

**St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas**  
**2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook**

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## **DISCIPLINE**

Our Catholic faith calls for discipline that is derived from respect, compassion and understanding of each other. St. Matthew Catholic School joins the parents in accepting responsibility for helping children to learn to control their own behavior and to be responsible for their own words and actions. Children are guided toward this goal in an atmosphere conducive to learning with a strong emphasis on spiritual and moral growth. Parents and students are expected to comply with directives and all school policies. Parents are expected to support the disciplinary process and to cooperate fully with the administration and the faculty in the enforcement of these policies. Lack of cooperation on the part of the parents and/or the student may jeopardize the present and future enrollment of a student.

Additionally, it is important for parents to understand that the Administration reserves the right to modify and/or add new directives and consequences to this discipline policy, as individual circumstances require. The Administration reserves the right, in serious cases, to circumvent the disciplinary process stated below.

Self-esteem will be nurtured as part of a “peacemaking discipline” to be employed in the classroom. This program will establish expectations for student behavior and correct any behavior that disrupts the student or others in the classroom. Each of the units (Pre-K & Kindergarten; 1-3; 4-5; 6-8) has developed steps for appropriate behavior in their grade levels. Homeroom teachers will hand out classroom rules that follow the Discipline Policy. **Six cardinal rules of conduct will be followed throughout the school:**

1. Show respect for yourself, adults, others, the St. Matthew uniform, and all property.
2. Be prepared for school and all activities.
3. Allow others to work undisturbed.
4. Follow directions.
5. Keep your hands to yourself.
6. Be honest.

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St. Matthew School will provide an environment free of physical, verbal and sexual harassment. Refer to Folder 18 of this Student/Parent Handbook for St. Matthew policy on harassment.

The Administration reserves the right to modify and/or add new directives and consequences to this discipline policy as individual circumstances require and may not be included in this handbook. Specific questions can be directed to the School Administration.

Disciplinary action will be taken in the form of disciplinary notices, detention, disciplinary referrals, suspension and expulsion. These forms will be sent home with the student for parent signature and a notice will be sent electronically through the Ren Web communication system. Instances that involve suspension and expulsion will involve immediate parent contact.

All discipline forms (Disciplinary Notice, Detention Notice, ISS or OSS) sent home for a parent/guardian signature must be returned the next school day. Parent and child signatures on the discipline form signify that communication has taken place, not necessarily that approval of the action has been given.

### **TEACHER REFERRALS**

A teacher may refer a student to the office for a conference with one of the school administrators. Depending on the circumstances, this referral may result in the issuance of a formal discipline action.

### **DISCIPLINARY NOTICES (DN)**

The notice may serve as a communication tool after several classroom warnings have been given and a favorable response has not been seen. An accumulation of three Disciplinary Notices within a grading quarter will result in a Detention. A DN may be issued for such behavior as: excessive talking in class, being unprepared for class, eating in class without permission, chewing gum or any other minor infraction of the rules of good behavior expected of the students. It should be noted that any seemingly minor infraction may be viewed with more severity given the context of a specific situation

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**DETENTION**

A detention is issued for more serious matters. A detention may be assigned for behaviors such as: repeated disruption of class, disrespectful attitude, behavior, language, academic dishonesty or any other behavior deemed significant enough by school personnel to warrant detention. The child and his/her parent/guardian will be notified of the date and length of time of a detention before the day it is to be served. If a student has been issued three Detentions in a nine-week grading period, an ISS (In-School Suspension) will be issued.

**SUSPENSION**

An **In-School Suspension (ISS)** is issued for one of the following: an accumulation of 3 detentions by a student within a grading period, or a grave/serious infraction of a school rule. Any student bringing prohibited items to school, using obscene or offensive language or gestures, failing to comply with administrative directives, exhibiting public displays of affections (PDAs), destroying property or any infraction deemed serious enough by the school administrators can be grounds for In-School Suspension.

A one-time fee of \$75.00 is charged for an In-School Suspension. Repeated disciplinary infractions that result in multiple assignments to ISS may result in dismissal from St. Matthew School.

**Consequences of an ISS:**

1. A student receiving an ISS will receive a U in conduct for that quarter and is not eligible for honor roll.
2. A student who has had an in-school suspension is not be eligible for field trips or special events without special permission the principal. However, when a student's class is taking a field trip, the student must report to school and arrangements will be made for supervision.
3. Student athletes will receive a one game suspension to be served on the first game after the ISS is issued to the student.

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**Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)** is issued for extremely grave infractions of a school rule or a continuous disregard of school rules and regulations. A student who is placed in an OSS may not return to the classroom until the parent and child have had a formal meeting with the administration. The pastor will be consulted in deciding the final disposition of a student placed on OSS. A student granted permission to return to classes at St. Matthew Catholic School after being placed on OSS, will return under the terms of a discipline contract which must be signed by the student, parent and administration. Failure to comply with the terms of the discipline contract may result in immediate removal from St. Matthew School.

**Consequences of an OSS:**

1. A student receiving an OSS will receive a U in conduct for that quarter and is not eligible for honor roll.
2. A student who has had an out-of-school suspension is not be eligible for field trips or special events without special permission the principal. However, when a student's class is taking a field trip, the student must report to school and arrangements will be made for supervision.
3. A student receiving an OSS will be ineligible to participate in all school activities for the duration of the OSS.
4. Receiving an OSS may result in a student's expulsion from St. Matthew Catholic School.

**All discipline forms (Disciplinary Notice, Detention Notice, ISS or OSS) sent home for a parent/guardian signature must be returned the next school day. Parent and child signatures on the discipline form signify that communication has taken place, not necessarily that approval of the action has been given.**

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**EXPULSION**

Serious infractions warrant a conference with the principal, assistant principal and pastor. The following violations will result in an immediate Administrative review with the possibility of expulsion from St. Matthew School:

- Participates in disruptive activities by a group such as a gang.
- Possesses, uses, delivers, or is under the influence of narcotics, dangerous drugs or alcohol.
- Smokes or uses any tobacco product on school property or at any school related activity.
- Possesses, uses or conceals a weapon (a weapon is any instrument which may produce bodily harm or death) on school property or at a school related activity.
- Threatens bodily injury or harm to some student or school personnel.
- Assaults a student, parent or any school personnel.
- Vandalizes school property or the property of others.
- Engages in chronic or repeated behavior that disrupts the learning environment.
- Sets off false alarms.
- Serves multiple In-School Suspensions in a school year.
- Serves an Out-of-School Suspension.

**PROHIBITED ITEMS AT SCHOOL**

The following items are not permitted on school premises:

- Alcohol
- Entertainment Magazines
- Drugs - prescription drugs **MUST** be stored with the school nurse and administered through the nurse's office. Non-prescription drugs (ex: aspirin, Advil, cough drops) may not be brought to school, unless under the authorization of a doctor's prescription and kept in the nurse's office.
- Electronic devices/ gadgets that have not been issued by the school
- Fireworks
- Glassware/Glass Containers
- Guns
- Highly Caffeinated "energy" drinks

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- Inappropriate books, websites, magazines/comics, music, pamphlets, literature or software
- Knives
- Laser pointers
- Lighters/matches
- Pump Sprays and Aerosol Sprays (i.e. Deodorant, body sprays, hairspray, cologne, breath sprays, perfumes)
- Strongly scented hand and body lotions
- Shock Devices
- Tobacco in any form
- Vaping paraphernalia
- Video games

Students are strongly discouraged from bringing expensive items to school. The list of these items includes, but is not limited to, expensive purses, wallets, backpacks and other personal accessories, including jewelry.

**St. Matthew is not responsible for lost or stolen valuables. The administration reserves the right to add to this list as needed throughout the school year.**

### **COPYRIGHT**

All employees, volunteers and students will abide by the federal copyright laws. Employees, volunteers and students may copy print or non-print materials allowed by:

1. Copyright law.
2. Fair use guidelines.
3. Specific licenses or contractual agreements.
4. Other types of permission.

Employees, volunteers and students who willfully disregard copyright law are in violation of the Archdiocesan policy and do so at their own risk and assume all liability.

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**CHEATING/CONSEQUENCES OF CHEATING**

When it has been determined that cheating has taken place, all students involved in giving or receiving information will face disciplinary action. This will include receiving a zero for the assignment, project or test, serving a detention and possibly (at teacher discretion) re-submitting the assignment (a new grade will not be given). Multiple infractions may lead to more severe consequences including suspension and expulsion.

**SCHOOL PHONE USE, CELL PHONES,  
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

**TELEPHONE USE**

Permission to use the classroom phone must be obtained from the teacher. The office phone is a business phone and students will be permitted to use it only in case of an emergency. Forgotten homework, athletic equipment, etc. does not constitute an emergency.

**CELL PHONES and WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

The possession or use of cell phones at any time during the school day is prohibited. Cell phones will be collected at the beginning of the school day in all homerooms. They will be secured and returned to the student at the end of the school day (or earlier if the student leaves before the formal end of the school day).

**Middle School students arriving after the tardy bell will leave cell phones in the office until dismissal.**

There shall be no cell phone usage in the building until the student is under the direct care, custody and/or control of his or her parent, guardian, person picking the student up from school, **or** with the permission of extracurricular moderator/coach/staff.

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**FIRST OFFENSE:**

A student in possession of a cell phone (or any electronic communication device), will surrender the phone/device to the administration for a period of one week and receive a detention.

**SECOND OFFENSE:**

A student who receives a second cell-phone infraction (or any electronic communication device) will receive an ISS (In-School Suspension), which has a \$75 ISS fee, and surrender their device to the administration for two weeks.

Continued violation of the Cell Phone Policy will result in more severe consequences.

**CELL PHONES ON CLASS TRIPS**

Class trips are extensions of the school day and student cell phones are not permitted on class trips without specific written direction from the teacher and administration approval.

***This rule applies to all forms of electronic communication devices that allow wireless communication of any kind, including, but not limited to, SMART WATCHES.***

**LOCKER AND LOCK ASSIGNMENTS**

- All Middle School Students will be assigned to a specific locker number and a specific lock and combination for that locker.
- Students are co-tenants of the locker space.
- The school will maintain a copy of the student's lock combination, as well as, a master key to unlock each individual locker.
- **The school reserves the right to inspect all lockers at any time. Students in possession of illegal substances or objects will be immediately reported to the local authorities.**

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- Assigned locker combinations are the responsibility of the individual student and are not to be shared with other students.

It is the student's responsibility not to share his/her locker combination; to keep his/her locker locked at all times; and to keep electronic communication tools in the locker.

**ARCHDIOCESE POLICY \*3310 SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

*The school principal and/or his/her designee may search student desks, lockers and belongings including, but not limited to, clothing, vehicles, handbags, briefcases, backpacks, electronic devices and other items in a student's possession.*

*The Parent/Student Handbook should contain a statement concerning the use and search of lockers, the possession of illegal substances and objects, and the resulting disciplinary action for violation of the school rules in these areas.*

**COMPUTERS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Acceptable Use Policy**

Computing, data storage and information retrieval systems are designed to serve the students, faculty, staff and volunteers of the school community. Network and Internet access is provided to further the legitimate education goals of St. Matthew School. The school provides computing and network resources for the use of students, employees and others affiliated with the school. Members of the school community are encouraged to use the computers, software packages, electronic mail (E-mail) or outside the school network software for educational or school related activities and to facilitate the efficient exchange of useful information. However, the equipment, software and network capacities provided through the school computer services are, and remain, the property of the school. All users are expected to conduct their on-line activities in an ethical and legal fashion. The use of these resources is a privilege, not a right. Misuse of these resources will result in the suspension or loss of these privileges, as well as disciplinary, legal and/or monetary consequences. Appropriate or acceptable educational uses; these resources include the following:

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1. Accessing the Internet to retrieve information from libraries, databases and World Wide Web sites to enrich and expand curriculum is encouraged.
2. E-mail capabilities may be used to facilitate distance learning projects.
3. List servers and news groups may be used to gain access to current information on local, state, national and world events.

Examples of inappropriate or unacceptable use(s) of these resources include, but are not limited to, those uses that violate the law, the rules of network etiquette or hamper the integrity or security of any network connected to the Internet. Some unacceptable practices include:

1. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state law including, but not limited to, copyright material, threatening, harassing, pornographic, obscene material or material protected by trade secret is prohibited. The transmission of copyrighted materials without the written permission of the author or creator through school E-mail or other computer messages that are sexually explicit constitute harassment, which is prohibited by St. Matthew School. It is also illegal for anyone to knowingly allow any telecommunications facility under their control to be used for the transmission of illegal material.
2. The use of school resources for financial gain (personal or commercial), product advertisement, political lobbying, the sending of unsolicited junk mail or chain letters is prohibited.
3. Vandalism is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, any attempt to harm or destroy the data of another user, the network/Internet or any networks or sites connected to the network/Internet. Attempts to breach security codes and/or passwords will also be considered a form of vandalism.
4. The creation, propagation and/or use of computer viruses are prohibited.

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5. The forgery, reading, deleting, copying or modifying of electronic mail messages of other users is prohibited.
6. Deleting, examining, copying or modifying files and/or data belonging to other users are prohibited.
7. Willful destruction of computer hardware or software, or attempts to exceed or modify the parameters of the system is prohibited. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the school operator from intercepting and stopping E-mail messages having the capacity to overload the computer resources. Discipline may be imposed for intentional overloading of school computer resources.

Access to the school E-mail and similar electronic communications systems are a privilege and certain responsibilities accompany that privilege. School users are expected to demonstrate the same level of ethical and professional manner as is required in face-to-face or written communications. Anonymous or forged messages will be treated as a violation of this policy.

1. Unauthorized attempts to access another person's E-mail or similar electronic communications or to use another student's name, E-mail or computer address or workstation to send E-mail or similar electronic communications is prohibited and may subject the individual to disciplinary action.
2. All users must understand that the school cannot guarantee the privacy or confidentiality of electronic documents and any messages that are confidential, as a matter of law, should not be communicated over the E-mail.
3. St. Matthew School reserves the right to access E-mail, to retrieve school information and records, to engage in routine computer maintenance and housekeeping, to carry out internal investigations or to disclose messages, data or files to law enforcement authorities.

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4. Any information contained on a school computer's hard drive or computer disks, which were purchased by the school, is considered the property of the school.

This policy applies to stand alone units as well as units connected to the network or the Internet. Any attempt to violate the provisions of this agreement will result in revocation of the user's privileges, regardless of the success or failure of the attempt. In addition, school disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. The decision of St. Matthew School regarding inappropriate use of the technology or telecommunication resources is final.

Monetary compensation will be sought for damage necessitating repair or replacement of equipment.

**Use of Electronic Communication – taken from Archdiocese Policy 3307**

Whether occurring within or outside of school, when a student's use of electronic communication jeopardizes the safe environment of the school or is contrary to Gospel values, the student can be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including expulsion.

This policy applies to communications or depictions through email, text messages, or web site postings, whether they occur through the school's equipment or connectivity resources or through private communication, which: (1) are of a sexual nature; (2) threaten, libel, slander, malign, disparage, harass or embarrass members of the school community; or (3) cause harm to the school community.

A school reserves the right to confiscate and/or examine any electronic device in the student's possession while on campus including, but not limited to, cellular telephones, watches, tablets, gaming devices, cameras, school-issued devices or other electronic communication equipment of any type.

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**Use of Electronic Communication on School-sponsored field trips and events**

The members of the Yearbook Staff, when available, are the designated photographers/ videographers on class trips and for after-school events. Personal photographs/videos, taken with cameras or electronic communication devices, must be treated as exactly that-- personal. Teachers may assign specific objects to photograph or video on a class trip or as a class project. Archdiocesan Policy regarding the Use of Electronic Communication (see above) is very clear about communication that could jeopardize the safe environment of the school or the students. Pictures or videos taken at school events, or at events where students other than members of your family are present and being photographed in St. Matthew uniforms or other easily identified clothing or costumes, are not to be electronically transmitted nor posted onto personal social network pages. These protocols must be followed to ensure the safety of all St. Matthew students.