

SAINT MATTHIAS SCHOOL

58-25 Catalpa Avenue
Ridgewood, New York 11385
(718) 381-8003

Parent-Student Handbook

Pastor: Monsignor Edward Scharfenberger

Principal: Miss Barbara Wehnes



The purpose of this handbook is to inform you and your student of St. Matthias School's policies and procedures. Your compliance with these policies and procedures is critical to the success of the student-school-home partnership that makes St. Matthias special. With your help we will be able to maximize instructional time, ensure the safety of all involved in our school, and provide a quality educational environment. As with all handbooks, every possible situation cannot be mentioned; therefore, the principal retains the rights of interpretation and amendment of this handbook. Parents will be notified of any changes.

We look forward to sharing in the educational journey that lies ahead for your child. With our Catholic Faith and a strong partnership between home and school, your child will be given the foundation necessary for a lifetime of success.

Please take the time to read this handbook, discuss it with your child, and return the signed form found on page 22.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Saint Matthias School in Ridgewood, Queens, is to empower our students, through formal education, to reach the fullness of their potential as children made in God's image, and to encourage them to direct their talents toward the building of a more just society.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. MATTHIAS SCHOOL

Saint Matthias School, recognizing Jesus as the "Master Teacher", bases its philosophy on the Gospel message. As a school community we strive to further develop our Catholic identity by recognizing each child entrusted to us as a unique gift from God. Providing an environment filled with love and understanding, which is consistent with the educational mission of the Church, we impart the Good News of salvation proclaimed by Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The religious nature of St. Matthias School can be identified by these four components – WORD, WORSHIP, COMMUNITY, and SERVICE. We strive to assist the students in their relationship with Jesus by teaching Scripture and by instilling Christian moral values and beliefs in the way we live our lives. We celebrate the relationship between God and the St. Matthias School community through daily prayer experiences in prayer, monthly liturgies, weekly Para liturgies, and preparation for the sacraments.

The school community of St. Matthias provides a loving and caring environment in which families from diverse cultures can grow in their love of Christ and each other without discrimination in our administration policies or educational programs. The St. Matthias faculty believes service is sharing of time, resources, and energy for God and community. We enable, encourage, and challenge our students to serve as Jesus did.

We commit ourselves to academic excellence, which fosters the intellectual development of faculty and students. Rooted in our faith we enable our students to live out their Christian values in an ever-changing world.

[Adopted 9/2006]

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We live in a complex society filled with challenges and learning opportunities for our children. The greatest gifts will be gained through a strong partnership between the school and home. In order to better understand the foundations of such a partnership, we must examine the roles critical to parents, students, and educators.

Your Role as Parent

Parents are the first and primary educators of their children. From birth to adulthood, our children follow our example in word and action. The lessons you provide your child must compliment and support those of our school for our mission to succeed. Your responsibilities include:

1. Sending the message that “school is important”. You do this by asking daily about lessons learned, following up on all assignments, checking on Progress Reports, and coming for report card conferences. You set the goals for your child. We believe they can each reach their potential.
2. Teaching the importance of respect and responsibility. Expect cooperation and effort in schoolwork. Teach the importance of deadlines and respect for rules, regulations, and school policies. You have chosen to send your child to St. Matthias. This action shows that you accept and support the rules and policies of the school.
3. Becoming an active member of our school community. Many opportunities are available for you to share your time and talents. Become a Home School Association member and support school events.
4. Providing your child with the necessary tools for learning. This includes proper nourishment and hygiene, adequate sleep, and the required school supplies.
5. Making sure your child attends school. Absences seriously affect learning.
6. Supporting the student-school-home partnership in word and action. This includes showing respect for the authority of teachers and following proper policies on conferencing regarding academic or social concerns. Students believe that teachers and parents are models to be followed. The manner in which the parent communicates respect for the school is the way the student will respond.

Your Role as Student

Students bring unique gifts and talents to each classroom and relationship. We believe that each child can reach his/her own potential if provided the proper school environment coupled with collaboration from home. Students must be active in the relationship for them to grow and learn. Each student is responsible for:

1. Trying their best in all they do. Students learn through all senses so they must read, write, speak, listen, and practice each task.
2. Accepting responsibility for their schoolwork and behavior.
3. Showing respect for their school family and the families of others.
4. Showing respect for school property and policies and the property of others.
5. Behavior that reflects the Catholic Faith upon which our school is grounded.
6. Demonstrating pride in their work and behavior as students of St. Matthias School.

The Role of the Teacher

The faculty of St. Matthias gives very generously of their time and talents to the student-school-home partnership. Their commitment to Catholic Education is evident not only in their skillful lessons but in their lives as active Catholics sharing the Gospel Message. As effective educators of St. Matthias School their responsibilities include:

1. Teaching a full curriculum supported by the Diocese of Brooklyn and the State of New York.
2. Continuing their professional development through workshops and classes on educational trends and practices.
3. Teaching each child as a unique gift from God. They will strive to build on strengths and support any areas of weakness.
4. Being a role model of Christian Faith in action and word.
5. Maintaining open, respectful communication within the student-school-home partnership.
6. Adhering to the policies and procedures detailed in the St. Matthias School Faculty Handbook and the Diocesan Personnel Handbook.

ADMISSION POLICY

In order for a child to be enrolled in St. Matthias School from Kindergarten to Grade 8 the following are required:

- 1) Age five by Dec. 31st of the year entering
- 2) Birth certificate
- 3) Baptismal certificate
- 4) Copy of Immunizations
- 5) For transfers from another school: latest report card, Standardized and New York State Test results. The child is interviewed and given a placement test in math, reading, and writing.

FOR ALL STUDENTS RETURNING TO ST. MATTHIAS SCHOOL: Contracts are issued in the spring for all students to re-register for the following school term. All financial responsibilities must be up-to-date for registration to be accepted.

Our Pre-kindergarten program admits children four years of age by December 31st of the year enrolling. Children are interviewed upon registration.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Saint Matthias School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational and admission policies, athletic programs or other school programs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Parents should be aware that the mystery of God's loving relationship as a Father is best revealed in a family where the sacramental presence of Christ is revered and prayer is a part of daily life. It is difficult for a child to understand the importance of religious practice as taught in school if this is not cherished, practiced or supported at home.

Religious Education is the primary purpose and core of Catholic Education. Religious instructions are part of the daily schedule in every grade. Children are provided the opportunity to strengthen their faith through daily prayers, monthly liturgies, and prayer services. The Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation is available to the children during the year. No student, Catholic or non-Catholic, may be exempt from participating in religion classes, worship services, or other prayer experiences.

The Church in its documents recognizes parents as the persons responsible for initiating and sustaining the child in his/her relationship with God. It is our privilege as a faculty to assist parents in this part of their child's growth and development in faith.

SCHOOL HOURS

School begins promptly at 8:15 am. School ends every day, except Wednesday, at 2:30 pm. **On Wednesday, school ends at 1:00 pm.** Note: Any change in school hours for Grades K to 8 is indicated on the monthly calendar or in a letter from the school.

Bells ring at the following times:

8:00 - Children move to classrooms

12:45 - Classes resume

8:15 - Prayer and opening exercises

2:30 - Dismissal

8:30 - Departmental classes begin [grades 3-8]

11:45 - Lunch dismissal

No child is allowed in the building before 7:45 am, except the boys and girls on safety patrol and those holding a tutoring pass. Children may enter the building and be seated in the gym between 7:45 and 8:00. **WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY CHILD ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS BEFORE 7:45 am.** Parents are requested not to congregate outside the school between 7:45 and 8:15 am.

LATENESS

Any child who is not in the school building by the 8:15 or 12:45 bell is recorded as late. A written late notice will be given to the student requiring your signature and an explanation for the child's lateness. This notice is to be given to the teacher the next day. A child who is late must also obtain a late pass from the office and present it to the homeroom teacher. Punctuality is important throughout the school year. Any child who is habitually late will have detention on a progressive basis.

LUNCH PROCEDURES

The majority of our student body remains in school for lunch. Children who stay for lunch eat quietly in the classroom. Volunteer parents help teachers supervise the lunch period. Proper conduct and manners are expected. **Children who are disruptive or misbehave will not be permitted to eat in school.** Cans or glass bottles are not permitted. Children are expected to clean off their desks, dispose of waste and leave everything in order before lining up to leave the classroom. Recycling is mandatory. Please review how to properly dispose of waste paper and containers. School lunches and snacks provide the energy for learning throughout the day. All food items should be healthy and easily eaten by the student. No soda or messy snack food is permitted.

If you will be taking your child home for lunch, a note to this effect is to be written to the principal at the start of the school year. Students who do not stay for the lunch period are to be picked up in the office at 11:45 by a parent or designated adult. These students are to report to their class lines at 12:40. No student leaving for the lunch period is to return for recess with the class. The school does not assume any responsibility for children who leave school grounds for the lunch period.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Classes are dismissed from the school at 2:30 pm, Monday through Friday, with the exception of 1:00 pm on Wednesday. In all weather, students must go to the corners in line. **Parents may not remove children from lines to cross in front of the school or the church.** In the event of forecasted rain or snow, the parent accepts the responsibility of providing an umbrella, etc. which the student carries to school in the morning. No parents may disrupt dismissal lines for umbrellas, hats, etc.

Patrol boys and girls are on duty at the corner to conduct the children safely across the street. Parents are not to congregate by the Scout Room on the corner of Catalpa and Woodward. Parents are asked to meet the children on the opposite corners of the street. While you are waiting for your child, please do not block the flow of the other children who are crossing. All school family members are expected to respect the property and rights of the businesses and neighbors residing in the dismissal area. Problems will be handled directly by the principal and crossing guard on duty.

NO PARENT IS TO BREAK THE LINES OF ANY CLASS, INTERFERE WITH SCHOOL DISMISSAL, STAND WITHIN THE CROSSWALKS, OR MOVE CARS PARKED WITHIN THE DISMISSAL AREA UNTIL THE BARRICADES HAVE BEEN REMOVED. THE SAFETY OF OUR STUDENTS AND FACULTY ALONG WITH OUR SCHOOL FAMILIES IS OUR PRIMARY CONCERN. DOUBLE PARKED CARS OR CARS PARKED WITHIN THE INTERSECTION ARE SUBJECT TO TICKETS/FINES. PARENTS FAILING TO COOPERATE WITH DISMISSAL PROCEDURES WILL HAVE THEIR CHILDREN DISMISSED ONLY FROM THE OFFICE UNTIL COOPERATION IS ASSURED.

Early dismissal for individual students is permitted on rare occasions for valid reasons. The request must be made by the parent, in writing, and be approved by the principal. **A PARENT MUST COME TO THE OFFICE FOR THE CHILD IF THE CHILD MUST LEAVE EARLY - WHETHER FOR ILLNESS OR OTHER LEGITIMATE REASON. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE WILL A CHILD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL PREMISES ALONE.**

No student may leave the school premises during school hours for any reason. This includes leaving school grounds during the lunch period **WITHOUT THE EXPRESSED WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM PARENTS AND THE APPROVAL OF THE**

PRINCIPAL. Any student leaving the premises without proper permission during school hours will be subject to disciplinary action.

DISCIPLINE CODE/ “BULLY FREE YOU & ME” POLICY

St. Matthias School’s philosophy is grounded in our Catholic Faith. The Greatest Commandment of Loving God and Our Neighbors as Ourselves guides us in our daily actions.

St. Matthias’ Discipline Code has been amended to include an anti-bullying/nonviolence program called, “Bully Free, You & Me”. Our goal is to prevent any and all forms of violence in our school. Violence is defined as any mean word, look, sign, or action that is used to hurt a person’s body, feelings, or possessions.

No listing of rules can ever cover every situation. The faculty and administration act with honesty and sincerity in protecting the rights of all students to the respect they deserve. It is with this in mind that we establish the following code:

1. Students will show respect for all those in authority, for students and their families. This respect includes the use of proper language and behavior. No student is allowed the use of obscene, abusive, or prejudicial language or behavior toward any member of the Family of St. Matthias.
2. Students will accept responsibility for their actions and words. No student is allowed to threaten or act in a way as to cause emotional or physical harm to themselves or others. No violent/bullying behaviors such as eye rolling, facial gestures, slamming things, deliberate exclusion (especially at recess, playtime, or by creating “clubs”), name-calling, sarcasm, tattling with the intent to get someone in trouble, pushing/shoving, or any form of assault including intentional kicking, tripping, hitting, biting will be tolerated at anytime during school hours. No student shall bring a weapon of any kind to school with the intent to threaten or cause harm to self or others.
3. Students will do their best and take their work seriously. No student will sign the name of a parent or guardian, take or purchase schoolwork from others, or cheat in any form.
4. Students will respect the property of the Family of St. Matthias. This includes personal property of the teachers and students as well as school property. No student will take or damage property belonging to others.
5. Students will respect the right of every student to work in a quiet, productive, and clean, learning environment. No student will disrupt classroom activities or school events nor behave in an unsafe manner. All students will take proper care of their desk and materials. All students will complete assignments and come prepared for class.

Failure to abide by the disciplinary code/anti-bullying policy outlined above will result in the following actions:

1. All minor to moderate first offenses will be treated with a verbal warning.
2. All minor repeated offenses will be treated with a) a verbal warning, b) a written note to the parent, c) loss of privileges such as loss of recess or playtime, or a consequence such as detention.
3. All serious offenses will require immediate, appropriate, disciplinary action (determined by the principal in collaboration with the teacher).
4. If the offenses are repeated or consistently demonstrated, then the situation will require immediate disciplinary action beyond those listed in 1. and 2. including, but not limited to, the following conference continuum: teacher/student, teacher/parent, principal/teacher/parent (with the option of having the student present), principal/teacher/parent/student/Pastor and/or PDHP counselor.

If a child in grades 1, 2, or 3, receives detention, parents will be notified ahead of time of the day and length of time the child will be detained. Students in grades 4 to 8 are often detained after school the same day after parents have been notified by phone or in person.

PLEASE NOTE: Any student who makes verbal or written threats to seriously harm themselves or others will be removed from the classroom immediately and parents will be called to pick up the child. The administration takes all threats seriously especially when combined with threatening behaviors. Students will be suspended from school until documentation is provided showing that the student is not a threat to self or others.

THE SAFETY OF THE ST. MATTHIAS FAMILY IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE. ANY STUDENT FOUND TO BE IN POSSESSION OF A WEAPON OR OBJECT, WHICH COULD BE USED AS SUCH, IS SUBJECT TO IMMEDIATE EXPULSION. PARENTS AND LEGAL AUTHORITIES WILL BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY.

The Principal, with the support of the Pastor, will be the final authority with regard to discipline matters. All policies are set with reflection given to the goal of a safe and productive learning environment with personal relationships guided by the example of Jesus.

ST. MATTHIAS SCHOOL DRUG POLICY

1. Any St. Matthias student who is suspected of having contraband (drugs, alcohol, tobacco) will be subjected to the following procedure:
 - a) the principal will be notified
 - b) the student's parents will be notified immediately, and the student may not leave until the parents arrive

2. The student will be interviewed by the principal. The parents will be present along with another member of the faculty/staff.
3. Should the student show outward signs of drug use, or intoxication:
 - a) he/she will be suspended from school for three days
 - b) a blood test and urinalysis will be required
 - c) the parents will be mandated to have tests done within 24 hours... a report of the findings must be submitted to the principal... tests can be performed at a local hospital/ by a family doctor/ a clinic.
4. The student will only be readmitted if the blood and urinalysis reports have been sent to the principal.
 1. After the student has been readmitted, and if the tests were positive, then an assessment of the student and family problem will be conducted by a member of the Program for the Development of Human Potential. Counseling or some other form of intervention will be mandated.
 2. At this second meeting a member of the Program for the Development of Human Potential will be asked to be present as a facilitator. His/her parent or guardian must accompany the student.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are not permitted to bring electronic devices to school. This includes, but is not limited to: cell phones, pdas containing Bluetooth or similar systems, beepers, handheld games, audio players, etc. These items are costly, distracting, and often cause problems among peers. Any electronics confiscated by faculty will be turned over to the principal. Devices will be released only to the student's parent/guardian. Students caught using electronic devices for the purpose of cheating and/or communicating with others are subject to suspension.

WEB POSTINGS

Many of our older students are familiar with social websites such as "My Space". These sites allow the user to create web pages, blog, and make postings. Students are also well versed in the use of instant messaging and email communication. This technology offers many opportunities to share information locally, as well as globally. Many problems and issues have arisen resulting in the need for all schools to develop a policy as follows:

No student has the right to bring harm or damage the reputation of the school or any individual in or related to our school. Therefore, student postings, blogs, or emails shall not include the following:

- The school name, logo, address, initials, or any reference to our school;
- Images or pictures of any employees of St. Matthias School without prior written permission from the person whose image is used;
- The names, initials, or other identifying information of employees or students of our school without written prior permission;
- Personal information about any employee or student, including, but not limited to, physical description, characteristics, lifestyle, associates, likes or dislikes without prior written permission;
- Threats, allegations, rumors, insinuations, or any other statements directed at other students or employees that can be perceived as harmful to the reputation or well being of the individual involved. This includes all forms of cyberbullying.

Any student whose online profile or postings tarnish the reputation of the school or any member of the school community or whose postings threaten or harm another individual will be required to remove the offending material and will be subject to suspension or expulsion.

Student safety is a primary concern. Students using the Internet should be supervised and have a clear understanding of the dangers inherent in sharing personal information especially on sites that claim to be “private”. Our school does not encourage the use of social websites. Access to such sites will be blocked on school computers.

DRESS CODE

St. Matthias School Uniform Shoes: Flynn & O’Hara located in the Atlas Mall at 8000 Cooper Avenue, Glendale, provides our school shoes. Boys must wear **black tie shoes with a thick rubber sole**. Girls must wear **navy tie shoes with a thick rubber sole**. On gym days and dress down days sneakers are to be worn. Sneakers may also be worn with the summer uniform if the student is wearing the uniform shorts or skirt. **Appropriate sneakers are basic white or black athletic shoes. High top styles and colors other than black or white are not acceptable.** All sneakers must have laces or Velcro closures. **At no time is footwear other than the regulation school shoe or sneaker permitted without permission from the principal.**

St. Matthias School Uniform: All uniform pieces are provided by Flynn & O’Hara located in the Atlas Mall on Cooper Avenue in Glendale, (718) 894-6561.

BOYS’ UNIFORM

The **standard/winter uniform** consists of the following: (all year)
white shirt (long or short sleeve)

navy pleated twill pants
navy uniform tie (gr7-8)
plaid uniform tie (grK-6)

white or navy crew socks
navy v-neck cardigan sweater (cold weather)
black belt

The **spring/fall uniform** consists of the following: (Sept./Oct./May/June)

white polo (short sleeve) navy twill walking shorts
black belt white cuffed socks with white or black sneakers

[Boys may wear the polo shirt with the dress pants & school shoes as a spring/fall option.
In this case the polo shirt must be tucked in at the waist.]

GIRLS' UNIFORM

The **standard school uniform** consists of the following: (all year)

Grades K to 6

white blouse (short/long sleeve) drop waist royal & powder blue plaid jumper
navy crew neck cardigan sweater navy knee-hi socks
(navy tights may be worn from Nov. 1 to Apr. 30)

Grades 7 and 8

plaid wrap around skirt short or long-sleeve white blouse
navy long line vest w/out buttons navy crew neck cardigan sweater
navy knee-hi socks (leotards may be worn from Nov. 1 to Apr. 30)

The **winter uniform** consists of the following: (Nov. through Apr.)

navy slacks white blouse (short/long sleeve)
navy w/ wht trim v-neck sweater (grK-6) navy knee-hi socks
navy long line vest w/out buttons (gr7-8)

The **spring/fall uniform** consists of the following: (Sept./Oct./May/June)

white short sleeve polo navy skort or navy walking shorts w/ cuff
black belt white cuffed sock or knee-hi with white or black sneakers

[Girls may only wear the polo shirt with the skort or shorts. If the polo is worn with the skort, it must be tucked in at the waist.]

SKIRT LENGTH MUST BE MODEST (no more than 3" above the knee when standing).
SHORTS AND SKORT MUST BE OF AN ACCEPTABLE LENGTH (generally no more than 5" above the knee).

POLO SHIRTS MUST BE PURCHASED IN THE STUDENT'S REGULAR SIZE.
OVERSIZE POLO SHIRTS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE AS A SCHOOL UNIFORM COMPONENT. THE SHIRT SHOULD FIT AT THE SHOULDERS AND BE AN ACCEPTABLE LENGTH FOR WEARING TUCKED INTO PANTS OR SKORTS.

NON-REGULATION CARDIGANS, PULLOVERS, SWEATSHIRTS AND SWEAT JACKETS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BE WORN IN THE CLASSROOM AT ANY TIME.

Gym Uniform: St. Matthias School has a required uniform for Physical Education classes. The uniform is worn for the full school day on the student's scheduled gym day. Only sneakers with shoelaces or Velcro are acceptable. No slip-on sneakers can be used for gym class. White athletic (cuffed) socks with basic white or black sneakers are to be worn.

Flynn & O'Hara Uniform Co provides the official gym uniform. Included is a navy blue t-shirt with school name and navy shorts. Crew neck sweatshirts and sweatpants are also available and can be worn in combination with the t-shirt and/or shorts.

NOTE: PLEASE LABEL ALL YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS, ESPECIALLY SWEATERS, BOOKBAGS, LUNCH BOXES, SNEAKERS, IN CASE OF LOSS. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT IN GRADES K TO 3.

Jewelry: Girls are permitted to wear **one** small earring per ear (worn in the lobe of the ear only). Only studs and hoops with an outer circumference no larger than the size of a nickel are permitted. No earrings that dangle may be worn, and no other visible body piercing is permitted. Boys are not permitted to wear earrings to school.

Bracelets or chains are not permitted. The only exceptions are religious medals or crosses, which are to be worn inside the students' shirts. For both boys and girls only a single ring and a watch are permitted. The school is not responsible for jewelry that is broken or lost. Non-regulation jewelry of value will be held by the principal and returned to the parent.

Hairstyles: Hairstyles of both boys and girls should reflect the standards for which our school is noted, and should not follow current fashion trends. Hair must be neatly groomed. Boys' hair that is excessively long or worn beyond the collar is not acceptable. **Cutting or shaving up and under the hair**, shaving the entire scalp, cutting lines, designs, multiple parts or the like is not permitted. Dying, streaking, or other changes to hair color are unacceptable. Students with hairstyles that cause distractions in the classroom and/or with peers will be asked to change to a more conservative styling. The grooming of hair is not permitted in the classrooms at any time.

Miscellaneous: Make-up, tinted lip-gloss, or nail decorations including polish, tips, etc. are not permitted. Only prescription contact lenses used for vision correction are acceptable. No form of hat or scarf may be worn in the building. Baseball caps may be worn only as a proper head covering – worn with visor forward. No hat may be worn as a symbol of membership in any group or as a toy for “keep away” games at recess.

ACADEMIC POLICY

Daily homework assignments are part of the general school process. They provide the opportunity for the student to reinforce a class lesson or concept; perform on an individual basis; establish and develop solid work and study habits; relate school learning to outside interests through projects and special activities; and learn responsibility in copying assignments, bringing home the materials needed, and completing and returning assignments on time.

In turn, interested parents have the opportunity to encourage the child to put forth his/her best effort, help the student budget his/her time in relation to other student and/or family activities, and be aware of particular difficulties that the child is experiencing and that should be discussed with the teacher.

Each child needs quiet, space and time for study and written work. Distractions such as TV, radio, games, other family members, make study more difficult and hinder learning. In general overnight assignments will vary in length of time according to subject and grade level and what the average child is able to accomplish in the time prescribed.

Written work should be done neatly on school tablet paper, unless otherwise specified by the teacher. Grades three to eight are expected to write in script/cursive using pen for all subjects except math. The school heading is **printed** on each paper for grades two to eight using the form below:

NAME	GRADE
SCHOOL	DATE
SUBJECT	

Parents are responsible for checking all homework for neatness, completeness and some degree of accuracy. Younger children may need help and supervision until they are able to work independently with success. **NO STUDENT WORK DONE BY ADULTS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT.**

Parents are required to sign each homework sheet of students in grades kindergarten to two. Assignment books require a parent signature for grades three and four. No signature is necessary for grades five through eight. It is the student's responsibility to accurately copy assignments and complete them in grades 5-8.

NOTE: A CHILD IS NOT PERMITTED TO RETURN TO THE SCHOOL OR CLASSROOM AFTER DISMISSAL FOR MATERIALS LEFT IN SCHOOL. A CHILD WHO LEAVES MATERIAL AT HOME - SNEAKERS, BOOKS, ETC. MAY NOT PHONE HOME FOR THEM OR HAVE PARENTS BRING THEM TO SCHOOL. THE EXCEPTIONS ARE LUNCH, KEYS OR EYEGLASSES.

All students are required to carry their schoolbooks in a weatherproof book bag. Textbooks can become very heavy as the student moves into the upper grades. Book bags with wheels are, by construction, much heavier than those without wheels. Since students

may not wheel book bags on school grounds because of safety concerns, we suggest you work with your child by insisting that only required texts are brought home each day, and that two bags are carried if the weight is too great for one backpack. The teachers and administration are very conscious of the weight of books. We will continue to work with the book companies to find solutions that are feasible within our budget constraints. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Students who are absent accept the responsibility for getting work assignments the day they are out. Arrangements for books and assignments can be made by calling the school office by 10 am and providing for work to be picked up by dismissal time.

GRADING AND REPORT CARD POLICIES

Report cards are issued three times a year - December, March and June. The first two report cards are distributed to the parents at a parent-teacher conference. Non-English speaking parents are asked to bring an interpreter to all conferences. Report card marks are based on many factors – class work, formal tests, homework, special projects, quizzes, study assignments, and portfolios.

We use a standard report card provided by the Diocese of Brooklyn. A sample for each grade is available in the school office. Grades 3 - 8 receive numerical scores in major subjects. Progress Codes are used in specialty areas such as: Computer, Library, Physical Education, Language...

Grades 1 & 2 receive letter grades to indicate the child's progress. Kindergarten uses a special code of pluses, checks, and minuses as indicated on their report card. The following grading scale is standard:

A+ 97-100	B 85-88	D+ 74-76
A 93-96	C+ 81-84	D 70-73
B+ 89-92	C 77-80	F below 70

The Religious Education mark is based on knowledge of the content taught, assignments, etc... It does not reflect the child's virtue or piety.

All tests must be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher the following day.

Full signatures are required. Please do not use initials and sign in pen (not pencil). Returned test papers are checked for valid signatures. Tests and quizzes, as well as special projects in certain subjects, are given on a regular basis to determine the pupil's progress in school. The policy regarding signatures on all other graded work is set by individual teachers

PROGRESS REPORTS AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Progress Reports are sent home at five or six week intervals between report cards. They are intended to alert the pupil and the parent of the possibility of receiving poor or failing grades for that marking period, and to provide the child the opportunity to improve the grade before the marks are finalized on the report card. Progress Reports closely follow the format of the report cards. Evaluations and grades are the result of many assessments of your child's work. Please be aware that a code of U or I next to a subject heading indicates unsatisfactory or failing work. Progress Reports must be signed and returned to school by the date due.

Promotion is granted to the student who has shown mastery of the grade level material and social development/maturity necessary for success in the following grade. The possibility of retention is a serious matter. Any comments regarding retention on progress reports and report cards require immediate action. Notification of impending retention is provided by the end of May.

If a student in any grade fails a major subject for the year, summer school will be strongly recommended. In September, proof of successful completion of summer school is required and will be placed into the student's permanent record card.

[Any parent refusing to act on our recommendations will be required to sign a letter stating that summer school was strongly recommended, and you chose not to follow the school's recommendations. A copy of this letter will be placed in the student's permanent record card.]

DIOCESAN AND STATE TESTING PROGRAMS

Pupils from Grades 3 to 8 participate in the Terra Nova Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills given throughout the Diocese in late September. Testing scores are distributed with the report card in December. Parents are advised to keep these results so they can note the progress made from year to year.

The New York State Testing Program serves to identify students who are in need of academic intervention with regard to the current New York State Learning Standards. Students in grade four take three tests throughout the year-- English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Grade six students will be tested in Math and ELA. Pupils in grade eight are tested in 3 major subject areas—English Language Arts, Math, and Science. Scores are provided to parents as they are received and become a part of the student's permanent record. If your child has an active IEP, allowing for testing accommodations, please provide a copy of the IEP directly to the principal in September or when the IEP is developed. Students in grades four through eight who score at Level 1 or 2 on NYS Exams are required to participate in Academic Intervention Services (AIS) until they are able to meet the State Standards.

Diocesan and State Testing Programs give indicators as to your child's potential and academic performance. They are only a part of your child's academic record at

St. Matthias School. Promotion is neither granted nor denied solely on the basis of these tests. St. Matthias School examines the total academic and social development of each student before determining promotion or retention.

LIBRARY POLICIES

Students are afforded access to two school libraries housing an outstanding collection of children's literature. Library rules must be followed to maintain this privilege. Students who do not return books or pay fines within a reasonable amount of time will forfeit access to the library until the fine is paid in full. Students damaging or misplacing materials will be responsible for a partial or full reimbursement of the cost of the material to be determined by the head librarian. All library fines must be paid before the final week of the school year before the issuance of a final report card.

ATTENDANCE POLICY/PROCEDURES

State laws permit absence from school for reasons of health or emergency only. If a child is absent from school for other than legal reasons, the child is illegally absent. Regular attendance is important for a child to achieve academic success. Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled as much as possible after school.

For your child's protection, parents of all students who are absent must call the school office by 9:00 am. that day. Children who are absent must present the teacher with a written excuse the day they return. This note, written ON AN ABSENCE FORM OBTAINED FROM THE SCHOOL OFFICE, must include the student's name, grade, date of absence, reason for absence, and a parent's signature. Absent notes written by students are never acceptable.

If a child is taken out of school for any reason other than a legal absence; the parent, not the school, assumes the responsibility for the work missed during that time. No work is given in advance and missed assignments are to be done within a reasonable time upon the child's return. Trips & vacations are not legal absences.

The St. Matthias School Attendance Policy has been updated to comply with NYS Educ. Law Section 3205 implemented on July 1, 2002. This policy includes the taking of attendance at any time when a student changes classrooms. This ensures that records of all student movements throughout the building are recorded daily. Also included is a clause placing students with repeated absences in jeopardy of retention. A copy of the full policy is available to parents upon request.

HEALTH AND MEDICATION POLICY

School personnel may not administer medication at any time. Please see the principal if your student requires any medication during school hours. No students are to possess medications at any time while on school property.

In case of contagious disease, the school should be notified immediately. A note of admission from a physician is required after absence. Head lice and nits are periodic problems wherever groups of children gather. A child with head lice or nits is excluded from school until the problem is corrected. A doctor's note of clearance is required when the student returns to school.

Physical hygiene is important to a child's physical and social development and a healthy classroom. It is mandatory that parents see to their child's needs in personal hygiene and cleanliness. Please remember that as your child reaches the age of puberty, many changes occur. Daily showering and the use of deodorant will avoid the need for uncomfortable discussions between the teacher and parents.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION CARDS

Emergency cards are kept for each child in the school office. These cards contain the name and phone number of a relative or friend who can be contacted in an emergency. It is important that your emergency contact person is English speaking. The most current business address and phone number of each working parent should be written on the emergency card. In the event that a phone number or address at home or work changes after the opening of school in September, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school office as soon as possible.

EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES

St. Matthias is a part of the DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN AND QUEENS. In general, in case of a snowstorm or an emergency, the school will close if the schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn close or if the New York City Schools close. All school closings are broadcast over 1010 WINS about 5:06, 6:06, and 7:06 A.M. You can also find school closings listed on-line at www.wor710.com. WOR will no longer make on-air announcements.

In the event that St. Matthias is closed and the Diocesan or City Schools are not, the closing will be announced over 1010 WINS about 5:06, 6:06, and 7:06 A.M. You are part of a school-wide phone chain. Please update your phone numbers with the school office if they change during the school year. The school telephone system will also

contain school closing information. Once the children are in school, there will be no early dismissal.

COMMUNICATION/PAYMENTS

Open communication between the school and home supports the strong partnership needed for student success. Appointments with teachers and/or the principal are scheduled before or after school hours. Non-English speaking parents should make arrangements for an interpreter to assist them. Please respond promptly if called to a parent-teacher conference.

You are welcome to arrange meetings with teachers and/or the principal by calling the school office or sending in a note with your child. In cases where concerns are related directly to a class or teacher, please speak to the appropriate teacher about the issues before contacting the principal. If the issue is not resolved through this communication, a meeting will be arranged so that the parent, teacher, and principal can discuss the matter together. Matters of a very serious nature may require a collaboration meeting including the Pastor and/or a mediator from PDHP.

All parents and visitors must report to the office before going to a child's classroom to meet the teacher. **NO PARENTS/VISITORS ARE ALLOWED TO GO TO CLASSROOMS FOR ANY REASON WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE OFFICE.**

The office phone and pay phone are not to be used by students. Parent will be called for office business and emergencies only. Forgotten homework and materials are not considered emergencies. (Forgotten lunch, keys and eyeglasses are reported to the office and the secretary will call the parent.) Parents may not call a teacher or a child out of class except in an emergency. Messages, lunches, keys and eyeglasses should be left in the office with the child's name and grade.

ALL MONEY SENT TO SCHOOL SHOULD BE IN A SEALED ENVELOPE. THE CHILD'S NAME, GRADE, AMOUNT ENCLOSED, AND WHAT THE MONEY IS FOR, SHOULD BE CLEARLY WRITTEN ON THE ENVELOPE. EACH ITEM MUST BE PAID SEPARATELY, BY CHECK OR MONEY ORDER, IN INDIVIDUAL ENVELOPES. All students are to give notes and envelopes to their teachers to be sent to the office by 9:00 am. The school accepts no responsibility for money left in student desks or classrooms. Parents may bring payment envelopes directly to the school secretary.

MONTHLY CALENDARS / NOTICES

Monthly calendars with important school events are sent home before the first of each month. Please consult them for information. Notices about special events are sent home very frequently. Parents are required to sign the **TEAR-OFF SECTION** and return it to

school so that the school knows you received the information. All notices are brought home in the child's folder and are to be signed and returned promptly. St. Matthias School calendars may also be viewed on our school website, www.stmatthiaschool.org.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

Field trips are privileges afforded to students, not absolute rights. Any student can be denied participation if he or she fails to meet academic or behavior standards. Trips are well planned and supervised. The choice of chaperones is the responsibility of the teacher and principal. Parents accepting the duty of chaperone agree to follow all policies set forth by the coordinating teacher and by the school administration including Safe Environment requirements. Chaperones accept responsibility for supervising students in their care; therefore, parents will refrain from personal conversations, use of cell phones, and purchasing refreshments unless approved by the coordinating teacher. The school accepts no liability for harm caused by circumstances beyond the school's burden of "due care".

PHOTO CONSENT

From time to time, the school administration, the HSA, the St. Matthias Educational Foundation, and the Office of Stewardship & Development will have the opportunity to publish students' photos in news releases, brochures, and school marketing packets. We request that all students have permission to be photographed. Every effort is made to use student photos in ways that promote our school mission and philosophy. If you have issues or concerns and **DO NOT** want your child's photo used, please indicate your decision by checking the box before the statement on the final page of the handbook. We believe each child is a gift from God. They are our "best advertisement"!

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Each child is responsible for the care and proper use of schoolbooks, equipment, and school property. All textbooks must be covered. **Do not glue or tape covers to the textbooks themselves.** Parents are liable for loss or damage to schoolbooks, furnishings, and property. The principal retains the right to recover costs of damaged school property. Fabric Book Soxes are recommended.

HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Home School Association is a school organization established to foster closer communication and cooperation between the parents and the school. Its aim is to promote a deeper understanding of the mutual responsibilities parents and teachers have as co-educators. The HSA has also been responsible for a major share of the fundraising critical to controlling tuition costs.

Events are run by committee with meetings held prior to events. Membership is open to all school parents. Parents are asked to support the various projects sponsored by the Home & School Association throughout the year not only for the funds that are raised, but also for the important lessons of teamwork and cooperation that are modeled for our student body. Currently the HSA is functioning using the committee structure. The committee chairs remain answerable to the Pastor and Principal.

THE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

St. Matthias has established an After School Program for students in Grades PreK to 6 for a weekly fee. Students may be registered on a daily or weekly basis. The hours of operation are from dismissal to 6:00 pm. All inquiries should be sent to the program's director, who can be reached through the After-School Office (718-381-5033).

In order to protect our children, we WILL NOT leave any student on the corner after dismissal. If the person picking up your child is late, he/she will find the child in the After School Program. A fee will be charged, depending on the length of the child's stay. Please notify the school office if you know you will be delayed.

LADIES GUILD

The Ladies Guild is a parish organization founded specifically for the benefit of the school. This group meets each month and sponsors many fundraising activities throughout the year. Through the donations made by the Ladies Guild, the school has been able to purchase modern equipment and new furnishings. **All women of the parish, especially mothers of our school children are invited to become members.**

TRANSFER PROCEDURES

Parents are asked to notify the school in advance of the date of transfer. The following information is needed:

1. Name, grade, and age of child.
2. Reason for transfer.
3. New address, if transfer is due to change of residence.
4. Name and address of the new school.

5. Last date the child will attend St. Matthias.
The school office will forward all records when notified of child's acceptance into the new school.

SAINT MATTHIAS SCHOOL
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
2011-2012

Please note our school handbook has been updated for 2011/12. Read and review each section carefully with your child(ren). Complete this page and return it to school within seven days of receipt.

It is very important that all of the members of our school family respect these policies in order for us to continue to provide the positive, focused, learning atmosphere that is a trademark of Saint Matthias School. Your cooperation is appreciated.

We have read the rules and regulations in this handbook on school policies. We understand them and agree to be governed by this handbook. Since no handbook can cover every possible situation, we accept the role of the Principal in determining policy not contained herein. Parents will be notified immediately if changes are made.

**PLEASE CHECK THIS BOX ONLY IF YOU DO NOT
GIVE PHOTO CONSENT (see p.20).**

Student's Name & Grade (printed)

Parent's Signature

Student's Signature

Date