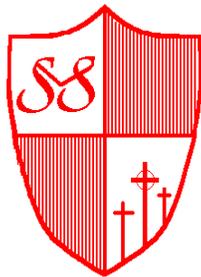


# St. Matthew Catholic School

## Student-Parent Handbook

### 2017-2018



#### **St. Matthew School Mission Statement**

The mission of St. Matthew Catholic School is to educate a strong faith-centered community through a commitment to the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social and physical development of each child.

Fr. Dennis Aréchiga, Pastor

Mr. Alvin Caro, Principal

10703 Wurzbach, San Antonio, Tx. 78230 (210) 478-5044 [www.smcssa.org](http://www.smcssa.org)

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## WELCOME

- Welcome letter from Fr. Dennis D. Aréchiga, Pastor of St. Matthew Catholic Church
- A brief history of St. Matthew Catholic School

## PASTOR'S LETTER OF WELCOME      2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR

Dear St. Matthew Parents and Students:

Welcome to our school and parish community! We are in an exciting time for our community as next year we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of our parish on November 23, 1968, and the 25th anniversary of the opening of the school on August 18, 1993. We will be having some special celebrations to honor these dates and to give thanks to God for the many blessings he has given our community over these past years.

As you can see by the construction that is taking place, we are now into the building phase of our "Building the Future" Project. The Koppow Construction Company, our general contractor, is currently clearing the land where the gym will be located, clearing out one of the Vance Jackson houses to make room for additional parking, and developing a temporary roadway from Vance Jackson street to manage the construction vehicular traffic to the work site. The anticipated completion date is in the Fall of next year, in time for the basketball season and our 50th and 25th anniversaries, respectively!

Having two gyms will allow for an uninterrupted use of those facilities for our weekday P. E. classes and provide for two basketball or four volleyball practices to take place at the same time. This will help us host most of our basketball and volleyball practices on campus and more home games. We will have space for a full concession stand, coaches' offices, changing rooms, and a lot of storage spaces.

The new gym will also have three meeting rooms that can each accommodate 30 persons, providing much needed meeting spaces. Our 11:15 a.m. Sunday Mass will take place in the new gym. The roadway connection to Vance Jackson will greatly ease our car line traffic flow as well.

The project is estimated to cost \$9.1 million dollars of which over \$4.4 million will be received in pledges and paid donations and \$3.5 million will be assumed in a loan. God willing, our shortfall of \$1.2 million dollars will be made up with additional fundraising. We thank all of you who have made donations to the capital campaign or to the "Big Give" which raised money for this worthy project.

With the many choices that parents have today in choosing schools, I want to thank you for choosing our school. Besides offering excellent academic and sports programs, St. Matthew School has some exciting extra-curricular offerings, such as the STEM, Robotics and Theater Clubs that expand our students learning horizons. One cannot minimize the dimension of faith formation that Catholic Schools provide with daily religion classes, school Mass and worthy social service projects.

The following pages include the St. Matthew Catholic School Student-Parent Handbook. Please read it in full. We thank the sub-committee from the School Council that reviews and revises this handbook. Once again, welcome!

Fr. Dennis D. Aréchiga  
Pastor

## BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**January 1993:** Ground breaking for St Matthew Catholic School  
Pastor: Msgr. John Flynn

**August 1993:** St. Matthew Catholic School opens – August 18, 1993  
Pastor: Msgr. John Flynn  
Principal: Sr. Patrice Floyd, IWBS

**August 1994:** Pastor: Msgr. John Flynn  
Principal: Mr. Curtis Youngman

**August 1996:** Pastor: Msgr. John Flynn  
Principal: Mrs. Cindy Salinas

**June 1998:** Pastor: Msgr. Michael Yarbrough  
Principal: Mrs. Cindy Salinas

**August 2004:** Pastor: Msgr. Michael Yarbrough  
Principal: Mr. Alvin Caro

**August 2010:** Pastor: Fr. Dennis Aréchiga  
Principal: Mr. Alvin Caro

St. Matthew Catholic Church and School are in North Central San Antonio, adjacent to the Medical Center. In 1992 Msgr. John Flynn, conducted a parish survey which revealed the desire for a parish school. He undertook the project with the firm belief that a parish school strengthened the religious education of the parish and strengthened parish life as a whole.

In January 1993, ground was broken for St. Matthew Catholic School and on August 18, 1993, the school opened with an enrollment of just under 400 students. The school was dedicated by Bishop Joseph Galante on Oct. 10, 1993.

Msgr. Michael Yarbrough was appointed pastor of St. Matthew Catholic Church on June 1, 1998. During his twelve years as our pastor, Msgr. Yarbrough was committed to the children, to their families, to the faculty and staff and, to promoting the Mission of St Matthew Catholic School.

St. Matthew Parish welcomed Fr. Dennis Aréchiga as its pastor on June 1, 2010. Fr. Dennis, a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and a former music teacher in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, brought his years of service as a pastor at St. Monica's in Converse, Texas and as Pastoral Administrator of a parish school. Fr. Dennis is a strong supporter of Catholic education. The faculty welcome his visits to the classrooms during the school year. We are blessed to be part of a living faith community. Fr. Dennis is assisted in the parish by Rev. Jake Emperor, SJ,

Msgr. Juan Alfaro, Rev. Abel Ruiz and eleven deacons. They meet the school children at weekly liturgies, during Reconciliation and on special holy days.

Sr. Patrice Floyd, IWBS, the first principal of St. Matthew Catholic School, opened the school with a full schedule for students from PreK-3 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Under the administration of Mr. Curtis Jungman, 1994-1996, school enrollment continued to grow, new classes were added at each grade level, and the decision was made to begin enrollment with PreK-4 classes. Under the administration of Mrs. Cindy Salinas, St. Matthew Catholic School reached an enrollment of over 700 students from Pre-K through eighth grade. Classroom space was expanded with the addition of three portable classroom buildings.

Mr. Alvin Caro, the current principal, is starting his 13<sup>th</sup> year at St. Matthew Catholic School. He brings expertise gained from over 30 years of experience as a teacher, coach, academic coordinator, and principal in the public schools in and around San Antonio. Mr. Caro and his family are active members of St. Matthew Parish. He is committed to the Mission Statement of St. Matthew Catholic School, to maintaining our traditions of excellence, and to careful planning for the near and distant future. Under his leadership the exterior of the school has been enhanced. This enhancement has included the completion of the entrance plaza, the addition of a sports court, the installation of a newly designed pre-school playground, the addition of an awning cover over the back-carline drop-off area, adding to the security of the campus by including closed-circuit monitoring and a security fencing, and a renovated school cafeteria. This school year we look forward to the start of construction of the Building the Future Campaign. The newest addition to the parish complex, the construction of the new gym facilities and the addition of a road to access the property from Vance Jackson will be in progress.

The school's staffing has evolved with the needs of the school and community. The full-time positions of Director of Development, Technology Administrator, Curriculum Director, Dyslexia and Intervention specialist and Resource teacher have been added to the staff.

In the 2013-2014 school year, with the support of the Pastor and the School Council, the iPad initiative was implemented. The principal contracted for the installation of a reliable communication infrastructure that would support the bandwidth needed to ensure WiFi and internet access to stream freely throughout the campus. All student iPads accessed the internet through the School server, whether at school or at home. This safeguard was installed to protect students when accessing the internet. Inappropriate internet sites and social networking sites were blocked. This same level of internet safety is available during this school year with the Mobicip Search Engine

When school opened for the 2013 school year, each child in Grade 4 – Grade 8 received a school-issued iPad. Students in PreK-4 through Grade 3 had access to iPad technology in a rotation system using a dedicated grade-level set of iPads. Technology in all the classrooms has been updated with the addition of Apple TVs; some classrooms use Elmo document cameras and/or Mimio devices.

Parent – School communication has been enhanced and expanded. Students, parents, teachers, and the administration use RenWeb, an electronic parent-to-school communication system, to maintain communication between the school and the parents. A weekly newsletter with photos and links to interactive video snaps bring the events of the week to life. An updated user-friendly Website debuted at the start of the 2015-2016 school year St. Matthew Catholic School. Each faculty member has his/her own webpage which is accessed from the school website.

St. Matthew Catholic School also has a presence on social media with a Facebook page, and Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram accounts. The FACTS Tuition Management Program was introduced in the 2017-2018 school year.

In the 2017-2018 school year, The Project Based Learning STREAM Initiative will be implemented throughout the school. Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Art and Math will be incorporated into planned projects that are based in the grade-level TEKS and Archdiocesan Curriculum.

St. Matthew Catholic School is and will continue to be dedicated to faith formation, educational excellence and innovation, and service to the community.