

# Pre-school Parent Handbook

St. Patrick School

2009 – 2010

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION/MISSION STATEMENT .....	6
Diocesan Philosophy of Catholic Education.....	6
School Mission Statement/Philosophy .....	6
Student/Parent Handbook .....	6
Parental Role.....	7
Non-Discrimination Clause .....	8
Non-Catholic Children.....	8
II. CURRICULUM .....	10
Supplies and Materials.....	11
Assessment.....	11
Parent-Teacher Communication .....	11
Scheduling and Other Conference Information .....	11
Progress Reports .....	11
Retention/Promotion/Placement .....	12
III. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES.....	13
Admissions.....	13
Diocesan Initial Admission Requirements.....	13
Class Placement.....	15
Attendance .....	16
Absence/Tardiness/Leaving School .....	16
Attendance/Reporting Procedures.....	16
Transferring to Another School .....	17
Arrival and Dismissal .....	17
IV. GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES .....	19
Administrative.....	19
Child Custody and Guardianship .....	19
Access to Records.....	19
School Visitors .....	20
School Communications .....	20
Telephone Use .....	20
Inclement Weather/School Closings.....	20
Photos and Other Media.....	20
Library.....	21
Field Trips .....	21
Overnight Trips .....	22
Parent Organizations.....	22
Fund-Raising.....	23
Transportation/Parking .....	23

V. FINANCES.....	24
School Tuition Policies.....	24
Tuition and other Fee Schedules.....	24
VI. CHILD RESPONSIBILITIES & BEHAVIOR.....	25
Code of Conduct.....	25
Discipline.....	25
Use of Disciplinary Action.....	25
Specific Disciplinary Policies.....	26
Suspension.....	26
Dismissal.....	26
Expulsion.....	26
Regulations and Procedures.....	27
Care of School Property.....	28
Dress Code.....	28
Dress Code Requirements & Other Pertinent Information.....	28
Playground Regulations.....	28
Lunchroom Regulations.....	28
Show & Tell.....	28
VII. HEALTH, SAFETY, & WELFARE.....	30
Student Health, Safety, & Welfare.....	30
Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse.....	30
Accidents and First Aid.....	30
Illness.....	31
Medication Administration Overview.....	32
Specialized Student Care Needs.....	33
Participation in Sports and Modification of Physical Activity.....	33
Infectious/Communicable Diseases.....	33
Disease.....	33
Lice.....	34
Bloodborne Disease.....	35
Fire/Emergency Drills.....	35
Sexual Harassment--Students.....	35
Bullying.....	36
VIII. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.....	38
IX. PROGRAM INFORMATION.....	39
Licensing Information.....	39
Crisis Management/Emergency Preparedness Plan.....	40
Over-the-counter Skin Products.....	40
Insurance.....	40

Tax Information .....41  
Parental Involvement .....41

# **I. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION/MISSION STATEMENT**

## ***DIOCESAN PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION***

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...  
Teaching them to carry out everything I have commanded you.*

*Matthew 28:19-20*

These words of Christ addressed to the apostles at the Ascension bestowed on the Church the office of teacher. Obedient to this divine challenge, the Church provides education permeated with the spirit of Christ and dedicated to promoting the full development of the human person<sup>1</sup>. The two-fold goal of Catholic schools is to provide an environment which will foster rich religious training as well as solid academic education in a Catholic value-oriented manner.

<sup>1</sup> Declaration on Christian Education #3

## ***SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY***

The mission of Saint Patrick School is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Saint Patrick School adheres to the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church and addresses itself to the development of the whole student spiritually, academically, socially, and physically. Saint Patrick School will provide a religious and intellectual environment of life-long learning that integrates in Catholic teachings of moral and spiritual truths with a Eucharistic community.

## ***STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK***

Each school shall utilize the OCS template to develop and distribute a handbook for students and parents. All local policies and procedures must be in conformity with Diocesan policies, guidelines and regulations.

A committee, representative of the total school community, shall be involved in the development and periodic revision of this handbook.

All parents are required to sign a form stating they have read the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook and they agree to abide by those rules (see Appendix AG-1 and AG-2). This signature form will be given to students when they receive a copy of the handbook and the form must be signed and returned as soon as possible. Failure to have a signed form on file will not prevent the School from enforcing its policies, but result in disciplinary action being taken and/or prevent a student from enrolling (or continuing enrollment) in the school.

Faculty and staff members shall be given copies of all school handbooks.

Handbooks and all subsequent changes are subject to prior written approval by the Diocese. To the extent any local handbook or policy statement therein may be inconsistent with the policies, guidelines or regulations of the Diocese, the Diocesan policies guidelines or regulations shall be of controlling force and effect.

## ***PARENTAL ROLE***

The Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children. The Catholic school exists to assist parents in the Christian formation of their children.

In this Handbook, the term parent refers not only to a child's natural or adopted parent, but to a child's non-parent legal guardian or to any person or agency authorized to act in place of parents.

Parents are expected to display an attitude of respect and support toward the school, the staff, and the educational process by:

- Supporting the school's mission and commitment to Christian principles;
- Supporting the school policies as outlined in the school handbook;
- Participating fully in school programs that are developed to support the education of their children;
- Remaining informed about and involved in the religious instruction of their children.

In the event a parent desires to discuss a problem with their child's teacher, the parent should make an appointment for a private meeting with the child's teacher. Teachers welcome the opportunity to discuss a matter of concern with parents before it becomes an actual problem. Any parent who wishes to speak with the principal may do so, but after an initial meeting with the classroom teacher.

If a parent repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students, or displays disrespectful, disruptive or harassing behavior toward teachers or toward school, parish, or diocesan staff, the school may take corrective action. Such corrective action may include, at the discretion of the principal (and, for parish schools, the pastor of the parish), the following:

- imposition of particular rules or procedures the parent must follow in interacting with the school and its students and staff;
- restriction or termination of the parent's access to school or parish property;
- dismissal of the parent's child(ren).

The school may impose other appropriate corrective action, without prior recourse, based upon the nature of the parent's conduct and the surrounding circumstances.

## ***NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE***

Catholic Schools, administered under the authority of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, comply with those constitutional and statutory provisions, as may be specifically applicable to the schools, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, marital status, disability, national origin, or citizenship in the administration of their educational, personnel, admissions, financial aid, athletic and other school administered programs.

This policy does not preclude the existence of single sex schools, nor does it conflict with the priority given to Catholics for admission as students. This policy also does not preclude the ability of the school to undertake and/or enforce appropriate actions with respect to students who advocate on school property or at school functions any practices or doctrines which are inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Catholic faith.

## ***NON-CATHOLIC CHILDREN***

The presence of children from other faiths provides a wonderful diversity to the school. However, the presence of non-Catholic children in the school shall not alter the primacy of Catholic religious formation as an integral component of the educational program in the school. As such:

- Non-Catholic children are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of the school.
- Non-Catholic children must participate in liturgies, retreats and other religious functions incorporated within the program.
- Non-Catholic children may not be exempted from the catechesis held during the school day.
- While Catholic teaching respects the various faith traditions of the children attending the Catholic school, parents must be aware that it is the Catholic position that will be taught.

In light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues that arise, the faculty and administration reserve the right to address and to take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this manual. In addition, in view of the unique and essential religious mission of the School, it is expressly understood that the school may take actions in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the school, the Catholic Diocese of Arlington or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the school to perform its religious mission or to effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the school and the Community of Faith.

This handbook may be modified by the school after reasonable notice to the parents of the

effective date of any changes. Any section headings are for convenience of use, and shall not affect the interpretation of any provisions. If the school should elect not to take action in a particular situation, this shall not be construed or interpreted as a waiver or preclude the school from acting in a subsequent situation of the same or similar kind.

All parents are required to sign a form stating they have read the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook and they agree to abide by those rules. This signature form must be signed and returned as soon as possible. Failure to have a signed form on file will not prevent the School from enforcing its policies, but may prevent a child from enrolling (or continuing enrollment) in the school.

## II. CURRICULUM

The curriculum is not just the goals of the program and the planned activities but also the daily schedule, the availability and use of materials, transitions between activities and the way in which routine tasks of living are implemented. Young children are expected to learn through active and positive manipulation of the environment and concrete experiences that contribute to concept development.

Without limiting the rights of the school under section VIII of this handbook, modifications may be made in the environment and staffing patterns for children with special needs.

The daily schedule is intended to provide a balance of activities with attention to the following dimension of scheduling:

- Daily outdoor play, weather permitting
- Altering periods of quiet time and active play
- A balance of large muscle and small muscle activities is provided
- Various small group or large group activities through most of the day
- A balance of child-initiated and staff-initiated activity is provided. The amount of time spent in staff-initiated, large group activity is limited.

Developmentally appropriate materials and equipment that project heterogeneous, racial, gender, and age attributes are selected for use.

The school will use media, such as television, films, videotapes and computers, that have been previewed by adults prior to use. Another option for activity is always available. No child is required to view or interact with the program; and the staff discusses what is viewed with children to develop critical viewing skills. Technology is incorporated as an integral part of the day.

The goal of the school is to emphasize concrete experiential learning and to achieve the following goals:

- a. foster positive self-concept
- b. foster spiritual development
- c. encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment
- d. develop social skills
- e. encourage language development
- f. enhance physical development and skills
- g. encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices
- h. encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts
- i. respect cultural diversity

Staff provides materials and time for activities, but children choose from among several activities that the teacher has planned or the children initiate. Staff respect the child's right to choose not to

participate at times.

Children are not always required to move from one activity to another as a group. Unregimented transitions are also used as a vehicle for learning.

Planned or routine activities may be changed according to the needs or interests of children, and/or to cope with changes in weather or other situations that affect routines without unduly alarming children.

Routine tasks such as toileting, eating, dressing, and sleeping are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children's learning, self-help, and social skills. Through complimentary actions at home, parents are expected to assist and cooperate with staff to make feeding and the development of other independent skills a positive experience for children. Provisions are made for children who are early risers and for children who do not nap.

## ***SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS***

Refer to the school's supply list.

## ***ASSESSMENT***

The school's program is intended to assist staff and administrators in a systematic evaluation of the program, to diagnose children's strengths and weaknesses, and to aid in revision of the curriculum and planning of instruction.

## ***PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION***

Teachers are available to parents throughout the school year to keep the lines of communication open in the best interest of the children. Parent-teacher conferences can be scheduled throughout the school year if necessary. Parents should first privately contact a teacher with any concerns about a child or class situation before seeking intervention of the director or school administration.

## **SCHEDULING AND OTHER CONFERENCE INFORMATION**

Conferences will be scheduled in the middle of the school year.

## ***PROGRESS REPORTS***

Evaluation of the child must be based on teacher judgment, observation, daily performance, class participation and effort.

Progress reports will be given at the end of the year.

## ***RETENTION/PROMOTION/PLACEMENT***

A major goal of the school is to assist children to complete each year satisfactorily. Retention is recommended only when it is deemed necessary and advantageous to the particular needs of the child.

- The final decision to promote or retain a child is based on the child's developmental performance and best interests, as determined by the Principal/Director/director.
- Parents will be kept informed about the inability of their child to progress satisfactorily.
- Children who would not benefit from being retained may be "placed" in the next level; however, the school may prepare and implement an Intervention Plan for the child as a condition of placement.

### III. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

#### *ADMISSIONS*

##### **DIOCESAN INITIAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Children who desire an educational experience founded on the Catholic philosophy of education and who fulfill the age, health and behavioral requirements are eligible for admission to the school.

##### Eligibility

The school sets registration procedures and admission policies. The availability of space and the order of preference for admission are determined by the school according to the following general criteria:

- a. Children from the parish
- b. Children from parishes without schools
- c. Children from parishes with schools (for sufficient reason)
- d. Children from non-Catholic families

If approved by the pastor, and where practicable, the siblings may receive special consideration.

##### General Requirements for Preschool Admission

There is no testing for pre-school admission. However, readiness assessment may be utilized to determine the developmentally appropriate placement in the pre-school program. The following list of documents/information is required:

- 1) Presentation of an original Birth certificate (schools are expected to keep a copy of the certificate on file)
- 2) Baptismal certificate for Catholic students
- 3) Proof of custody where applicable
- 4) Current report card and previous academic years' report card as applicable
- 5) Standardized test scores and previous years, if applicable
- 6) **Completed Diocesan Application Form (Appendix J)**
- 7) A non-refundable application fee
- 8) A fully executed MCH-213 Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Form or equivalent, which stipulates the following must be submitted prior to the student beginning school:
  1. Proof of exact dates of immunization as required by the Code of Virginia
  2. Current Certification of Immunization
  3. Physical examination covering all required aspects as mandated on the MCH-213, within 12 months prior to entering school for the first time. Equivalent school entrance physical forms from another state may be acceptable. (Note: A preschool physical does not take the place of the required kindergarten entry physical unless it is completed within 12

- months prior to kindergarten entry.)
- 9) Proof of satisfying tuition requirements at any former Diocesan school if previously enrolled in a Diocesan school.

### General Conditions of Admission

A child is admitted to the school on the premise the child intends to learn the Catholic religion and be educated in a Catholic environment. In certain cases, a child may be admitted on a probationary basis subject to the child successfully completing one or more subsequent interim evaluations. A child with academic or other needs (i.e., behavioral), which cannot be reasonably addressed by the school may be denied admission.

School application forms may request disability-related information. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not prohibit a school from asking questions about a student's disabilities provided that information does not discriminate (automatically prohibit a student from applying).

### Foreign Students

The Diocese of Arlington endeavors to remain certified by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to admit F-1 Non-Immigrant students. The school, therefore, adheres to the following policies for enrolling non-U.S. persons:

- A. Foreign students who apply for admission to a Diocese of Arlington School will be considered for admission, if all the following requirements are satisfactorily demonstrated:
  1. Students with F-1 Visas:
    - a. if a foreign student is a baptized Catholic, valid proof of baptism is required;
    - b. student guardian has guardianship of no more than two students at same local address;
    - c. documentation of legal guardianship
    - d. tuition payment is made in full upon admission;
    - e. if the student is represented by an educational consulting firm, an I-20 Sponsorship Survey is completed and returned to the Office of Catholic Schools.
  2. The F-1 (non-immigrant student) status applies to those aliens who are in the United States for the purpose of attending school. Once a student is determined to meet the school's requirements for admission, the family must contact the Office of Catholic Schools or other "designated official" to process the Immigration and Naturalization Service I-20 form for eventual admission and stay in the United States as an F-1 student. Foreign students who enroll in a school in the Diocese for the first time must provide documentation they are free from communicable tuberculosis.
  3. In order to maintain a better accounting of F-1 (non-immigrant) status students, the Immigration and Naturalization Service requires ongoing accounting. In that regard, schools are responsible for reporting the status of these students via the Report on Status of F-1 (non-immigrant) Students form. Specifically, the school shall:

- a. Report each semester to the Office of Catholic Schools regarding the status of any F-1 (non-immigrant) student as long as that child is enrolled in the school;
  - b. Notify the Office of Catholic Schools if an F-1 (non-immigrant) student who has been issued an I-20 and has been accepted by that school, fails to report to the school within 30 days of the designated start date;
  - c. Notify the Office of Catholic Schools within 15 days when an F-1 (non-immigrant) student transfers to another school or departs the United States;
  - d. Report any legal change in the name or address of an F-1 (non immigrant) student within 10 days.
4. Foreign students enrolling in a school in the Diocese must show a B-1 or a B-2 Visa. In addition to a B-1 or B-2 Visa, any foreign student seeking temporary enrollment, must provide the following documentation:
- a. Diocesan Emergency Care Form
  - b. State Immunization Form
  - c. Local Admissions Forms
  - d. Signed statement indicating no grades will be given (i.e. the student is maintaining audit status)
  - e. Tuition Agreement
- B. Foreign students who enroll in a school in the Diocese for the first time must provide documentation they are free from communicable tuberculosis.
- C. Any student applicant whose passport, United Nations travel document, or other Immigration and Naturalization documents indicate that he or she is a refugee, asylee, parolee, lawful non-immigrant, or permanent resident, may be admitted to the schools of the Diocese of Arlington under normal requirements for admission. This policy would also include undocumented children.

#### **CLASS PLACEMENT**

The Principal/Director/director and faculty reserve the right to place a child in a class to ensure the best interests of the child.

#### ***ATTENDANCE***

## **ABSENCE/TARDINESS/LEAVING SCHOOL**

Regular attendance in the program is strongly encouraged for setting the groundwork for a successful school experience. Neither the school, the Diocese, the Office of Catholic Schools, nor any of its employees/staff are responsible for ensuring actual attendance; this is the responsibility of the child's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Except in cases of emergency as determined by the Principal/Director/director and/or a staff member (as applicable or necessary), a child may only be released from school to another authorized adult with the prior written or verbal authorization of the child's parent. The adult will be required to produce identification before the child is released.

## **ATTENDANCE/REPORTING PROCEDURES**

### Absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents must contact the office by 9:00 AM to report the absence. A written excuse explaining the absence must be presented upon return to preschool. All written excuses will be kept on file for a year.

### Tardiness

A student who is tardy should report to the Principal/Director's office or attendance office. A student who arrives late with an excused reason (i.e. director's note) is counted tardy.

Frequent cases of tardiness should be brought to the attention of the Principal/Director so that the parent may be contacted.

### Medical excuses

Doctor and dental appointments should be made during non-school hours if possible, and requests for early dismissal should be written by parent and sent to the school with their child. Verbal requests over the phone will not be accepted.

### Anticipated absence

Parents wishing to take their children out of school for several days for personal or medical

reasons should notify the preschool teacher, parents are asked to use the school calendar and daily schedules to plan for departures, vacations, and medical appointments.

### Release of children

Parents must sign in/out their children when arriving late or being released outside of regular school hours.

## ***TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER SCHOOL***

The school must be notified in writing by the parent(s) of a child regarding a decision to transfer a child to another school, including the last day the child will attend classes at school. All school-owned materials must be returned to school and all fees paid before leaving. Scholastic information will be sent to the new school upon a "Release of Student Records" from the new school. All Fees and Tuition MUST BE PAID prior to the release of the child's records.

## ***ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL***

Morning preschool classes begin at 8:30 am. You may drop off your child no earlier than 8:20 am. The afternoon pre-3 class begins at 12:00 noon and the afternoon pre-4 class begins at 12:25 pm. Parking is only permitted in the front of the church in the afternoon in order to allow the elementary students the side parking lot as an area for recess. Pre-3 dismisses at 11:30 a.m. and pre-4 dismisses at 11:45 am. in front of the church. The pre-3 afternoon class dismisses in front of the church at 3:00 pm. The pre-4 afternoon class dismisses at 3:40 pm. in front of the school. Parents may park their cars in the side parking lot by the basketball goals beginning at 3:25 pm.

If an emergency arises and you will be late, please call the school at 786-2277 and make provisions for your child to be picked up as soon as possible.

## **IV. GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES**

### ***ADMINISTRATIVE***

#### **CHILD CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP**

At the time of school entry or at any other time where a change in custody status/arrangements occurs, it is the responsibility of the parent(s) to provide the Principal/Director/director with a true and correct copy of the legal document for any child for which there is a legal custody agreement or for any child not residing with his/her parent.

School communication with the appropriate guardian is essential. Accordingly:

- Custodial parents should identify in writing other adults who may have access to information regarding their child.
- Non-custodial parents may receive information (when requested) regarding the child unless specific documentation to the contrary is provided in the legal custody agreement.

#### **ACCESS TO RECORDS**

Parents have a right (unless prohibited by the courts in a custody agreement) to the timely inspection of the educational records (cumulative and confidential) of their child during school hours. The school shall respond to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records.

If the educational records of a child contain information on more than one child, the parents are limited to the specific information about their child only.

The school administration may elect to provide at cost photocopies of a child's educational records to parents, but documentation is to be stamped "unofficial."

Parents are obligated to share educational/psychological testing results and any resulting plan with the school. If a student has a documented disability, a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Services Plan (ISP), 504 plan, and/or Student Assistance Plan (SAP) should be maintained in the student's confidential file. The refusal to provide such information is a ground for terminating enrollment in the school.

Confidential records are to be retained for ten years after the student leaves school or his/her class graduates, whichever occurs first, according to the Library of Virginia General Schedule #21, Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. However, there are certain student records that must be retained indefinitely. They are the most recent copies of the IEP/ISP, 504 Plan, Student Assistance Plan, Eligibility Minutes and/or Student Assistance Team minutes. Ten years after the student leaves school or his/her class graduates, only the most recent copy of the forms listed above must be retrained.

## **SCHOOL VISITORS**

All persons other than school staff and currently registered children must first report to the school office immediately upon entering school grounds, sign in/out, and wear an identification tag when visiting the school.

## **SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

### Principal/Director/Director's Communication

A communication folder is sent home every Wednesday with your child.

### Take-Home Communication

All materials prepared by parents for release to the Parish or school community must be approved by the Principal/Director/Director or his/her designee.

## **TELEPHONE USE**

Preschoolers are not allowed to use the telephone without the supervision of a teacher or aide. Parents are asked to refrain from calling the school office with messages to be relayed to children unless there is an emergency.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

Cancellation of school, delayed openings or early closings due to inclement weather will be announced on WBQB 101.5 and WFLS 93.3. These stations also have websites that update closings or delays. We are aware that many people work and are unable to know about such announcements. Please find a friend who will contact you. Morning preschool is canceled if the K-8 school is running on a two hour delay.

## **PHOTOS AND OTHER MEDIA**

The School requires the use of the *Waiver/Right to Object* Form when children are participating in videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography, or Internet (see Appendix). Schools must state in their Parent/Student Handbook the right for parents to forbid their children from participating in videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography, or

participation involving the Internet. When a parent decides to exercise this right, the school is required to use the *Waiver/Right to Object* form (see Appendix N). All student or parental publications are subject to review and approval by the school administration prior to publication.

#### **LIBRARY**

All books chosen for classroom reading in Diocesan schools must be appropriate for students not only in age level and reading ability but also for the moral development which we are working to foster. All books shall conform with Diocesan policies and guidelines regarding Catholic education.

Parents or teachers who object to reading or audio-visual/computer materials must complete an Objection to Content Form (Appendix K) and submit it to the school principal. A review committee (to include an Office of Catholic Schools member) will subsequently discuss the objection and decide the disposition of the challenged material. The parent or teacher initiating the review should be personally notified of the results of the review.

#### **FIELD TRIPS**

- Field trips are privileges planned by teachers and approved by the school administration with educational purposes as the primary objective and in light of financial considerations.
- Field trips are considered an extension of the school day and the code of conduct will apply.
- A child must give to the sponsoring teacher a permission form signed by a child's parent(s) prior to a child participating in each activity (see Appendix).
- In the event private automobiles/vehicles of children, parents, or other authorized adults are to be utilized to transport children on field trips, the drivers and/or the vehicle owners must have a valid driver's license and sufficient liability, medical and uninsured motorist insurance coverage as defined by the Diocesan Risk Manager. Evidence to this effect must be presented to the Principal/Director/director for review and approval prior to the use of such vehicles. The Principal/Director/director shall have the right to prohibit for any reason a proposed driver from transporting children on a field trip.
- Parents/guardians are to be furnished with detailed written information about the field trip, and must be given the opportunity to “opt out” their children from the field trip.
- It should also be understood, in light of world conditions and specifically threats of terrorism against Americans, it may be necessary to cancel school-sponsored trips due to world and national developments at any time.

## **OVERNIGHT TRIPS**

Overnight trips are not permitted for preschool children.

## ***PARENT ORGANIZATIONS***

Parent-teacher (and/or home-school) organizations are sponsored by the School to promote a cooperative effort at meeting certain needs of the child body. The parent organization is subject in all respects to the control of the school, and all parent organization activities and all materials prepared by parents must be submitted to the Principal/Director/director for approval prior to implementation and/or distribution.

The parent organization should strive:

1. to serve in an advisory capacity to support the Principal/Director/director;
2. to provide a means by which parents can respectfully articulate their values and expectations regarding the school so that these can be examined and addressed by the Principal/Director/director;
3. to support and promote quality Catholic education at the school;
4. to encourage Catholic values of family life;
5. to share with teachers the values that parents are attempting to develop with their children at home;
6. to acquaint parents with up-to-date information concerning current developments in educational initiatives as they may affect the School so that they can be in a better position to promote the legitimate rights of their children;
7. to unify parents in an effort to raise funds each year for the school.

## ***FUND-RAISING***

Any program of fundraising at the school must have the approval of the pastor and the Principal/Director/director. Fundraising activities should be organized and executed so that the school program is not interrupted. Children may participate in and cooperate with worthy collections and fundraising projects conducted by the school or parish.

## ***TRANSPORTATION/PARKING***

Student transportation is by car, carpool, or other arrangements made by parents. Please do not park by the basketball goals or in front of the school during the school day. We need to leave that area available to the children at recess time.

## V. FINANCES

### ***SCHOOL TUITION POLICIES***

FACTS Tuition Management Company collects tuition payments for Saint Patrick School. FACTS offers an automatic draft from your checking or savings account on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of each month beginning in September. FACTS charges \$38.00 per family to use this service. Families who pay their entire tuition payment by September 1<sup>st</sup> do not contract with FACTS.

### ***TUITION AND OTHER FEE SCHEDULES***

The tuition fee schedule for 2009-2010 school year is as follows:

Pre-3 Tuition	\$1,628.00
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Pre-4 Tuition	\$1,943.00
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There is a \$25.00 non-refundable registration fee per

## **VI. CHILD RESPONSIBILITIES & BEHAVIOR**

### ***CODE OF CONDUCT***

In all areas of learning, discipline must be considered in the development of children. The Code of Conduct is based on the Gospel message of Jesus. Growth in self-discipline, a responsibility for Catholic moral values, and a loving respect for the rights of all persons is encouraged and nourished by the Code of Conduct. To achieve these ends, parents, staff and children work together to create a Catholic school environment. Based upon the Catholic moral values and loving respect for others taught by Jesus, children:

1. Will be truthful.
2. Will be respectful and courteous toward all teachers and adults.
3. Will refrain from harassment of any kind.
4. Will use appropriate language.
5. Will speak respectfully to and about others.
6. Will respect all school and personal property.
7. Will play only in assigned playground areas with good sportsmanship and cooperation.
8. Will bring to school only appropriate show & tell items from home.

The school observes this Code of Conduct because it is built on fundamental Catholic social teachings. The role of the Principal/Director/director and staff is to work with the children and parents to assist the children in developing a strong Christian attitude toward life.

### ***DISCIPLINE***

Classroom rules are designed to protect persons and property and to promote pro-social behaviors, such as sharing and taking turns. If problems arise, the children in question will be reminded of acceptable behaviors and redirected to more positive activities.

#### **USE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

In cases where a child is continually disruptive of others or in the case of a single serious disciplinary infraction, the teacher will appraise the Principal/Director/director of the situation. They will assist in the development of a course of action to be taken to correct the situation.

Children who lack self-discipline or who violate the rights of others can expect disciplinary action. Each offense will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the age of the child, the nature of the infraction, and the severity of the case. Repeated infractions can result in more serious consequences, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion, but there is no

requirement for progressive discipline.

### **SPECIFIC DISCIPLINARY POLICIES**

When a child exhibits inappropriate behavior, the incident is used to teach the child the unconditional love of Jesus. Without ridicule the child will be removed from the situation. With respect and love, the child is made aware of the unacceptable behavior.

### **SUSPENSION**

Suspension may be imposed as determined by the Principal/Director/director. Once the Principal/Director/director suspends a child, parents may be required to sign a behavioral contract in which they signify their understanding of the problem and agree to work with the school in correcting the situation.

The failure of the parents to execute the above referenced agreement shall preclude the child from returning to the regular program.

### **DISMISSAL**

Conduct which is disruptive to the learning atmosphere and/or contrary to the school's Code of Conduct is justification for a Principal/Director/director to dismiss a child at the close of the school year.

If a parent repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students, or displays disrespectful, disruptive or harassing behavior toward teachers or toward school, parish, or diocesan staff, the school may take corrective action. Such corrective action may include dismissal of the parent's child(ren).

Children who are dismissed may apply for readmission to any Diocesan school after one full year.

### **EXPULSION**

Expulsion may be resorted to when one or all of the following are present:

1. a serious infraction of school rules occurs;
2. the child has demonstrated continuing disregard of school rules for which other means of discipline have proven ineffectual;

3. the child's continued presence in the school is considered by school officials to be a serious hindrance to the safety or welfare of the school community;
4. a parent repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students or displays disrespectful, disruptive or harassing behavior toward teachers or toward school, parish or diocesan staff.

If the Principal/Director/director believes it necessary to expel a child, the Principal/Director/director will notify the child and the child's parents about the child's action and provide them with an opportunity to respond in accordance with the school's disciplinary hearing process before making any final decision on the matter.

A parent whose child is expelled may appeal this decision by writing to the Superintendent of Schools within 5 working days from the time of written notification. If an appeal is made, the superintendent will appoint a hearing panel to evaluate the decision to expel. The hearing panel will be composed of two principals, one pastor and one member of the Office of Catholic Schools. The parent(s) making the appeal is/are permitted to bring legal counsel. Counsel's participation during the appeal hearing, however, is restricted to providing advice/communication to their client only. The OCS member shall be an advisory non-voting member of the panel. The decision of the appellate panel is final.

During the pendency of any appeal, the expelled child shall be removed from the school community in compliance with the expulsion notice unless otherwise directed in the discretion of the Principal/Director/director.

Children who have been expelled from any Diocesan school may not apply for admission to another Diocesan school for a minimum of one (1) year from the date of expulsion.

## ***REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES***

Privacy of individual children must be balanced against the need to protect the health, welfare and safety of other members of the school community. The Principal/Director or his/her designee has the right to protect the health, welfare, and safety of school patrons by searching a child's person and/or personal property on school grounds or at school activities. Lockers and desks are school property and are subject to searches by school personnel.

## ***CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY***

Children are to care for school property in a respectful manner. Children who deface or damage school property or the property of others will make financial restitution.

## ***DRESS CODE***

The dress code provides a standard for our children that fosters an environment conducive to learning and respectful behavior.

Final decisions regarding the school uniform rest with the Principal/Director/director.

### **DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS & OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION**

The dress code provides a standard for our children that fosters an environment conducive to learning and respectful behavior.

## ***PLAYGROUND REGULATIONS***

1. No playing in the woods or on the hill.
2. Use the preschool playground equipment only.
3. No pushing, shoving, or rough play.
4. Be polite and courteous to all.

## ***LUNCHROOM REGULATIONS***

Given the risk of potential harm, students' access and use of microwave ovens are prohibited. Student meals provided by parents must not be heated in microwave ovens by school personnel and/or school volunteers.

Preschool classes have a snack in their classroom.

## ***SHOW & TELL***

Children are allowed to bring toys from home for the purpose of Show and Tell only. Weapons (whether real or toys) of any kind are not appropriate Show and Tell items, and shall not be brought to school for any reasons. If weapons of any kind are brought to school, the child shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action which may include but not be limited to expulsion.

## **VII. HEALTH, SAFETY, & WELFARE**

### ***STUDENT HEALTH, SAFETY, & WELFARE***

Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for the health and well being of their children. School health services supplement, rather than substitute, for parental care and concern for the health of the students.

#### **PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND/OR CHILD ABUSE**

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse generally applies to all clergy, all employees, and all volunteers.

It is the policy of the Diocese that sexual misconduct and/or child abuse while performing any work or activities under the auspices of the Diocese is contrary to Christian principles and outside the scope of any authority, duties, and/or employment of any clergy, employee or volunteer.

Any clergy, employee or volunteer with the Diocese who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that an incident of child abuse or illegal sexual misconduct has been perpetrated by any individual, including clergy, employee, or volunteer with the Diocese,

- must comply with applicable reporting and other requirements of state and local law;
- must report the incident to the Moderator of the Curia of the Diocese of Arlington.

Virginia law imposes upon school personnel the legal responsibility of reporting to the local child protective services agency any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect.

School personnel who suspect the abuse or neglect of a student must report the matter directly to the school principal who in turn will call the Moderator of the Curia, and then contact the Child Protective Services Agency. At that point, confidentiality must be respected.

According to the *Code of Virginia*, (Section 63.2 – 1518) *Authority to Talk to a Child or Sibling*, “Any person required to make a report or conduct an investigation or family assessment, pursuant to this chapter may talk to any child suspected of being abused or neglected or to any of his siblings without consent of and outside the presence of his parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person standing in loco parentis, or school personnel.

#### **ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID**

The school nurse or principal’s designee will record the circumstances of all accidents, (e.g., date, time, injured party, immediate cause, involved parties, supervisory facility/staff member, treatment/action taken, etc.) in the individual student health record. A separate Diocesan Accident Report Form (see Appendix F-7) is completed for all significant accidents or injuries that may require treatment outside of school. A copy of the accident report is retained as a separate, internal

school record, with the original forwarded to the Diocesan Insurance Risk manager at the Chancery within 72 hours of the accident or as soon as possible in the case of major accidents and/or injuries.

The parents of an injured student will be notified of the accident/injury by the principal/administration or the principal/administration's designee as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the student.

If an incident results in a medical condition or injury which can be reasonably known to the appropriate supervisory faculty/staff member and/or the principal, the school and/or its staff are authorized to render reasonable basic first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion of the school, serve to minimize the severity of the injured person's condition.. In addition, staff may secure professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion of the school, appears to be reasonably warranted. The school and school officials shall be expressly held harmless from any liability costs or expenses associated with the professional diagnosis and/or any treatment or first aid provided (including but not limited to the cost of transportation), such costs or expenses being the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

## **ILLNESS**

Each school will provide a health office or comfortable space, apart from the student population, where children who become ill or injured can be cared for following *Virginia School Health Guidelines, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*.

Children with fevers, contagious, or infectious diseases will be sent home promptly and excluded from school while in that condition, per Virginia Department of Health regulations. Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable illness by a healthcare provider or is fever free/symptom free for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school, after school, and extracurricular activities.

When a student is requesting a waiver from participating in Physical Education classes and/or recess, parents are required to submit a written statement from their child's physician which states any activity restrictions with regard to participation in Physical Education classes and/or recess. The statement is expected to include a specific time frame for the activity restrictions.

## **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION OVERVIEW**

Detailed Diocesan medication policies and procedures can be accessed on the Office of Catholic Schools website, in the school clinic and in the appendix of this document.

All school clinic, administrators and staff are required to administer medication within the framework of the procedures outlined in Diocesan policy and summarized here..

All prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications may be administered during the school day under the following conditions:

1. When the need for administration of medicines during school hours has been confirmed by the school nurse/health assistant (or the school administration) ;
2. After the first dose of any medication has been given at home;
3. When the parent / guardian provides and transports the medication to and from school and the medication is given directly to the school nurse/health assistant, or a senior member of the school administration;
4. When there is a health care provider's written order signed by the parent / guardian requesting the school to administer medication or to permit the student to self-administer the medication;
5. When the medication is brought to the school in its original container stating the name of the student, the dosage and method of administration prescribed by a physician. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to notify the school of any changes to the original prescription. The new prescription must also be brought to the school in the original container as stated above;
6. When the appropriate medication authorization form (see Appendix) has been completed, signed and accompanies the medication;
7. For any medication, parents must document the number of tablets or dosages to be secured for administration by authorized school personnel. If tablets are to be divided, the parent or guardian is responsible for dividing the tablets that are to be divided in order to achieve their child's proper dosage.

All OTC and prescription medications are to be kept locked in the clinic/school office and be administered by the school nurse, clinic aide, principal or trained designee. No student is to carry/possess medications, without appropriate medical authorization. No medication will be administered unless the school has received a signed copy of the Medication Authorization Form (see Appendix). OTC medications do not require a health care provider's signature unless the medication is required for four (4) or more consecutive days.

It shall be the student's responsibility to come to the clinic/school office at the appropriate time for medication unless a health care provider or parent indicates in writing that the student cannot do this.

Students are NOT permitted to self medicate. The school does not assume responsibility for medications taken independently by the student. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis for students who demonstrate the capability to carry and self administer emergency life saving medications (e.g. inhaler, Epi-pen)

Within one week after expiration of the effective date on the order, or on the last day of school, the parent /guardian must personally collect any unused portion of the medication. Medications not claimed within that period will be destroyed.

### **SPECIALIZED STUDENT CARE NEEDS**

The parent of any student on a continuing regimen for a non-episodic condition shall inform the school principal/administration and identify in writing the student's supervising health care provider. If necessary, and with parental written consent, there may be occasions when the school needs to communicate with the health care provider regarding possible effects on the pupil's healthcare management, special emergency procedures or behavior at school.

### **PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS AND MODIFICATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Students participating in school-sponsored team athletic activities must have proof of an annual pre-participation sports physical. Submission of this form and a consent to participate form for elementary, middle and high school based athletic program participation is required, excluding parish CYO and intramural sports.

When a student is requesting a waiver from participating in Physical Education classes and/or recess, parents are required to submit a written statement from their child's health care provider that states any activity restrictions with regard to participation in Physical Education classes and/or recess. The statement is expected to include a specific time frame for the activity restrictions.

## ***INFECTIOUS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASES***

### **DISEASE**

The protection and welfare of each individual student is of importance in the schools of the Diocese of Arlington. In an effort to enhance protection of students:

No daycare/preschool, elementary, middle or secondary school student may attend class without documentary proof of adequate immunization in accordance with Virginia Department of Health's school entry requirements (or modified schedule as approved by licensed health care provider) on the Virginia School Entrance Health Form (MCH-213).

- a. Parents or guardians who object to the administration of immunizing agents for their child on the grounds that this conflicts with their religious tenets or practices must produce a notarized Certificate of Religious Exemption CRE-1 form, which will be retained in the student health record.
- b. Students who have traveled or resided in a foreign country for five months or more during the last three years are required to provide documentation of a recent tuberculosis skin test result prior to school entry.

Children with fevers and/or contagious or infectious diseases will be sent home promptly and will be excluded from school while in that condition, according to Virginia Department of Health regulations. Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable illness by a health care provider or is fever free/symptom free for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school.

School health personnel will follow the Virginia Department of Health Communicable Disease Chart, found in the Virginia School Health Guidelines, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, when referring suspected cases of communicable disease to the local health department for excluding or readmitting a student.

## **LICE**

All students determined to have an active case of lice will be excluded from school until they receive treatment. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide appropriate and adequate treatment for the student and home environment as recommended by their health care professional. Readmission to school is determined by the school nurse based upon re-inspection and the effectiveness of treatment. Follow up treatment is expected and verified by the school nurse. Classroom contacts may be inspected.

Lice are tiny insects that survive on human blood. Head lice are about as big as a sesame seed and may live on the human scalp. Head lice usually pass from child to child through shared combs, hats, and other personal items. One of the most common symptoms of lice infestation is itching. If you notice your child repeatedly scratching, you should check for lice. Live lice can be difficult to locate because they move quickly and don't like bright light. But their nits are easier to see. Closely examine the scalp in natural light and look for eggs attached to the hair shaft. Also, inspect under the child's finger nails. Do not send your child to school if you suspect head lice. Check with your pediatrician for proper instruction on how to treat head lice. Children with head lice may not return to school until the condition is fully treated.

## ***BLOODBORNE DISEASE***

The Christian community is called to respond to the sick in our midst with compassion and justice. The diocese recognizes its obligation to protect the rights of individual students infected with; Hepatitis and HIV to provide a safe environment for students, staff members, and the public. Students who are infected with bloodborne Hepatitis, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or HIV-related conditions must be provided the opportunity to receive a Catholic school education in a regular classroom unless the student's health interferes significantly with school performance.

Since it is known that bloodborne Hepatitis and HIV are not transmitted through casual contact, any student who is infected will continue education in a regular classroom assignment unless his or her health status requires otherwise. It is the intent of the Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools to follow the recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health which state that, most bloodborne Hepatitis and HIV-infected children be allowed to attend school in an unrestricted setting, and that decisions regarding school attendance be based on the medical condition of each child and the expected type of interaction with others in that setting.

Persons involved in the implementation and monitoring of this policy shall maintain confidentiality of records in compliance with federal and state law, and diocesan policy. All diocesan schools shall also maintain a program of information and training for school staff members to ensure a consistent and accurate understanding regarding prevention of exposure to bloodborne pathogens. This includes training related to the proper application of universal/standard precautions.

## ***FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS***

Fire drills are held monthly. Students are trained to leave the building quickly and quietly, if the fire alarm rings.

## ***SEXUAL HARASSMENT--STUDENTS***

Sexuality affects all aspects of the person, including in a general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Arlington endeavor to provide for their students an atmosphere free from sexual harassment.

1. No student is to sexually harass another member of the school community. Any student who engages in sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.
2. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. "Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" includes, but is not limited to, "the deliberate, repeated making of unsolicited gestures or

comments, or the deliberate, repeated display of offensive, sexually graphic materials which is not necessary for school purposes."

## ***BULLYING***

Bullying is prohibited and is defined as one or more actions of abusive treatment of another. Examples include but are not limited to:

- a) Physical intimidation or assault
- b) Extortion
- c) Oral or written threats
- d) Teasing
- e) Put downs
- f) Name calling
- g) Threatening looks
- h) Gestures or acts of aggression (Overt and Covert)
- i) Cruel rumors & false accusations
- j) Social Isolation
- k) Cyber-bullying

School personnel will not tolerate any bullying on Diocesan school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity (on or off school grounds). In addition, the Office of Catholic Schools expects students and parents who become aware of an act of bullying to report it to appropriate school personnel (e.g. Principal/Director, teacher, school counselor). The Office of Catholic Schools expects staff members who become aware of an incidence of bullying to take appropriate steps to intervene- unless intervention would be a threat to staff members' safety. If a staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report the bullying to the school Principal/Director for further investigation.

In cases of reported bullying, the Principal/Director or designee shall interview all students involved (i.e. the aggressor(s) and the victim(s)) and investigate, as appropriate. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents, and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying may be subject to appropriate consequences.

- a) Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include:
  - Counseling
  - Parent conference
  - Detention
  - Suspension and/or Expulsion
- b) Depending on the severity of the incident(s), the Principal/Director may also report incidents of bullying to law enforcement if appropriate.

## **VIII. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

The Catholic school recognizes the beauty and potential inherent within each child. In an effort to foster continued growth, the school embraces the challenge to provide assistance and programs to serve children with special needs according to the resources available within/to the school. Parents are considered an integral part of the process.

In order to accommodate a child who has been evaluated for special learning needs, parents are obligated to share educational/psychological testing results and any resulting plan with the school. A child may be admitted on a probationary basis with dates and criteria of evaluation clearly established in writing.

If a child has a documented disability, a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Services Plan (ISP), 504 plan, and/or Student Assistance Plan (SAP) should be maintained in the child's confidential file. Children who have a documented disability but do not qualify for services through the local public school may be eligible for accommodations through a Student Assistance Plan written at the Catholic school. The refusal to provide such information is a condition for negating enrollment in the school.

Children with disabilities are expected to follow the school's policies and honor code.

## **IX. PROGRAM INFORMATION**

### ***LICENSING INFORMATION***

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.1, Chapter 10 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exemptions to licensure, licensed programs include child day centers, family day homes, child day center systems, and family day systems. The state may also voluntarily register family day homes which are not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, a ratio of children per staff member, equipment, program, and record keeping. Criminal record checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health, and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

Three types of licensing may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program to allow up to six months for the program to demonstrate compliance with the standards. A regular license is issued when the program substantially meets the standards for licensure. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to comply with the standards. Operating without a license when required constitutes a misdemeanor which, upon conviction, can be punishable by a fine of up to \$100 or imprisonment of up to 12 months or both for each day's violation.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Regional Office of Social Services closest to you.

**Fairfax Licensing Office**  
**11320 Random Hill Road, Ste. 200**  
**Fairfax, VA 22030**  
**(703) 934-1505**

**Northern Virginia Regional Office**  
**Northern Virginia Regional Office**  
**320 Hospital Drive, Suite #23**  
**Warrenton, VA 22186**  
**(540) 347-6345**

**Central Regional Offices**  
1604 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 130  
Richmond, VA 23229-5008  
(804) 662-9743

**Eastern Regional Office**  
Pembroke Office Park  
Pembroke Four Office Building, Suite  
300  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452-5496  
(757) 491-3990

**Verona Licensing Office**  
Verona Licensing Office  
Post Office Box 350  
Verona, Virginia 24482-0350  
(540) 248-9345

**Piedmont Regional Office**  
Commonwealth of Virginia Building  
210 Church Street, S.W., Ste. 100  
Roanoke, VA 24011-1779  
(540) 857-7920

**Abingdon Licensing Office**  
190 Patton Street  
Abingdon, VA 24210  
(540) 676-5490

## ***CRISIS MANAGEMENT/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN***

A Crisis Management/Emergency Preparedness Plan has been developed and approved. All employees have been trained accordingly.

## ***OVER-THE-COUNTER SKIN PRODUCTS***

All non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall not be kept or used beyond the expiration date of the product.

For all over-the-counter skin products,

- written parent authorization noting any known adverse reactions shall be obtained;
- shall be in the original container labeled with the child's name;
- does not need to be kept locked but shall be inaccessible to children under five years of age;
- any center-kept sunscreen shall be hypo-allergenic and have a minimum SPF of 15;
- children nine years of age and older may administer their own sunscreen if supervised.

When insect repellent is used, a record shall be kept that includes the child's name, date of use, frequency of application and any adverse reaction. Manufacturer's instructions for age, duration and dosage shall be followed.

## ***INSURANCE***

The program is covered by public liability insurance through the Diocese of Arlington and the Catholic Mutual Relief Society of America. Student insurance must be provided by the family through their own policy, or purchased through an independent school insurance provider. The school will send home optional policies each fall for the families to consider.

## ***TAX INFORMATION***

Because the Internal Revenue Service requires identification of care givers in order to claim a credit for child and dependent care expenses, the school will complete and return to the parent any W-10 that is sent in, provided Part II is already completed by the parent.

## ***PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT***

In compliance with state regulations for state licensed programs, a custodial parent shall be admitted to any child day program. Such right of admission shall apply only while the child is in the child day program (63.2-1813 of Code of Virginia).