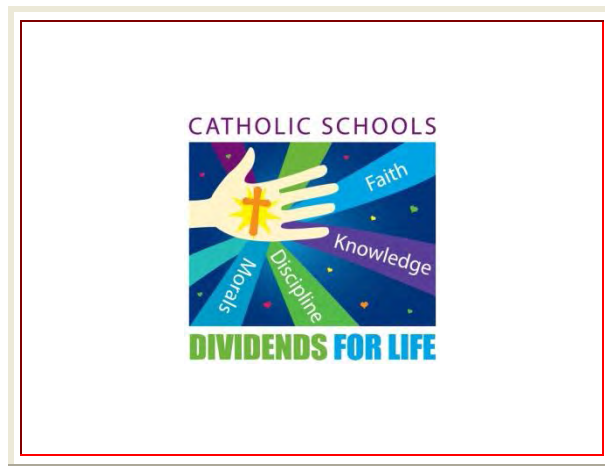


ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL



FAMILY HANDBOOK 2009 - 2010

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PREFACE

This handbook is presented to the parents and students of St. Michael's Catholic School in order that they become acquainted with the school, its aims, ideals, policies, and regulations. It is the sincere wish of the school administration that parents and students become familiar with the ideals of Catholic education and thus cooperate more closely with the teaching staff. In order to operate the school effectively, this cooperation is necessary. Only when the home and school are linked together will progress be manifested.

We at St. Michael's Catholic School consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children, because we understand that, as your children's primary educators, you have decided to share that responsibility with us. It is your right and duty to become the primary role models for the development of your children's lives – physical, spiritual, emotional, moral and psychological. Your choice of St. Michael's Catholic School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your children to recognize God as the greatest good in their lives.

May these pages bring a deeper understanding of our purpose and may the spirit of good will and cooperation, which is part of St. Michael's Catholic School, continue to bring God's blessing on all. Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

RIGHT TO AMEND

St. Michael's Catholic School reserves the right to amend this handbook. Notice of amendment will be sent via the family newsletter.

MISSION OF ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The mission of St. Michael's Catholic School is to know as Jesus knew, to love as Jesus loved, and to serve as Jesus served.

PHILOSOPHY OF ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St. Michael's Catholic School is dedicated to helping each child realize their full potential. We are committed to each child's total education: spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social. We strive to instill Christian values so that each student becomes a force of good in God's world. Our educational program leads, encourages and aids each student to develop his/her unique abilities. We respect the distinct attributes of each student. By providing an atmosphere of living and learning in the light of faith, we encourage each individual to become a whole person.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- (1) St. Michael's Catholic School's primary goal is the continued formation of the Christian person. To achieve this goal, we have the following objectives:
 - Students will develop an awareness of Christ in self and in others.
 - Students will develop Christian values and attitudes.
 - Students will increase their knowledge of and respect for the teachings of Christ.

- (2) Students of St. Michael's Catholic School will have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills for continued educational development.
 - Students will accept responsibility for the acquisition and use of knowledge.
 - Students will have opportunities to meet with success and a sense of achievement in what he/she does, thus developing a positive self-concept.
 - Students will learn to appreciate the richness and variety of our cultural heritage.

- (3) Students of St. Michael's Catholic School will attain the highest possible level of physical, emotional and social growth.
 - Students will strive for and maintain physical well-being.
 - Students will demonstrate concern toward one's self and others.
 - Students will accept and respect the uniqueness of each person.

HISTORY OF ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St. Michael's Catholic School was established in 1877 in a building at the rear of the church. Originally, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio staffed the school; however, in 1884 the Sisters of Mercy from New Orleans began to teach at the school. During the first two decades of the school's existence, the enrollment ranged between 40 and 85 students annually. The Sisters of Divine Providence of San Antonio replaced the earlier nuns in 1897, and remained for ten years. During that time, enrollment was as high as 110 students.

In 1908, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio returned to St. Michael's to teach all grades, including high school, in the original building. They stayed until 1916, and usually their number included three academic teachers, a music teacher, and a housekeeper. During this time the school awarded degrees in music and high school certificates. Students also studied German, and some boarded at the school in the sisters' residence.

In 1909, the church acquired additional property across from the church, and the school was moved to the Old Baker Home on that property. In 1912, the Old Baker Home was moved across McLeod (then Depot Street) to make way for the first permanent school building, a two-story structure with three classrooms and a wide hall on the ground floor and an auditorium with a kitchen on the upper floor. The hall served a number of purposes, and mass was held there during the construction of the present church. The Old Baker Home served exclusively as the convent.

In 1916, the Sisters of Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Victoria came to the school. In 1927, St. Michael's Catholic School graduated its last high school student, and in 1929, the high school was closed.

In 1955 a new school building was constructed on the site of the razed Baker House. It was a concrete, brick, and glass structure in that it took its design from the international style pioneered in the first quarter of the century by European and American architects. It had four classrooms, a library, office, and a convent upstairs. The building was doubled in 1966, and all the classrooms were air-conditioned. Later a science lab and a computer lab were added.

In 1953, the first lay teacher was hired, and by 1984 two sisters worked with eight lay teachers and the first lay principal. At this time, the first Kindergarten class was opened. In 1996, the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament ceased leading and teaching at St. Michael's. Since then, the school's faculty and staff have been lay persons. In 1999 the school added pre-kindergarten for three and four year olds. In 2002, the school's Advisory Council submitted a written five-year strategic plan that highlighted future growth and improvements to the school. A Spanish program was also implemented in 2002. In March 2003, the school purchased a 23-passenger school bus with grant funds. Grant funds also provided a new playground structure in 2008. All classrooms were wired for internet access in the summer of 2008.

Today, St. Michael's Catholic School offers instruction in grades 3K-6. It has a lay principal, a faculty of seven, and a support staff of five. The school offers extra-curricular activities which include Student Council and Soccer.

LOCAL ORGANIZATION

St. Michael's Catholic School is part of St. Michael's Parish, which is under the authority of the Catholic Diocese of Victoria.

The Diocesan Bishop As chief representative of the Church's teaching authority, the Diocesan Bishop is juridical head of the school system. His is the ultimate responsibility for articulating the faith and educational policies. He delegates ordinary oversight of the Catholic School System to the Superintendent of Schools.

The Superintendent of Schools The Superintendent of Schools is the chief administrative officer of the Catholic schools in the Diocese. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible to the Diocesan Bishop. It is the duty of the Superintendent of Schools to coordinate all school programs and to represent the diocesan school system in dealing with state and regional educational offices.

The Pastor The Pastor is the ex-officio chief administrative officer of the parish school. The Pastor serves as spiritual leader of the school community. The Pastor, in consultation with the local School Advisory Council, has final approval over actions taken by the local School Advisory Council.

The Principal The Principal as administrator of the school is responsible for the implementation of council policy, diocesan policy, and governmental requirements. As the educational leader of the school, the principal has full administrative responsibility for carrying out the instructional program. The principal also acts as the executive officer of the local School Advisory Council.

The School Advisory Council The local School Advisory Council provides advice and direction to the pastor and principal in aspects of the local school including planning, policy formulation, finances and public relations. All policies and significant actions of the local school council shall need approval of the pastor and must be in accord with diocesan policy.

The Home and School Association The purpose of the St. Michael's Catholic School Home and School Association is to pursue ideal Christian values and high educational standards, foster unity, cooperation and understanding between parents and teachers, promote a cooperative Christian spirit among parish, school and community, and provide financial assistance to the school.

NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

St. Michael's Catholic School admits students of any race, religion, national or ethnic origin, and physical disabilities to the extent that the school can serve the student to all rights, privileges, programs and activities made available at St. Michael's School. The school does not discriminate in the administration of its educational policies or other programs.

Additionally, in compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in St. Michael's Catholic School shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity except permitted under said Title IX.

ACCREDITATION

In accordance with the decision of the Roman Catholic Bishops of the State of Texas, St. Michael's Catholic School is accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED).

PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORITY

In accordance with the school's philosophy and values and in situations where policies and procedures have not been established, the principal has the authority to determine and invoke actions or disciplinary consequences regarding students, non-students and parents/guardians. The principal has the authority to:

1. Amend, revise or change school practices, procedures, regulations and other guidelines. Changes are communicated through written notices sent through students, and verbal announcements, when applicable.
2. Determine what is appropriate behavior or dress becoming a student or non-student. The principal is the final recourse in all matters of discipline and school related matters and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause at his/her discretion.

ADMISSIONS

A child must be three years of age on or before September 1st to be admitted to the 3K program. A child must be four years of age before September 1st to be admitted to the 4K program. To enter the Kindergarten, a child must be five years of age before September 1st. A child will have attained the age of six years on or before September 1st of the year in which he or she enters First Grade. The principal may make an exception in the case of a child who has completed Kindergarten in a different state where the entering age is lower if testing shows that the child is ready for First Grade.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Every student enrolled in a Catholic school in the State of Texas shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunizations schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health Services. A student who fails to present the required evidence shall not be accepted for enrollment. The only exception to the foregoing requirement is a medical exemption signed by a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) authorized to practice in the State of Texas.

REGISTRATION

Before a student is eligible for registration, the following information must be received: Birth certificate from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Baptismal certificate (if applicable), Social Security card, and complete immunization record. Transfer students must also include their latest report card and test scores, and sign a release form for a transfer of records from their previous school. Registration is not complete and students are not admitted to St. Michael's Catholic School until all information has been received. All transfer students will be on a nine-week probation, which may be extended at any time by the school principal. If, during this period, the student or parents demonstrate that they are unwilling to cooperate with the school or its staff, the student will be dismissed or asked to withdraw.

Before a student is finally accepted into St. Michael's Catholic School, the following conditions must be verified:

1. The student must meet the academic standards of the grade or class section in which he or she will be placed as set forth by St. Michael's Catholic School.
2. Any student's academic position will be objectively established through the school transcript or by a standardized test administered by St. Michael's Catholic School at the parent's expense.

Every student who is enrolled from a public or non-public school will be placed in the grade recommended by the sending school (unless the principal and parents agree otherwise) until evidence is obtained by testing, observation, and other means make it possible for the principal to make an appropriate grade placement.

STUDENT TRANSFERS AND WITHDRAWALS

When a student is transferring from St. Michael's Catholic School, the principal and teacher must be notified in ample time. Official records are released from the school office by mail only at the request of the school to which the student transfers. No records are released until all books are returned and all library fines, cafeteria, after-school care and tuition accounts are paid in full and all schoolbooks have been returned.

CUSTODIAL ARRANGEMENTS

At the time of registration, the parent(s) shall provide competent information regarding the custodial care of the student and visitation rights. Upon request, the parent(s) shall furnish the principal a copy of any relevant court order so as to insure the safety and welfare of the student. The parent(s) shall have a continuing duty to apprise the school of any changes in the custodial care of the student and of the issuance of any court order restricting or prohibiting parental third party access to the child.

SCHOOL RECORDS

Educational records are considered confidential material available only to the parents, and to those members of the school staff who have a legitimate educational interest in the student. Parents shall, upon written request, be entitled to review and request copies of the education records relating to their child.

SCHOOL RECORDS AND DUPLICATE NOTIFICATION

Unless prohibited by order of the court or other legally binding instrument, a non-custodial parent shall have the right of access to school records relating to his or her child and, upon request, may receive copies of all notices relating to the school and school activities.

ADMISSION POLICIES AND PRIORITIES

St. Michael's Catholic School admits all qualified students regardless of sex, race, color, nationality or ethnic origin. Because of the religious purpose of the school, preference is given to children of the Roman Catholic religion. The following priorities are used to admit students:

1. Children of active parishioners:
 - a. Children from parish families with a sibling currently enrolled or who have completed the highest grade of the school;
 - b. Oldest child just reaching school age;
 - c. Children of new parishioners who are transferring from a Catholic school, or from an area where a Catholic school was not available but participated fully in the religious education programs offered.
2. Children of active parishioners from other parishes:
 - a. Children whose siblings are currently enrolled or who have completed the highest grade of the school;
 - b. Oldest child just reaching school age;
 - c. Children of new parishioners who are transferring from a Catholic school, or from an area where a Catholic school was not available but participated fully in the religious education programs offered.
3. Children of active parishioners with a sibling enrolled in non-Catholic schools.
4. Non-catholics.

TUITION AND FEES

Parents may pay their tuition in one of the following ways:

- ❖ **Payment in Full.** Payment directly to the school by check or cash by July 1st will entitle you to a \$100 tuition discount.
- ❖ **Payments through FACTS.** For all deferred payments, tuition may be paid through one of the following methods:
 - 1--Automatic Bank Payment (ACH) budgeted through FACTS. Payment date may be either the 5th or the 20th from checking or savings account. Families may choose to pay in up to twelve

installments. Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, families with students only in pre-kindergarten must pay in ten months.

2--Automatic billing to MasterCard, Discover, or AMEX with a convenience fee. Payment in full may also be made this way if you wish to collect credit card reward points for paying your tuition.

Families registering after July 1st shall be expected to fulfill their tuition obligation according to the tuition policy stated above.

Tuition for students registering on or after the first day of school shall be prorated over the number of school days they will be in attendance. Tuition refunds for those families withdrawing students before the end of the school year shall be prorated over the number of school days each student was in attendance.

Lunches and daycare must be paid by the 10th of each month or lunches will no longer be charged and daycare will not be available until these fees are paid.

The Schedule of Tuition and Fees can be found at the back of this handbook.

LATE PAYMENTS

It shall be the responsibility of each school family to keep the school office informed of their need to make any changes in their preferred tuition payment plan or adjustments in the amount of tuition expected to be paid. Without such information, the following policy will apply when tuition payments are received late.

- **Full Payment** If payment is not received on or before July 1, the discounted rate of tuition will not apply. When full payment has not been made by July 1, the family will be contacted within five days concerning the missed payment and alternative tuition payment options will be offered. If funds are not received according to a new agreement, all tuition payments must be made through the FACTS Tuition Management Plan.
- **Monthly Payments** School families who choose the automatic bank payment plan and miss a monthly payment due to insufficient funds will be assessed a \$25.00 missed payment fee by FACTS and may incur a fee from their own financial institution. The missed payment will be reattempted by FACTS within 20 days. In addition, school families who have missed two monthly payments and have not made suitable arrangements within fourteen calendar days of

the second missed payment will be informed that their children will not be readmitted to school according to the specifications of this policy.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

A limited amount of tuition assistance is available for school families experiencing economic difficulties. Normally, requests for such assistance should be made at the time of registration. However, since such circumstances often are unpredictable, families should not hesitate to inform the school office of their need whenever it may arise during the year.

NON-ADMISSION OF STUDENTS DUE TO TUITION DELINQUENCY

School families failing to pay tuition according to the agreement which they have made with the school or who have been unwilling to make suitable alternative arrangements with the school will be informed that their child(ren) will not be readmitted to our school. All families must be current in their payment of tuition.

- **If tuition is delinquent as of August 20th:**
Students will not be admitted on the first day of school.
- **If tuition is delinquent as of December 20th:**
Students will not be readmitted on the first day of class in January.
- **If tuition is delinquent as of March 20th:**
Students will not be readmitted on the first day of class following spring break.
- **If tuition is delinquent as of May 20th:**
Students will not receive report cards and permanent records will not be released.

DELINQUENT TUITION FROM PREVIOUS YEAR(S)

All previously unpaid tuition must be paid by August 1 if a student is to be readmitted on the first day of class for a new school year. Payments are to be made directly to the school. If payment is not possible, suitable arrangements must be made with the Pastor and Principal.

EXTENDED-DAY CARE

St. Michael's Catholic School offers extended-day care until 5:15 p.m. for its students after the end of their regular instructional day. Families may arrange this service with the office for a fee of \$3.00 per hour or part thereof. Students not picked up by 5:15 will be charged \$5.00 for each 10 minutes after 5:15. Students not picked up 15 minutes after dismissal will automatically be placed in the after-school program that day, and all applicable charges will be applied.

ATTENDANCE

In compliance with Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED) and the State of Texas Family Code, St. Michael's Catholic School follows compulsory attendance laws. Parents/Guardians are expected to honor the calendar established and published by the school. Daily school attendance is the only effective way to assure continued academic progress.

Students are expected to be present and punctual for all classes. A written excuse from the parent or guardian is required for all absences and tardiness. Students are considered absent for the morning (one-half day) if they leave before or arrive after 10:00 a.m. Students who leave before 12:30 are considered absent for the afternoon (one-half day). Students leaving before the dismissal bell will not be eligible for "Perfect Attendance."

STUDENT ABSENCES

Absence is defined as not being present at school during the required hours of the school day. Absences cause a student to lag behind in work completed by other members of the class. School absence is categorized in the following manner:

Family Emergency A death in the immediate family and serious or prolonged illness is always handled on an individual basis. Special care and consideration for the student and his/her family dictate the procedure the principal will authorize in such circumstances.

Absence Due to Illness If a student is unable to come to school due to illness, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school office and send a written note upon return to school.

Absence for Other Reasons When a student is absent from school for any reason other than a doctor's appointment, illness or family emergency, the school staff is not obliged to provide special

services when a parent opts to schedule activities that warrant student absence on compulsory attendance days as indicated on the annual school calendar. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete assignments missed while absent and to make arrangements for “make-up” or other help needed. Ordinarily one school day is allowed for each day the student was absent. On extended absences, the student shall make individual arrangements with the teacher with the approval of the principal.

SCHOOL ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival School begins at 8:00 a.m. and dismisses at 3:15 p.m. Teachers are available in the classrooms at 7:45 a.m. Generally, students should not arrive sooner than 7:45 a.m. unless to accommodate parents’ schedules. Upon arrival at school, students should sit on the benches provided for them in the hallway outside the classrooms. Students are not allowed to play on the playground before classes begin.

Dismissal Students are to leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal each day. Except for emergencies and extra-curricular activities approved by the principal, students who remain on school property more than 15 minutes after dismissal will be charged the extended-day care rates.

TARDINESS

Tardiness creates a disruption of a class that has already begun. Students need to be in school and in their classrooms on time. A student is tardy who arrives in the classroom after 8:00 a.m. Habitual tardiness seriously affects school performance. Parents will be contacted when this situation arises and the consequences will be discussed. Continued neglect after consultation will be treated as described in Absence for Other Reasons. Any child that has been excessively tardy will not be eligible for “Perfect Attendance.”

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students are required to bring a dated note signed by a parent or guardian to request early dismissal. No student may leave the school premises without proper permission. The adult taking the child during school hours must sign the release form in the office. He/She must again sign the

form in the school office when returning the child to school on the same day. A student may be released to either parent unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, statute, or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes this right. A copy of such document must be in the school file.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

Generally, if Cuero ISD closes its schools for environmental reasons (chiefly bad weather) St. Michael's Catholic School will also close. However, any closing is a judgment call, and SMS prefers not to use its two bad-weather days unless it is necessary. If bad weather threatens at night or early morning, parents should tune to the following stations, and listen for information.

KIXS FM Radio 107.9	KVIC FM Radio 95.1
TEXAS Radio 97.7	KAVU TV Channel 25

If SMS does not close when CISD does, but parents feel that it is imprudent or impractical for them to bring their children, they should keep them at home. If CISD closes during the school day for environmental reasons, to avoid confusion, SMS will also close for the rest of the day.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

For morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, parents may either park in the slots on the playing fields side of McLeod or line up on McLeod parallel to the curb on the school side. Staff members will help students out of their cars. Normally, students will be dismissed from the side of the school. However, in bad weather, we will dismiss from the front door of the school. Teachers will place students into cars that pull up to the dismissal location. Parents parking across the street or around the corner must come to the school to get their children. Students are not permitted to cross McLeod or Courthouse without adult supervision.

Under the provisions of an ordinance of the City of Cuero, we close the 200 block of McLeod each day. This permits students to safely cross to the playing fields and to use the street for activities. These barricades are put in place at approximately 8:05 each morning. When the barricades are in place, no one is to drive past them. The closed street is not a parking area. The exceptions are for vehicles making deliveries that are large or heavy.

VISITORS

Parents, visitors and guests are always welcome at St. Michael's Catholic School. Parents are welcome to observe their children's classrooms; however, to ensure that students receive the maximum benefit of the teaching-learning process, the parent should contact the teacher at least one day before observing. Visitors must check in and out at the office.

In the event that a parent/guardian must bring something to the school, he/she should leave it at the school office. Neither the child nor the teachers should be disturbed during class hours.

EARLY RELEASE DAYS

Catholic schools of the Diocese of Victoria are permitted a maximum number of early release days per school term. Students will be dismissed at Noon on these days. Please make arrangements to pick up your child/children promptly at Noon. There will be extended-day care on early dismissal days only on days when school is dismissed for Faculty meetings. Lunches will NOT be provided on these days.

HEALTH POLICIES

A health record is maintained on each student. Each student must be immunized and health rules observed according to state law and diocesan regulations, especially regarding medicine and all contagious infections. Hearing tests, vision screening, and dental screening will be conducted annually for all students. Students will be measured for height and weight each year. Students in Grades 5 and 6 will be screened annually for scoliosis. Diabetes screening will be conducted annually for Grades 3 and 5. Students are checked for head lice periodically.

MEDICINES

St. Michael's Catholic School will administer prescription or non-prescription drugs to students whose parents indicate, in writing, a necessity. Parents or guardians must complete and sign the medication release forms, which are available in the office, for each medicine a child is taking. Prescription drugs must be clearly labeled and identified as being prescribed for the student.

Non-prescription medicine must be in the original container, accompanied with a parent's written instructions for administration. All medications, including cough drops, must be left in the school office. The school does not supply any medication for students.

HEALTH ISSUES

Children with certain symptoms should not be sent to school, or if they develop them during the day, must be sent home. These symptoms include: oral temperature of 100 degrees or greater; vomiting, nausea, or severe abdominal pain; marked drowsiness or malaise; sore throat, acute cold, or persistent cough; red, inflamed, or discharging eyes; acute skin rash or eruption; swollen glands around jaw, ears, or neck; any skin lesion in the weeping stage, unless protected and diagnosed as noninfectious; serious earache; pediculosis (head lice) that has not been treated; other symptoms which are suggestive of acute illness. Any student sent home for any of the above symptoms may not return the same day.

AIDS

Recognition of a student or employee with AIDS is not reason alone for exclusion from school. Each person should be evaluated as an individual case, and exclusion from the school environment should be based upon the person's physical limitations, psychosocial activity patterns, and the opinion of a panel of responsible persons designated by the Superintendent of School.

If a student has been diagnosed as having AIDS and has any of the following conditions, he/she shall be excluded from attending school:

- Vomiting
- Lack of toilet training
- Other medical conditions conducive to spreading of the virus
- Open Sores
- Tendency to bite

CHILD ABUSE

The Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption and Family Services Act requires that any suspected abuse or neglect of a child be reported to the Texas Department of Human Services or a law enforcement agency. Failure to report suspected child abuse is punishable by fines up to \$1,000.00 and confinement up to 180 days. The Child Abuse Hotline Number is 1-800-252-5400.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

As mandated by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, all employees and volunteers in the Diocese of Victoria are required to:

1. Complete, submit and receive clearance of the required online application/criminal background check. Approval from the Diocese of Victoria and the Pastor/Principal of the parish or school is also required.

2. Attend the Keeping Kids SAFE & *Code of Pastoral Conduct* and *Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors* Training Session within 90 days of the background check clearance date.

Only those who successfully complete the requirements for employees and volunteers will be allowed to supervise, chaperon and/or provide care to the students of St. Michael's Catholic School.

In addition, all employees and volunteers are required to attend education sessions pertaining to various aspects of abuse every three years. Background Checks are automatically re-submitted for approval one month prior to the third year anniversary date.

STUDENT INSURANCE

All students in St. Michael's Catholic School are covered under the group insurance policy adopted for the schools of the diocese. More complete coverage is available if the parents choose to pay the higher premium.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

Fire drills and tornado drills are held periodically as required by state law. When the alarm is sounded for a drill, students must go to their assigned place in silence and as quickly as possible without running. They remain there until the signal to return is given.

ASBESTOS CONTROL

The school is inspected every six months. A copy of the management plan is available for inspection in the principal's office. See addendum #VI.

TELEPHONE

The office telephone is a business phone. Parents and children are asked to make necessary arrangements while at home and request to use the school phone as little as possible. The student use of the telephone is for emergencies. In order to avoid numerous interruptions in the classroom, students will be called to the telephone for reasons of extreme emergency only.

The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen cell phones. Students who choose to bring cell phones must keep them turned off during the school day.

COMMUNICATIONS

Our weekly family newsletter is a source of communication to help parents know about upcoming events and pertinent information. Parents should expect the bulletin every Friday, unless otherwise notified. In addition, the school will publish a calendar each month that lists activities, holidays, etc.

LOST ARTICLES

All items found on the school grounds are taken to the school office. Many items are unclaimed each year. Please mark your child's possessions so they can be returned when found. Lost articles will be stored for a period of one month only.

LUNCH

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria are committed to providing school environments that promote the development of lifelong wellness practices. In order to protect students' health and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity, St. Michael's School will:

- Strive to comply with the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy and/or the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans for all foods and beverages sold or served at school.

- Provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical education.
- Provide opportunities for all students to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Assure compliance with the federal Child Nutrition Program requirements and nutrition standards for reimbursable school meals.
- Involve students, parents, teachers, and other interested community members in developing and implementing school nutrition and physical activity goals.
- Appoint a Wellness Committee to annually evaluate compliance with the wellness policy and local school goals.

See Appendix IV for detailed information.

Students will have lunch between 12:00 and 12:30. Parents may send a lunch, bring one to the school, or order a school lunch prepared by CISD. Parents are welcome to eat with their children. Students may purchase milk and fruit juices for the morning break and at lunch. Students may purchase soft drinks and tea only after school is dismissed.

LIBRARY

The library is open throughout the school day, and teachers will encourage and require students to use it. Students may check books out for a one-week period, which can be extended. Overdue books will incur a fine of \$.10 (ten cents) per day. Students will be charged for lost or damaged books.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

St. Michael's Catholic School encourages parents to meet with their children's teachers often, if only for a few minutes, to stay abreast of the students' progress. Parent-teacher conferences are mandatory at the end of the first nine-week grading period. At these meetings, teachers give parents their children's report cards. Additional meetings may be scheduled during a teacher's conference period or immediately after the last class of the day. Please call the school office to schedule a meeting.

GRADING STANDARDS

The St. Michael's Catholic School academic year is divided into four grading periods in two semesters. Each grading period is approximately nine weeks. The first semester ends before the Christmas vacation and the second begins with the new year. St. Michael's reports student progress as numeric values except in Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade. Report cards are issued generally on the Wednesday following the close of a grading period. Progress Reports are sent out midway of each grading period to keep parents aware of the student's progress.

GRADING SCALE

For Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten:

S – Satisfactory Progress

N – Needs Time to Develop Skills

For Grades 2 and Higher

94 – 100 Excellent Achievement

85 – 93 High Achievement

75 – 84 Average Achievement

70 – 74 Low Achievement

0 – 69 Unsatisfactory Achievement

For Grade 1:

E – Excellent Progress

G – Good Progress

S – Satisfactory Progress

N – Needs Improvement

U – Unsatisfactory

+Indicates Strength or Improvement

- Indicates Weakness

For Conduct In All Grades:

S – Satisfactory

N – Needs Improvement

U - Unsatisfactory

HONOR ROLL

To enhance academic performance of the students, St. Michael's Catholic School has an Honor Roll for students in grades 3 and higher. Academic Honor Roll is defined in the following manner:

High Honors Overall average of 94 in the Core subjects (Religion, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Mathematics) with no grade below 90 in a core subject .

Honors Overall average of 85 – 93 in the Core subjects with no grade below 85 in a core subject.

An “Unsatisfactory” grade in conduct will disqualify a student from receiving any award.

PROMOTION/RETENTION

The promotion or retention of a learner should be based primarily on the degree of achievement of the specific objectives of the grade or course. A learner who has not achieved satisfactorily in a grade or subject should repeat the subject or grade. To permit a learner to take a course for which he or she does not have the proper preparation is an injustice to him or her, to the other learners, and to the teacher. There may be cases in which ability, effort, interest, and other factors must be weighed. In such cases, the principal's decision will be final.

Parents shall be informed of possible non-promotion at the beginning of the second semester or as soon as this becomes evident. If the learner is promoted conditionally, the parents shall make provision for the learner to remove the condition through summer work. These provisions shall be approved by the principal.

Regulations for Promotion

1. A student who has made satisfactory progress at one grade level will be promoted to the next higher grade.
 - a. Students in First Grade must have completed the primer level in Reading and have at least a final average of "N" in Religion, Math, and Reading in order to be promoted.
 - b. Students in Grades 2-3 shall earn a final average of 70 in each major subject in order to be promoted to the next grade. The major subjects for these grades are Religion, Reading, English and Math.
 - c. Students in Grades 4-6 shall earn a final average of 70 in each major subject in order to be promoted to the next grade. The major subjects in Grades 4-8 are Religion, Reading, English, Math, Social Studies and Science.
 - d. Because language skills (English and Reading in Grades 2-6, Reading in Grade 1) and number skills (Math) are the basis for all other learning, a student who fails two of these subjects shall not be promoted to the next grade.
2. Students who fail two major subjects, provided that both subjects are not in the area of language skills or number skills as indicated above, shall be promoted on the condition that they receive remedial instruction during the summer and receive a passing grade. The principal must approve all remedial instruction and/or attendance at summer school programs.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The curriculum followed at St. Michael's Catholic School is approved by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED), the Texas Education Agency, and the Diocese of Victoria Office of Catholic Schools for all parochial schools in the diocese. Christian truths and values are integrated into the students' total development. Thus, the students in our school will be led to a faith which is living, conscious and active. St. Michael's Catholic School follows the Curriculum Guides approved by the Diocese of Victoria. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills are followed in subject areas not covered by the Diocesan Curriculum Guides.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Students participate in the Liturgy of the Mass weekly. During the day, teachers will lead the students in a prayer to begin and end an activity. Communal Reconciliation Services or opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be arranged. Rosary and Stations of the Cross are celebrated throughout the year. All students, regardless of their religious affiliation, are expected to attend religious activities offered during school hours.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks used at St. Michael's Catholic School are those officially adopted by the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools. Textbooks are loaned to students. These should be covered at all times and properly taken care of by the students.

TESTING

Students in Grades K-6 are administered the Iowa Test of Basic Skills each year. These tests identify the strengths and weaknesses of the individual pupil in different subject areas, and also afford the school a view of the test performance of the collective student body as compared with Diocesan and National norms. Parents are apprised of the strengths and weaknesses of their own children as indicated by the tests.

INDEPENDENT WORK/HOMEWORK

Students are expected to do independent work at school and at home. Teachers assign independent work to reinforce the instruction they provide, to increase skills, to increase students' confidence, and to instill in students a sense of academic curiosity. Homework assigned is based on the grade level of students. Reading, which is essential for all subjects, should be done daily at home. Parents should help provide an atmosphere conducive to study. Assignments should be handed in on time. Late notices will be sent to parents for their signature. Any work not received the following day will result in a "0" for that assignment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Participation in P.E. is mandatory for all students in accordance with the Texas Educational Agency and Texas Catholic Conference Education Department requirements. Exemption is given to those who present a note signed by a doctor or parent. If requests from parents for exemptions are too frequent, a doctor's request will be mandatory. Students in grades 3-6 will change into athletic clothing for P.E. The SMS staff will judge the appropriateness of any student's dress.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be related to the curriculum. Trips will be planned by classroom teachers with the approval of the principal. Adequate transportation and supervision will be provided. Generally, educational trips taken by students in the primary grades will be within a close distance.

Field trips are a privilege, not a right. Students not exhibiting proper behavior in school will not be allowed to accompany their class on field trips. Any student receiving an in-school or out-of-school suspension at any time during the school year will not be allowed on field trips but will be required to attend school the day of the trips.

Since the school is responsible for the students while on a school-sponsored trip, the following rules must be followed:

1. Orderly behavior at all times. Any misconduct on the trip is to be reported to the principal by the teacher so proper action may be taken.
2. Proper respect and cooperation towards the driver, teacher, and other adults in charge.
3. School uniform must be worn.

UNIFORM DRESS CODE

Shirts and Blouses

Girls and boys may wear

1. Short or long-sleeved white or navy blue polo shirts
2. Long-sleeved white, light blue or navy button-down collar shirts
3. Long-sleeved white or navy turtle-necks (not mock turtle-necks)
4. Turtle-necks under long-sleeved shirts
5. Girls may wear short or long-sleeved white Peter Pan collared blouses with jumper (with or without blue piping for girls)
6. St. Michael's School t-shirts with uniform bottoms may be worn on Wednesdays unless otherwise informed. These may be purchased through the school office.

Pants, Shorts, Skirts & Skorts

Girls and boys may wear

1. Khaki or navy blue pants (no denim) that are pleated in the front and have no external pockets
2. Khaki or navy blue shorts (no denim) that are pleated in the front and have no external pockets

Girls may wear khaki or navy blue (no denim) skorts that have no external pockets or khaki or navy blue skirts (no denim)

All pants, shorts, skirts and skorts

1. Should be of medium tan khaki (not the darkest, but not the near white) or navy blue (no denim)
2. Should be plain
3. Belts must be worn with all pants and shorts that have belt loops.
4. Pants and shorts may be cuffed or not.
5. Shorts must be of the walking type, and the bottom of the hem must be no higher than the tip of the wearer's middle finger when the arm is relaxed at the side. This applies to skorts and skirts also.

Jumpers

Girls may wear jumpers that are khaki, navy blue (no denim) or an approved tartan of blue, green, white and yellow.

Dress Uniforms

"Dress Uniforms" must be worn on mass days. For boys, the "Dress Uniform" consists of khaki pants and the navy blue polo shirt. For girls, the "Dress Uniform" consists of khaki or plaid skirts (not skorts), or jumpers with a white shirt.

Outer Wear

Girls and boys may wear

1. Any jacket
2. Navy blue or white sweaters and sweatshirts (over approved shirts). The sweaters may be pullovers or cardigans. Sweatshirts may be zippered or not.

Monograms

Shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts and jackets may be monogrammed with the name of the school or the name and a St. Michael figure. Monograms may be obtained at "A Special Stitch," "7C Unlimited,"

or other vendors. The text should read “St. Michael’s School, Cuero, Texas.” The letters must be in purple and Old English style.

Noncompliance

Homeroom teachers and other staff members will report to the office students who are not complying with the uniform requirement. Three instances of noncompliance in a grading period will result in lunch or after-school detention.

All uniforms may be obtained at the Uniform Connection in Victoria.
1401 E. Airline 578-9109

UNIFORM DRESS CODE

1. Shoes and belts should be of a single color: black, brown, cordovan, navy or white.
2. Open-toed shoes are not acceptable.
3. Socks should be a solid color: black, khaki/tan, navy or white.
4. Shirts must be tucked in.
5. Caps and sunglasses are not permitted inside the building.
6. Boys and girls may wear watches and neck chains. Girls’ earrings may not be large or long.
7. Gym and athletic wear is not permitted in the classroom.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Invitations to parties are not to be distributed at school unless all classmates are invited. Birthday celebrations at school should be kept to a minimum and must comply with the school’s Wellness Policy. There should be no gift exchanges at school and no party embellishments such as streamers, balloons, or party favors.

APPEALS PROCESS

Although the Diocese of Victoria endeavors to establish a harmonious Christian atmosphere within its schools, it recognizes that misunderstandings or differences of opinion sometimes occur. Ideally, such matters can be resolved informally by a parent or guardian by meeting with the immediate authoritative person to discuss the matter. If, however, the matter is not then settled to the parent or guardian’s satisfaction, and the parent or guardian believes the dispute to be a misapplication or misinterpretation of a school related policy, only then may the parent or guardian institute a formal grievance. A formal grievance must be in writing and must be received in five (5)

working days following the occurrence of the event on which the grievance is based. Please contact the principal for a copy of the Diocese's current **Complaint Procedure for Students and Parents** for further details. Also, please note that current policy supersedes and replaces all previous policies and statements regarding institution and processing of formal grievances within the Catholic school of the Diocese of Victoria.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

At St. Michael's Catholic School, we believe that good discipline is a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. No student has the right to interfere either with the teachers' ability to teach or with the students' opportunity to learn. Students should act in such a manner as to make St. Michael's Catholic School a center of Christian social living and to enable themselves to acquire the fullest education possible. They should avoid behavior that is harmful to the good order of the school, to themselves, or to fellow students. They will be held accountable for conduct, whether on-campus or off-campus, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school.

Every student in St. Michael's Catholic School is expected to follow the example of Christ; each student is expected to manifest Christian character. Students are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a manner reflecting credit to their parents and their school. Regulations are not intended to place undue restrictions on the students, but rather to encourage all students to be well mannered and considerate of others and to conduct themselves in a manner that they will be a credit to St. Michael's Catholic School.

Classroom Behavior Policy

Each student is responsible for the following:

1. Raise your hand and wait your turn to speak.
2. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
3. Have all necessary material – textbooks, paper, pencils, assignments, etc.
4. Stay in your seat at appropriate times.
5. Follow the directions of the teacher/supervisor.
6. Respect the teacher and all classmates.
7. Keep books and other supplies off the floor, as they are safety hazards.
8. Maintain a learning atmosphere.

Consequences for Class Disruption

Each teacher will list classroom rules and consequences at the beginning of the school year. Teachers will keep a written factual record of all incidents requiring any action. Constant classroom disruption will be considered a **Severe Disruption** and the consequences for severe disruption will apply.

Severe Disruption

A severe disruption is a serious form of behavior manifested by students during the school day or while participating in school activities.

1. A student instigates or inflicts physical harm on another student or on school personnel.
2. A student threatens bodily injury or harm to another student or to school personnel.
3. A student willfully steals or destroys property.
4. A student intentionally refuses to do what he/she is told.
5. A student uses abusive, vulgar language and/or obscene gestures.
6. A student leaves the school grounds without permission.
7. A student cheats on tests or assignments.
8. A student manifests misconduct in school activities outside of school time.
9. A student possesses or uses dangerous items: drugs, alcohol, knives, tobacco, matches, etc.
10. A student manifests misconduct in church or during the liturgy.
11. A student continues the disruptive behavior despite previous consequences.

Consequences

The principal will deal with severe disruption in one of the following ways according to his/her discretion:

- Immediate parent/principal conference
- After-school detention (Three detentions will result in one day of in-school suspension.)
- Out of school suspension
- Expulsion

Suspension

Suspension is defined as a temporary dismissal of a student from the classroom. Suspension may be in-school or out-of-school. St. Michael's Catholic School, realizing its obligations to the students, makes every reasonable effort to assist students to adjust to the social and academic requirements of the school environment. Decisions to suspend a student follow only after other means of motivation have failed and/or behavior or disruption necessitate this extreme action. In reaching such decision, consideration is given to the welfare and Christian development of the individual, the common good of the entire student body, and the positive teaching/learning environment.

After consultation with the student about the incident, the principal will notify the parent by phone and/or provide written notification to the student and the student's parent/guardian of (a) the reason(s) for suspension; (b) the time/length of the suspension; (c) whether the suspension is in-school or out-of school; and (d) requirements for reinstatement.

In-school suspension isolates a student from his/her classmates while he/she does his/her schoolwork and the isolation includes lunch and any breaks. The student will not attend P.E. during suspension. A student is responsible for all work assigned to him/her during in-school or out-of-school suspension. Any tests given during an out-of-school suspension will be made up upon the student's return.

Expulsion

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter and other possible solutions should be explored with parents/guardian. When expulsion becomes a consideration, the principal shall advise parents immediately and urge them to take advantage of assistance which could help the student with his/her difficulties. A student may be expelled after other means of discipline have failed. For very serious reasons, a student may be expelled after a single violation if, in the judgment of the principal, his/her

continued presence in the school would seriously hinder the school in fulfilling its obligation to the other students.

Expulsion of a student is reserved to the principal, who shall observe the following procedures:

1. The principal shall confer with the student, the teacher(s), the parents/guardian and the pastor regarding the problem with a view to resolution or reconciliation.
2. The principal shall advise the parents, in writing, of the decision, the effective date of expulsion and their rights under these policies.
3. Parents must be notified of their right to appeal the action according to procedures specified by the Appeals Process.
4. The principal shall inform the Superintendent of School and submit to the Superintendent of Schools a copy of the official letter of expulsion to parents.

Immediate Expulsion

Immediate expulsion can take place when a student:

1. Participates in disruptive activities by a group such as gangs.
2. Possesses, uses, or delivers cigarettes, narcotics, dangerous drugs or alcohol on school campus or school sponsored activities.
3. Possesses, uses, or conceals a weapon (a weapon is any instrument which may produce bodily harm or death) on school property or at a school related activity.
4. Threatens bodily injury or harm to a student or to school personnel.
5. Assaults a student or any school personnel with resulting serious physical injury.
6. Vandalizes school property or the property of others.
7. Engages in chronic or repeated behavior which disrupts the teaching/learning environment.

Action of Parent/Guardian

The disruptive, threatening or illegal behavior of a parent/guardian may result in the expulsion of that student.

Threats

Any threat of bodily harm or threat of the possession of a weapon shall be taken seriously. Student, parents and staff shall be responsible to report to the administration any knowledge of verbal or written threats. Any such threat or any false reports of such threats may result in immediate suspension or expulsion. A threat shall be defined as any verbal or written comments intended in jest or otherwise, which would cause alarm to the school and anyone in it.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

No student shall possess, use or attempt to possess, use or be under the influence of any of the following substances on school premises during any school term or off school premises at a school related activity, function or event:

1. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.

3. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other volatile chemical substance for inhalation.
4. Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior altering drug not authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for the student's use.

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action including expulsion. Desks and other personal property may be searched by administrators for alcohol, drugs, and other controlled substances. The transmittal, sale or attempted sale of what is represented to be any of the above-listed substances is also prohibited under this policy. Students involved in such actions shall be expelled from school.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is immoral and reprehensible and will not be tolerated in St. Michael's Catholic School. It subverts the mission of Catholic education and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of all affected persons. In both obvious and subtle ways, the very possibility of sexual harassment is destructive to individuals and to the school community as a whole. Harassment involving any student or staff member shall be investigated, and appropriate remedial action shall be promptly taken.

Harassment shall be defined as any conduct of an intimidating nature which creates a hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

1. Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances or imitations;
2. Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements or interfering with work, study or play because of sex;
3. Retaliation for having reported sexual harassment.

PLAYGROUND POLICY

Students must obey the following rules:

1. Play in designated areas only.
2. Follow the directions of supervisors.
3. Play games that are not dangerous.
4. Keep playground free of all litter.
5. Use all playground equipment properly.

BUS BEHAVIOR POLICY

While on the school's bus or van, the students must observe the following:

1. Obey the driver and speak only in a courteous and respectful manner.
2. Seatbelts should be worn correctly at all times.
3. No walking around while the bus is moving.
4. Wait for the vehicle to stop completely before boarding or leaving.
5. Remain seated and keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
6. Speak in a low voice.
7. Exercise courtesy toward the driver and fellow travelers.
8. Refrain from eating or drinking on the vehicle, unless allowed by the teacher in charge.
9. Keep the vehicle free of all litter.



DIOCESE OF Victoria

creating and maintaining a
SAFE ENVIRONMENT *for children and youth*

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OFFICE FOR CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION
DIOCESE OF CORPUS CHRISTI
620 LIPAN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS 78401
361.882.6191

Code of Conduct for Children and Youth

Children and Youth participating in Catholic Church sponsored ministries, activities and programs in the Diocese of Victoria will:

- Be responsible for learning the discipline and teachings of the Catholic Church and choosing behaviors accordingly;
- Follow rules established for the event, activity or program;
- Act as positive role models for younger children and peers;
- Dress modestly and appropriately;
- Act with respect towards all persons, avoiding statements, language or behavior which is disrespectful or demeans another person;
- Help others;
- Be responsible for learning to recognize, resist and report abusive behaviors involving themselves or other persons;
- Model honesty;
- Protect the property of other persons.

How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse

We are all deeply concerned about the general welfare of our children. There are many challenges that confront today's youth and child abuse is one of these. Child abuse is a fact in our society and a matter of great concern for most parents. Fortunately, child abuse is preventable and parents can help their children master prevention strategies.

The “3 R’s”

Three underlying principles to effective youth protection strategies:

1. **Recognize.** *The child needs to be able to recognize the situations that may result in abuse.*
2. **Resist.** *The child needs to be able to assert the right to resist the abuser.*
3. **Report.** *The child needs to be able to tell an adult when he or she has encountered abuse and to feel confident that the adult will take actions to prevent further abuse.*

Recognize Situations

Traditionally, children have been told of the risks associated with strangers. As we have come to learn, child abuse is committed most often by a family member or person who is known to the child, often in a position of authority over the child. Therefore, if we teach only to be wary of strangers, we are not protecting our children as completely as we must. Children and youth need to understand that they have a *right* to refuse adults or persons in authority (i.e. babysitters, teachers, aunts, uncles) when they are touched on the private parts of their body or in ways which make them feel uncomfortable or frightened. The exercises in this booklet will help to prepare your child to identify situations requiring caution.

Resist the Abuser

Interviews with child molesters document that when children resist advances made by the molester, the molester will usually abandon further attempts with that child. A relatively low incidence of child molestation involves the use of physical force. Children need to be trained to say “NO” or “yell” and get away when inappropriately approached by anyone—friend, relative, or stranger.

Tell an Adult

Children and youth need to be taught to tell their parent, teacher, or other trusted adult whenever they encounter questionable situations or attempted abuse. Since adults do not always listen when a child talks to them, the child needs to be told to keep on telling until someone listens.

Sometimes, a child may not be able to talk about what has happened, but will communicate in other ways. For example, the child may go out of the way to avoid being alone with a particular person, such as a babysitter. This is a kind of communication to which parents need to be sensitive as it may be an indicator of abuse.

When a Child Discloses Abuse

If your child becomes a victim of abuse, your initial reaction can be very important in helping him or her through the ordeal. The following guidelines may help you:

- ❖ *Don't* panic or overreact to the information disclosed by your child.
- ❖ *Don't* criticize your child or claim that your child misunderstood what happened.
- ❖ *Do* respect your child's privacy and take your child to a place where the two of you can talk without interruptions or distractions.
 - ❖ *Do* reassure your child that you believe him or her and that he or she is not to blame for what happened. Tell the child that you appreciate being told about it and that you will help make sure it will not happen again.
- ❖ *Do* report the incident to the police or Child Protective Services, and encourage your child to tell the proper authorities what happened. Try to avoid repeated interviews, which can be very stressful for the child.
- ❖ *Do* consult your pediatrician or other child abuse authority about the need for counseling to assist your child.

Finally, if abuse happens to your child, do not blame yourself or your child. Individuals who victimize children are not readily identifiable; they come from all walks of life and all socioeconomic levels. Often, they present a nice image—they may even go to church and be active in the community. The molester is skilled at manipulating children, often by giving a child excessive attention, gifts, and money. Most abuse occurs in situations in which the child knows and trusts the adult.

Teach Your Child to Be Assertive

It is important that your child understands the right to react assertively when faced with a situation he or she perceives as dangerous. When teaching your child self protection skills, make it clear that although some of the basic strategies involved seem to contradict the sort of behavior you normally expect of your child, these strategies apply to a situation that is not normal. When feeling threatened, your child must feel free to exercise the right to:

- ❖ trust his or her instincts or feelings.
- ❖ say “no” to unwanted touching or affection; say “no” to an adult's inappropriate demands and requests.
- ❖ withhold information that could jeopardize his or her safety
- ❖ refuse gifts; be rude or unhelpful if the situation warrants. Run, scream, and make a scene.
- ❖ physically fight off unwanted advances
- ❖ ask for help.

It's important to remember that these are protective strategies designed to give youth the power to protect themselves.

The following exercises will help to clarify when it is appropriate to apply these strategies.

Exercise 1: What If ...

In this exercise the parent sets up situations that the child should recognize as potentially dangerous. Once the parent describes a situation, the child tells what he or she would do if ever confronted in such a way. Suggested actions are listed with each situation.

Situations and Suggested Actions for Each

1. What if you are home alone and the telephone rings; a voice on the other end asks if your parents are home. What do you do?
 - a. Tell the caller your parents are busy and cannot come to the phone.
 - b. Take a message and the phone number of the caller.
 - c. If the message needs an immediate response, call your parent.
 - d. Do not tell the caller you are home alone.

2. What if an older child hangs around your school and tries to give pills to younger students. What do you do?
 - a. Tell your teacher.
 - b. Tell your parent even if you told the teacher.
 - c. Stay away from the person with the pills.

3. What if you are home alone (or with your brother or sister) and someone knocks on the door and asks to read the electric meter. This person is not wearing a uniform or identification. What do you do? (Alternate situation: If the person were wearing a uniform, would the responses be different? Probably not.)
 - a. Keep the front door or screen door locked.
 - b. Do not open the door to anyone without permission from a parent.
 - c. Tell the person to come back later when your parent can come to the door. Do not let the person know your parent is away.
 - d. Use the telephone to call a neighbor and ask for assistance.

4. What if someone comes to you and says that your parent is sick and you must go with him or her. What would you do?
 - a. If at school, go to the principal or your teacher for assistance and verification.
 - b. If at home or somewhere else, call the emergency number-parent's employer, neighbor, close relative-for assistance and verification.
 - c. Do not go anywhere without verification from someone in authority whom you have been told to trust.

5. What if you are in a public restroom and someone tries to touch you. What do you do?
 - a. Yell "STOP THAT" as loudly as you can.
 - b. Run out of the room as quickly as possible.
 - c. Tell your parent, a police officer, security guard, or other adult what happened.

6. What if you are walking to school in the rain? A car stops and the driver asks if you want a ride. What do you do?
 - a. Stay away from the car. You do not need to go close to the car to answer.
 - b. Unless you have your parent's permission to ride with the person, say "No, thank you" If the driver persists, say "No!"
 - c. Tell your teacher when you get to school and tell your parent when you get home.

7. What if you are playing on the playground and an adult comes up to you and asks you to help find his or her lost puppy. What do you do?
 - a. If you do not know the person, stay away and go directly home.
 - b. Even if you know the person, do not help. Adults should ask other adults for help. Before you assist, you must get your parent's permission.
 - c. Tell your parent what happened.

8. What if you are walking down the street and someone comes up to you and wants to take your picture. The person asks you to come to his or her house. What do you do?
 - a. Stay away from the person and say in a loud voice, "No, I don't want my picture taken!"
 - b. Do not ever go into anyone else's house without your parent's permission.
 - c. Tell your parent about the person.

9. What if an older child you know invites you to play a game, and to pretend that he or she is the doctor and you are the patient. This child tells you to take off your clothes so that the "doctor" can examine the "patient" What do you do?
 - a. Keep your clothes on.
 - b. If he or she persists, yell and get away.
 - c. Tell your parent.

What-If Exercises for Older Children

1. What if you get on a bus by yourself and a person sits down next to you and puts a hand on your thigh. What do you do?
 - a. State in a clear, loud, firm voice, "No. Take your hand off"
 - b. Move to the front of the bus near the driver.
 - c. Tell the driver and tell your parent when you get home.

2. What if, while collecting on your paper route, a customer offers you a beer, puts his or her arm around you, and says you have a fine body. What do you do?
 - a. Tell the customer, "I don't like that, take your arm off me" and get away.
 - b. Tell your parent when you get home.

3. What if a family friend offers you a ride home and, instead of taking you home, drives down a dead end street, parks, and starts rubbing your leg.
 - a. Tell the person "NO! STOP!" in a firm, loud voice.

- b. Get out of the car, go to the nearest telephone (if you are too far away to walk home), and call your parent. Always carry enough money to make a phone call, or a cell phone.
 - c. Tell your parent what happened.
4. What if you are babysitting for a couple that your family does not know well and the couple returns home late at night. While driving you home, your employer makes suggestions that make you feel uncomfortable. What do you do?
- a. Refuse to comply. Ignore the driver.
 - b. If the driver stops the car and makes inappropriate advances, say “NO”, get out, go to the nearest phone, and call your parent or the police department. Again, always carry enough money to make a phone call, or carry a cell phone.
 - c. Do not baby-sit for these people again. It is much safer to baby-sit for people known to your or your family.
 - d. Tell your parent what happened.

Exercise 2: My Safety Notebook

This exercise will help your child be prepared to avoid situations that could lead to abuse or molestation. The safety notebook can be a loose-leaf notebook or pages fastened together with staples for which your child has made an original cover.

The safety notebook provides a place where your child can list emergency telephone numbers, including parents' work numbers and a neighbor or friend's number to be contacted when parents are unavailable. In addition, your child can list the safety rules that you have discussed together. Encourage your child to decorate each page with pictures and drawings that illustrate some of the rules. He or she may also want to list other kinds of safety guidelines, such as rules for bicycle safety.

"My Safety Notebook" is intended to be a fun activity for getting across some serious concerns. It is a personalized reference that can reassure your child in how to respond when confronted by a potentially dangerous situation.

Exercise 3: Child Abuse and Values

While we teach children the core values of respect, kindness and helpfulness, we must make it very clear that no child is expected to place himself/herself in potentially perilous situations. In addition to teaching and modeling the values children need to be prepared to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous situations. A few reminders:

- A. If a teacher, coach, or other youth leader, ever asks a child to do something he thinks is bad, the child has the right to say "No!" and tell his parent.
- B. Sometimes people who really do not need help will ask for it in order to create an opportunity for abuse. Children should be aware of the rules of safety so that they can recognize situations to be wary of; for example:
 - a. It is one thing to stand on the sidewalk away from a car to give directions, and something else to get in the car and go with the person to show the way to go. A child should never get into a car without his parent's permission.
 - b. It may be okay for a child to help a person when there are other people around, but he should never go into another's house unless he has permission from his parents.
 - c. The child may be taught to be obedient, but a child does not have to obey an adult when that person tells him to do something that the child feels is wrong or that makes the child feel

uncomfortable. In these situations, the child should talk with his parent or another trusted adult about his concerns.

Exercise 4: Family Meeting

The most important step a parent can take to protect his or her child from abuse is to establish an atmosphere of open communication in the home. A child must feel comfortable in bringing to his or her parent any sensitive problems or relating experiences in which someone approached the child in an inappropriate manner or in a way that made the child feel uncomfortable. Studies have demonstrated that more than half of all incidents of child abuse are never reported because the victims are too afraid or too confused to report their experiences.

It is important that your children be allowed to talk freely about their likes and dislikes, their friends, and their true feelings. One way to create open communication is through family meetings at which safety issues can be addressed by the entire family. (The "What If . . ." exercises could be done in the context of a family meeting, as could the development of the safety rules for "My Safety Notebook")

Modified, with permission, from How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse and Drug Abuse, A Parent's Guide, Boy Scouts of America.

Basic Rules of Safety for Children

As we address the basic rules for child safety, *it is important to stress that traditional cautions about "strangers" are not sufficient to protect our children. Child abusers are usually known to the child.* Therefore, a more appropriate protection strategy is based upon teaching children to recognize harmful situations or actions. Discuss the following safety rules with your child:

- If you are in a public place and get separated from your parent (or authorized guardian), do not wander around looking for him or her. Go to a police officer, a checkout counter, the security office, or the lost-and-found area and quickly tell that you have been separated from your parent and need help.
- You should not get into a car or go anywhere with any person unless you have your parent's permission.
- If someone follows you on foot or in a car, stay away from him or her. You do not need to go near the car to talk to the person inside.
- Adults and older youth who are not in your family and who need help (such as finding an address or locating a lost pet) should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.
- You should use the buddy system and never go anywhere alone.
- Always ask your parent's permission to go somewhere, especially into someone else's home.
- Never hitchhike.
- Never ride with anyone unless you have your parent's permission.
- No one should ask you to keep a special secret. If this happens, tell your parent or teacher.

- If someone wants to take your picture, tell your parent or teacher.
- No one has the right to touch you on the private parts of your body (parts which would be covered by a bathing suit,) nor should you touch anyone else in those areas. Your body is special and private.
- You have the right to say "No!" to someone who tries to take you somewhere, touches you, or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way.

These are some simple safety rules that can be approached in the same non-frightening manner in which you tell your child not to play with fire. They emphasize situations common to many child molestation cases.

COMPUTERS AND CHILD ABUSE

If your child is alone with his computer - do not assume he is safe. Cyberspace can be dangerous. If your child uses a computer and talks on a network or bulletin board your child can be at risk of child abuse.

It is possible and often very easy for children to access pornographic pictures and stories on their computer. They can even download and print this material. Exposure to pornography is inappropriate for children of any age and can be harmful to their development.

Abusers are using the computer to reach children and make friends with them. When a child begins to feel comfortable with this new friend they may forget that their computer "buddy " is really a stranger. Abusers are very good at making friends with young children. While most computer users are trustworthy people, you cannot be certain who is on the information highway with your child.

You can prevent child abuse by computer if you caution your child not to give out any personal information over the network (such as full name or address). Tell them not to answer any personal questions about themselves. Instruct your child to inform you if someone requests personal information or makes comments that leave your child with uncomfortable feelings.

Know your child's friends, even their e-mail ones. If your child is going to meet someone face to face that they first met through a computer network - check it out. Go with your child. Be aware and supervise just as you would if they were meeting any other stranger.

Consider placing your home computer in a central location, such as the kitchen or family room so that the screen is openly visible. This aids in direct supervision of computer usage as well as deters a child from accessing inappropriate material.

Consider also limiting the amount of time your children and teenagers are allowed to spend solely with the computer. Psychologists warn us that children who spend excessive time with computer or video games may have increased difficulty in relationships with other persons. Pediatricians caution us that excessive sedentary time at computer and video based activities contributes to health and learning problems.

A word about reporting.... If you know or suspect that abuse has resulted from computer contact, you should immediately report it to your local police department. Because more than one geographical area may be involved, federal law enforcement authorities may also be contacted by the police. This new type of abuse requires special attention. Working together we can keep our kids safe.

Used with permission from the Office for Child and Youth Protection Diocese of Corpus Christi

**Technology Use Agreement
For St. Michael's Catholic School**

Adapted from NCEA's From the Chalkboard to the Chatroom, 2001

As a computer user, I agree to follow the rules and Code of Ethics in all of my work with computers while attending St. Michael's Catholic School.

1. I recognize that all computer users have the same right to use the equipment; therefore I will not use the computer resources for non-academic purposes. I will not waste or take supplies such as paper, printer cartridges, and diskettes that are provided by the school. When I am in the computer lab, I will talk softly and work in ways that will not disturb other users. I will keep my computer work area clean and will not eat or drink in the computer lab.
2. I recognize that software is protected by copyright laws; therefore I will not make unauthorized copies of software and I will not give, lend, or sell copies of software to others. I understand I will not be allowed to bring software applications, games or CD-ROMs from home to be used on school equipment without proof of licensure and prior approval of appropriate school personnel.
3. I recognize that the work of all users is valuable; therefore I will protect the privacy of theirs by not trying to learn their password; I will not copy, change, read, or use files from another user without prior permission from that user; I will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to system programs for computer equipment; I will not use computer systems to disturb or harass other computer users or use inappropriate language in my communications.

I will honor my school's procedures for the storage of information. I realize that, after prior notice has been given to me, files may be deleted from the system to protect the integrity of the network or because of space limitations on the computer's hard drive.

4. Each student who receives Internet access will be instructed in the proper use of the network. The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research consistent with the educational objectives of the school. Students using network or computing resources must comply with the appropriate rules for that network or resource.

As a user of a network, I will not use bulletin boards nor chat lines for personal use. In addition, I will not reveal my personal information, home address or personal phone number or those of students, teachers or other staff members. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. The use of school computers and networking resources for commercial activities is not permitted. Their use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.

5. Parents must realize that students may encounter material on a network/bulletin board that they do not consider appropriate (vulgar jokes, statements of belief that some might consider immoral, etc.) The student is responsible for not pursuing material that could be considered offensive.

6. The use of the computer is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of these privileges. Vandalism or intentional modification of system settings will result in cancellation of privileges and/or school disciplinary action. The school reserves the right to seek financial restitution for any damage caused by a student or other user. The system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decision is final. The administration, faculty, and staff of the school may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges.

BACTERIAL MENINGITIS

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people

exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and causes meningitis or another serious illness.

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85-90%). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within 7 to 10 days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to 5 years.

What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

Seek prompt medical attention.

St. Michael's Catholic School Wellness Policy and Regulations

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria are committed to providing school environments that promote the development of lifelong wellness practices. In order to protect students' health and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity, St. Michael's School will:

Strive to comply with the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy and/or the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans for all foods and beverages sold or served at school.

Provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical education.

Provide opportunities for all students to be physically active on a regular basis.

Assure compliance with the federal Child Nutrition Program requirements and nutrition standards for reimbursable school meals.

Involve students, parents, teachers, and other interested community members in developing and implementing school nutrition and physical activity goals.

Appoint a Wellness Committee to annually evaluate compliance with the wellness policy and local school goals.

Listed in the regulations are the only items that can be sold on elementary school campuses during school hours:

Low-fat milk, bottled water, and/or fruit drinks

Chips and ice cream, approved by the Texas School Nutrition Policy

Fruits and/or natural fruit products are offered daily as the selection for school lunch desserts. Occasionally, cookies and cupcakes, approved by the Texas School Lunch Nutrition Policy are offered as a dessert.

Fast foods of any kind are discouraged.

Parents are asked not to include carbonated drinks in lunches brought from home.

Lunches brought from home (or purchased by a parent) are not to be shared with other students.

For school parties and/or birthday celebrations, check with the teachers or the school office for food items that meet the "Texas School Nutrition Policy."

Snacks may not contain any Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) or consist of candy or dessert type items (cookies, cakes, cupcakes, pudding, ice cream, or frozen desserts, etc.)

Restricted foods include soda water, water ices, chewing gum, certain candies: hard candy, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy coated popcorn.

Students may be given FMNV, candy items or other restricted foods during the school day for up to three different events each school year: All Hallow's Eve Party, Advent Party, and Valentine's Day Party.

School-approved field trips are exempt from the nutrition policy.

This policy does not restrict what parents may provide for their own child's lunch or snacks. Parents may provide FMNV or candy items for their own child's consumption, but they may not provide restricted items to other children at school.

St. Michael's Catholic School promotes the general wellness of all students through nutrition standards, nutrition education, and physical activity. We ask that you continue to support us in this mission.

Appendix IV

ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Cuero, Texas

Schedule of Tuition & Fees 2009-2010

<u>Yearly Tuition</u>	<u>1 Child</u>	<u>2 Children</u>	<u>3 or more children</u>
<u>K – 6th Grade</u>			
Contributing Parishioners of any Parish in the Cuero Deanery	\$2,741	\$4,457	\$6,173
Non-Parishioners	\$3,016	\$5,007	\$6,723

Pre-K

Full Day (8:00 – 3:15)	\$2,950
Half Day (8:00 – 11:45)	\$2,100

Other Fees

Registration Fee	\$100 due at the time of registration (Returning families pay \$125 after March 31st)
Lunch	\$2.50 per meal, includes milk
Band Transportation	\$15.00 per month per student in Grade 6 attending band class at Cuero Junior High
Extended-day Care	\$3.00 per hour or part thereof (3:15 – 5:15)
Bus Route	\$75.00 per month per family

The registration fee is non-refundable. Tuition payments are made through FACTS Tuition Management. Payments may be spread out up to a twelve month period. A \$25 Late Fee will be charged if payment is not received on the specified date.

Families facing financial difficulties are invited to apply to the “Guardian Angel Fund” for assistance.

Lunches and daycare must be paid by the 20th of each month or lunches will no longer be charged and daycare will not be available until these fees are paid.