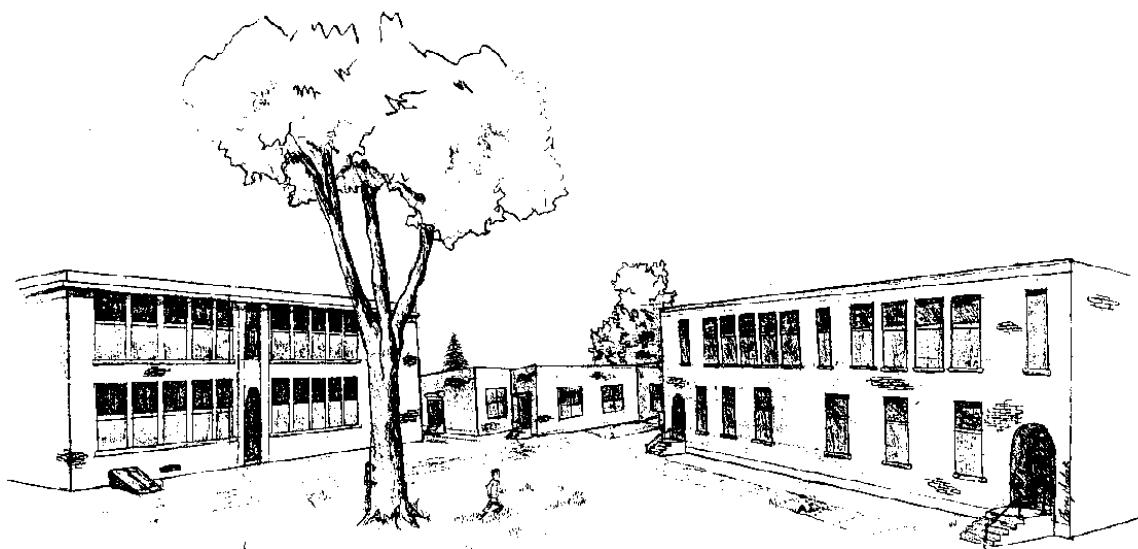


**Saints Cosmas and Damian
Elementary School
Parent and Student Handbook
2025-2026 School Year**



**Accredited Through the
Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Elementary Schools**

Introduction

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Thank you for choosing our school for your child. The Saints Cosmas and Damian Elementary School presents to you our Parent/Student Handbook. It is the result of deliberation and consultation among administrators and in collaboration with the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie.

Please take the time to read the handbook carefully so that you can familiarize yourself with school policies and information. When you have finished reading it, please sign and return to the school **the additional agreement page**, sent home with your student, stating that you recognize the right and responsibility of the school to make rules and enforce them.

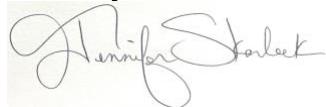
The school or the principal retains the right to amend the handbook for just cause, and parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

We encourage your input regarding the handbook. We are open to your suggestions as to clarifications, additions, deletions, corrections, changes in format, etc., so that we can use your comments to prepare next year's handbook.

As we look forward to the start of school, I wanted to share our collective vision: *Prudence, justice, fortitude, and our shared Catholic values will be the guiding virtues that will direct planning, assessing the situation, and determining best practices. A risk-mitigation approach will be used to maximize educational opportunities and to create an environment that promotes the health, safety, and wellness of students, teachers, staff, families, and the wider community.* Communication with parents and students will be a foundational aspect of all phases of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Current communications can be located on our school website at **sscdschool.com**. The Catholic school governance structure allows for our schools to be responsive in making decisions related to safe school operations and providing excellence in Catholic education. Our hallmark family atmosphere will provide students with adult role models that have a positive, reassuring and faith-filled outlook.

May God continue to bless us and our school year and guide us as we bear great fruit in His name, for, **He is the vine, and we are the branches.**

Sincerely,



Ms. Jennifer Skarbek
Principal

Our Mission Statement

Saints Cosmas and Damian School provides a faith-centered education that empowers its students to reach their full potential spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially. We strive to create lifelong learners who have a strong foundation in Catholic tradition and values complemented by a desire to be Christian role models in the community and their family.

Beliefs

- We believe that along with parents, who are the primary educators of their children, it is our duty to promote the academic and faith growth of a student.
- We believe the goal of education is to advance the formation of the whole person.
- We believe that every person is a child of God who deserves respect.
- We believe that it is our mission to teach the needs of all the students and challenge them to reach their full potential.
- We believe each child is a unique creation of God with dignity, self-worth, and individual abilities.
- We believe a safe, respectful learning environment is necessary for a quality education.
- We believe each child has different styles, which are respected by the teachers.
- We believe curriculum and instruction practices should incorporate a variety of learning activities to accommodate different learning styles.
- We believe instruction and assessment must provide for the diverse needs and abilities of all students.
- We believe parents and the school are partners in the faith and academic formation of each child.
- We believe the primary purpose of Catholic Education is to offer an enriched Catholic faith-based education, which teaches the Gospel values across the curriculum and fosters spiritual and academic growth.
- We believe the Catholic school environment should be a supportive, challenging atmosphere that affirms the dignity of everyone in the school community.
- We believe in continued improvement in the curriculum and the willingness to make changes when necessary to implement student learning.
- We believe the prayer life of each child is enhanced by active involvement in the liturgy, as well as prayer opportunities in the classroom.

Diocese of Erie Personnel

The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, J.C.L.....	Bishop
Nancy Bradish.....	Director of Curriculum
Ms. Lisa Royek.....	Director of Government Programs
TBD.....	Director of School Finance
Mrs. Laura Blake.....	Assistant Superintendent/SSCD Title IX Coordinator
Mr. James Gallagher.....	Superintendent of Catholic Schools

All of the above can be reached at the following:

Diocese of Erie
St. Mark Catholic Center
P.O. Box 10397
429 East Grandview Boulevard
Erie, PA 16514-0397

814-824-1241 or 1-800-374-3723

SS.Cosmas and Damian School Administration, Faculty and Staff

Very Rev. Msgr. Joseph J. Riccardo, V.F.....	Pastor
Ms. Jennifer Skarbek.....	Principal
Mrs. Lisa Phillips.....	Secretary
Mrs. Kerri Presloid.....	Preschool
Mrs. Julie Hollenbaugh.....	Preschool Aide
Mrs. Theresa Pearce.....	Kindergarten
Mrs. Jeanine DiPietro.....	First Grade
Mrs. Maureen Freas.....	Second Grade
Mrs. Catherine Byers.....	Third Grade
Mrs. Ann Koppenhaver.....	Fourth-Sixth Grade
Mrs. Tasha Manners.....	Fourth -Sixth Grade
Miss Marcy Sallack.....	Music Pre-K-6
Ms. Lona Koppenhaver.....	Title I
Mrs. Ranee Sikora.....	Act 89
Mrs. Retta Cebulskie.....	Speech Therapist
Mrs. Sapphire Lowry.....	Nurse
Mrs. Pamela Hanley.....	Food Service Director
Ms. Sharon Murray.....	Food Service Assistant
Ms. Anna Murray.....	Religion/Art Instructor
Mr. Mike Gmys.....	Maintenance Supervisor
Mr. Herman Bofinger.....	Custodian

Fact Sheet for Quick Reference

Principal: Ms. Jennifer Skarbek
205 Chestnut St.
Punxsutawney, PA 15767
814-938-4224
Fax: 814-939-3759
E-Mail: jennifer.skarbek@sscdschool.com

Web Page Address for Saints Cosmas and Damian School:

www.sscdschool.com

Pastor.....Msgr. Joseph J. Riccardo.....814-938-6540 Ext. 2215
Business Manager.....Mr. Tony Bofinger.....814-938-6540 Ext. 2214

Admission Requirements
Birth Certificate
Baptismal Certificate (if not in local parish)
Record of Immunizations
Social Security Number (optional)

Lunch is \$2.50 (includes milk)
for all full-day students
Milk is only 50 cents

Tuition Assistance Programs

FACTS Tuition Management Program—
for families who qualify for payments
over the year.

STAR Foundation
Bridge Foundation
Children's Scholarship Fund
Central PA Scholarship Fund
Scrip Program

Tuition

Preschool programs:

\$961 3 Yr. Old

\$2263 Pre-K

Elementary School (K-6)

Registered Parishioners of SSCD

\$3656 one child

\$6270 two children

Elementary School (K-6)

\$5057 one child

\$8837 two children

The tuition and fee schedule are published annually in February. Copies can be obtained from the school administrative office. The schedule is also included in the registration packet.

Families will receive an itemized statement of account annually in the Spring (or shortly after returning their completed registration form for mid-year registrants). Arrangements to satisfy all outstanding tuition and fees for the school year are to be finalized by the date listed on the statement. Student accounts must be in good standing to attend the first day of class. If a student's account is not settled by the first day of class (or by the first scheduled day of attendance for mid-year registrants) the student's assignments will be sent home until payment arrangements are finalized and the student is able to attend class.

Families may choose to address their outstanding tuition and fee balance through one of two methods:

1. The balance in full may be paid directly to the school office (a discount may apply for this option – *see the school office for more details*)
2. The balance may be paid through installment payments using the FACTS Management Company. Payment plans are offered with two or ten installments.

Admission

Parents are requested to bring the following with them at the time of new registration: Birth Certificate, Baptismal Certificate, and Record of Immunizations. Students entering Kindergarten must be five (5) years of age by June 1st. Pre-School students must be three (3) years of age by June 1st to attend our Tuesday-Thursday classes. Students who are four (4) years of age by June 1st can attend our Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes.

Late Registration

Any student who registers after the posted deadline is subject to a late registration fee. The fee is assessed on a sliding scale depending on the time that has elapsed since the deadline. The late registration fee is assessed as an add-on to the standard registration fee.

Late Payments and Returned Checks

Checks that are returned by the bank as unable to process (i.e., insufficient funds, closed account) are subject to a returned check charge of \$30.00 per occurrence in addition to whatever fees your financial institution may assess. Installment payments through the FACTS Management Company that cannot be processed are subject to a late payment fee of \$30.00 for each failed attempt to process the payment. This is in addition to any fees that may be assessed by FACTS and your financial institution.

Lunch

Hot lunch is available daily for \$2.50, which includes milk, to all Pre-K-6 students. Milk only is 50 cents. Menus are posted on the school website monthly. Our lunch program is required to meet or exceed government guidelines in terms of nutritional value. (Government inspections take place during the school year.)

All students who participate in the program are served milk unless a student has a note from a physician indicating that he/she is lactose intolerant.

The school offers a free/reduced lunch program to families who qualify. Forms are sent home to families the first day of school. If after reviewing the financial guidelines, you feel that your family is eligible, the head of household should fill out the necessary form and return that form in a sealed envelope to the school. **ALL INFORMATION IS KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. ONLY THE PRINCIPAL AND THE SCHOOL SECRETARY KNOW WHICH STUDENTS ARE TAKING PART IN THE PROGRAM.**

If your child packs, **do not** bring meals from any fast-food chain. Also, it would be helpful if lunches coming from home were packed with not only love but also good nutritional items.

There are behavioral guidelines for the lunchroom and recess. Children are expected to follow the rules. Repeated disobedience at lunch will result in a loss of lunchroom privileges.

If you have more than one child in the school and are sending in money, please have the courtesy to send a note with the other child's teacher, letting the teacher know you have sent a note with the older or other child.

Pre-K-2 Lunch is from 11:00 – 11:30; Recess is from 11:30-12:00
3-6 Lunch is from 11:30-12; Recess is from 11:00-11:30

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Activity Fee

Each K-6 family is required to pay an annual \$75.00 Activity Fee. The activity fee covers many things throughout the school year. Examples are the assemblies, field trips, bus costs, and many other items throughout the school year.

School Supplies

The supply list is established by each classroom teacher. Teachers will communicate through SeeSaw what supplies parents will need to provide.

Transportation

Bus Transportation is provided by the Punxsutawney School District. If you need bus transportation to/from SSCD, please contact (814) 938-5151, public school transportation director. All bus regulations are to be adhered to by SSCD students. Other school districts that must provide transportation to SSCD are Brookville, Marion Center, and Dubois.

SSCD Parent Group

Our SSCD Parent Group will keep communication open, promote school spirit, and help support the financial aspect of the school through fundraising. Our school parents make a caring commitment to contribute 30 hours/per family/per school year to our school in the way of support to the general operating budget. They also try to offer services and activities throughout the year for the students; *every family is an important part of the success of our school, volunteering for school events and fundraising make the 30 hours fun and profitable. Event chairpersons are only asked to sign up for one*event.*
Additional information is on the school website, SSCD Parent Group tab.

School Functions:

SSCD School Lawn Festival (August)

***First Week of School:**

Photo Booths/Props

Welcome-Back Decorations

Open House

*Trunk or Treat

Christmas Celebration Activities:

*Home for the Holidays Parade

*Decorating for Christmas

*Santa's Workshop

*Tree Lighting/Circle of Trees

School Swim Nights

Class Trips

Classroom Parties

*End of Year Fun

Fundraising:

*Golf Scramble

*Fall 50/50

*Marianna's Hoagies (bi-monthly)

*Christmas Bazaar

*Kitchen (menu, food ordering, prep/clean up, schedule)

*Vendors/tables

(Invitations/agreements, map, event coordination)

*Designer Bag Event

* Dueling Pianos

*Spring 50/50

*Spirit Days

*Additional fundraisers to be announced

Academics

The school is committed to academic excellence, data driven best practices and participation in Professional Learning Teams to design instruction to reach goals of a minimum of 50% growth and 65% achievement. All students are encouraged to achieve their full potential through an academic program, which consists of high standards in curriculum and faculty performance. Student progress will be monitored and reported to both students and parents via Gradelink on-line. The goal of academic excellence can only be assured when parental involvement occurs and open communication among parents/guardians, teachers, students, and administrators is practiced.

The school follows the guidelines set forth by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie. The diocesan curriculum adheres to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In addition to the state requirements for curriculum, there are also religion classes.

Progress reports and report cards are distributed regularly for grades 1-6. The achievement grade scale is as follows:

Elementary

A	93-100
B	85-92
C	76-84
D	69-75
F	below 69

An explanation of the grading system is also given on the report cards. Parents are encouraged to review it. As is stated on the report card, the letter grades relate to the student's grades, while a number rates the student according to his or her own ability and effort.

Kindergartners are assessed four times a year, in October, January, March, and May. A parent-teacher conference is required by the diocese in November (for all students) and May (Kindergarten only)

Homework fosters good study habits, reinforces needed skills, and develops independent research abilities. The student should have a quiet place to study and should do all work neatly. If the parents feel the child has too much or too difficult work, the teacher should be contacted. Diocesan Policy states that homework should not exceed one hour in grades 3 through 6. In the primary grades, homework is to be given judiciously. However, the amount of time spent on homework is relative to the student's individual ability and study habits.

In accordance with the recommendation and approval of the Vicar of Education for the Diocese of Erie, a testing program which includes standardized tests of academic achievement and of mental ability (in addition to the regular teacher evaluation) has been designed to provide information concerning the proficiency of all children in the diocesan elementary schools. The results of these tests provide a continuing record of each child's academic progress in comparison with national norms. They are also an invaluable aid to the child's teacher in diagnosing strengths and weaknesses of both the class as a whole and the individual student. This enables the teacher to provide a more effective class and individual instruction.

Grades Kindergarten-6

NWEA Assessments – Fall: September 15-October 3

Winter: January 5-23

Spring: April 20-May 8

IXL Assessments- Fall: September 15-October 3

Winter: January 5-23

Spring: April 20-May 8

Grade 5

ACRE-Religion-May

Parents are discouraged from scheduling appointments and/or vacations during the above testing times.

Attendance

The following are school schedule times regarding attendance for grades kindergarten through sixth.

Arriving	<i>Any student arriving after 7:50 am must be signed in at the school office by an adult.</i>
7:51-9:59	Tardy-Requires Written Excuse
10:00-1:00	Present for 1/2 day
After 1:00	Absent for entire day

Leaving	<i>Any student leaving early must be signed out at the school office by an adult.</i>
Before 10:00	Absent for entire day
10:00-1:00	Absent for 1/2 day
After 1:00	Release with valid excuse

Missing school for any reason is a serious detriment to the educational process of the student. A student who must be absent from school for any purpose is required by law to bring, upon return to school, an excuse stating the date(s) of absence, the reason for the absence, and a parent's or guardian's signature. **Failure to submit an excuse within five**

school days after the student returns to school will result in an unexcused absence.
Acceptable excuses for absence are for personal illness, death in the immediate family, doctor appointments, educational field trips, etc.

Any student who is absent from school for a total of ten days, including physicians' excuses and/or approved educational trips, will be required to present a physician's excuse for each absence thereafter within five school days of that absence. Without a physician's verification, the absence is considered unexcused and could result in legal action.

Vacations during the school time, although permitted, are discouraged as absences can affect the child's academic progress. Family vacations must be limited to only one such absence per year. A specific form to acknowledge the student's absence is required due to having documentation of your time away from school. The parents, teachers, and principal will be signing this form. Forms are available in the school office or on the school website under the Parent Resources tab.

Any student who has three or more tardy arrivals in a given grading period will be required to accompany their parents to a corrective action plan meeting with the principal.

Communication

Regular and open communication among teachers, students, parents/guardians, administrators, and school support groups is essential to the well-being of the school. All communication among members of the school community should be carried out in the spirit of Christian charity, always remembering that students are children of God and that the Holy Family is the role model for the schools. Communications will encourage student achievement, will allow for proper appraisal of student progress, and will coordinate teacher efforts.

A formal communication system from teacher to parent/guardian, which includes conferences and progress reports, exists to identify student accomplishments and/or deficiencies, with praise and/or recommended corrective actions.

An informal communication system from teacher/school to parent/guardian includes the online web-based communication system Gradelink (emailed school updates and access to grades), SeeSaw teacher/classroom preference, Remind (all school text message updates) and Facebook/Facebook Messenger. Anytime a parent who wishes to confer with the child's teacher at a time other than the conferences may contact the teacher or school office to make arrangements. These conferences are important for student growth.

At the beginning of the school year, parents are requested to complete the following forms and return them to the school.

- Student Emergency Data Form
- Annual Student Health Update Form
- Memorandum of Understanding Form

- Parent/Student Handbook Agreement Form
- Concussion/Cardiac Arrest Form
- Act 195/90/35 Textbook/Materials Request Form
- Internet Use Form
- Income Survey Form
- Free and Reduced Lunch Form (www.compass.dhs.pa.gov)
- Student Picture Use Form
- Home Language Survey (Kindergarten and New Students ONLY)
- Email Communication Form
- School Counselor Permission Form
- Epi-Pen Opt-Out Form (Only if Refusal)

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to communicate to the administration or teachers any circumstances that may adversely impact their children's academic, behavioral, or social progress.

Parents/guardians who come to the school to pick up/drop off a student during the school day for various appointments are required to stop at the school office. Visitors must also stop in the school office first and sign the visitor sign in sheet. For the safety of the students, it is essential to know who is in the building at all times and for what reasons.

School Closings and Delays Due to Severe Inclement Weather

The many problems involved in attempting to maintain a scheduled school calendar during periods of severe inclement weather require a decision-making process in which the welfare of the children in getting to and from school is of greatest importance.

A decision to close or delay schools will usually be made by 5:30 a.m. of the day involved or by 10:30 p.m. in those extreme cases of a severe or prolonged snowstorm. School personnel will be notified as soon as possible thereafter. Every effort will be made to have the announcement over the public media and school media by 6:00 a.m. or 11:00 p.m. If closing is required during the day, it will be announced over WPXZ and TV cable Channel 18. We will generally notify the following stations that will usually carry the announcement:

Punxsy School TV Cable Channel 18

WPXZ – Radio (104.1FM) - Punxsutawney

WJAC – TV (Channel 6) – Johnstown/WWCP Fox 8/WATM ABC 23

SSCD School Facebook Page

Message sent out via Remind System and Gradelink

The absence of any announcement will mean that school will be in session as usual.

**PARENTS ARE REQUESTED TO REFRAIN FROM CALLING SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATORS OR OFFICE PERSONNEL ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF
SCHOOL CLOSING.**

Student Dress Code

The dress code reflects the school system's philosophy that all are equal in the eyes of God. The school uniform and dress code help to promote this concept.

Students are required to be clean and well-groomed at all times. The school uniform is worn on school days unless expressed permission is granted by the administration.

In order that the student's appearance will always represent the school well, students are not permitted to change out of their school uniforms before dismissal, unless they are going directly to participate in an athletic or other school-related activity.

There is a Uniform Exchange program in effect throughout the year. Although it is called an "exchange" program, it is not necessary to actually trade anything. It is available to anyone who needs uniforms.

The administration maintains the right to make the final determination concerning the appropriateness of any student's attire.

GYM CLASS

Gym class is on Tuesdays. Students are required to wear **athletic apparel** on gym day. Athletic apparel means materials that are comfortable to move in for gym activities. Shirts must have sleeves (long or short). No muscle shirts or camis. Shorts must be no shorter than 2 inches above the knees. Pants cannot be "zip off" or "tear away" style. Sneakers must be worn and have non-marking soles. If yoga type pants are worn, they must be accompanied by a long shirt that covers the torso.

GIRLS

Jumper: (K-2) Blue plaid jumper. Jumpers shall be an appropriate length. The white blouse and tie must be worn with the jumper.

Polo Shirt/Dress: (K-6) white, light blue, navy blue or red, short or long sleeve polo shirt. Shirts are to be tucked in at all times.

Pants & Shorts: (K-6) Navy or Khaki shorts. Shorts should not be more than two inches above the knee or one inch below the knee.

Skirts: (K-6) Navy, Khaki or plaid. Skirts should be no shorter than two inches above the knee and no longer than one inch below the knee.

Sweater: Solid navy, white, light blue or red. Zippered sweaters will be permitted.

Sweatshirts: Navy sweatshirts with school logo (without hoods) or solid navy, white, light blue or red.

Socks: Solid white, navy or red socks or tights. (Socks must be visible above the shoes.)

Shoes: Black, brown, or navy shoes that are cut below the ankle and have a heel or platform height of no more than 1 ½ inches. **Boots, clogs, or sandals are not permitted.** Open-toed or open heeled footwear may not be worn. Shoes should be tied snugly, using all eyelets. Shoes need to have a rubber, soft sole. This will allow the students to be able to walk in the gym. On winter days when snow boots are worn, please send a change of shoes. Snow boots cannot be worn all day.

Sneakers: Sneakers should be tied snugly, using all eyelets. **High tops with jumpers are not permitted.**

Hair: Hair should be kept neat and clean at all times. Only natural hair colors are permitted. Eyes must be visible. Outlandish hairstyles are not permitted.

Jewelry: Earrings shall be a matched set. Only one earring per ear (must fit within the ear lobe)
Necklaces may not be worn, except for religious medals and scapulars.
Both must be worn underneath clothing.
One wristwatch may be worn.
One ring per hand is permitted.
One message bracelet may be worn, in as much as it is for a worthy cause.
Anklets and Visible body piercing are not permitted.

Nails: Nail polish may be worn, but black is not permitted.

Make-up: Make-up may be worn, but not in excess. Only natural colors are permitted.

Grooming: Keep a neat and clean appearance at all times. Writing or drawing on the skin is not permitted.

BOYS

Polo shirt: (K-6) white, light blue, navy blue or red, short or long sleeve polo shirt.
Shirts are to be tucked in at all times.

Pants & Shorts: (K-6) Navy or Khaki shorts. Shorts should not be more than two inches above the knee or one inch below the knee.

Sweater: Solid navy, white, light blue or red.

Sweatshirt: Navy sweatshirts with the school logo (without hoods) or solid navy, white, light blue or red.

Socks: Solid white, black, or navy socks. (Socks must be visible above the shoes.)

Shoes: Black, brown, or navy shoes that are cut below the ankle and have a heel or platform height of no more than 1 ½ inches. Boots, clogs, or sandals are not permitted. Open-toed or open-heeled footwear may not be worn. Shoes should be tied snugly, using all eyelets. Shoes must have rubber, soft soles to be allowed in the gym.

Sneakers: Sneakers should be tied snugly, using all eyelets.

Hair: Hair should be neat and clean at all times. Only natural hair colors are permitted. Hair must be cut above the collar, ears, and brow. Outlandish hairstyles are not permitted. **Shaving of the head shorter than ¼ inch, designs, and/or visible lines are not permitted.**

Hats: Hats are to be removed in the building.

Grooming: Keep a neat and clean appearance at all times. Writing or drawing on the skin is not permitted.

RECESS

The recess for the children will normally be outside. It gives the children an opportunity to run and to get some fresh air. It is very important that the students come to school in attire that is appropriate for the weather conditions. As the weather gets colder, please make sure that heavy coats/hats come with your son/daughter.

Recruitment

Recruitment is an essential part of the school system. It includes various methods of informing potential students and their families about the benefits of a Catholic education.

Alumni Relations

Our school has created an alumni database and is continually in the process of updating the names and addresses of our alumni. We also seek ways to involve alumni in our school and reach out to them through our school newsletters and news in parish bulletins.

Public Relations/Marketing

We continue to increase the publicity about our school system for the promotion of Catholic education.

Discipline

Proper conduct of students is essential to the fulfillment of the school's Christian and academic mission. The discipline code will apply to all students while in school and during school sponsored activities. This code shall be impartially applied and should foster self-discipline, maturity, and self-worth.

The teacher represents the parent/guardian in the classroom and is primarily responsible for student discipline. Serious discipline problems or continuous and deliberate minor problems will be brought to the attention of the administration.

The discipline code of the school addresses not only the physical conduct but also the academic and ethical performance of the student. It provides specific consequences for each infraction. It does not administer corporal punishment and has provisions for incremental punishment. Suspension and expulsion are serious disciplinary actions and will be utilized only if other disciplinary action has failed, or if the offense is of such a serious nature that a lesser punishment would be deemed to be inappropriate. Expulsion is to be utilized only as a last resort by the school, particularly if the safety of the student body and/or faculty is in jeopardy. Those cases where expulsion is being considered will be reviewed by the administration and the teacher(s) involved for appropriate action. Parents/guardians will be informed of serious code offenses and will be routinely advised of recurring disciplinary action needed to correct the student's behavior. If warranted, the school may suggest and initiate appropriate psychological counseling, if parental consent is given, for a student in need of assistance.

The use of cell phones, in all forms i.e., texting, taking pictures is strictly prohibited during school time.

For grades K-3, the classroom teacher will resolve discipline issues. Should there be a time when the classroom teacher cannot resolve the issue, the matter will be referred to the principal and/or the pastor. Parents will be consulted.

For students in grades 4-6, the discipline procedure has been updated and revised, realizing that this age group of students is now beyond the formation stage of behavior. They know what is expected of them while they are in school and while they participate in extracurricular activities.

Should these guidelines be ignored, consequences will result.

Detentions will be served on the appointed day. No excuse will be accepted (practice, meeting, etc.) except a previously scheduled game, public performance, or illness. Students are expected to fulfill the detention on the day they return to school. Students

failing to attend a detention will be referred to the office and will be assigned other consequences.

All suspensions will be served on the appointed day(s). Students will be required to complete all assignments missed during suspensions-without credit.

Level I offenses will be almost always handled by a staff member.

Inappropriate behavior (body language/gestures/actions that negatively impact self/others/school)

Inappropriate display of affection

Locker violations (neatness, defacing)

Inappropriate language (verbal or nonverbal communication that negatively impacts self/others/school)

Minor disruptions in class, at Mass, during assemblies

Unprepared for class (failure to complete assignments or not bringing necessary materials)

Chewing gum/eating candy

Dress code violations

Uncovered textbooks

Disobeying safety regulations during school hours

Abuse of privileges

1st-3rd offense...written warning to parents

4th offense...one-hour detention

Subsequent offense one-hour detention per offense

Level II offenses will be handled by staff members, school principal, and/or Pastor.

Defacing school property

Disrespect toward staff/students/volunteers (physical and/or verbal)

Disruptions during class, Mass, or assemblies

Dispensing/possessing over-the-counter meds (cough drops, Tylenol, etc.)

Being in an unassigned area without permission from an adult

Failure to follow school procedures

1st offense...written warning to parents

2nd offense...one-hour detention

Subsequent offenses...in-school suspension

Level III offenses include behavior, which is frequent and serious.

This type of situation tends to disrupt the learning climate of the school. The school principal and/or the pastor will handle these offenses.

Examples of III offenses may include, but are not limited to:

Defiant behavior

Fighting between/among students

Unprovoked attack on a student

Abusive language or behavior

Dangerous behavior in school or during school-sponsored functions
Forgery (notes, excuses, signatures on papers sent home)
Plagiarism/Cheating
Harassment
Internet school policy (Signed the first day of school)
No warning
1st offense...one-hour detention
2nd offense...in-school suspension
Subsequent offenses
Two or more days in-school suspension

Level IV Offenses

These are the most serious offenses that a student can commit at school. At this level, the school principal and/or the pastor will handle the offense. Examples of Level 4 offenses include, but are not limited to:

Vandalism or theft of student or school property
Possession/use of tobacco products
Physical violence toward school personnel
Possessions of dangerous objects
Possession/distribution/use of controlled substances
Violent physical acts against a student
Leaving school grounds without permission
No warnings
1st offense...in-school suspension (2-4 days)
2nd offense...3-5 days in-school suspension
3rd offense...possible expulsion according to guidelines set forth by Pennsylvania School Law
Individual teachers will oversee applicable detention situations in grades 4-6

Weapons Policy

Weapons Policy Purpose: To ensure a safe school environment, possession of weapons in the school, on school grounds, or at a school sponsored event is prohibited.

A. Definitions: Possessing is when the weapon is found on the person of the student, in the student's locker, in their backpack, in their car, under the student's control while in the building(s) of or on the grounds of the school, or at a school sponsored event, or in any conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school activity or function. Weapons shall include, but are not limited to, the following: guns, firearms, paintball, BB, or pellet guns, knives, cutting instruments, cutting tools, nunchaku, metal knuckles, straight razors, razor blades, noxious, irritating or poisonous gases, liquids or solids, bombs, missiles, chains, metal objects, objects designed for personal protection such as tasers or stun guns, replicas of weapons, or any other tool, instrument, implement or object capable of threatening, harassing, harming or doing bodily injury. Objects that are

not reasonably considered weapons may be classified as a weapon if used to threaten, harass, harm, or do bodily injury.

B. Forbidden Items: It is forbidden for anyone to possess a weapon of any sort, as defined by the laws of Pennsylvania and the Department of Homeland Security, on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school sponsored event, or while the student is on the way to or from school. Exceptions will only be made by prior written approval from the Administration. In addition, any object deemed by the Administration to threaten, harass, do bodily harm to, or disrupt the educational process will be forbidden on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school sponsored event, or while the student is on the way to or from school. Only in instances where there is a supervised and approved school activity and/or course of study will permission to have a weapon of any kind be given. In such cases, the instructor and/or teacher must request and receive approval from an administrator. A student is in possession of a weapon/forbidden item when it is found on the person of the student, in the student's backpack, locker, car, or other personal forum, or under the student's control to any degree.

Weapons Policy: Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken up to and including expulsion and involvement of legal authorities. Examples of weapons/forbidden items are as follows (non-inclusive): Guns, firearms, projectiles/missiles, (including paintball, BB, or pellet) Cutting implements of any kind Noxious, irritating, or poisonous gases, liquids, or solids Explosive or incendiary devices (including matches and lighters) Any object designed for personal protection (including stun guns or tasers) Any object intended by the student to threaten, harass, or do bodily injury to another • Any replica or look-alike object of the above.

Parents/guardians and all school employees will be notified within 24 hours if a weapon is discovered on school property, during a school-sponsored event, or on school transportation.

Bullying/Cyberbullying

Policy 302.2

Saints Cosmas and Damian School is committed to providing a safe, civil, positive learning environment for students. The school recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, presents an obstacle to social/emotional development of students, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, Saints Cosmas and Damian School prohibits bullying by students.

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of any of the following:

- Substantial interference with a student's education
- Creation of a threatening environment
- Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying. Bullying consists of a pattern of repeated harmful behavior by a person with more physical or social power toward a less powerful person. This may include a wide variety of behaviors, with deliberate intent to hurt, embarrass, or humiliate the other person. All forms of cyberbullying are unacceptable and, to the extent that such actions are disruptive of the educational process of the district, offenders shall be the subject of appropriate discipline, which may include legal and/or police proceedings.

Bullying includes unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a student by another student that has the intent of or effect of:

- Physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student.
- Damaging, extorting, or taking a student's personal property.
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical, emotional, or mental harm.
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property.
- Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

The term bullying shall not be interpreted to infringe upon a student's right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct. School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school and on the way to and from school.

Saints Cosmas and Damian School prohibits all forms of bullying by students. The school encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building administrator or designee.

Saints Cosmas and Damian School directs that those complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. If the behavior is found to meet the definition of bullying, written documentation shall be submitted to the building administrator. The building administrator or designee will inform parents/guardians of the victim and person accused. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include:

- Counseling
- Parental conference
- Loss of school privileges/exclusion from school-sponsored activities
- Detention
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Referral to law enforcement officials

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION-302.9

Purpose: To ensure each school/system adopts a youth suicide awareness and prevention policy and provides ongoing professional development.

The SSCD Staff are committed to supporting parents and students through all of life's triumphs and challenges in prayer and protective measures.

Protection Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for being our protector, our ever-present help in times of trouble. Your word says that you are faithful, you will not abandon us in what we believe we cannot bear. When we feel hopeless, you have promised that you will provide a way out so that we can endure. Grant us protection and guidance of these precious children. Give us the strength and wisdom to overcome everything that stands against them. Sustain us through your unfailing love. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

In this commitment, our staff will complete the four (4) hours of training in youth suicide awareness and prevention that is required every five (5) years for professional educators in school buildings serving students in grades six through twelve.

Our 5th and 6th grade students will participate in a yearly Safe2Say or S2S program concerning aspects of school and student safety including suicide.

Each employee and the parent/guardian of each student enrolled in SSCD School shall be informed of the Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Policy 302.9, included in the 2023-24 SSCD Student Handbook. Policy 302.9 is also be posted on the school's website under-Parent Resources-Health and Wellness Resources. By signing the signature page of this handbook, you are acknowledging that you are aware of these resources and have read them entirely on our school website.

School Policy

The SS. Cosmas and Damian School is a private institution with established policies and regulations that are consistent with the Catholic identity and mission of each school individually. All policies and regulations have been adopted to enable the schools to operate in an orderly and fair manner reflective of a Christian philosophy. A parent or guardian enrolling a child into this school system requires parental agreement and acceptance of school policies as well as all provisions in the school's handbook.

Parents/guardians should be aware of all policies and regulations and their enforcement. Parental and administrative cooperation regarding policy is essential for the welfare of the students served. For the safety of our staff and students our campus is equipped with audio and visual communication equipment.

While reserving the right to make religious exemptions as provided by law and in accord with Catholic religious belief, the Catholic schools within the Diocese of Erie do not discriminate on the basis of sex. This includes being excluded from participation in, being denied the benefits of, or being subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity on the basis of sex. For more information contact our CSO Title IX Coordinator at Office: 814-824-1247 or

<https://www.eriercd.org/schools/titleix.html>

Teachers and Administrators as Professionals

The teachers and administrators are professional educators who are called upon by vocation and by contract to respond to the educational needs of the students they serve. The success of the school depends upon the teachers' and administrators' professional preparation, ability, and willingness to communicate ideas and skills to the students, and the students' motivation to study and learn well. In the Catholic school, it becomes part of the responsibility of the professional educator to provide good Christian examples and moral leadership for others to observe and follow. Teachers and administrators are pledged to mutual support of one another in meeting the needs of the students and advancing the interests of the school. All professionals are encouraged to take a positive view of the effort of their colleagues and regard them as part of a team of educators.

Professional Memberships and Affiliations

National Catholic Educational Association
Diocese of Erie
Pennsylvania Department of Education (registered)
Middle States Commission on Schools.

For Reference Only: A separate copy of the agreement page will be sent for signature.

2025-2026 Parent/Student Acknowledgement:

Parent Handbook Agreement

I understand that I am a community representative of the SSDC School mission and that the following are prohibited on any personal websites, blogs, or social networking sites. Consequences for violations will be issued in accordance with the school Code of Conduct.

1. Pictures, photos, or drawings of Saints Cosmas and Damian School/Erie Diocese name or logo, including clothing.
2. Pictures, photos, drawings of, or references to school employees or students.
3. Threats toward or disparaging remarks about the school, its employees, or its students.
4. Bullying, harassment, or any other behavior that is ill-mannered or disrespectful.

No policies or guidelines shall interfere with the right of school authorities to act swiftly and decisively in dealing with situations believed to be detrimental to the welfare of student (s), the student population, staff or learning environment."

I/we the parent(s)/guardian(s) of _____
Name(s) of student(s)

Have reviewed the contents of this handbook and I/we support the premise that I/we and my/our child(ren) are responsible for following school policies, codes, and regulations.

Signature(s) of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____ Date _____

Student Handbook Agreement

I have reviewed the contents of this handbook, and I understand and support the premise that I am responsible for following school policies, codes, and regulations.

Student Signature _____ Date _____