



St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School

Family Handbook

2025-2026

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Family Handbook Receipt Acknowledgement

Enrollment at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School is a privilege, not a right. Students agree to be governed by the school policies and procedures contained within this handbook. Parents are expected to support these policies and procedures. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary actions that may lead to suspension and possible expulsion from St. Vincent School.

The presence of your child at the school means you accept the terms and conditions of the handbook. By enrolling your child, you acknowledge you are familiar with the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School Student Parent Handbook that is located at <https://www.svselkhartguardians.org/> and will actively support and follow the rules listed within. You understand that the handbook contains important information about the school, its administration, and the educational and disciplinary policies and procedures that the school maintains in furtherance of its religious mission as part of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Enrollment in St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School is subject to the approval of the Diocese and the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School administration. In order to foster an environment that promotes the optimum educational and spiritual development of the student, every parent/guardian of each student is expected to act as a cooperative partner with the Diocese and School and comply with all policies and rules that are established by the Diocese or School. The School retains the right to rescind approval for the enrollment of any student if it determines that there is a lack of cooperation on the part of the student's parent/guardian, and, as a result, the withdrawal of the student would be in the best interest of the student, the School, other students attending the school, or the fulfillment of the School's mission.

The Student-Parent Handbook and other Diocesan School Policies are subject to review and interpretation by school administrators and/or the Diocese and are subject to change at the discretion of the administration and/or the Diocese.

Right to Amend

St. Vincent de Paul School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via the Wednesday letter and ClassDojo.

Mission Statement:

St. Vincent de Paul students understand the joy of faith, the importance of knowledge, and the value of service.

Vision:

Our students will know what it means to be Catholic and be prepared as citizens for this world and Heaven. They will be proficient writers, articulate speakers, and deeper readers. Students will know how to think critically and problem solve. All students will model for others how to treat people as if they were Christ in disguise.

Motto:

Faith † Knowledge † Service

Mascot:

Guardians

EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The education of the student is a joint effort among the student, the school, and the parents. Each party has a role to fulfill.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Attend school on assigned days and times.
2. Obey the rules of the school: Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible
3. Put forth the effort to learn as much as possible.
4. Meet classroom expectations of individual teachers, including homework.
5. Respect school property.

Parent Responsibilities

1. Be familiar with and support regulations as listed in this handbook.
2. Assist the school in teaching the basic Christian principles.
3. See that the child receives proper rest, diet, medical care, and time for study.
4. See that students arrive at school on time and attend regularly.
5. Cooperate with the teachers
6. Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences.
7. Complete 10 hours of service per school year.

Teacher Responsibilities:

1. Prepare the type of class lessons that will assist each child to learn according to his/her ability.
2. Respect the dignity of the child at all times.
3. Participate in a partnership with the parents for the good of the students.
4. Note the child's behavior (social, academic, and emotional) in order to evaluate with parents the progress of the child.
5. Maintain a grade book through PowerSchool.

The Role of the Administration is to:

1. Supervise teachers, students, and curriculum.
2. Incorporate the directives and regulations of the diocese, state, and religious community offices of education into the school procedure.

3. Enforce school policies and procedures.
4. Serve as a liaison between the school and parents.

PERSONNEL

Pastor

The pastor is the spiritual leader of the school. He is to ensure the execution of all the diocesan policies and directives. As a spiritual leader, the pastor will share with the faculty his vision of religious education. While he will not be involved in the administrative details of the school, his ongoing dialogue with the staff will make it possible for his ideals to be reflected in the programs. He will be involved in the Sacramental Program and worship experiences for the students and their parents. He will be present in the school to whatever degree and in whatever way seems most natural and advantageous to all. Finally, he will work to develop, nourish, and strengthen the faith community among the school staff.

Principal

The principal is the Executive Director of the school. He/she administers, supervises, and coordinates all educational activities within the school. He/she is responsible for staff development and for hiring new teachers with the approval of the pastor. He/she works in close harmony with the pastor of the parish. His/her responsibility of educational leadership extends to the faculty and the students in creating a harmonious working body. The principal sets the tone, the atmosphere, and the spirit of the school.

Assistant Principal

The assistant principal fulfills regularly assigned administrative duties as determined by the principal. In the absence of the principal, the assistant principal has full authority and responsibility.

Teachers

The teachers are certified by the State of Indiana and approved by the Ft Wayne-South Bend Diocesan Superintendent of Schools. Teachers are commissioned by church authorities to be the authentic witnesses to the truths, moral principles, and values of the Roman Catholic faith. This practice testifies to the Church's confidence that Catholic school teachers, with God's help, will have a positive influence on their students' ideals and attitudes. Teachers are responsible for the academic instruction of the students, the evaluation and grading of scholastic achievement, and the maintenance and promotion of discipline. They work directly with the principal.

ADMISSION and ENROLLMENT

Admission to St. Vincent de Paul School is a privilege, not a right.

Students who cannot meet our behavior expectations may be placed on an individual contract, which may lead to suspension or expulsion from St. Vincent de Paul School.

St. Vincent de Paul School admits students of any race, religion, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in our school.

St. Vincent de Paul School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, and student aid programs, or any other school-administered programs.

St. Vincent de Paul School is not handicapped accessible.

School Choice Lottery Process

This policy applies to all students seeking enrollment at St. Vincent de Paul School through the CHOICE Scholarship who have been placed on the waiting list due to full capacity in the applicable grade level.

- **Priority Considerations** In accordance with school policy and applicable laws, limited preferences may be applied before the lottery, such as:
 - Returning students who are eligible and reapplying.
 - Siblings of currently enrolled students.
 - Children of faculty/staff. *All preferences must be disclosed to families prior to the lottery.*
- Selected students must confirm acceptance within five (5) business days, or the seat will be offered to the next student on the waiting list.

Enrollment Policy (Policy 4010 Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend)

I. School Admission Policy

Diocesan schools shall comply with State laws and regulations regarding school enrollment and attendance to the extent possible, as consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and diocesan policy.

II. Nondiscrimination Policy

Diocesan schools shall follow and promote an open enrollment policy, accepting students without regard to religion, color, race, sex, or national origin, and reasonably accommodate students with disabilities in their educational programs. By way of example, and not in exclusion, reasonable accommodation may include allowing access by a service animal as required by law.

A. High School Admissions

In the event enrollment appears to be reaching capacity, the school is to give preference in admissions to students with Active Registered Parishioner status from feeder schools. The school may also give preference to siblings of current students or alumni and children of faculty and staff.

When a school class has reached capacity, the names of children who are not able to be accepted (or on a waiting list) should be given to the other Catholic high school in the area no later than the end of May. At the request and expense of the other Catholic high school in the area, the school, which has reached capacity, will

address and then mail marketing materials provided by the other Catholic high school to the parents of the children not able to be accepted or to that school's waiting list.

III. All prospective students are required to complete a battery of academic assessment tests prior to admission to any diocesan school. Students applying for admission are required to be tested on Language Arts, English proficiency, and Math. The principal or designee is responsible for the administration of all placement tests and reporting test result data to teachers and parents. The principal must select placement tests for English proficiency, Language Arts, and Mathematics from an approved list provided by the Catholic Schools Office. Requests for waivers or exceptions to placement testing must be submitted to the superintendent of schools in writing prior to admission of students.

Upon review of test data and other relevant information, the principal will make a determination regarding the school's ability to meet the needs of the student tested.

IV. School Entrance Requirements

A child can be enrolled only by a person having the legal custody of the child. A certified copy of the student's birth certificate or a baptismal certificate shall be required for original entrance at all grade levels. Proof of legal custody must also be required in cases where a child does not reside with both natural parents. If these required documents are not provided to the school within thirty (30) days of the student's enrollment or appear to be inaccurate or fraudulent, the school shall notify the Indiana Clearinghouse for Information of Missing Children (See P4030) and will cooperate with local authorities if the child has been reported missing. The custodian parent or legal guardian shall provide the name and address of the school the student last attended, if any. The school shall request records from the last school the student attended within fourteen (14) days.

Written proof that the child meets State and county health requirements (immunization record) for enrollment shall be made.

V. Kindergarten Age Requirement

Schools shall follow state law guidelines in enrolling Kindergarten students.

A child entering kindergarten must be five years old prior to August 1, or the date set by the State.

A school should administer a developmental assessment to determine the proper placement in kindergarten.

VI. First Grade Entrance Requirements

Indiana compulsory education begins when a child is officially enrolled in school or the school year of the child's 7th birthday, whichever is earlier.

Students enrolling in a diocesan school after successfully completing kindergarten in another accredited school that has different age requirements shall be allowed to continue in school without interruption because of chronological age.

VII. Children with Exceptional Educational Needs

Children with exceptional educational needs requiring special class placement are accepted if their needs can be reasonably accommodated in the school. Initial enrollment should be on a tentative basis, with the understanding that in the event the exceptional needs of the child cannot be reasonably accommodated by the school, the custodial parents or guardians will agree to enroll their child in another school setting that can accommodate the special needs of exceptional children.

Ordinarily, when a diocesan school cannot reasonably accommodate the exceptional needs of a child, a recommendation for special class placement should be made to the custodial parent or guardian by the principal, after consultation with the special education teacher and the child's teacher(s). This recommendation can be for either special class placement within the Catholic school or referral to a public school for evaluation or placement. If the custodial parent or guardian does not accept the

school's recommendation, it is expected that he/she will refute the decision in writing. In some instances, the custodial parent or guardian will be required to withdraw the child if the child's continued presence, in the opinion of the school personnel, would be detrimental to the child's educational or emotional needs, poses an undue hardship on the operation of the school, or poses a threat of harm to the student, other students, or school personnel.

VIII. Students or Prospective Students with Diseases

Catholic schools shall comply with all applicable State law and all Board of Health policies regarding school enrollment and attendance in relation to a student or prospective student having a communicable disease.

Prospective students who otherwise meet all entrance requirements may not be denied admission solely on the basis of a diagnosis of a disease unless required by applicable State law or board of health policy; similarly, students may not be excluded merely on the basis of a diagnosis of a disease.

However, as with any prospective student who is diagnosed as having or is suspected of having a communicable disease, a child with a communicable disease may be excluded, if, after an individualized assessment of the child's condition, in accordance with the school's communicable disease policy/procedure, it is determined that the child's presence in the classroom would expose others to significant health and safety risks.

Upon being informed that a child is diagnosed as having or is suspected of having a communicable disease, a review team consisting of the student, their parent/guardian; his/her physician; a physician representing the school, parish, or diocese; and school or parish administrators will be established to determine whether the child's admission or continued presence in school would expose others to significant health and safety risks. In making its determination, the review team will conduct an assessment of the child's condition. The review team's inquiry will include findings of fact, based on reasonable medical judgments given the state of medical knowledge about:

- A. the nature of the risk – how the disease is transmitted;
- B. the duration of the risk – how long the carrier is infectious;
- C. the severity of the risk – the potential harm to third parties;
- D. the probabilities that the disease will be transmitted and will cause varying degrees of harm; and whether a reasonable accommodation exists and/or is required.

The review must also take into consideration the scope of the problem, education-related issues, and the student's right to confidentiality. The recommendation of the review team and the decision of the parish and school administrators shall be considered confidential and will be submitted for review only to the Superintendent of Schools, Secretary for Catholic Education, and the diocesan attorney. In the event it is determined that a child is unable to regularly attend a Catholic school, the parish, school, and diocese will assist the parent or guardian in locating alternative educational services and obtaining religious and catechetical instruction.

ACADEMICS

St. Vincent de Paul School is a certified school accredited by the State of Indiana and by the NCA Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, the SACS Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, and by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). Our teachers are licensed by the State and approved by the Diocese.

Religious Curriculum

Faith formation is an important part of St. Vincent de Paul School. Each grade has religion classes and prayer experiences as part of the daily and weekly schedules.

Liturgies

St. Vincent School is a vibrant faith community. School liturgies are an important part of prayer life. The students and their teachers in Kindergarten through 8th grade participate in Mass twice per week. Students are directly involved in the preparation of the Liturgy. Prayer Services are held monthly. Throughout the school year, the students participate in the Stations of the Cross, Penance Services, Adoration on First Fridays, and other services both in and out of the church. Students also receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least twice during a semester.

Sacramental Preparation

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist occurs in the second grade. Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation occurs in eighth grade. Preparation includes classes and instructions for students, parent meetings, and family activities. Catholic students in grades three through eight who have not received the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Eucharist, or the Sacrament of Confirmation should contact the Religious Education Department (293-8071).

Service Projects

During the years, students will have an opportunity to help further the message of love by taking part in missionary projects such as Operation Rice Bowl, Christmas and Thanksgiving Food Drives, Nursing Home visits, and other activities. Each class, grades kindergarten through eight, adopts a special service project which they work on throughout the school year. ***Beginning in kindergarten, students are required to perform service hours throughout the school year.***

Parent Service Hours

Part of the success of schools is dependent on the time donated by volunteers for events, committees, etc. Starting this school year, service hours will be required of parents of students at St. Vincent de Paul. ***Five hours of service each semester (10 per year) will be required to remain an active member of St. Vincent de Paul School.*** There will be many opportunities to fulfill this requirement, such as breakfast, lunch, HASA, Notre Dame Concession Stand, etc.

God's Gift of Human Sexuality

The Catholic school upholds and supports God's plan for sexual relations by promoting chastity for human life. Sexual union is intended by God to express the complete gift of self that a man and a woman make to one another in marriage, a mutual gift that opens them to the gift of a child. Therefore, all students are expected to live a chaste lifestyle and to abstain from sexual relations.

In conformity with pastoral guidelines from the Holy See on human love and sexuality, the moral and spiritual aspects of human love and sexuality will be presented to students within the school's curriculum. Parents, as the primary educators of their children, are normally expected to address the more intimate details of human love and sexuality at home with their children. However, if parents need assistance in this area, they may delegate this personalized dialogue with their child to a teacher, counselor, or some other trustworthy person. The diocesan Office of Family Life, in conjunction with the parishes and schools, will assist parents of elementary students in carrying out this responsibility of family life education.

Statement from the Diocese

Given the cultural challenges we face, it is necessary that we have clear policies for our parishes and schools regarding conduct related to sexual identity and sexuality. It is important that our Catholic school educators, parish staff, catechists, youth ministers, and parents who enroll their children and young people in our Catholic schools, religious

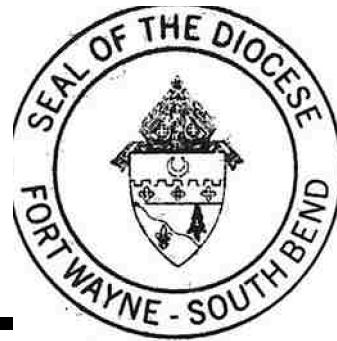
education programs, and parish youth ministries are knowledgeable of these policies based on the anthropological teachings of the Catholic Church, summarized in the following document. These policies are established as binding for diocesan institutions, including all diocesan offices, parishes, and schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

1. Designations and Pronouns: Any parochial, organizational, or institutional documentation that requires the designation of a person's sex is to reflect that person's God-given sexual identity, that is, his or her biological sex. No person may designate a "preferred pronoun" in speech or in writing when related to ministry activities of any kind; nor are diocesan institutions to permit such a designation. Only pronouns that accurately reflect a person's God-given sexual identity shall be used when addressing or referring to that person.
2. Bathrooms and Locker Rooms: All persons must use the bathroom or locker room that matches their sexual identity, that is, his or her biological sex. Individual-use bathrooms are permitted in diocesan institutions and are to be available to all members of the respective communities.
3. Attire: Appropriate modesty in dress is expected in a manner consistent with the cultivation of the virtue of chastity. Where a dress code or school uniform exists, all persons are to follow the dress code or uniform that accords with their God-given sexual identity.
4. Single-Sex Programs and Activities: Participation in institutional programs and activities (whether curricular or extracurricular, athletics, camps, retreats, etc.) that are designated as single-sex must be consistent with the person's God-given sexual identity. Some programs and activities may be open to participation by persons of both sexes.
5. Single-sex Accommodations: Participants in overnight events or programs sponsored or approved by diocesan institutions may only reside in single-sex rooms or accommodations consistent with their God-given sexual identity. The only exception is, of course, accommodations used by persons who the Church considers validly married and family members.
6. Conduct: Chaste conduct is expected and required in our diocesan institutions and at all events and programs sponsored by our diocesan institutions, including at parish or school dances and social activities. Public advocacy for, or celebration of, sexual behavior or ideologies contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church is prohibited. Active, hostile, and public defiance of these teachings is prohibited since it is harmful to the institution's Catholic identity and mission.
7. Treatments for Gender Incongruence: Compassion and sensitivity are expected and required in our diocesan institutions towards those who struggle with gender incongruence or dysphoria. Just as "Catholic health care services must not perform interventions, whether surgical or chemical, that aim to transform the characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex or take part in the development of such procedures," so our diocesan institutions are not permitted to cooperate in such interventions, including the taking of puberty blockers, on diocesan property. While we strongly support efforts to alleviate the suffering of those who struggle with their sexual identity, we cannot support interventions that we believe ultimately harm them. We support pastoral and counseling services to alleviate their suffering and assist them in accepting the God-given gift of their sexual identity.
8. Protecting the Vulnerable: All who teach, serve, and minister to young people in our diocese are expected to uphold the teachings of the Church regarding sexual identity,

sexuality, and marriage, to affirm their God-given dignity and worth, and to treat them with the love and compassion of Christ. Ministers have a special responsibility to assist those who are hurting or struggling, including those dealing with confusion about their sexual identity or with same-sex attraction. Ministers must not tolerate any ridiculing, bullying, or hostile speech or behavior directed against them.

This document has been approved and the above policies promulgated as diocesan law by the undersigned Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Kevin Carl Rhoades, on September 12, 2024, the Memorial of The Most Holy Name of Mary.

+ Kevin C. Rhoades



[Document on Gender Incongruence or Same-Sex Attraction.pdf](#)

Statement from the Bishop and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend on Pornography

10 years ago today, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) released *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography Use*. My fellow bishops intended to provide hope and healing to those harmed by pornography and also raise awareness concerning pornography's pervasiveness and harms. *Create in Me a Clean Heart* was addressed not only to clergy, diocesan, and parish leaders, but also, and perhaps most especially, to parents of our school-aged children who are victimized by pornography through the use of a digital medium.

As technology advances, and we enter the world of Artificial Intelligence with an ever-increasing reliance on cell phones and the internet, I am reminded of Pope Leo XIV's recent reminder that this digital and artificial world creates a number of challenges to human dignity. At the same time, this digital and artificial world has the potential of elevating the human spirit and bringing us closer together as God intends if these technological tools are used correctly.

Consistent with the concerns raised in *Create in Me a Clean Heart*, there are increasing reports in our schools concerning the linkage between the internet and pornography. The phenomenon requires ongoing review of not only the educational and pastoral tools used in our schools, primarily grounded in Saint Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*, but also requires ongoing review of Diocesan and school policy regarding instances when pornography and especially child pornography is knowingly spread, in any fashion, by our students. Pornography of any kind is harmful. However, the harm to our school-aged children who are victimized by pornography is potentially devastating, and even life-threatening.

It is not a coincidence that the Indiana legislature recently adopted a statutory framework addressing "revenge pornography", defined as the distribution of an intimate image that depicts sexual contact of an individual where such image has been taken, captured, created, disseminated or recorded by a person who knows, or reasonably should know, that the individual depicted in the intimate image does not consent to either the production, possession or distribution of the intimate image. Our State Supreme Court in *State v. Katz* correctly observed that in the modern age of social media, when anyone with a phone can instantly publish images worldwide, it creates new potential harms unimaginable a generation ago.

Indiana's criminal code imposes either a Class A Misdemeanor or a Level 5 or 6 Felony for violation of our state's laws dealing with obscenity, pornography, revenge pornography, and "sexting". While violations of our criminal code distinguish between those tried as juveniles and those tried as adults, the severity of many of the crimes also turns on whether obscene, inappropriate, or pornographic materials or images contain photos, images, or videos of children under the age of 18. Incarceration and monetary fines are a result of these crimes. This is not just a pastoral matter for the well-being of our young people, but also a criminal issue within our society that carries with it potentially severe penalties. I believe our disciplinary framework should reflect the seriousness of the type of criminal behaviour that strikes at the very essence of the dignity of our young people.

Diocesan Educational Policies, which are in effect for our schools, often link the consequences of expulsion with certain conduct or criminal acts, but particularly those acts which may be deemed criminal in nature and which involve serious and grave harm to our minor children. Existing policies govern the appropriate use of the internet and its

relationship to the creation, possession, and distribution of obscene or pornographic material. Moving forward, I believe that certain violations of existing policy should be reviewed at the Diocesan level. I further believe it is necessary to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to knowing or intentional violations of policy involving the creation, distribution, possession, dissemination, or recording of pornographic images, photos, or videos of children under 18 years of age.

Policy P1010 of the Diocesan Educational Policies reserves to me, at any time, to rescind or modify existing school policy at any time. I have determined it necessary to do so now. Effective immediately, it shall be the policy of this Diocese, for all of our schools, both elementary schools and high schools, that:

1. Knowingly or intentionally sending, displaying, possessing, accessing, uploading, downloading or distributing immoral, pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit materials, messages or pictures of individuals under the age of 18 through the use of written material, the internet, digital or "PDQ" device, cellular telephone or through the use of an artificial intelligence medium will be deemed a violation of the Diocesan Educational Policies.
2. A violation in #1 above shall be deemed to occur whether the impermissible conduct occurs on school grounds or if found to have occurred off campus.
3. A principal having belief that a violation of #1 has occurred shall immediately report such a violation to the Indiana Department of Childhood Services and/or local law enforcement.
4. A principal having the belief that a violation of #1 has occurred shall immediately report such violation, together with any findings, to the Superintendent of Schools, who, in turn, shall report such incident to the Vicar General, who will relay the information to the Bishop.
5. The Bishop may then choose to seek the advice of the Diocesan Review Board, a consultative board which assists the Bishop regarding claims of sexual abuse. If a determination and finding is made that a knowing or intentional violation of #1 has occurred, the student shall be expelled from school with no right of re-entry. IF a determination is made that the facts do not support a knowing or intentional violation of #1, the Bishop, in consultation with the school principal and pastor (as applicable), shall determine the consequence, if any, as provided in the Diocesan Education Policies.
6. The determination of expulsion or other discipline pursuant to #5 shall be final and not subject to any appeal.

I have directed our Diocesan legal counsel to make the above policy statement available to the county prosecutors in St. Joseph and Allen counties to let them know of the seriousness our Diocese is treating this issue. Legal counsel will also request attention be given to any police investigative report filed with the prosecutor's office involving a potential violation within our school of Indiana's criminal statutes involving obscenity, pornography, revenge pornography, and sexting to the extent it becomes necessary to reach out to other county prosecutors in the Diocese where our elementary schools are located, outside of St. Joseph and Allen counties, we will do so.

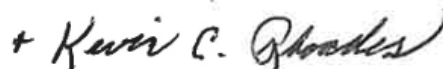
As we now approach the end of the 2024-2025 school year, I will direct our Diocesan School Board, in consultation with our Catholic Schools Office, to recommend other modifications to existing Diocesan Educational Policies, and review individual elementary school policies and high school policies themselves, to assure uniformity, integration and compliance with the promulgated policy statements above. This work will be completed

prior to the start of the 2025-2026 school year and will be distributed to all parents and students. Until then, should the above policy statements in #1-6 conflict with any individual school policy or other provisions of our Diocesan Education Policies, the above policy statements in #1-#6 shall control.

I direct all pastors of our elementary schools and principals of our high schools to notify the parents and students of your schools and your respective faculty, staff members, and school boards of this policy. I also ask that all schools work with the Catholic Schools Office on maintaining the practice of notifying both parent and student alike of the existence of Diocesan Education Policies and individual school policies at the beginning of each new year to assure continual and consistent messaging of all applicable policies.

The foregoing policy has the unanimous support of the Diocesan Review Board and the Catholic Schools Office. In no way is it intended to be punitive. Rather, it is intended to protect the well-being of our children and, as contemplated by *Create in Me a Clean Heart*, serve as a reminder to our students, their parents, school administrators, school faculty and our clergy that there is certain conduct so egregious, so palpably harmful, so potentially hurtful and even life threatening, that it has no place in our school, our homes, or anywhere in the world in which we are to strive to be more Christ like in our treatment of each other.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin C. Rhoades". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Curriculum

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School follows State and Diocesan Curricula.

Communication

Effective communication is essential for a healthy school environment. If concerns arise, talking directly to the persons involved is imperative. Remember to first address your concerns with your child's teacher. If the issue is not resolved, you may contact the administration to follow up. Contact can be made through a phone call, email, message through ClassDojo, or by arranging for an in-person appointment.

Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice a year. During this time, each parent meets with each student's teacher to discuss the academic progress of the child. Parents are encouraged and are welcome to contact a teacher whenever they feel such a conference is necessary. It is required that these conferences be made by appointment to be sure the teacher can spend all the time you may require. When a problem does occur, parents are to contact the teacher first. The principal and/or pastor should not be contacted until after this initial contact has been made.

Honor Roll

Honor Roll is awarded for grades 3-5 and 6-8. Students must maintain a B average in academic classes to be eligible for the Honor Roll. Students on Modified Programs will receive a Certificate of Achievement rather than Honor Roll.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued quarterly to students in grades K-8.

Special Services

Testing for speech, learning disabilities, and psychological testing is completed in cooperation with Elkhart Community School Corporation.

Parent/Legal Guardian Concerns Procedure (Policy 2310 Diocese of Fort Wayne South Bend)

To facilitate and promote the orderly and efficient resolution of concerns, parents/legal guardians wishing to address and/or question an academic area or situation regarding a specific teacher or classroom procedure must follow the grievance procedure below:

Step 1: Address the issue with the classroom teacher in a formal manner (face-to-face or in writing).

Step 2: Address the issue with the department chair.

Step 3: Address the issue with the Principal.

Step 4: Address the issue with the Pastor (elementary schools only).

Step 5: If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, then the parent/guardian should place his/her concerns in writing to the person involved and his/her supervisors (e.g., pastor and principal).

Step 6: Contact the Catholic Schools Office.

Parents/legal guardians should follow the steps outlined in this policy, except where a situation is specifically covered under another school or Diocesan policy, which provides for a different reporting procedure (e.g., harassment).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (Policy 4170 Diocese of Fort Wayne South Bend):
Parents have a right to access to educational records of their children. Records are available for review in the school office during regular business hours.

Daily Schedule

A monitor is on duty from 7:30 to 8:00 A.M. The monitor has the same authority and responsibility as any faculty member for the safety of the children.

8:00 A.M.	Classes Begin
8:05 A.M.	Morning Prayer
11:15 A.M. - 12:15 P.M.	Kindergarten-3 rd Lunch in MTC/Recess
11:35 A.M. - 12:15 P.M.	3 rd – 5 th Lunch in MTC/Recess
11:45 A.M - 12:15 P.M.	6 th – 8 th Lunch in MTC/recess
12:15 P.M.	K-8th All students return to start afternoon classes
12:30 P.M.	Afternoon Prayer
2:45 P.M.	Bus Rider Dismissal
3:00 P.M.	Car Dismissal

Students not picked up by 3:15 P.M. will be sent to Almost Home. **A penalty fee of \$5.00 for every hour late will be charged to parents if children are not picked up on time.**

Field Trips

Field Trips that help to supplement or enrich the curriculum are encouraged. No student may go on a field trip unless the signed permission forms have been returned before the trip. Verbal permission (including phone calls) cannot be accepted. Students who do not participate in a field trip will be counted as absent for the day.

Homework/ Homework Detentions

Grading Scale (Grades 3-8)

90%- 100%	= A (Superior)
80%- 89%	= B (Above Average)
70%- 79%	= C (Average)
60%- 69%	= D (Below Average)
Below 59%	= F (Failure)

Grading Scale (Grades K-2)

O	= outstanding
S+	= satisfactory +
S	= satisfactory
S-	= satisfactory -
N	= needs improvement
U	= unsatisfactory

Homework assignments will be given as deemed necessary by the individual teacher. Students often begin their assignments under teacher supervision. If a student is absent, it is the student's and parent's responsibility to obtain the make-up assignments from the teacher.

The following are a few suggestions to help your children develop profitable study habits

1. Check with your child to see what she/he must do.
2. Have a definite time provided and a quiet place to study.
3. If no homework is assigned, use this time for a school-related activity (reading, etc.). Turn off the TV and the Radio.
4. Remember that some homework is studying, not written. Library reading is encouraged.

Missing Homework/Assignment Detention Policy

Students are responsible for completing their assignments on time as deemed by each classroom teacher. **Detentions will be on Wednesday from 3:05 P.M. until 4:00 P.M.** Teachers will send a detention slip home with the child notifying the parents/guardians. A parent/guardian must sign and return the slip the following day. If the student does not return the signed slip, he/she will call the

parent/guardian from the school office. If a student skips assigned detention, an additional detention period will be served by the student for failure to serve his/her detention.

At 4:00 P.M., the **parent** must come into the school and pick up the child from the detention room. If the parent is sending someone else to pick up the child, notify the school. Older students attending SVS cannot sign out a sibling or relative.

If a child is not picked up promptly at 4:00 P.M., they will be sent to Almost Home, and a penalty fee of \$5 for every hour late will be charged to parents. The adults who are serving as monitors in the detention room have many other obligations and cannot wait for parents to pick up their children

Grades

Students who receive more than one failing grade on their report card in one grading period will be placed on academic probation. The student will have six (6) grading periods (which is equivalent to a year and a half) to raise their grades to a passing score. If they are unable to do so within the allotted time, they may not be allowed to return to St. Vincent de Paul School.

ATHLETICS/CLUBS

St. Vincent School participates in the ICCL (Inter-City Catholic League) Athletic Program for students. This extracurricular athletic program is primarily for students in grades 5 and 8. We participate in Boy's Football, Girls' Softball, Girls' and Boys' Basketball, Boys' and Girls Soccer, Girls' Volleyball, Boys' Baseball, Boy's and Girls' Track, Boys' and Girls' Lacrosse, Boys' and Girls' Tennis, and Boys' Wrestling, when coaches are available. IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO BE A TEAM MEMBER. ATTENDANCE AND ATTITUDE ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO HAVE SUCCESSFUL TEAMS.

Robotics is another program available to SVS students in grades 6th-8th. The team caps at 10 members and follows the same athletic eligibility requirements.

Eligibility

Any student not receiving passing grades on a weekly basis will be ineligible until the grade has been raised (at least 3 days). Students will attend team practices and games, but will not participate. Any student receiving a referral during a grading period may be removed from the team. Any student who misses 3 practices (unexcused) will be removed from the team. Serving detention will be considered a missed practice.

ATTENDANCE

Excused absences- Parents are to notify the school office by **8:30 A.M.** each day that their child/ren will not be in attendance at school.

Excused Absences

- Illness
- Funerals
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Medical/Legal Appointments
- School Visits (scheduling HS)

Unexcused Absences

- No parent/guardian contact with the school
- No doctor's note
- Family Vacations
- Any absences not counted as excused

(Other details of excused/unexcused absences can be found in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Policy P4040)

Should the absence not be reported to the office, the parent/guardian will be called to verify the absence.

Please do not send a sick child to school. If your child is unable to participate fully in school activities (gym), please send a dated note giving the reason. All students will go outside for recess. No child may leave the school grounds during the school day, for any reason, without permission from the principal. The parents should request this permission in advance.

Response to Irregular Attendance

- A call from the school office (secretary) to the parent/guardian to verify the absences and determine the reason.
- After 6 missed – excused/unexcused – contact will be made to parents through a letter expressing concern for the repeated absences, along with outlining the consequences of further absences.
- After over 15 missed days in 1 school year, a referral to the principal will be made. If the principal is unable to successfully resolve the attendance problem, a referral may be made to the intake officer of the Elkhart County Juvenile Probation Department.
- Continued absences may result in a student needing to repeat a grade or, in extreme cases, expulsion from the school.

Attendance is checked each morning at 8:00 A.M.

Tardiness

Tardy students cause disruption in the classroom and impede the learning process. Students are responsible for planning well in advance to avoid being late for school. Developing promptness is a lifelong lesson that will serve our students well. Students and parents are responsible for monitoring attendance on PowerSchool.

A student is tardy when he/she is not present at the start of the school day (8:00 A.M.) or, in the case of middle school, any class period. Students tardy to the first period of the day should report directly to the school office.

No student will be admitted to class without a tardy slip. Tardiness will only be excused if the student presents a note from a medical or dental office for a morning appointment or at the discretion of the principal.

All other tardiness will be unexcused, even if the student has a call or note from his/her parents. Situations, including but not limited to needing extra rest, late events the previous night, weather, power outage, parents' fault, etc., will result in an unexcused tardy.

Progression of Consequences for unexcused tardies per quarter:

4th Unexcused Tardy = 1 hour detention

5th Unexcused Tardy = 1 hour detention

6th Unexcused Tardy = 1 hour detention

7th Unexcused Tardy = Meeting with parent, student, and counselor to discuss the situation

8th Unexcused Tardy = Student may receive a drop of one letter grade in the class they are missing

Vacations

Absence for travel is a parental decision; however, an extended leave of absence separate from scheduled school vacations requires school administrative approval. The teacher is not required to send work for the student to do during the absence. It is the responsibility of the student and parents to see that all missed work is completed in a timely manner.

Attendance Policy (Policy 4040 Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend)

Attendance IC § 20-33-2-6

The Diocesan schools consider the development of good attendance habits as a vital and desirable undertaking for two essential reasons. First, it is difficult for young people to learn if they are not in class; the teaching-learning process builds upon itself. Secondly,

research shows that educational achievement is directly related to attendance. A student who misses a day of school misses a day of education that cannot be retrieved in its entirety.

I. Parents/Legal Guardian Responsibility

Parent(s)/legal guardians are responsible for having their children in school. Indiana law prescribes that parents must have their children in a public or private school from the age of seven (7) until the date on which the child:

A. Graduates, or

B. Reaches at least sixteen (16) years of age or less than eighteen (18) years of age and:

1. The student, the student's parent or guardian, and the principal agree to the withdrawal;
2. The student provides written acknowledgment of the withdrawal, which must include a statement that the student and the student's parent/guardian understand that withdrawing from the school is likely to reduce the student's future earnings and increase the likelihood of the student being unemployed in the future, and the student's parent or guardian, and the school principal each provides written consent of the student to withdraw from school; and
3. The withdrawal is due to financial hardships requiring a student to be employed to support the student's family or dependent, illness, or an order of a court that has jurisdiction over the student, or

C. Reaches the age of eighteen (18) years, whichever occurs first.

II. Absences from School

Absences from school shall fall into one of the three following categories:

A. Absences which are counted as present.

1. Serving as a page for or an honoree of the Indiana General Assembly;
2. For students in Grades 7 through 12, serving on a precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or political party on Election Day, with prior approval of the principal;
3. Court appearances pursuant to a subpoena;
4. Active duty with the Indiana National Guard for not more than ten (10) days in a school year, or participation in Civil Air Patrol as a member of the Indiana wing of the Civil Air Patrol for not more than five (5) days in a school year;
5. Placement in a short-term inpatient treatment program that provides an instructional program;
6. Homebound instruction;
7. Religious observances.
8. Approved, educationally related non-classroom activity per I.C. 20-33-2-17.5.
9. Participation or exhibition in the Indiana state fair by the student or a member of the student's household if the student is in good academic standing, but not to exceed five (5) instructional days in a school year.

B. Excused Absences

1. Illness of the student (with written statement by parent/ guardian or doctor)
2. Funerals
 - a. for death in the immediate family
 - b. for persons outside of the immediate family with parental permission
3. Out-of-school suspension
4. Medical and legal appointments – Such appointments should be scheduled after school hours when possible.

5. School/college visits (2 days) – Parents/guardians need to check with the individual school's policy when arranging such visits.

C. Unexcused Absences

1. No parent/guardian contact with the school, giving an explanation for the absence on the day of the absence.
2. No physician's note to excuse an absence once more than 5 days of absence have occurred (see Frequent or Prolonged Illness below).
3. Family vacations.
4. Absences other than those defined as excused or absences counted as present.

III. Truancy

A student is truant when he/she is absent from school or class without the permission of his/her parent/guardian and the school. Students who are habitually truant shall be reported to the juvenile authorities in accordance with applicable state law and following diocesan procedures:

The following may be evidence of habitual truancy:

- a. Refusal to attend school in defiance of parental authority.
- b. Accumulating a number of absences without justification over a period of time, such as a grading period. Habitual truancy is students who have ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year.
- c. Three (3) or more judicial findings of truancy.

IV. Reporting an Absence

A parent/ guardian shall contact the school to report a student's absence. Each school has established procedures for reporting absences. Absences will not be excused, and the student may be considered truant if the procedure for reporting an absence is not followed.

A written explanation for any absence signed by a parent/guardian is required upon the return of the student to school. The school is not required to provide credit for makeup of assigned work missed because the student's absence is unexcused or the student is truant.

V. Frequent or Prolonged Illness

If a student is absent for five consecutive days due to illness, or has contracted a contagious disease, a physician's statement may be required in order for the student to return to school.

VI. Response to Irregular Attendance

If an irregular attendance pattern begins to develop, the school may use the following procedure to encourage the student's return to a pattern of regular school attendance.

1. Call daily from school (secretary, principal, or attendance clerk) to the parent/guardian to verify absence and to determine the reason.
2. After a student is absent for six (6) days per school year, a school administrator, attendance clerk, or counselor will make contact with the student's parent/guardian. The date and content of this contact shall be documented.
3. After a student is absent over twelve (12) days per school year, a conference shall be held with the parent/guardian and the student. An attendance contract may be established at this time, and documentation shall be kept.
4. After a student is absent for over fifteen (15) days per school year, a referral shall be made to the principal. If the principal is unable to successfully resolve the attendance problem, a referral may be made to the intake officer of the local Juvenile Probation Department.

VII. Habitual Truancy Report to BMV

If the student is at least 13 years of age but less than 15 years of age and is truant more than 10 times in one (1) school year, the student shall be designated as a habitual truant and reported to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles as provided by the State law.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are responsible if they lose books, break, or damage Chromebooks, furniture, equipment, or other school property. Parents will be expected to compensate, and hopefully, the student will work off the amount with the parents.

GUM is not permitted in the school building.

DISCIPLINE

"The teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church are the guiding principles of behavior for all students while enrolled in a diocesan school." (From Policy 4410, Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend)

Students are responsible for their own behavior. Students will conduct themselves in accordance with the rules both while on school premises and while off school premises concerning school-sponsored activities.

Enrollment at St. Vincent de Paul School is a privilege, not a right. Students who are admitted to St. Vincent School agree to be governed by the school policies and procedures contained in this handbook. Parents are expected to support these policies and procedures. **Failure to do so will result in disciplinary actions that may lead to suspension and possible expulsion from St. Vincent DePaul School.**

There are 3 All-School Expectations:

1. Be respectful
2. Be responsible
3. Be safe

Each classroom has a discipline cycle. Students are aware of the behavior expected and the consequences if the rules are not followed. At the beginning of each school year, teachers will provide an annual orientation for both classroom and school-wide expectations.

If a student violates any of the school expectations and has exhausted the classroom discipline cycle, the student will be sent to the principal's office and the following six (6) step Discipline Cycle will be set in motion.

FIRST STEP: Pre-Verbal Action Plan

- a. The teacher will notify the office of a major infraction.
- b. The student will be picked up or sent to the administrator's office.

Note: This is a time for the student to calm down, reflect, and prepare to go back to the classroom. If the student is still struggling, proceed to STEP TWO

STEP TWO: Reteach

- a. A student conference is held with an administrator.
- b. The student will reflect on his/her behavior and practice appropriate behavior

Note: If the student cannot demonstrate self-control using the established procedure, STEP THREE discipline cycle begins.

STEP THREE: Assignment of Consequences

- a. Depending on the severity of the student's actions, the administrator will determine and assign an appropriate consequence.
- b. Consequences may include but are not limited to:
 - o After-school detention
 - o In-school suspension (ISS)
 - o Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
 - o Repayment of damaged personal/school property

Note: The third step can be repeated as long as the student can demonstrate that there is progress and is willing to contribute to a positive learning environment. When little or no change is seen and staff have exhausted all means of effective change, the fourth step of the cycle will be implemented.

STEP FOUR: Parental Contact

- a. The administrator will contact the student's parents to inform them of their child's repeated actions
- b. Included in the discussion will be a verbal plan to correct student behavior
- c. Parents will be advised that the next time the student is sent to the office will result in a meeting with parents, teacher, student, and administration, and a behavior contract will be written and implemented

STEP FIVE: Behavior contract

- a. If the student is still unable to meet classroom and school expectations, the parents will meet with the administrator, teacher, and student, and a behavior contract will be written and implemented
 1. The contract may include student responsibility, parent responsibility, and school responsibility.
 2. The contract may also outline terms where the student will be assigned an In-School Suspension (ISS), Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), asked to leave school, or expelled.

STEP SIX: Final Determination

- a. Once a contract has been broken, the administration will notify the parents that an alternative placement is necessary.

Serious offenses such as possession of drugs, weapons, or severe physical or moral conduct may result in an immediate move to Step Six in the Cycle.

Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion of Students (Policy 4520 Diocese of Fort Wayne South Bend)

- I. The grounds for suspension or expulsion below apply to student conduct that occurs:
 - a. On school grounds
 - b. Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
 - c. Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or
 - d. At any other time when the principal determines that the student's conduct either causes harm or could potentially cause harm to the other students, school employees, or property, or the reputation of the School or Diocese.
- II. The following types of student conduct constitute a non-exclusive listing of grounds for suspension or expulsion, subject to the school's provisions for disciplinary review contained in P4530.
 - a. Any conduct which, in the opinion of school officials, is contrary to the principles and teachings of the Catholic Church.
 - b. Using violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or other comparable conduct constituting an interference with school purposes, or urging other students to engage in such conduct.

- c. Causing or attempting to cause damage to property belonging to any other person, student, school employee, or the school, stealing or attempting to steal property belonging to any other person, student, school employee, or school.
- d. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury or intentionally behaving in such a way that, in the opinion of school officials, could cause physical injury to any person.
- e. Threatening or intimidating any individual for whatever purpose.
- f. Violation of the diocese's Gun-Free School Policy, or possession of or control over a knife or other cutting-type of device not used for school-sanctioned purposes.
- g. Possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of any controlled substance, including lawfully prescribed medications taken in a non-prescribed manner, or an intoxicant of any kind. The prescribed use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a physician is not a violation of its use.
- h. Engaging in the unlawful selling of a controlled substance or engaging in a criminal law violation that constitutes a danger to other students or constitutes an interference with school purposes and/or educational function.
- i. Failing in a substantial number of instances to comply with the directions of teachers or other school personnel during any period of time when the student is properly under their supervision.
- j. Engaging in any activity forbidden by the laws of the State of Indiana that interferes with school purposes or educational function.
- k. Violating or repeatedly violating any rules that are, in the opinion of the school officials, necessary to carrying out school purposes and/or educational function.
- l. Using an electronic paging device, MP3 player, or similar device, cell phone, or other mobile message conveyance device in a situation not related to a school purpose or educational function.
- m. Engaging in any unlawful activity on or off school grounds if the unlawful activity is considered by school officials to be an interference with school purposes or educational function.

Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Policy P4530:

Disciplinary Review for Students (Suspension or Expulsion)

Any student accused of wrongdoing in violation of school or diocesan policy that could result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the school will be given:

- 1. An explanation of what the student is accused of doing that is wrong; and
- 2. An opportunity for the student, in the presence of the student's parents, to respond to the accusations before either the principal, his or her designee, or an impartial tribunal established by the school's administration for the purpose of making a recommendation on the matter to the principal.

The principal (in consultation with the pastor in the case of an elementary school) shall be responsible for making a final decision on all such matters, and the decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

The St. Vincent Way

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program teaches our students about bullying behaviors and provides them with skills to prevent bullying. Students are taught that "a person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself".

Students are taught the following four rules of the St. Vincent Way:

- 1. We will not bully others.
- 2. We will try to help others who are being bullied.
- 3. We will try to include students who are left out.
- 4. If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home, and expect them to do something about it.

DRESS CODE

Regulations

1. Uniforms: The school uniform consists of specific colors, styles, and accessories that are unique to our school. This includes items such as skirts, pants, shirts, sweaters, and polo shirts. Any clothing item not mentioned in the uniform policy is not permitted.
2. Modesty: Our Catholic school dress code emphasizes modesty, which means clothing should not be revealing or overly suggestive.
 - a. Shorts and girls' skirts or dresses are required to be of an appropriate length (e.g., no shorter than a certain length above the knee), and tops should have modest necklines and cover the shoulders.
 - b. Shorts may only be worn in summer and spring. The dates for wearing shorts will be determined by the weather and announced in the weekly Wednesday letter.
 - c. Pants must be full length, but may not "bag up" or be folded up more than 1 1/2 inches. Pants must be worn at the natural waist, be neat and clean, and may not have holes
 - d. In cold weather, a long-sleeved shirt may be worn under a short-sleeved shirt only if they are the same or a complementary color.
 - e. No offensive or inappropriate messages: Clothing with offensive language, images, or symbols is generally not allowed. This includes clothing that promotes violence, drugs, or explicit content.
3. Grooming: We are implementing guidelines for grooming that will require neat and clean hairstyles, no extreme (non-natural) hair colors or styles, and limited or no visible body piercings, fake fingernails, make-up, or tattoos.
 - a. Girls may wear post or stud earrings in the earlobe only. Hoop or dangling earrings may not be worn. Boys may not wear earrings.
 - b. Makeup is not allowed.
 - i. False eyelashes are not allowed
 - c. Nails must be kept short, neat, and clean. **NO FAKE NAILS**
4. Footwear: Specific requirements may be in place regarding footwear, such as closed-toe shoes or specific styles of shoes that are considered appropriate for school activities.
 - a. Footwear must be the proper size and have a heel/sole of less than one inch. Shoes must have a closed toe and, at minimum, a strap behind the heel. Shoes must be kept fastened.
 - b. Socks must be worn at all times.
5. Dress-down days may occur throughout the month. Similar to our uniform requirements, we are emphasizing modesty.
 - a. Jeans may not have holes or tears
 - b. Leggings are allowed with a shirt that covers the bottom
 - c. Shirts must be long enough to cover the midriffNo offensive or inappropriate messages: Clothing with offensive language, images, or symbols is generally not allowed. This includes clothing that promotes violence, drugs, or explicit content.
6. Students are required to wear their school ID at all times. Students must use a school-approved "breakaway" lanyard. The lanyard with the **ID MUST BE WORN AROUND THE NECK**. The student may not add stickers or other toys to their ID or lanyard

Students who are in violation of any dress code will receive a dress code violation. When a 4th violation within a school year is reached, an after-school detention will be issued and could result in a parent conference.

The school reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of clothing and grooming.

(Updated 5/2025)

Saint Vincent School Uniforms

PANTS/SHORTS

- Khaki or Navy (Dark Blue) ONLY
- Cargo pants and cargo shorts are NOT appropriate for school.
- Pants must be full-length
- Pants may not “bag up” or be folded up more than 1 ½ inches.
- Shorts must be at or above the knee but not shorter than 6 inches above the knee when kneeling.

DRESS/JUMPER

- Khaki, Navy, (Dark Blue), or the school plaid

SKIRTS – girls

- Khaki, Navy, (Dark Blue), or the school plaid

POLO SHIRTS

- Hunter Green SVS

SWEATER/FLEECE/ Sweatshirts (must be a solid color)

- Hunter Green
- Navy Blue
- White

SOCKS/TIGHTS

- White, Navy, Black, Cream, Hunter Green
- Socks must be worn at all times
- Need to be a solid color

SHOES

- Plain leather dress shoes or athletic shoes are acceptable

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell Phones: If a student needs a cell phone after school due to walking home from school, entering a house where no one is home, or attending sports practices or games, he/she should turn the cell phone into their homeroom teacher upon arrival in the morning. Cell phones must remain in the off position for the day. The cell phone may be picked up by the student at dismissal. At no time during the day should a cell phone be in a student's possession. Phones should not be visible at school and turned on until the student is in their vehicle.

Similarly, students are not permitted to wear Apple Watches, Smart Watches, or any similar device. Should a student have any device with them, it will be turned into the homeroom teacher to be stored with student phones.

Other electronic devices may be allowed at school. These items must be turned in to the homeroom teacher upon entering the classroom and only used with the expressed permission of the teacher.

CHROMEBOOKS

See the Acceptable Use Policy and Chromebook Policy attached. Student and parent agreements must be signed and returned to the school.

Chromebooks should be brought to school daily and fully charged.

LUNCH

Children may either bring lunch from home or buy a school lunch. Parent volunteers help serve the hot lunch and salad bar items. Students are not permitted to have carbonated drinks in their lunches. Lunchtimes are 11:15, A.M for Kindergarten-2nd grade, 11:35 A.M. for 3rd – 5th grade, and 11:45 P.M. for Grades 6th – 8th.

Milk is included in the price of the lunch, and can also be bought separately.

Free and reduced lunches are available for those families who complete the application and are approved by St. Vincent School. Information pertinent to the application is confidential to avoid discrimination or special treatment. These forms are available in the office.

Children are never permitted to leave the school premises during lunchtime unless they leave with a parent. The school office must be made aware of plans that differ from the normal routine.

***Currently all students are eligible and receiving free school meals**

MEDICAL INFORMATION

A public health nurse visits the school periodically for vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening, and for emergency calls.

State law prohibits the school from administering medication, including aspirin, to any pupil without written parental permission and specific directions. Medication must be in the original prescription container and kept in the school office.

First aid may be given. See Parent Authorization Forms for Medication (Over-the-Counter and Prescription). In the event of an emergency, the parent is notified immediately. The school should be notified if a child suffers from epilepsy, asthma, allergies, etc., that might cause fainting or other emergencies, so that proper procedure may be followed with the least possible trauma for the child

and others. Please notify the school of any health issue that may affect your child in order that the child's needs may be best served.

Indiana law requires that each child must be immunized against smallpox, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, Hepatitis-B, measles, and mumps before entering school for the first time.

Emergency Information Form

Each student is to have an Emergency Form on file in the office. These forms are filled out by the parents in August. If there is any change to the information throughout the year, please notify the school office. Any medical alert information should be put on the back of the form. It is critical that we are able to get in touch with you. Other conditions which may affect your child's classroom performance (hearing problem, change in family situation, etc.) should be brought to the teacher's attention as soon as possible.

Fever/vomiting

Students will be sent home if they have a temperature of 100°F or higher and/or are vomiting.

Students will not **be permitted to return to school on the same day that they are sent home due to illness.**

STUDENTS MUST BE FEVER-FREE FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

Insurance

Student Accident Insurance is mandatory for all students. All students must carry this insurance even if covered under other insurance. Insurance fees are included with the book and tuition fees.

Lice

Any child found with lice or nits will not be permitted to stay at school. After treatment, students may return when **no lice or nits** are present. **A parent or guardian must accompany the student into the school office and wait while the head check takes place.** Students will not be permitted back into the classroom until all evidence of the lice is gone.

Prescription Medication

Prescribed medication must be accompanied by written instructions signed by the physician of the student who is to receive the medication. The pharmacy label can serve as the written order of a practitioner. The medications prescribed must be kept in the original container/package with the pharmacy label and the student's name affixed. A note should accompany the medication stating the purpose of the medication, side effects, dosage, and time it is to be administered. All medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the school office. The parent/guardian is responsible at the end of the treatment regime for removing from the school any unused medication that was prescribed for his/her child. If the parent does not pick up the medication by the end of the school year, the school will dispose of the medication in an appropriate manner and document that the medication was discarded.

IF YOUR CHILD USES AN INHALER, PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE FOR SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS.

PLAYGROUND RULES

1. Food (drinks, candy, fruit) is not permitted on the playground.
2. Once outside, any child wanting to enter the building must get permission from the playground monitor.
3. If a child is injured, he/she is brought to the school office.
4. If a ball goes off the playground area, one child is to ask for permission to get it.
5. Balls on the roof should be reported to the recess teacher.
6. Snowballs are never to be thrown. Snow should not be picked up or kicked about.
7. Only students wearing boots and snow pants will be allowed to play on the snow hills.
8. Skateboards, Frisbees, hard balls, and yo-yos are not permitted on the playground.
9. Students must obey the playground monitor.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS FOLDER

The information flow between home and school is very important. In order to expedite this two-way process, green communication folders are used. Each child will be given a school communication folder on the first day of school. This folder is sent home EVERY Wednesday. Students are to return the communication folder the following day. **The replacement fee for a lost or destroyed school folder is \$5.00.**

SCHOOL DELAYS AND CLOSINGS

In case of severe weather, St. Vincent School will close when Elkhart Community Schools closes. Occasionally, we may be closed due to a lack of electricity or heat. Listen to the major local radio and television stations for notification of school closings. Parents have the right to choose if the weather conditions are too bad to send their children to school. Parents are encouraged to sign up for Reach Alert and ClassDojo. Information about Reach Alert and Classdojo will be sent home at the beginning of the year.

There may also be times when an e-learning day will be called instead of a school closure.

Never drive away until you see your child enter the school building.

SECURITY

The doors to the school are locked at all times. Please come to the front door to enter. There are two doorbells. The bell for school hours will activate a camera and monitor so that the secretary can “buzz” you in. The after-school bell rings throughout the building, and should not be used during school hours. **Please never ask a child to open the door to let you in.**

All visitors to the school during school hours must first report to the office, even if they are parents bringing forgotten items. This is strictly for the safety of your children. Students from other schools are not permitted to visit classes without permission from the principal. Parents who wish to visit a class during the year with the prior approval from the teacher and principal. **Parents MUST check in at the office when entering the building.**

Our school has an Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Intervention Plan, which addresses events that may threaten our students. In addition, the plan provides for responding to crisis situations, such as identifying evacuation sites and providing support for students, parents, and staff. During the school year, we will conduct drills for fire, severe weather, and lockdown drills.

TRANSPORTATION

Carpools, Elkhart Community Schools busing, and individual drivers typically transport children to and from St. Vincent de Paul School. Elkhart Community Schools provides St. Vincent de Paul School children who live in the Elkhart Community School District, a bus to and from school. The bus only picks up / drops off at specific locations. It is the parents' responsibility to get their student to that location. St. Vincent School children are subject to the Elkhart Community School bus rules and regulations. Any child will be denied the privilege of bus service if he/she does not conform to these rules and regulations.

NOTE: The bus WILL NOT stop if the student is not visible when the bus reaches the appointed stop.

General Bus Conduct Rules:

- Do not eat or drink while on the bus.
- Do not open windows. Only the driver may do so.
- Stay in the seat while the bus is in motion.
- Do not throw objects in or out of the bus.
- Do not shout or use profane language.
- No fighting or horseplay.
- Keep hands, feet, and head inside the bus
- Do not deface the bus. Vandalism or damage must be paid for by the parents before the student is permitted to return to school.

*The driver will keep parents and the school informed of each violation.

Procedure for parents who drive children to school:

Drivers are asked by the Elkhart Police Department to drop off and pick up children in the parking lot behind the building, not on Main Street.

***Drivers must enter the school grounds via Stocker Court and exit via Melcher Court.**

Morning Drop off

Students are to be dropped off at the back door of the school. Please do not back up, or pull around other cars. Students will report to the gym. An adult supervisor is on duty each morning from 7:30 A.M. to 8:00 A.M. The supervisor has the same authority as any faculty member for the safety of the children.

After-School Pick-up

Cars are to form 3 traffic lanes. Students will be ushered directly to their cars by the staff on duty. Please do not get out of your car. Please do not back up or pull around other cars. The driveway between the school and the rectory should never be used. **Car riders must be picked up between 3:00 P.M. and 3:15 P.M. Any student not picked up by 3:15 P.M. will be sent to Almost Home, and a fee of \$5.00 for every hour late will be charged to parents after 3:15 P.M.**

Bicycles used for transportation must have a lock and be placed in the bike rack in front of the building. The school cannot be responsible for any damage done to bicycles. Anyone who rides a bicycle to school must get off the bicycle as soon as he/she enter the school area, to prevent any accidents. We also need a written note from parents if a child is riding their bicycle to school.

Students riding bikes to school must wear a protective bike helmet.

NOTICE - unless we hear otherwise, children will always go home their regular way (bus, ride, walk). **If there is to be a change, we must have a note or a phone call (293-8451) before 1:30 P.M.** Please do not call after 2:30 P.M., as the message may not be able to be delivered in time.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The School Board establishes tuition and fees. Book rental and other fees are non-refundable.

Book Rental

Book fees cover the rental of hardcover books and the workbooks used in the classroom. It also covers art supplies, audiovisual aids, and other equipment.

Chromebook/iPad Fees

A \$50 fee will be collected each school year to cover the cost of upkeep and replacement of both Chromebooks (2-8) and iPads (K-1).

Fees

Fees help to cover the cost of technology needs and other classroom supplies.

Tuition

Tuition is charged through our school. The current fee schedule may be obtained from the office. St. Vincent School has created a partnership with the FACTS Management Company to offer the Monthly Payment Option to our families. Tuition may be paid in full to the school or in monthly payments through FACTS. **Failure to pay tuition on time may result in exclusion from school unless other arrangements have been made.**

Tuition assistance is available for those who qualify. Families must apply and qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program in order to receive tuition assistance. FACTS Grant Management Company applications may be obtained from the school office or may be completed online. Families need to be current in their tuition payments before applications for next year's aid will be accepted. A copy of your previous year's Income Tax Form is required.

Tuition refunds will be granted when a family leaves St. Vincent School during the school year. If a student leaves during a grading period, the family will pay for the entire grading period.

SPECIAL NOTE: School Records will not be transferred to another school until all financial obligations to the school have been met.

INTERNET USAGE POLICY

Internet access is available to students and teachers in St. Vincent School. We are very pleased to bring this access to our school and believe that the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service to students and teachers is to promote educational excellence in schools by facilitating resources for sharing, innovation, and communication. The use of the Internet and related technologies must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of Catholic Schools. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for these networks.

Statement Regarding Websites/Blogs/Social Media

In order to maintain the integrity of our parish/school accounts, no student or parent may create a Facebook®, X® formerly Twitter®, or other social media online accounts under the name of the parish/school or any sponsored organization of the parish/school without written approval of the parish/school administration. Disciplinary action may be necessary if unauthorized creations occur.

Defamatory or derogatory engagement in any social media regarding St. Vincent de Paul Parish, its school, any of the parish/school administration, the faculty, other students, or other students' parents may also result in disciplinary action.

As a user of the St. Vincent School computer network, students agree to comply with the stated rules, terms, and conditions, honoring all relevant laws and restrictions.

Students understand that the use of the Internet connection in the school is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of those privileges. The school administration determines appropriate use, and its decision is final. Further disciplinary action may follow as indicated in the school handbook.

Students understand that they are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

Network Etiquette

1. Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others.
2. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.

3. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
4. Keep your personal address and phone number private and do not reveal the phone numbers of students or colleagues.
5. Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
6. Use the network in such a way that it will not disrupt the use of the network by other users.
7. Note that all communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.
8. Inform the technology teacher of any security problem immediately.

Students understand that the following are not permitted:

1. Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures.
2. Using violent or obscene language.
3. Sending harassing, insulting, or threatening messages.
4. Damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks, or harming or destroying data of another user.
5. Violating copyright law.
6. Unauthorized use of another's password.
7. Trespassing in others' folders, work, or files.
8. Intentionally wasting resources.
9. Employing the network for commercial purposes.
10. Transmission of any material in violation of any US, state, or local law.
11. Obtaining software or data fraudulently or illegally.
12. Revealing one's own or another's personal address or phone number.

Violation of the terms, conditions, and regulations above is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should a student commit any violation, access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action taken.

Acceptable Use Policy (Internet) (Policy 4620 Ft. Wayne-South Bend Diocese)

The school shall follow the Diocesan Internet Policy, and a copy is available in the school office. Parents/guardians are required to sign an annual Permission Form and Acceptable Use Policy with their child, and students may not access networked computer services without this permission. Parents/guardians must be notified that their children will be using school resources for internet access and have the option to request alternative activities. The handbook should express clear expectations for student use of the Internet off campus.

LOCAL WELLNESS POLICY

In accordance with The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Public Law 108-265 Section 204, standards have been set to address all foods and beverages sold or served to students, including those available outside of the school meal program. Refreshments served at parties (including birthday treats) need to be low in fat, sodium, and sugar. Students will be limited to one serving per food item. St. Vincent School's Wellness Plan can be found on the school website.

VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers who are in contact with our students MUST complete the diocesan application and background screening process. This diocesan safe environment program was designed for the protection of all the youth who participate in diocesan school and parish programs.

*Each family is responsible for 10 hours of service for the school each school year.

SCHOOL BOARD

The purpose of the school board is to provide an appropriate representative body for identifying and articulating the educational needs and aspirations of the school community.

The board's primary responsibility is to define the policies that govern the operation of the school. All other duties are subsidiary functions.

In the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the local board for an elementary school **is advisory** to the pastor and the principal. The board does not have the authority to formulate local educational policy, monitor the implementation of the policy, or evaluate educational programs and policy objectives. Board members have no power or authority as individuals. The authority is vested in the school board acting as a board to make recommendations.

It is the mission of our board to:

1. Be instrumental in aiding and assisting the St. Vincent School pastor, principal, teachers, and staff to provide a quality education rooted in the Catholic faith for all students.
2. Understand our advisory role to the pastor and principal and assist them in developing meaningful school policy.
3. Be a sounding board for the pastor and principal in school matters.
4. Facilitate the involvement and accountability of parents to their children's education.
5. Be the conduit for proactive communications between the church community and the board in promoting the school.
6. Set an example and promote respect and love for the teachings of Christ.

The School Board meets at 6:00 P.M. on the third Thursday of each month in the computer lab.

Parents/guardians wishing to address and/or question an area or situation regarding a specific teacher or classroom must follow the concerns procedure established by the School Administration. See Diocesan Policy 2310 on page 9.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (HASA)

The Home and School Association is an integral part of St. Vincent de Paul School. HASA has five major purposes:

1. To promote communication among parents, teachers, and administration.
2. To provide parents and teachers with the information to aid in all aspects of education and the students' growth and development.
3. To promote goodwill and cooperation between and among parents, faculty, administration, school board, and the parish.
4. To direct and coordinate parental support to the school through specific assistance activities, social functions, and fundraisers.
5. To organize political action of the parents as advocates regarding local, state, and federal legislation that affects Catholic schools, as well as the lives of the students and parents.

The HASA Board meets at 6:00 P.M. on the 2nd Tuesday of every month in the Computer Lab.

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF PARENTAL ACCESS RIGHTS TO STUDENT'S RECORDS

Any natural parent, guardian, or individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian of a student of a diocesan school, or a student who has reached eighteen (18) years of age or is attending an institution of post-secondary education has the following right, (unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, State statute, or legally-binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation, or custody that specifically revokes these rights):

1. Inspect and review the student's education records;
2. Request the amendment of the student's educational records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights;
3. Consent to disclose personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the regulations authorize disclosure without consent;
4. File with the U.S. Department of Education a complaint under 34 C.F.R. 99.66 concerning alleged failures by the agency to the institution to comply with the requirements of the Act and this part; and obtain a copy of the diocesan policy (PA230 Access to Official Student Records)

SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT STATEMENT

St. Vincent De Paul Catholic School/Fort Wayne South Bend Diocese believes a safe and healthy environment should be provided in which all children can learn, develop, and participate in instructional programs that promote high levels of academic achievement. As an Indiana accredited non-public school, state law requires that our school have a Seclusion and Restraint Plan. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that all students and staff are safe in school and that students who may have behavior crises are free from inappropriate use of seclusion or restraint.

Behavioral interventions for children must ensure all children are treated with dignity and respect. This environment should allow all children to be free from physical or mental abuse, aversive behavioral interventions that compromise health and safety, and any physical seclusion or restraint imposed solely for purposes of discipline or convenience.

Seclusion or restraint shall not be used as routine school safety measures; that is, they shall not be implemented except in situations where a child's behavior or action poses an imminent danger of physical harm to self or others and not as a routine strategy implemented to address instructional problems or inappropriate behavior (e.g., disrespect, noncompliance, insubordination, out of seat), as a means of coercion or retaliation, or as a convenience. Any use of either seclusion or restraint shall be supervised, short in duration, and used only for the purposes of de-escalating the behavior.

Parents can access a full copy of our school's plan by request in the school office or by visiting our school's website www.svselkhart.org.

DIOCESAN POLICIES

School Crisis Response Procedures (Policy 1510 Ft. Wayne-South Bend Diocese)

Each school shall meet State guidelines for school safety (plans and procedures).

- I. Annually, each school shall establish, update, and implement an individual School Crisis Plan, an individual School Reunification Plan, an individual School Indoor Air Quality Plan, and an Individual Seclusion and Restraint Plan.
- II. Evacuation and Reunification Procedures It is the responsibility of the principal to see that all school personnel know what to do in an emergency. In case of crisis, emergency procedures for evacuating the school building and reunifying students with parents/guardians should be clearly written and available to all personnel.
- III. Communication Management
In times of emergency or crisis, the school principal shall immediately notify the Catholic Schools Office as soon as possible. Emergency or crisis includes, but is not limited to, life-threatening situations, matters of health and safety of students and/or staff, and matters of potential lawsuits. The principal, in consultation with the Catholic Schools Office, shall communicate the situation to the Diocesan Office of Communications. Additionally, all plans

relating to school safety shall contain responsibilities and procedures for communicating, in time of crisis, to all additional stakeholders as needed (parents, media, etc.)

*See School Crisis Response Handbook.

Failure or Refusal of Parents/Guardians/Custodians to Participate in a Disciplinary Proceeding (Policy 4420 Ft. Wayne-South Bend Diocese)

The failure or refusal of parents/guardians/custodians to participate in diocesan or school discipline proceedings concerning their students' improper behavior may be considered educational neglect and the child may be considered a "child in need of services" in accordance with I.C.31-6-4-3- (a)(7), and, in that case, the matter shall be referred to the Child Protective Services Division of the Department of Public Welfare.

Student Accused of a Non-School Related Criminal Act (Policy 4550 Ft. Wayne-South Bend Diocese)

When a student is accused of a non-school related criminal act, the school shall follow diocesan policy.

Surveys, Analyses, Examinations (Policy 4610 Fort Wayne - South Bend Diocese):

Parents/guardians have the right, upon request, to inspect a survey created by a third party before it is administered or distributed to students, and that requests should be made in writing to the principal. Reference to policies regarding surveys, instructional materials, and physical examinations (P4610 III A-F) shall be provided to parents annually, generally at the beginning of the school year, and parents must be notified of substantive changes during the year within a reasonable period.

Gun-free Schools (Policy 4560 Fort Wayne - South Bend Diocese)

Students are prohibited from bringing firearms to school or school functions. Further, students are prohibited from possessing firearms en route to or from school or school activities or on school property. A violation of this policy carries an automatic expulsion from school of not less than one calendar year. This penalty supersedes any penalty that may be imposed by a local school discipline policy.

Substance Abuse (Policy 4570 Fort Wayne - South Bend Diocese)

This school shall assist students experiencing substance abuse problems in accordance with diocesan policy.

Sexual/Racial Harassment (Policy 4580 Ft. Wayne-South Bend Diocese)

Sexual or racial harassment shall not be tolerated in the Catholic Schools.

Student Locker and Vehicle Inspection (Policy 4590 Ft. Wayne-South Bend Diocese)

All students who enroll in a diocesan school must consent to the search of their person and personal belongings, lockers, school desks, vehicles, etc., at any time and for any reason consistent with diocesan policy.

Environmental Tobacco Smoke (Policy 5430 Ft. Wayne-South Bend Diocese)

All facilities (buildings which are enclosed) where kindergarten, elementary, and/or secondary education or library services are being provided to children shall be smoke-free. No one, whether an administrator, an employee, a student, or a visitor, is allowed to smoke in these buildings.