

# HOLY GHOST CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS



**2017-2018**

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**ACCREDITED BY**

**TEXAS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE  
TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY**

The administration of Holy Ghost School maintains the right to unilaterally amend or withdraw any policy or matter set forth herein at any time. By no means is this handbook considered all inclusive. Administration and staff will exercise professional judgment and discretion to address situations fairly and consistently. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made. In the absence of a school policy, the school will abide by the policies set forth by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and the Catholic Schools Office.

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## **Holy Ghost Catholic School**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Holy Ghost Catholic School, rich in faith and cultural diversity, under the spiritual guidance of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, strives to:

- \***Discover and develop** the God-given gifts of each student;
- \***Provide** a challenging academic curriculum guided by the capability of each child
- \***Inspire** our students to continue the legacy of service to parish and community

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Holy Ghost School is a part of the total Catholic Community of Holy Ghost Parish. The purpose of Holy Ghost School is to make known the love of God the Father, revealed through the Son, Jesus. This is achieved through the spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical development of the student. At Holy Ghost, we strive to develop the intellectual potential of students according to their abilities. We want students to come to know what it means to be a Catholic Christian and to grow in the ability to respond to the demands asked of them. Self-discipline is emphasized as a means of obtaining the high moral integrity we expect of all our students. While personal growth is of the utmost importance, we want each student to become aware of the needs of others, to take responsibility in serving others, and in helping to build the Christian Community. Indeed, each student is called to be truly a witness to Christ.

### **GOALS**

- To continue to develop strong Catholic Administrative Governance
- To achieve optimal academic leadership from the faculty and staff
- To develop a strong Catholic education excellence that fosters a solid moral character and high academic skills

### **HISTORY**

Holy Ghost school opened in 1948 and was staffed by the Holy Spirit Sisters. At the time, it was the only Catholic school in this area of Houston. At one time, Holy Ghost School serviced over 1000 students.

### **ACCREDITATION**

Holy Ghost School is accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCBED), which is recognized and approved by the Texas Education Agency. To gain accreditation, the school must meet the principles and curriculum standards set forth in the Texas Education Agency's Bulletin 560, revised. There is an annual evaluation conducted by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools to ensure that the standards are maintained.

Holy Ghost School received its renewed ACCREDITATION STATUS on May 8, 2013 by TCCBED.

## **ADMISSION POLICIES**

### **Admission - Archdiocesan & Holy Ghost School Requirements**

Students entering Pre-school - First Grade must have reached the age required for each program by September 1 (5 years for Kindergarten, 4 years for PreK-4, and 3 years for PreK-3).

Admission applications will be finalized after all the following required forms have been submitted to the school office: School's Cumulative Record, Report Cards, Achievement Test Scores, Birth Certificate, Baptismal Certificate, First Communion Certificate (if applicable), health records, Emergency Medical Information, PTO Parental Involvement Form, and the After School Program Registration.

All new students are on academic probation for the first nine week grading period. Should it become apparent that a student is unable to succeed on the assigned level, parents will be advised of the school's recommendation and/or decision to change the grade level placement in order to better address the academic needs of the student.

Holy Ghost School reserves the right to refuse registration to students who are considered discipline problems by the faculty and/or administration or whose educational needs cannot be adequately served by the academic program offered at Holy Ghost School. Admission of students is contingent on the parents being in good standing with the school. This presumes that the parents know and abide by the regulations as set forth in the Student/Parent Handbook and support the philosophy of Catholic Education. **The signed Handbook Policy Agreement Form must be turned in to the school office no later than two weeks after receiving this document.**

Acceptance of registration of students will be prioritized as follows: returning Holy Ghost students; siblings of returning Holy Ghost students; children of Holy Ghost Church parishioners. All other applications will be considered based on need or on a first come first serve basis.

### **Admissions and Non-discrimination Statement**

Holy Ghost School admits all students to the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to the student body. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and/or ethnic origin in the administration of its admission, athletic, or scholarship programs.

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

### **Tuition/Fees Payment Plan**

Tuition rates and fees for the academic year are determined by the Archdiocese of Galveston Houston in accordance with the Inner City Transformational Model. Families must go through the FACTS Management Company Grant and Aid analysis online procedure in order for the school to determine tuition costs.

Holy Ghost School has partnered with FACTS Management Company to provide our families a streamlined and customized method to handle payments for the tuition and fees.

- **Payment Date:** The 10<sup>th</sup> of each month has been set as the date. FACTS will automatically withdraw from your checking or savings account your payment due. However, you can make payments on line from the convenience of your home or office

prior to this date.

- Convenience & Security: Your payments are processed securely through a bank to bank transaction.
- Insurance: FACTS offers this optional benefit for only \$14 per year per family. In the event of death of the Responsible Party or spouse, the remaining tuition balance owed for the current school year will be paid by FACTS. Again, this is "optional".
- Consumer Account: You may check your personal account anytime.

With FACTS, Holy Ghost School still maintains decision-making control. As always, the school will continue to work with families should special circumstances or "hardship" cases arise during the school year.

### **Tuition Non-Payment**

Tuition is the primary revenue source of our school, and these funds are used to pay the monthly bills our school incurs: teacher and staff salaries, utilities, maintenance and repairs, etc.) Therefore, it is imperative that families pay their tuition obligation in a timely manner to ensure the effective operation of the school.

If a family has not made their scheduled tuition payment, they will be notified by FACTS. FACTS will make two more collection attempts, which will incur additional fees for each attempt. The principal will contact the family within 15 days of the past due payment to discuss the past due balance and schedule a meeting to discuss a payment plan. Parents will be afforded an additional 15 days to meet the conditions of the payment plan. If the family is not abiding by the plan and the account is 45 days past due, the student is subject to administrative withdrawal.

Withdrawal of a student due to non-payment of tuition is not a matter that can be grieved.

### **HEALTH POLICIES**

There is a Health Coordinator on campus at Holy Ghost School. Her goal is to maintain a healthy school environment. She is responsible for complying with certain laws and requirements mandated by the local and state health departments and the Texas Education Agency. Please complete the Emergency Information Card provided by the school. If necessary, please call the school's Health Coordinator to discuss your child's health problems or concerns.

The school is serviced by the Christus Based Clinics once a week. Required forms must be completed and signed by parents giving permission for treatment by their personnel.

### **Communicable Diseases/Illnesses**

In order to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases as much as possible, a student will not be permitted to remain in school if he/she has the following symptoms:

1. Fever - 100.4 or above
2. Vomiting
3. Diarrhea
4. A rash that is not easily identified
5. Symptoms of a communicable disease.
6. Feeling too ill to remain in school.

Should your child have any of these symptoms before school, please keep him/her home. Every child should be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school.

While many communicable diseases are now controlled through the required immunization programs, there are still illnesses and rashes that occur regularly. The Texas Department of Health provides guidelines for reporting, treating and school exclusion for many rashes or diseases. For example:

- **Chicken Pox(Varicella)** — a child may return to school after all the blisters have crusted.
- **Impetigo** — may return to school with written permission from the physician after treatment has begun.
- **Conjunctivitis** (Pink Eye) — written permission from the physician or the eyes are clear.
- **Pediculosis** (Head Lice) — after treatment with a medicated shampoo or lotion formulated for head lice. The child must see the school nurse before going to the classroom.
- **Ringworm of the Scalp** — with written permission from the physician after treatment has begun.
- **Scabies** — with written permission from the physician after treatment.
- **Tuberculosis** (TB) — with written permission from the physician after treatment has begun.

### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

In the event of serious illness or an accident or injury, school personnel will attempt to contact the parent or guardian first. An ambulance will be called to transport a student to the nearest hospital. In case of an emergency, a school employee will remain with your child until you arrive at school or the treatment site.

If a student should have a medical emergency at school or at a school-related activity and the parents cannot be reached, school personnel will need written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment. Parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Please keep this information up-to-date (name of physician, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.) throughout the year. Please contact the school nurse to update this information.

### **Immunizations**

Every student enrolling in the District for the first time must provide satisfactory evidence of required immunizations. The responsibility for providing immunization records for school entry lies solely with the parent or guardian. Every public health clinic and most physicians' offices can provide that information. The school Health Coordinator has a list of required immunizations by age. In addition, the health department sometimes changes or adds required immunizations, and boosters may be required at different ages.

### **Exemptions for Immunization Requirement**

The Texas Catholic School Superintendents, with the support of their Bishops, have decided to require immunization for all students enrolling in Catholic Schools in Texas with the only exception being a medical exemption by a physician for medical conditions recognized by the Texas Health and Safety Code. Therefore, all students must be up-to-date on immunizations

required by the Texas Health and Safety Code. If a new student enrolls and is in the process of seeking a medical exemption, the enrollment would be provisional, allowing the parents at least two weeks to obtain the required immunizations.

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or the reason for non-compliance must be documented. Students who are not fully immunized may be restricted from school attendance during an outbreak of any disease that a child is not immunized against, if the local health department declares an epidemic situation.

The **only exception** to the foregoing requirement is a medical exemption signed by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) authorized to practice in the State of Texas, including the physician's license number. Immunizations are not in conflict with the Catholic faith. Conscientious objections or waivers, which may be permissible for attendance in public schools, do not qualify as an exemption in Catholic Schools in Texas. (Atty. Gen. Op. GA-0420)

### **Administration of Medication at School**

Your child may have an illness which requires medication for relief or cure that does not prevent his or her attendance at school. When possible, such medication should be taken at home. However, according to Texas State Legislature, a medication may be dispensed to a student by school personnel if the following requirements are met by the parent/guardian requesting this service:

1. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to schedule medication doses in such a manner that medication brought to school will be kept to a minimum.
2. Medication (oral, topical, prescription or non-prescription) may be administered to students only upon written request by the parent/guardian and physician of administration, exact dates medication is to be given, liability release (allergic reactions) and signature of parent or legal guardian. Parents/Guardians must deliver and pick up, in the school office, the medicine to be administered.
3. All medication, prescription, or non-prescription, must be given in its original container and be properly labeled in English. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label stating the student's name and date filled. Non-prescription medication must be in the original container indicating directions for use and labeled with the student's name.
4. If there is a medication discrepancy that might be injurious to the student, the school Health Coordinator/principle designee has the responsibility to question the discrepancy or refuse to give the medication.
5. If a medication is prescribed "as necessary" (for cough, headache, etc.), the parent/guardian must come to the school and administer the **PRN** (when necessary) medication.
6. Exception to PRN medication is the diagnosed asthmatic, epileptic, or diabetic student whose medicine can be administered by the school Health

Coordinator/principle designee when the parent/guardian request is on file.

7. It is the responsibility of the student to report to the clinic to take any medication to be administered at school.
8. At the end of the school year, all medication is to be picked up by the parent/guardian, or it will be destroyed at that time.
9. In the absence of the Health Coordinator, the principle designee must administer medication.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **Homework**

Homework assignments reinforce the skills previously taught, foster habits of independent study, and meet growth needs of the individual. The work will encourage and facilitate, but not demand, parental involvement.

### **Suggested Time Allotment**

Grades PK-K	15 minutes
Grades 1 – 2	30 minutes
Grades 3 - 4	45 minutes
Grades 5 – 6	60 minutes
Grades 7 - 8	90 minutes

### **Late Work/Make-up Work Guidelines**

Assignments missed during excused absences must be completed within a reasonable time. (Reasonable time is usually the number of days missed plus 1 more day). School work missed during an unexcused absence cannot be made up.

Allowances may be made if there are excusable, extenuating circumstances such as an extended illness.

If a student is released during the school day, the school should be notified, in writing, in advance, and the parent/guardian is required to come to the school office and sign out the student.

### **Grading**

Grades are based upon class performance, tests, projects, homework and class work. Numerical and letter grade explanations are printed on the report cards.

- It is the student's responsibility to make up work missed when absent.
- Late work will be penalized.
- Students receive E, S, N, and U conduct grades.



## Report Cards

Report cards are issued to students four times each academic year. Holy Ghost Catholic School uses the Archdiocesan grading scale:

Outstanding	<b>A+</b>	99 – 100	<b>E</b>	Excellent
	<b>A</b>	95 - 98		
	<b>A-</b>	93 - 94		
Above Average	<b>B+</b>	91 - 92	<b>S</b>	Satisfactory
	<b>B</b>	88 - 90		
	<b>B-</b>	86 - 87		
Average	<b>C+</b>	84 - 85	<b>N</b>	Needs Improvement
	<b>C</b>	80 - 83		
	<b>C-</b>	78 - 79		
Below Average	<b>D+</b>	76 - 77	<b>U</b>	Unsatisfactory
	<b>D</b>	72 - 75		
	<b>D-</b>	70 - 71		
Failure	<b>F</b>	0 - 69		

The dates of report card and progress report distribution are marked on the school's monthly calendar for parent notification.

Report cards and progress reports are withheld when financial responsibilities to the school have not been met. These include tuition, fees, library fines or payments for lost or damaged books.

Any request of a grade change will only be taken into consideration by the principal in consultation with the teacher of record.

## Athletic Eligibility

Students receiving **one** grade of **69** or below on either a Report Card or a Progress Report will be ineligible for **3 weeks**. Any student receiving a conduct grade of "U" will be ineligible for **3 weeks**. If an athlete is suspended, s/he may not attend practice or games. This suspension time is meant to prioritize coursework and improve grades. Attending practice and games does not allow the student appropriate time or focus on coursework. If a student becomes ineligible, a notification form will be sent home to verify the length and reason for suspension. Form must be returned to the Athletic Director on the following school day. Suspensions will begin immediately. The student will remain suspended from all team activities until the form is returned. The Athletic Director and the Principal will have the final word on this issue.

## Absence/Tardiness

### Attendance

In compliance with the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED), Holy Ghost Catholic School follows compulsory attendance laws. There are at least 180 days of instruction per school year.

School hours are from 7:55 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday-Friday. The school offers supervision for students from 7:15 to 7:55 a.m. in the gym, as well as from 3:15 to 3:30 p.m.

Students are not to be on campus at other times unless they are part of an organized activity. Students who are on campus outside of school hours must be directly supervised (visually supervised) by a parent. Students who remain on campus after pickup time will be sent to the Extended Day Program, and all fees will apply. Extended Day is available only on days of instruction as denoted in the annual calendar. Each child enrolled at Holy Ghost is automatically registered for Extended Day for the convenience of the parents.

Daily school attendance is the only effective way to assure continued academic progress. **Students absent for more than 18 days of the school year for any reason may be retained at the sole discretion of the Principal.** A Principal/Parent/Teacher Conference may be scheduled to inform the parent of the Principal's decision. School absence is categorized in the following manner:

- **Absence Due to Illness:** If a student is unable to come to school because of illness, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school office by calling and sending the reason for the absence in writing upon the student's return. Students are responsible for makeup work and tests. These students have an equal amount of days to complete the work in order to receive a grade and not a zero. Absence of more than 3 days in a row is serious and requires a doctor's note for returning to school.
- **Family Emergency,** such as death in the immediate family and serious or prolonged illness, is always handled on an individual basis. Special care and consideration for the student and his/her family will dictate the procedure that the school will follow in such circumstances.
- **Absence for Other Reason:** When a student is absent from school for any reason other than illness or family emergency, the student will not be given make-up work in advance. The school is not obligated to provide special services when a parent chooses to schedule activities that cause student absence on compulsory attendance days. It is the parent/student's responsibility to make sure that missed work is completed upon returning to school.
- **Tardiness:** Tardiness disrupts the learning environment for all students. Students who are not with their classes at 7:55 a.m. for morning prayer are tardy and must report to the school office accompanied by their parent/guardian, and the student will receive a tardy slip. Be on time to school each day by 7:55 in the gym to begin the day. Excused tardies are those with a note from a professional office (Dr., Dentist, etc). Unexcused tardies are parent/family related excuses. School

administration may offer extra time to class in the case of citywide traffic or weather issues. **Students arriving after 8:00 am must be escorted to the school office by a parent.**

- **Early Dismissal:** A written note by the parent/guardian is required if a student is to leave campus before regular dismissal time. The student is sent to the office at the designated time and is to be signed out by the parent/guardian. A student returning to school is to report to the school office to be signed in by the parent before being admitted to class. Parents picking children up early should report to the School Office, not the classroom.
- **A note explaining student absence is to be sent to the school office upon the student's return to school.**

### **No Tardy Party**

At the end of each quarter, students who have no tardies for the entire quarter will be invited to participate in a "no tardy party" at the school during the school day.

### **Promotion/Retention**

Students shall be promoted or retained after evaluation of the student's academic performance. To be promoted, a student must have completed or mastered the work satisfactorily in each of the core subjects (English, math, reading/literature, religion, social studies, and science). If a student's final average is below 70 in any of the core subjects, it is at the sole discretion of the Principal as to the student's retention.

When the possibility of retention exists, the parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be notified by the end of the first semester and the student will be placed on academic probation. Confirmation of retention shall be communicated in writing to parents.

### **Records**

Student records are kept in the school office. Parents may make an appointment to review the records and standardized test scores. Records will be held until financial obligations are met. Non-custodial parents will be sent a copy of academic records (report cards) as requested.

### **Non-Custodial parent/Parent Custody Rights**

Non-custodial parents will be provided records of their student's progress if they request a copy in writing. This information will be shared after the custody agreement with judge's signature is presented to the principal. A fee may be charged to non-custodial parents for shipment and handling of records.

### **Standardized Testing**

The IOWA Test will be administered to grades K-8 each year during a designated testing window. These tests will help determine the needs of each child in the classroom so that teachers can

differentiate curriculum according to the strengths and weaknesses as determined by the scores. Parents are informed of the results of the test during the month of May.

## **Use of Technology and Social Media**

### **Acceptable Use Policy for the Use of Computers and Telecommunications**

Computing, data storage, and information retrieval systems are designed to serve the students, faculty, staff and volunteers of the school/institution community. Network and Internet access is provided to further the legitimate educational goals of this institution. The school provides computing and network resources for the use of students, employees, and others affiliated with the school. Members of the school community are encouraged to use the computers, software packages, electronic mail (E-mail), or outside school network software for educational or school related activities and to facilitate the efficient exchange of useful information. However, the equipment, software, and network capacities provided through the school computer services are and remain property of the school. All users are expected to conduct their on-line activities in an ethical and legal fashion. The use of these resources is a privilege, not a right. Misuse of these resources will result in the suspension or loss of these privileges, as well as disciplinary, legal, and/or monetary consequences. Appropriate or acceptable educational uses of these resources include:

- \* Accessing the Internet to retrieve information from libraries, databases, and World Wide Web sites to enrich and expand curriculum is encouraged.
- \* E-mail capabilities may be used to facilitate distance learning projects.
- \* List serves and newsgroups may be used to gain access to current information on local, state, national, and world events.

Examples of inappropriate or unacceptable use(s) of these resources include, but are not limited to, those uses that violate the law, the rules of network etiquette, or hamper the integrity or security of any network connected to the Internet. Some unacceptable practices include:

\*Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state law, including but not limited to: copyrighted material; threatening, harassing, pornographic, or obscene material; or material protected by trade is prohibited. The transmission of copyrighted materials without the written permission of the author or creator through school/institution E-mail or other network resources in violation of U.S. copyright law is prohibited. As with all forms of communications, E-mail or other network resources may not be used in a manner that is disruptive to the work or educational environment. The display or transmission of messages, images, cartoons or the transmission or use of E-mail or other computer

messages that are sexually explicit constitute harassment which is prohibited by this school. It is also illegal for anyone to knowingly allow any telecommunications facility under their control to use computers for the transmission of illegal material.

\* The use of personal financial or commercial gain, product advertisement, political lobbying, or the sending of unsolicited junk mail, or chain letters is prohibited. Vandalism is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, any attempt to harm or destroy the data of another user, the network/Internet, or any networks or sites connected to the network/Internet. Attempt to breach security codes and/or passwords will also be considered a form of vandalism.

\* The creation, propagation, and/or use of computer viruses are prohibited.

\* The forgery, reading, deleting, copying, or modifying files and/or data belonging to other users is prohibited.

\* Deleting, examining, copying, or modifying files and/or data belonging to other users are

prohibited.

\* Willful destruction of computer hardware or software, or attempts to exceed or modify the parameters of the system is prohibited. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the school/institution operator from intercepting and stopping E-mail messages which have the capacity to overload the computer resources. Discipline may be imposed for intentional overloading of school/institution computer resources.

Access to the school's E-mail and similar electronic, communication systems is a privilege and certain responsibilities accompany that privilege. School users are expected to demonstrate the same level of ethical and professional manner as is required in face-to-face or written communications. Anonymous or forged messages will be treated as a violation of this policy.

\* Unauthorized attempt to access another person's E-mail or similar electronic communications or to use another's name, E-mail or computer address or workstation to send E-mail or similar electronic communications is prohibited and may subject the individual to disciplinary action.

\* All users must understand that the school cannot guarantee the privacy or confidentiality of electronic documents and any messages that are confidential as a matter of law should not be communicated over the E-mail.

\* The school reserves the right to access E-mail to retrieve school information and records, to engage in routine computer maintenance and housekeeping, to carry out internal investigations, or to disclose messages, data or files to law enforcement authorities.

\* Any information contained on a school computer's hard drive or computer disks which are purchased by the school are considered the property of the school.

This agreement applies to stand alone units as well as units connected to the network or the Internet. Any attempt to violate the provisions of this agreement will result in the revocation of the user's privileges, regardless of the success or failure of the attempt. In addition, school disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. The decision of Holy Ghost Catholic School regarding inappropriate use of technology or telecommunication resources is final. Monetary remuneration will be sought for damage necessitating repair or replacement of equipment.

### **SCHOOL BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM**

The application form for Free/Reduced Lunches must be completed online. If families qualify for Reduced Lunches, the fee will be \$.40 (40 cents) per meal. The regular cost of the lunch will be \$ 3.00 per meal. Breakfast is served in the school cafeteria between 7:15-7:45. Students who wish to eat breakfast must arrive before 7:45a.m. The cost will be \$2.00 per meal or \$0.30 if your family qualifies for Reduced Lunches. The lunch menu is available at the archdiocesan Catholic Schools website.

Lunches may be brought from home if parents do not wish to participate in the lunch program. Canned carbonated drinks and candy are not allowed. A microwave is available for student use in grades 5-8 in the school cafeteria if needed.

The lunch count will be taken daily in homeroom. If your child is late, please indicate to the school office if the student will be purchasing lunch when he/she checks into school.

## COMMUNICATION

### **Important dates 2017-2018**

#### SEPTEMBER

1 **Teacher in-service- NO SCHOOL**

4 **LABOR DAY ~ NO SCHOOL**

14-15 P/T Conferences- Progress reports

#### OCTOBER

7-8 Holy Ghost Parish Bazaar

9 **Teacher In-Service ~ NO SCHOOL**

20 REPORT CARDS

#### NOVEMBER

17 PROGRESS REPORTS

20-24 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

#### DECEMBER

8 8:10 AM Mass ~ Mass uniform required

18-20 5th-8th EXAMS

21 Noon Dismissal

Dec. 22-Jan 5 **CHRISTMAS BREAK**

#### JANUARY

5 **Teacher in-service- NO SCHOOL**

8 Classes Resume

12 REPORT CARDS

15 **Martin Luther King Day- NO SCHOOL**

28-Feb 3 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

#### FEBRUARY

8-9 P/T conferences- Progress Reports

14 Ash Wednesday 8:10 AM Mass ~ Mass uniform required

17 **STEPS FOR STUDENTS!!!**

19 **Teacher In-Service ~ NO SCHOOL**

#### MARCH

12-16 **SPRING BREAK ~ NO SCHOOL**

23 Report Cards

29 Holy Thursday

30 **Good Friday- NO SCHOOL**

#### APRIL

2 **Teacher In-service- NO SCHOOL**

9-20 IOWA ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

27 PROGRESS REPORTS

#### MAY

21-25 5<sup>TH</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> Grade EXAMS

24 Passing of the Light

25 8<sup>th</sup> grade Promotion

28 **Memorial Day- NO SCHOOL**

31 Noon Dismissal

Last Day of School

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Teachers and parents or guardians are encouraged to communicate throughout the school year by phone, Wednesday Folders, written notes or letters, e-mails, and on-site meetings. Social media should not be used for such exchanges between teachers or other school officials and parents. Parents who desire to meet with teachers or other personnel should schedule the meeting in advance by scheduling an appointment via phone call or email to the teacher. Parent communications/messages will be returned within 24 business hours.

Wednesday Folders will be sent home every week with graded papers and information from the office.

Communication between parents and teachers is essential to a strong educational program. There are Parent/Teacher conferences in the Fall and Spring. Parents who wish additional conferences should schedule an appointment with the teacher during his/her conference period. It is not appropriate to expect a conference at a time when a teacher is responsible for supervision of students, including in the morning assembly or in the afternoon pick up line. Parents are requested to call teachers during school hours only. Teacher email is available for communications with all staff.

## **Teacher and Administration/Parent**

Under certain circumstances, the Teacher or Principal may request a conference. It is imperative that you answer this request. If a parent does not make an effort to confirm or reschedule a meeting and does not attend the meeting, the student may be withdrawn from the school at the discretion of the Principal and in consultation with the Superintendent.

## **Non-use of Electronic Devices, including Cell Phones**

### **Cell Phones**

Students are forbidden to use cell phones while they are on campus. Students may bring cell phones to be used for after school events (ie- to call for pick up from club or sport activity after school), but the phones must remain in their backpacks, in the off or silent setting and out of sight. Any cell phone or electronic device, seen in the open, or heard during the school day will be confiscated and held in the office. Parents may retrieve the cell phone or electronic device, but will be assessed a \$25 fee. Other electronic communication devices are not allowed on campus.

## **DRESS CODE**

### **Hair/Jewelry**

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to supervise grooming. Students who need further grooming will be sent home for help.

Boys Hair should be neatly cut, and not longer than shirt collar length. Bangs should not

extend below the eyebrows. No extreme haircuts i.e. shaved heads, shaved designs, or "tails" will be allowed. No bleaching or dying of hair will be permitted. No earrings are allowed. A watch may be worn.

Girls Hair should not interfere with vision nor be an extreme haircut. No bleaching or dying of hair will be permitted. Small stud earrings, ONE PAIR ONLY, and a watch may be worn. Color coded wrist bands are not permitted unless approved by the principal. No make-up, nail polish, or false nails of any kind may be worn at school.

## **Uniforms**

School uniforms serve two important purposes at Holy Ghost School:

Uniforms reinforce the identity and the children's sense of purpose as students of Holy Ghost Catholic School and what they have in common. They promote the "building of community as a Christian value." Uniforms also de-emphasize differences which in our world divide people. Uniforms allow each student to be seen as equals among their peers.

Uniforms are required to be worn by all Holy Ghost School students. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that students come to school in the complete and proper uniform. Uniforms can be purchased through Parker Uniforms located at 3817 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, TX 77025. Please place the student's name on the inside of all articles of clothing and belongings. Students must be neatly dressed in the proper uniform to attend classes. Any student who does not comply with the uniform code and personal grooming regulations as outlined in the handbook, will be sent to the office. The parent/guardian will be called to bring the proper uniform and attire to the school.

### ***Girls***

#### Required

Designated plaid Jumper

White blouse with red piping

Red solid cross tie (Grades 1 through 4)

Designated plaid Skirt

White overblouse

Plaid sailor tie(Grades 5 through 8)

Red cardigan with school emblem

(The hems of skirts and jumpers must be at the knee.)

White bobby, crew, or knee socks (ANKLE SOCKS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE)

Plain white or black tights may be worn in cold weather

Black leather dress shoes (no boots or shoes above ankle) w/no more than 1-1 1/2 heels (no higher)

#### Optional

Red polo with school emblem

Navy skort

### ***Boys***

#### Required

Solid navy twill slacks, straight cut only

White oxford button down shirt (tucked in at the waist at all times)



**Solid** white undershirts under the shirt

Plaid tie

Red cardigan with school emblem

Black belt

White or black crew socks (ANKLE SOCKS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE)

Black leather dress shoes (no boots or shoes above the ankle)

Optional

Red polo with school emblem

Navy shorts

***Students are required to bring tennis shoes to change into for PE.***

### ***Spirit Day Dress***

On designated Spirit Days, students may wear their Holy Ghost t-shirt, jeans and tennis shoes to school. Jeans must be neat with no holes, rips or tears (intentional or accidental) and must not be “sagging.” Skinny jeans, jeggings, or capris are also not permissible.

### ***All Students*** – Boys and Girls

A red sweatshirt with the Holy Ghost insignia or the official red cardigan sweater can be worn by all students during cool weather. In extremely cold weather, a heavy coat or jacket may be worn over the sweater or sweatshirt when changing classes, but not in the classroom. The coat or jacket is not to be worn in place of the Holy Ghost sweatshirt or sweater during class.

Articles of clothing bearing INAPPROPRIATE logos/sayings of any kind are never to be worn by students at school.

Immodest dress (i.e. clothing which clings to the body or which inappropriately exposes parts of the body) may never be worn to school.

### **Mass Uniform**

On Mass days and on other special occasions as deemed by the administration, the students must wear the full required uniform. For the girls, this is the blouse, jumper/skirt, and tie. For boys, this is the white oxford shirt, pants, belt and tie. Students are not permitted to wear sweatshirts or jackets in church. They may, however, wear the official school uniform cardigan sweater. Shorts and skirts are not permissible on Mass days.

### **Free Dress**

Free dress may be allowed for students under certain circumstances at various times during the year and must be approved by the administration. On days when free dress is allowed, all rules governing dress and grooming, except those pertaining to the wearing of the regular uniform, will be enforced.

### **Responsibility**

It is the parent/guardian’s and student’s responsibility to ensure that the student is appropriately

dressed and groomed for each day that he/she attends Holy Ghost School. Should a student show up for school not dressed and groomed properly disciplinary action will be taken, including, but not limited to, a demerit slip being issued, the student being sent home to dress/groom properly or detention.

In as much as it is true that loop-holes may be found in any code, it is the expectation of Holy Ghost School that parents/guardians and students will use good judgment in complying with the dress and grooming code. To avoid such a misunderstanding, use the following rule: **If you are not sure if it is allowed, do not wear or do it!**

### **ASBESTOS INFORMATION**

In accordance with AHERA:

Holy Ghost along with other schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston has completed an asbestos management plan that has been submitted to the Texas Department of Health. A copy of this management plan is available for public review (with at least 5 days written notice) at the parish office during business hours, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

If you have any further question, please contact:

Holy Ghost Catholic School  
6920 Chimney Rock Rd.  
Houston, Texas 77081  
713-668-5327

Office of Risk Management  
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston  
1700 San Jacinto  
Houston, Texas 77002 713-659-5461

### **BEGINNING AND DISMISSAL TIMES**

School hours are from 7:55 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday-Friday. The school offers supervision for students from 7:15 to 7:55 a.m. in the gym. Students are not allowed to be dropped off before 7:15 in the morning. Students in grades Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will be dismissed at 3:10 outside the office gate. Students in grades 3-8 will be dismissed at 3:15 outside the gate facing Bellaire.

### **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES**

In the morning, students may be dropped off between 7:15 -7:55 outside the school gym. Please pull up all the way to the front of the drop off line. Parents who choose to park and walk their children in may not park in the drop off area. Please park across the street and walk your children inside the gym.

At the end of the school day, students will be dismissed in the car line. PLEASE DO NOT WALK UP TO PICK UP YOUR CHILDREN. This slows the car line down and can create dangerous situations of children weaving between cars. Exceptions are made for parents and siblings who do not have cars and are walking or utilizing city transportation. Parents should have their family car sign posted in the window to streamline the pickup procedure and should not be on cell phones in the line, so that they are aware and following the directions of the staff working the car line. Parents who are only picking up children in grades 3 or below should exit the car line through the “parking spots” and then out to Bellaire drive. Parents picking up both upper and

lower grade children will first pick up their younger children and then proceed around the building to the next gate to pick up their older children. They will then exit to Chimney Rock.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER/ EMERGENCY DISMISSAL**

In the event of emergency dismissal or unscheduled holidays, the Archdiocesan policy is generally, but not always, for Catholic Schools to follow HISD's decision about closing school in inclement weather. Should an emergency situation involve only Holy Ghost Catholic School, room representatives/Principal will contact school families. An Emergency Contact System (IRIS) will notify families through cell phone, home phone and by email. We must have the most current email addresses and cell phone numbers for your family on file.

Parents/guardians are cautioned to exercise their judgment in situations, which may only affect their local neighborhoods (such as flooding). In such instances, children may be released early to parents/guardians to insure their safe arrival home. In the event the school is forced to close for an emergency or weather event, the day(s) missed will be made up during the school year at the discretion of the Pastor and the Superintendent.

### **CHILD ABUSE**

Holy Ghost Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Texas. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

### **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM**

This program provides adult supervision after school with creative and educational activities for the students enrolled in the program. During this time, students have snack time (snacks are provided by parents/guardians for their children), free play, supervised study time and creative activities.

Every child is to be registered for the After School Program. This allows for the unexpected times when children need to stay after school. The fees for this program are payable monthly.

After school care fee is \$3.00 an hour per child. All students must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. Staff members are employed only until 6:00 p.m. It is only common courtesy to respect the time of closure. **NOTE: A late charge of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for each minute after 6:00 p.m. when a student remains in Extended Day.**

In the event of an emergency, parents/guardians are asked to notify the school at 713-668-5327. There will be no After School Program on the day before Christmas Break or the last day of school.

### **LUNCH VISITATION POLICY**

Parents will be allowed to have lunch on occasion with their children and should register as a visitor with the school office upon entering campus. Parents shall not leave campus with their child to have lunch.

## **VISITORS**

All Visitors to campus must sign in at the office and receive a visitor badge. Upon leaving campus, the visitor must sign out at the office. Visitors who will be volunteering on campus or regularly come for lunch must be Virtus trained and pass a background check.

## **DISCIPLINE CODE**

### **Rules/Consequences/Exceptions**

The purpose of this code is to promote and establish an environment within the school's faith community by which students, teachers, and parents develop understanding, trust, and respect for one another. The teaching of Christian values and love will require joint cooperation among students, teachers, and parents.

**ALL FACULTY AND STAFF, AS WELL AS THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR, ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENFORCING THIS CODE FOR ALL STUDENTS.**

### **Discipline**

Good discipline originates in the home. The parent is the first teacher of his/her child and should develop in the child good behavioral habits and proper attitudes toward school. A parent should:

- Recognize that the teacher takes the place of the parent while the child is in school.
- Teach the child respect for law and authority, the rights of others, and private and public property.
- Arrange for prompt and regular school attendance and comply with attendance rules and procedures.
- Work with the school in carrying out recommendations made in the best interest of the child, including discipline.
- Talk with the child about school activities and show an active interest in all records given (i.e., report cards, progress reports, special communications, disciplinary slips, etc.)

Any child who fails to cooperate with school personnel may be asked to withdraw after consultation with his/her parent(s) and/or guardian. This cooperation includes all classroom procedures, class work, homework, and/or all activities that take place during the normal teaching day and after-school activities.

Every teacher has full permission to correct or discipline any student who violates the rules of the class/school.

### **Discipline Consequences**

Since our school is a PK-8 campus, consequences will be administered with respect to the age and maturity level of the student.

Disciplinary options of which one or more may be used:

- Verbal reprimand;
- Seat assignment change;

- Extra assignments to be done at home;
- Teacher/Student conference;
- Parents/Guardians contact via phone call, note or conference;
- Conference with intervention team assigned to the individual grade level i.e.,  
(administrator, teacher, student, parent(s) and any other appropriate personnel);
- Behavior contract;
- Supervised campus or community service assignment while serving detention;
- Time-out in another classroom until the completion of the assignment or time limit;
- Confiscation of a prohibited nuisance item;
- Morning detention;
- Lunch detention;
- Saturday school
- In-class disciplinary action;
- Exclusion from extra-curricular activity;
- Grade penalty for copying, plagiarism and/or cheating;
- In-school or Out- of-school suspension;
- Exclusion from Field Trip;
- Restoration or restitution; (as applicable)
- Removal of student from classroom;
- Withdrawal of various student privileges;
- Other appropriate disciplinary options as deemed necessary by the administration;
- Expulsion;

\*Law enforcement will be contacted if the behavior warrants such action.

### **Disciplinary Probation**

A student's continuous misbehavior may result in being placed on disciplinary probation by the principal. The principal will determine the length of the probation and notify the teacher, student and parents of the reasons for the terms of probation. Probation may occur in class or in a setting of in-school suspension. During the probation and at the end of the probation, the parents will be informed of the student's progress. At the conclusion of the probation, the principal, in consultation with the student's teachers, will determine whether sufficient improvement in behavior has occurred. If insufficient progress is noted, the principal may consider other actions.

If a problem persists, the child may be removed from classes until parents attend a conference with the teachers and/or the principal.

### **Suspensions and Expulsions**

The following offenses committed by students are potential reasons for suspension or expulsion, pending a Principal's conference with the parent(s) and/or guardian(s). Suspensions over five (5) days and expulsions shall require the approval of the Superintendent.

It is impossible to list all of the behaviors which may be deemed unacceptable; however, the following are major offenses that will not be tolerated at Holy Ghost Catholic School and will result in an office referral and may lead to suspension or expulsion:

- Use, sale, distribution, or possession of real or fake: tobacco, alcohol, weapons, drugs, or other illegal/controlled substances and other items

- Defiance of authority in word or deed by students or parents
- Defiance of authority by passive refusal to follow the rules or policies of the school
- Destruction or vandalism of school property (In each instance, restitution will be paid to the school to repair or replace the property)
- Serious theft or dishonesty
- Use of crude, sexual, or offensive language or possession of such materials
- Serious or continuous disruptive behavior
- Acts or threats of aggression or violence or any instance of bullying or harassment
- Acts of sexual harassment
- Violation of internet code of ethics or the acceptable use policy
- Photographing or video-recording students or school personnel without permission
- Habitual unauthorized absences or tardiness
- Failure to follow the Honor Code
- Conduct at school or elsewhere which would reflect adversely on the Catholic school and the Church.

### **Complaint/Appeal**

#### **Grievance Procedure – Complaint/Appeal**

Although the Archdiocese endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within its schools, it recognizes that misunderstandings or differences of opinion sometimes occur. Ideally, such matters can be resolved informally by a parent meeting with the immediate authoritative person (teacher) to discuss the matter. If, however, the matter is not settled to the parent's satisfaction, the parent may send a formal letter of complaint to the principal within five (5) working days following the occurrence of the event on which the complaint is based. Please contact the principal for a copy of the Archdiocese's current appeals process/complaint procedure for further details.

### **Bullying/Harassment/Cyber-bullying**

#### **Bullying**

Holy Ghost Catholic School believes that as Catholic Christians everyone has the right to be treated with respect. School administration and staff work to prevent harassment in all forms, including bullying and cyber-bullying. Bullying is often hard to identify. Victims do not want to cause more trouble nor do they want to admit that they are bullied and the bully hides their actions or defends it as play or normal "joking". Bullying is defined by a power imbalance between a bully and their target. This power can be derived from physical size, strength, popularity, gender or verbal skill. Bullying can happen physically, emotionally, socially or via technology called cyber-bullying. Bullying involves repeated acts of physical, emotional or social behavior that are intentional, controlling and hurtful. Bullying persists even when the target has asked for it to stop. Bullying is a learned behavior that is either direct or indirect. Direct bullying is usually seen and felt readily; examples might be: shoving, kicking, intentionally scaring or physically intimidating someone. Indirect bullying is also called relational aggression.

It is difficult to identify and more difficult to remedy. Examples of relational aggression include: spreading rumors, teasing, exclusion and name calling. Cyber-bullying is defined as use of the

internet, cell phone or other electronic device to send or post text messages or visual images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.

Holy Ghost Catholic School will not tolerate any form of bullying. Students are encouraged to report any incident of harassment to their teacher, counselor, principal, or any school staff. At Holy Ghost Catholic School we use a three tiered process to combat the destructiveness of bullying and to promote kindness and good social skills.

The three tiers are as follows:

#### *Level One Intervention*

If a child is accused of bullying the accusation will be addressed by the classroom teacher and an educational remedy is put into place. Most of the time, students do not know that their behavior is hurtful to others. Society has evolved into a much more verbally critical and sarcastic environment and sometimes educating children to appropriate and loving interactions with one another is all that is needed.

#### *Level Two Intervention*

If a child is accused of bullying a second time the school counselor will be invited to assess the situation with the teacher. Sometimes this means having individual counseling and/or a classroom guidance lesson on what bullying is and how to interact in a kind and assertive manner.

#### *Level Three Intervention*

If a child is accused of bullying a third time a referral is made to the Principal to begin the discipline process. The parents will work with the school to develop a plan of action to help the student develop their social skills and to eliminate all bullying activity. The Principal reserves the right to develop any individualized behavior plan that is seen as necessary to ensure the physical and emotional safety for all the students. Continued bullying may result in further disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

### **Harassment**

Harassment, as defined for Holy Ghost Catholic School, is that which is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive, adversely affecting a student's education or that which creates a hostile or abusive educational environment. The act of harassment is a direct violation of the Christian behaviors and values upheld in the school. Harassment involving students, school and parish faculty, parents and visitors will be investigated and necessary action taken immediately. Depending on the nature of the harassment, each incident will be reviewed independently and action taken may range from a disciplinary report to expulsion from the school and in some cases, legal action. Should anyone become a victim of or witness harassment, the following steps should be taken:

- 1) Immediately notify someone in authority, such as teacher, principal, or priest.
- 2) After reporting the harassment, keep the information confidential.
- 3) If necessary, write an account of what happened for future reference.

Holy Ghost Catholic School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (seriously, in jest, online, at school or even after school hours) face detention, suspension and/or expulsion.

## **Harassment - Sexual**

Sexual harassment is immoral and reprehensible and will not be tolerated in the Catholic School. It subverts the mission of Catholic Education and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of all affected persons. In both obvious and subtle ways, the very possibility of sexual harassment is destructive to individuals and to the Church/School community as a whole.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances or imitations.
- Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements or interfering with work, studies, or play.
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report sexual harassment.
- Obscene comments of a sexual nature can be deemed as sexual harassment.

## **Blogs/Social Networking**

Engagement in online blogs and social media sites may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the parent/student's blog or social media includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **After School Activities**

In order to participate in After School Activities, students must have no grade lower than D (70), or S, or conduct grade lower than N on their report cards or progress reports. A student must withdraw from these activities until these grades are returned to the minimum on the next report. After school sports offered at Holy Ghost School - depending upon the number of students participating- are the following: Soccer Basketball Track Any additional activities/classes will be listed in the weekly newsletters as they become available.

### **Special Events**

During the school year, Holy Ghost School participates and/or sponsors various special events designed to enhance a child's learning experience, strengthen religious values, and help raise funds. The major events are listed below. It is possible that other activities or class events may occur during the School Year. Notification of these will be listed in the weekly newsletter.

### **Field Trip Policies/Forms**

#### **Field Trips**

Field trips serve the instructional program by utilizing the educational resources of the community that supplement classroom work. To keep with the class's instructional objectives, teachers plan



the field trips. Some field trips are held here on campus. Participation in field trips is a privilege and can be denied to students who fail to meet behavioral requirements. Parents or guardians are required to sign a permission and liability release form in order for the student to participate. Students are not allowed to attend a field trip without this written permission from their parents or guardians. A note or phone call cannot be substituted for this form. Teachers verify and set the number of parents or guardians needed to chaperone during field trips. Parent chaperones are to take an active role in supervising designated students, knowing that the students are ultimately under the jurisdiction of a teacher. Parents who transport students in their vehicle must have a copy of their valid drivers' license, Texas State Driving Record, and proof of insurance on file in the school office, as well as a seat belt for each student transported. Parents must also meet additional requirements and be cleared by the VIRTUS system. Siblings of students participating in class field trips may not attend the outing. Students may only be transported to the designations indicated on the field trip permission forms. All adults interacting or responsible for chaperoning students must be VIRTUS trained.

## **SAFETY**

### **Unlicensed Drivers**

Unlicensed drivers are not permitted to drive on the property or campus of Holy Ghost School or Parish.

### **Fire Drills**

State Law requires that fire drills be held monthly. Additional drills for sheltering in place and inclement weather are run during school hours as deemed necessary by the administration.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### **Service Requirements**

Volunteers are valued members of our school community. **It is mandatory that each family complete a minimum of 20 service hours per school year.** All volunteer activities during the school day will be coordinated with the school office. Volunteers are required to sign in at the office and receive a badge before reporting to their work area. Upon completion of work, volunteers must sign out in the office. Every family is expected to fulfill 20 Service Hours by the middle of May. If not, then there will be a charge of \$30.00 for every hour not fulfilled. There are many opportunities for parents to fulfill these hours throughout the year.

Please make other arrangements for younger children as they may not be brought to school during volunteer hours. Working parents may have family members volunteer in their place. A "Family Service Hour Record " is kept in the office. Helping with the various school activities, events, etc. are ways in which parents can fulfill these hours.

It is an archdiocesan policy that ALL volunteers who work directly with the students must attend the "Virtus Program". Information on the classes can be obtained by going on line at

[www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). You will be notified in the school newsletter of times and dates for classes that may be scheduled here at Holy Ghost parish. Volunteering to help with the Parish Bazaar, the Fish Fry, and the GALA do not require Virtus training.

Volunteers represent the church and school. They should show support for the school and governing policies at all times. Archdiocesan Ethical and Moral Conduct policies hold all volunteers bound by confidentiality. All comments and concerns should be addressed with school administration.

Christian charity and respect shall be observed during any verbal and nonverbal communication at all levels within the school community. The following actions will be termed in violation of Christian charity and may result in dismissal from the school:

- public criticism of school personnel or procedures
- threats of any nature toward personnel or families
- verbal and nonverbal acts of aggression including yelling, screaming, pushing, etc...
- public discussion of student and/or family matters based upon confidential information obtained as a result of volunteer duties, etc...

These regulations/requirements hold the same for all Visitors if they wish to be involved with the students during the school day.

### **The Role of School Organizations**

School associations and organizations are under the direction and leadership of the school principal. To provide sound structure by-laws should be established for associations and organizations. All organization funds belong to the school and are managed by the principal through the school account number. No separate account numbers are allowed. The principal must approve all fund disbursements. Formation of these organizations, as well as the continuance of them, is solely at the discretion of the principal.

- ***Parent/Teacher Organization:*** Parent Teacher and/or Home School Organizations under the leadership of the principal provide parents and educators a vehicle to foster collaboration in educational and social endeavors. The principal must approve all fund disbursements.
- ***Booster Club Organizations:*** Booster Club Organizations under the leadership of the principal assist schools in providing appropriate athletic competition for students. The principal must approve all fund disbursements.

### **Use of School Grounds and Facilities**

Outside of school hours, all use of the school's grounds and facilities is at the discretion of the Pastor.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS AND REFERRALS**

### **Introductory Statement**

Consistent with the contents of the Church document, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, and the Pastoral Statement of the U.S. Bishops, *Persons with Disabilities*, the Archdiocese seeks to include students with special needs in our schools to the extent that the need of such students can be met within the scope of the programs and resources offered. The Catholic Schools Office is aware that it is unrealistic to serve all categories of special need students. However, Holy Ghost Catholic School and the other Catholic Schools are cognizant of the fact that admission of special needs students must be considered and reviewed on an individual basis.

### **Legal References to Special Services**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that local school districts locate, identify, and evaluate all private school students suspected of having a disability (for Holy Ghost Catholic Schools, the local district is Houston ISD). This “Child Find” process must be conducted in consultation with private schools representatives to ensure equitable access for private school students. In IDEA, these children are often referred to as “parentally placed private school children with disabilities,” and the benefits available to them differ significantly from the benefits for children with disabilities enrolled in public schools.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 educational section (frequently called “Section 504”), provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in any program receiving federal assistance. Catholic educators strive to recognize and address the needs of all those who seek a Catholic education. Within our resources, Holy Ghost and other Catholic schools will offer services to eligible students with special needs, when possible. However, private schools are not required to significantly alter their programs, lower or substantially modify their standards to accommodate a child with special needs. Private educational institutions are only required to make minor adjustments to accommodate eligible students.

### **Records for Special Needs Learners**

All psychological and educational evaluations/reports regarding special needs testing of students received from local public schools, persons, or agencies are forwarded to Holy Ghost Catholic School, upon request. These records are kept on file at the school for a period of seven (7) years after the exit of the student. These records are kept in a secure file and area accessible only to the principal, the Intervention Specialist, the Counselor, and any other appropriate staff member working with the student. Parents may view their child’s record at any time. These records may not be forwarded to any other individual or agency.

### **Criteria for Acceptance of Students with Special Needs**

In making a determination regarding the admittance of a particular student, the school will review the child’s ability to meet the school’s academic, behavioral, and physical qualifications. Each Catholic school determines its ability to meet the need of the student applicant. Consideration will be given to the following:

- Student’s demonstrated ability to meet grade level requirements;
- Record of student’s ability to follow school rules and regulations; and
- Student’s ability to meet the physical requirements of attendance.

### **Holy Ghost Services for Special Needs Learners**

New Students – When the Admission Office or the principal is notified that an incoming student may have special learning needs, the principal and other appropriate school staff review current academic, social, medical, and psychological evaluations to determine if the applicant is qualified to enroll, with or without his/her disability. If the applicant is qualified for enrollment, the principal will then determine if reasonable adjustments can be made to the educational program which will accommodate the student's needs. If an admission is determined the school will begin the procedures with parents to discuss a Catholic Accommodation Plan.

Currently Enrolled Students – If a teacher (or parent) is concerned about a child's academic, behavioral, or emotional progress and feels that testing may be needed, he/she will discuss concerns with the parent/family and the Principal, as soon as possible. We work as a team to do what is best for the child and will discuss:

- The student's current educational status, including attendance records, grades, assessment data, and classroom observations;
- Previous educational efforts and strategies provided for the students and the results;
- Documentation of recent vision and hearing screenings;
- Updated general health history inventory; and
- Other information provided by the parents or teachers.

Parents will be expected to disclose any pertinent information that may assist us in educating the student. The principal and staff are responsible for recommending educational alternatives and/or referral to the local school district and/or private agency of the parent's choice for further evaluation. In some cases, the campus may not have the resources necessary to help the child be successful. The principal will then assist the family to locate an appropriate educational program for the child.

Documentation for all referrals must be kept on file. This documentation will be included in the student's records. If an evaluation determines the student requires minor accommodations the school will begin the procedures with parents to discuss a Catholic Accommodation Plan. Accommodations for a child will be noted on the report card and in the child's permanent folder.

### **Student Success Expectations for Special Needs Learners**

All available school resources shall be utilized to promote student success. Lines of communication will be kept open to inform parents of student progress in all areas. Concerns about a student will be addressed initially by the classroom teacher and parent. School success can only be attained through cooperation between parents and educators. Parents are expected to disclose any pertinent information from private resources (diagnoses and recommendations) that would be of specific educational value in programming adequately for their children. If it is determined that the school's resources cannot meet the needs of a student, or if parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to act on the school's recommendations for remediation or diagnostic evaluation, the principal may request withdrawal of the student or deny admission for the following year.

### **Accommodations for Special Needs Learners**

The purpose of an accommodation of any type is to provide the appropriate instruction according to the individual student's special needs. As a result of a diagnostic evaluation, a student meets

certain criteria to qualify for accommodations to his/her schoolwork. In many instances, accommodations (changed in methods of instruction) can be made in the classroom for students with special needs or for struggling students. Students who are diagnosed with a learning difference or who are diagnosed with a special need through the public school system, private doctors, or through special agencies may be referred for special assistance after the administration has verification of the student's recommended accommodations. (Curricular modifications are not provided because modifications require alterations of curricular objectives.) The number of intervention sessions per week, length of sessions, and goals will be determined by the principal and classroom teacher after all available information has been reviewed.

### **Standardized Assessment for Students with Special Needs**

Standardized assessments are one of several means of evaluating student performance. All students participate in the Archdiocese standardized assessment program. Students with disabilities identified through IDEA may require assessment accommodations. These accommodations should be provided on a weekly basis through the classroom teacher. These testing arrangements must be planned for in advance through a meeting with the principal. Any adjustment made on the standardized assessment must be requested from the Catholic Schools Office via special request on the appropriate form.

Holy Ghost Catholic School  
**PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM 2017-2018**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Please sign, date and return this acknowledgment form to your oldest child's teacher. Your signature (and that of your child/children) indicates that you have read this handbook. It also means that you have discussed with your child/children the appropriate items from the handbook, and that you and your child/children agree to abide by the school procedures, regulations and policies discussed in this handbook.

Thank you for your cooperation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Our family has discussed the Holy Ghost Catholic School Parent-Student Handbook. We agree to follow the school procedures, regulations and policies covered in this Handbook for the School Year 2017-2018.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Family Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature Grade Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature Grade Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature Grade Date