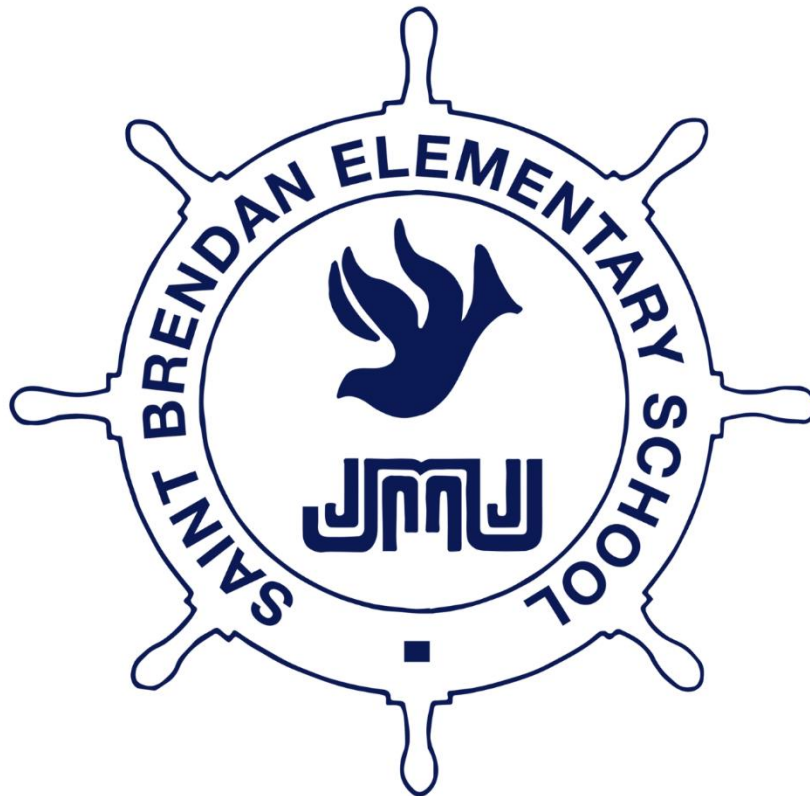


# PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026 - 2027 SCHOOL YEAR



## School Logo



The helm of a ship is a powerful symbol of the St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School community. Inspired by St. Brendan the Navigator, it represents guidance, leadership, faith, and purpose. Just as a helm steers a ship through both calm and challenging waters, St. Brendan guides students on their academic, spiritual, and personal journeys. It reminds us that Christ is our compass, helping us navigate life's challenges with courage, integrity, and faith. The helm reflects the partnership of our students, families, faculty, and parish community, all working together to prepare our Navigators for a future filled with promise and purpose. At St. Brendan, the helm serves as a lasting reminder that with faith as our guide, every student is equipped to chart a successful course in life.

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## Alma Mater

St. Brendan Alma Mater  
By: Consuelo Boffill

*Saint Brendan, my home, Saint Brendan, my pride,  
with you, O Saint Brendan, my star always shines.  
You give me the strength, you give me the light,  
You guide my steps to follow the path  
of knowledge and virtue, of science and of truth.  
You take me in your wings to follow Lord Jesus.  
Saint Brendan, my home, Saint Brendan, my pride.  
Your spirit, Saint Brendan, with me till I die.*

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## WELCOME

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*We are happy to welcome you to St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School and to provide you with our Parent/Student Handbook. With this handbook, it is our intention to form one entity between church, home, and school.*

*You will find within these pages the rules of our school and an explanation of our services offered. Most importantly, our focus extends to the educational, moral, and ethical expectations for our students. Finally, you will find specific instructions for carrying out procedures at our school.*

*St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School strives to recognize each student as an individual and to help him/her develop to their fullest potential within a parish community of living faith in Jesus Christ. It is our hope that the children's experience in our school engages them in becoming productive citizens in society.*

*We look forward to serving your family throughout this coming year and pray for your continued trust and cooperation.*

*Blessings,*



**Father Miguel Sepúlveda**  
Pastor



**Maria Cristina Capote**  
Principal

## Saint Brendan the Navigator

St. Brendan was the greatest traveler. He was born in Ciarraighe Luachra, near the present city of Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland. He was baptized by Bishop Erc, who then undertook his education for several years. From an early age Brendan attracted disciples, and he established several monasteries in Ireland. The most famous was Clonfert, County Galway, founded around 560. Clonfert became one of Ireland's greatest monastic schools and endured until the sixteenth century.

Brendan's reputation as a traveler rests on the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, an account written by an Irish monk in the ninth or tenth century. More than 100 Medieval Latin manuscripts of this Voyage of Saint Brendan still exist. An epic modern voyage led by Tim Severin in the 1970s showed that it was possible to sail a coracle of wood and leather to America, suggesting that Irish monks might indeed have preceded Christopher Columbus by several centuries.

On the 3200-foot-high summit of Mount Brandon are the ruins of a small beehive-shaped chapel. There, it is said, the saint had a vision of the Promised Land. Brendan and his crew of monks prayed and fasted for forty days and set off on a second voyage lasting seven years, probably taking them to Iceland, Greenland, and even the American mainland. In later life, Brendan returned to his work in Ireland and died there in 578 at Annaghdown.



## History of St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School

St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School was founded in 1955 by Monsignor Thomas O’Donovan. Our school is located on nine and two-thirds acres of land at 8755 SW 32nd Street in Miami, Florida. Monsignor O’Donovan asked four sisters of the Holy Family to lead the newly established parochial school. On August 27th, 1955, these 4 sisters arrived from Chicago accompanied by two lay teachers. These 6 individuals formed what was to be the first faculty of St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School. The school opened its doors with an enrollment of 275 students comprised of kindergarten through fourth Grade. The following year, St. Brendan increased its enrollment to include a fifth and sixth grade class. In June of 1960 marked the year of the first graduating class that consisted of 54 students. In the school year 1964-1965, St. Brendan Elementary peaked its highest enrollment with a total of 1,027 students. At the present time, St. Brendan Catholic Elementary has a total of 1,051 students from PK2-8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

The school, under the leadership of Sister M. Honesta, received its first accreditation from the Florida Catholic Conference on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1975. Subsequently, the school received re-accreditation in 1986-2021.

Due to the needs of the community for an early education childhood program, St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School opened the PK3 program in 2003 and the PK2 program for following school year in 2004. Our Early Childhood Program nurtures each child’s God-given gifts spiritually, intellectually, socially, artistically, emotionally, and physically. Currently, in the school year 2026-2027, our Early Childhood Program consists of four PK2 classes, five PK3 classes, and 4 PK4 classes.

Striving to meet and heighten the educational needs and interests of its students, several programs have been implemented at St. Brendan Elementary throughout the years. Our St. Thomas Aquinas Language Arts Accelerated Program services high achieving students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>. The Felix Varela Program for students in grades 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, offers students with special needs a comprehensive self-contained educational program based on intervention and geared towards the needs of the students. The Dual Enrollment program for our students in Middle School gives high achieving students the opportunity to enroll in Algebra I Honors and Geometry Honors for High School credit. The integration of STREAM as part of our educational program provides our students with the technological literacy needed as 21st Century learners. Through this curriculum our students are encouraged to investigate, problem solve, create, and use their critical thinking skills by engaging in a hands-on learning environment. In addition to academics and faith formation, St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School offers its students a wide variety of after school experiences that include sports, music, art, drama, and dance. We encourage the students’ participation in our service clubs/activities, NJHS, Student Council, Yearbook Club, Robotics, and all other clubs.

As a Roman Catholic School, St. Brendan’s Elementary foundation is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. We are committed as a community of believers to our Catholicity as tangible symbols of faith are visible throughout the entire facility. More importantly, there is the spirit of family that exists among the faculty and students that shines through to all who walk our grounds. Prayerful experiences, retreats, masses, sacramental and liturgical celebrations, and our service programs such as “Knocking on Someone’s Door” all help to bring us to a deeper understanding of our Lord God’s greatest and first commandment, “You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind.”

Through the dedication and guidance of administration, the faculty and staff, and our Pastor, Fr. Miguel Sepulveda, a nurturing learning environment has been established at St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School. As our God embraces us on this journey, we will continue to foster experiences that provide the community with excellence in education, along with strong moral, ethical, and spiritual values based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

## Mission Statement

St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School, in collaboration with our families, fosters the Spiritual, Social, Intellectual, Emotional, and Academic growth of our students. Our mission is to prepare and educate students to become compassionate individuals who live their faith by following the Gospel values of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Through devotion to Mary and an active sacramental life, students will become socially responsible adults and witnesses of our Catholic Church.

## Statement of Philosophy

As a Catholic parochial institution, Saint Brendan seeks to create an authentic Catholic community of faith among faculty, students, and parents. This faith community is strengthened and nourished by participation in liturgy, prayer, and the study of Catholic doctrine. The school community seeks to focus its attention on the person of Jesus by means of a total school atmosphere of religious formation in an academically challenging environment. The parents, supported by school programs, join their children in this effort by their own participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Families are encouraged to deepen their faith so that it becomes “living, conscious and active” (The Bishop’s Office in the church, #14).

Saint Brendan’s faculty and staff are convinced of the uniqueness and personal value of each student. It is this appreciation of the student’s self-worth that serves as the foundation for developing attitudes of positive self-esteem. Learning experiences are designed to develop student potential and readiness for responsible citizenship in a pluralistic society. The faculty collaborates with parents, the primary educators, by instilling a love of lifelong learning and fostering respect for oneself and others among students. Together the faculty and parents create a sense of self-discipline and personal responsibility for conscientious choices. The students at Saint Brendan Catholic Elementary School are encouraged to use their talents to build the kingdom of God on earth by a life of Christian service.

Thus, all members of the school community strive to become true witnesses for Christ, bringing the light of hope, justice, and peace to those who “seek and suffer” (To Teach As Jesus Did, #154).

## School Objectives

- To evangelize students, teachers, parents, and the community at large through diversified, spiritual programs, so that Jesus Christ and His Gospel may be revealed in word and deed.
- To instill in the students a knowledge and reverence for Catholic doctrine and a desire to live their faith authentically.
- To encourage students to become witnesses of the compassionate Christ by taking an active part in school and community service projects for the needy.
- To instill in the students the knowledge of Christian values and a respect for oneself and others.
- To create an effective learning environment, marked by mutual respect and cooperation.
- To implement curricular experiences that provide students the opportunity to develop moral, ethical, and spiritual values.
- To help students develop critical thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and problem solving.
- To deepen the students’ appreciation of their cultural heritage as well as that of persons from diverse social, cultural, and ethnic groups.
- To promote high standards of professionalism among faculty and staff.
- To create a strong bond of mutual cooperation and dialogue between parents and faculty.

## Accreditation

St. Brendan Catholic School is bound by the standards set forth by the Florida Catholic Conference (FCC), the accrediting agency for all Catholic schools in Florida. Compliance is verified through annual

visits from the Archdiocese of Miami Department of Schools and through the submission of the Annual Report for Continuing Accreditation.

## Introduction

We are blessed and honored to welcome you as a valued member of St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School. Please read this handbook thoroughly and retain it for future reference. The policies stated in this handbook are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied.

***The Principal and/or Pastor reserve the right to add, delete, or change any and all policies related to the school and this handbook at any time. The Principal and/or Pastor are the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rules for just cause at their discretion. Parents and students will be notified in writing of any changes.***

## SECTION 1

# ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICIES

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### Admissions Philosophy

The mission of St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School is rooted in the Catholic faith and the Christian formation of every student. Families who enroll their children are expected to support and participate in this mission through regular Mass attendance, active involvement in parish life, and participation in school and church activities. In all matters regarding admissions and registration, the decisions of the Pastor and the Principal are final.

### New Student Admissions

St. Brendan utilizes an online Admissions and Registration process. The online application window for new students opens annually from November through January. Admission is based on available space, completion of all required documents, and the school's admissions criteria.

### Returning Student Re-Registration

Re-registration for current students takes place each January. Families will receive an email with instructions and a link to complete the online re-registration process. To secure enrollment for the upcoming school year, all required forms, documentation, and applicable fees must be submitted by the designated deadline. Parents who do not plan for their child to return are asked to notify the school office as soon as possible.

### Admission Priority

- Active registered parishioners of St. Brendan Catholic Church.
- Active registered parishioners of other Catholic parishes.
- Qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis, as space permits.

### Age Requirements

- Pre-Kindergarten 2: a child must be two (2) years of age on or before September 1st.
- Pre-Kindergarten 3: a child must be three (3) years of age on or before September 1st.
- Pre-Kindergarten 4: a child must be four (4) years of age on or before September 1st.
- Kindergarten: a child must be five (5) years of age on or before September 1st.
- First Grade: a child must be six (6) years of age on or before September 1st and have successfully completed one full year of Kindergarten.

### Required Documentation

All applicants must submit the following through the online admissions portal by the published deadline:

- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate (if applicable)
- First Holy Communion Certificate (if applicable)
- Current Florida Certificate of Immunization and Student Health Examination Form
- Parish registration number or letter from pastor verifying active parish membership (if applicable)
- Most recent report card (if applicable)
- Most recent standardized test scores (if applicable)

Failure to submit all required documentation by the deadline may delay or prevent the admissions process.

## Open Admission Policy

The school has an open admission policy. No person, on the grounds of race, color, disability, or national origin, is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the receiving of services. Nor does the school discriminate in hiring or any aspect of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender, or national origin.

## Undocumented Students

A student's enrollment and/or graduation from school does not confer a legal status. Although the Archdiocese of Miami may assist with the completion of an I-20 form, the school does not guarantee or confer any privileges available to documented legal residents. Parents should consult with immigration legal counsel if they have any questions as to immigration status.

## Section 504 – Policy Statement

St. Brendan Elementary School complies with the mandate of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act which prohibits discrimination based on disability. The school will make those minor adjustments that can accommodate students with disabilities. The designated 504 Coordinator is: Jaclyn Don Caceres, Associate Superintendent, 305-762-1269; Archdiocese of Miami, Office of Catholic Schools, 9401 Biscayne Blvd, Miami Shores, FL 33138.

## Immunizations

The Archdiocese of Miami requires that, prior to attendance in school, each student present or have on file a Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680). Immunizations are required for poliomyelitis, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis, mumps, tetanus, measles, H. Influenza type B, varicella, hepatitis B, and other communicable diseases. Students may be kept from attending classes for non-compliance. The Archdiocese does not accept immunization exemption requests based upon religious, philosophical, personal, or other reasons.

## Academic Evaluations for Admissions

All students applying for admission will take their respective assessments to ensure appropriate academic placement. However, taking the test does not ensure acceptance. Test fees are applicable. PK2 through Kindergarten: a screening process will determine appropriate developmental stages. 1st–8th Grade: a grade-appropriate assessment will be administered.

## Parental Cooperation

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

## Parish Involvement

Families at St. Brendan Elementary are encouraged to register as active members of St. Brendan Catholic Church.

## Withdrawal

Parents are asked to inform the school Principal in writing when transferring a child to another school, including the name and address of the new school, the withdrawal date, and the reason. This notice must be given thirty (30) days in advance whenever possible. All accounts must be settled, including tuition for the month. When all financial responsibilities are settled, the student will be given their report card. Fees paid during the school year are non-refundable.

## **Parental Custody Arrangements**

St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School is a faith-based community committed to the well-being of each student. The school will not take sides in parental timesharing arrangements and will not undertake responsibility for interpreting, mediating, negotiating, or enforcing parental timesharing schedules or custody arrangements. The school may apply explicit court orders that prohibit a parent's contact with a child.

Parents have a serious responsibility to manage custody and time-sharing arrangements without involving school faculty or staff. Parents must not ask teachers, administrators, coaches, or staff to refuse a child's release based on an alleged schedule violation, or to serve as intermediaries for family court matters. Parents must promptly provide the school with updated copies of any court order affecting parental contact or pickup restrictions.

## **Testifying in Divorce or Custody Proceedings**

In recognition of the importance of the matrimonial sacrament, parents agree not to compel the attendance, testimony, or deposition of any school or church employee in any divorce, custody, or other legal proceedings involving the dissolution of marriage or the determination of parental/custody rights. If a parent breaches this policy, any legal fees incurred by the school will be charged to the parent or legal guardian.

## SECTION 2

# SCHOOL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

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### Office Hours

The school office is open for business from 7:30 am until 4:00 pm daily; closed on all school holidays. You may contact individual teachers by using the teacher's school email address.

### Calendar

A copy of the school calendar may be found on the school website: [www.stbrendanmiami.org](http://www.stbrendanmiami.org). The dates on the calendar are subject to change; please check all weekly/monthly notices sent home.

### Parental Communication with the School

Parents with concerns should follow the proper protocol:

- Bring concerns first to the classroom teacher.
- If still dissatisfied, contact Assistant Principal Mrs. Ileana Jardines at ext. 2403.
- If unresolved, make an appointment with Principal Ms. Cristina Capote through Administrative Assistant Ms. Alexa Daparra at ext. 2405.

When the Principal is out of the building, the Assistant Principal is in charge.

### Arrival and Dismissal

**Supervision:** St. Brendan will not be responsible for any students dropped off before 7:15 am. Teachers do not assume their duties until 7:20 am on scheduled school days.

**PreK-2 and PreK-4:** Students begin at 7:50 am and end at 2:20 pm. Students are dropped off and picked up at the Early Childhood Center.

**Kindergarten – 4th Grade:** Dismissal is at 2:45 pm.

**Grades 5th – 8th:** Dismissal is at 3:15 pm.

Students in Kindergarten through 8th Grade are dropped off in car line. The front of the school (32nd Street) is not a vehicle drop-off area, nor is the street between the school and rectory, nor the Columbus High School parking lot. Students must be ready with book bags, water bottles, and lunch boxes in hand.

As part of the development of a child, St. Brendan Elementary will not accept delivery of books or schoolwork left at home for a student.

Ride services will not be allowed to either pick up or drop off students using the driveway system.

### Tardiness

A student is considered tardy once the driveway is over. If tardy, the student must report to the school office to pick up a late pass. Students will not be accepted into school after 11:30 am — they will be considered absent.

### Absences

After three (3) consecutive days of absence, a medical excuse from the child's doctor is required. A written excuse signed by the parent or guardian is required upon return, including the date, full name of student, grade, day(s) absent, reason for absence, and signature.

**As per the State of Florida, students may be retained if they have eighteen (18) or more days absent in a school year.** Students must maintain 90% attendance during the school year.

## Early Pick-Up Procedures

In the event that a student needs to be picked up early:

- Email the front office at [mmelo@stbrendanmiami.org](mailto:mmelo@stbrendanmiami.org) AND the homeroom teacher by 9:00 am.
- Subject line must state: EARLY PICK UP, Child's Name and Homeroom.
- Provide the reason, the approved person picking up, and the time of pick-up.
- Students who leave prior to 11:30 am will be considered absent for that day.
- On Early Dismissal Days, pick-up through the front office closes at 11:00 am.
- On regular dismissal days, pick-up through the front office closes at 2:00 pm.

## After School Program

The After-School Program requires registration, Emergency Cards, and payment of fees. Students cannot be picked up until after 3:45 pm on regular dismissal days and at 1:45 pm on early dismissal days. Students not picked up by 3:10 pm (K–4th) and 3:35 pm (5th–8th) will be placed in the after-school program with a fee charged.

## Closed Campus

St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School is a closed campus. Students are not allowed to leave the school premises at any time during the school day unless picked up by a parent or authorized individual.

## Visitors

Parents or anyone entering the school MUST report to the office to obtain a Visitor's Pass if they have business in the school during school hours. Volunteers must always wear their identification badges while on school grounds.

## Emergency Contact Information

Each parent is asked to complete an emergency card annually. Please ensure that all telephone numbers, emails, addresses, and pertinent information (including allergies, illnesses, emergency contacts, and guardians) is up to date. If any information changes throughout the year, please contact the school receptionist immediately.

## Emergency Procedures

St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School has a comprehensive emergency plan. When emergency conditions have been declared by the county, the school will dismiss and resume classes in accordance with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Archdiocesan announcements. Parents should tune in to local television/radio broadcasts.

## School Property

It is the responsibility of every student to use and maintain school property in good condition. Any student found damaging property may be suspended or expelled. All damage, even accidental, will be acknowledged by the person involved and reimbursement made to the school. Parents are financially responsible for any damage caused by their children.

## Lockers

Students in grades 4th–8th will be responsible for all items in their locker. Under no circumstances will any stickers, photos, or decorations be applied to the inside or outside of the locker. Only school-related books and supplies may be kept in the locker.

## Navigator Store

The Navigator Store will be open at specific hours of the school day. With permission from the teacher, students may visit the store to purchase or place orders. No more than 3 students are allowed inside the store at the same time. Students must leave all bags outside the store.

## Restrooms

Students in grades K–2nd should be accompanied by another student when going to the restroom or water fountain. Students are not permitted to take anything into the restrooms, especially cell phones, markers, pens, or any food or drink.

## Lost and Found

Please label all student property with the student's name. Lost articles will be kept in the school office for a 1-week period and then donated to charity. St. Brendan is not responsible for any valuables brought to school.

## Use of School Telephone

Students will be allowed to use the office/classroom telephone only in cases of serious emergencies or illnesses. Please communicate with your children concerning any activities or alternate arrangements prior to the event whenever possible.

## Cafeteria Procedures

Cole Catering will be servicing St. Brendan Elementary for lunch. All lunch purchases and orders will be through Meal Magic. The lunch period will begin with a prayer of Grace in individual classrooms. Absolutely no "Fast Food" deliveries will be permitted in the school. Any student involved in a food fight during the lunch period may be subject to suspension for a period of one day.

## Peanut Allergy Policy

Please notify homeroom teachers a minimum of 72 hours in advance when you will bring cupcakes, doughnuts, or cookies to celebrate your child's birthday. Under no circumstances can parents nor teachers distribute party bags or candy. All allergies must be listed on Emergency Cards. If an EpiPen is necessary, it must be provided to the school office.

## Middle School Dances

St. Brendan will allow the Home and School Association to organize various dances throughout the school year. Limousine services will not be allowed to pick up or drop off students. Only St. Brendan Middle School students will be allowed to participate (NO EXCEPTIONS). Faculty/staff and parent supervision will be enforced for dress code, music (edited), food/beverages, and all common areas.

## Field Trips

Field trips planned with an educational objective may be sponsored by school authority if safely conducted and adequately supervised. A parental consent form must be obtained for any child to participate. Field trips extending beyond school hours are discouraged. Overnight field trips are forbidden for elementary school. No siblings may be taken on field trips.

**Parent Drivers** must be 25 years old, VIRTUS trained and fingerprinted, and carry the mandatory level of auto insurance coverage.

## Community Service Activities

Community service activities are not school activities. Students are free to select the location where they wish to perform community service so long as the location and activity meet school requirements. The school does not assume responsibility for any injuries, damages, or losses incurred. Students perform these services at their own risk.

## School Sponsored Events

The school does not sponsor, oversee, or in any way control parties or social functions at private residences. School-sanctioned events are specifically identified in this Handbook, the school calendar, and/or written notices from the school.

**Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, hereby release** the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to attendance at parties or social functions at private residences or from participation/attendance at events not identified in the school calendar or in written notices from the school.

## Parties and Treats

Classroom celebrations for major holidays may be organized with the approval of Administration, in collaboration with teachers and room parents. These events are intended to be simple and appropriate. While students will enjoy these occasions, celebrations should reflect the school's Christian values of moderation, sharing, and simplicity rather than excess.

Any parties, treats, or celebrations not approved in advance by Administration are not permitted and will not be allowed. Parents and room representatives must obtain approval before making plans or purchasing items for any classroom event.

## Birthday Treats

Students in Pre-K and Kindergarten may celebrate their birthdays with a small treat to be shared with their classmates. Acceptable items include cupcakes, donuts, or cookies, which will be distributed by the teacher in the classroom before lunch.

Large or more elaborate food items, such as cakes, pizza, punch, or similar items, are not permitted. Parents are also discouraged from bringing gifts or party favors for the class, as not all families are able to do so. Balloons are not allowed on campus.

## Transportation Arrangements

Student transportation to and from school is a parental responsibility. In limited and documented circumstances, a parent may engage a commercial transportation company, but this requires the written authorization of the school. Except upon the written consent of the school, parents should not utilize internet-based transportation services such as Uber or Lyft.

## Home and School Participation Hours

Each family will be required to volunteer 20 hours per school year. Opportunities include: SBE Cook-Off, Field Day, Service Events, Harvest Festival, A Night in Bethlehem, Mother's Day, and other school events. Families who do not complete the required 20 hours will not be eligible for parishioner scholarship for the following school year.

## Notification of Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records, including: the right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days; the right to request amendment of inaccurate records; and the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information. To file a complaint: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920.

## Buckley Amendment / Confidentiality

Teachers, Staff, and the Administration will maintain confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake. For the full Buckley Amendment document, please visit [www.stbrendanmiami.org](http://www.stbrendanmiami.org).

## Electronic Acknowledgments

Periodically, the school may require electronic acknowledgments confirming the receipt and/or acceptance of various policies, procedures, notices, or releases. Electronic acknowledgments and

signatures are valid and binding. Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE to receive and be bound by electronic acknowledgments.

## Intellectual Property Protections

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

## Use of Photos

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

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

## Video Surveillance

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

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

## School Policy and Principal's Right to Amend

***Any student action that is not in keeping with the philosophy/objectives of St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School is subject to review and may lead to withdrawal from school. The Principal and/or Pastor reserve the right to add, delete, or change any and all policies at any time.***

## SECTION 3

# SCHOOL UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE

All uniforms for St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School are to be purchased at Risse Brothers Uniform Company at 7700 North Kendall Drive Suite 7710 Miami, Florida 33156. The prime responsibility for good grooming rests with the student and the parent. Nevertheless, the school shares that responsibility, since it believes that good grooming represents a difference in character and motivation and should distinguish the Saint Brendan Catholic Elementary student from pupils attending other schools. Students are expected to come to school looking clean and neat and dressed in a manner that is in accordance to the school uniform regulations.

Parents are expected to check the child/children's attire each morning. Students are required to wear the prescribed full school uniform each day including the first day of school at all times otherwise stated for special activities. All uniforms must be in good condition. Items in poor condition must be fixed or replaced immediately. In the event that a student is not in complete uniform, the parent may be called, and the child may be sent home. Parents are requested to sew nametags on all school clothing. Abuse of the student dress code could lead to disciplinary action. The school will dispose of all lost clothing if it is not claimed in the school lost and found after one (1) week.

There are no exceptions to this dress code. Students not in full school uniform must come to school with a note addressed to the Principal, explaining the reason(s) and signed by the parent.

A black belt is part of the school dress code. Boys 1st–8th grade **MUST** wear the black belt **AT ALL TIMES**. The school holds the right to send a student home or, if necessary, to initiate administrative withdrawal if a student does not abide by these policies.

### Dress Code Requirements – 2026-2027

GIRLS	BOYS
Pre-Kinder 2 – Pre-Kinder 4 Red Polo Dress with Plaid bottom with embroidery Navy biker short under dress	Pre-Kinder 2 – Pre-Kinder 4 Short sleeve Red/Navy striped polo with embroidery Navy pull-on shorts with SBE embroidery
Kinder – 5th Grade Split Front Jumper in Plaid with embroidery K–3rd: White Round Collar with Navy Piping 4th–5th: White Round Collar Blouse	Kinder – 5th Grade Short sleeve White with Navy tipping or solid navy with embroidery Navy Pants with SBE embroidery K–2nd: Navy Shorts with black belt & SBE embroidery 1st–8th: Black Belt
6th – 8th Grade Plaid Skort (Mandated for Church) White Button-Down embroidered shirt Blue Vest EVERYDAY Navy pants with SBE embroidery Friday Polo from Navigator Store	6th – 8th Grade Light blue striped or white Oxford shirt with embroidery Blue Vest EVERYDAY Navy pants, black belt, SBE embroidery SBE Tie (Mandated for Church) Friday Polo from Navigator Store

*The length of girls' skirts/skorts should be dignified and modest, no shorter than mid-knee length.*

SHOES – GIRLS	SHOES – BOYS
Pre-Kinder 2–2nd Grade: Black Mary Jane	Pre-Kinder 2–2nd Grade: Black Velcro Uniform Sneaker
Grade 3rd–8th: Black Penny Loafers	Grade 3rd–8th: Black Penny Loafers

**Socks (All Students):** White/Navy Blue SBE socks with logo

### Winter Options (All Students / All Grades)

- Navy Full Zip Jacket with embroidery • ¼ Zip Dri-Fit Jacket with embroidery • Navy SBE Appliqué Crewneck Sweater
- Uniform Approved Sweater from Navigator Store • Fleece Navy with embroidery • Navy Cardigan with embroidery
- Navy Open-bottom sweatpants

### Physical Education Uniform (PK2 – 8th Grade)

- Navy Mesh Short with logo • P.E. T-shirt with logo (navy, red or white)
- Sneakers ONLY — NO CONVERSE-STYLED SHOES or HIGH TOPS • White/Navy Blue SBE logo socks

All students may wear their PE uniform to school on the day they have Physical Education classes.

### Non-Uniform Dress Days

Non-uniform days are intended to teach students how to dress modestly and appropriately, reflecting Christian values and the purpose of the occasion. These days are not meant for showcasing current fashion trends. Items such as additional jewelry or makeup that are not permitted on regular school days remain prohibited during non-uniform days. Ripped jeans, leggings, and sandals are not allowed.

Parents are expected to assist in ensuring that students come to school dressed appropriately; however, students are ultimately responsible for following these guidelines. There is no expectation to purchase special clothing for these days, as students should be able to dress appropriately using items they already own.

For designated dress-down days, students are required to wear PE shorts or non-ripped jeans along with the assigned dress-down shirt.

The school is not responsible for modifying or correcting inappropriate attire. Students who arrive in clothing that does not meet the guidelines will be required to contact their parents to bring the proper uniform. Uniform infractions may be issued to students in all grades (PreK3–8) who do not adhere to dress or grooming expectations.

### Book Bags and Books

Students in Kindergarten through 8th Grade are required to have a sturdy book bag for the protection of books. These bags must be kept clean and free of any writing, drawing, or markings.

### Hair Style and Jewelry

**Boys:** Hair must be neatly styled and cut above the eyebrows, ears, and collar. No fad haircuts, highlights, frosted tips, bleaching, or hair dyeing. Facial hair is not allowed. EARRINGS, PIERCINGS, and TATTOOS ARE PROHIBITED.

**Girls:** Hair must be neatly styled. No fad haircuts, hair dyes, or extensions. Absolutely no make-up is permitted unless participating in a special event. . Please note that if any student arrives at school with make-up on, she will be asked to wash the make-up off.

Girls may wear a single pair of stud earrings only. NO MULTIPLE PIERCINGS. TATTOOS ARE PROHIBITED. ONLY LIGHT-COLORED NAIL POLISH is permitted in Middle School (6th–8th): light pink, white, or nude. NO ACRYLIC OR FAKE NAILS.

Students may wear a watch and a necklace with a religious medal or crucifix. Any jewelry that the Administration believes is not appropriate will be removed.

## **SECTION 4**

# **RELIGIOUS INFORMATION**

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### **Catholic Formation**

The educational program at St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School is centered on our Catholic faith. All students, regardless of religious affiliation, will be required to attend and participate in religion class and school Liturgies. All Catholic students are to attend the Holy Mass on Sundays regularly, and are expected to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist on a regular basis.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

The sacramental life of your child is very important to us as a Church community. It is vital that parents set an example of sincere Christian living by developing a religious atmosphere in the home. Students in grade 2 will be prepared to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. Students in grade 7 will be prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

### **Family Life**

The Archdiocese requires that all schools have a family life program in grades K–8th. The Family Life program facilitates educating our children on living as Catholics in today's society, following the spirit and guidelines put forth by the National Council of Catholic Bishops in their statement "Always our Children." St. Brendan is committed to providing the NCEA AIDS curriculum to our children.

### **Code of Ethics**

Teachers and students will work together to determine the classroom rules that will be practiced for orderly classroom management. Parents are expected to help students comply, as they are the primary educators in their children's formation. Students are expected to always practice good etiquette.

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## SECTION 5

# INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

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### Curriculum

St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School follows the curriculum mandated by the Archdiocese of Miami Department of Schools, which meets or exceeds the Florida Sunshine State Standards and aligns with the Florida Catholic Conference standards. Content areas include: Religion, Science, English, Reading and Literature, Mathematics, Social Studies, STREAM, Spanish, Spelling and Vocabulary, Handwriting, Family Life, Health and Safety, Music, Computers, Art, and Physical Education.

Religion Training is held as maximum priority in our basic education program. The cooperation of parents in this area is vital.

### Grading Scale

#### Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten do not receive a percentage grade. The student will be evaluated on a performance scale with 4 as the exceeding expectations level and 1 as emerging skills level. The scale is:

- 4 - Proficient in meeting grade level standards
- 3 - Progressing in meeting grade level standards
- 2 - Development in meeting grade level standards
- 1 - Emerging in the development of grade level standards

Effort and Conduct scores are also utilized on the Kindergarten report card using the following scale:

- 4 - Exemplary
- 3 - Consistent
- 2 - Inconsistent
- 1 - Needs Support

#### 1st–2nd Grade

Grades in grades 1-2 are determined using the following scale:

- E - Excellent Progress
- G - Good Progress
- S - Satisfactory Progress
- N - Needs Improvement
- U - Unsatisfactory Progress

Effort and Conduct should be measured by:

- 4 - Exemplary
- 3 - Consistent
- 2 - Inconsistent
- 1 - Needs Support

### 3rd–8th Grade

Percentage-based grades are used for grades 3-8 based upon the following scale:

- A - 100-90
- B - 89-80
- C - 79-70
- D - 69-60
- F - 59 or lower\*

Effort and Conduct should be measured by:

- 4 - Exemplary
- 3 - Consistent
- 2 - Inconsistent
- 1 - Needs Support

### Homework

Homework is assigned to reinforce learning and foster habits of independent studying and responsibility. Assignments will be developmentally appropriate. Homework will be available every Monday through Schoology. Homework is due as assigned, and late assignments may not be accepted without lowering the grade for each day late, unless a student has a valid reason accepted by the school's administration.

### Academic Integrity: Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating is considered a form of dishonesty, as it involves presenting someone else's work, ideas, or efforts as one's own. Students may be tempted to cheat due to pressure from parents, peers, or teachers, or as a result of inadequate preparation. However, each student is expected to complete assignments independently and to put forth their own best effort.

Any student who is found engaging in dishonest academic behavior such as copying homework, classwork, or exams, or allowing others to copy—may face serious consequences. These may include disciplinary action, such as a major demerit, and/or receiving no credit for the assignment.

Plagiarism is also a violation of academic integrity. This includes using material or ideas from books, magazines, the internet, or any other source without proper acknowledgment. Submitting work generated by artificial intelligence (AI) tools as one's own is also considered plagiarism, as it does not reflect the student's original effort.

Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable and does not align with the values and principles expected of our students.

### Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held as the need arises. Parents must make arrangements with the teacher via email, phone messages, or notes. At no time during school hours are parents to present themselves to a

teacher. Conferences may be scheduled before or after school hours, or during teachers' planning periods. Lunchtime is NOT the time to see teachers. All conferences will be documented and placed in the student's cumulative folder.

## Interim Progress Reports

Interims are ordinarily sent out at approximately midway through each quarter for students in grades K–8. The Schoology Parent Portal allows parents to be actively involved in the progress of students at any time.

## Awards and Recognition

**Principal's Honor:** Students who receive 95% or above in all Subject Areas.

**Honor Roll Award:** Students who receive 90% or above in all Subject Areas. Recognized at the end of each Quarter.

**Principal's Award:** Given to distinguished students receiving outstanding academics, conduct, and effort. Highest overall average within the grade level.

**Effort Award:** Presented to the student who has consistently demonstrated outstanding effort throughout the year.

**Conduct Award:** Presented to the student demonstrating outstanding conduct throughout the school year.

**Valedictorian:** At the Graduation Ceremony, the student with the highest overall GPA will be recognized as Valedictorian.

**Student of the Month:** Each month, one student from each classroom is selected based on the chosen character trait for the month. Selected students are recognized at Mass and awarded a certificate.

## Promotion and Retention

**Academic Probation:** Students placed on academic probation are encouraged to demonstrate academic improvement, in accordance with the standards of St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School. The primary goal of academic probation is to provide opportunities for students and parents in conjunction with the school faculty and administration, to develop values, attitudes, knowledge of skills and good study habits. Academic probation will facilitate an open communication between classroom teachers and the student's home. Parents, teachers, administrators, and students will be asked to sign and agree to the terms of the probation, with the sole purpose of enhancing and improving the situation.

**Retention:** A conference with the parents, teacher(s), and Principal/Assistant Principal is required to retain a student. Prior to the conference, the teacher should be in contact with the parents. Teachers will advise parents of the student's progress. The parents, teacher(s), and Principal/Assistant Principal conference shall take place no later than May of the current school year. **Students may be retained if he/she has more than eighteen (18) or more days absent in a school year.** Students must maintain 90% attendance during a school year.

**Graduate at Graduation:** A graduate of St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School will enter high school with a love for learning and all the necessary tools needed to succeed.

## Special Programs

**St. Thomas Aquinas Language Arts Accelerated Program:** Services high-achieving students in grades 3rd–5th.

**Father Felix Varela Program:** A comprehensive elementary school program for students with learning differences in grades 2nd–8th. An innovative and integrated curriculum, coupled with small class size and low teacher-to-student ratio, enables students to experience academic success. The Program is based on Florida State Standards and each student's individual learning profile.

**Dual Enrollment Program:** High-achieving students in Middle School may enroll in Algebra I Honors and Geometry Honors for High School credit.

**Curriculum Accommodations:** Students requiring special learning accommodations must be formally evaluated by an outside testing agency. If modifications are prescribed, a staffing will be held to formulate a plan of action that is evaluated on a regular basis.

## Academic Clubs and Organizations

**Clubs/Activities:** National Junior Honor Society, Student Council, Mission Club, Altar Servers, Choir, Campus Ministry, Yearbook, Arts and Soul, Academic Olympics, Robotics Club, Broadcasting, Art Club, Hype Club, Salsa Club, Knocking on Someone’s Door.

**Athletics:** Baseball, soccer, basketball, cheerleading, track, volleyball, flag football, track and field, cross country, golf, softball.

## National Junior Honor Society

The NJHS chapter at St. Brendan is a duly chartered chapter of this prestigious national organization. Students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades are eligible for membership with a cumulative grade of 95% or higher. Students must participate in at least two student activity organizations each year and have a minimum of ten hours of documented community service.

## Student Council

Candidates must have an 88% average or above in each subject. Once elected, members must maintain the election criteria. Student Council consists of twenty members headed by an all-eighth-grade Executive Office (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer). Election of Homeroom Representatives takes place in September.

## After School Sports

Students must maintain at least a “C” academic average and good behavior in all subjects. Academic eligibility is determined each marking period. Students who are suspended or absent will not be allowed to participate in sports on the day(s) of suspension or absenteeism.

In an effort to uphold All Catholic conference standards, the Athletic Department, in coordination with the Administration, will be monitoring academic progress for those students who participate in After School sports. The rules are as follows:

1. A student’s academic eligibility will be determined in each marking period based on his/her performance in the previous marking period except for the first quarter. Final decisions may be determined by the athletic director and the Administration.
2. Academic eligibility is based on the student’s performance in the core subjects (Religion, Reading/Literature, Mathematics, English, Social Studies, and Science); special classes will also be averaged.
3. Students who participate in the sports program must be able to handle both the scholastic and athletic programs. They are expected to maintain at least a “C” academic average and good behavior in all subjects. Students receiving grades lower than these specified herein may be placed on probation for the athletic program.
4. Students that represent St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School are expected to conduct themselves according to the Code of Conduct listed in this manual. This will be a determining factor for students to remain on the team.
5. An athlete who has been ruled ineligible may re-establish his/her eligibility once he/she has met the academic requirements for the previous marking period. A student must be informed of his/her ineligibility and should be prohibited from further participation within three (3) days from the date on which the grades are distributed to the parents.
6. All eligibility requirements will be enforced at the discretion of the Administration and Athletic Director. The Administration may waive the eligibility requirement in extraordinary cases.

7. If the student is suspended or absent, he/she will not be allowed to play sports on the day or days of the suspension and/or absenteeism.
8. Students participating in after school sports will be responsible for purchasing the team uniform and for the fee associated with the sport.
9. Once a student makes a team, the parent is expected to pay all sports fees prior to the first game or meet.

*Any student who is absent or leaves school prior to 11:30 am cannot participate in After School practices or sports events on that day.*

### **Physical Education**

All students are required to participate in Physical Education classes in full uniform. If a student does not participate for more than three (3) consecutive days, a doctor's certificate should be provided.

### **Private Tutoring, Coaching, or Lessons**

The school does not sponsor, oversee, or otherwise provide private tutoring, coaching, therapy, or other similar private lessons. Parents who engage school staff members for these services do so at their own risk and expense, outside the scope of the staff member's employment.

## SECTION 6

# STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

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### Philosophy of Discipline

Discipline is maintained in a classroom or school when students work cooperatively with the Principal, teachers, and their classmates. The legitimate interest of the school extends beyond the school day. The faculty and staff believe that discipline is fundamental to life and that the most worthwhile discipline is self-discipline. Discipline in the Catholic school is to be considered an aspect of moral guidance and not a form of punishment.

### Student/Parent Conduct

Students and parents are expected to behave consistent with the mission, philosophy, and spirit of the school and the moral teachings of the Catholic faith. Because the school cannot anticipate all conduct that violates this policy, it reserves the right to take any form of student disciplinary action, including administrative withdrawal, against any behavior that violates this policy.

### Conduct Referrals

Teachers may send a Conduct Referral Notice to the parent when students have not followed school guidelines or policies. After the teacher and student have signed the Conduct Referral, it will be sent home for the parent to sign and return the next day. After one (1) Conduct Referral, the student may be subject to detention.

### Uniform Infractions

A student may be issued a uniform infraction notice whenever not in compliance with uniform regulations. After two (2) uniform infractions, the next violation may result in detention.

### Detentions

Saturday detentions may be scheduled as deemed necessary from 8:00 am–12:00 pm every month beginning in September. The cost per student for Saturday detention is \$40.00.

### Suspensions

**First Time Suspension:** A student may be suspended for one school day.

**Second Time Suspension:** A student may be suspended for two school days and will not be re-admitted to class without a conference with the Principal. The student will be responsible for completing homework with a lowering of a letter grade.

Reasons for suspension include: continued misbehavior, use of abusive or offensive language, fighting, and disrespectful behavior towards faculty and staff.

### Expulsion

A student may be expelled if a third suspension is required, or immediately for automatic expulsion grounds, which include: possession of drugs, matches, firearms, cigarettes, vape pens, e-cigarettes, or sharp-edged instruments; skipping school or leaving school property without permission; visible tattoos or body markings; continuous inappropriate misbehavior; sexual language; threats of violence; and consistent bullying.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

The school is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment. Bullying is strictly prohibited. This policy prohibits any unwelcome verbal or written conduct or gestures

that physically, emotionally, or mentally harm a student; damage a student's personal property; place a student in reasonable fear of harm; or create an intimidating or hostile environment.

Each student and parent have a duty to report any bullying to the school immediately. Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, administrative withdrawal, and/or notification to appropriate authorities.

## **Harassment and Discrimination**

The school is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination and harassment. The school will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of any protected status. All students are responsible for helping to ensure that any harassment or discrimination is reported to the school principal.

## **Threats of Violence**

Consequences for a student whose verbal or written comments threaten serious bodily harm may include: immediate suspension; reporting to Law Enforcement; and treatment by a psychologist or psychiatrist at the parents' expense. If the child is determined to be serious about the threat, the child may be administratively withdrawn.

## **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

The use or possession of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, drug-related paraphernalia, or abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs by any student on school property or at any school-sponsored activity is forbidden. This may result in administrative withdrawal, even for a first offense. The school may conduct random searches and drug testing.

## **Smoking / Vaping**

It is a violation of Florida law for any minor to knowingly possess any tobacco product or nicotine dispensing device. The use of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and/or vaping in any form is prohibited on school property and at any school events. Violation may result in administrative withdrawal.

## **Sexting**

The electronic transmission or receipt from one minor to another of any photograph or video that depicts nudity may constitute illegal sexting. Students engaged in sexting will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences, which may include administrative withdrawal. The school administration may report instances of sexting to the Florida Department of Children and Families or local law enforcement.

## **Public Display of Affection**

The Catholic school promotes friendship, charity, kindness, love, and respect for self and others. However, inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing or embracing which connote more than simple friendship, are not permitted at school or at any school event. The administration reserves the right to determine what is or is not appropriate.

## **Search and Seizure Policy**

The principal and their designee have access to any lockers, handbags, electronic devices, cell phones, book bags, desks, cars, or any other object brought onto campus or at any school-sponsored event, and may remove or confiscate any object which is illegal or contrary to school policy.

## **Safety in Private Spaces**

St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School complies with the requirements of §551.865, Florida Statutes, The Safety in Private Spaces Act. Except where facilities are specifically designated as unisex, the school's bathroom and locker room/changing facilities are designated exclusively for use by biological females or biological males.

## **Weapons Policy**

Weapons are not permitted anywhere on school grounds or at any school activity. Any student who brings a weapon, is in possession of a weapon, or who threatens others with a weapon may be administratively withdrawn. This includes BB guns, Airsoft guns, toy or replica guns represented as real guns, and any items that can inflict serious harm.

## SECTION 7

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

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### Medication Guidelines

Students are not permitted to carry or distribute any prescription or non-prescription drugs on school grounds. Only when necessary will the school allow the administration of medication on campus, and only under the following guidelines:

1. An authorization form must be completed and submitted by a parent or legal guardian.
2. Medications should be labeled with the child's name, exact dosage, physician's name, and telephone number.
3. While the school may monitor a student taking medication, the school will not remind students to come and take their medication.

Exceptions may be made for the use and administration of an epinephrine auto-injection (Epipen), or as otherwise authorized in writing by the school.

### Communicable Diseases

Attendance at school and participation in school activities poses some risks including the transmission of communicable diseases. Although the school has taken various measures to reduce the risks of transmission, the possibility of infection is nonetheless present. Parents expressly assume such risks.

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or any other circumstances that make it unfeasible or unsafe to continue campus-based education, school educational programs shall resume as soon as practical by way of distance learning. There will be no suspension, reduction, or refund of tuition in these circumstances.

### Injuries/Illness

Students who are injured while at school must report the incident immediately to a teacher, school health personnel, or an administrator. Appropriate care will be provided, the situation will be reviewed, and parents will be notified when necessary. To be eligible for coverage under the school's student insurance policy, injuries must be reported promptly.

Accident insurance claim forms are available upon request for injuries that occur on campus. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to complete and follow through with any insurance claims.

In cases of serious injury, students must submit written authorization from both a parent/guardian and a physician before they may return to participation in any physical activities.

### On-Campus Therapy Services

Parents/guardians of students receiving therapy during the school day must submit a completed and signed On-Campus Therapy Parent Form annually. A separate form must be completed for each student. All therapists providing services on campus must complete a background check, fingerprinting clearance, current Virtus certification, and any additional requirements established by the school or the Archdiocese of Miami.

Questions may be directed to Michelle Hernandez at [mhernandez@stbrendanmiami.org](mailto:mhernandez@stbrendanmiami.org).

### Child Protective Investigations

Florida law requires that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Reports should

be made to Florida's Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). Abuse may also be reported to the Safe Environment Office of the Archdiocese at 305-215-6635 or [abusereporting@theadom.org](mailto:abusereporting@theadom.org).

### **Cooperation with Legal Authorities**

It is the practice of the school to cooperate with any local, state, or federal investigators or law enforcement officers. The school will attempt to notify the parents of any student sought to be interviewed during a criminal investigation, unless directed otherwise by investigators.

### **Counseling Services**

Our school is required to have a counselor on staff to provide instruction and individual counseling when warranted. Any parent who does not want their student to be seen by the counselor should indicate this wish in writing to the principal at the beginning of the school year.

### **Confidentiality Statement**

School officials will have access to student educational records in the performance of their duties. Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE AND CONSENT to the disclosure of such records to school officials with a legitimate educational interest in the information.

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## SECTION 8

# EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

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### Emergency Plan

While it is impossible to foresee every type of emergency, St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School has a comprehensive emergency plan that provides guidelines and procedures for different situations. When emergency conditions have been declared by the county (such as severe weather), the school will dismiss and resume classes in accordance with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Archdiocesan announcements. Parents should tune in to local television/radio broadcasts. During severe weather, dismissal may be interrupted/prolonged until it is safe to proceed.

### Campus Security

To ensure a safe environment for all students and staff, the school has established the following security procedures:

1. All school entrances are secured during the school day. Gates and doors are locked beginning at 7:45 a.m. and remain so until 2:30 p.m. Entry through the main gate is controlled by a buzzer and visitor check-in system. The faculty parking lot is also secured during these hours. Parents and visitors should park in visitor parking to avoid restricted areas.
2. Miami Dade Sheriff's Office provides support by monitoring scheduled outdoor activities and maintaining a presence on and around campus throughout the school day and during after-school programs.
3. Upon entering campus, all parents, visitors, and service personnel must report directly to the main office, state their purpose, and obtain a visitor identification badge before proceeding. Service personnel should be in uniform or display proper identification at all times.
4. Faculty and staff will direct any individual without proper identification back to the main office. Anyone not recognized and without a visitor pass will be asked to check in immediately.
5. Students are instructed not to open gates or allow entry to anyone. They should report any unfamiliar individuals or suspicious activity to a staff member right away.
6. Restroom facilities designated for visitors are to be used by all adults. Student restrooms are reserved for student use only during school hours.
7. The school uses internal communication procedures to alert staff when there is an unauthorized person on campus or when assistance is needed in an emergency.
8. The school is not responsible for any personal belongings lost or stolen on campus, including items left in vehicles.

Parents are encouraged to review and reinforce these procedures with their children in a calm and reassuring manner. While safety is a top priority, it is equally important to maintain a supportive environment where students feel secure and confident.

## SECTION 9

# SCHOOL FINANCES

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### Tuition Obligations

Tuition payments must be made through the FACTS Management Tuition System. All families are responsible for creating their own FACTS account every school year. Payment options:

- Payment in full due by August 10th, 2026.
- Payment in 2 installments: ½ in August and the remaining balance in January.
- 10 monthly payments from August–May, on the 1st, 5th, or 10th of each month.

Students with outstanding tuition and/or fees at the time of re-registration will not be admitted for the following school year.

### Late Payment / Uncollected Funds

Tuition must be paid on the first through the tenth of the month, beginning August 1st. A late fee will be added if payment is received after the 10th. A student may not receive a report card nor be allowed to take midterm exams if tuition or any school fees (after school, tardies, or late fees) are not current. Financial responsibilities must be fulfilled by May 1st for a student to complete the school year.

### Financial Obligations

The satisfaction of all financial obligations constitutes a material condition for continued enrollment. The school may disallow students from taking examinations, withhold transcripts, disallow participation in school activities, and/or administratively withdraw the student if any financial obligations are not met.

Parents of students receiving a government scholarship have a total of 10 days to approve the invoice submitted by the school for payment. If the parent does not approve the invoice within the time allotted, a late payment fee may be applied.

### Fundraising

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

### Deadlines

In the interest of fairness to all students and parents, deadlines in all areas must be respected and met. Students and parents have a right to be informed of deadline dates; the responsibility of meeting those deadlines rests with the student or parent.

### Participation in School Athletics or Organizations

Parents acknowledge that participation in sports, activities, or clubs may be inherently dangerous, and the school cannot ensure the safety of all students. Prior to participation in any sport, each student must complete the Parent Consent and Release of Liability form and a physician's certificate confirming physical fitness.

**Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, hereby release** the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to participation in any sports, leagues, clubs, activities, or volunteer service-hour programs.

## SECTION 10 TECHNOLOGY

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### Artificial Intelligence

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** refers to systems that simulate human decision-making processes without direct human intervention, including chatbots, machine learning algorithms, and automated tools.

**Generative Artificial Intelligence** refers to technology that creates content — including text, images, video, and computer code — by identifying patterns in large quantities of training data and then creating original material with similar characteristics. These tools include, but are not limited to, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot.

These AI tools have great potential but also carry potential risks and ethical implications. St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School recognizes the growing impact of AI on education and this policy aims to guide our students in its responsible and ethical use.

Before using AI, students must engage in three steps:

- **Consultation.** Students must consult with their teacher prior to using any AI tool to determine if the task, assignment, or assessment can be completed with AI assistance.
- **Documentation.** If granted permission, students must document their interaction with the AI tool by copying and pasting the conversation into a separate document that can be shared with the teacher.
- **Citation.** Where its use is permissible, students must cite the use of the AI tool.

AI tools may not replace a student's work. The presentation of AI-generated content without a teacher's approval will be considered academic dishonesty and will result in disciplinary consequences.

### iPads

Students in all grade levels will be using iPads as an educational tool. All school-issued iPads are the property of St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School, loaned to students for educational use. In addition to the Archdiocese of Miami Acceptable Use Policy, St. Brendan has its own iPad policy. **See also the Acceptable Use Policy provided at iPad distribution.** In case of a conflict, the ADOM policy takes precedence.

- St. Brendan reserves the right to confiscate and search a student's iPad to ensure compliance with the Acceptable Use Policy.
- Students in violation of the Acceptable Use Policy are subject to disciplinary actions at the school administration's discretion.
- In the event of confiscation, completion of all classwork and homework remains the responsibility of the student.
- St. Brendan is not responsible for the financial loss of any personal files or applications that are deleted.
- **Students are required to have their iPads in their book bags when traveling from class to class. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.**
- The iPad is required to be at school every day, fully charged. Students must charge their iPads at home.
- If an iPad is left at home, it is not to be brought to school after the school day begins. The front office will not accept the delivery of iPads.
- If an iPad is left at home or is not charged, the student remains responsible for completing all classwork and homework. Repeat offenses will result in disciplinary action.
- The whereabouts of the iPad should be known at all times. It is the student's responsibility to keep their iPad safe and secure.
- If an iPad is lost, stolen, or damaged, the IT Department must be notified immediately.

- All iPads are subject to routine monitoring by teachers, administrators, and the technology staff. All wireless traffic will be routinely monitored. If the Acceptable Use Policy is violated, disciplinary action will be taken and the iPad may be remotely locked down, wiped, and/or confiscated.
- Prohibited uses include, but are not limited to: accessing inappropriate materials, illegal activities, malicious use/vandalism, jailbreaking, and recording or taking pictures with the iPad without teacher authorization.
- If a student is found not to be on the authorized page during class, the student will receive disciplinary action at the discretion of the teacher.

## Technology Use

Students must use all technology resources in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of the school and Catholic teachings. Students must:

- **Respect and protect the privacy of others:** Use only assigned accounts and passwords. Do not share accounts or passwords. Do not view, use, or copy passwords, data, or networks to which you are not authorized.
- **Respect and protect the integrity of all electronic resources:** Observe all network security practices. Report security risks to the school principal. Do not vandalize, destroy, or damage data, networks, hardware, computer systems, or other resources.
- **Respect and protect the intellectual property of others:** Do not infringe on copyright laws. Do not install unlicensed or unapproved software. Do not plagiarize.
- **Respect the principles of the Catholic school:** Use only in ways that are kind and respectful. Do not access, transmit, copy or create materials that violate the school's code of conduct. Do not use resources for non-educational purposes such as visiting social websites or networks like Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, or any other social media site. Do not engage in any form of cyberbullying.

## Articles and Services Prohibited in School

Cell phones, SMART WATCHES, Air Pods, Personal iPads, Meta Glasses of any brand, Nintendo's DS, cameras, etc., are not allowed to be used during class unless otherwise approved by a teacher and/or administration for special events. If these items are visible, the administration or designee will confiscate them and return them at the end of the day to the student's parents only.

Cellular phones, SMART watches, Air Pods, Headphones are **NEVER** to be used during school time (7:30 am-3:45 pm). Cell phones are to remain OFF and UNACCESSIBLE during the school day (7:30am-3:45 pm). Students participating in After School Sports/Clubs (After 3:45pm) may use cell phones to communicate with parents if necessary- with the approval of their COACH OR AFTER SCHOOL DIRECTOR.

## Supervision and Monitoring

The school and its authorized personnel may monitor the use of information technology resources. The school reserves the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks or on any technological devices used by students on campus. It may also use this information in disciplinary actions and may furnish evidence of a crime to law enforcement.

## Unacceptable Use of Outside Technology

The school expects students to use information technology and social media in a responsible and ethical fashion in compliance with all applicable laws and with Christian moral principles, both in and out of the school setting. Students may not post, upload, share, or communicate any images, photographs, statements, or inferences relating to profanity, vulgarity, indecency, illegal use of drugs or alcohol, or other illegal activities. This rule applies to communications both during the school year and while students are on vacation or summer breaks.

## Text Messaging / Telephone Calls

The school may use text messages and automated telephone calls to alert parents/guardians of important information. Parents/guardians acknowledge and consent to the receipt of these messages when providing their telephone numbers.

## Consent

Parental/guardian execution of this Handbook constitutes an express consent and waiver as to any recordings and reproductions incidental to the use of any technological devices on school property or at school events.

## Student Hardware Policy — Summary

All school-issued iPads are the property of St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School, loaned to students for educational use. The complete Student Hardware Policy is provided separately at iPad distribution and is available from the Technology Department. Key provisions are summarized below.

## Device Ownership and Bundle

Each student receives: (1) Apple iPad, (1) school-approved protective case, and AppleCare coverage managed by the school. Devices must be returned upon withdrawal, at the end of the program year if requested, or at any time upon request by school Administration.

## Student Device Responsibilities

1. Bring the iPad to school every day, fully charged. The office will not accept delivery of a forgotten iPad after the school day begins.
2. Keep the iPad in its school-approved protective case at all times.
3. Transport the iPad in your book bag when moving between classes.
4. Do not lend or borrow iPads. Do not allow another student to use your device.
5. No food or beverages near the iPad. No stickers or markings on the device or case.
6. Do not create administrative passcodes or change MDM-managed settings.
7. Students are responsible for backing up their own data to Schoology or Google Drive. The school is not responsible for lost or deleted data.

## Loss, Damage and Repair Fees

If an iPad is lost, stolen, or damaged, notify the IT Department immediately — no later than the next school day. Bring damaged devices to the Technology Office only — not to the Apple Store or any outside repair service. Parents are financially responsible for all repair and replacement costs.

Approximate fees: iPad replacement \$400–\$500\* • Protective case \$40 • Charger/cable \$30 • AppleCare incident deductible \$50. All fees are billed through FACTS Management. Cash is not accepted.

*\* Final pricing confirmed at time of assessment. Not all damage is repairable.*

## Device Return

Upon withdrawal from school, all device components must be returned to the Technology Department within five (5) school days in working condition. Failure to return the device results in the full replacement fee being charged to the student's account, and may prevent the release of transcripts and school records.

## **For Full Policy Details**

*The complete Student Hardware Policy — including the full fee schedule, MDM disclosure, prohibited uses, and withdrawal procedures — is provided separately at iPad distribution and is available at any time from the Technology Department.*

## **Consequences of Violations**

A violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privilege to use the school's information technology resources and any additional consequences at the principal's discretion including administrative withdrawal.

# St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School

## Parent-Student Handbook Acknowledgment Form

2026 – 2027 School Year

Last Revised: June 29, 2026

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade / Homeroom

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Legal Guardian Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Second Parent / Legal Guardian Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Second Parent / Legal Guardian Signature (if applicable)

Please return the signed form to your child's homeroom teacher by the date specified at the start of the school year.