

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas
2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO

1. THE VISION

2. POLICIES

St. Matthew is governed by the policies of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. These policies are regularly reviewed and revised. The selected policy citation pieces listed are those that may be helpful references for current and prospective parents.

- **ATTENDANCE**
- **ARCHDIOCESAN GRADING POLICY**
- **PROMOTION POLICY**
- **ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM SCHOOLS WITHIN THE ARCHDIOCESE**
- **ADMISSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**
- **TUITION PAYMENT**
- **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**
- **MORALITY**
 - Pregnancy**
 - Abortion**
 - Marriage and co-habitation**
- **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**
 - Reporting child abuse and neglect**
- **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas

2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

Archdiocese of San Antonio

Dedicated to a Vision

Share The Spirit!

The fundamental purpose of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of San Antonio is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus the Christ. His news is one of challenge, love and unity; His spirit is caught in the lives of students. Affirming that parents are the primary educators and partners of education, we prepare students to share the spirit of Jesus through community building, Christian acts of service, and word and worship. We commit to provide inspiring active learning and quality education so that all students Share The Spirit of Catholic Education.

This Vision statement calls forth beliefs that affirm the missionary dynamics of all Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of San Antonio as we move into the Third Christian Millennium. They are:

Foster A Catholic Identity

We prepare students to encounter the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to bring Catholic teachings and values into their lives and the global world.

Invest In Community Building

We are committed to building a communal spirit that is the heart and reality of Christian formation.

Provide Quality Education

We teach knowledge and critical skills so that students function fully as citizens within a changing technological and multicultural society.

Encourage Moral Formation

We lead by example in teaching moral values that encourage respect and responsibility.

Appreciate Families

We recognize the family as the basic faith community in which all members share as active participants of the parish community.

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas

2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

Support Parish Life

We believe that the school contributes to the parish through the formation of students as active participants of the parish community.

Share Governance

We seek support and participation from those who share a common vision, mission, and philosophy.

Seek Equitable Distribution

We are challenged to establish just distribution.

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas
2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

ATTENDANCE

***3101 STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

A student may not receive credit for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Students are to attend school unless there are valid reasons for absence provided by the parent/guardian.

An excused absence does not mean a student will not be marked absent. A student not physically present at a school, excused or unexcused, is marked absent.

Local school policy will determine when other absences or tardies are to be excused. Valid reasons, such as sickness, are considered excused. Invalid reasons, such as extra vacation, are considered unexcused. In all cases, students are responsible for all work missed and are subject to the local school policies (*or discretionary authority of the principal*) for determination of whether absences are excessive and to determine what consequences will be enforced.

GRADING SYSTEM

The following are the Archdiocesan Academic Grading System Guidelines (***7104**):

Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade

E	Excellent Progress
V	Very Good Progress
G	Good Progress
L	Limited Progress

Second Grade through Eighth Grade

94-100	Exceptionally High Achievement
85-93	High Achievement
75-84	Average Achievement
70-74	Low Achievement
0-69	Failure to Master Material

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas
2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

Pre-Kindergarten through 5th Grade: Interpretation of Mastery in Standard Skills

- + Skill Mastery Exceeds Expectations
- ✓ Skill Mastery Meets Expectations
- Skill Mastery is Below Expectations

St. Matthew follows the Archdiocesan guidelines in its Conduct Grading System. The following indicators show the progress in Christian Growth, Work Study Skills, Conduct and the academic development in P.E., Art, Music, Technology and Handwriting.

- O** Outstanding
- S** Satisfactory
- I** Improvement Needed
- U** Unsatisfactory

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas
2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

PROMOTION POLICY

***7105 PROMOTION POLICY**

Appendix: Summer Make-up Work – 7105A

Social promotions are prohibited in the schools in the Archdiocese. Students are promoted to the next grade level based on their academic achievement.

Retention of a student is to be considered the last resort for students who do not meet the academic criteria for promotion. Factors leading to the decision made by the principal and parent include the following:

- age of student,
- maturity of student,
- degree of deficiency in the student’s learning as per grade level requirements,
- achievement and instructional data,
- review of academic interventions, and
- any other special circumstances that have hindered academic progress for the student.

The following are the specific regulations for promotion for various grade levels:

3K-4K: Promotion at this level is determined by the teacher and principal in consultation with the parent/guardian.

5K-1: A student must have at least a “G” final average in Reading and Mathematics.

2-5: A student must have at least a “70” final average in Religion, Reading, English, and Mathematics. A student who fails Reading and Mathematics is not promoted.

6-8: A student must have at least a “70” final average in all core subjects – Religion, English, Reading/Literature, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. A student who fails more than 2 core subjects is not promoted.

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas
2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

For each core subject below “70” a student must demonstrate the successful completion of work in summer school. If summer school is not available, work will be assigned and the student will be tested prior to advancement to the next grade level.

ARCHDIOCESAN TESTING PROGRAM AND TEST SCORES

- * Each school shall test according to the guidelines established by and available from the Catholic Schools Office. The Archdiocesan Testing Program consists of the following:
- * All students in grade 1- 8 take the total battery of the Iowa Tests according to the schedule set up each year by the Archdiocesan School Office.
- * Students in grade 2 and 6 must take the **Cognitive Abilities Test™ (CogAT®)**.
- * Students in grade 5 and 8 must take the ACRE test for religion assessment.

PSAT – All 8th grade students in the Archdiocese of San Antonio will take the PSAT test.

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM SCHOOLS WITHIN THE ARCHDIOCESE

Archdiocese Policy *3003: The transfer of a student from one Catholic school to another within the Archdiocese of San Antonio can occur only after consultation between the principals of the two schools involved.

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas
2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Archdiocese Policy *3007: The Archdiocese of San Antonio promotes inclusion for all children with different learning needs. Students with special needs shall be given the same consideration as all applicants and will be provided an opportunity for admission.

Catholic schools strive to provide the accommodations and/or modifications within the scope of their school's resources for students who are identified as having special learning needs.

TUITION

Archdiocesan Policy 4405B: Delinquent Tuition and Fees Payment

Agreement: describes the steps to be taken by the party responsible for tuition and the school, when tuition and fees are delinquent. The Parent/Guardian must sign a statement indicating that the responsible party has received, read and agrees to the terms and conditions of this Archdiocesan Policy.

USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Use of Electronic Communication – taken from Archdiocese Policy 3307

Whether occurring within or outside of school, when a student's use of electronic communication jeopardizes the safe environment of the school or is contrary to Gospel values, the student can be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including expulsion.

This policy applies to communications or depictions through email, text messages, or web site postings, whether they occur through the school's equipment or connectivity resources or through private communication, which: (1) are of a sexual nature; (2) threaten, libel, slander, malign, disparage, harass or embarrass members of the school community; or (3) cause harm to the school community.

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas 2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

A school reserves the right to confiscate and/or examine any electronic device in the student's possession while on campus including, but not limited to, cellular telephones, watches, tablets, gaming devices, cameras, school-issued devices or other electronic communication equipment of any type.

MORALITY

St. Matthew Catholic School abides by the following policies of the Archdiocese of San Antonio regarding morality.

PREGNANCY (see Archdiocese Policy 3304)

A primary purpose of Catholic education is to guide students' growth in Christian values and moral conduct. Catholic teaching stresses that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that the sanctity of family life is enhanced through the fulfillment of God's plan as expressed by a loving and permanent commitment. Premarital sexual activity is contrary to these values. However, if a pregnancy occurs outside of marriage, the total school community seeks to offer support to the pregnant student and or the student father so that the pregnancy can be brought to term. The reality of the situation, in all its dimensions, is to be treated in a Christian and humane manner.

In order to insure the best interests of the student(s), parents and the school community, the following guidelines will be implemented:

1. When school personnel become aware of the pregnancy, the principal must meet with the pregnant student and then her parent or guardian.
2. The student must receive appropriate professional counseling consistent with Catholic teaching.

If the father-to-be is identified and if he is a student in the same Catholic school, the following guidelines will be implemented:

1. The principal of that school must meet with him and his parent or guardian.
2. He must be involved in a counseling program similar to that provided the mother-to-be.

The school will assist the pregnant student in completing her education either by allowing her to continue attending classes or by referring her to an appropriate alternative program.

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas
2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

If the student is to remain in school, she will be allowed, with a doctor's written approval, to participate in all activities to the extent that her condition and the common good of the school dictate.

If the student desires to return to the school after the birth of the child, the school will facilitate her continuance only with appropriate documentation from a health care provider.

The condition of pregnancy, itself, must not exclude the student from participating in the public graduation activities and events. However, the principal, in consultation with the superintendent, the parent or guardian, and in the case of parish schools, the pastor, must determine whether unique circumstances may necessitate pursuing an alternate action.

ABORTION (see Archdiocese policy 3305)

Abortion, which disregards innocent human life, is incompatible with and contradictory to the fundamental teachings of the Church, the mission of the Catholic school and the values that ought to permeate Catholic education. Catholic teaching does not accept that anyone may justifiably arrange for or procure an abortion for oneself or for another person, be forced or pressured into having an abortion or influence or coerce another person to have an abortion.

Therefore, the involvement of any student in procuring or assisting in the procurement of an abortion is cause for such student to be dismissed from school.

If it becomes known to any member of the school community that a student is contemplating or planning an abortion all reasonable encouragement must be given to the student to save the life of her unborn child. In all circumstances, the mother of the unborn child must be treated with compassion and respect.

MARRIAGE AND CO-HABITATION (see Archdiocese policy 3306)

When the marriage of a student is recognized as a valid Catholic marriage, the school administration will determine the status of the student within the school on an individual basis.

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas 2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

Such a marriage, in itself, is not cause for dismissal or sanctions against the student. Co-habitation and a marriage not recognized by the Catholic Church may be causes for expulsion.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (see Archdiocese 8601)

The Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of San Antonio will pursue all reasonable measures to assist mistreated children and their families. The Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Office will:

1. Require that all Catholic schools comply with the requirements of Texas Statutes Family Code Chapter 261—Investigation of Report of Child Abuse or Neglect.
2. Cooperate with official child protective agencies in identification and reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.
3. Provide child abuse awareness in-service education, including legal requirements, for school personnel.
4. Encourage inclusion of appropriate child abuse awareness education in classrooms at all grade levels.

REPORTING ABUSE OR NEGLECT

A person who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as required by law. Family Code 261.101. The report must be made no later than 48 hours after the hour that the person first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

The report shall contain: name and address of the child, the name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child, and any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

Reports shall be made to any local or state law enforcement agency, and in addition shall be made to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) at the San Antonio phone number 53-ABUSE or by their toll-free number 1-800-252-5400. More information on reporting can be found on the DFPS website:

<http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us>

If the allegation of abuse is being made against a school employee, the Superintendent of Schools must also be notified immediately.

St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas
2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

The Archdiocese of San Antonio (Policy *3302) defines bullying and harassment as follows:

Bullying means engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs within or outside of school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the school or the Archdiocese of San Antonio and that:

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's property; or
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

This conduct is considered bullying if it:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
2. Interferes with a student's education and substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

Harassment is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.