ In the winter months, students must change out of their boots and wear their school shoes during the course of the academic day.
- ❖ Sandals, Crocs, jelly type shoes, clogs, flip-flops, moccasins, or shoes of any type that are backless or open-toed are NOT to be worn at any time.
- ❖ Light-up sneakers are not allowed.
- ❖ Any shoes deemed a safety hazard by the discretion of the teacher may not be worn.

Jewelry for Boys and Girls

- One neck chain or bracelet is permissible for boys and girls only if it is a cross, religious symbol or of medical necessity.

- Only one earring per ear may be worn at any time. For safety reasons, dangling or hoop earrings may never be worn to school. Only stud earrings may be worn. Earrings will be allowed on ear lobes only. The school is not responsible if excess or unsafe jewelry must be removed during the school day.

- **Smartwatches and AI glasses** are not acceptable.

Dress Down Days

- Appropriate and modest clothing should always be worn on dress down days or school sponsored activities. All safety guidelines must be adhered to in regards to jewelry and footwear. No ripped or torn clothing is allowed.

Hair Code

Boys –

❖ Hair must be worn neat, clean, and combed away from the face and eyes and above the collar.

❖ Hairstyles should never include extreme multi-layered cuts, ridges, steps, "mohawks" or sculpting. Individual spikes that exceed 1 inch in length and require gel or hairspray to keep hair in place will not be permitted.

❖ Hair may not be dyed, tinted, bleached or braided/twisted with unnatural colors (e.g.: green, pink, purple, blue, shoe-polish black, etc.) and must always be arranged appropriately for the student's age and grade.

❖ Any type of step hair cut or layering must be subtle and not extreme. Etched designs or sculpting are not permissable.

❖ Hair may be "buzzed" but shaved scalps are not allowed.

❖ Facial hair on boys is **not permissible.**

Girls –

❖ There is no stipulated hair length for girls.

❖ Hair must be worn neat, clean, and combed away from the face and eyes.

- ❖ Hair bands or decorations (e.g.: bows) must complement the primary colors of the uniform. Headwear which may be a distraction in the classroom will need to be removed.
- ❖ Extreme hairstyles or fads such as ridges, shaved scalp or sculpting are not permissible.
- ❖ Hair may not be dyed, tinted, bleached or braided/twisted with unnatural colors (e.g.: green, pink, purple, blue, shoe-polish black, etc.) and must always be arranged appropriately for the student's age and grade. **Colored braids and extensions are not permitted.**

Tattoos: Body art may not be visible on any part of the body.

Hair, make-up, and nails must be school appropriate. Nails should be well-trimmed and manicured. Students may be required to remove any inappropriate items. Final decisions are **left up to the teacher's discretion.**

*****Pimple patches must be clear in nature and simple shapes. No colored patches may be worn.**

We anticipate the full cooperation of all students who form our school community. In the event that any of the uniform code (including student appearance) requirements are not adhered to during the school year, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken. If repeated violations are not properly attended to, the student will be sent home and will not be allowed to return to school until the uniform code of St. Michael's Academy is followed.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students will be dismissed from school for legitimate reasons. A written request from the parent or guardian should be sent in to the teacher first thing in the morning.

All early dismissals must occur before 2:30 PM in order to ensure a safe and smooth dismissal procedure at the end of the school day. The responsible designated adult who will accompany the student **MUST** enter the school building and sign the student out in order for the child to be released to said person.

In the event that a parent/guardian entrusts the care of a child to an adult unfamiliar to the principal or school staff member, the principal reserves the right to request identification and to ask for information from the child before allowing the release.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

It is imperative that the school have readily accessible the name and telephone number of the adult/adults who has/have agreed to assume responsibility for a child when the parent is not available. When a student becomes ill or is the victim of an accident, the school nurse/

administrative assistant will contact the parent first (if possible) or the named responsible adult. If neither can be reached, the principal or the principal's authorized designee will call 911 and will accompany the child to the nearest hospital for needed care. The principal or the principal's designee will remain with the child until a parent arrives at the hospital.

It is of the utmost importance that parents keep the school office informed if the contact information (name[s]/telephone number[s]) provided at the beginning of the school year.

Persons chosen to be responsible adult caretakers in the absence of a parent **MUST** live or work in or within the immediate vicinity of Springfield and have a means of transportation.

Change of Address and/or Telephone Number

Should a student's address or telephone number change during the school year, a parent/guardian **MUST** notify the school office of the new information. This policy is extremely important in the event that a parent must be reached at any given time during the school day. Families choosing to have **unlisted telephone numbers** must notify the school office to this effect. Lists are often requested during the school year for in-house purposes such as committee work for fundraisers. Telephone numbers will be released unless stipulated beforehand by the parent/guardian.

Safety

Evacuation/Lockdown Drills

Evacuation/lockdown drills are conducted at various intervals during the school year. Students are periodically instructed regarding safety issues/procedures to be followed in the event of emergencies.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted on an annual basis by fire officials by regulation of the Springfield Fire Department. Additional fire drills are conducted at various intervals during the school year. Students are periodically instructed concerning fire safety. Each classroom has fire exit procedures for that room posted in a strategic location.

EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM

The school offers before and after school care to assist working parents with the supervision of their children. The before school program begins at 6:30 AM with drop-off at the Eddywood St. cafeteria door; the after school program is in operation from school dismissal until 5:30 PM.

Bills for the extended day program are sent home on Fridays in the family envelope. The billing period covers the previous Thursday through Wednesday of the current week. Payment is due upon receipt. Attendance in the extended day program is contingent on timely payment of

your account. **Students may be denied participation in the extended care program if accounts become past due.**

The extended care program is not in session when school is closed (vacation times) and when there is an early or noon dismissal.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips, within or outside the city, are scheduled by various classroom teachers throughout the school year. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the classroom curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community. Students **are required** to participate in these classroom trips. All scheduled classroom trips are listed on the monthly calendar distributed at the onset of each month. Parents receive notice of a scheduled field trip at least one week in advance of the scheduled trip and must sign the proper permission form in order for a child to attend. The cost of the trip will vary depending on the destination and must be paid prior to the trip. No student is ever allowed early dismissal while on a school trip. Upon return from the field trip, students are dismissed only from the school campus and only under the direction of the teacher.

All chaperones must complete a CORI form and the Virtus online training three weeks prior to a class function in accordance with diocesan policy. Please contact the school office for more information.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

St. Michael's Academy is a *NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT.*

Cafeteria

St. Michael's Academy is contracted with the Springfield Public School system to provide breakfast and lunch for all of its students who express an interest. Under a Springfield city grant all St. Michael's Academy school students qualify to receive both free breakfast and lunch options daily.

Menus can be found on the SMA website under the Students tab. Milk is an automatic component of the hot lunch program. Milk boxes including a fruit or vegetable are provided free to cold lunch students upon request.

All students in preschool through grade eight will eat lunch at the classroom-scheduled time in the school cafeteria. Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds at any time without authorized permission from the principal.

In the cafeteria, as everywhere on the school grounds, courtesy and consideration for others is a must. **No external restaurant food may be brought in or delivered for student lunch.** All lunch food is to be eaten in the cafeteria. In order to teach the aspects of service, pride of place and a spirit of cooperation: students must leave the tables clean and dispose of rubbish in the proper receptacles provided. Parents are asked to cooperate in teaching good

eating habits and respectable table behavior at home. Students whose cafeteria behavior is inappropriate in any way will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences.

Littering, sunflower seed eating, and gum chewing on school property are prohibited.

Classrooms

Classroom celebrations, such as birthdays, are allowed at the elementary level at the discretion of the homeroom teacher. Prior permission must be obtained before any treat is brought into the classroom. Parents are requested to be aware of other food allergies whenever sending treats to school for any celebrations. No treats will be brought into the middle level classrooms.

Water Bottles

Only plastic, see-through, sealed, secure and appropriate sized water bottles are allowed (Stanley-type containers or those with external straws will NOT be allowed).

FUNDRAISING

SMA conducts two major fundraisers each year. Proceeds from fundraisers are used to help balance the budget by keeping the rising tuition costs as minimal as possible. Fundraising profits subsidize all aspects of the school's various educational programs including the purchase of new and updated textbooks and materials. In order to benefit from these functions, it is understood that **ALL FAMILIES** participate in fundraisers conducted by the school.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students in grade eight must pass major subject courses in order to be promoted to high school. In the event that a student fails two or more subjects, the **course(s) must be made up in summer school or a plan for hiring a private tutor must be approved by the principal**. There are no summer school or summer make-up opportunities at St. Michael's Academy for students who do not graduate.

The school must receive a formal notice documenting the successful completion of the course(s) before the student can receive a diploma and be promoted. In these cases, a conference will be scheduled with the principal or the principal and teacher(s) so that the proper course of study can be planned. The principal will notify the receiving high school of the successful completion of middle school prior to the beginning of the fall semester.

HOMEWORK

Homework is a necessary part of any school program. It is an extension of the learning that takes place within the classroom setting. It helps students to develop independent study habits, reinforces daily lessons and relates school learning to out-of-school interests. The timely completion and submission of homework assignments are calculated as one part of each subject grade. It is expected that parents/guardians support St. Michael's Academy's homework policy and take an active interest in ensuring that a student's homework assignments are taken seriously and are promptly completed.

While there is not a defined frequency of homework assignments in each grade, the following is used as a guideline:

Preschool: homework is assigned at the discretion of the classroom teachers

Kindergarten: homework is assigned at the discretion of the classroom teachers

Grades One and Two: four nights per week ------- approximately thirty minutes each night

Grades Three and Four: four nights per week ----- approximately three - quarters to one hour each night

Grades Five: four nights per week and occasional weekend homework -----approximately one hour to one and one - half hours each night

Grades Six, Seven and Eight: five nights per week and additional weekend work if subject matter so requires; approximately one and one - half hours to two hours each night

A BLUEPRINT FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS:

- copy the assignment in the designated student planner: text, page, numbers, expectation;
- arrange a definite time and place to study in a quiet area without television/radio/ telephone/computer games;
- start the most difficult lesson first;
- make sure you understand the lesson and the assignments. Ask questions if you do not understand (teachers are available one afternoon or morning per week to give tutorial assistance);
- keep your assignments in a separate notebook/folder;
- learn to form your own judgments and to solve your own problems;
- review lessons frequently in order to recall points that you did not understand clearly;
- as you study, take notes or make summaries on the main points. Do all work accurately, neatly and completely. **TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR WORK!**

Students in grades three through eight receive a cumulative student planner at the start of each school year. Parents/guardians must check these daily for accuracy and

completion. A replacement fee of $5 will be assessed for any student whose student planner has become lost or unusable.

HONOR ROLL

Students should be praised for working consistently to their God-given potential. For this reason, an **Honor Roll** is posted each time that a report card is issued, that is, four times each academic year. **Students in grades four through eight only will be eligible for honor roll recognition.** (Fourth grade students begin appearing on the honor roll during the 2nd quarter.) Appropriate behavior and work habits must reflect high academic standing in order to be considered for honor roll status.

In order to qualify for honor roll status, the criteria listed must be met:

- **HIGH HONORS:** Students must receive grades of "A+/A/A-" in content areas. **WORK HABITS** and **CONDUCT** must be at a minimum SATISFACTORY in all subject areas.
- **HONORS:** Students must receive grades of "A+/A/A-", "B+/B/B-" or a combination of "As" and "Bs" in all content areas. **WORK HABITS** and **CONDUCT** must be at a minimum SATISFACTORY in all subject areas.
- **HONORABLE MENTION:** Students must receive a combination of "As" and "Bs" in all content areas. One grade of "C+/C" will be allowed in this category. **WORK HABITS** and **CONDUCT** must be at a minimum SATISFACTORY in all subject areas.

✔ **It is understood that if a student is capable of "A" or "B" work – which is supported by standardized testing results and other objective data – on a consistent basis but does not perform as such, this student will not be eligible for any type of report card award.**

In each discipline, students are expected to give 100% of their attention and participative effort which helps to provide growth, development and broaden horizons of knowledge.

INSURANCE

All students attending St. Michael's Academy are required to have insurance. Regardless of which insurance plan a parent/guardian selects for their child(ren), each SMA student **MUST** be protected by some type of insurance plan.

LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY

The length of our school day is dictated by the Springfield schools' busing schedule. We begin and end each school day at travel times established by the Springfield Transportation Department.

Students may begin arriving at 8:00 AM where they will enter the building and walk directly to their assigned homeroom class.

Students are considered tardy if they arrive once the school community has begun reciting the morning prayers and Pledge of Allegiance at 8:30 AM, the official start time of the school day. This regulation does not apply if the tardiness is due to a problematic situation with a school bus.

The school day ends with closing prayers at 3:10 PM followed by dismissal for carlines and walkers. School buses usually arrive at campus for dismissal at approximately 3:20 PM.

Students are never allowed to leave school grounds without adult supervision.

LOST and FOUND

A lost and found container (a large plastic storage box) is located in the cafeteria by the foyer entrance. Unclaimed items are deposited in the provided container. Students seeking lost items can check this receptacle and/or ask the office staff for assistance. The lost and found container is emptied periodically during the school year. Items are donated to local charities if not claimed.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

The schools of the Diocese of Springfield admit students of any race, color, national and/or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and/or ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, and athletic and other school - administered programs.

PLAYGROUND POLICIES

Recess

Weather permitting students are given a lunch recess each day. Our early childhood and primary grade students may also have additional play time scheduled daily.

Decisions to have outside recess during cold weather depend upon the temperature and the wind chill factor. Shorter outside recess times are scheduled on very cold days. Children are to be appropriately dressed for outside recess. All students must be on the playground during their scheduled outside recess period. Only students with written medical excuses will be allowed to remain in the building during scheduled breaks outdoors.

Students will have supervised free time in the classroom on days when inclement weather prevents outside recess. Quiet games and/or talking with friends are usually allowed by the teachers in charge.

Middle school students are granted the additional privilege of spending at least one recess period a week at Nathan Bill Park during the week, weather permitting. Common courtesies to families and individuals using the public park are expected at all times. Appropriate behavior is expected of all middle level students when participating in this activity.

Supervision

School staff supervise the playground during all scheduled breaks. The playground is not supervised after school hours following dismissal duty. All St. Michael's Academy students are expected to leave for home immediately following dismissal or to be enrolled in the after school extended care program.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are issued quarterly, mid-way during each marking period (October, December, March and May). Progress Reports give parents/guardians an overview of their children's status midway through a given marking period. Parents/guardians are to carefully review this report with their children, offer guidance, encouragement and help in areas that need improvement or simply praise a child for a job well done!

A parent/guardian always has the option to request a conference and/or a telephone call from a teacher to discuss information recorded on a progress report.

Parents/guardians are required to sign the progress report and return it to school, via their child, intact. **A copy for the home will be supplied upon request.**

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Promotion and/or retention are based on an evaluation of each child's academic, physical, social and emotional growth. The primary reasons for considering retention include but are not limited to:

- indifference or lack of effort on the part of a capable student;
- physical or social immaturity;
- frequent or prolonged unexcused absences;
- unsuccessfully completing a required course of study.

REPORT CARDS

At the preschool level, students are evaluated twice a year with progress reports distributed at the end of the academic year. Kindergarten students are issued a progress report following the first marking period and a report card for the remaining three marking periods of the academic year. For the rest of the Academy, report cards are issued following the completion of each of the four grading periods that are approximately nine weeks long. The report cards are an indication of a child's progress and academic growth. Mandatory conferences in November of each academic year are conducted, preschool-grade 8, in order that a parent/guardian may

have an opportunity to discuss a child's progress and needs with his/her homeroom teacher. An additional conference is held in March of each school year.

RIGHT TO AMEND

St. Michael's Academy reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents/guardians via the weekly e-newsletter.

SAFETY

The safety of children traveling to and from school is the joint responsibility of the school and the parents/guardians. Children are instructed in safety procedures by the principal and teachers. Parents should reinforce that instruction at home. Parents should be sure that their children know and follow these routes. The shortest route may not be the safest route.

Children need to be told to stop at the curb and look both ways for oncoming traffic before crossing the street. They should stay between the lines marking crosswalks and observe the signals of the crossing guards and traffic lights. Parents should be sure that their children leave home for school at times when crossing guards are stationed at intersections. **Parents who pick up children in cars must adhere to the regulations for zoned pick up.**

Students who travel by school bus to and from the Academy are required to take directions from the bus drivers while traveling on, boarding, or leaving the bus.

Students who walk home must have this indicated on their Family Emergency paperwork. They are expected to travel **directly** home, using appropriate crosswalks and pedestrian safety measures. Parents using a vehicle to pick up students are expected to join their designated carline.

SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The school has a safety plan in place in the event that there is a need for student evacuation. The evacuation site for St. Michael's Academy is either Pope Francis Preparatory School or Nathan Bill Park. Please refer to the website for a copy of the Safety Management Plan.

ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION FORM

Date: Dec 10, 2025

Dear Parents, Students, Legal Guardians, and Employees:

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) which requires schools to be inspected to identify any asbestos-containing building materials. In 2021, State of Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards updated their asbestos regulation to include Requirements for Schools Subject to AHERA.

The law requires an asbestos management plan to be developed and implemented to monitor any known or suspected ACM. The plan has several ongoing requirements: publish a notification on management plan availability and the status of asbestos activities; educate and train its employees about asbestos and how to deal with it; notify short-term or temporary workers on the locations of the asbestos containing building materials; post warning labels in routine maintenance areas where asbestos was previously identified or assumed; follow set plans and procedures designed to minimize the disturbance of asbestos containing building materials; and to inspect and assess the condition of known or suspected ACM routinely.
It is the intention of the Diocese of Springfield to comply with all federal and state regulations controlling asbestos and to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure students and employees a healthy and safe environment in which to learn and work. You are welcome to review a copy of the asbestos management plan in the school administrative office during regular business hours. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me, Designated Person, at the number listed Below.

Maria P. Wagner
Superintendent
Diocese of Springfield, MA
65 Elliot Street
Springfield, MA 01102
m.wagner@diospringfield.org
413-452-0831

SCHOOL CLOSINGS (due to weather emergencies)

In the event of inclement weather, St. Michael's Academy will follow all Springfield Public Schools posted cancellations. St. Michael's Academy participates in remote learning on inclement weather days and reminders will be sent through the FACTS Parent Alert Notification System. Additional reminders will also be sent via Constant Contact to family emails.

In the event of a school delay of one/two hours, the before school extended day program will also be delayed by that same amount of time; therefore students are not to be brought to school for before school extended care, or at regular opening time. There will be no staff member at the campus to admit children into the building or to supervise them in such circumstances.

INCLEMENT WEATHER REMOTE LEARNING DAYS

St. Michael's Academy provides remote learning on inclement weather days for two important reasons:

It maintains students' engagement in the academic rigor of the school year while learning potential is at its highest (rather than trying to finish up at the end of the year, when the students are tired and ready for the summer).

It allows us to determine the last day of school, enabling us to schedule and to have adequate time to complete maintenance and upgrades to the facility.

During an Inclement Weather Remote Learning Day, your child will be provided with approximately half a day of direct instructional time. Students will login to classes remotely with their regular classroom teachers to receive a lesson that is student centered and supports the learning done each day.

Remote Learning Day Expectations:

Students will need access to home technology to participate in the remote learning days. Additionally all students should be dressed in their St. Michael's Academy school uniform when logging in to remote class.

PreK - Students will receive a packet of work generated by their teacher as a continuation, review, or extension of the academic activities being covered in the classroom. Students at this level will also have the opportunity (at your convenience during the day) to login and view a video of a story and complete activities. Work should be sent back to school with your child upon their return.

Kindergarten - Students will receive a packet of work generated by their teacher as a continuation, review, or extension of the academic activities being covered in the classroom. Students at this level will also be expected to attend a Morning Meeting from 9 to 10 am through Google Meet. Work should be sent back to school with your child upon their return.

Grades 1, 2 and 3 - Students will use their Google Meet link, located in their Google classroom, to attend class with their homeroom teacher. Direct instruction will be provided from 9 to 11 am with an additional hour of independent work time expected.

Grades 4 and 5 - Students will use their Google Meet link, located in their Google classroom, to attend class with teachers from 9 to 11 am. Direct instruction will be provided with an additional hour and a half of independent work time expected.

Grades 6, 7 and 8 - Students will use the Zoom link provided by their classroom teacher(s) to attend four of their regular classes from 8:30 until 12:00 noon. Regular homework completion for the day will be expected.

Attendance credit, for Grades 1 to 8, will be given based on your child's classroom login. Cameras are expected to be turned on and students should be prepared to focus when the direct instruction begins. Active participation and engagement are encouraged so that everyone receives the most from this experience. General classroom expectations will be upheld as well.

STUDENT RECORDS

Parents/guardians with physical custody have the right to see their own child(ren)'s records, and copies of any information in the records can be obtained upon request. Schools routinely forward student records to other schools in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Information in the student's records is not available to anyone outside the school system without written permission from the student's parents/guardians except in the case of probation officers and/or court orders. Records may be sent outside the school system only with a signed written transcript release.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

St. Michael's Academy has a **NO TOLERANCE** policy with regard to the possession, sale and use of alcohol, drugs or any other controlled substance on campus or on buses. **Violation of this policy may result in immediate expulsion and information will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies**.

Smoking/vaping is strictly forbidden at school. Students are neither to carry nor use tobacco products of any kind. The school is a smoke-free institution therefore adults are not allowed to smoke in the school building or anywhere close to the school building where second-hand smoke would be inhaled. **SCHOOL PROPERTY IS A SMOKE-FREE ZONE**. Students caught smoking/vaping or in the possession of tobacco-related products will be disciplined according to the school's discipline policy (please refer to page 16, Discipline).

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS ON CAMPUS

There are several parking and driving policies in place due to the limited parking space and street access around the Academy. Please refer to traffic regulations located at the end of this handbook.

TRANSPORTATION

The Springfield Public School system provides free transportation for students in K – 5 who reside one and one-half miles or more from the school they attend, and for students in grades 6 – 8 who reside two miles or more from the school they attend. These students must be residents of the city of Springfield. Appeals for new bus stops must be submitted in writing to the school who in turn will submit them to the Springfield Public Schools Transportation office. All school bus stops are established by the transportation office located at 1550 Main Street.

Transportation is provided only to and from the student's legal residence. In special circumstances where hazardous walking conditions exist, the School Committee may approve the provision of bus transportation.

Students are under the jurisdiction of the school authorities from the time they board the bus until they alight from the bus. If riders are not well-behaved and courteous, they endanger the health and safety of others and may be deprived of the busing privilege.

The bus driver is the authority figure on the bus and maintains order. It is his/her responsibility to report misdemeanors to the school principal using the conduct form mandated by the city of Springfield Transportation Office.

The bus driver submits the form stating the reason for needed action to the principal. The principal reviews the submitted form and is responsible for the disciplinary action to be taken focusing on the severity of the offense and the number of prior reported offenses.

The form is sent to the parent/guardian for signature of having received notification from the school. A copy of the signed notice is forwarded to the Springfield Transportation Officer and to the Springfield Public School Superintendent, and a copy is kept in the student's file for the remainder of the school year.

If the FIRST offense is of an extremely serious nature, the principal reserves the right to impose a term of bus suspension. Second offenses may result in the loss of bus transportation for a period of time to be determined by the principal.

Proper Bus Conduct: Expectations and Rules
(per directive from the Springfield Transportation Office)

- The bus driver is responsible for your safety as well as the safety of your fellow passengers.
- Stand back away from the curb until the bus is completely stopped and the door is opened. At this time, you may board the bus in an orderly fashion.
- Weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited aboard a school bus.
- Toys of any kind are strictly prohibited aboard a school bus.
- Live animals are strictly prohibited aboard a school bus. Pets pose a danger of an allergic reaction, distraction, or injury.
- Take your seat promptly and remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop. The driver will instruct you when it is safe to get off the bus.
- Windows should not be opened without the permission of the bus driver. At no time should any part of your body be extended outside of the bus.
- Smoking, alcohol or drugs are strictly forbidden on the bus.
- Do not push, fight or indulge in "horseplay" while on the school bus. Always respect the rights of others.

- Treat the school bus as you would an object of your own. Any act of vandalism by a student will result in suspension from the bus and financial restitution for damages incurred.
- Throwing objects from the bus is strictly forbidden.
- For your safety, do not cross any street until you are absolutely sure it is safe to do so.
- Kindergarten students must be met by a parent at the bus stop. If another individual is to receive a kindergarten child from the bus, the parent must submit this information to the bus driver.
- The bus driver will report any infraction of the above rules in writing on an Incident Report Form. The initial evaluation of the child and the incident will be done by the principal, or principal designee.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES:

It is the policy of the Transportation Department of the city of Springfield that a student rides the bus to which he/she has been assigned. Recurring requests for rides to and from school on different routes must be approved by the principal of the school and the Transportation Office of the city of Springfield.

Students who are not entitled to busing because of residential proximity to the school CANNOT ride buses to/from school at any time. The city of Springfield Transportation Department reserves the right to grant exceptions to this policy if submitted in writing.

TUITION

The existing tuition charge is reviewed by the St. Michael's Academy Administration and the Diocesan Catholic School Board on an annual basis. Increases in tuition for any given school year are based on current economic needs and the projected cost to educate each child registered at St. Michael's Academy. Appropriate advance notice is given to the parent population concerning the new rates.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

There are two options for the payment of tuition:

- paying the full balance by June 30th, or
- utilizing the FACTS Tuition Management Plan.

For families already enrolled in FACTS, signing the agreement section of the application and submitting it for registration will authorize St. Michael's to automatically activate your account for the upcoming academic year. Approved parish subsidies will be deducted from tuition once the completed form is received from pastors. Approved Diocesan aid will also be deducted once notification is received from the Diocese. Please contact the Tuition Manager at 413-782-5246, ext. 1121 for questions regarding tuition.

Note: SMA is not able to accommodate monthly payments made to the school.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

Parish Support: Parish grants are available through local Catholic parishes for parishioners who are in good standing (attend weekly liturgies, are involved in parish activities, and financially support the parish using the envelope system). To qualify for a parish grant, your pastor must complete the "Parish Grant Application" and return it to the Tuition Manager. Upon receipt of the approval of the application, the award will be applied to your tuition. The amount of your parish grant will be determined by your pastor. The application must be submitted by the parent, to the pastor, on an annual basis.

Diocesan Financial Aid: Diocesan Financial Aid is available for students in kindergarten through grade eight. Diocesan Financial Aid will be applied to tuition upon notification from the Diocese of Springfield. Families need only complete one application to cover all their children enrolled in our Diocesan elementary and high schools. To qualify for Diocesan Financial Aid, you must:

- demonstrate financial need within the Diocesan guidelines;
- complete the financial aid application each year (online at factstuitionaid.com) and pay an application fee of $45;
- assistance is awarded on a first come/first served basis.

SMA Tuition Assistance: SMA has a limited amount of funding available for families who demonstrate financial need. To qualify, you must complete the financial aid application available online at factstuitionaid.com and pay an application fee of $45.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

SMA considers the cost of your child's education as a full school year expense. Books are purchased, teachers are hired, and classrooms are prepared in anticipation of each student's full-year participation. As a result, the Academy has specific policies regarding students who withdraw from school.

Parents or guardians who are financially responsible for the withdrawn student are responsible to pay for the number of academic quarters/partial quarters that the student was in attendance. For example, if a student withdraws during the first week of the second quarter, the parents/guardians are responsible for two quarters. Further, if a student withdraws before the start of school, the parents/guardians are responsible for one quarter.

Families who choose to withdraw their child from SMA must notify the school in writing. The family is responsible for contacting the Academy's Business Office to cancel the FACTS Payment Plan. If there is tuition due or any outstanding debt with the Academy from the Before and After School Program, the Academy will keep the agreement open to collect all debt until your obligation is met.

Additional Tuition Notes:

1. Tuition, according to the contracted plan, will remain the same every month regardless of days missed due to illness, holidays, vacation plans or inclement weather. In the event of any other unforeseen school closings, St. Michael's Academy will consider make-up days, if appropriate.
2. **NO** adjustment in monthly tuition can be granted in the event that a child is absent from school.
3. If a child enrolls in the middle of a month, tuition will be prorated for that month.
4. "Students whose tuition is not paid, or for which satisfactory arrangements for its payment have not been made, may be denied enrollment.

Final report cards are issued on the last day of the school year. If a student has not returned all assigned textbooks and materials, a replacement fee will be assessed. Final report cards will not be issued until this fee is cleared. Additionally outstanding balances on before and after school or tuition will cause the final report card to be retained by the school until those items are cleared.

Students who are in eighth grade and whose tuition is not paid in full may be denied participation in the end of the year activities and graduation exercises." (Diocesan Policies and Regulations Handbook, Policy 5115)

UNAUTHORIZED ARTICLES

Common sense and consideration are the best guides in determining whether or not to bring personal possessions to school. In general, students are not to bring toys or unusual items to school unless they are intended for a specific purpose in a classroom.

VALUABLES

The school staff members cannot be responsible for valuables that students bring to school. It is highly recommended that students leave all valuables, particularly electronic devices, at home. If special circumstances necessitate that students bring cash or other important possessions to school, students are asked to leave them with the homeroom teacher where these items can be safeguarded.

VANDALISM

The school building and school equipment are private property. Willful damage or damage to school property is cause for immediate suspension and possible expulsion. St. Michael's Academy requires that vandal damage be paid for in advance of a student's return to class. If a student accidentally causes damage, he/she should report the incident to a teacher or administrator immediately.

VISITORS

All visitors are required to report to the school office upon entering the building and sign the Visitor Log.

No Parking
Eddywood Street
No Parking
Drop / pickup & go
Last names beginning M -Z
Before School
Drop Off Door
PK Drop-off Door
St. Michael's
Academy
Holy Cross Church
Arvilla Street
Preschool
Parking
Campus Drop Off and Pick-Up Procedures:
Students may be dropped off in the morning and/or picked up at dismissal on the school side of Wheeler Avenue and Eddywood Street only. There is absolutely no parking on any street around the school block except for PK parking on Arvilla Street. Parents are requested to use car lines for arrival and dismissal at all times. We have limited parking available in the parking lot and the lot should only be used by parents when absolutely necessary and not on a regular basis.
Holy Cross
Rectory
Plumtree Road
No Parking
No Parking
Drop / pickup & go
Last names beginning A - L
No Parking
Wheeler Avenue
No Parking