



St. Rita's School
Making a Difference

Parent/Student Handbook 2023-2024

St. Rita's School
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PARENT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Every Catholic school student has a right to be treated as a child of God, with the love and respect that implies, regardless of family circumstances. In like manner, the believing community has the right to education guided by Catholic teaching and identity, unimpeded by pressures contrary to Church teaching.

As parent/guardian of a student in a Catholic school, I understand, affirm, and support the following:

1. The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is two-fold: to strengthen the Catholic community in its faith, and to form students in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.
2. Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church. They are not simply private schools offering a positive moral code. Rather, they exist to advance the faith mission of the sponsoring Catholic parish(es), Diocese, or Catholic religious community.
3. While Catholic education places a high value on academic excellence and extracurricular achievement, its fundamental priority is fidelity to Catholic teaching and identity.
4. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic teaching and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity and that the school is able to function as a community of faith.
5. In all questions that involve Catholic teaching, morals, and Church law, the final determination rests with the Bishop.

As a parent/guardian desiring to enroll my child in a Catholic school, I accept this memorandum of understanding. I pledge support for the Catholic identity and mission of this school and by enrolling my child I commit myself to uphold all principles and policies that govern the Catholic School.

"We believe that Christ is the center of our school. He is the unseen, ever-present Teacher, the model for our faculty, and the inspiration for our students."

ST. RITA'S SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

St. Rita's Catholic School is a multicultural parish community that welcomes children of all faith backgrounds. The students' cultural diversity fosters a spirit of understanding and cooperation, and we care for one another as an expression of our faith. The rigorous academic program incorporates components of Catholic doctrine throughout all subjects and provides opportunities for worship, challenges students to cultivate their spirituality, think critically, use technology responsibly, develop intellectual curiosity, and communicate effectively.

In partnership with parents, who are the students' primary educators, the administrators and staff facilitate learning in a student-oriented environment where students develop wholly and uniquely. St. Rita's School celebrates the diversity of its students while fostering a sense of social responsibility. Students develop patterns of thoughts and behaviors based on Jesus Christ's example and respond to others in accordance with Catholic values and the Church's social teachings.

Students at St. Rita's School are encouraged to pursue learning as a life-long goal. At St. Rita's School students develop spiritually and academically enabling them to live in the world of today and preparing them for the world of tomorrow. For our students, the pursuit of learning remains essential at school and beyond.

MISSION STATEMENT

As a Christ-centered school, we partner with parents in teaching and modeling our Catholic school core values: *Love and Unity - Collaboration and Resilience* to empower our graduates to become lifelong difference makers.

HISTORY OF ST. RITA'S SCHOOL

Under the leadership of Monsignor John Gallagher, St. Rita's School opened its doors to 250 boys and girls in September 1951. Five School Sisters of Notre Dame staffed the school of six grades. In 1959, a second story was added to the building with six more classrooms, a library and other facilities, allowing expansion to a Kindergarten – eighth grade program. Enrollment increased steadily in the rapidly expanding community. In the early 1960's, the property across the street from the church was acquired adding five more classrooms, a cafeteria and an auditorium to the school.

St. Rita's came under the leadership of a lay principal in 1981 after being directed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame for thirty years. The school has had lay principals since the 1980's.

Enrollment reached a high of 770 in 1969 with double classes in all grades and remained in the

700-student range for several years. In the following years enrollment has decreased, with the last double class graduating in 1986. A low point in enrollment with just one hundred seventy-nine students registered was reached in September 1991. With the opening of the Preschool in 1992, the enrollment steadily began to increase. In the last few years, the school's enrollment has fluctuated due to the socio-economic conditions of the neighborhood, families moving out of the area, and the transfer of families who are military personnel. Currently, St. Rita's School enrollment is gradually increasing. In 2022, we ended the year with 224 elementary students and 30 preschoolers.

St. Rita's School is composed of many diverse economic and ethnic families. We are a school that welcomes students from all financial situations, providing assistance whenever possible, striving to serve as Jesus served. Our community is made up of primarily Filipino, Hispanic, African-American and European cultures.

St. Rita's School plays a very vibrant role in the life of the parish. Through the years, this large parish and its school have provided stability and quality Catholic education to a changing community in an urban area of the city of San Diego. The city itself has grown tremendously in the last ten years, and continues to do so despite the rising cost of living. Under the leadership of Father Silverio Espenilla Jr., the community of St. Rita's continues to thrive.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

St. Rita's School is under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of San Diego and follows its educational policies and procedures.

ROLE OF THE PASTOR

The pastor of St. Rita's School is the spiritual leader of the school. The priest is the shepherd and leader of the Eucharistic community which exists at St. Rita's School. Following in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, the pastor must feed the flock entrusted to him. Since St. Rita's School is an organic part of the life of the parish, it comes under the pastor's guidance. While the principal is responsible for the general direction of the religious and educational program, the pastor is kept fully informed of all important happenings and no major step is taken without his knowledge.

ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

The principal of St. Rita's School is appointed by the pastor and is charged with the spiritual, academic, and managerial policies in cooperation with the faculty, and the Diocese of San Diego. As the primary school administrator, the principal motivates the staff to formulate clear goals and objectives for each school year and guides their development and accomplishments. The principal's primary goal is to build and live "community" in a spirit of trust and charity.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The role of the teacher in St. Rita's School is not exclusively that of educator, but is multifaceted including that of servant-leader, organizer, instructor, motivator, counselor, evaluator, and exemplar within the environment of his/her own classroom. He/she has the unique and sacred privilege of developing in his/her students a love for learning. Each teacher accepts the responsibility to use his/her personal endowments to the best advantage of the students. Thus, the students are exposed to a variety of teaching styles, strategies, methodologies, and classroom activities chosen by each teacher to promote optimum learning experiences. The teacher willingly cooperates with the principal in carrying out the religious and academic goals of the school, and in a spirit of generosity, accepts additional responsibilities that affect the school community and programs.

ROLE OF THE PARENT

The important role of the parents to catechize and educate their children is acknowledged by the Church through the pronouncement of the National Catechetical Directory, Norm 212:

"Parents are the primary teachers of their children. They catechize informally but powerfully by example and instruction. They communicate values and attitudes by showing love for Christ and His Church and for each other, by reverently receiving the Eucharist and living in its spirit and by fostering justice and love in all their relationships..."

Concrete ways that parents contribute to nurturing the education of their children include the following:

- Participate in policy-making through the PTG.
- Provide for the physical and mental daily readiness of their child for school. Proper rest, exercise, diet, and study will provide a good framework for learning.
- Promote a positive image of self, home, school, and others which will nourish a healthy attitude for wholesome relationships. By being faithful to Catholic moral teaching in decision-making, virtue, and worship, the parents themselves provide the most fruitful kind of Catholic education relative to the moral development of their child.
- Demonstrate the role of co-educator to the children, parish, and school personnel, by actively supporting school activities, attending Parent/Teacher conferences, joining the Parent Teacher Group (PTG), and participating in school and parish celebrations.

ROLE OF THE STUDENT

Students are charged with the goal to develop excellent academic, vocational, and professional skills because God wishes an abundant life for every one of His children. This goal is furthered by enhancing his or her talents to the fullest. Moreover, through their personal witness and achievements, students glorify God and lead others to the truth. Students of St. Rita's School commit themselves to be faith-filled Christians, innovative problem solvers, collaborative communicators, and culturally competent citizens who practice virtues of love, unity, collaboration, and resilience.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - THE ABC'S OF S.R.S.

ACCREDITATION

St. Rita's School is fully accredited by the Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

ATTENDANCE

Absences that are not due to illness, weather, or emergencies are considered unexcused. Also, absences that have not been pre-approved by the principal, such as family vacations, are considered "unexcused/unlawful." Truancy, parental neglect, or personal choice, oversleeping, and missing the bus are not valid excuses for absence. Work will not be provided for families going on vacations.

Please call the school office between 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM to report your child's absence.

Notes:

- Students should check their Google Classroom for work they have missed, and check with the teacher for work upon their return.
- Upon return to school, the student presents to the homeroom teacher a written note signed by a parent or guardian containing the reason and dates of absence. An excused illness that extends beyond three days requires a doctor's note upon the student's return to school.

ADMISSIONS

Registration Requirements:

- Pre-school – Two years, 9 months old and fully potty-trained
- Kindergarten – Five years old by September 1
- Grade 1 – Six years old by September 1
- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate
- Most Recent Report Card
- Information on any medical conditions
- Legal Custody Agreements / Legal Directives
- IEP (if applicable)
- Social Security Number of Child
- Immunization Records
- Registration Fee

All newly enrolled students are accepted on a one trimester probation period.

Non-Discriminatory Statement

In accordance with Federal Law and the U.S. Department of Justice, this establishment does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability

Admissions Process

1. Age Requirement
 - a. A child must be five years old by September 1st to be admitted to kindergarten, and six years old by September 1st to be admitted to 1st grade (Diocese of San Diego requirement). Such evidence shall be in the form of a Birth Certificate, a passport, or an affidavit of the parent, guardian or custodian of the child. (Education Code, Sec. 10504)
2. Application Form
 - a. Newly admitted students must have a completed application form, including school contract, Baptismal and birth certificates, and a report card from the previous school, if applicable. Immunization records and physical exam forms are due before the first day of school. It is California state policy that no child will be admitted without an immunization record. (San Diego Public Health Department and California School Immunization Law, Health and Safety Code, Sections 120325-120375)
 - b. Any child transferring from another school must bring all report cards from that school before admittance is accepted.
3. Health and Immunizations
 - a. California law requires specific health screening and immunization procedures for all students admitted to school.
 - b. The school office will notify parents of any deadlines on all necessary health records.
 - c. A physician's certificate, indicating that the student has been immunized and the dates of immunization and health exams, is required.
 - d. A student who lacks the required immunization and health forms will not be admitted to school. (AB 2068)
 - e. Health records and transcripts are requested from the previous school by the office.
 - f. Medical Notifications: It shall be the responsibility of the parent of each student to inform the school office in writing concerning the medical welfare of a student. Any allergies, hypersensitivities (drugs, antibiotics, bee stings, food, etc.), or chronic illness should be reported on your child's permanent health record on file in the school office. Other health factors pertaining to your child should also be reported.
4. Entrance Exam: \$20 testing fee
 - a. If a student is found to be deficient in a skill area, one or both of the following conditions may be required as a condition for acceptance:
 - tutoring during the summer preceding enrollment, and/or during the school year with written verification from the summer school/tutor, and retesting.
 - placing the student in a grade level appropriate to his/her needs.
5. Principal Interview

CAR RIDERS

Morning Drop Off • For MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS: In single file, cars are to enter from the alley off of San Jacinto Drive and drive to the school's back entrance. Drivers remain in the car.

Students exit from right-side car doors and enter the school campus, gathering in the assembly area. The car then continues, making a left turn and exiting the alley onto Santa Margarita Street. Absolutely no parking or idling is allowed in this public right of way. For KINDERGARTEN - 4TH GRADE STUDENTS: In single file, cars are to enter the new driveway off of Imperial Avenue and drive to the turn-about between the church and Art Studio. Drivers remain in the car. Students exit from right-side car doors and enter the school campus, gathering in the assembly area. The car then continues, making a right turn onto Imperial Avenue. For PRESCHOOL STUDENTS: In single file, cars are to enter the new driveway off of Imperial Avenue and park in the spaces just outside the preschool playground to sign in their child. When leaving, re-enter the turn-about in the counterclockwise flow of traffic, making a right turn onto Imperial Avenue.

Afternoon Pick Up • Car riders are to be picked up in the same area they arrive at school. Vehicles should follow the same traffic patterns as in the morning drop off . • Children may not be picked up in the Church parking lot. Students are not allowed to wait for their rides off campus; instead they should wait with their teacher in the designated pick up areas for safety reasons.

CELL PHONES and other personal electronic devices

Students may not use cell phones during school hours. Any contact that needs to be made during the school day will be done through the Main Office. If a student brings a cell phone or other electronic devices to school, it is to be off and turned-in to the classroom teacher.

If a student is found in possession,

- the cell phone and/or electronic device will be confiscated and sent to the principal.
- A parent will be required to pick it up.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

In accordance with Diocesan policy and California law, school staff is obligated under penalty of fine and imprisonment to report the reasonable suspicion of emotional or physical abuse or neglect, inadequate supervision, or sexual abuse and exploitation. According to the law, the school will not contact parents in advance of making a report to legal authorities.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is an essential goal of the faculty/staff of St. Rita's School. Each Monday, the school sends home:

- *The Passport*, via the schools' website (www.stritassd.org) and SchoolSpeak (www.SchoolSpeak.com), as well as a paper copy in the green family folder.
- Each child's homeroom teacher sends a weekly newsletter via email to the parent, posts the newsletter outside of the classroom, and posts the newsletter online on the school website.

The teacher also is asked to respond within 48 business hours to any contact that a parent may initiate. If you have any questions or concerns about your child, the **teacher is your first contact**.

CURRICULUM

St. Rita's School offers continuous curriculum development with Religion as the core. This academic curriculum strives to educate the whole child. It is based on the Common Core State Standards for ELA (English Language Arts), Math, and the Next Generation Science Standards as

adopted by the Office for Schools of the Diocese of San Diego.

DISCIPLINE

St. Rita's School is committed to assisting parents/guardians in the whole-person formation of their children. We recognize that this task of helping children grow into the best versions of themselves cannot be accomplished alone. With parents and school working together, our children can grow into confident, self-reliant, respectful, self-disciplined adults who recognize that their primary vocation is to serve God and others. It is the purpose of St. Rita's School to instill within each student the self-discipline that is necessary for a successful life.

GENERAL STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Serving God and others is the primary vocation of a student at St. Rita's School. It follows, then, that all students are expected to demonstrate the core values of SRS that are expressed in the student code of conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- As a student of St. Rita's School I commit myself to be a Faith-Filled Christian, Collaborative Communicator, Culturally Competent Citizen, and Innovative Problem Solver.
- Cooperate with all school personnel by following directives willingly.
- Give proper respect to all school personnel: administration, faculty, staff, and volunteers.
- Accept correction graciously as an opportunity to learn and grow
- respect schoolmates and the individuality of each student.
- Use class time effectively and contribute to the learning environment.
- Be responsible for the timely completion of all assignments and projects
- take pride in their school, caring for the buildings (especially the bathrooms), equipment and supplies at their disposal.
- Cooperate with Lunch Program Policies.
- Respect the dignity of human life by avoiding substance use, fighting, foul language, sexual innuendos, gestures, and verbal, visual, or physical actions of a sexual nature within a school setting.
- Safeguard a positive learning environment - Items that detract from a learning environment are not permitted at school or in the daycare program. The administration will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of items in the school. Items that are taken away from students will only be returned to the parent/guardian. Chewing gum is not permitted on the grounds or in school at any time.

See the school discipline policy for consequences regarding failure to comply with any of the rules listed.

GENERAL APPROACH TO COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

- Since no person is perfect, students may occasionally make negative choices. St. Rita's School encourages parents and teachers to view such decisions as "teachable moments."

- Teachers work with children at various developmental stages. That requires individualized methods of discipline, a variety of age-appropriate strategies, and sometimes incident-specific assignments for reporting misbehavior. Often the report requires a parent signature.
- Individual classroom policies are presented at the Back-to-School Night meeting.
- Usually, several teacher interventions occur before a teacher issues a written infraction or initiates contact with parents. For instance, eye contact, calling out the student's name, expressing a verbal correction or warning, etc.
- If a student fails to cooperate regarding the above expectations, he/she will receive a warning. If the behavior continues, an email or phone call to parents will be initiated, informing them of the unwanted conduct/behavior.
- Continuous disregard for school regulations and policies may result in disciplinary action at the discretion of the teacher/principal. If the situation warrants, it may be necessary to suspend a student from class.
- For serious violations of discipline, a student may be denied participation in school related activities, including field trips. Parents will be notified in writing if a student is not eligible.

SUSPENSIONS/EXPULSIONS

Any deliberate action that is contrary to the moral climate, serious in nature, and having potential to cause harm to any student or staff member may result in a suspension of up to three days and/or expulsion. Suspensions may be “in-school suspensions” or “out-of-school suspensions” depending on the seriousness of the offense. The suspended student will NOT receive credit for missed work.

Prior to any suspension or expulsion, the Principal will conduct a conference with the student, the parents of the student, and the student's teacher. The Pastor will be informed of the incident and invited to attend the meeting. The final decision will rest with the Pastor and the Principal. The parents will then be informed as soon as possible of the decision.

Immediate Suspension and/or Expulsion May Be Issued for the Following Infractions:

1. The use or possession of drugs, alcohol, or weapons of any kind
2. Fighting that causes or has the potential to cause serious injury
3. Leaving the school grounds during school hours without permission
4. Flagrant violation of the Acceptable Use Policy for technology
5. Flagrant inappropriate physical contact

SUMMARY

- The above categories do not cover every possible situation. The school will determine which behavior is inappropriate in school situations.
- In the case of threats of violence or harassment in any form, (including oral, written, or electronic communication made by a student against any member of the school community), the student, if suspended but not dismissed from SRS, may be required to have psychological or psychiatric clearance before returning to school. Documentation of this clearance would need to be provided to the school by the parents.

- If the principal receives a report from a student, teacher, and/or parent that a particular student has made a threat to commit a crime of violence, this matter shall be immediately referred to the local law enforcement agency.
- In addition, the student who has made the threat to commit a crime will be suspended upon investigation and/or expelled.

DAILY SCHEDULE

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 6:00am | St. Rita's Extended Care opens in the Art Studio. |
| 8:00am | Morning Assembly in the Assembly Area |
| 9:40-9:55am | 5-8 Snack/Recess |
| 10:00-10:15am | K-4 Snack/Recess |
| 12:25-1:05pm | Lunch period |
| 12:00pm | Dismissal on Minimum Days (EVERY WEDNESDAY) |
| 3:00pm | Regular Dismissal time |
| 6:00pm | St. Rita's School Extended Care closes |

MINIMUM DAYS

Every Wednesday will be a minimum day. Students will be dismissed at 12:00pm. Half-day schedules may also be followed on certain days for special meetings, report card conferences, in advance of holidays, WASC accreditation preparation, or at the discretion of the principal. Parents will be notified in advance. Please see the school calendar for specific dates for minimum days. Lunch will be served on minimum days from 11:15am-11:45am.

Parents are not to have their children anywhere on the school/church grounds before 7:45am when supervision begins, unless children are in the St. Rita's Extended Care Program. Upon dismissal, students are to leave the school grounds immediately with their parents/guardians, unless they are requested to stay by a teacher or are participating in a school-organized activity. Please notify the school office in writing if your child walks home at the end of the school day.

Supervision ends at 3:15pm or at 12:15pm on minimum days. The school accepts no liability for providing supervision before 7:45 am or after 3:15pm, or 12:15pm on minimum days, unless a child is enrolled in the St. Rita's Extended Care Program. Our insurance liability ends at 6:00pm and the appropriate authorities will be notified if any child is left at school after 6:00pm.

Supervision is provided when students are taking part in the after school sports programs. If such an event is canceled, parents will be called to pick up their children.

Parents entrust their children to the school. When children are on school grounds during the school day or during school-sponsored events they are under the direct supervision of the faculty and staff. Please refrain from criticizing, reprimanding, or yelling at a child other than your own on the school grounds during school, at school-sponsored events, or in the St. Rita's Extended Care Program. If a parent has trouble with a child not their own, they should speak to a teacher, staff member or the principal who will deal with the situation.

DRESS CODE

Students must be in complete uniform each day beginning with the first day of school. Homeroom teachers will communicate with parents about any problems.

BOYS:

- Navy twill pants
- White or green polo shirt with school logo
- Gray PE T-shirt with school logo (for PE days only)
- Navy blue mesh PE shorts/sweatpants with school logo (for PE days only)
- Collared white button-down shirt under the sweater vest for formal uniform
- Navy blue tie for formal uniform days (Mass, field trips, special occasions) gr. 5-8
- Navy logo sweater/jacket. Non-uniform jackets are permitted outdoors only.
- Socks are to be solid color white or navy crew socks and must cover the ankle.
- ONLY BLACK athletic shoes

Regulations:

1. Boys' hair must be trimmed to the top of the collar and must be above the eyebrows. No fad hairstyles are permitted: No tails, shaved heads, Mohawk styles, lines, designs, spikes or bleached/colored hair.
2. Earrings are not permitted.
3. Only small necklaces with crosses or religious medals are permitted.

GIRLS:

- Plaid jumper gr. K-4
- Plaid skirt gr. 5-8 (Length must not be shorter than 3 inches above the kneecaps)
- White or green polo shirt with school logo
- Gray PE T-shirt with school logo (for PE days only)
- Navy blue mesh PE shorts/sweatpants with school logo (for PE days only)
- Collared white button-down shirt under jumper gr. K-4 / sweater vest gr.5-8 for formal uniform
- Plaid tie for formal uniform days (Mass, field trips, special occasions) gr.5-8
- Navy sweater/jacket with school logo. Non-uniform jackets are permitted outdoors only.
- Socks are to be solid color white or navy crew socks and must cover the ankle.
- Girls may wear white or navy tights or leggings on cold days.
- ONLY BLACK athletic shoes

Regulations:

1. Bleached, highlighted, tipped or colored hair is not permitted.
2. Hair bands, barrettes and bows to match the uniform.
3. No cosmetics (makeup) of any kind. No fake nails or nail polish.
4. If ears are pierced, one pair of small earrings may be worn on the ear lobe. No excessive dangling or hoop earrings are permitted.
5. Only small necklaces with crosses or religious medals are permitted.

MARK ALL ITEMS OF THE UNIFORM WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME IN PERMANENT MARKER.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

DISASTER DRILLS

- Fire drills, earthquake drills, and lockdown drills are held monthly, or as needed to prepare students for appropriate calm behavior during an emergency.
- Students are expected to strictly follow the directives of the teachers during these drills, and are instructed to remain quiet during the entire procedure.

EARTHQUAKE KITS

- At the opening of each school year, every family will prepare a disaster food package for each child, preschool through 8th grade.
- The earthquake kits should include a variety of non-perishable items including canned fruit, 2 drinks of some type, can of meat, crackers, hard candies, and other similar items.
- All items should be in packages or containers which children are able to open easily themselves.
- Place all items in a gallon-size Ziploc bag with the student's name easily identifiable.
- Packages are due the first week of school.
- The school will assess a \$25 fee for earthquake kits it provides (when parents have not supplied them).
- These packs will be sent home with each child at the end of the school year, and fresh supplies will be requested the next year.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

- In the event of an emergency necessitating closing school during regular hours, the students, faculty, and staff will proceed with practiced procedures.
- If safe and advisable that children be picked up, only adults identified on the student's emergency card will be permitted to pick up students.
- If families are unable to reach the school grounds, school personnel will remain with the students for the number of hours required by Diocesan and Emergency regulations.
- During this time, every effort will be made to communicate with the family to arrange safe pick-up of students.
- St. Rita's personnel will release students to the first adult who arrives and is identified on the Emergency Card.

EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM

- St. Rita's will conduct an extended care program both before and after school hours
- 6:00am – 7:45am and 3:00 pm until 6:00pm, 12:00pm-6:00pm on minimum days.
- ***Students who arrive on campus before 7:45 am must be signed into the Extended Care program by their parents/guardians.***
- Sign in/sign out procedures must be followed to ensure safety and security.
- Contact the school office or the director of the Extended Care program for further information.

EXTRA CURRICULAR PROGRAMS:

- Choir
 - Students should turn in a signed permission slip to participate.
 - Their presence is required at Sunday Children's Mass (1st Sunday of each month during school year), First Communion and Graduation.
- Academic Decathlon
 - The competition takes place the first Saturday of March
 - Students are invited to join in October and are provided with study materials
 - The group meets weekly with advisors to prepare for the event
- Student Council
 - Meets regularly to plan and carry out activities in service, ecology, school spirit, fundraising
 - May represent St. Rita's School at public functions, and serve as hosts for special events.
 - Learn about leadership and service by being part of this process.
 - Any student who fails to make appropriate progress in two or more courses in any trimester will be placed on academic probation. Those students on academic probation are not eligible for extracurricular activities such as Student Council.
- Athletic Program
 - Sports played include volleyball(5-8), softball(5-8), football(5-8), soccer(k-8), and basketball(5-8).
 - Students who choose to join a team are expected to attend all practices and to remain a member of the team for the entire season.
 - Parents are responsible for transportation to and from school, and before and after practices and games for their child.
 - The following requirements must be met before any child can participate in any sport throughout the academic year: \$50 fee, completion of Athletic Participation Form, and approximately \$20-\$30 for your child's uniform (which the child keeps).
 - Practices and games are after school or on the weekends.
 - Parent volunteers may coach, and are supervised by the school's Athletic Director.
 - All behavior of students and adults at practices and games is expected to be consistent with the philosophy and spirit of St. Rita's School.
 - Students who are absent from school on a practice or game day will not be allowed to practice or play that day.
 - Teachers inform the students and the Athletic Director of students who are not performing appropriately in the classroom; the Athletic Director keeps the coaches and parents informed.
 - Any student who fails to make appropriate progress in two or more courses in any trimester will be placed on academic probation. Those students on academic probation are not eligible for extracurricular activities such as sports.
 - Athletic awards are presented at the end of sports seasons and/or the school year at the annual sports banquet.
 - School policy at all athletic events stresses that respect be shown for officials and school personnel, that sportsman-like and courteous conduct be demonstrated, that cheers should be directed to the home team and should not be negative toward another team, and that cooperation with all school and sports officials is required.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned to enhance and supplement the instructional program.

Students will be allowed to go on school-sponsored field trips only if:

- their field trip permission slips have been signed by the parent or guardian and returned in a timely manner.
- All students are expected to attend school-sponsored field trips during the year.
- Any student who does not have a signed permission slip will complete assigned work under the supervision of another classroom teacher at the school.

Volunteer drivers for school field trips must provide:

- proof of insurance, minimum \$100,000 liability
- Driver Information sheet verifying that the driver is at least 21 years of age.
- Drivers/chaperones must be cleared through CMG Connect (**A \$19 processing fee will be added to the Smart Tuition account**)
- Individual seat belts are required for each passenger and car seats for any student who weighs less than 80 pounds.
- No siblings, school age or younger, are allowed on school-sponsored field trips.
- Each driver must carry the original permission slips/medical release forms for the students riding in that car; the teacher will have copies of all permission slips.
- The children in each car are the responsibility of the driver and/or chaperone for the entire trip.
- No teacher will drive students.
- Drivers must go directly to the site to be visited and return to school immediately after.
Stopping for treats or other side trips is not permitted.

FIRE SAFETY

Fire drills are required by law and are held several times throughout the school year at the principal's discretion. Teachers and students must be familiar with a well-planned fire drill route. Students should follow the directions posted in the front of each classroom and leave the room and school building in silence and good order. Members of the staff are assigned responsibilities during the drill by the principal.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

TITLE 1 SERVICES

St. Rita's School receives a specialized reading and math skills program through the services of a Title I teacher, to be made available to those students who meet the criteria set up by the Federal Government. Forms to qualify for funding are distributed to families in the September Packet. It is essential that ALL families complete and return qualification forms EVEN IF THEY CHOOSE NOT TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THE PROGRAM OFFERINGS in order for the school to qualify for overall funding. Please be prompt and accurate with this paperwork.

LUNCH PROGRAM

- A nutritious hot lunch, with milk, is served Monday through Friday in the school lunch area. The school participates in the hot lunch program sponsored by the National School Lunch Program and meals are provided by the San Diego Unified School District. All families are encouraged to fill out the lunch application to see if they may qualify for free or reduced lunch through the National School Lunch Program.
- A menu is sent via SchoolSpeak, in the green Family Folders and email regularly, and all families may order the hot lunches, if they choose. Every lunch ordered must be picked up. Parents will be charged for every lunch ordered. The cost is \$3.75.
- Lunch must be ordered ONE day before lunch is desired. Parents are encouraged to order lunches weekly or monthly. An accurate count is maintained of all lunches served, and parents will be billed through the Blackbaud Tuition system by the 10th of the month. An invoice will be provided. Payment is due by the 15th of the month.

GRADING POLICY

St. Rita's abides by State Standards-referenced reporting provided by the Diocese of San Diego.

All kindergarten through 8th grade students will be receiving a standards-referenced report card, with grading that is aligned with State standards for academic growth.

This standards-referenced evaluation system, recommended by our Diocesan Office for Schools, offers detailed accounting of student knowledge and achievement.

| | |
|-----|---|
| E | Exceeds grade-level standards consistently |
| M+ | |
| M | Mastering grade-level standards |
| P+ | |
| P | Progressing toward mastery of grade-level standards |
| IP+ | |
| IP | Initial Progress toward grade-level standards |
| IP- | |
| NE | Not Evaluated |

REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS

Report cards are issued three times a year. Report cards for the first trimester are issued at the mandatory formal student-led parent/teacher conference, while the remaining report cards are sent home with the students and will be available online.

Progress reports are issued mid-way in each trimester. Parents are directed to use these documents to encourage their children for their efforts to work to the best of their ability.

Progress reports and report cards are **to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school within the week they are given.**

If parents are not receiving test papers or other academic communications during the marking period, they should contact the teacher.

The trimester schedule for this academic year is as follows:

- 1st Trimester: ends November 17
- 2nd Trimester: ends March 1
- 3rd Trimester: ends June 7

PARENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES

A formal parent-teacher conference will be scheduled at the end of the first report card period, usually in early December for all students. ***This conference is mandatory.*** Parents will sign up on SchoolSpeak and students will be required to attend.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

To be promoted, a student must have completed the coursework for their grade-level and have received passing marks in all core academic subjects; that is, he/she must demonstrate competency in the grade level requirements in order to advance unless that student has an individualized education plan that outlines adapted goals for progress.

Graduation Requirements: Students who graduate from St. Rita's School must have completed and received passing marks in the required courses established by both the Diocese of San Diego and St. Rita's School.

If a teacher determines that a student is experiencing great difficulty with grade-level learning expectations, that teacher will confer with the principal in a timely manner, and by the first trimester report card (early-December), or before, a conference will be arranged with parents, teacher, education specialist, and principal to discuss the options for the child to be successful. Parents are notified as early as possible so that if tutoring or other programs can be planned to assist the child, they be put into operation before retention is considered. Retention of a student will be determined only after consideration of all the facts related to the student's development, and consultation between the teacher, principal, and family.

TRIMESTER ABSENCES:

If a student is absent for more than 7 days during a report card period, he/she will not receive grades for that period without special arrangement with the teacher and principal. An incomplete grade on a report card will need to be fulfilled according to the requirements of the grade and the guidelines of the teacher. Diocesan and California Education Code regulations will be followed.

TESTING

The Star Renaissance 360 Assessment is given three times during the school year. Grades 5 and 8 take the Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) test. The purpose of these standardized tests is to measure each child's academic achievement as compared with national norms.

Parents receive the results for their child showing his/her performance. Details about the dates and times of testing will be sent home in advance. We ask that you not schedule doctors or other appointments during these dates. It is important that each child is present for every test to ensure an accurate record of his/her achievement.

HEALTH

ILLNESS OR INJURY DURING THE SCHOOL DAY/EMERGENCY CARDS

Families are notified immediately of serious injury or sudden illnesses that occur during school hours. For this reason, it is very important that families keep the Emergency Card information up-to-date.

If it is impossible to reach a parent or responsible person:

- St. Rita's School reserves the right to select emergency care providers.
- No liability would be attached to such decisions in the event parents cannot be reached. Any expenses incurred will be borne by the child's family.
- The school will not be responsible for anything that may happen because of false information given to the school.

MEDICATIONS

All medication, including aspirin, non-aspirin or inhalers, must be kept in the school office accompanied by written instructions, signed and dated by the parent and/or doctor, regarding dosage and the procedure for administering.

- Please mark the medication with the student's name in large, easy-to-read letters.
- Enclose the medication and instructions in a plastic bag and bring it to the school office.
- A student is not permitted to have any type of medication in their possession at any time at school.
- Parents or guardians should notify the teachers, in writing, if the student needs to take medication (to be dispensed from the school office) during school hours

ALLERGY AWARENESS

Parents must notify the school on their emergency cards if their child has such an allergy or any other health issue that the school should be aware of, then teachers and other staff members can take the precautions needed to provide a safe learning environment for all the students.

HOMEWORK

Homework is designed to reinforce concepts and skills that have been presented in class, and has an essential place in the educational program. Homework may be assigned daily, unless a long-term project is assigned. Frequently, homework will consist of reading for 15-30 minutes and math practice on a home computer or device, in addition to finishing any incomplete classwork from that day.

Parents should make sure that each student:

- has a comfortable, quiet, organized place in which to study
- sets the proper amount of time aside each day for homework assignments
- has access to local libraries on a regular basis
- keeps track of homework assignments (an assignment book is provided to each student in grades 2 – 8)
- finishes all assignments on a consistent basis
- keeps returned papers each trimester

LIBRARY

We are looking forward to reopening the library with parent volunteers. If you are available to commit to a day or a few hours in the library, please contact the school office.

LOST AND FOUND

Please label all uniforms and supply items with your child's name. Items that have been found on school grounds are kept in the Lost and Found cart in the lunch area. If these items are not claimed, they are given to local charities at the end of each trimester or added to the school's used-uniform supply.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. Specifically, this includes the responsibility:

- to establish a home environment which teaches moral values, religious habits, social skills, self-discipline, and commitment to learning.
- to be fully informed in all aspects of their child's developmental progress, to take and/or support the appropriate remedial action, if needed.
- to maintain a collaborative, supportive relationship with the school.

Minimum responsibilities include:

- 30 hours of service hours
 - Card due by May 31st
 - must have teachers or staff members sign the card after having volunteered at any function
 - Donation of goods or cash may also be credited as service hours and must be logged in to be credited (\$15/service hour)
- participation in fundraising activities
- regular attendance at mandatory General PTG meetings and other meetings
- open communication with the teacher/principal
- support the school's educational programs

PARENT TEACHER GROUP (PTG)

All parents and guardians of children in the school are automatically members of the Parent Teacher Group (PTG) at St. Rita's School. The purpose of the PTG is to bring about a closer relationship between school, home, and parish based on an appreciation of the ideals of a Catholic education by providing volunteers to carry out many school programs and events, and a solid organization to improve the school's fundraising efforts.

PTG BOARD

The PTG Board consists of parent and staff representatives, the pastor, principal, and a teacher and meets monthly. The Board is responsible for planning fundraising efforts and special events at the school.

- Chocolate Sales
- Walk-a-Thon/Turkey Trot
- Spring Event (Telethon)
- End Of Year Picnic

Please refer to the PTG Handbook for more details.

PARTIES

- Class parties to celebrate special days (such as Valentines' Day and Christmas) will be permitted on certain holidays, and parents will be notified beforehand.
- Room parents will arrange these parties after consulting with the teacher. Small, healthy snacks are encouraged.
- If a parent wants to recognize a child's birthday, a small treat such as cupcakes or cookies are acceptable.
- Pizza and lunch foods are not allowed for birthday celebrations.
- Check with the teacher for a convenient time, but generally birthday celebrations will take place 15 minutes prior to dismissal.
- Please do not send or bring party invitations to school to be distributed unless every child in the class will be included.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY (CATHOLIC IDENTITY)

ALTAR SERVERS

Boys and girls in 5th through 8th grades may be trained to be altar servers. This privilege is highly regarded as this is an important service for the Church. Requests for training should be made at the parish rectory. The servers assist at all school Masses, and when parents so commit, also assist at parish Masses, funerals, weddings, and other special ceremonies. The parish staff publishes a monthly schedule, and families are responsible for seeing that the servers arrive at church consistently and on time.

MASS ATTENDANCE

Since St. Rita's School is a Catholic school, students are expected to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. They are encouraged to actively participate in the Mass. The first Sundays of each month, at the 10:00am Mass, are designated as Children's

Masses of the parish and *families are required to attend*. The school's Children's Choir will sing at those Masses. Each Wednesday during the school year, a special liturgy will be celebrated for the entire student body at 8:30am. All families are welcome to join us.

MISSION ACTIVITIES

St. Rita's School actively participates in the Missionary Childhood Association. This branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith creates opportunities for young people to become aware of the needs of people around the world. This program fosters awareness and concern for human and spiritual needs, and develops a spirit of generosity and sharing. Activities are held throughout the year to provide opportunities for students to give to those who are less fortunate by contributing their time, talent, or treasure in weekly Missions collection drives, Jeans for Jesus, and other forms of giving such as the Christmas Collection Drive.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION/LITURGIES/PRAYER

Regular daily religious instruction is an integral part of the educational program for all students at all grade levels. School liturgies are important in developing a Catholic faith and are celebrated consistently throughout the year for the whole school at St. Rita's Church.

- Reconciliation will be made available to students during the seasons of Advent and Lent.
- Other seasonal or special prayer services or Masses may be scheduled as the opportunities arise. Students are involved in the preparation of these Masses.
- From the opening assembly to the closing of the day, prayers are said regularly.
- Specific prayers are learned each year as part of the religion curriculum in each grade, and additional prayers and prayer forms may also be introduced.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Families of students in the 2nd grade will participate in the Sacramental Preparation program, which readies Catholic students for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

- Parents whose children are in grades 3 - 8 who wish them to receive Reconciliation or First Eucharist should alert the office.
- The office will make arrangements with the principal and Sacramental Coordinator.
- Please note that any baptized student attending St. Rita's can only receive the sacrament of Reconciliation and First Eucharist if he or she has attended Catholic school for at least one full year prior to the year of preparation; exceptions are made, however, for students with proof of attendance in a parish's catechism class.
- The 2nd grade teacher, working with the pastor and principal, schedules these events for the reception of the two sacraments.
- There will be a sacramental class or retreat for parents (the primary educator of the child) and the families work with the pastor and teacher to prepare the students.
- Baptismal training can also be arranged for any family whose child attends St. Rita's School in the Kindergarten through eighth grade. Parents who wish to have their child baptized should contact the office.

TECHNOLOGY

CHROMEBOOKS (gr. 2-8) & iPADS (gr. K-1)

- To enhance their learning capabilities, St. Rita's School provides students a Chromebook/iPad for use during the school day. These tools are used for educational purposes.
- Misuse of the Chromebook through carelessness will result in forfeiture of privileges and a repair fee of not less than \$50. Continued misuse or repairs exceeding \$150 will result in a fine of \$350 to purchase a new Chromebook.

The following offenses will result in the loss of the use of the Chromebook for 5 school days;

- Accessing non educational/inappropriate material during class time.
- Accessing inappropriate material including gaming sites that contain violent actions.
- Accessing inappropriate material on another student's Chromebook
- Sending emails to other students during class time
- Listening to music on your personal device or on school device

COMPUTER/INTERNET POLICY

Students can access the internet through the school's computer network.

- They are responsible for appropriate behavior while using the internet, and general school rules for behavior and communications always apply.
- Faculty and Staff reserves the right to review browsing history by students to ensure the system is being used properly.
- The use of the computer network is a privilege that may be revoked, if abused.
- The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's technology resources.
- The students are advised never to access, keep, or send anything that they would not want their parents or teachers to see.

COMPUTER GUIDELINES

- the computer and/or the network must remain undamaged – financial responsibility for damaging chrome books, tablets, and other technology belongs to the student/family
- Technology must remain inside the school building
- respect copyright laws
- group chats, offensive messages or pictures and social media are not allowed at school
- notify an adult immediately if anyone encounters materials that are not appropriate
- acknowledge accountability for the actions and the loss of privileges if the above guidelines are not respected

OFFICIAL EMAIL ADDRESS

- Students will be assigned a *stritassd.org* student email account.
- This account will be considered the student's official St. Rita's email address until such time as the student is no longer enrolled in St. Rita's.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are purchased by the school and loaned to the students. All books must be well-cared for. Students may not mark or damage the books in any way. Books lost or damaged must be replaced at cost by the student/family. Students are not to write in any textbook or workbook, unless directed to do so by the teacher.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition constitutes the major source of income for St. Rita's School. It is imperative that it be paid promptly as the school depends on it for its operating budget. Every effort is made to keep tuition rates as affordable as possible. Delinquent tuition may necessitate an at-home suspension at the discretion of the principal.

The financial responsibilities of enrolling a child in St. Rita's School include:

- an annual registration fee (non-refundable, and due at time of registration),
 - covers processing of registration, student insurance, educational materials, and physical education equipment.
- tuition (paid annually or monthly)
- Uniforms
- Supplies
- Volunteering
- support of PTG fundraisers.
- Other Fees:
 - 6th grade camp
 - 8th grade graduation fee
 - due and payable on a predetermined date to be announced to parents. The 8th grade student will not take part in graduation activities without payment
 - other field trip fees

The policy regarding late or missed payments is delineated in the agreement signed by all parents at registration (and re-registration each year). At the time of re-registration each spring, all commitments to the school must be cleared or up-to-date or a student will not be considered re-registered. These commitments include all tuition payments, minimum levels of PTG fundraisers, service hours, miscellaneous fees (texts, library books, camps, etc.).

TUITION ASSISTANCE

St. Rita's School provides some tuition assistance through fundraising, grant writing, and the generosity of people who contribute to the school. The amount is limited and is only a partial assistance program. Tuition Assistance does not roll over to the following school year. A new application with updated financial verification is required each year at registration. **Without this new application and verifications, full tuition payments are required.** The principal must approve all applicants for tuition assistance. Applications are available in the school office. Funding is given on a "first come-first served" basis.

VISITORS

All individuals must report to the school office, sign in the Visitor's Log Book, notify the secretary, and wait in the office. Visitors are not allowed to go directly to the classroom or lunch area to

Speak to a child without reporting to the office first. This procedure ensures the safety of all students.

WALKING TO/FROM SCHOOL

The school administration recommends that students not walk to and from school alone. Students are not allowed to wait for their rides off campus; instead they should wait with their teacher in the designated pick up areas for safety reasons. Students should have a note from their parents on file in the office giving permission to walk home.

HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

I, _____(Print Parent Name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the St. Rita's School Parent Student Handbook. I agree to follow and respect ALL the policies and procedures in the handbook.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

I, _____(Print Child Name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the St. Rita's School Parent Student Handbook. I agree to follow and respect ALL the policies and procedures in the handbook.

Child Signature

Date

Child Signature

Date

Child Signature

Date

Child Signature

Date

RETURN TO SCHOOL OFFICE