



# **Family Handbook**

## **2022-2023**

924 74th Street

Brooklyn, NY 11228

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# St. Ephrem Catholic Academy

**100 Years Where Faith and Tradition Meet Progress in Education!**

924 74<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, NY 11228

Office: (718) 833-1440 | Fax: (718) 745-5301 | Web: [www.stephremschool.org](http://www.stephremschool.org)

September 2022

Dear Families and Students,

Welcome to **St. Ephrem Catholic Academy** and the 2022-2023 school year! We are pleased to provide you and your children with a team of professionals dedicated to the highest standard of Catholic education and care for your child(ren).

As families of children enrolled in St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, you also serve as a **partner** in education. As partners, parents, faculty, and staff will work together to ensure your children's academic, social, spiritual, and emotional growth while they attend St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. I trust that you are up to the task, and I welcome working with you to ensure the success of your child and all the students at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy!

To provide the best quality of education and safety, we ask that all families and students adhere to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's policies. This Family Handbook contains St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's policies and is intended to provide you with a guide. Please take the time to review this Handbook in its entirety. I hope the Handbook will answer questions regarding the policies of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, although you may always reach out to the Board of Directors or me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

This Handbook will be distributed as a hard copy upon request. It will remain accessible to you on the school website and ClassDojo.

**At the end of this Handbook are various documents for you to review and sign, as well as an Acknowledgement of Receipt of this Handbook. Please sign and return all these documents by **Wednesday, September 21st, 2022.****

Thank you for your support, and I look forward to working with you as we provide the utmost quality Catholic education to your children in a secure, safe, and nurturing environment.

Sincerely,

Mr. Estevez  
Principal

*"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all" - Aristotle*

## **ST EPHREM CATHOLIC ACADEMY DIRECTORY (2022-2023)**

### **Pastor**

Very Rev. Robert B. Adamo, V. F., KCHS, St. Ephrem Church

### **Principal:**

Mr. Andy Estévez

### **Board of Directors:**

Mr. Sylvester Sichenze, Chairperson

Mrs. Carol Fell, Vice-Chairperson

### **Faculty and Staff**

#### **Middle School (6-8)**

Mrs. Michelle Emeh, Grade 8 (6-8 Math, 8 Religion)

Mr. Anthony Martinez, Grade 7 (6-8 Social Studies, 7 Religion)

Mr. Ernest Rosas, Grade 7 (6-8 Science, 7 Religion)

Mrs. Mary Curry, Grade 6 (6-8 ELA, 6 Religion)

#### **Elementary School (K-5)**

Ms. Kelsey Iannacone, Grade 5 (4-5 Math/Science, 5 Religion)

Ms. Susan Maher, Grade 4 (4-5 ELA/Social Studies, 4 Religion)

Ms. Maria D'Alessandro, Grade 3

Mrs. Gina Costagliola, Grade 2

Mrs. Donna Polizzotto, Grade 1

Ms. Marie Ann Pascarella, Kindergarten

Ms. Nicole Kokkinos, Kindergarten

#### **3K/PK:**

Mrs. Giovanna Marchese, PreKindergarten

Ms. Jennifer DeGaeto, 3K

#### **Student Support Services Coordinator:**

Mrs. Margaret Greene-Tomasi

#### **Special Subjects:**

Mrs. Roseann Parchment, Art

Mr. Kerrin Quinn, Music

Mrs. Claudia Nigro, Physical Education

#### **Teacher Assistants:**

Mrs. Angela Micali

Mrs. Anna Accetta-McKeon

Mrs. Ariana DeVito

Mrs. Gina Leshi

**School Nurse:** Mrs. Kathleen Bowes

**Office Staff:**

Mrs. Donna Colon, Administrative Assistant  
Mrs. Michele James, Business Manager

**Safety Agent:** Mr. Mark D'Oliveira

**Custodial Staff:**

Mr. Stephen Hayes  
Mr. Edward Haynes

## **ST. EPHREM CATHOLIC ACADEMY OVERVIEW**

### **A. Mission Statement**

The mission of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is to empower our students to become active and creative learners equipped with skills to thrive in today's changing world. Our faith mission is to develop students with a sense of understanding and compassion for others who are advocates for Catholic social teaching according to the Gospels of Jesus Christ.

### **B. Vision Statement**

Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy is committed to educating students on Catholic values and traditions, while developing a firm foundation in academics.

### **C. Our Philosophy**

Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy embraces that each child is a unique creation of God with spiritual, intellectual, and social needs. As members of the faith community, we instill in our students the teachings of the Catholic Church, which are rooted in the Gospel. We foster relationships among parents, faculty, staff, and the community rooted in the Catholic Faith.

We recognize the importance of each faculty member as a personal representative of the faith and values held by the Catholic Church and transmitted through Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy.

Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy embraces students from an ethnically diverse population.

Through the uniform efforts and attitudes of faculty and staff, priests, school board, parents, and students, Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy develops, in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a sense of community by recognizing and celebrating the dignity and uniqueness of each individual as created by God. We endeavor to promote respect for self and for others by respectful dealings with students and with each other.

Personal growth begins in the home and is reinforced in a community of faith. We believe parents and faculty are partners in our student's academic and social growth.

The educational policies of Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy are determined by The Office of the Superintendent - Catholic School Support Services of the Diocese of Brooklyn and by New York State. We believe that these policies, implemented within a Christ-centered atmosphere, enable each student to pursue his/her goals beyond the Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy community. We believe that presenting such policies requires appropriate renewal and prudent innovation.

The philosophy of Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy is finally determined by the belief that the school should foster student independence which enables them to accept their responsibilities as Christian citizens of their neighborhood, nation, and global community.

### **D. History of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy**

Saint Ephrem School was opened in 1922, staffed by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 2018, Saint Ephrem School transitioned to Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy. We stand proudly on the traditions of the past and build for the future. Today, our school is staffed by lay men and women.

## E. Parental Expectation of Adherence to School Policy

Discipline in the schools should reflect the spirit of *Vatican Council II*, as expressed in *the documents on Christian Education and Religious Liberty*. Therefore, discipline should be geared to assist a child in developing the understanding of self as being made in the image of God.

...Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost, every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who, in Jesus Christ, reveals his transforming love and truth (cf. *Spe Salve*, 4). This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way, those who meet him are drawn by the very power of God to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church...Dear friends, I wish to conclude by focusing our attention specifically on the paramount importance of your own professionalism and witness within our Catholic universities and schools. First, let me thank you for your dedication and generosity. I know from my own days as a professor and have heard from your Bishops and officials of the Congregation for Catholic Education that the reputation of Catholic institutes of learning in this country is largely due to you and your predecessors. Your selfless contributions – from outstanding research to the dedication of those working in inner-city schools – serve your country and the Church. For this, I express my profound gratitude. Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, April 17, 2008

Evidence of discipline exists in a school community when the students, teachers, administration, and parents/legal guardians work cooperatively to educate the whole child: spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

### I. PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This Parent-Student Handbook (“Handbook”) provides important information regarding rules, policies, and procedures relating to the operation and safety at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. The Handbook summarizes policies and contains general guidelines and information. To the extent that anything in this Handbook conflicts with applicable law, the applicable law governs. Further, this Handbook may be changed from time to time during the academic year. An up-to-date version can be found **on our school website and ClassDojo**, and parents/guardians are expected to check that version to be aware of any changes regularly. If you have any questions on this Handbook or otherwise, please contact the Principal.

Parents/guardians must sign a form stating that they have read the rules and regulations outlined in this Handbook and that they agree to abide by those rules and to ensure that their children abide by them. **Students in grades 6-8 must also sign this form. Failure to sign the form will not prevent St. Ephrem Catholic Academy from enforcing its policies but could result in disciplinary action being taken and/or preventing the student from enrolling in the school. This form can be found at the end of this Handbook.**

In this Handbook, the term “parent” refers not only to a child’s natural or adopted parent but to a student’s non-parent legal guardian or any person or agency authorized to act in place of a parent.

**Finally, in light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to address and take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this Handbook. And in light of the unique and essential religious mission of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may take action in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, the Diocese of Brooklyn, the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy to perform its religious mission or to effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy and the community of Faith.**

## **II. CATHOLIC IDENTITY**

### **A. Catholic Identity**

The mission of Catholic Education is to form children in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the Catholic Church while providing a comprehensive academic education that will help them reach their full human potential and contribute to the common good of our nation and the world. Ultimately, the mission of all Catholic education is to lead those entrusted to its care to find salvation in Jesus Christ.

In *Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (#11) Saint John Paul II wrote that Catholic schools are “...the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. Catholic schools are places of evangelization, complete formation, enculturation, and apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds.”

Diocesan academies and schools strive to emulate the words of Saint John Paul II by:

- creating an evangelizing community where people come to have a better and deeper understanding of Christ and His Church
- recognizing the importance of multi-cultural, multi-faceted, academically sound educational programs that meet the needs of the poor and the rich, the Catholic and the non-Catholic, the wise and the not so learned
- welcoming members to the school community regardless of culture, race, or religion and celebrating the diversity that exists within our communities, churches, and schools
- creating an environment that encourages young people to grow, not separated from others, but as part of a larger community, as part of the family of God
- not only promoting and encouraging academically sound individuals but rejoicing with children who are spiritually, theologically, and liturgically enlivened and fulfilled

## **B. Adherence to Catholic Doctrine**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is a Roman Catholic school located in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn (“Diocese of Brooklyn”), and is committed to providing a quality Catholic education for both Catholic children and those of other faiths who share our commitment to the Gospel values and academic excellence. Our goals include teaching Christ’s truth and fostering the formation of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy’s students by conveying the values rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a religious organization of the Roman Catholic faith, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, at all times, adheres to the doctrines, customs, tenets, and teachings of the Roman Catholic church and the curriculum guidelines in religion from the Diocese of Brooklyn. **All students and parents, including those who are Non-Catholic, must accept and adhere to the standards, values, and religious tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. All parents/guardians are expected to support St. Ephrem Catholic Academy’s mission and commitment to Christian principles.**

## **C. Inclusion of All Other Faiths**

The presence of students from other faiths provides a wonderful diversity, and St. Ephrem Catholic Academy welcomes students and parents/guardians of other faiths. However, as a Catholic school located within the Diocese of Brooklyn, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is focused on forming children in the Catholic faith. Parents/guardians must accept the intentional Catholic values and tenets that are the underpinning of our Academy. **All students, including Non-Catholic students, are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, including, but not limited to, liturgies, religious functions, and religious classes. It is also expected that Non-Catholic students and parents/guardians participate as fully as possible in the liturgical and prayer life of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy.** The teachers and administration at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy are also committed to teaching the fullness of revelation as taught by the Roman Catholic Church and the Diocese of Brooklyn. While our teachers, administration, and staff value the presence of students from other faiths and respect other faiths, they always teach and model within the context of the doctrines and tenets of the Roman Catholic Church.

# **III. ACADEMICS**

## **A. Academic Expectations**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy expects its students to perform to the best of their ability. Teachers evaluate students’ progress regularly with quizzes, tests, homework, presentations, participation, behavior in the classroom, and class presentation. **After a test is graded, the results will be posted on the FACTS SIS within one week. Please check the FACTS SIS regularly.**

## **B. Curriculum & Assessments**

### **NYS Testing**

Students in grades 4, 6, 7, and 8 will participate in New York State Testing. Parents receive an Individual Student Report (ISR), which includes a breakdown of a student’s performance in different skill areas within ELA, Math, and Science. This helps parents understand where their child is doing well and in what areas they may need additional practice. Parents can use these



results to guide a discussion with their child's teacher about additional supports or challenges that may be needed in the classroom and ways to support learning at home.

There are no negative consequences when taking state tests as the tests are considered diagnostic. The ELA and math test results are not recorded on students' permanent record cards or report cards. New York State law forbids the use of state test results as the determining factor in promotion.

### **TerraNova Testing**

Students in grades 3-8 will participate in TerraNova Testing in the fall. TerraNova testing is a nationally- normed, standardized testing program. This series of tests is issued to diagnose student performance and develop learning goals.

### **C. Religious Education**

Religion is part of all that we see, teach and do at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, and is a crucial component of students' academic learning. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy adheres to the current Diocese of Brooklyn curriculum guidelines in religion. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate in all religious education fully and formation programs, including, but not limited to, religion class, liturgies, and religious functions.

### **D. Homework**

Homework is an essential part of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's instructional program, as it reinforces learning and provides students with opportunities to practice what they were taught in class. Homework can come in many forms, including, but not limited to, projects, reports, and independent reading. Students are required to complete all homework, including when a student is absent. **Parent, guardian, or other adult assistance with homework is key to a student's academic success!**

**ALL students are expected to read independently for 20 minutes per evening (or, in the case of lower grades, to be read to).**

Additionally, the time allotments for other homework, not including reading, are *approximately* as follows:

- **3K-PK:** 10-20 minutes
- **Kindergarten:** 30 minutes
- **Grades 1 & 2:** 30-35 minutes
- **Grades 3-5:** 30-40 minutes
- **Grades 6-8:** Up to 60 minutes

**Homework is given every day, Monday – Thursday, and on Fridays, at the teacher's discretion.** All teachers expect students to study, review, and read for pleasure on the days when written homework is not given. *A student at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy never has “No Homework.” Often students feel that no written homework means “No Homework.” Students should spend time each day reading and studying in addition to time spent on written homework.*

**Homework will be posted by 4 PM each day on ClassDojo (Grades K-3) and Google Classroom (Grades 4-8)!**

Please remember that each child works at a different pace, and the time frame for completing homework for one student may be different than that for another. **If your child is repeatedly having difficulty with homework, please contact your child's teacher immediately.**

Homework must be done at home and may not be done at school, **except for students who attend the After School program.**

### **E. Grades**

The determination of grades is the responsibility of each individual teacher. Parents/guardians and students must know and understand how grades are determined and are encouraged to reach out to each student's teacher or teachers.

The following is an overview of grades at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy:

**Nursery, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten will utilize the following grading system to identify progress in each area**

- 4: Meeting grade level expectations with distinction
- 3: Meeting grade level expectations
- 2: Progressing toward meeting grade level expectations
- 1: Not meeting grade level expectations
- X: Student is not receiving this service

**Grades 1 through 8 will utilize the levels included above and alpha/numeric grades as indicated below:**

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

**For social-emotional learning/personal progress and religion report card evaluations.**

G: Area of Growth  
A: Area of Strength

- Letter Grades are given in First and Second Grade.
- Numerical Grades are given in Grades 3 – 8.
- Passing Grade is 70.

- The lowest grade to be received is an F for students in grades 1-2. The degree of failure will be interpreted for the parent at the Parent/Teacher Conference.
- **The lowest grade to be received is -70 in Grades 3 – 8. The degree of failure will be interpreted for the parents at the Parent/Teacher Conference.**
- Progress Codes will assess students in Art, Music, and Physical Education. They are considered Special Subjects.
- **At any time during the school year, a parent may and should log on to FACTS SIS to review their child's current progress using their username and password. Report cards are issued at the end of each trimester in December, March, and June.**
- A parent or guardian must meet with their child's teacher to receive a copy of the report card in December and March, virtually or in person. The school calendar will specify when the teachers are available to meet with the parents and guardians.
- If a parent cannot attend a Report Card Conference on a specified day, they are to advise the teacher in writing beforehand to make another appointment to meet with the teacher.

#### F. Make-Up Work

**If the child is absent, all homework and classwork must be made up. To obtain the assignments and books from school, families must call the school by 8:00 AM. Homework may be picked up no sooner than 3:00 PM. Students are required to make up the work within a reasonable time frame. Make-up exams will be given according to the teacher's discretion.**

#### G. Protecting Instructional Time

Maintaining the school schedule and structure is of the utmost importance during the school year. As we make our calendars and schedules, our goal is to protect instructional time as much as possible. **In protecting instructional time, parents are asked to refrain from removing their child during the school day for unnecessary activities.** Appointments should be scheduled, when possible, before or after the school day to avoid disrupting student learning. Vacations and family trips should also be planned, when possible, for existing school vacation weeks. **In the event of a necessary absence, parents should alert the school and classroom teacher as soon as possible. If an extended absence is known, parents should communicate with their child's teacher to create a plan for making up missed work.**

#### H. Progress Reports & Report Card Schedule

Students in Grades 1-8 will receive report cards three times a year (December, March, and June), at the end of each trimester. **Parents/legal guardians will also receive progress reports each trimester before receiving the report cards.** Open communication between parents/ legal guardians and their child's teacher is vital to a student's progress.

Conferences will be held in the afternoon and evening to accommodate parents' schedules. Teachers will be available at this time for a few minutes per child. **If additional discussion is needed, conferences may be scheduled when needed. We ask that parents be respectful of others when picking up their child's report cards. Each parent is assigned a brief time frame and should make every effort to arrive on time and remain within their assigned time.**

**Any concerns regarding a child's progress should be addressed first to the child's teacher.**

### **I. Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parents/legal guardians will have the opportunity to attend parent-teacher conferences at the end of the first and second trimesters after receiving student report cards. While these are formally scheduled conferences, parents are also encouraged to schedule meetings with teachers or other staff, when necessary, to discuss their child's progress and learning goals.

### **J. Academic Awards**

**Honors are awarded at the end of each report card period.**

#### **Grades 5-8:**

**Principal List** is earned by a student who receives 97% and above in each major subject area.  
**First Honors** is earned by a student who receives 93% and above in each major subject area.  
**Second Honors** is earned by a student who receives 89% and above in each major subject area.  
**Merit Honors** is earned by a student who receives 85% and above in each major subject area. A grade of 3 (Meets Standards) must be received in all Special Subjects and good conduct for all honors.

#### **Grades 1-4:**

**Principal List** is earned by a student who receives an A+ and above in each major subject area.  
**First Honors** is earned by a student who receives an A and above in each major subject area.  
**Second Honors** is earned by a student who receives a B+ and above in each major subject area.  
**Merit Honors** is earned by a student who receives a B and above in each major subject area. A grade of 3 (Meets Standards) must be received in all Special Subjects and good conduct for all honors.

### **K. Admission Policies**

Roman Catholic schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn base their educational purpose and activities on the Christian teaching of the essential quality of all persons as rooted in God's love.

The process for admission to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is as follows: parents/guardians must complete St. Ephrem Catholic Academy application form and provide all required documents. An interview will be held. Following an interview and evaluation of the materials, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing about whether St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is offering the child a position. In addition, please note the following:

- Children must be three years old by December 31st of the current year to enroll in the PreK3 program
- Children must be four years old by December 31st of the current year to enroll in Pre-K
- Children must be five years old or older by December 31st to enroll in Kindergarten
- Children must be six years old or older by December 31st to enroll in first grade
- Children entering Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy in Grades 2-7 must present their most recent report cards.

Each child's immunization records must be current and meet New York standards. **THE NO SHOTS-NO SCHOOL POLICY IS IN EFFECT for the health of everyone at Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy!**

While admission is on a first-come, first-served basis, the school endeavors to give preference in admission following these guidelines: first, to siblings of currently enrolled students; second, to Catholic students whose parents/guardians are active members of the parish; third, to Catholic students whose parents/guardians are active in another Catholic parish; and fourth, to non-Catholic students.

#### **L. Transfers and Withdrawals**

**If a parent/guardian wishes to transfer his or her child(ren) out of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, a transfer request form must be obtained from the main office. Before records are transferred to another school, all bills must be paid in full, and all books must be returned.**

When a student transfers from one school to another or enters high school, the new school may request a copy of the permanent record and health card from the former school. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may disclose a student's cumulative record (*i.e.* permanent record, attendance record, test results) to another school with a legitimate educational interest if a written request is made and when a parent/guardian has given written permission for the release of the child's records. A parent/guardian signature is required to release a student's confidential file, including special education records, psychological reports, disciplinary records, and reports by a school counselor.

**At the discretion of the Principal and in accordance with applicable law, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy has the right not to certify a student's graduation or provide transcripts of the student's academic record to third parties such as other schools, colleges, or employers, or to issue a diploma to the student, if there has been a breach of a material condition of the educational contract, such as failure to meet financial obligations, infractions against the school's code of conduct, anti-bullying policy or violations of the policies of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy and those set forth in this Handbook.**

**St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to request that a parent/guardian withdraw his or her child from the school.**

#### **M. Recommendation for Next Grade Level**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy takes the decision of promoting or retaining a student extremely seriously. Sometimes, however, testing, diagnosis, and actual performance may indicate that a student cannot follow the school's complete course of study. In accordance with NYS Education Law, Assessment, and Performance, teachers will discuss the possibility with the Principal if a student is being considered for retention at the same grade level. Although the teacher consults with the Principal, the final decision for retaining a student rests with the Principal. Certain criteria the Principal and teachers may take into account as they consider a recommendation for retention includes that the student has failed to pass major subjects on each grade level and/or has not demonstrated acceptable progress toward mastery of standards, including failure to complete assignments, or repeated low scores in several areas on a report card.

**Students who fail more than three subjects (two of which are ELA & Math) will be retained. Adequate warnings will be sent to families throughout the year, allowing sufficient time to avert retention action. Promotion in Doubt letters will be formally issued in December, March & late May.**

**As per the Office of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Brooklyn, any student who receives a final failing grade in religion will NOT be promoted.**

**If a student completes all requirements for promotion or graduation, and there has been no recommendation or approval to retain the student, a parent/guardian or family cannot self-select that the student is retained.**

#### **N. Graduation**

At the discretion of the Principal, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy has the right not to certify a student's graduation or to issue a diploma to the student if there has been a breach of a material condition of the educational contract, such as failure to meet financial obligations, infractions against the school's code of conduct, anti-bullying policy or violations of the policies of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy and those outlined in this Handbook.

#### **O. Distance Learning**

**Distance (Remote) Learning is provided by the school through the Google Classroom platform. It is only provided to students when the entire class is closed.**

**Distance (Remote) Learning is also provided to students in the event of a classroom closure or a school shutdown. Distance (Remote) Learning may also be provided on Snow or Emergency Days. Distance (Remote) Learning is not provided to students quarantined due to travel.**

**Students will be instructed through Google Classroom. Students must be in full uniform, seated at a table or desk with the camera on. They must be on time and remain until the end of the session. Students will follow the same behavioral norms as expected during in-person learning.**

**PLEASE NOTE that if a teacher is sick, then Distance Learning will not take place.**

**Distance Learning is NOT to be utilized for short-term absences or family vacations.**

#### **P. Extracurricular Activities**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy offers various extracurricular activities. Students are expected to follow school policy while engaged in any extracurricular activity. Participation in these activities is a privilege, and students are expected to fulfill their obligations in the classroom as a priority in any extracurricular activity.

Failure or difficulty meeting academic or behavioral requirements will result in a student's suspension or dismissal from the activity. The Principal makes the final determination as to participate in an extra-curricular activity.

**When participating in extracurricular activities, including sports or otherwise, students must at all times demonstrate Catholic values. It is expected that students, coaches, and fans display respect, civility, and responsibility during all events, contests, and/or practices.**

**Students who do not abide by St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's policies will lose the opportunity to participate in any extracurricular activity.**

#### **Q. Recess**

Except for school-wide events, including Mass, daily recess will be provided. If weather permits, the students will attend recess. If a student has any physical limitation which may affect his or her ability to engage in all recess activities, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy must be notified in accordance with the Limitations of Physical Activity policy below.

#### **R. Summer School**

**In accordance with NYS Education Guidelines, a student who has received a failing grade in reading, mathematics, and language arts in three marking periods of the report card will be required to attend mandatory summer school in the low-performing content areas.**

**A student who receives a D (70-76) in any major subject area is strongly advised to attend an approved summer school or tutorial program. Excessive absences during the school year may result in the child being required to attend summer school. The final determination as to whether a student must attend summer school rests with the Principal.**

**Summer school options will be provided by the Academy at the end of the school year. The Academy will provide a list of local schools which offer a summer term.**

**The summer school report card must be submitted to the Principal before September 1. Failure to attend summer school when required will result in retention at the same grade level or the discharge of the student. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide documentation that summer school has been successfully completed. In cases where tutoring is allowed for remediation, it must be undertaken by a qualified teacher and approved in advance by the Principal.**

### **IV. GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **A. Academy Calendar and Hours**

New York State Law currently requires a school calendar to provide 177 days of instruction with 3 professional days and cites the following holidays when schools may not be in session:

Columbus Day	Second Monday in October
Veterans Day	Eleventh Day in November
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Christmas Day	Twenty-fifth day in December
New Year's Day	First Day in January
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Third Monday in January
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May

Juneteenth

Nineteenth day in June

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the feast of the patroness of the Diocese of Brooklyn, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, will be closed. Academies may also choose to observe other Holy Days. All advanced school closings will be indicated in the school calendar.

The Academic calendar can be found on St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's website. To the extent any changes are made, the website will be updated.

### **B. School Hours**

School hours are from **8:00 AM to 2:45 PM for 3K and PreK to 8:00 AM to 2:50 PM for K-2, 8:00 to 2:55 for Grades 3-5, 8:00 to 3:00 for Grades 6-8**, except for early dismissal days.

### **C. School Office Hours**

**The Academy Office will be open daily from 8:00 AM until 3:00 PM. Special arrangements can be made for those requiring time outside the normal schedule. Please contact Mrs. Colon by calling 718-833-1440 or email: [dcolon@stephremacademy.org](mailto:dcolon@stephremacademy.org).**

### **D. Early Release Schedule –(Half Day)**

- **Grades 3K-PK:** 8:00 AM - 12:15 PM
- **Grades K-8:** 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM

### **E. After School Program**

**St. Ephrem Catholic Academy offers an After School program. This occurs Monday through Friday from Dismissal to 6:00 PM unless otherwise indicated. The After School program is an extension of the school day, and students are expected to follow all Academy policies and procedures during After School.** Directors of individual activities during After School may also issue rules of behavior that recognize the special nature of non-classroom activities. When students are picked up, parents/guardians are expected to make arrangements to pick up their children at the end of the program or activity. **Students will be released only to a parent/guardian or a person previously specified in writing by the parent/guardian.** After-school program fees are expected to be paid in full upon invoicing. Past due balances will result in a student not being allowed to participate in the program until the account is updated.

### **F. Attendance**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy has developed our attendance policy in accordance with New York State Education Law. This comprehensive attendance policy will help us uphold the philosophy and mission statement of our Academy.

Education Law of the State of New York mandates school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 16, but the responsibility for compliance rests with the parents/legal guardians. The school must keep an accurate record of daily attendance, absence, and tardiness in the attendance register in a manner approved by the Commissioner of Education.



- When a child has been absent, a written excuse is required from his or her parents/legal guardians. If a student is absent without an excuse, or if the school has reason to suspect the validity of the excuse, the principal will investigate the situation.
- When a student has been absent for five days without a satisfactory explanation, a report will be made to the attendance officer of the local public school district.
- Continuing illegal absences totaling five or more days will also be reported to the attendance officer at the local public school district office.
- Although each case is different, it should be noted that at 40 truancy days, retention is a strong possibility, and principals will contact the local district office to alert the truancy officer.

**Parents must contact the school by telephone (718-833-1440) by 8:00 AM to report a child's absence and request homework. A doctor's note is required if a child is absent for four or more consecutive days upon his/her return to school. A detailed, written note must be submitted for absences 3 days or less. PLEASE NOTE: ABSENT NOTES ARE NOT TO BE EMAILED. A PAPER COPY IS TO BE PROVIDED AT ALL TIMES!**

**When a student is absent, the parent should request books and homework assignments through the office by 8:00 A.M. Books and assignments may be picked up at the office at dismissal time. All assignments will be due on the day following the student's return. The completion of all work is the responsibility of the student. All tests will be given on the assigned day regardless of a student's absence. If a student misses a test due to absence, he/she will be responsible for taking it on the day he/she returns to school.**

**If an ABSENT note is not received, your child's absence will be marked as an ILLEGAL ABSENCE. Vacations are illegal absences.**

**Doctor or dental appointments should be scheduled for after regular school hours. Family vacations should not be planned for days when school is in session. Rather, students receive vacation time throughout the year. Teachers are not required to give assignments in anticipation of family vacations and are not required to give make-up tests for absences due to vacation trips.**

### **G. Lateness**

A student who arrives after 8:00 AM will be marked late.

All students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must stop at the security desk and sign the Late Book to proceed to their classroom. Frequent lateness may result in detention and affect a student's grade.

**Prompt Attendance is required, and late students are disruptive to the class. Students in grades 4-8 are not eligible for academic honors in any given term if they exceed 5 latenesses.**

### **H. Arrival and Dismissal Policy**

Early arrival begins at **7:15 AM**. The cost of supervision is \$6 per day.

**Early Morning Drop off is available for before school supervision. Please do not permit your children to come to school in the morning until their assigned time.**

**Parents/guardians must drop their children off at 7:45 AM with a teacher or staff member. Students in Grades 3K will enter through the parking lot doors on 74th Street. Students in PreK will enter through the door by the parking lot adjacent to the convent. Grades K-8 will enter through the Main Entrance on 74th Street and proceed to Msgr. Kain Parish Hall for Morning Prayer at 7:50 AM. INSTRUCTION BEGINS AT 8:00 AM!**

**FOR SAFETY SAKE, FAMILIES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE BUILDING!**

**The students will be dismissed at their designated locations at the end of the school day. 3K and PreK dismiss at 2:45 PM. Grades K-2 dismiss at 2:50 PM. Grades 3-5 dismiss at 2:55 PM. Grades 6-8 dismiss at 3:00 PM.**

- **3K:** Door closest to the parking lot on 74th Street
- **PreK:** Door closest to the parking lot near the convent
- **Grades K-2:** Main Entrance
- **Grades 3-5:** Door closest to the rectory
- **Grades 6-8:** Exit near the main parking lot

**St. Ephrem Catholic Academy will not release a student to any adult that is not known to it as a parent, guardian, or custodian. If a parent/guardian sends another individual to pick up his or her child, the parent/guardian must notify St. Ephrem Catholic Academy in writing.**

Students who proceed home on their own, either by walking, bicycle, or otherwise, must do so as safely and directly as possible and submit written authorization signed by the parent/guardian to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. They must obey all traffic and trespassing laws and cross at designated crosswalks. **Students in Grades 3K through 4 will not be permitted to travel home from St. Ephrem Catholic Academy without a parent, guardian, or other authorized adult or another pre-arranged travel accommodation (such as a school bus).** In the case of a younger student traveling home with an older student, such as an older sibling, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy must receive written authorization from a parent/guardian. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to not release the student(s) to travel home on their own, either by walking or otherwise if it deems that is not in the best interest of the students.

**Students must be under the supervision of a teacher at all times. Therefore, no student is permitted in any part of the school building without teacher supervision.**

### **I. Early Release**

Students are expected to be in attendance for the complete session each school day. **If a student must leave St. Ephrem Catholic Academy before the regular dismissal hour, a parent/legal guardian or a person authorized by the parent/legal guardian must come to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy office to pick the student up and escort the student out of the building. Parents/ legal guardians must provide authorization for their child to be released to someone other than a parent/ legal guardian.**

## J. Use of School Grounds

Unless students are formally registered for before or after school programs, including Academy extracurricular activities, the school does not have staff available to supervise students on the grounds outside the general school hours.

## K. Dress Code

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy believes that clothes do not define a person. A uniform allows everyone to be seen for who they are, not by what they have. The purpose of a uniform is a means of consistency in student dress while keeping costs to a minimum. It also reduces the problem of competitive dressing. Students, unless otherwise notified by Administration, will wear the school uniform.

All students are expected to keep themselves well-groomed and neatly dressed. A clean and healthy appearance is important. Any form of dress considered by the Administration to be contrary to good hygiene or which is distracting or disruptive in appearance and detrimental to the purpose or conduct of the school will not be permitted. All clothing must be clean, neatly pressed, and in good repair. No ripped, torn, or defaced item may be worn.

## UNIFORMS

Families are expected to cooperate with the uniform policy when choosing to send your child/children to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy.

The school uniform is to be purchased from Tommy Hilfiger and consists of the following dress code: **5 unexcused uniform infractions will result in the loss of honors.**

### **K-8 BOYS:**

#### ***Winter***

Navy Blue Socks  
Blue Oxford Shirt with Logo  
Logo  
School Navy Blue Tie  
Black Belt  
Black/Navy Socks  
Non-Scuff Dress Shoes (**NO SNEAKERS**)

#### ***Spring***

Navy Blue Twill Shorts or Long Pants  
Light Blue Short Sleeve Polo Shirt with  
Black Belt  
Black/Navy Socks  
Non-Scuff Dress Shoes (**NO SNEAKERS**)

*The school logo can be purchased from Tommy Hilfiger.*

### **K-8 GIRLS:**

#### ***Winter***

Plaid Skirt/Skort or Navy Blue Pants  
Light Blue Oxford with Logo  
Black/Navy Blue Knee Socks  
Non-Scuff Dress Shoes (**NO SNEAKERS**)

#### ***Spring***

Plaid Skirt/Skort  
Light Blue Polo with Logo  
Black/Navy Blue Knee Socks  
Non-Scuff Dress Shoes (**NO SNEAKERS**)

*The school logo can be purchased from Tommy Hilfiger.*

**BOYS/GIRLS:** In 32-degree or below weather, the school-issued sweater may be worn. Students in Grades 5-8 may wear the school-issued cardigan or pullover sweater.

**3K & PK:** The school's gym uniform is to be worn daily.

## **GYM UNIFORM**

All students are to wear the regulation gym uniform to school on gym days.

### **K-8 Winter:**

Navy Blue T-Shirt with Logo  
Nave Blue St. Ephrem Sweatshirt  
Navy Blue Sweatpants with Logo  
White Athletic Socks  
Sneakers

### **K-8 Spring:**

Navy Blue T-Shirt with Logo  
Nave Blue Shorts with Logo  
White Athletic Socks  
Sneakers

***ALL SCHOOL UNIFORM ATTIRE MUST BE PURCHASED THROUGH THE TOMMY HILFIGER UNIFORM COMPANY. ALL STUDENTS WEARING THE WRONG UNIFORM PIECES WILL BE DETAINED IN THE OFFICE UNTIL THE PARENT/GUARDIAN BRINGS THE MISSING OR CORRECT UNIFORM PIECE.***

## **L. Grooming Code**

Families are expected to cooperate with the grooming code when choosing to send your child/children to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy.

Hair must be its natural color, clean, neatly combed, and not cover the ears or eyes.

- Facial hair is not permitted
- **Hair must be a natural color. Streaking, highlighting, lowlights, glints, etc., are not permitted**

**Students are not allowed to wear make-up at any time. This includes eye make-up and acrylic nails. Only appropriate modest and safe jewelry is allowed. Necklaces must be tucked into the shirt. Tattoos and body piercings are not allowed. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY WILL RESULT IN A UNIFORM INFRACTION.**

**Nothing in this policy is meant to prevent a student from attending school with an ethnic hairstyle in connection with his or her race, heritage, or national origin, including, but not limited to, braids, locs, or twists.**

Parents/guardians will be notified if a child comes to school consistently in an unkept manner. If no improvement is noticed within a reasonable amount of time, an appointment with the parents/guardians and the Principal will be made.

## **M. Dress Down Days**

There may be occasions in which students are allowed to wear non-uniform attire. Students are reminded to dress with modesty. Students should adhere to the following attire:

- Appropriate length skirt, shorts, or dress – no shorter than 3” above the knees
- No torn or tight jeans or pants
- No spaghetti strap tanks, midriffs, tube tops, etc.
- No logo type T-shirts
- No hats (unless specifically designated)
- No loose/baggy pants or shorts
- **No make-up!**
- No hoop earrings or excessive jewelry
- No jeggings, leggings or skinny jeans
- **No flipflops, strapless sandals, slippers, or beach shoes**

**When it is not a Dress Down Day, students who come to school in Dress Down attire will have their parents notified immediately and will be prohibited from returning to class.**

#### **N. Field Trips**

Written permission must be obtained from parents/legal guardians of students who wish to go on scheduled trips. Information to the parents/legal guardians will include the trip's date, purpose, and destination, the expense, the means of transportation, and the probable time of return.

Adults who wish to chaperone must complete Virtus training and background checks before accompanying students. Please see the Volunteering, Chaperoning & VIRTUS training section for further information about this process.

**Field trips are considered an extension of the school day, and the code of conduct and anti-bullying policy will apply. All disciplinary rules apply to students equally during school field trips. Students who engage in poor behavior on field trips may be required to be escorted by a parent/guardian for future field trips or may lose the privilege of attending field trips. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Principal, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance, violation of the code of conduct or poor behavior, or violation of school policy.**

All medications given on field trips must comply with the Administering Medication policy. For a student with prescription medication and/or medically necessary related treatments, a trained individual needs to be present on a field trip. This can include a parent/guardian, a designated family member to ensure care in the case of an emergency, or the school nurse *if* the nurse is attending the field trip. Given the needs of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy cannot guarantee that the nurse will attend the trip. If a trained individual of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy cannot attend the field trip, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide a trained individual to accompany the student on the field trip. Any adult accompanying the student must complete Virtus training and background checks before accompanying the student.

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to cancel school-sponsored field trips at any time and for any reason, including inclement weather and safety risks.

#### **O. Care of School Property**

Students will be held responsible for properly caring for all books, supplies, devices, accessories, or equipment furnished to them by St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. Students who damage, lose or deface Academy property shall be required to pay for the damage or loss.

**Desks, lockers, and any other area on Academy property where students store items are Academy property and subject to searches by school authorities to protect the safety of all.**

#### **P. Books and Supplies**

**All assigned books must be properly covered.** Contact paper is NOT to be used to cover any books obtained under the New York State textbook loan. Books that are not part of this loan and are soft-covered should be covered in contact paper. Each child is responsible for keeping his or her books clean, neat, and covered. Students should follow the direction of their teachers regarding the covering of their books.

**Books that are lost or defaced become the liability of the student and his or her parents.** Workbooks must be free of doodling and scribbling.

**Students are responsible for providing supplemental materials listed on the yearly supply list for use in the classroom.**

**Final report cards will be withheld until restitution for damaged/lost books is made.**

#### **Q. Telephone Use to Call Parent/Guardian/Custodian**

If a parent/guardian needs to reach a student, he or she must call the **Main Office at (718) 833-1440**. Similarly, if a student seeks to call his or her parent, the student must make the request to the **Main Office**. **Under no circumstances should a parent/guardian or child call or text each other during school hours from a cell phone.**

#### **R. Personal Property**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is not responsible for lost or damaged valuables. Students are strongly advised not to bring valuables into the school building, including electronic devices such as tablets, phones, etc.

#### **S. Announcements**

Informational announcements are handled through St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's P.A. system. Students must courteously listen when a message is presented over the P.A. system, especially when prayers are recited.

#### **T. Fliers and Informational Brochures**

Upon approval by the Principal, students may distribute unofficial material, including petitions, buttons, or other insignia, at reasonable times and places. However, all such material must be in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Failure to comply will result in confiscation of the material and possibly disciplinary action. Further, any such material may not be obscene, libelous, contain indecent or vulgar language or content, advertise a product not permitted to minors by law, constitute insulting or fighting words the purpose of which is to

injure or harass other people, or present a high likelihood of causing a disruption at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. Further, parents/guardians may not distribute any unofficial material through their child or otherwise.

## V. STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND BEHAVIOR

### A. Student Behavior and Code of Conduct

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's Student Code of Conduct is as follows:

Christian behavior is a duty, bound by conscience, to do what is right, being fully aware of any and all consequences. *The expectation is that students/parents and staff will treat everyone with respect, every day, all the time.* A student's behavior, in and out of school, reflects upon the school and the family. The Code of Conduct applies to the circumstances that form the Christian life of the School.

#### SCHOOL RULES:

1. Students are to be respectful, courteous, and obedient in speech, action, and attitude to the principal, all teachers and staff, parent volunteers, other adults, and fellow students.
2. Violence is not tolerated at Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy. Violence is defined as any act meant to hurt, punish, or belittle another. Report bullying incidents to an adult and understand that bullying behavior is unacceptable. **Any act of violence (including hitting, pushing, shoving) will lead to immediate parent contact.**
3. Personal property and the property of others are to be kept neat, clean, and orderly. There shall be no graffiti of any kind. All books are to be covered and carried in a school bag. Textbooks, notebooks, workbooks, folders, etc., are to be cared for in a neat and careful manner. Each student must respect the property of the school and parish.
4. All academic requirements, which include writing, reading, study homework, and class work, must be met. All extra assignments are also to be completed as assigned. Failure to complete or not do assignments will result in a point loss for the grade in that subject.
5. Each student is to come prepared with ALL supplies needed for every class. **Grades 6-8 students are to come to school with their Chromebooks charged daily.**
6. **Students must have headphones with microphones. Earbuds must be removed if they are not being used in class. WIRELESS HEADPHONES ARE NOT PERMITTED!!!** Students are to Make up School Work when absent
7. **STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN DEVICES!**
8. Maintain good attendance and be on time every day for school. **Students in Grades 5-8 who arrive later than 8:00 more than 5 times in a term will become INELIGIBLE**

**for Academic Honors.**

9. When moving with the class as a whole in the halls, stairs, etc., the students are to walk in silence in two single lines or as directed by the teacher. This also applies to the time for entering and leaving the school and the Church, Library, Gym, Auditorium, and all school areas.
10. At dismissal, ALL students must walk in line with the teacher to the POINT OF DISMISSAL. No students will be permitted off the line before this point. Order and respect are to be maintained on the way home. Respect for the Crossing Guards is essential.
11. There will be no eating of food in the classroom. Chewing gum is NOT allowed inside or outside anywhere on school property.
12. Cell phones are prohibited AT ALL TIMES (unless directed by the teacher)-including during the afterschool program and extracurricular activities (Art Club, Band, etc).
13. Refrain from loitering in lavatories, corridors, and exits.
14. Demonstrate good manners in the lunch room in word and action.
15. While in the Gym in the morning, students will remain on their class line; there will be no running or activity that can cause injury or disruption. Students cannot leave the gym once they have arrived.
16. All directives, policies, requirements, and rules of the classroom teachers and special subject teachers must be followed and respected by each student.
17. Students are expected to practice proper hygiene. Dress Neatly and take pride in their appearance. All Students MUST wear the required school uniform and not a variation of the uniform
18. Toys, games, and electronics may NOT be brought to school. These items and others deemed INAPPROPRIATE may be confiscated and kept in the office until the parent is notified. The school is not responsible for these items if they are not confiscated. Toys, games, and electronics may ONLY be used in afterschool if the supervising staff member gives consent!
19. CELL PHONES will be collected by the homeroom teachers and must be turned off. Failure to comply will result in confiscation of the phone and detention.
20. All students must use school login on all devices for any school-related activity and at all times while in school



**21. Plagiarism is a serious offense. Students will be given a zero grade for plagiarism. Junior High students may face suspension or expulsion if the teacher has determined the offense is serious and repeated.**

**22. WHITE OUT AND SHARPIES ARE NOT PERMITTED!**

### **DEMERIT SYSTEM**

A demerit system has been established in Grades K-8 as communication between teacher and parents to inform a parent of a child's inappropriate behavior. All demerits are to be signed by the parent. Whether it is signed by the parent or not is irrelevant to whether the demerit remains. The demerit will stand because it is issued based on a teacher giving prior notice to the student several times and no correction of the behavior occurred by the student. The system attempts to correct behavioral actions deemed unacceptable for our children's development. All teachers will use demerit forms. These discipline notes will be kept in the teachers' binder. If patterns of misbehavior arise, parents will be called in for a conference with the Principal, Teacher, Guidance Counselor, etc. If children/teacher/staff/principal is endangered by your child's behavior, parents will be called immediately, and the student will be suspended or expelled. The number of demerits will be recorded on the child's report card.

Demerits will result in the student being unable to be part of our honor roll system, which stresses excellence in all areas, including academic and personal development.

**Please see below for the consequences for Grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8.**

#### **Kindergarten through Grade 2**

Students are to be respectful, courteous, and obedient in speech, action, and attitude to the principal, all staff, parent volunteers, other adults, and fellow students. This also applies to failure to follow classroom rules and taking direction from an adult. Failure to abide by this statement will result in obtaining a discipline referral. If a child receives 3 referrals, a time-out recess will occur.

Violence is not tolerated at Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy. Violence is defined as any act meant to hurt, punish or belittle another. This includes hitting, kicking, biting, etc. Any act of violence will result in an immediate time-out recess and a meeting between the family, the teacher, and the administration.

Students should show respect toward the academic property and the property of others, including furniture and learning material. If a child receives 3 referrals, a time-out recess will occur.

#### **Grades 3-5**

##### **1 Demerit:**

- Out of uniform (unauthorized)

- Chewing gum
- Incomplete classwork (without reason)
- Calling out/talking out of turn (with a warning)
- Unauthorized use of AirPods/earphones/earbuds/headsets (unauthorized)
- Aggressive playground/recess/gym class behavior

## **2 Demerits:**

- Misuse of technology
- Disruptive behavior
- Not submitting cell phone
- Name-calling/teasing

## **3 Demerits**

- Cheating
- Stealing
- Physically inappropriate (aggressive behavior)
- Destruction or vandalism of school property
- Other very serious violations of behavior as stated in the student handbook. .

This list is subject to change as behavior warrants.

## **Consequences**

- A total of 3pts from either list one or two results in lunch/recess detention
- 1 pt. violations can only result in detention
- 3 instances of a 2 pt. violation may result in an In School Suspension (ISS)
- 3 point violations can result in detention or ISS, depending on teacher/principal discretion
- If a student receives 3 points (1 detention), they will no longer be eligible to receive honors for the trimester.

Parents will be notified via FACTS of all demerit points.

If your child receives demerits, it is strongly suggested that you confirm with the teacher to regulate this behavior early.

Consistent demerit will result in a 1 or 2 in Personal Progress on the Report Card, thereby removing your child from any honors awards regardless of subject grades.

## **Grades 6-8**

### **1 Demerit:**

- Chewing gum
- Unauthorized Dress Code Violations
- Profanity
- Unauthorized use of AirPods/earphones/earbuds/headsets

- 1st offense - Simulated violence (playing guns, play fighting, drawing violent images, etc.)
- Aggressive playground/recess/gym class behavior
- 1st offense - teasing/harassment

### **2 Demerits:**

- Unauthorized cell phone usage
- Highly or repeatedly disruptive behavior
- Overt disobedience
- 2nd+ offense - Simulated violence
- 2nd offense - teasing/harassment (3+ offenses will be considered bullying)

### **3 Demerits:**

- Bullying
- Truancy
- Cheating/Plagiarism
- Destruction or vandalism of school property
- Insubordination
- Stealing
- Misuse of school property
- Viewing of inappropriate images/materials/videos
- Hitting/Biting/Kicking/Other acts of physical harm
- Other very serious violations of behavior as stated in the Family Handbook

### **Consequences**

A total of 3pts from either list one or two results in lunch/recess detention

1 pt. violations can only result in detention

3 instances of a 2 pt. violation may result in an In School Suspension (ISS)

Students who receive 3 points (1 recorded detention) will no longer be eligible for honors for the trimester.

Teachers may refer students to the diocesan counselor for mediation.

This list is subject to change as behavior warrants.

**All students are expected to thrive toward excellent behavior at all times. Behavior problems include disrespecting authority, including teachers, staff, and other students, teasing, bullying, socially unacceptable behavior, or behavior contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church or the mission of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. If behavioral issues persist, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may request a conference with the parent. Failure on behalf of a parent/guardian to attend a conference may result in the child staying home until the parent/guardian and student attend the conference with St. Ephrem Catholic Academy.**

## **B. Anti-Bullying Policy**

The school communities within the Brooklyn Diocese believe in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person. We believe that all students, school employees, and volunteers have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. In turn, all school community members must promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. Research shows that students who learn in a safe and supportive environment succeed academically. Students have a right to learn in an environment free of harassment that substantially interferes with their education.

Bullying and bias-based harassment/intimidation are intentional, repeated, hurtful acts (physical, verbal, written) committed by one or more persons towards another person or persons. It usually involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power which can be physical, emotional, or verbal. Bullying can create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating school environment and affect a student's educational opportunities if not addressed. The behaviors include but are not limited to:

- *Physical:* physical violence, stalking, threats, aggressive or menacing gestures, exclusion from peer groups intended to humiliate or isolate the target (relational bullying).
- *Verbal:* taunts, teasing, derogatory language, derogatory jokes, name-calling, slurs, spreading rumors
- *Written:* written or graphic material, including graffiti containing comments or stereotypes that are electronically written and transmitted via the internet, social messaging sites, blogs, instant messaging, text messages, cell phones, and webcams. This would also include forwarding such messages if received. This generally constitutes cyberbullying.

### **Reporting Procedures:**

- The targeted student, parent/guardian of a student or other students in the school (bystanders), or any school staff who believe that bullying has occurred should report the incident to the principal.
- The principal needs to conduct an investigation by interviewing all parties separately.
- The parents of all involved students should be notified.
- If it is determined that bullying has occurred, the child who was bullied is subject to consequences per the school's disciplinary code.
- Parents should be advised to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if the situation warrants such a report.
- Referral to counseling should be made for all parties if deemed necessary.
- The principal must follow up to see that the offending conduct has stopped.
- All students should be notified that retaliation against anyone who makes a report will not be tolerated, and those that retaliate will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **C. Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy**

Under New York State Law on Cyber-Bullying, inappropriate, defamatory, or content found to be injurious to an academy community member may result in disciplinary action, even if done outside of Academy premises or using devices not owned or controlled by St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. All instances of such behavior must be reported immediately to the administration, who will investigate the matter and enforce the appropriate consequences.

Violation of this policy in whole or in part may result in any or all of the following and will be issued at the discretion of the St. Ephrem Catholic Academy principal:

- Loss of use/privileges of school/academy technology.
- Disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to, detention, suspension, expulsion, and /or legal action by the school/academy, civil authorities, and/or other involved parties.
- Compensation for damages, both physical and punitive, incurred due to actions in violation of this policy

#### **D. Alcohol and Drug-Free Zone Policy**

The New York City Tobacco Products Regulations Act of 1994 curtails exposure to tobacco use on school grounds. For the purpose of this legislation, “school grounds” means the “buildings, grounds or facilities, or any part thereof, owned or occupied by the public or private institutions for the primary purpose of providing educational instructions to students at or below the twelfth-grade level.” Tobacco use is not permitted on school grounds at any time. A “tobacco product” is any substance which contains tobacco including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, and chewing tobacco. New York City regulations are far more stringent than the regulations promulgated by New York State. However, schools subject to the rules of this municipality, as are the schools of the Diocese of Brooklyn, must follow the local laws. Thus, smoking is prohibited on ALL SCHOOL PREMISES AT ANY TIME.

For the safety of our students, alcohol is also prohibited from being consumed on school premises at any time. At no time is the use of marijuana permitted.

#### **E. Impermissible Items**

Students must conduct themselves, at all times, in a courteous manner in accord with Catholic principles. To that end, and also in the interest of the safety of the students and the protection of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy’s property, the following items are NOT allowed at any time but are not limited to the following:

- 1. White-out or any type of permanent marker**
2. Spray cans, smoke bombs, stink bombs, powders/choking agents or chemicals or any kind.
3. Gum
4. Alcohol or drugs of any kind, matches or lighters, and drug paraphernalia
5. Laser pointers, knives/box cutters, scissors, or any type of weapon
6. Any type of toy weapon
7. Nail files
8. Energy drinks and caffeine
9. Extreme jewelry, more than two wristbands or bracelets, dangling earrings, or hoop earrings larger than the size of a dime
- 10. Makeup of any kind, including lipstick**
11. Personal electronic devices

The presence of any of these items can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. The presence of alcohol, drugs, or weapons is a criminal offense, and the police will be notified.

#### **F. Discipline Policy**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may need to involve disciplinary measures from time to time. The purpose of disciplinary measures is to provide structure to students and for them to learn self-discipline, strengthening and promoting the values incorporated in our Catholic faith. Disciplinary measures should have, as an end, the development of the human person who respects oneself, other persons, and those in authority.

At no time will corporal punishment be used against a child. Any perceived acts of corporal punishment or reports from a child of corporal punishment should be reported to the Principal immediately by the student and/or the parent/guardian.

By enrolling your child in St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, the parent/guardian agrees to be supportive of the rules and regulations that St. Ephrem Catholic Academy deems critical in the child's spiritual, academic, and behavioral growth.

Teachers are the primary disciplinarians within the classroom and among students. Teachers will discipline students for minor classroom disruptions, such as not completing homework, minor verbal disputes with other students, or not being in the complete uniform. Parents/guardians will be notified of classroom problems to the extent a teacher finds necessary. As partners in education, parents/guardians should work with the teacher to ensure that inappropriate behavior is changed.

At times, however, teachers will refer classroom discipline issues to the administration of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. This is likely to include chronic minor problems listed above or major problems, including chronic lateness, verbal abuse of a teacher, signs of disrespect to a teacher or another adult on the staff, fighting, vandalism, stealing, physical, sexual, or verbal harassment or bullying of a fellow student, violent behavior, smoking, or the possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, cigarettes, lighters, matches, stink or smoke bombs, chemicals/irritants, alcohol, dangerous items or a weapon. The administration will handle such matters in various ways depending on the severity of the incident, up to and including suspension, police notification, and expulsion.

For serious acts of misbehavior, such as but not limited to fighting, stealing, vandalism, and harassment, the student may immediately be suspended for one to five days. In cases of vandalism, the parent/guardian must pay the full cost of repairing or replacing the item before the child may return to school. In cases of theft, the item is either returned in good condition, or the cost of replacement is borne by the parent/guardian before the child can return to school.

In cases where a child engages in a fight that causes injury to another child or adult, the police may be summoned, and then the parents/guardians will be notified. Likewise, the possession of drugs or alcohol by a child may be reported to the police. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to expel the child due to such an offense.

In cases in which a child brings a weapon to school, the police are summoned, and then the parents/guardians are called. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to expel the child due to such an offense.

Police will always be called in the case of a weapon.

**Individual-directed threats of violence or harm communicated directly or indirectly by any means, as well as building-directed threats of violence or harm communicated directly or indirectly by any means (e.g., shooting, bomb threats), or to harm students, employees, or visitors, are taken seriously. Upon knowledge of the threats, the Principal will notify the Office of the Superintendent and call the parents. The administration will determine the course of action to be taken, including calling law enforcement, requiring a mental health referral, and/or expulsion.**

**It is the expectation of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy that student behavior is exemplary both on and off school grounds. A student always represents the entire school community. Therefore, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to discipline students for acts such as but not limited to stealing, fighting, vandalism, bullying, or any other type of threatening or inappropriate misconduct (personally, via telephone, or on the internet). Such misconduct could result in punishments, including suspension and/or expulsion.**

**Lastly, a child's arrest for a crime on or off of school grounds, within or beyond the vicinity of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, at any time could result in the child's suspension or expulsion. A child's conviction of a crime on or off school grounds, within or beyond the vicinity of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, will likely result in a child's expulsion.**

**The school's decision is final in any matter of discipline or academics, including a decision to expel a student.**

## **G. Respect for Life**

A fundamental belief and tenet of the Roman Catholic faith is that human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. All students and parents are expected to live and follow gospel teachings and the Catholic faith in this area.

## **VI. EXPECTATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

### **A. Parental Involvement**

Home is the first place a child learns to love and respect God and neighbor. Parents/legal guardians, in choosing a Catholic school to continue the education begun at home, have responsibilities and opportunities to share in the continuance of their children's education.

Parental involvement consists of parents/legal guardians and staff meeting together because of a common interest in the child. It is expressed in many ways, such as sharing in student supervision in the lunchroom or playground or serving as library or teacher aide. In some instances, parents/legal guardians may be asked to assist in advocacy in all areas that would benefit the schools, including programs that request government assistance, in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent. The involvement of the total family is also a means of communicating St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's performance to the total parish community.

Parental support for the education of their children is of the utmost importance. Parents and legal guardians are also expected to uphold the behavioral expectations for students and staff

within St. Ephrem Catholic Academy community. Failure of parents to act in a manner compatible with the values of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may result in student dismissal.

## **B. Proximate Preparation for the Reception of Sacraments**

Diocese of Brooklyn

Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis

Proximate Preparation for Reception of Sacraments Program

Handbook Format

**Proximate preparation** takes place during the Faith Formation year immediately preceding the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation. The Five (5) proximate preparation sessions offer the candidates and their families the opportunity to “deepen the life of faith, especially regarding knowledge of the sacraments of the Church.”

“The ‘Year of Renewal’ begins with the core of the mission of Catholic education — to form children in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the Catholic Church. By investing in our children, we are investing in the future of the Church. Education isn’t just in the classroom or the religious education room. It begins and is nourished in the family. ‘Year of Renewal’ provides an opportunity to highlight parents’ roles as primary witnesses of the faith and educators in everyday life... This is just the beginning, and it’s meant to be a spark of awareness that will grow, year after year.”

These words describe the “Year of Renewal for Catholic Education.” This Renewal is a combined effort to enhance Catholic Academies/Schools, Faith Formation Programs, and Parishes. It reflects the missionary call to all God’s people to evangelize and renew the face of the earth. In this Year of Renewal, it is most important that we, as parents and educators, once again familiarize ourselves with the Diocesan guidelines for the reception of sacraments.

“As a family of families, the parish remains the ideal home for Catholic families to join together” to ensure the integrity of parish life, all constituents should review these guidelines and discuss the pastoral implications. Parents and children should be catechized to the importance of returning to their home parishes for the reception of sacraments. The parish confers a sacrament, not a Catholic academy or parish school.

**Can. 913** §1 For holy communion to be administered to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and be accurately prepared so that, according to their capacity, they understand what the mystery of Christ means and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.

**Can. 914** It is primarily the duty of parents and of those who take their place, as it is the duty of the parish priest, to ensure that children who have reached the use of reason are properly prepared and, having made their sacramental confession, are nourished by this divine food as soon as possible. It is also the duty of the parish priest to see that children who have not reached the use of reason, or whom he has judged to be insufficiently disposed, do not come to holy communion.



## THOSE TO BE CONFIRMED

**Can. 889 §1.** Every baptized person not yet confirmed, and only such a person is capable of receiving confirmation.

**§2.** To receive confirmation licitly outside the danger of death requires that a person who has the use of reason be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew the baptismal promises.

**Can. 890** The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the proper time. Parents and pastors of souls, especially pastors of parishes, are to take care that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the appropriate time.

**Can. 891** The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion unless the conference of bishops has determined another age, or there is the danger of death, or in the judgment of the minister, a grave cause suggests otherwise.

## SPONSORS

**Can. 892** Insofar as possible, there is to be a sponsor for the person to be confirmed; the sponsor is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this sacrament.

**Can. 893 §1.** To perform the function of sponsor, a person must fulfill the conditions mentioned in **can. 874.** (**Can. 874 §1.** To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor, a person must: 1/ be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function; 2/ have completed the sixteenth year of age unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause; 3/ be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on; 4/ not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared; 5/ not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized. **§2.** A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.)

**§2.** It is desirable to choose as a sponsor the one who undertook the same function in baptism.

### What this means:

- All proximate prep must be done through the home parish of each student
- Families must participate in Proximate Prep
- Sponsors must be practicing Catholics

Session One (3 hrs)  
**Preparation of the Candidates**

This first Session should be held at the beginning of the Faith Formation Year (September, October). It should follow a Sunday Celebration of the Eucharist. The intention of the Session is to introduce the families to the importance of Faith formation, the Domestic Church, and parish life. The important personnel is the Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Catechetical Leadership, families, and candidates for Sacraments.

**Catechetical Formation:** It is the personal responsibility of the Parents, Pastor, and Catechetical Leadership to ensure the adequate catechetical formation of the candidates and to vouch for such preparation in the presentation of the candidates to the Bishop (in the Sacrament of Confirmation) and to the parish. Because of this presentation, it is not necessary or required to have a public presentation of the candidates during a Sunday Mass before the conferral of the Sacraments.

**Sacrament of Penance:** It is important for the Reception of First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation that the candidates be “properly disposed” (**Canon 889**). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that “to receive Confirmation, one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the Sacrament of Penance to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit...” (**no. 1310**). For the Sacrament of First Penance and First Holy Communion, the Catechism states: According to the Church’s command, “after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year.”<sup>1</sup> Anyone aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession.<sup>2</sup> Children must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time. -Candidates should therefore be expected to receive the Sacrament of Penance in proximate preparation for their Confirmation and be allowed to do so. (**no. 1457**)

**Reception of Holy Communion:** Candidates and sponsors should prepare to receive Holy Communion at Mass, including the Confirmation Mass. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that it “is in keeping with the very meaning of the Eucharist that the faithful, if they have the required dispositions, *receive communion when* they participate in the Mass” (**no. 1388**). By receiving Holy Communion, both the newly confirmed and their sponsors give witness that Christian Initiation is directed toward the Eucharist.

- “A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine.” (**Canon 919 §1**).

- “The elderly, the infirm, and those who care for them can receive the Most Holy Eucharist even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour” (**Canon 919, §3**).

- Family members and invited guests for First Communion should likewise understand the importance of the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist and be spiritually prepared to receive Eucharist.

**Universal Prayer:** The Pastor should encourage the parish community to pray for the candidates for First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation, especially with a petition in the *Universal Prayer* on the Sundays leading up to the date of the sacrament.

**What this means:**

- Weekly Sunday celebration in the home parish is expected
- Parents participate in the preparation of children for sacraments
- Families are known in the parish
- Children are prepared for specific sacraments: First Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation

Session Two (3 hrs)

**The Liturgical Calendar and Advent Season**

This second Session should be held on the first or Second Sunday of Advent. It involves a presentation on the Liturgical calendar and highlights the importance of Advent as a season of preparation for Christmas. The intention of the Session is to (re) introduce the families to the liturgical year, how the Domestic Church celebrates this season with Catholic cultural elements, and how the parish prepares for the coming of the Messiah. The important personnel is the Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Catechetical Leadership, families, and candidates for Sacraments.

**Celebrating Christmas**

Advent is the period of preparation and waiting for the coming of the Lord. It begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas, and it lasts until the 24th of December. As in many other Christian churches, Advent is observed in Catholicism, too, and is related to a range of preparatory Christmas practices.

Some of them are to make an Advent wreath, keep an Advent calendar and pray a daily devotional, as well as to set up Christmas decorations, and erect a Christmas tree.

Christmas is an extraordinary event for the Catholic Church. It signifies the birth of the savior coming (in flesh) to meet people in the world. The Catholic Church designates the four weeks preceding Christmas as Advent. It is a preparatory period for a major event where the Lord is coming as a King and Savior.

According to the Catholic tradition, Christmas is not a one-day celebration but a longer festive period lasting up to 22 days. It is also connected to other holidays that are celebrated in the winter period of the year.

**What this means:**

- Families will have a deepened understanding of the meaning of the Advent/Christmas Season
- Families will participate in a parish-wide celebration
- A family Advent/Christmas project will be presented

Session Three (3 hrs)  
**The Liturgical Seasons of Lent/Easter/Pentecost**

This third Session should be held on the first Sunday of Lent. It stresses the importance of the Lenten practices of prayer, self-sacrifice, and charity to prepare for the renewal of **Baptismal promises** at Easter. The intention of the Session is to present a liturgical/spiritual understanding of Lent, provide examples of how the Domestic Church may pray and sacrifice together, present cultural elements of the Easter celebration, and illustrate how the spirit of Pentecost is found in each sacrament's candidates will receive. The important personnel is the Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Catechetical Leadership, families, and candidates for Sacraments.

**Lenten Devotions**

Lent in the Liturgical Year is when families examine our heritage's Catholic customs. The Catholic cultural traditions, especially in the types of **Easter foods**, can become a special treat and religious experience for the family, which can be handed down to the next generation, and to the next.

**Fasting** conveys a sense of self-sacrifice, an important theme to teach our children. While Mother and Father may restrict their diet considerably, children should be encouraged to “fast” from desserts or sweets, using their mobile phones and other electronic devices. References to the fasts in the Bible might be explained several times at dinner during Lent. All family members can also be encouraged to fast from gossip, unkind remarks, or any hurtful behavior. This has been a season of “giving up” things for Lent. Each family member might also be asked to choose one thing to give for every day of Lent. This may be helping someone, donating clothing or food, or some other act of charity.

**Holy Week**

Holy Week is a serious, deeply religious experience. The week is filled with prayer—formal prayer and private prayer. Families should be encouraged to attend the special Masses and rituals of the week in their home parishes.

From noon till three on Good Friday, many families keep silent. Children should be encouraged to meditate or to say private prayers. Watching a video of the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary while saying the **rosary** or watching a video of the Stations would be appropriate while saying the Stations.

As His apostles today, we want to spread the message. Families may write “He is Risen” on different colored sheets of construction paper and tape them all over the doors of the domestic church. Greet each other with “He is Risen!” In all these ways, make your family life mirror the church's life. In that way, it will indeed become the domestic church.

**What this means:**

- Families will have a deepened understanding of the meaning of Lent/Easter Season
- Families will participate in a parish-wide celebration
- A family Lent/Easter project will be presented

Session Four (1 1/2hrs)  
**Sacraments and Family Life**

This fourth Session should take place on a **weeknight** before the ritual celebration of the sacraments. The presentation highlights the nature of sacraments, the role of sacraments in family life, and the role of the sacraments in the life growth plan of students. The intention of the Session is to present a liturgical/spiritual understanding of sacramental life in general, provide examples of how the Domestic Church may experience sacraments, and present cultural elements of Eucharistic celebration. The important personnel is the Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Catechetical Leadership, families, and candidates for Sacraments.

Many Catholic families live their Faith only once a week by attending Sunday Mass. For the rest of the week, the world's cares impinge on the family, and the Faith is practically forgotten. We are called to lead lives worthy of our baptismal calling. We are to live with God as a constant part of our lives, especially by including Him in our family life. This proximate prep allows reflecting on discipleship in light of the sacraments.

To be an authentic Catholic family, we must live a sacramental life. The sacramental life means not only the regular reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist but also the daily practice of using sacramentals to help us to live the life of prayer and to celebrate the feasts of the liturgical year.

### **Receiving the Sacraments**

Next to the Holy Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is our biggest help living the Catholic lifestyle. If we are really aiming to be the best possible Catholic family, it is important to stress the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Receiving the Sacrament of Penance frequently will make us concentrate on strengthening our virtues and ultimately improve our Catholic family life.

Parents must be encouraged to raise children to love all the sacraments. The sacramental life involves taking the children to observe the reception of the other sacraments, especially Baptism and Confirmation, and explaining their meaning. When possible, children may have opportunities to experience a wedding ceremony, and have instruction concerning the deeper meanings of the sacrament of Matrimony according to their age level. When appropriate, Children need to witness the Sacrament of the Sick.

### **Sacramentals**

While the Sacramental Life means frequent reception of Penance and Holy Eucharist, it also means the daily use of sacramentals. Sacramentals are a part of our Catholic cultural heritage. They can supplement the daily reception of the Holy Eucharist and, in some cases, maybe the only way to maintain the sacramental life for some families during the week between Sunday Masses.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines **Sacramentals** as “sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the **sacraments**. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the **Church**. Sacramentals are signs reminding us of God, the saints, and of Catholic truths. While sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ as a direct means of obtaining sanctifying and sacramental graces, sacramentals were instituted by the Church to obtain graces for us.

Sacramentals embody and make alive Catholic traditions that have existed for centuries. The rosary, the scapular, the Advent Wreath, Miraculous Medal are not merely objects but truly represent the Catholic way of life.

### **Living the Faith**

The sacramentals with appropriate prayers are best used in conjunction with the liturgical year. The liturgical year, starting with Advent, takes us through the history of mankind awaiting Jesus our Redeemer and then through the life of Jesus Christ. (cf. Proximate Prep 2)

This is a wonderful way for us to grow spiritually, but best of all, a joyful way to teach our children how to live and practice authentic Catholic family life.

More specifically, certain traditional Catholic practices can be started (or maintained) to help us better understand and love our Catholic beliefs. During Advent, making the Advent wreath is a very special event.

### **What this means:**

- Families will have a better understanding of the sacramental life of the Church
- Children will be given additional information about sacraments and their meaning
- Parents/Guardians will have the opportunity to address important issues in their adult faith formation

Session 5 (1 1/2hrs)

### **The Celebration of the Sacraments**

This fifth (final) Session should take place on a **weeknight** before the ritual celebration of the sacraments. The presentation highlights the nature of the particular sacrament to be celebrated. The intention of the Session is to present a liturgical/spiritual understanding of the particular ritual, explain the flow of the ceremony, and present cultural elements of Eucharistic celebration that may be particular to the Diocese or parish, **i.e.**, presentation of candidates, style of clothing acceptable for participants, and specific elements of conduct that are allowed.

### **The Celebration of the Christian Mystery:**

Jesus Christ has made it possible for us to share in the divine nature by conforming to Him through the grace of the Holy Spirit imparted to us through the Sacraments.

The sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. In Confirmation, the baptized is anointed with oil (a sign of abundance, joy, cleansing, healing, and strength) and is thereby consecrated, or imprinted, with the seal of the Holy Spirit. As Christ was marked with his father's seal, Christians are marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit of divine protection in the great Eschatological (end times trial). The primary effect of the sacrament is the (full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.” Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace; it unites us more firmly to Christ; increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit and renders more perfect our bond with the church, And gives us a “special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ...”

The sacrament of the Eucharist (from the Greek meaning “thanksgiving”) completes Christian initiation. The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” The other

sacraments, along with all the work of the Church in her ministries, are bound up with and oriented toward the Eucharist. “The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being.” In short, the Eucharist is the “sum and summary of our faith.”

Jesus Christ is present to the church in many ways: in his word, in the church’s prayer, in the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, in the sacraments, in the mass, and in the person of the minister. At the same time, he is most especially present in the Eucharist, in the body and blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine. The whole of Christ, his body and blood together with his soul and divinity, is truly, really, and substantially contained in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. This means that Christ is present in the fullest sense when the bread and wine are converted into his body and blood through the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **What this means:**

- Families will have a better understanding of the liturgical aspects of the sacraments
- Parents/guardians will receive specific information about the ritual as it is celebrated in the home parish
- Children will have the opportunity to receive final instructions about the reception of a sacrament

### **C. Parental Communication**

Regular communication between St. Ephrem Catholic Academy and parents/guardians is crucial to your child’s school experience. Scheduled parent-teacher conferences allow teachers and parents/guardians to discuss student achievement and develop means to assist students in areas of difficulty.

A parent/guardian may request a meeting with a teacher at any time by simply sending a note to the teacher in question, and the teacher will arrange for this meeting outside class at a mutually convenient time. The meeting should occur in the classroom or someplace that ensures privacy and never in a hallway, on the street, or another public place. A parent/guardian who is refused such a meeting should notify the Principal. If a parent/guardian seeks to meet with the Principal, he or she must contact the Main Office at 718-833-1440 or via e-mail at [aestevez@stephremacademy.org](mailto:aestevez@stephremacademy.org) and CC: [dcolon@stephremacademy.org](mailto:dcolon@stephremacademy.org) to set up an appointment.

Additionally, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may communicate with the parent/guardian in many ways, including:

- **Email, SMS, phone messages, and posts through the FACTS Family Portal**
- **ClassDojo.** Every class from 3K through Grade 8 has ClassDojo. Please check the page regularly, especially the Class and School Story sections.
- **School Website and Social Media** St. Ephrem Catholic Academy website can be found here: <https://www.stephremschool.org/>. This website does not require a login and is

accessible to the public. Various announcements may be made on the school website, such as emergency school closings, snow days, and other important information. The website will also contain various resources, such as the academic calendar. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

- **Information Sent Home With the Children:** Occasionally, teachers or administration at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy will send hard copy information home with your children. Please check your child's backpack *daily* for any information sent home by St. Ephrem Catholic Academy.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Arrival and dismissal areas are NOT the appropriate place or time for sensitive discussions.

**Concerns should be handled at the most local possible level. Persons with concerns about a situation with a teacher should first attempt to address the concern with the teacher. Only after such attempts have failed should the principal be contacted.**

**Similarly, a situation with the principal should be addressed to the principal. Only after such failed attempts should the concerned party contact the Board of Directors chairperson.**

#### **D. Inappropriate Parent, Family Member or Adult Behavior**

**At no time is a parent, family member, or adult to address a student of the school, other than their own child, regarding a situation that has occurred with their child. Parents must meet with the homeroom teacher, and an appointment may be set up, if you wish, with that child's parent. Adults must not approach children directly for any reason.**

**From time to time, situations occur where children act inappropriately. When demerits are given, it is a communication between the parent and teacher so that the teacher, who is acting in place of the parent, may inform the parent of their child's inappropriate behavior or breaking of a school rule. It is imperative that, as role models to children, adults exhibit appropriate behavior toward teachers, students, and other adults. If unkind behavior is exhibited, at any time, toward a child, teacher, or another adult, your child will lose the privilege of attending our school. As adults, there is absolutely no reason for unkindness as we address other parents or teachers regarding a situation that has occurred either in or out of school.**

#### **E. Home Academy Association (HAA)**

Every Academy is encouraged to establish a Home Academy Association. Its purpose is the educational enrichment of parents/legal guardians and teachers. The goal of the Home Academy Association is to foster a clearer understanding of the mutual responsibilities of parents/legal guardians and teachers regarding the education of the students.



Participation through volunteerism enhances the ability of parents to take an active part in their child's education. There are 3-4 HAA meetings/year, which parents are strongly encouraged to attend. Members may be contacted via the school office mailbox or by phone at 718-748-6610.

An added responsibility of the Home Academy Association will be to assist in the fundraising efforts of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. In the school, this is done in coordination with the administration. In an academy, it is done in coordination with the board of directors of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. No organization may hold title to accounts nor have access to funds raised for St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. The pastor/academy board of directors must approve all financial transactions.

#### **F. Homework**

As a partner in education, parents' role in homework is vital. Parents/guardians or another caretaker should remain available to assist students with homework and ensure that all homework is completed.

#### **G. Fundraising**

Fundraising activities benefit St. Ephrem Catholic Academy and are often a quality way to involve students in furthering their school community. Any fundraising program should have the Principal's approval and should be organized and executed so that St. Ephrem Catholic Academy program is not interrupted.

**FUNDRAISING FEE: \$150 per family per trimester.**

The HAA and other organizations host various events throughout the school year. Please make every effort to support these events as profits help enhance our students' educational experience.

#### **H. Volunteering, Chaperoning & VIRTUS Training**

**Parent volunteers and chaperones are an integral part of the school community. All parents/ legal guardians/ other adults must complete VIRTUS training, sign a Code of Conduct, and complete a background check.**

- The VIRTUS program for adults is a three-hour live awareness session that instructs adults of the Church that to protect children, you must have continuous awareness and vigilance. This awareness session helps trainees understand the signs of child sexual abuse, the methods, and means by which offenders commit abuse, and five empowerment steps to prevent child sexual abuse.
- The Code of Conduct is a document that acknowledges the importance of legal, professional, and responsible conduct of all who work with children and young people. All clergy, employees, and volunteers must read the Code of Conduct and sign a Statement of Acknowledgement Form. The Code of Conduct is distributed at all VIRTUS sessions.
- All employees and volunteers must also complete a criminal background screening before starting their employment or service. These forms are also distributed at all VIRTUS sessions. As of May 2010, all background screenings (employees and volunteers) will be done through the Safe Environment Office. The searches are done through LexisNexis (volunteers) or HireRight (employees). All information is kept confidential, and if a positive result is returned, the pastor/administrator will be notified,

and appropriate steps will be taken. Background searches will be rerun every 3 years for employees and 5 years for volunteers

## **I. Custody and Guardianship Orders**

Parents must provide accurate custodial information to be kept on file at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. Non-custodial parents do have rights. The law protects non-custodial parents and maintains that parents do not cease to be parents when they no longer have custody of their children. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment concerning the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy will provide the non-custodial parents with access to academic records and other school information regarding his or her child. **If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a court-certified copy of the court order.**

## **J. Contacts with Media**

Throughout the academic year, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may take pictures or videos and release personal information about students for promotional purposes. This might include:

- where a special event or program at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is covered by a newspaper or television station, resulting in student interviews and pictures;
- award-winning students who may have their names and photos published in a local newspaper; or
- if St. Ephrem Catholic Academy posts pictures of school activities on web pages and social media.

Parents/guardians can exclude their children from videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography, or participation involving printed materials or on the internet. If a parent/guardian chooses to exclude their child, the parent/guardian must provide written notification to the **Main Office.**

Parents/guardians who do not object must fill out the media authorization release form attached at the end of this Handbook. Please be advised that if a parent/guardian does not fill out this form, the child may be excluded from certain group photographs or otherwise taken in connection with the school day or other Academy functions.

## **VII. HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

### **A. Medical Requirements**

The New York City Department of Health requires that all new students entering nursery through grade 12 show proof of having received a complete medical evaluation. New York City students who transfer from one school to another are not considered new students. These requirements may change from year to year.

New York State Law states that all students in Grades Nursery through 12 must be immunized as directed by the New York State and New York City Departments of Health. New students may enter school provisionally with documentation of **an initial series of immunizations.** Once

admitted provisionally, a student has a certain amount of time to continue and complete the medical requirements. Students who fail to complete the necessary requirements within the appropriate time frame **must be excluded from school**. Parents must provide records of immunization to be kept on file at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. Any exemptions to the immunization requirements must be approved by St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, with documentation being kept in the student's health records. Only medical exemptions are permitted per New York State Law. Religious exemptions are no longer permissible.

- For Nursery, Pre-k, and UPK Programs--Between July 1 and December 31 of each year, all children between the ages of 6 months and 59 months and attending a group child care or school-based child care program must receive one dose of influenza vaccine.

## **B. Health Services**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy has a nurse provided by the NYC Department of Health daily.

## **C. Illness and Medical Conditions**

The following provides an overview of various medical conditions and illnesses, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's policy on handling such illnesses and conditions, and parent/guardian requirements. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but rather explanatory. If you have any other illness or medical condition, or if there are any questions, please contact the Principal. **The policies in this section may be altered or superseded by policies in light of COVID-19.**

**Parents are reminded of the NYC Department of Health Core Practices for reducing illness in school:**

- **Keep your child home if they are sick**
- **Practice good Hand Hygiene (wash hands )**
- **Practice good Respiratory Hygiene (cover coughs and sneezes)**

**Allergies:** Parents/guardians must notify St. Ephrem Catholic Academy of any documented allergies that a student may have.

**Policy on nuts and other allergens:** St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is a NUT FREE school. Absolutely no nut (peanut, tree nut) products are permitted. Families must notify the Academy of any documented allergies a student may have.

**Asthma:** Parents/guardians must notify St. Ephrem Catholic Academy of the medical needs and protocols of any student with asthma or a related condition.

**Clearance to Return:** In certain instances, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may require medical clearance for the child to return to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. If requested, the medical clearance note must specifically state that the child may return to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy and resume all activities, including gym and playground. Clearance notes will likely be required for severe illness, including hospitalizations and ER visits, surgical procedures, head injuries, cardiac/respiratory concerns, fractures, sprains, or significant changes in a child's health that may impact physical activities.

**Contagious Illness:** To the extent a child has a contagious illness, please notify St. Ephrem Catholic Academy as soon as possible so that we may alert others who came in contact with your

child. We also may be required to notify the Department of Health. A student with a contagious illness should not arrive for school. This applies even if the parent/guardian has not received confirmation that the child's illness is contagious, but the child is exhibiting signs of a possible communicable disease, such as a suspicious skin rash, suspicious open wounds, redness of the eyes with intense itching/burning and thick drainage, painful, reddened sore throat, and a constant cough accompanied by other symptoms. Students with a contagious illness should remain home from school until a doctor advises that he or she is no longer contagious and can resume normal activities.

Diarrhea/Vomiting: Students exhibiting vomiting and/or diarrhea should not arrive for school. Rather, they should stay home until they are free from symptoms for at least 24 hours.

Epinephrine: Severe allergic reactions leading to anaphylaxis are a life-threatening and time-sensitive medical emergency. Therefore, and in accordance with New York State and City Departments of Health recommendations, Academies will work with local health providers to receive training on the administration of epinephrine. For more information, see the administering epinephrine policy below.

If a child is at risk of anaphylaxis, the parent/guardian MUST notify the school and inform it of the risk. Additionally, the parent/guardian must 1) inform St. Ephrem Catholic Academy whether the student can self-administer epinephrine, 2) supply St. Ephrem Catholic Academy with two epinephrine devices in their original packaging; and 3) replace the devices when it expires, has been used, or shows any other signs of defect, such as discoloration.

Fever: If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or over, he or she must stay home. Your child may not return to school until they are fever free *without* Tylenol, Motrin or Advil for at least 24 hours.

Lice: To the extent a student contracts head lice, he or she must stay home from school until the parent/guardian has treated the condition in accordance with the New York City Department of Health Regulations. This is to protect the health and safety of all students and staff, given the high likelihood that others can also contract head lice. In any cases where a student is infected, a letter will be sent out to the entire class. The student's name will not be revealed. Do not send your child to school if a parent/guardian becomes aware of a lice infection at home. Please inform the school via telephone. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy does not pay for lice treatment regardless of where exposure may have occurred.

Mobility: As a matter of safety and in accordance with all applicable laws, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may not be able to accommodate in-person learning for a child who is immobile, such as a child who is utilizing crutches or in a cast. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy will endeavor to provide reasonable accommodation whenever possible but must ensure the safety of the student and all other students and be in accord with fire safety laws. Distance learning may be provided as an alternative solution.

#### **D. Administering Medication**

School nurses may administer over-the-counter-prescription drugs to students with written consent and medical authorization from a parent or legal guardian. School nurses may administer prescription medication that has been prescribed by a physician but must be provided with:

- Medical authorization from the parent or legal guardian consenting to administer the medication
- A medical plan developed by the child's parents and health care provider detailing the proper medication administration, details regarding the child's medical concerns, and other pertinent details.

**St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to call 911 in any case of a medical emergency.**

### **E. Administering Epinephrine**

Parents or guardians will supply their own epinephrine auto-injector and must provide written consent and medical authorization for its use. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy must have an up-to-date medical statement on file for each child in care. For a child with identified allergies or special health care needs, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy must have a copy of an individual health care plan developed by the child's parents and health care provider. Parents must make program staff aware of the individual health care plan on their child's first day at the program.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of the student who is at risk of anaphylaxis:

- to notify the school that the child/student is at risk of anaphylaxis and is in need of the presence of epinephrine on school premises
- to indicate to the school if the child/student is capable of self-administration of the epinephrine device
- to supply the school with the epinephrine device\* in its original packaging as received from the pharmacist.
- to replace the epinephrine device when it expires, discolors, or has been used

\*It is recommended that two epinephrine devices be supplied, the second functioning as a backup in case of malfunction or if an extra dose is necessary in accordance with medical documentation.

### **F. Administering Epinephrine on Field Trips**

**In the event of a school trip or school event conducted outside of th school premises, an emergency personnel/nurse must be present in order to assist the child. However, they must be notified within a couple of days. If an emergency personnel/nurse is unable to attend, it is the responsibility of the parent (or a designated person who appears on the child's emergency contact list) to attend with the child/student for the purpose of epinephrine administration, if necessary.**

### **G. City & State Health Services**

The Education Law of New York State mandates that students attending nonpublic schools receive the same health services provided to students attending public schools.

### **H. Accommodations**

Students requiring medical accommodations throughout the school day (including physical education, dietary conditions, physical limitations, and medical interventions) must submit a statement from his or her licensed medical provider stating the need for such accommodations each academic year. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy will attempt to provide the accommodation in accordance with all applicable laws and will inform the parent/guardian if it is unable to do so. If St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is unable to do so, it may withdraw the child's enrollment in accordance with the law.

### **I. Emergency Services in the Event of a Serious Injury**

In the event of a serious injury, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may call 911, and an ambulance may take the child to the hospital. The ambulance staff will determine the hospital based on the severity of the emergency. A staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance, and the parent/guardian will be notified to meet the child at the hospital. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, its staff, and St. Ephrem Catholic Academy officials shall be held harmless from any liability, costs, or expenses associated with any emergency services, and such costs or expenses shall be the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents/guardians.

### **J. Limitations of Physical Activity**

Students at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy will be enrolled in physical education classes. To the extent a student has a physical disability or issue which may impair his or her ability to engage in the class or which may make the class unsafe, the parents/guardians must notify St. Ephrem Catholic Academy at the beginning of the school year or as soon as the issue arises. A written doctor's recommendation may be required. Further, a student will be required to attend the physical education class for the instructional component and observation, complete an alternative assignment, or complete missed activities when physically able to participate.

### **K. Counseling Services**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy offers counseling services through PDHP (*Program for the Development of Human Potential which is sponsored by the diocese*) and Title I.

### **L. Wellness Policy**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy meets minimum federal and state standards for goals of physical education, nutrition, and healthy environments in schools.

**Please provide the school office, nurse, and teacher with up-to-date medical information. It is necessary for us to know if your child has any medical conditions such as heart problems, epilepsy, asthma, or allergies.**

### **M. Lunch Program**

The Lunch Program is supervised by the teachers with the assistance of parent aides. The Annual Lunchroom fee is \$120 and is collected to staff the lunch room.

After lunch, the children will go to the schoolyard, weather permitting, or the gym for recess. No child will leave the school yard for any reason during lunch. No parents will be permitted in the schoolyard or cafeteria unless they have approved volunteers for the lunch program that day. ALL STUDENTS are responsible for bringing lunch from home in the MORNING. For Safety purposes, Children are not permitted to bring glass bottles to the lunchroom Students must obey

the supervising adults for the safety of everyone. Students must be respectful to each other in words and actions. 3 reported incidents of unsatisfactory behavior will result in dismissal from the program for a period of time. No monies will be reimbursed. The suspended student must be supervised under the parent's guidance. If the poor behavior does not improve, the student will be permanently suspended from the lunch program.

Pizza, bagels, and chicken tenders are provided on specific dates. Typically, pizza is provided every Friday, bagels are provided every other Tuesday, and chicken tenders are provided every other Thursday. These items are provided to students for a fee paid at the beginning of the school year. All order forms and checks made payable to **St. Ephrem Catholic Academy** must be in the office by the deadline date noted on the form.

**Food or beverages in glass containers are not permitted for safety reasons.**

**For safety purposes, children are not permitted to bring glass bottles to the lunchroom. Students must obey the supervising adults for the safety of everyone. Students must be respectful to each other and to the adults in charge in words and actions.**

If a child forgets his/her lunch, the lunch is to be brought from home by the parent or designated person to the office in a well-marked bag. Parents should not meet their child in the schoolyard or come to the cafeteria with a forgotten lunch. **Children should be encouraged to be responsible for bringing their lunch with them to school upon arrival.**

**Students must be under the supervision of a teacher at all times. Therefore, no student is permitted during the lunch period without teacher supervision.**

### **Accident Policy**

If a student is seriously injured, the parent/guardian will be notified by St. Ephrem Catholic Academy as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the student.

If an accident results in a medical condition/injury, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is authorized to render reasonable first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion and judgment of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, minimize the severity of the student or injured person's condition. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may secure a professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion and judgment of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, appears to be reasonably warranted. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, its staff, and St. Ephrem Catholic Academy officials shall be held harmless from any liability, costs, or expenses associated with any treatment of first aid provided (including, but not limited to the cost of transportation), and such costs or expenses shall be the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

## **VIII. TECHNOLOGY**

### **A. Acceptable Use Policy**

The use of technology is permitted on school premises under limited conditions as authorized by the Principal to enhance academic achievement while respecting the dignity and safety of all members of the St. Ephrem Catholic Academy community.

In using the information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways, the following conditions of being a digital citizen within the Diocese of Brooklyn are expected:

*Respect One's Self*

- Public names should be appropriate
- Be mindful of any and all content you post, including photos, views, comments, information, etc.
- Avoid seeking out and/or viewing inappropriate content
- Do not engage in potentially harmful activities such as communicating with persons unknown to you or internet challenges

*Respect Others*

- Be mindful of comments, posts, photos, or any content directed toward or including others
- Refrain from engaging in inflammatory, harassing, or any other such disrespectful behavior
- Do not perpetuate inappropriate content by sharing it with or sending it to others
- Warn others of potentially disturbing or harmful content that should be avoided

*Protect One's Self and Others*

- Report any and all cyber-abuse committed against you or others to parents, teachers, and/or administrators
- Keep groups with friends private to avoid potentially inappropriate or dangerous content and communications from unknown sources

*Respect Intellectual Property*

- Cite sources when using any content not originally authored by you

Members of Catholic Academy communities must remember that when electronically communicating with individuals, groups, or institutions, you are doing so as an individual. You should not represent yourself, your views, ideas, questions, or actions as representing the Catholic Academy you are associated with without the principal's permission.

*Security of Technology*

The schools and academies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn assume no responsibility for the theft, loss, repair, or replacement of any technology devices brought onto school/academy property, whether lost, stolen, damaged, or confiscated.

Security on any computer system is a high priority. If you believe you can identify a security issue, you must notify a system administrator, principal, or teacher and not disclose the problem to others in any way. Although safeguards are in place to protect all users from inappropriate content, we are not responsible for filtering failures that result in bypassing our program and/or access to objectionable content. If any inappropriate content bypasses these safeguards, any parties involved should turn off the monitor and report the security breach immediately to a system administrator, teacher, or principal. Additionally, members of the school/academy community shall not:

- Use another's credentials for any reason
- Gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to Diocesan or school/academy computers or computer systems.
- Download or install any software application without prior authorization.



*Administrative Rights (To monitor the use of technology)*

The school/academy reserves the right to monitor both student and employee use of technology and computer-accessed content. Due to the evolving nature of technology, the Catholic Schools and Academies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn reserve the right to amend or add to this policy at any time without notice.

*Personal use of Social Media (Teachers, Students)*

This section refers to the personal use of social media. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn, Snapchat, or any other medium. All references to school/academy personnel, students, and/or any member of the school/academy community in technology-related mediums such as web pages or email deemed to be injurious to the moral tone of the school or academy are violations of this policy. **Any communication with current students by faculty, staff, or administration is strictly forbidden on any personal social networking site. Personal posts must use respectful speech and refrain from harassing, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, threatening, or other inappropriate communications.**

Representation of the school/academy in whole or part on any personal posts and/or communication is prohibited. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to take disciplinary action for activity that occurs on social media or otherwise on the internet, if deemed, in the sole discretion of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, in the best interest of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy.

**B. Chromebook Usage Policy (Grades 6-8)**

**Students in grades 6-8 may bring their own Chromebook or rent a Chromebook for use in school and at home after the acceptable use policy has been signed and returned & the \$200 fee has been paid. This device is for the student's education and should be used for this purpose only. The school retains the right to repossess a student's device with cause.**

**Students in grades 6-8 may bring their own Chromebook or rent a Chromebook for use in school and at home after the acceptable use policy has been signed and returned & the \$100 fee has been paid. This device is for the student's education and should be used. If a student uses the device to harass or bully another student or behaves in a manner contrary to the acceptable use policy, the student will relinquish the right to the device without a refund of the fee. Students cannot access the camera in class without the teacher's permission. Students who access unauthorized websites during class may lose access to the device. Teachers will have the ability to monitor each student's device in real-time while in the classroom. If a student's device is lost or stolen, that student's parents must pay the full cost before a new device is issued to the student. The classroom teacher reserves the right to limit any student's access to their device in class. The school retains the right to repossess a student's device with cause after a verbal or written notice to the parent. Students are responsible for maintaining and charging their Chromebooks overnight. Students should arrive with a fully charged device every morning. Students are only permitted to sign in**

with their St. Ephrem Catholic Academy-issued username during the school day and during school-related activities.

This device is for the student's education and should be used for this purpose only

The school retains the right to repossess a student's device with cause.

Students in grades 6-8 may bring their own Chromebook or rent a Chromebook for use in school and at home after the acceptable use policy has been signed and returned & the \$200 fee has been paid

### C. FACTS Family Portal

The FACTS Family Portal will be your one-stop destination to view student academic information, school announcements, school calendar, and your FACTS payment plan and incidental billing information. You can conveniently access all this information in one centralized location, eliminating the need for multiple log-ins. Once the FACTS Family Portal is set up, your child(rens) school will notify you with simple instructions on creating log-in credentials. Once you create your user profile, you can access the FACTS Family Portal from any device, including your smartphone, whether an Apple or Android device.

### D. Communications with Teachers

Students benefit tremendously when an open line of communication exists between families and teachers. It is recommended that parents/ legal guardians communicate any concerns regarding their child. **Parents/ legal guardians and teachers should always use FACTS, email, school communication platforms (I.e. Class Dojo), or a note sent directly to the teacher/ family.** The parent/ legal guardian or teacher can schedule a follow-up meeting to address further issues if needed.

**Concerns should be handled at the most local possible level. Persons with concerns about a situation with a teacher should first attempt to address the concern with the teacher. Only after such attempts have failed should the principal be contacted. Open communication with the teacher first continues a positive relationship between families and teachers.**

**Similarly, a situation with the principal should be addressed to the principal. Only after such failed attempts should the concerned party contact the Board of Directors chairperson.**

**Parents and teachers should not use personal social media accounts or personal cell phones (texting) as a means of communication in regard to school-related concerns.**

### E. Electronic Devices

Although useful and helpful tools in many ways, electronic devices must only be used appropriately by faculty, administration, staff, and students. **Cell phones, iPads, iPhones,**

**Smart Watches, and other personal electronic devices are NOT permitted. Schools are not responsible for electronic device loss, theft, or damage.**

#### **F. Parent/Guardian Monitoring of Child's Non-School Devices**

Today more than ever, young individuals need guidance from their parents to help navigate the technological world, create boundaries, and filter out inappropriate content. There are multiple consumer products, including some at no cost, which parents/guardians can secure for monitoring and controlling their child's access to technology. Specifically, products for mobile and cellular services include, but are not exclusive to, Apple Screen Time, Google Family Link, Qustodio, and OpenDNS Family Shield. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy expects parents/guardians to equip their child's personal electronic devices, including cellular devices and tablets, with parental controls if not already in place. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy expresses no preference or recommendation for any specific product but expects that parents/guardians utilize such a product to monitor their child's electronic activity. Further, as Catholics, we are obligated to our fellow Academy-community members. Therefore, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy expects that parents/guardians will notify the school if activity on a child's personal electronic device threatens the health and/or safety of any member of the St. Ephrem Catholic Academy community.

### **IX. SAFETY**

#### **A. Commitment to Safety**

The safety of the students is St. Ephrem Catholic Academy's number one concern, and we maintain a high standard of safety. This requires St. Ephrem Catholic Academy to complete periodic drills and exercises and that all community members are trained in our safety standards. To maintain a safe environment, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy requires cooperation across the board, including the administration, teachers, staff, and parents. We must ensure safety is practiced in hallways, when passing during class, while on staircases, when using restrooms, during recess and physical education, during after-school programs and extracurricular activities, when outside the school building, during arrival and departure, and in connection with parent parking.

#### **B. Emergency Drills**

Per New York State laws, academies are required to conduct twelve emergency drills over the course of the school year. Four of these drills must be lockdown drills. Students are expected to follow all directives by school teachers and staff. Failure to comply or act appropriately during emergency drills will result in disciplinary action.

#### **C. School Closings**

The Diocese of Brooklyn will base its closings on the New York City Public School System. If the New York City school system closes due to inclement weather, the schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn are closed. Local academies may also decide to close their individual

schools based on inclement weather or other hazardous conditions (infrastructure issues, flooding, property damage, etc.). Parents will be notified as soon as possible. In the event of a closure during the school day, proper provisions will be made for students to return home or to be cared for on other premises until the usual dismissal time.

#### **D. Crisis/Emergency Information**

Should a crisis require evacuation from the school building, the students will be brought to a safe place at **St. Ephrem Church (if possible) or McKinley Junior High School on Fort Hamilton Parkway**, and parents/guardians should meet them at that location. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy utilizes **FACTS** to notify parents/guardians directly about the crisis.

#### **E. Reporting Concerns Regarding School Safety**

Students, parents/guardians, and staff must report all dangerous and potentially dangerous situations and/or events directly to an administrator at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy.

#### **F. Visitors**

**All visitors must be admitted to the building by school staff. Visitors should proceed to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor designation (lanyard, sticker, etc.) if available. Visitors to the school are asked to remain in the office until they have confirmed their destination within the school. For the safety of staff and students, visitors should not walk about the school but should travel to their intended destination within the school. Before leaving the school, visitors should return to the main office, sign out, and leave through the main doors. Visitors should not exit through side doors to maintain building security.**

**During COVID-19, we ask all parents and legal guardians to visit St. Ephrem Catholic Academy only when necessary and keep any visits as brief as possible.**

#### **G. Video Surveillance/Photographs**

Academies within the Diocese of Brooklyn are authorized to use video camera surveillance on Academy property to monitor the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to the property and to safeguard facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be placed in locations as deemed appropriate by the designated school administrators.

Violations of Diocesan policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or laws that images, video, and audio capture through surveillance may be used as evidence that may subject students, staff, and visitors to appropriate disciplinary and legal action, including, but not limited to, disclosure to law enforcement.

Data from video surveillance is typically retained for a year. Data related to a known incident that involves injury to students, staff, or members of the public or property, or which involves any potential violation of the law or Diocesan policies will be kept with reports of the incident until the incident has been appropriately resolved.

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy recognizes that parents/guardians often want to document their student's life at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, including by taking pictures or video recordings. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy asks parents/guardians to exercise caution, however, and be

mindful of not taking pictures of other children without the express consent of those children's parents/guardians. Parents/guardians and students are not permitted to take pictures or make recordings of any type, including but not limited to audio and/or video recordings, on school grounds without the express consent of the Principal.

Students are prohibited from making any and all recordings (including audio and video) on Academy grounds or at an Academy-sponsored event, regardless of whether such event is on Academy grounds. This prohibition applies to recording a class or Academy event through a personal electronic device, including, but not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, iPads, tablets, laptops, and/or iPhones. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy may, in its sole discretion, authorize the recording of a class or Academy event; however, such recording may only be done with the prior consent of the Principal.

## **X. SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

### **A. Safe Environment Protocol & VIRTUS training**

All teachers, staff, and volunteers must complete VIRTUS training and a background screening administered by the Diocese of Brooklyn.

There are additional steps parents/guardians can take to keep their children safe, which we recommend parents/guardians consistently and regularly review with their children. This includes:

- Students should never go home with strangers.
- Students should never talk to strangers.
- Students should never take things from strangers.
- If students are approached by strangers and are still near St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, they should be encouraged to return to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy and immediately inform a staff member.
- Young students should be escorted to and from school.
- Older children should be encouraged to walk/travel to school in groups whenever possible.

The teachers at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy will also remind students of the importance of not responding to strangers and actions each child should take if a stranger approaches, including reporting it to responsible adults.

### **B. Child Lures Prevention Program**

The Child Lures/Teen Lures Prevention programs are presented to the children and youth who attend each Academy. This program is tailored to different age groups, and covers topics such as staying healthy and safe, kindness and respect, trusted adults, my body belongs to me, child luring, choosing grown-ups to help, children are special, and abuse is never a child's fault (topics will vary based on age level appropriateness). For older students, topics include sexual assault, harassment, dating violence, bullying/cyberbullying, sexting, identity theft, online luring, suicide, and human trafficking to facilitate authentic conversations to bring awareness to the topics.

Each program provides teachers with the resources to facilitate appropriate conversations. Parents/legal guardians will also be provided a link to access parent guides digitally to continue the conversations within their homes.

### **C. Child Abuse Laws**

Under NYS law, teachers are all mandated **reporters** and are legally required to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect to the proper agency. The teacher will make a judgment that the child may be presenting signs of abuse or neglect. If the mandated reporter makes such a judgment and suspects abuse or neglect, in addition to reporting to the proper agency, the reporter must notify the Principal.

### **D. Confidentiality**

**A professional, legal and moral ethic requires all persons to safeguard all student information of a privileged nature. However, if a teacher learns of something that could impact the health or safety of a student or any person, the teacher has the responsibility to share the information with the Principal. Further, school officials must report when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is an abused or maltreated child.**

### **E. Sexual Harassment**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is committed to providing its students an atmosphere and school zone free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is a direct violation of the Catholic faith as it signifies a lack of respect for other persons.

Any student who believes that he or she is being sexually harassed or a parent/guardian who was informed by their child that the child was sexually harassed shall immediately report this information to the teacher and to the Principal. A student/parent who is uncomfortable reporting the alleged harassment to a teacher or Principal may report it directly to the Office of the Superintendent. Any information shall be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by law. All claims of sexual harassment will be investigated in an appropriate manner under the supervision of the Office of the Superintendent. No student will be subject to any retaliation or disciplinary action on the part of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy for reports of sexual harassment made in good faith.

No student is to sexually harass another member of the school community. Any student who engages in sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action, including expulsion.

### **F. Child Reporting Abuse to Parents**

If a student reports any form of abuse at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy to his or her parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must notify the Principal. Any information shall be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by law. This will permit the Principal to investigate the situation and ensure that the alleged abuse or harassment does not occur to other students. If a

parent/guardian is uncomfortable going to the Principal, he or she may go directly to the Office of the Superintendent.

## **XI. SIGNS OF SUICIDE (SOS) PREVENTION PROGRAM**

SOS Signs of Suicide (SOS) is a universal, school-based prevention program designed for middle school (ages 11-13) and high school (ages 13-17) students. The goals of this program are:

- Decrease suicide and suicide attempts by increasing student knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression
- Encourage personal help-seeking and/or help-seeking on behalf of a friend
- Reduce the stigma of mental illness and acknowledge the importance of seeking help or treatment
- Engage parents and school staff as partners in prevention through “gatekeeper” education
- Encourage schools to develop community-based partnerships to support student mental health
- Raise awareness of self-harm behaviors, such as cutting and burning

Through a video and guided discussion, students learn to identify warning signs of suicide and depression. At the end of the session, students complete a seven-question screening for depression (anonymous or signed – the school can decide) to further encourage help-seeking and connect students at risk with trusted adults. The curriculum raises awareness about behavioral health and encourages students to ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell) when worried about themselves or their peers.

## **XII. TUITION AND FINANCES**

### **A. School Tuition Policies**

Our Academy's success relies on our families' commitment to make Catholic education a financial priority. St. Ephrem Catholic Academy has full-year contractual and financial obligations that must be met, such as teacher salaries, utility bills, building maintenance and improvements, and other expenses. Families seeking enrollment must satisfy the annual tuition by specified due dates.

These policies are not intended to deprive anyone of a Catholic education. It is our desire to maintain a fair approach to the collection of tuition and to provide a sound financial policy for the overall welfare of our families. We encourage all responsible parties to maintain open communication with the business office to ensure a complete understanding of each family's financial obligations. Our academy aims to provide a Catholic education to every student who desires one, but only by mutual cooperation can we make certain that this goal is met. Parental non-payment or delinquency in meeting financial obligations creates an additional burden for St. Ephrem Catholic Academy.

- Tuition contracts specifying a payment schedule will be published and shared with families. All families must sign an enrollment contract that guarantees the family will be responsible for the full tuition payment for the academic year.

- Academies will arrange for all tuition and fees to be collected through FACTS Tuition Management.
- A tuition payment schedule will follow the most appropriate schedule for St. Ephrem Catholic Academy and parents: monthly, one payment, or three installments.
- A Tuition Assistance Committee will be in place at every Academy

## **B. Tuition and Other Fee Schedules**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy will collect tuition and fees over a ten-month period. This ten-month period will typically extend from June to March. Tuition collection will begin before the start of the school year.

The Following Tuition policy is in effect for all Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy families for the 2022-2023 school year:

- We use the FACTs Tuition Company to bill our school families every month.
- Billing begins in July and ends in April. The first tuition payment of the year must be made before school begins for the student admission to take place. Tuition payments are due by the 10th of each month. A late fee of \$50/month will be incurred. All tuition balances must be paid in full by April.
- Failure to keep the tuition/parish affiliation commitment balance up-to-date will result in the student's progress report/report card being held until payment is made. Please contact the Parish/School Manager if there is a financial difficulty.
- Eighth grade families owing tuition/fees will result in the student not being allowed to attend the eighth-grade dance & the eighth-grade trip. The student will not receive their diploma or report card. Records to high schools will be delayed until all financial obligations (parish & school) are fulfilled.
- PreK3, Pre-K & Kindergarten families' financial obligations must be paid one week prior to graduation day.
- The FACTs Tuition Company will send out a reminder of overdue tuition before report card times and at the end of the tuition payment schedules in April.
- Re-Registration fee is \$100 per child and is non-refundable and NOT applied toward tuition
  - a) An additional \$200 deposit will be applied to tuition.
- A \$200 application fee for new families is non-refundable and not applied toward tuition
  - a) An additional \$100 deposit that will be applied to tuition.
- To maintain a fiscally sound, top-quality school, Saint Ephrem Catholic Academy must have a firm financial base, and in fairness to those families who do keep their tuition up to date, we would appreciate that everyone does the same.
- In the event of delinquent tuition as of May 15, 2021. BE ADVISED that we will only accept certified checks, money orders, or cash submitted directly to the school or rectory business office. Cash requires obtaining a receipt of payment. Therefore, paying cash must be done in person.



## Tuition 2022-2023

In signing a partnership agreement, Catholic families are registered with a parish, participate in the worship and life of the parish, have faith formation of their child/children, and support the parish of their affiliation with meaningful financial contributions. **If conditions of the partnership agreement are not met, Non-Catholic rates will go into effect.**

PK - Grade 8 Families registered at St. Ephrem Church or another Catholic parish and using weekly envelopes:

**1 child:** \$5,400

**2 children:** \$9,675

**3 or more children:** \$13,175

Our 3K program has its own separate tuition, shown below:

**3K (5 Full Days):** \$5,500

**3K (3 Full Days):** \$4,500

**3K (3 ½ Days):** \$3,450

### Tuition Payment Schedule

A tuition payment can be made in full to the school or monthly to FACTS Tuition Collection Agency. A discount is offered if tuition is paid in full by the designated date at the time of tuition schedule distribution.

Please be advised at the time of registration/re-registration, all families will be required to complete a FACTS Tuition form. If tuition is NOT paid in full by the designated due date for the following school year 2022-2023, your family will automatically be placed in FACTS with payment due by July 10th.

If tuition is paid in full, the family FACTS registration form will be withdrawn. There will be no exceptions.

New families who enroll in August will be charged for July & August at the time of registration- Thus, all payments will be based on the 10-month schedule as described previously.

**Technology Fee:** \$100 per student. This fee is used to service and operate our technological devices & internet access. *It is due January 15th, 2023!*

**Chromebook Rental Fee:** \$200 per student (Grades 6-8) A student's Chromebook must be brought to school each day FULLY charged. Each student is responsible for the care of the device throughout the school year. No student will be issued a Chromebook until the fee is paid and the Acceptable Use Policy is returned.

Academies reserve the right to place severely delinquent accounts in the hands of a collection agency or its attorneys for collection. It is not our desire that any family should incur unnecessary legal fees or suffer further embarrassment or inconvenience in this regard. Again, we encourage prompt communication with St. Ephrem Catholic Academy to avoid litigation.

To withdraw a student, the parent must submit written notice to the principal before the withdrawal date. This enables St. Ephrem Catholic Academy to prepare the necessary information and settle accounts. No student records will be forwarded to another academy or school until all accounts have been settled.

Following the terms of the enrollment contract, refunds will be made only in accordance with the stated guidelines and/or at the administration's discretion. The refund must be requested before the start of the period for which payment would be made.

### **C. Resources for Tuition Assistance**

Catholic education is meant to be available to every Catholic family. Every family desiring a Catholic education for their child(ren) will participate to the extent capable in the cost of providing that education.

Each family needing tuition assistance must complete a scholarship application through Futures in Education, which may currently be found at: [www.futuresineducation.org/scholarships](http://www.futuresineducation.org/scholarships). The exception is families returning to the Teddy Forstmann program coordinated by the Children's Scholarship Fund.

If the family requests additional assistance beyond the awarded amount, the request will be forwarded to the Tuition Assistance Committee. The review will be completed as early as possible.

### **D. Tuition Assistance Committee**

The Tuition Assistance Committee is an essential advisory body to the pastor/board chair and principal. It has a two-fold purpose.

- The Committee will have the responsibility of direct involvement in the monitoring and collection of tuition arrears from the families of its respective school or academy.
- The Committee will be empowered to recommend, when needed, a partial deferment of tuition for families that have demonstrated true financial need or face unforeseen extraordinary circumstances. Such a deferment will establish a fair and just tuition rate that will allow students to remain enrolled when even scholarship assistance is not enough. This discernment must be guided by an approved fair, transparent, and reasonable process. Any recommendation made by the Tuition Assistance Committee must be approved by the respective pastor of a parochial school and the Board of Directors for an academy.

Should there be a concern regarding the tuition assistance process or if an appeal for discernment is requested, parents/guardians should present their concerns in writing. In the case of a Catholic academy, the letter should be addressed to the chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The response from the pastor or chairperson would be final.

### **E. FACTS**

FACTS is a tuition management company designed to simplify tuition collection for families and academies. There will be one FACTS record per family, and each student must be listed separately. This provides valuable detail about the charges and discounts each student is

receiving. In turn, this provides St. Ephrem Catholic Academy with better reporting. A major benefit of FACTS is the ability to process automatic drafts of the payer's bank account or credit card. There is a 2.85% convenience fee on credit card transactions. FACTS does offer an invoicing option as well. With this option, FACTS will send an invoice to the payer (via email or postal mail) 20 calendar days before the payment due date. The payer must then initiate payment by using a credit card or bank account online, over the phone or by mailing a check directly to FACTS. Families are encouraged to pay via an automatic draft. FACTS also allows for flexible payment options. Common options are monthly payments, three-trimester payments, and payment in full.

#### **F. Tuition Delinquency**

By standard practice, FACTS will send payment reminders before any due date, return payment notices in the case of a failed payment, and make automated phone calls to delinquent payers. Payers who fail to communicate with St. Ephrem Catholic Academy and resolve the delinquency through a payment schedule approved by St. Ephrem Catholic Academy will suspend services for the student.

**Students will not be permitted to attend class at the start of the trimester should any balance be past due.**

No student will be permitted to begin an academic year unless all registration and other required fees are current. Registration and other required fees are paid through FACTS Tuition Management at enrollment. Enrollment for students whose families are not currently in the registration or other required fees by June 30 may be canceled at the discretion of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy. In no event will students be permitted to attend class at the commencement of the academic year unless the delinquency is paid in full.

**All debts for eighth-grade students must be cleared by the first Monday of May to participate in graduation activities. Eighth-grade transcripts will not be released to the high schools if the financial obligations are not met.**

**For all grades to participate in school activities and field trips, all financial accounts are to be current and up to date.**

**All fees must be paid in full before processing records or progress reports. It is the sole discretion of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy to withhold trimester exams, report cards, transcripts, records, and diplomas until all financial obligations are satisfied in full.**

### **XIII. TRANSPORTATION**

#### **A. Bus Procedure**

While students are being transported to and from St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, it is expected that they will uphold the behavior expectations of St. Ephrem Catholic Academy as well as the

rules set forth by the bus driver or bus company. Students who continuously disregard bus procedures and rules risk losing their access to bus transportation.

Each bus company must hold an evacuation drill at least once a year. Students are expected to follow all instructions given by the bus driver or other adult facilitating the drill.

**OPT bus service (Yellow School Bus) is available for grades K-6 students who meet distance requirements and adhere to bus safety rules. Students who misbehave on the bus may be suspended from riding the bus.**

**Pupils in grades Pre-K, K, 1, and 2 can ride free on public transit if they reside 1/2 mile or more from school. Pupils in grades 3 through 6 can ride free if they reside 1 mile or more from school. They must pay half-fare if they live less than 1 mile but more than 1/2 mile. Pupils in grades 7 and 8 are eligible for reduced fare on public transit if they reside 1/2 mile or more from school. Please notify the school office if your child is eligible for public transit and you have not already requested one.**

**For everyone's safety and in case of a parishioner emergency that requires a priest to have a clear exit, no parent or caregiver is allowed to park in the schoolyard or behind the rectory in the parking lot for any reason.**

**Please do not double park or park at the bus stop on Fort Hamilton Parkway in front of the church. Do not block the entrance to the schoolyard & rectory driveway. If you do so, you put yourself at risk of a summons by the Traffic Department.**

#### **B. Use of Other Vehicles**

**Only a licensed public carrier that is fully insured should be used to transport students. Teachers or administrators are not permitted to transport students in their personal vehicles.**

St. Ephrem Catholic Academy does not assume liability for transportation not operated by it, such as Ubers, car service, private buses or van services.

**Parents/ legal guardians must provide authorization for their child to be transported by someone else. This includes transportation for dismissal as well as extracurricular activities.**

### **XIV. RECORDS**

#### **A. Change of Information**

For student safety, it is imperative that parents/ legal guardians alert St. Ephrem Catholic Academy to any changes in address or phone number. Parents/ legal guardians must also provide St. Ephrem Catholic Academy with an adequate number of emergency contacts (with up-to-date information).

#### **B. Educational Records Request**

If a student transfers to a different academy, parish school, or public school, the school will provide student records to the school of transfer. Requests can be made in writing by the parent/

legal guardian or the school where the student will be transferring. The school office is responsible for sending student records directly to the school of transfer. If records are not provided in a timely fashion, parents or legal guardians may contact the Office of the Superintendent to receive further assistance in this matter.

### **C. Authorization to Release Records**

Academies may not release the records of students without the written consent of the parents/legal guardians to any individual, agency, or organization other than the following:

- Other academy or parish school officials who have legitimate educational interests.
- Officials of other academies or parish schools where the student intends to enroll.
- Officials of the courts with the lawfully issued judicial process, i.e., subpoena, court order, etc.
- Please note health records are the property of the Department of Health.

### **D. Review of a Child's Official Records**

Parents/legal guardians have the right to inspect any and all material that is part of their child's permanent record. Academies require parents/legal guardians to provide a written request prior to when they wish to examine their child's permanent record. At the time of inspection, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy administrator, or qualified delegate, will be present.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

**FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Parent-Student Handbook and all subsequent forms (“Handbook”).

I have read and understood the contents of this Handbook and will act in accord with these policies and procedures. I have explained the contents of this Handbook to my child. I agree that I am responsible for my child’s adherence to this handbook's policies.

I understand that this Handbook supersedes any other previously issued handbook and personnel manual and that all previous versions are hereby revoked.

I understand that St. Ephrem Catholic Academy reserves the right to add, amend, modify, or discontinue any of the policies and procedures set forth in the Handbook at any time, with or without notice.

Where applicable, policies relating to the COVID-19 virus may be provided as part of a supplement to this Handbook.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ Child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Grades: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**FOR STUDENTS GRADES 6-8**

I have read the Parent-Student Handbook, have discussed its contents with my parent/guardian, and agree to abide by all its terms.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE AUTHORIZATION**

*If a parent/guardian chooses to sign any form electronically, the following **MUST** be submitted beforehand to St. Ephrem Catholic Academy with an original, and not electronic, signature:*

I authorize St. Ephrem Catholic Academy to accept my electronic signature.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ABSENT NOTE FORM**

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Absence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason for Absence:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Doctor's Note Attached (circle one)?**                      Y                      N



**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

**Parent/Guardian**

As the parent/guardian of a student at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and agree to abide by its terms and to ensure my child abides by its terms. I understand that computer and internet access at St. Ephrem Catholic Academy is designed for educational purposes. I am aware that it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial materials, and I will not hold St. Ephrem Catholic Academy responsible for materials acquired in use. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use of the school's technology resources is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission for my child to use the school's technology resources and certify that I have reviewed this information with my child.

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

**For Students in Grades 6-8**

I have read the Acceptable Use Policy in this Handbook.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDIA AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE**

I hereby consent to the taking of photographs, movies, videos, and images capable of reproduction in any medium of me or my children or children of whom I am the designated guardian by St. Ephrem Catholic Academy, Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, and/or Department of Education and their parents, affiliates, trustees, directors, members, officers, employees, volunteers, agents and contractors (the "Parties").

I hereby grant the Parties the right to edit, reproduce, use and reuse images for any and all purposes including, but not limited to, advertising, promotion, and display, and I hereby consent to the editing, reproduction, use, and re-use of said images in any and all media in existence and all media yet in existence including, but not limited to, video, print, television, internet, and podcasts.

I forever grant, assign, and transfer to the Parties any right, title, and interest that I and/or my child/children may have in any images, including negatives, taken of me and/or my children by the Parties. I hereby agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the Parties from any and all claims, demands, actions, or causes of actions, loss, liability, damage, or cost arising from this authorization.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Grade of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are choosing to opt-out of this policy, St. Ephrem Catholic Academy MUST receive the signed acknowledgment below and return it to the Principal by the first day of school:**

I have read the Media Authorization and Release Policy and am choosing to opt-out.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Grade of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

