



**St. James**  
**Lutheran School**  
*Your first choice.*

Parent Handbook  
2025–2026  
*Love-Learn-Lead*

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 167th year of St. James educating children in the city of Chicago!

It is certainly an exciting time of growth at St. James and we continue to be committed to providing the highest quality, faith-based education and support to all of God's children and their families. This is especially important in these trying times in our city and world. We continue to complete our expansion of the school and look forward to opening our new classrooms and gym mezzanine during this school year.

Whether you are a new or a returning family, we are excited to have you as part of the St. James community, which will continue to offer preschool through 8th grade students innovative and engaging coursework that shapes their intellectual, spiritual, and physical well-roundedness. We are blessed to have amazing faculty and staff who support this mission on a daily basis, educating and interacting with your child/children in a Christ-centric manner.

The St. James Lutheran School Board of Education is looking forward to the school year ahead. We will work to help create an environment that allows God's children to receive a high quality Christian education in the City of Chicago. We appreciate your support and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Principal or a member of the board.

***The policies outlined in this handbook are subject to change at any time.***

Sheri Meyer, Principal

St. James Lutheran School Board of Education

## **Table of Contents**

1. Foundations and Basic Commitment	3
2. School Governance and Operation	5
3. Fiscal Management	6
4. Health and Safety	7
5. Life Together	14
6. Academics	16
7. Student Life	21
8. School Counseling	26
9. Admissions/Enrollment	28

# 1.0 Foundations and Basic Commitments

## 1.1 Legal Status

The constitution and by-laws of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church UAC provides for the operation of a Christian day school. St. James is a 501(c)(3) corporation registered in the State of Illinois. St James School agrees to comply with any other applicable State or federal law or regulatory requirement.

## 1.2 Non-discrimination Policy

St. James Lutheran School serves the entire community. St. James Lutheran School does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, disability, immigration status, or national ethnic origin in admission of students; in the right to privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students in the school; in administration of educational and employment policies; and in administration of athletic or other school administered programs. The Non-Discrimination Policy of St. James Lutheran School complies with applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination. The Governing Board of St. James Lutheran School is responsible for implementation of the non-discrimination policy in accordance with state statutes and addresses any concerns in this area.

## 1.3 Vision Statement

Equipped with an intellectual and spiritual foundation, our students will excel in high school and throughout life as life-long learners and leaders who are committed to bringing Christ's love to their communities.

## 1.4 Mission Statement

St. James Lutheran School offers preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students innovative and engaging coursework in a Christ-centered environment that shapes their intellectual, spiritual, and physical well-roundedness.

## 1.5 Values

St. James values an environment grounded in Christ's love and community support that nurtures life-long learners and leaders.

- **Love** - We practice Christ's love for everyone - teaching our students how to love all.
- **Learn** - We teach students and their families how to discover their God-given talents and how to find their passions and follow them through their curiosity from God.
- **Lead** - We foster a community where all students can and are encouraged to lead through their God-given talents and gifts.

## 1.6 Parent Involvement

We value our partnership with the parents of our students. We encourage parents to become involved in every aspect of the school. The Maverick Parent Squad is open to all parents.

## 1.7 What We Believe

The center of the Bible, the Christian Faith, and what St. James teaches lies in Jesus Christ who died and rose for sinners. This act of God on the cross and empty tomb gives life to people burdened by their guilt and oppressed by their fears. This historical and divine reality makes a person alive and equipped to see themselves and the world with hope, peace and love for God and fellow human beings. This is the primary message of Christ's Church for a world in crisis. We exist to enjoy God's love and to share it.

**Scripture Alone.** We believe the Holy Scriptures are authoritative for everything St. James teaches. Where it speaks, we must speak. Where it doesn't speak, we don't. While there are truths we can be somewhat positive of through God's gift of reason, we can be certain of God's Truth as recorded in the Bible. God's Word makes us Alive in Christ and allows us to truly live in the now and just survive.

**Grace Alone.** We believe that human beings are incapable by their own works to be righteous and live forever. We are tragic characters born with a desire that the world revolves around ourselves and our whimsical passions. Yet instead of letting us go our way toward destruction, God loves sinners! He finds us where we are. He singlehandedly rescues us from our destiny and gives us a new destiny. He forgives us every sin and our sinfulness. He gives us eternal life and will raise us even from the dead. This gift is not connected to our works, or even our potential. It is free. That's grace. It was won for us not by us paying a price, but by His Son, Jesus, who took our punishment on the cross and took our mortality with Himself through the grave, rising again from the dead. He not only saves us but continues to save us through our ups and downs as Christians. He does this through the preaching of His Word, baptism and holy communion. It's all by grace alone. God's grace in Jesus makes us and keeps us alive.

**Faith Alone.** We have this life, forgiveness and hope by faith. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God opens our hearts to believe in His promises. Faith in Christ's promises equals righteousness before God. Though we might not look alive in Christ all the time, we believe because He says so. Though we might not look like forgiven people, we believe it because God says so. Doing good works and loving our neighbor are fruits of believing that we are saved by God in Christ. They are not what makes us righteous but spring from a heart that believes it is forgiven and given eternal life!

St. James is a member of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod ([lcms.org](http://lcms.org)). We are a voluntary gathering (synod) of congregations united by our confession of faith ([bookofconcord.org](http://bookofconcord.org)) and commitment to working together to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

## 2.0 School Governance and Operation

### 2.1 Governance and Structure

St. James Lutheran School is a ministry of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church UAC, which is a member of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. The St. James Council is elected by and accountable to the Voters' Assembly and has accountability for establishing policy and overseeing the management and operations of the church and school. The Council is composed of the officers of the congregation, the chairs of the boards, and the Senior Pastor as a non-voting member. The Board of Education serves as the governing board for the school, including its early childhood program, and has accountability to the St. James Council. The Board of Educations oversees the operation and management of the school as a mission of the Church. The Board has 7 members, of which there can be no more than three who are school parents – one of which may be a non-church member. All other members must be church members in good standing.

#### **Current School Board Members:**

- Sara Welch, Chair      sarajwelch4@gmail.com
- Chris Burrichter      chrisburrichter@gmail.com
- Becky Gorcyca      bgorcyca@stjames-lutheran.org
- Kylie Hughes      kyliannehughes@gmail.com
- Stacy McGowan      stacymcgowa@gmail.com
- Holly Sandefur      holly\_sandefur@hotmail.com
- George Stowers      george.stowers@gmail.com

### 2.2 Administration

The Principal of the school serves as the Chief Educational Officer for the school. The Principal oversees the instruction, assessment, curriculum, faculty and aides, third-party educational professionals and educational resources, as well as the daily life of the students.

## **3.0 Fiscal Management**

### **3.1 Budget**

The school's operating budget is prepared in conjunction with the Board of Finance, Board of Education and the Council, and is submitted to the church Voters' Assembly for approval at the annual meeting in the spring.

### **3.2 Tuition**

Tuition is reviewed annually for the next academic year. It is our intention to maintain a high value education at St. James. While we attempt to keep tuition manageable for our families, we must also maintain high standards for staff and programming.

Tuition collection is managed by FACTS. In June, each family must activate their account with FACTS in time for the billing cycle to begin in July. Account activation includes choosing the payment plan that best suits each family. These options will be outlined in the FACTS information.

It is the responsibility of each family to remain current in their payment of tuition. Falling behind or not completing the responsibility causes hardship in our operations and may jeopardize a family's attendance at St. James Lutheran School.

A deposit made with the application for a new student is non-refundable when St. James accepts that student into one of our programs. All deposits are applied to the total tuition. The deposit required for a new student is \$1,000 per student. There is also a \$1,000 fee/deposit required for all Early Childhood returning students. This includes all Pre-school, Junior Kindergarten, and Kindergarten programs. Deposits are non-refundable and will hold your child's spot for the upcoming school year.

### **3.3 Fees**

Fees are charged for services performed such as before and after-school programs, chromebooks for grades 3-8, and yearbook purchase. There also may be charges for things such as lost or damaged books, damage to chromebooks and late or returned check charges. All fees will be processed through FACTS and billed monthly.

### **3.4 Tuition Assistance**

Tuition assistance is available for families that meet the financial qualifications. To apply for assistance, families must complete the application on FACTS Management website.

The award of tuition assistance does not reduce the quality of a student's education or the costs associated with the delivery of our services. It is important that families receiving tuition assistance adhere to the conditions outlined in the offer.

## 4.0 Health and Safety

### 4.1 Student Illnesses

St James School will continue to follow Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for schools.

Children must be kept at home when exhibiting the following symptoms:

- If your child's oral temperature exceeds 100 degrees F. A child with such a fever should remain home for 24 hours AFTER the temperature returns to normal without the use of fever reducing medicines.
- If your child vomits and continues to experience nausea, diarrhea and/or vomiting, they must stay home for one school day without incident.
- If a rash is present that has not been evaluated by a physician.
- If your child complains of severe, persistent pain. The symptoms should be referred to a physician for evaluation.
- If your child shows signs of upper respiratory infection (cold symptoms) serious enough to interfere with the child's ability to learn.
- If there are signs of conjunctivitis (pink eye) such as matter coming from one or both eyes, itching and/or crusts on eyelids. A child with these symptoms should be evaluated by a physician.
- If there are open sores that have not been evaluated by a physician.
- If there are signs of infestation with lice (nits in the hair, itchy scalp). In order to return to school, please present proof of treatment in the office.

### 4.2 Medication

Students may not carry any medication nor keep it in their possession. Students are allowed to carry inhalers or Epi-Pens when authorized by the filing of the proper forms.

All medicine must be administered by a designated administrative staff member. The school cannot dispense medication, prescription or over-the-counter, unless we have a signed permission form. Medicine should be brought to school in the original prescription bottle (pharmacies will give an extra one when asked), or in the container in which it was purchased. It should be clearly marked with the student's name and dosage to be given, logged in and stored in the office. This includes medical cannabis infused products to a student who is a registered qualifying patient.

### 4.3 Required Medical Examinations

Illinois state law mandates the following medical examinations. Students failing to meet the listed deadlines may be dismissed from classes. All forms are due in the office by the first day of school of the current school year.

- Dental – required of new students and those entering grades K, 2 or 6.
- Vision – required of new students and those entering Kindergarten.



- Health/Immunizations – required of new students and those entering grades K, 1 and 6.
- Physical exam – required for all students in grades 3–8 that participate in athletics annually.

Illinois state law requires that a certificate of immunization (obtained from a doctor or health clinic) must be provided for the child prior to the beginning of each school year. ***ALL IMMUNIZATIONS*** must be current or the student will not be allowed to attend school. Students entering St. James Lutheran are required to have current immunizations:

- DPT/DTaP
- Polio
- Rubella
- Measles
- Mumps
- Varicella
- Hepatitis B
- Meningococcal Disease

St. James is required to report any failure to receive necessary health/dental/vision exams and immunization records to the Illinois State Board of Education. St. James is required to exclude students from school if they have not met such exam or immunization requirements by October 15. St James does accept religious exemptions with documentation from the religious organization.

#### 4.4 Emergency Care

All emergency contact and student medical information (allergies, medical conditions) must be entered into the FACTS system. Parents are responsible to keep this information up to date in their FACTS Family Portal. This information should be updated annually by all families prior to the first day of school. The Authorization of Emergency Care for Students with Severe Allergies should also be on file by the first day of school. All staff and faculty are certified in CPR and first aid.

#### 4.5 Lunches and Snacks

A productive day at school depends on many factors, including nutrition. Please make sure your child has breakfast before coming to school. Students who do not eat breakfast struggle in the morning simply because they are hungry. Snacks and lunch procedures will be addressed by each teacher, depending on the age of the students and any unique allergy situations. However, certain general rules apply:

- Soda pop is not allowed.
- Candy/cookies should be minimized in lunches and are inappropriate for morning snacks.
- Goodies for birthday celebrations should be cleared with classroom teachers at least 24 hours prior to celebration.
- Parents may not drop-off or have lunches delivered. Students should bring their lunch

to school in the morning.

- Parents may be required to adjust their child's lunch/snack for safety reasons regarding students with extreme allergies. For this reason, students are also discouraged from sharing lunch items.
- We will again be offering a lunch delivery program with both hot and cold choices on M,W&F. These will be available to both students and staff at St. James. Fly, Girl Fly will handle menu options/ordering/payment/etc. through *their* online portal.

All lunches are individually packaged, labeled, and arrive daily in a hot or cold pack to keep their temperature controlled during travel and while waiting for delivery to their respective classrooms. Vegetarian and allergy free options are available. *Allergy free is rid of gluten, wheat, egg, dairy, sesame, fish, soy, and tree nuts.* The entire kitchen is NUT and SESAME FREE.

## 4.6 Building Security

We continue to update our security measures at the school. All visitors must enter through the Fremont entrance and register with the receptionist that is now on the 1st floor by the entrance. The school has cameras inside & outside of the building that cover all of the entrances and are monitored throughout the day. There are panic buttons that connect to the alarm company and the Chicago Police Department that also trigger blue light technology in and out of the building to indicate there is a crisis.

This year we will be asking for parent volunteers to help monitor drop off and pick up:

- 8:15-8:30 -2- 3 volunteers;
  - Outside the Dickens entrance
  - Traffic monitor on the corner - help with crossing and keeping cars moving
- 2:45-3:15 - 2 volunteers
  - Traffic monitor on the corner - help with crossing and keeping cars moving

## 4.7 Visitors

All visitors are required to enter and leave through the Fremont St. entrance where they will sign in and be given a Visitor's badge to wear while they are in the building. Visitors must sign out and return their badges upon leaving the building.

Please do not let strangers into the building without accompanying them to the front desk. Students are not permitted to let anyone into the building.

## 4.8 Drop-Off and Pick-Up

### Drop-Off

- Morning Care drop-off at Dickens door 7:30-8:00 am – students go directly to the library – parents can accompany them if needed. They will be dismissed to their classrooms at 8:15 am.
- Drop-off is 8:15-8:30 am each morning at the Dickens door for all students:
  - 3 year old programs – parents are welcome to take their students to their classrooms in the morning. If you are dropping off, you will exit through the Fremont door.
  - Students arriving after 8:30 am must enter through the Fremont door.

### Pick-Up

- Half day programs – enter at Fremont door – parents pick up from the classroom at 11:45 am.
- Full day 3 year old classes and JK – enter at Fremont door – parents pick up from the classroom between 2:45-3:00.
- Grades K-4 – teachers will bring students out through the Fremont door at 3:00 pm.
- Grades 5-8 – students will be dismissed at 3:00 pm and will exit through the Dickens door.
- Students in after care will be brought to the EC classroom or library at the end of the day by their teachers.

### Important Information

- “No Parking” signs are posted on both Dickens Avenue and Fremont Street. These are posted for the safety of all our students and are enforced by the Chicago Police Department. Parents are allowed to temporarily park for morning and afternoon pick-up and drop-off in these spaces. They must put their car flashers on if they leave the vehicle – otherwise they may be ticketed.
- Ticketing is also strictly enforced if a crosswalk is blocked. Please do not impede the safe crossing of pedestrians.
- “Double parking” to escort children in or out of school is only allowed on Dickens Avenue. Fremont Street is only used for “stop and drop” or “pick-up”, but the vehicle should never be left unattended. Double parking is not allowed on Fremont Street.
- If parents are planning to spend some time in the school (classroom parties, volunteering in the school, etc.), they must park elsewhere on the street.
- All 3 year old students must be signed in and out each day at the classroom by a parent, guardian or someone designated to pick up the child on the “Permission to Pick-Up a Student” form.

## 4.9 Emergency Drills and Inspection

Emergency drills are practiced regularly for every child's safety. Every class has an assigned evacuation path, which is reviewed at the beginning of the school year. The local fire department visits St. James School each month to supervise the practice of a drill. If you are in the school when the alarm sounds, follow a classroom on their path out of the building to aid in the orderly evacuation.

Minimum Drills:

- 3 Evacuation Drills
- 1 Bus Evacuation Drill (if a bus is being used by the school)
- 1 Severe Weather Drill/Shelter in Place
- 1 Law Enforcement Drill

An emergency plan is maintained in the office for catastrophic events. This plan is filed with the local fire and safety agencies and is available for inspection in the office as well as the office of the State Fire Marshal.

## 4.10 Classroom Safety

Each teacher has been trained and the classroom equipped to best protect the students and staff in case of an emergency situation. This includes panic buttons that go to the alarm company and the CPD. Professional development is provided to all of the staff including certifications in CPR, FA, Stop the Bleed and information to develop a plan of action for their classrooms within the security and emergency plans for the school. Faculty reviews emergency procedures quarterly during their weekly staff meetings.

Each teacher requires the use of proper safety equipment in connection with classroom activities. St. James complies with the requirements of the Eye Protection in School Act and the Toxic Art Supplies School Act. (Toxic art supplies are not used). St. James complies with the applicable requirements of the Asbestos Abatement Act.

## 4.11 School Closing

When conditions require the entire St. James School to be closed, each family will be notified by a school-wide email through the FACTS system. Broadcast notification will also be posted if appropriate. This information can also be found on the Emergency Closing Center website, [www.emergencyclosingcenter.com](http://www.emergencyclosingcenter.com) for weather closings. St. James will be designated as St. James Lincoln Park. If the school must be closed during the course of a school day, parents will be called to pick-up their children.

## 4.12 Faith's Law & Erin's Law

Faith's Law Notifications- Employee Conduct Standards are required to be included in the Employee Personnel Manual. These standards, in part, define appropriate conduct between school employees and students. These standards are included in the St James Personnel

Manual and can be requested from the Principal.

Erin's Law Notification – St James provides evidence-informed educational information to parents or guardians on the warning signs of a child being abused along with referral and resource information. This information is available on FACTS in the resource document section of the parent portal.

## 4.12 Concussion Information

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) that results from a bump, blow, or jolt to the head (or by a hit to the body) that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, stretching and damaging the brain cells and creating chemical changes in the brain. While some research shows that the young brain can be resilient, it may also be more susceptible to the chemical changes that occur in the brain after a concussion. These changes can lead to symptoms affecting the student's cognitive, physical, emotional, and sleep functions. Concussions affect people differently. Most students will have symptoms that last for a few days or a week. A more serious concussion can last for weeks, months, or even longer.

**Symptoms may include one or more of the following:**

- Headaches
- “Pressure in head”
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns
- Amnesia
- “Don’t feel right”
- Fatigue or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Irritability
- More emotional
- Confusion
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
- Repeating the same question/comment

**Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:**

- Appears dazed
- Confused about assignments
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events after hit
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Vacant facial expression
- Forgets plays
- Moves clumsily or displays incoordination
- Slurred speech
- Can’t recall events prior to hit
- Seizures or convulsions
- Loses consciousness

**What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?**

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage

from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athlete's safety.

### **If you think your child has suffered a concussion**

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act requires athletes to complete the Return to Play (RTP) protocols for their school prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest. You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

[https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/media/pdfs/schools/TBI\\_Returning\\_to\\_School-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/media/pdfs/schools/TBI_Returning_to_School-a.pdf) Adapted from the CDC and the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport Document created 7/1/2011 Reviewed 4/24/2013, 7/16/2015, 7/17 2017, 7/15/2024

### **Return-to-Learn Protocol**

Students who have sustained a concussion may need informal or formal accommodations, modifications of curriculum, and monitoring by medical or academic staff until the student is fully recovered. A return-to-learn protocol that is based on peer-reviewed scientific evidence consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines provides a baseline testing for student athletes. The link provided gives parents what to look for and to have their healthcare provider to help develop a plan as each concussion is different and affects each person differently and as such will need to be discussed with their physician. [Back to School Handout](#)

### **Family Notification**

The school distributes a brochure to any family whose child may have sustained a concussion, regardless of whether or not the concussion occurred while the child was participating in an interscholastic athletic activity. The Illinois Department of Public Health provides a series of customizable concussion handouts and posters via the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The handouts are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/resources/custom.html>

## 5.0 Life Together

### 5.1 Extended Day Program (before & after care)

Before and after-school care is available for families who need safe, quality childcare during work hours. We offer care on the days they are enrolled in school. There is no after care available on early dismissal days.

- **Morning care** is available 7:30-8:15 am – students must arrive by 8:00 am. All students are in the library with a supervisor and are dismissed to go to their classes at 8:15am. Cost per child for morning care is \$10.00 per day
- **After care** is available until 6:00 pm each day (except early dismissal days). Students who are not picked up promptly by 6:00 pm may lose the privilege of using the after-school program. Early Childhood students are in an Early Childhood classroom and grades 1-8 are in the library. Cost per child for after care \$15.00 per day.
- **After School Programming** is offered 3:00-4:00pm. Families sign up for the programs through the vendors that are providing the programs. There are 3 sessions: fall, winter and spring. If students are attending an after school program, they can attend after care once the program is over. If your child goes to an afterschool program and then attends aftercare, you will be charged \$5.00 for that day.

Parents will be billed through FACTS for before and after care.

### 5.2 Parent Communication

FACTS parent portal ([www.factsmgt.com](http://www.factsmgt.com)), maintains current and comprehensive information:

1. Student and family information including a family directory.
2. Gradebook & report cards
3. Calendars and announcements
4. Finance – tuition and other payments

Our weekly school newsletter, Maverick Message, is sent on Friday at 6:00 am. It includes current news of the school and church as well as notices and information important for school-home communication.

In Early Childhood through grade 4, teachers will communicate weekly via a class newsletter that is sent home electronically on Fridays. In grades 5-8, teachers will communicate via email and/or Google Classroom. There is a monthly counseling corner newsletter with information on the monthly character trait we are focusing on and resources for parents.

### 5.3 Maverick Parent Squad

The Maverick Parent Squad is open to all parents to provide support for the mission of St. James School. The Parent Squad works cooperatively with school leadership to build our community. It is our objective to include as many parents as possible in volunteer opportunities, including: providing hospitality for school events; planning and implementing family outings; supporting the funding objectives including the annual Traveler's Gala; and

maintaining a positive and supportive environment in keeping with our biblical values.

**Parent Squad Leaders 2024-2025:**

- Nikki Drake and Elizabeth Stephanou, co-chair
- Alex Sprague, Room Parent Coordinator
- Ingrid Burrichter
- Melanie Everett
- Judy Flock
- Kara Korte
- Jessica Wilson
- Amy Winter

**Parent Squad Meeting/Social Dates:**

- Thursday, October 17, 2024
- Tuesday, December 10, 2024

**Room Parents** are selected by each teacher on the basis of the teacher's needs and expectations. The Room Parent is a support for the classroom, and by working cooperatively with the teacher, greatly enhances the quality of the classroom and learning experience. It is important that Room Parents (or a representative) attend the quarterly Parent Squad meetings.

We hope that every family is involved in supporting the school through their volunteer efforts. We choose to encourage rather than mandate service hours.



## 6.0 Academics

### 6.1 Curricular Areas

We provide instruction (in English) in the following curricular areas:

- Christian Studies
- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Science
- Health
- Physical Education
- Art
- Music & Band
- World Language
- Social and Emotional Learning

### 6.2 Curriculum and Instruction

St. James implements a comprehensive curriculum designed to foster the maximum growth of each child through developmentally-appropriate activities adapted to grade level, interest and experience. Classroom areas, activities and routines are designed to promote each child's social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual development. Students experience a variety of activities that develop skills in each curricular area. The selection of materials and activities are based on research and best practices.

The development of curricular goals and instructional objectives is an ongoing process. St. James annually reviews and implements standards from the following organizations:

- National Lutheran Schools Accreditation
- Illinois State Board of Education Learning Standards
- Common Core Standards
- Next Generation Science Standards

St. James employs standards-based curriculum utilizing carefully researched materials, creative teaching strategies, varied learning opportunities and integrated technology.

All students have the opportunity to study a variety of world languages through our World Language Program.

St. James provides instruction in American patriotism; the principles of representative government as enunciated in the American Declaration of Independence; the Constitution of the United States of America; the proper use and display of the American Flag and recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance daily. All eighth grade students are required to show evidence of comprehensive knowledge of the above subject matter.

## 6.3 Assessments

### Assessments

It is our belief that there are many ways to assess students and ALL of them are important in the academic, social, emotional and physical development of each individual student.

- Portfolios
  - In the Early Childhood classes, teachers will create a portfolio of student work that is distributed at the end of the academic year.
  - In grades 1-8 portfolios may be used to collect student work in specific academic areas.
- Report Cards
  - For all Early Childhood classes, report cards will be posted for quarters 1 and 3 on the FACTS family portal.
  - For grades 1-8, report cards will be posted on the FACTS family portal for quarters 1, 2, 3, and 4.
  - For grades 3-8, there is a final grade for the academic year for each subject which is a compilation of all 4 quarters. This final grade becomes part of the student's permanent record.
- Parent Teacher Conferences
  - Parents and teachers will meet at the end of the first (11/11) and third (3/31) quarters to discuss student progress and review report cards.
  - Conferences may be scheduled throughout the school year by the teacher or the parent to monitor student progress.
- Standardized testing
  - Tool used: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) developed by the Northwest Evaluation Association is used
  - Students in grades 1-8 will be tested in the 1st quarter of the year and in the 4th quarter of each year. The test results are used to measure achievement and diagnose individual and group needs in terms of meeting and exceeding Illinois state benchmarks.
  - Parents will be sent a report for their student(s) along with information about the MAP tests after completion of a testing cycle.
  - Kindergarten students are tested in the spring to establish a base-line for 1st grade.
- Prior to graduation from eighth grade, each student must pass exams covering the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Illinois.

## **Grading Policy**

St. James uses the following grading system at each of the grade levels:

### **Early Childhood (Preschool-Kindergarten)**

In the early childhood program, students will receive an anecdotal review and the following letter grade to best assess the areas of cognitive, spiritual, fine/large motor and social/emotional development:

- P – Proficient
- A – Approaching
- E – Emerging
- N – Not Yet
- NA – Not Assessed

### **Elementary – Primary (Grades 1-2)**

In grades 1-2, student progress is reported using a developmental continuum representing the knowledge and skills appropriate for the age level of the student:

- 3= Proficient at grade level
- 2= Approaching grade level
- 1= Below grade level

### **Intermediate and Middle School (Grades 3-8)**

In grades 3-8, students receive numerical grades for reporting and the permanent record:

- A+ 97-100
- A 93-96
- A- 90-92
- B+ 87-89
- B 83-86
- B- 80-82
- C+ 77-79
- C 73-76
- C- 70-72
- D 60-69
- F below 60
- P – Pass (60-100) – for designated classes

All students will receive a Pass or Fail for Religion, based on their participation in class. For elective classes -which include Art, Band, Choir, Spanish – students will receive a grade based on participation and completion of work. Please refer to the class syllabus at the beginning of the year for the expectations for each of these classes.

### **Honor Roll and High Honor Roll- Grades 6-8**

- Students who receive no more than 1 B on their report card (final grades) will be named to the Honor Roll for the year.
- Students who receive all A's on their report card (final grades) will be named to the High Honor Roll for the year.

## **Student Development**

We recognize and value that students are more than letter grades. We believe that student progress is also rooted in character development, work habits, attitude, and engagement.

- Teachers are continually working with students to nurture life skills that will enable future success.
- Report card comments will address students' strengths and goals. The following criteria is a basis for teacher reflections:

### **Successful students will:**

- Accept suggestions and opportunities for improvement
- Complete work carefully and on time
- Communicate knowledge
- Follow directions
- Respect community property
- Utilize organizational skills
- Ask good questions
- Demonstrate persistence
- Prepare for tests through study
- Apply analytical thinking when solving problems
- Exhibit academic and social confidence
- Work at or above grade level
- Support their peers
- Engage in classroom activities
- Work collaboratively
- Work independently
- Demonstrate leadership skills

## **Homework**

Homework is designed to extend, enrich or reinforce classroom learning. Although homework requirements vary from elementary through middle school, all students may have homework. Parents should set aside time at home each night for homework.

## **6.4 Library**

The school library offers our students a variety of books and other resources to enhance their education. Librarians and parent volunteers assist preschool through grade 4 students with book selections each week and also read books aloud to those classes. A Middle School Library is maintained on the third floor for grades 5 through 8. Students will access resources as supervised by teachers. Students are allowed to check out two books at a time for a period of one week. Parents will be required to pay for books that are lost.

## 6.5 Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled according to individual classroom needs and interests. Field trips are an integral part of the school experience, planned in accordance with curriculum. All students are expected to participate in these experiences. However, some students may be excluded from field trips for disciplinary reasons. Parent volunteers are often needed to assist with transportation. Parent drivers must complete a “Private Vehicle Registration” form. In addition to this form, a photocopy of the driver’s insurance card and driver’s license is required to be kept on file.

Parents who are chaperoning should not bring younger children on field trips. Each teacher is responsible for determining who will chaperone and how many are necessary.

Students in preschool and kindergarten are required to bring car seats/boosters when traveling on field trips. Parents of students in grades 1 and 2 are expected to comply with Illinois state law regarding the safe seating of their child depending on his/her age, weight and height. (see [www.buckleupillinois.gov](http://www.buckleupillinois.gov))

## 7.0 Student Life

### 7.1 School Year/School Day

Illinois state law requires St. James to schedule a minimum of 176 days or 880 hours of instructions. Our school year begins September 4 and includes four marking periods of approximately nine weeks each, and meets or exceeds state requirements.

Daily Schedules:

- **Grades 1-8** classroom doors open at 8:15 am each morning with classes beginning at 8:30 am. Classes are dismissed at 3:00 pm. All students are released at 11:45 am on early dismissal days. Each morning students begin their day with morning devotions, which includes reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
- **Early Childhood** classrooms open at 8:15 am with classes beginning at 8:30 am. Half-day preschool classes end at 11:45 am parents pick up from the classroom. Full day preschool classes parents pick up from the classroom at 2:45 pm. Kindergarten classes are dismissed at 3:00 pm.

### 7.2 Attendance

It has been shown that there is a positive relationship between regular attendance, punctuality and school success. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure that their child is at school on time and ready to learn every day. Records of attendance are kept on file in the student's permanent record.

- If a student is going to be absent from school, the parent should contact the office prior to 9:00 am.
- The following are considered excused absences and/or tardies - all other reasons are unexcused:
  - Illness, including the mental or behavioral health of the student;
  - Doctor appointments;
  - School shadow days;
  - Observance of a religious holiday;
  - Death in the immediate family or family emergency;
  - Other situations beyond the control of the student, as determined by the Principal; or
  - Such other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student.
- Tardiness is recorded for students in grades 1-8 following their classroom start time. This becomes part of the attendance record.
- Chronic tardiness/absence is disrespectful to teachers and students and will result in a conference with the Principal. This may lead to a review of the student's admission status. Parents should note that attendance records are now a key component to admission procedures for high school.
- Even though we acknowledge the value of travel, we also recognize the importance of

regular school attendance and ask you to schedule any family trips during school vacations.

- Students who are absent more than 25% of the school year will not be admitted the following year.

### 7.3 Student Conduct

At St. James, the virtues of respect for self and others, honesty and responsible stewardship are emphasized. Each student is expected to maintain a high standard of personal integrity and honor, and to observe the regulations of the school. All school rules apply in the classroom and at school and church activities, whether on or off campus. Students of St. James Lutheran School will:

- Conduct themselves in Christian life with the help of God.
- Show honor, courtesy and respect toward all people.
- Use forgiveness and restoration as the appropriate means for resolving conflicts.
- Conduct themselves properly in chapel and devotions.
- Never knowingly, by word or deed, injure anyone's person, feelings or property in any manner.
- Be honest with themselves and with others.
- Practice cleanliness of mind and body at all times.
- Put forth an honest effort to do as well as they can in their school work.
- Do all to the glory of God through service to others.

Student conduct must not jeopardize others' health, safety or well-being. Therefore, if a student's behavior includes: any discriminatory behavior; verbal abuse (threats, racial slurs, sexual harassment); physical abuse (bullying, fighting); damaging personal property, or sexually graphic language, gestures or behaviors, the student will be sent to the Principal's office immediately and the parent will be notified. A second offense will result in the student's parent being notified to come pick up their child immediately. The third offense will result in a mandatory behavior contract for the student to continue attending St. James. The Principal is required to notify the Illinois State Police within three days of written complaints from school personnel concerning incidents of battery committed against such personnel at the school.

St. James provides a variety of extracurricular programs for its students. These include athletics (cross country, basketball, track and volleyball), after school programming and clubs.

It is a privilege to participate in any St. James after-school program. Each student's conduct and behavior toward others must be appropriate Christian behavior. Failure to honor this standard may result in a student's immediate removal from the program.

## 7.4 Classroom Management

The classroom is designed to create an environment that promotes learning. Classrooms are resourced in such a way as to be attractive, motivating and instructional. Homeroom teachers and visiting instructors share the responsibilities of maintaining order, safety, cleanliness and enthusiasm. In order to allow all students the opportunity to grow and learn, teachers will differentiate instruction. Thus, students are challenged to annually achieve a year's worth or more of progress in each of their subject areas. To achieve these rigorous individual goals, student behavior is carefully managed.

### Instructional Approach

Self-discipline is an objective of the school. Students are taught to be responsible for their own actions and behavior. The teacher will maintain regular communication with parents concerning student behavior, both appropriate and otherwise. Most disciplinary actions are handled at the classroom level. The teacher will develop a brief set of broad classroom rules with input from the students and follows the listed Positive Discipline Model tenants:

- The teacher will compliment the demonstration of appropriate behavior as a means of positive reinforcement.
- The teacher will use verbal cues and/or approach the student exhibiting inappropriate behavior using proximity as a means of redirecting behavior.
- The teacher will employ a consistent, age-appropriate behavior modification technique.
- The teacher will escort the student to the hallway for a private conversation focusing on "I" statements.
- If the above strategies are ineffective, the student will be brought to the office and the parents will be called to consult on the best way to correct the behaviors.

## 7.5 Student Dress Code

St. James students are expected to be clean, well-groomed and in full uniform each day. Students' names should be carefully marked on their uniform clothing tags. Approved clothing is available through Tommy Hilfiger and Land's End. Use the St. James school code #9001-1398-6 for Land's End.

- **Top:** Approved St. James logo must always be visible. The approved St. James plaid is the only exterior layer that may be worn without an attached logo. Colors are limited to navy, burgundy and white. Middle school students may wear St James hoodies and fleece.
- **Bottom:** Solid color navy or tan bottoms, or the approved plain or plaid jumpers. Jumpers, dresses, and skirts must be purchased from Tommy Hilfiger or Land's End. Pants and shorts do not need to be purchased from Tommy Hilfiger or Land's End, but must be of the same material and quality.
- **Footwear:** Footwear should be reasonable for safety and daily comfort. Open-toed shoes, Crocs, and sling back shoes are a safety hazard and therefore should not be worn. Shoes with non-marking soles are required to play in the gym.



- **Physical Education Uniform:**
  - Students in grades 5–8 are required to change for PE classes each day. Uniforms must be purchased through Lands’ End. Students should wear short sleeve feminine fit basic t-shirt or boys’ essential t-shirt in gray heather and mesh athletic shorts in burgundy. Burgundy sweatpants are optional, but recommended for cool weather. Students are required to wear closed toed shoes with a rubber bottom. Non-athletic shoes are not allowed in the gym.
- **Accessories:** Caps, hats, hoods, scarves and bandanas may not be worn in the building. Jewelry may be worn that is appropriate and in good taste. Tights and knee socks for girls should be a solid color white, navy, burgundy or black for all students. Students can wear leggings and tights with jumpers, dresses or skirts; leggings and tights should not be worn by themselves.
- **Winter Wear:** Boots, snow pants, gloves/mittens are required for early childhood students to play outside in the snow.
- **Spirit Wear:** May be worn on Fridays only
- **Special Occasions:** There may be special days when students are allowed to dress by standards other than the dress code. Students who elect not to participate in these special dress days must remain in compliance with the uniform dress code.

## STANDARDS

- The St. James logo should always be visible. Any layer of clothing that is worn in the building as the outer garment must comply with the standards.
- Clothing should be neat and clean. Stained or wrinkled clothing is not considered “in uniform.”
- White long sleeve shirts can be worn under short sleeve shirts.
- Girl’s skirts and shorts must be an appropriate length. Short skirts and shorts will not be allowed.
- Pant lengths should be tailored to the shoe and should be relaxed and suitable for comfortable movement.
- Pants are to be worn at the waist or their natural height. Low risers or sagging pants should never be worn.
- Polo shirts may be worn tucked in or remain out if they lay flat.
- Tied, exposed belly or altered shirts will not be allowed.
- Hair must be a natural color.

## Jet Hawkins Law

A student’s appearance, including dress and hygiene, must not disrupt the educational process, or compromise standards of health and safety. The school does not prohibit hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists. Students who disrupt the educational process or compromise standards of health and safety must modify their appearance.

## 7.6 Electronics and Unacceptable Items

St. James is, first and foremost, a learning environment. Objects that interfere with the learning environment are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: laptops, iPads, toys, trading cards, inappropriate literature, game systems and any other unapproved electronic devices.

Students in grades 3–8 and their parents/guardians must sign the technology usage agreement for use of the Chromebooks and Google education suite of products that is used at the school.

Students who bring a cell phone or smartwatch to school will be asked to “store” the phone when they arrive at school in the designated place in their homeroom class. Cell phones may not be turned on during the school day or at extracurricular activities without a teacher’s permission.

The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student’s account or profile on a social networking website. The school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student’s social network account violates the school’s disciplinary policy. The school may require the student to share content in the course of th such an investigation

## 7.7 Firearms & Drugs

There is zero tolerance for:

- Weapons
- Drugs
- Illegal substances

The Principal (or appointed administrator) will immediately notify the Chicago Police Department(CPD) of firearm incidents on school grounds, If a student is in possession of a firearm, then the Principal shall also immediately notify the student's parent or guardian. The Principal shall immediately notify CPD of verified incidents involving drugs occurring on school grounds. All such incidents will be reported to the Illinois state police through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS).

## 7.8 Student Insurance

St. James provides excess accident insurance for all its students. This is designed to pay deductibles and copayments not paid by a family’s standard insurance. It is not designed to replace a standard health insurance policy. Parents should file a claim promptly if an accident occurs at school or at any school activity. Parents should also contact the principal to confirm the date and circumstances regarding the accident.

## 7.9 Student Records

St. James checks the missing person report in the Nonpublic Registration and Recognition Renewal report prior to releasing student records. Certified copies of transfer student’ records are requested within 14 days of enrollment; the school sends unofficial records of students

transferring to other schools within 10 days of the request.

### 7.10 Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is prohibited. Corporal punishment is defined as slapping, paddling, or prolonged maintenance of students in physically painful positions, or intentional infliction of bodily harm. Corporal punishment does not include reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for students, staff, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense or defense of property.

## 8.0 School Counseling

### 8.1 Mission

The mission of the counseling department is to provide evidence-based counseling services that address the needs of all students as it relates to their academic, social-emotional and spiritual well-being. The school counselors provide guidance to promote a school climate that fosters kindness, empathy, respect, and perseverance through life's challenges.

### 8.2 Vision

Students will accomplish academic success, along with social-emotional, and spiritual growth. Students will be prepared to function as empowered members of society where they will show kindness, empathy, and respect for others.

### 8.3 Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Defined by the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL), social emotional learning is the process which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

### 8.4 Definitions of Accommodations, Modifications and Differentiation

The terms accommodations, modifications, and differentiation are often used interchangeably, however, they each have a different definition. It is important to understand the differences between these terms, as they are used within the classroom setting.

- An accommodation is a change that removes a barrier to learning or getting work completed, such as flexible seating options.
- A modification is a change in what the student is taught or expected to do, such as modified assignments.
- Differentiation is a teaching approach that tailors instruction to all students' learning needs, such as a small group pull-out.

### 8.5 Services and Support Provided

There are three main areas of services and support that St. James provides to its students: the classroom, counseling office and referral services.

- **Classroom** teachers assess and discover the needs of students and implement accordingly, providing an accommodation, modification or differentiation. Teachers will communicate with parents about any support that is provided within the classroom. If additional support is needed outside of the general accommodations, modifications or differentiation, parents will be contacted.
- **Counseling office** provides support to students as well as teachers and parents.
  - 1:1 pull-outs with students to support:
    - Social skills
    - Emotional regulation & awareness
    - Problem solving
    - Self-control

- Guidance counseling
  - As needed check-ins
  - Navigating transitions such as moving, a new sibling, loss and grief, familial changes, etc.
- Group pull-outs
- Collaboration with teachers in developing tools to support classroom management
- Classroom observations to assess student/classroom social-emotional functioning
- Weekly implementation of SEL to develop skills in these domains:
  - Self-awareness
  - Social awareness
  - Self-management
  - Relationship building
  - Problem solving
- Professional development for teachers, administrators, and staff
- Parent workshops
- Work as a liaison between students and outside professionals such as speech, OT and outside special education professionals - organizing the provided services within the school building.
- Collaborate with parents to support social-emotional learning at home.
- Provide monthly newsletters with more information about SEL.
- Provide resources and referrals.
- Crisis management.
- **Counseling office** does NOT provide the following services:
  - A special education classroom or teacher.
  - In house speech therapist or occupational therapist.
  - Assessments for individual education plans (IEPs) or 504 Plans.
  - Clinical assessments.
- **Referrals** - A student will be referred to one of the following when accommodations, modifications and/or differentiation is no longer working or effective:
  - Outside professionals
  - Other schools

### **504 Plans and Individual Educational Plans (IEP)**

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), all children with disabilities are able to receive a public education. Schools throughout the U.S. are funded through the federal government to provide assessments and services to accommodate students with disabilities. Private schools then receive 10-15% of federal funding. If a child has a 504 or IEP Plan, their local school district is responsible for funding services for that student. The counseling office will work with the provider to schedule and accommodate the services inside of the school building if appropriate. The school counselor will attend all IEP and 504 meetings scheduled for the student by their local public school.

## 9.0 Admissions and Enrollment

### 9.1 Admissions Policies and Procedures

Admission to St James will be based at minimum on a tour with parent(s) and child, a completed application, and a perusal of previous school records and test results, if applicable. Applications from re-enrollments, siblings, and church members will be received and processed in that order. New applications will be accepted on a rolling admissions basis. The decision to accept or decline any applications is based upon the following:

1. Whether there is room for the child (we do form waitlists) .
2. Whether the child's previous record indicates they would have trouble adjusting to our school, for any reason.
3. Whether the record of the child indicates that St James would not be able to meet his/her needs

Parents/guardians who enroll a student at St James must provide either (1) a certified copy of the student's valid birth certificate or (2) other reliable proof (i.e., passport, visa or other government document) of the child's identity and age and an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate within 30 days of the student's enrollment. If a certified copy is not received within 30 days, state law requires the District to report this to the Illinois State Police.

### 9.2 Entrance Age Requirements:

- Preschool 2 HD - 3 years old and potty-trained on or before December 31
- Preschool 3 HD/3FD/5HD/5FD - 4 years old and potty-trained on or before September 1
- Kindergarten - 5 years old on or before September 1

### 9.3 Enrollment Forms

All enrollment forms must be completed online through the FACTS system.

### 9.4 Enrollment Fees

A **non-refundable** \$1,000 enrollment fee/deposit is due for ALL enrollments (current and new students) in any of our Preschool, Junior Kindergarten or Kindergarten programs. They are also required for any NEW students applying for grades 1st through 8th. This enrollment fee/deposit will be credited towards tuition. No enrollment fee/deposit is required for returning students in grades 1st through 8th.

### 9.5 Withdrawal

Should you decide to withdraw your child from St. Lutheran School, please inform the Director of Admissions. A Withdrawal Form will be sent and needs to be filled out and returned and documented in FACTS.