Saint Ambrose Catholic School

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Pre-Kindergarten Handbook
2026-2027

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Rev. Dariusz Zarebski
Pastor

Mrs. Lisa Dodge, Ed.S
Principal

We are blessed and honored to welcome you as a valued member of St. Ambrose Catholic School. To answer some of your questions concerning the school's policies, the school has prepared this Parent-Student Handbook. Please read it thoroughly and retain it for future reference. The policies stated in this handbook are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school, as are all other policies, procedures, or programs of the school. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in policy. However, the school has the right to add, delete or revise any school policy or procedure with or without notice. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, and none of the policies or provisions should be construed as such. If you have any questions about the school's policies, please ask the principal for assistance.

Saint Ambrose Catholic School
Pre-Kindergarten
Philosophy and Goals

We welcome you and your child to Saint Ambrose Catholic School! Our early childhood program provides an integrated approach to developmental education, addressing the intellectual, emotional, physical and social aspects of children 3 to 5 years of age.

Through a well-organized, though minimally structured program, with an emphasis on individuality, our main objective will be to provide an environment which promotes creativity and spontaneity. Minimally structured refers to the manner in which our learning program is implemented - not the content of the program. We utilize a variety of learning strategies emphasizing the use of all five senses to convey reading, science, math and social studies concepts. We will always strive to create a happy, nurturing environment for your child.

We believe that learning, at its best, happens through imaginative play rather than forced structure. This imaginative play will have very definite goals, but will allow our children the freedom to respond independently within a relaxed atmosphere.

We provide every opportunity for the development of the whole child--intellectually physically, emotionally and especially spiritually. God will feel very welcome at Saint Ambrose Catholic School. Religion is an integral part of our day for all of our children, providing an opportunity to hear and understand Bible stories. We will guide them to an appreciation for God's beautiful world, His love for us, and our responsibility to Him in prayer.

Our philosophy statement: We believe that each child is a unique individual and that all children can learn. St. Ambrose Catholic Preschool program provides inclusive settings that recognize children's varied abilities, interests, needs, and learning styles. We believe children learn through meaningful play

OBJECTIVES

We believe that it is the responsibility of our Early Childhood Program to:

1. Realize that children must be treated as individuals.
2. Guide, protect and encourage children to learn at their own rates.
3. Provide activities that are flexible for both large and small groups.
4. Provide materials for learning that relate to each age group.
5. Provide information to parents concerning the welfare of the child and activities in the school environment.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ADDRESS/TELEPHONE

At the beginning of each year, parents fill out an emergency card for each student they have enrolled in St. Ambrose. Cards are kept on file in the school office. If the student has a serious health problem or condition, it must be noted on the card. It is important that the information on these cards be correct, up-to-date, and easy to read. In an emergency situation, the school must have the proper information in order to respond properly.

Change of address or telephone numbers—Home, work, and cell—must be reported IMMEDIATELY to the school office and a note written to your child's teacher.

ADMISSION POLICY

The school has an open admission policy. No person, on the grounds of race, color, disability or national origin, is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the receiving of services. Nor does the school discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender, or national origin.

ALLERGIES

Please make sure you notify your child's teacher and the school office of any allergies your child has. This is of utmost importance for your child's safety.

Peanut Allergy Policy

In order to ensure the safety of students with peanut allergies, please notify homeroom teacher 72 hours in advance when cupcakes, donuts, or cookies to celebrate your child's birthday will be brought to school. This will give the teacher sufficient time to notify parents of students with peanut allergy or any other allergy to provide a snack for their child on that day. Under no circumstance can parents nor teachers distribute party bags and/or candy.

All allergies must be listed in Emergency Cards that are part of the registration forms. If an Epipen is necessary, it must be provided to the School Office. A meeting with all teachers that have students with allergies will be conducted at the beginning of the school year.

ATTENDANCE/TARDY/EARLY DISMISSAL POLICY

Daily attendance is encouraged. Consistency gives the child a sense of belonging and a feeling of security. In case of illness or an extended absence, please notify the office.

Parents of VPK students must sign their student in and out each day. The sign in/out book is located in the book outside of the classroom. At the end of each month, parents of VPK students must sign their student's attendance card to verify the dates the student was present/absent.

Pre-Kindergarten 3 Hours:
7:55 AM – 3:00 PM

VPK Hours:

Standard Day	**7:55am-11:00am**
Extended Day	**7:55am-3:00 pm**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

St Ambrose School will be operating a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) for 3 hours a day, 5 days a week for 180 days. All enrolled families received a calendar showing the scheduled days off during the operational period of August 11, 2026 through June 2, 2027.

Attendance during the scheduled instructional days is of utmost importance to remain in the VPK program. Not only is St Ambrose School funding linked to attendance, but also the child's success upon entrance into Kindergarten.
You will be required to sign and comply with the following policy on Attendance and Tardiness to remain in the VPK program.

Tardiness:

Arrival for the VPK program is between 7:30 and 7:50 a.m. VPK arrivals should be signed in during carline drop off at the back of the school. The earliest time arrivals will be accepted in carline is 7:30 a.m. The instructional day starts at 8:00 a.m. and all children are expected to be in place and ready to start the day. Arrivals after 8:00 a.m. are disruptive to the group in progress and difficult for the arriving child as well. We understand that it is occasionally unavoidable to be "running late", but more than twice a month will not be acceptable and will be cause for termination from the VPK program.

Late Pick Up:

The VPK program ends at 11:00 daily. If you are late to 11am pickup, please proceed to the front office for dismissal.

Excused Absence

Daily attendance in the VPK program is necessary for optimal learning, however, you will be allowed (3) absences per month. Any absences beyond those require a written note from the parent for one of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury of the child or the child's family member which requires hospitalization or bed rest;
- Physician or dentist appointment;
- Infectious disease or parasitic infestation;
- Funeral service, memorial service, or bereavement upon the death of the child's family member;
- Compliance with a court order (e.g. visitation, subpoena);
- Special education or related services for the child's disability;
- Observance of a religious holiday or service;
- Family vacation, not to exceed 5 excused absences per program year.

Please note: Absences of 5 consecutive instructional days will be considered a **withdrawal** from the VPK program at St Ambrose Catholic School. Withdrawals from the VPK program will not be eligible for re-enrollment. St Ambrose Catholic School will allow one **documented** 5-day absence during the 180 day instructional period. Documentation must be submitted in advance, explain the reason for the 5-day absence, and be dated and signed by the child's legal custodial adult.

Verifying your child's attendance and absences

The St Ambrose Catholic school PreK staff will give you a form to review and confirm your child's recorded attendance for the month. Your signature on this form will not only verify the attendance, but also will direct the Early Learning Coalition of Broward to direct payment for the month's VPK program for your child to St Ambrose Catholic School, and that you continue to choose St Ambrose Catholic School to provide your child's VPK program for the upcoming month.

BIRTHDAY/HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Holiday celebrations will focus on our Faith (Christmas, Easter, Advent etc.). Celebrations will be scheduled via the room parent at the request of the teacher as deemed appropriate. All plans for parties/celebrations will be at the discretion of the teacher and the administration. Students are permitted to have birthday treats **during snacktime only**. When planning an out of school party, and you do not plan on inviting the entire class, invitations are to be distributed outside of school

Please check with your child's teacher to coordinate birthday treats. The preferred treats are cookies, donuts, or ice cream cups. Pull-apart cupcakes, sheet cakes and other heavily frosted items are **not** permitted. All holiday/birthday celebrations, if approved, may have store bought food goods only. Florida law prohibits "home-baked"

goods.**Siblings are not permitted to be signed out of class to attend parties or classroom celebrations.**

CAR LINE

Everyone is required to drop off their child in the carline and sign the VPK book if your child is in VPK. At 11:00 VPK parents drive through the carline to pick up their child and sign them out. All others will be dismissed in carline at 2:55 to pick up the children

CHANGE OF CLOTHING

We ask that each child have a complete change of clothing in his/her classroom in the event of an accident (be sure to include socks and shoes). These should be sent to school in a zip lock bag marked with the child's name. If your child does have an accident, be sure to send in a new change of clothing with him/her to school the next day.

CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local law enforcement agency. Reports should be made to Florida's Department of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

In addition to contacting DCF, abuse may be reported to the Safe Environment Office of the Archdiocese by calling 305-215-6635 or emailing abusereporting@theadom.org.

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will seek to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews on school property. However, please note that, under Florida law, DCF and local law enforcement have the discretion to conduct unannounced interviews and to disallow school staff member's presence during these interviews.

COMMUNICATION

Information for parents will be sent home via email on or before **Friday**. Parents are asked to read and review the emails as they contain important and current information about the school and its events and policies. Teachers will digitally communicate via email, BloomZ, Class Dojo, or Google Sites on a regular basis. Please email teachers will any questions or concerns you may have and they will answer you within 2 business days.

St. Ambrose School will strive to keep up with technology and will be posting many announcements thru OptionC/PowerSchool. The school website is:

www.stambrosecs.org

If there is an Emergency or last-minute announcement, such as the cancellation of an after school event due to weather or illness, the school will be utilizing the OptionC Parent Alert program which will send out a text message/email to all parents notifying them of the change. Please provide the office with any updates to email/cell phone numbers so that you can be reached.

CONDUCT

Saint Ambrose Catholic School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and disciplined learning environment. In order to uphold these standards, the school administration is empowered to fully investigate allegations of student bullying, misconduct, threats of violence, and other concerns that may impact the school community. As part of this process, school administrators may conduct inquiries, review relevant information, and interview students as necessary. Students are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation. The school may also involve parents or guardians at its discretion. The failure to comply with an investigation or provide truthful information may result in disciplinary action.

In addition, students and Parents are expected to behave consistent with the mission, philosophy and spirit of the school and the moral teachings of the Catholic faith as determined by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Miami. Because the school cannot anticipate all conduct that violates this policy, it reserves the right to take any form of (1) student disciplinary action, including administrative withdrawal, and/or (2) restrictions against any behavior that violates this policy, even if not specifically stated in this handbook.

CONFERENCE

Arrival and dismissal times are very busy for teachers and aides. If you would like to schedule a conference with the teacher, please call the office and leave a message for your teacher to call you. The car line is not the place or time to discuss your child with their teacher.

Communicable Diseases and Related Items

Attendance at school and participation in school activities poses some risks including the transmission of communicable diseases. Although the school has taken various measures to reduce the risks of transmission, the possibility of infection from communicable diseases is nonetheless present. Parents expressly assume such risks by allowing their children to attend school and participate in school activities and/or by coming onto the school campus and attending school activities themselves.

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or any other circumstances which in the judgment of the school administration make it unfeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus- based education, school educational programs shall resume as soon as practical by way of distance learning and/or other methods adopted by the school administration and faculty. Due to the school's continuing financial

obligations related to its operations, there will be no suspension, reduction, or refund of tuition in these circumstances.

Confidentiality Statement

School officials including teachers, administrators and other paraprofessionals in the performance of their duties will have access to student educational records. **Parents/Guardians by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE AND CONSENT** to the disclosure of such records including the nature and existence of a disability, a medical/educational diagnosis, or any associated minor adjustments or accommodations made to such school officials with a legitimate educational interest in the information

CURRICULUM

Our Pre-Kindergarten program is developed within an experiential, hands-on curriculum, with an emphasis on religious experience, language arts, problem solving, gross and fine motor development, and acceptable social behavior.

Prek3's curriculum is Creative Curriculum

VPK's curriculum is Creative Curriculum

DISCIPLINE

Discipline means respect for others, helping the child feel good about himself, setting limits, and helping the child learn to control himself. Discipline consists of time out. If a negative behavior continues, the teacher will request a conference.

The Discipline policy at Saint Ambrose is one of **"loving limits"**. This policy includes:

Preventive Discipline - Structuring the program and environment for maximum benefit and interest of the children.

Self Control - Guiding the children in a loving way to understand the need for such control.

Discussions - Explaining more directly the limits of behavior.

Redirection

AT NO TIME WILL PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT BE USED, NOR ANY METHOD THAT UNDERMINES THE CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM.

While Saint Ambrose Catholic School attempts to meet the needs of every child in our learning community, if it becomes apparent that the school is unable to accommodate the particular needs of a child, Saint Ambrose may, at its sole discretion, request that the child be withdrawn from school.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Dismissal time is **3:00 PM.** Everyone is required to use the car line in the back of the school for arrival and pick up. If someone is to pick up your child other than

yourself, the teacher and office must be notified in writing. The school reserves the right to require proper identification from anyone who is coming to the school to pick up a student who is not personally known to the teacher or administrator, and to refuse the release of the child without it. If the teacher is not familiar with the person picking up the child, the person picking up your child will be asked to park their car and proceed to the office, where their identification will be verified.

DIRECTOR DESIGNEE:

In case of the Director not on-site the PreK4 teacher will be the person in charge for that time.

EARLY SIGN OUT

In the event that you must sign your child out early from school, no student will be called to the office after 2:00 PM on regular school days or 11:00 AM on early dismissal days. There is no exception to this rule.

EMERGENCY CONTACT CARDS

These cards are sent home with your child the first day of school and must be filled out completely and returned promptly. Please notify the office of any changes during the year. It is imperative that the office has emergency numbers to contact parents during the day. In a situation that would require immediate medical care, we will contact the first person listed. Your signature on the back of the emergency contact card empowers the school authorities to exercise their own judgment in calling the physician listed or if not available, transport the child to a hospital emergency room.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The satisfaction of all financial obligations to the school, including tuition and fees, constitutes a material condition for continued enrollment in the school. The school may disallow students from taking quarterly, semester, or final examinations if the parents or legal guardians fail to meet any financial obligation to the school. In addition, the school may withhold the issuance of transcripts or any other student records and/or disallow participation in or access to school activities, and/or administratively withdraw the student if any financial obligations are not met.

Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE to be responsible for the full balance of tuition and any related fees regardless of any scholarship that may be available. Should such scholarship awards not cover the entire balance due or otherwise not become available, Parents/Guardians agree that they remain responsible for the full tuition amount and fees. Additionally, with respect to these scholarships, any student with a disability does not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended.

FUNDRAISING

No student may solicit funds in the school's name unless such solicitation has been authorized in writing by the principal.

HAIR – Boys/Girls

Parents should use good judgment in selecting hairstyles. **HAIRCUTS ARE TO BE TRADITIONAL AND CONSERVATIVE.** All boys' hair should be cut short and neatly styled. Extreme hairstyles (fads, tails, dyed or bleached) are not permitted. Final determination as to what is traditional and conservative will be determined by the Administration.

HARRASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

The school is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, at assignments outside the school, or at school-sponsored events. All students are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student must immediately report the incident to his/her principal. If, however, the principal is the individual who is believed to have engaged in the inappropriate conduct, the student should notify the Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of Miami. If an investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the school will take corrective action based on the circumstances

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Home and School Association is an important part of Saint Ambrose Catholic School. We invite and encourage all families to actively participate in our many fund raising and volunteer efforts.

HYGIENE

Hand washing before meals, after toileting, and at other appropriate times will be taught and required of all students.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

If a child becomes ill or injured, the parent(s) shall be called and the student will be placed in a predetermined isolation room. If we are unable to reach the parent(s), we shall call the person designated on the emergency contact card.

According to state guidelines, there are certain illnesses that require us to send the child home and to refuse admittance for a designated time period. The following is a partial list of such illnesses. Those illnesses designated with an * require a doctor's note to return to school.

- *Chicken pox - all lesions are to be dry and crusted
- A cold with green, nasal discharge

- *Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) - 24 hours after start of medication
- Diarrhea
- Fever - Temperature over **99 degrees - 24 hours fever free**
- Lice and Scabies - following medical treatment
- *Rash
- *Strep throat - no sooner than 48 hours after the start of oral medication or 24 hours following an injection
- Vomiting - 24 hours after vomiting subsides

Clinic

You will be notified immediately in case of sudden illness or accidents of a serious nature. Students with a measured fever will be sent home immediately. Please be certain that the office has the correct information and phone numbers for emergency contact. School clinics, by law, are for first-aid only. The school is not permitted to send a child to a doctor for emergency treatment without the permission of a parent or guardian. The signature on the back of your child's emergency contact card will allow the school to seek emergency care for your child should the need arise and we cannot contact you.

See MEDICATIONS for more information.

IMMUNIZATIONS

The Archdiocese of Miami requires that, prior to attendance in school, each student present or have on file with the school a certificate of immunization for the prevention of those communicable diseases for which immunization is required by the Department of Health. A Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680) completed by a health care provider licensed in the state of Florida and participating in Florida Shots is required to document the administration of prescribed immunization doses.

The Archdiocese of Miami does not accept immunization exemption requests based upon religious, philosophical, personal, or other reasons. Medical-related immunization exemption requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Such requests must be made through submission of the Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680) and signed by a health care provider licensed and located in the state of Florida.in Florida and located in South Florida who regularly sees the student for medical care. Medical exemptions are only approved for legitimate documented medical needs. The Archdiocese reserves the right to not accept any medical exemption request.

Should there be an outbreak of a communicable disease at school, students with medical immunization exemptions may be asked to remain home throughout the incubation period of the disease.

Intellectual Property Protections

The name, logos, seals, mascots, slogans, designs, uniforms, and other identifying marks of Saint Ambrose Catholic School are valuable property of the School. These

marks are used to identify the School, its mission, programs, activities, students, teams, and community. Parents, guardians, students, family members, volunteers, alumni, and other persons may not use the School's name, logos, seals, mascots, slogans, or other identifying marks for any purpose without the School's prior express written authorization. This restriction includes, but is not limited to, use on merchandise, apparel, websites, social media accounts, flyers, signs, banners, fundraising materials, promotional materials, team materials, event materials, or any other printed, digital, or commercial materials. No person may create, sell, distribute, advertise, or purchase for resale any merchandise or materials bearing the School's name, logos, or other identifying marks without prior written approval from the School. Parents/ guardians are also expected to ensure that any merchandise, apparel, or other items bearing the School's name, logos, or identifying marks are purchased only from vendors who have been authorized by the School to use those marks. The fact that an item is available for purchase from a vendor, website, or third party does not mean that the vendor or item has been approved by the School.

LIBRARY

Our Pre-Kindergarten classes will have the opportunity to visit the library with their class at a designated time and day.

LOST AND FOUND

To avoid frequent loss of items, please mark all belongings with your child's name. Lost items will remain in the office for two weeks. If they have not been claimed they are given to the needy or put in the used uniform inventory.

LUNCH

The children will have lunch at school. Please send your child to school with a nutritious lunch. Carbonated sodas or glass bottles are not allowed at any time. We have no provisions for refrigeration or heating. We also ask that you **do not bring** special lunches for your child such as Burger King, McDonalds, etc. "Lunchables" that require the teacher to open and assemble the food are strongly discouraged (ie - pizza, hot dog, hamburger, deli sandwiches.

MEDICATIONS

Except as authorized by the school, students are not permitted to carry or distribute any prescription or non-prescription drugs or treatments, including aspirin, on the school grounds or at any school function. The administering of medicine to a student outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should only be delegated to school personnel when necessary and authorized by the school. Parents should ask their physicians if it is possible to prescribe medication so it can be administered at home. Only when necessary will the school allow the administration of medication on campus, and only under the following guidelines:

1. An authorization form must be completed and submitted by a parent or legal guardian of the student. The name of the medication and dosage should be indicated on the form.

2. Medications to be dispensed at school should be labeled with the child's name and the exact dosage. The name and telephone number of the physician should also be on the label.

3. While the school may monitor a student taking the medication, the school will not remind students to come and take their medication.

Exceptions to this policy may be made for the use, supply and administration of an epinephrine auto-injection (Epipen), or as otherwise authorized in writing by the school. In particular circumstances, the school may agree to administer medication or otherwise provide health care interventions that go beyond a minor adjustment for a particular student. In those cases, Parents hereby release the school, the Archdiocese, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the provision of those health care interventions that are beyond minor adjustments.

PARENTAL COOPERATION

The school views the education of a student as a partnership between the parents and the school. Parents and students are expected to comply with the school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials, whether it be at school events, on or off school campus, or on social media or other public forum. Just as a parent can withdraw a child from the school if desired, the school has the right to administratively withdraw a student if it determines at its discretion that the parent or student partnership with the school is irretrievably broken.

PARENTAL CUSTODY AGREEMENTS AND COURT PROCEEDINGS

Saint Ambrose Catholic School is a faith-based community committed to the spiritual, academic, and emotional well-being of each of our students. We believe that children flourish when the adults in their lives act with charity, discretion, and peace. Because parental disputes can be disruptive and harmful to children—especially when they occur on campus—this policy exists to keep the school focused on its mission and to prevent custody or timesharing disagreements from occurring at school. This policy applies to the parents and the legal guardians of students.

A. School Policy on Parental Timesharing Arrangements

The school will not take sides in parental timesharing arrangements. Consequently, it will not undertake responsibility for interpreting, mediating, negotiating, or enforcing parental timesharing schedules or custody arrangements. However, in limited cases, the school may apply explicit court orders that prohibit a parent's contact with a child including no-contact and restraining orders. At its discretion, the school may take steps to prevent adult conflict from occurring in view of students or disrupting learning, worship, or school operations.

B. Parent Responsibility for Timesharing and Custody Matters

Parents have a serious responsibility to their children—and to the school community—to manage custody and timesharing arrangements without involving school faculty or staff. Accordingly:

- Parents are solely responsible for policing and enforcing their own timesharing arrangements, exchanges, and parenting-plan requirements.
- Parents must not ask, pressure, or expect teachers, administrators, coaches, or staff to:
    - "Take sides," "verify compliance," or determine which parent is "supposed" to have the child on a given day;
    - Refuse a child's release to a parent based on an alleged schedule violation;
    - Serve as intermediaries, messengers, or "record-keepers" for family court matters; or
    - Facilitate confrontations, negotiations, or discussions about custody on campus, at school events, or through school communication channels.
- Parents are required to resolve disputes privately (and, when needed, through their legal counsel, mediation, or the court) and not through school personnel.

C. School Access and Release to Parents

To protect student safety while remaining neutral in family disputes, the school will generally follow these standards:

1. **Equal parental access absent restriction**. Unless the school has on file a current, valid court order that restricts a parent's contact with the student (e.g., an injunction for protection, no-contact order, or other court-ordered restriction), the school will generally treat each legal parent as having access to the student, school records, and school activities consistent with applicable law and ordinary school procedures.
2. **Verification and safety procedures still apply.** All adults—including parents—must comply with campus security procedures (sign-in requirements, identification checks, visitor rules, and supervision expectations).
3. **Authorized pickup procedures.** For student safety, the school will release students to individuals permitted by school procedures (e.g., verified parent/guardian and/or individuals listed on the school's authorized pickup permissions), and consistent with any court order on file. The school's safety protocols are not an enforcement mechanism for timesharing; they are for student protection and orderly operations. Decisions about which individuals may be included on the school's authorized pickup list should be made by the parents. Disputes over such lists should be addressed by the parents (and their legal counsel and/or court order as necessary).
4. The school is not responsible for "holding" a child to resolve a dispute. If a parent appears for pickup and the school has no restraining/no-contact order or other

court-ordered restriction on file, the school is not responsible for adjudicating competing claims about which parent's day it is.

5. High-conflict situations. If repeated conflict occurs on campus or at school events, the school may require additional boundaries (for example: separate conference schedules, separate event check-in instructions, communication limitations, or a school-developed interaction plan) as a condition of continued enrollment, so that school remains a place of peace for students.

D. Court Orders, Injunctions, and Documentation

Parents must promptly provide the school with updated copies of any court order affecting: parental contact, pickup restrictions, supervised contact requirements, or communication limitations. If the school receives a valid restraining order/injunction/no-contact order restricting a parent's contact with the child or the other parent on campus, the school will follow it to the extent reasonably practicable and consistent with student safety and school operations. If an order is unclear, the school may ask the parents to obtain clarification. Until then, the school will follow its standard procedures and campus safety rules. In accordance with Florida law, the school will make student records and in-person conferences available to both parents unless a court order specifically revokes this right, in which case it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the court order to the school. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the address(es) where student records should be sent.

E. Testifying in Divorce or Custody Proceedings

In recognition of the importance of the matrimonial sacrament to the Catholic faith, parents agree not to compel the attendance, testimony, or deposition of any school or church employee in any divorce, custody, or other legal proceedings which may in any way involve the dissolution of marriage or the determination of parental/custody rights. A violation of this policy will constitute a breach of the parental cooperation requirement.

In the event that a parent or legal guardian breaches this policy, any school or church personnel who are required to attend legal proceedings may be represented by an attorney. In addition, any and all legal fees and costs incurred by the school will be charged and become the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

F. Conduct Expectations and Campus Safety

Saint Ambrose Catholic School expects all parents to model respect and self-control consistent with the school's Roman Catholic faith and values. Parents may not argue, negotiate custody, or engage in hostile communications on campus, at drop-off/pickup, or at school events. Parents must not involve students in adult disputes or request that students carry messages or documents between parents. In cases where a conflict arises at school, the school may separate parties, end a meeting/event participation, restrict access to campus for the remainder of the day, and/or require future communication through designated channels. If safety is threatened or a disturbance occurs, the school may contact law enforcement.

Compliance with this policy is an integral component of the school's overarching parental cooperation requirement in which parents and legal guardians are expected to comply with the school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials.

PHOTO USAGE

The school reserves the right to use student or parent photos in any school or Archdiocesan publication including but not limited to print publications, videos, or websites including Facebook, Instagram and other social media websites. Any parent who does not want his or her child's picture or video to be used accordingly must notify the school's principal in writing prior to the beginning of the school year. **By executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, Parents HEREBY CONSENT, authorize and grant permission to the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their agents, employees or duly authorized representatives to photograph or videotape students and parents and CONSENT to their publication for any purpose deemed proper by the school, including but not limited to, use on the internet.**

Additionally, Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the use of student or parent photos.

RELIGION

Religion in the Pre-Kindergarten program will be integrated into the activities of the day. The concepts of God and His Family will be presented in a manner, which gives students an opportunity to creatively express these concepts. Students will learn prayers, and participate in religious celebrations that are age appropriate. Starting in January, the students will attend the school masses.

REST TIME

Florida State Early Childhood regulations require quiet time for all preschools. All pre-k children will use a roll-up mat with a sewn-in pillow and blanket. This item must be purchased from the school office prior to the start of school. The mat will be sent home on Friday for laundering.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

All parents, guardian, relatives, faculty, staff, and clergy who volunteer with children in any capacity, including driving for field trips and helping in the classroom must adhere to Diocesan Safe Environment Program regulations by being Safe Environment trained and fingerprinted. Training and fingerprinting are renewed every five years. Fingerprinting must be done through the Diocese. Fingerprint records from any other source will not be accepted. Only parents who have received training and been fingerprinted will be allowed to work with our students. www.virtus.org and FieldPrint information.

SCHOOL HOURS

7:50 AM - 2:55 PM

We ask that you please have your child to school on time. The morning is a very important part of their day. Please be prompt in picking up your children. Any child who has not been picked up by 3:15 PM will be sent to the office and their parent(s) or person listed on the emergency contact card will be called.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Accidental damage to school or church property must be reported immediately to the school office staff. Students should develop pride in trying to keep their classrooms and school surroundings in good condition. Willful or deliberate damage to school property will be brought to the principal's attention. This is cause for suspension, detention, and/or dismissal from Saint Ambrose Catholic School. Saint Ambrose Catholic School is co-tenant of student desks and reserves the right to search them at any time without notice

SCHOOL SPONSORED EVENTS

The school does not sponsor, oversee, or in any way control parties or social functions at private residences. School-sanctioned events, including all field trips, excursions, or parties, are specifically identified in this Handbook or are identified in the school calendar and/or written notices generated and distributed by the school.

Parents, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to attendance at parties or social functions at private residences or from participation/attendance at events not identified in the school calendar or in written notices from the school, including field trips, excursions, or parties.

Students engaged in conduct that is contrary to the mission and philosophy of the school may be subject to disciplinary action regardless of whether the conduct occurred at a school-sponsored function.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

At the beginning of the school year, we will post and distribute a school supply list. From time to time teachers may send written requests for special supplies needed in an individual classroom for a specific project (paper plates, ribbon, egg cartons, yarn etc.)

SEARCH AND SEIZURE POLICY

The principal and his/her designee has access to any lockers, handbags, electronic devices, cell phones, book bags, desks, cars or any other object that is brought onto the campus of the school or any school-sponsored event, and may remove or confiscate any object which is illegal or contrary to school policy.

SECTION 504 – POLICY STATEMENT

School complies with the mandate of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in certain programs and activities. Pursuant to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, (Name) School will make those minor adjustments that can accommodate students with disabilities to the school's educational programs and activities.

The school's designated 504 Coordinator and contact information are as follows: Dr. LaTonya WhiteJaclyn Don Caceres, 305-762-12691019. Parents with questions regarding the school's disability accommodations or related items should contact the 504 Coordinator. Parents may file a grievance as to any decisions related to a disability accommodation and request an internal hearing and review by sending a written notice addressed as follows:

Dr.Jaclyn Don Caceres,Associate Superintendent
Office of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Miami
9401 Biscayne Blvd
Miami Shores, FL 33138

The internal hearing and review will seek the prompt and equitable resolution of disability discrimination complaints.

SNACK

Each child brings in his or her own snack for the day. As we strive to encourage good nutrition, we ask that you choose snacks carefully. Healthy snack suggestions include: cheese sticks, carrots, fresh fruit, crackers, dry cereals (Cheerios, Chex), popcorn, pretzels and yogurt. Please include a drink for snack time. No peanuts, please.

THREATS OF VIOLENCE

The disciplinary consequences for a student whose verbal or written comments, including email messages, that threaten serious bodily harm to another student or member of the faculty or staff or destruction of property, may include, but not be limited to:

1. Immediate suspension from the school;
2. Reporting to law enforcement;
3. Treatment or consultation by a psychologist or psychiatrist at the parents' expense and/or by the school counselor, both of whom may be asked to submit a written evaluation. If it is determined that the child was serious about the threat and has the capacity to carry it out, the child may be administratively withdrawn from the school. If it is determined that the child did not seriously intend to do harm to others, the child may be allowed to return to the school, at the discretion of the school principal.
4. If allowed to return to school, the child may be placed on probation with an indication that, should a similar threat occur, the child will be administratively withdrawn from school;

5. The school should inform the Office of Catholic Schools of these cases. The school may submit an informational report to the police.

TOILETING GUIDELINES

All students enrolled in the Saint Ambrose Catholic School Pre-Kindergarten program are expected to be fully toilet trained and capable of adequately cleaning themselves following toilet use. No "pull-ups", training pants or diapers are permitted. Teachers and aides will provide verbal assistance and oversight and may not provide physical toileting assistance. No "flushable" wipes are permitted.

Young children may have unexpected toileting accidents and these will be treated with understanding and the necessary clean-up assistance. However, following a 30 day transition period from the first day of school, no student experiencing more than four (4) accidents in a 30 day period shall be permitted to continue in school. A mandatory one month, home retraining period, will be required before returning to school.

TOYS

We ask that children do not bring toys from home unless specified by the teacher.

TRANSPORTATION

Be sure your child fully understands transportation arrangements before leaving home in the morning. Please, **unless it is an emergency**, **avoid calling the school at the last minute** to relay a message to your child or another parent.

Parents hereby acknowledge and agree that the school does not provide or arrange for student transportation to or from school, except as specifically set forth in writing by the school. Student transportation to and from school each day is a parental responsibility. The school does not authorize or endorse any private transportation arrangements. In limited and documented circumstances, a parent may engage a commercial transportation company to transport a student from school; however, any such engagement requires the written authorization of the school and the execution of school documents allowing for such an arrangement. Except upon the written consent of the school, parents should not utilize internet-based rideshare transportation services (such as Uber or Lyft) to transport students to/from school and school-sponsored activities

TROPICAL STORMS

If such an emergency arises during school hours, parents are encouraged to come to school and pick up their children. We will observe the same regulations as Broward County Schools/Archdiocese of Miami regarding school sessions during hurricanes or severe storm days.

TUITION

FACTS will be collecting tuition starting in August and ending in May.

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

AA student's enrollment and/or graduation from school does not confer a legal status nor does it serve to regularize an undocumented student. Although the Archdiocese of Miami may assist with the completion of an I-20 form, the school does not guarantee or confer any privileges or rights available to documented legal residents. Parents should consult with immigration legal counsel if they have any questions as to immigration status.

UNIFORMS

The children may wear the casual uniform (P.E.) or uniforms purchased from Risse Brothers along with Velcro sneakers and socks (no light up sneakers). The children visit the playground on a daily basis, weather permitting. During the cooler weather and cold days, students are required to wear blue sweat pants and St Ambrose sweat shirts and windbreakers. These uniforms are also available at the school uniform store, Risse Brothers.

Children are required to carry a backpack to school every day. Please be sure that your child's backpack does not depict any characters of violence.

Video Surveillance

Saint Ambrose Catholic School uses video surveillance cameras throughout the campus. Cameras may be located in areas including, but not limited to, entrances, exits, classrooms, hallways, common areas, outdoor areas, parking areas, athletic facilities, and other areas used for school operations. The School's surveillance cameras record video only and do not record sound or audio. Video recordings may be reviewed by authorized School personnel for legitimate school purposes, including safety, security, student discipline, investigation of incidents, protection of property, compliance with School policies, and cooperation with law enforcement or other appropriate authorities when deemed necessary by the School.

Students and parents/guardians are hereby made aware that they may be recorded by the School's video surveillance system while on campus or participating in School-related activities. Video recordings are the property of the Archdiocese of Miami and the School, and will be maintained, accessed, disclosed, or destroyed in the School's discretion, consistent with applicable law and School policy. Recordings are not generally available for inspection by students, parents, guardians, or third parties, except as required by law or as otherwise determined appropriate by the School.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers must have a volunteer screening form on file in the school office - **NO EXCEPTIONS**. All volunteers must attend a session of Protecting God's Children (VIRTUS) workshop, hosted by the Archdiocese of Miami, and be fingerprinted through the Archdiocese of Miami.

Volunteers, parents, or any other visitors, must check in at the school office before entering classrooms or labs. No one is permitted to go through the building or directly to a classroom without stopping at the office and receiving a visitor pass.

Volunteers are a vital part of our school. Parents are encouraged to become involved in our Home and School Association. The Home and School Association, which represents the parents, is active in fundraisers, contacting volunteers and organizing special events. Anyone who wishes to volunteer in the classroom must complete and return an Archdiocese of Miami volunteer application form. These are available in the school office. When assisting in individual classrooms, we ask that no discussion take place regarding a student's behavior or progress at any time. Confidential matters that are seen or heard in a classroom should remain confidential at all times.

Volunteers are responsible for 30 hours per family of which 15 hours must be done at the carnival. In addition parents are expected to participate/or contribute towards school fundraising events, such as pumpkin patch, fish fry, family night etc. A fee may be assessed for incomplete hours.

WEAPONS POLICY

Weapons are not permitted anywhere on school grounds or at any school activity. Any student who brings a weapon to any school activity, who is in possession of a weapon, or who threatens others with a weapon may be administratively withdrawn from the school. Any item used to threaten or cause bodily harm may be considered a weapon. In particular, the possession of any instruments or objects that can be used to inflict serious harm on another person or that can place a person in reasonable fear of serious harm will be considered weapons. Included in this category are BB guns, Airsoft guns, and toy or replica guns represented as real guns. Also included in this category is the possession or storage of items which are prohibited at school, including but not limited to ammunition clips, bullets or cartridges, flammable liquids, combustible materials, poisonous substances, mace, pepper spray, and any other items which may result in injury.

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

   Parents or eligible students should complete the Request for Release of Student Records and submit it to the School principal (or appropriate school official) identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

   Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

   One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

   A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

   Family Policy Compliance Office
   U.S. Department of Education
   400 Maryland Avenue, SW
   Washington, DC 20202-5920

Saint Ambrose Catholic School
Parent-Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, as Parent or Legal Guardian, acknowledge that I have read the entire contents of the Parent-Student Handbook and understand the consequences of any violations of the rules and policies of the school.

I agree to cooperate with the school in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook. I also understand that the school has the ultimate authority over the administration of the school and the interpretation of the school's rules and policies. Moreover, I further understand that all of the school's policies whether written or verbal are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school with or without notice.

I also hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms of the **RELEASES** outlined in the School-Sponsored Events Policy, the Participation in School Athletics or Organizations Policy, and the Use of Photos Policy.

_____ _____

(Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name) (Date)

_____ _____

(Signature Parent/Legal Guardian)

_____

(Print Student Name) (Grade)