



Parent/Student Handbook

2019-2020

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www.morningstar-jax.org
Jean Barnes, Principal

FORWARD

This handbook is a legal document and by signing it you agree to abide by the policies set forth. It is to be used to answer some of your questions and to provide pertinent information about the school. It may be amended at any time by the Principal. We welcome your comments for future years.

Morning Star School is a part of the Diocese of St. Augustine. Final authority for all major decisions of policy and property is vested in the Superintendent of Catholic Schools whose decisions are guided by the Morning Star School Principal and Board of Directors.

Morning Star School is accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference, and follows the Diocesan curriculum, which is based on National Catholic Standards and Benchmarks.

Morning Star School prides itself for upholding strong Christian values as a part of the Catholic School system. Deliberate defamation of others, whether verbally, through phone calls, writing, or use of the internet, is not consistent with these values. The administration of Morning Star School reserves the right to discipline students for off-campus conduct. Morning Star does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or national origin. Catholic schools in the Diocese of St. Augustine admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in administration of educational and admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

Our Office is open school days Monday through Friday from 7:30- 3:30. After School hours are until 6 PM.

PHILOSOPHY

Morning Star School is a special education facility under the auspices of the Diocese of St. Augustine, dedicated to helping children with learning differences become productive, responsible members of society. With the cooperative efforts of parents, community, and teachers, the students are afforded the opportunity to grow intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

We believe that each child is an individual with unique learning styles. With a highly structured learning environment and curriculum individualized to fit each child's needs, we are dedicated to helping each of our students perform to their highest potential. We recognize that it is critical for each child to acquire a realistic assessment of individual potential and develop an attitude of respect, service, and concern for other members of society.

Our curriculum reflects the message of the Gospel, with the understanding that each student must experience a sense of accomplishment, develop an appreciation of dignity

and worth, and incorporate a set of Christian values into daily life, through prayer and worship. Surrounded by a family of faith, in an atmosphere of loving support which fosters a positive self image, the children are provided with successful experiences, thus, enabling them to grow and mature as children of God.

MORNING STAR SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Rooted in the gospel and strengthened by the sacraments, the mission of Morning Star School is to provide a unique, inspiring education empowering students with learning differences to achieve their full potential.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

The faith community of Morning Star School believes:

Each student is valued as a unique child of God in his or her social, emotional, physical, behavioral, spiritual, and academic needs.

We must foster acceptance of self and others as we help students develop and share their unique gifts.

Each student learns in a variety of ways and should be provided with accommodations or modifications to materials, methods, instruction, and assessment according to their individual needs.

Christian formation is at the heart of Catholic education.

A safe and nurturing learning environment is essential for student growth and learning.

A respectful partnership among parents, teachers, students, and the school community is essential for success.

Through a sense of individual responsibility and global awareness, students must be empowered to become active and effective participants in today's world.

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

To be considered for admission a child must:

- Be aged 5-14, and turn 5 before Sept 1 of enrollment in grade K
- Be diagnosed with a learning disability, dyslexia, process deficit, attention deficit disorder, and/or hyperactive, mild intellectual disability, high functioning ASD or Asperger's syndrome
- Have a school entry physical exam
- Have all immunizations current, and a record of those immunizations on file in the school office
- Have on file a birth certificate and, if applicable: baptism, communion and confirmation certificates
- Have a current (within three years) psychological evaluation, and a record of such in the school office
- Have on file any legal or custody papers

All prospective students will have an intake interview with the principal or assistant principal to determine appropriateness of placement. Students will be assigned to one division of the school (Primary, Intermediate, or Junior High) based on age and ability level.

Students with behavior disorders or moderate or severe intellectual disabilities are outside the scope of services we provide. **All new students are admitted on a trial basis which may last up to nine weeks.**

The final decision for admission or re-enrollment resides with the principal. All financial accounts must be current to be considered for re-enrollment.

Statement of Services

Morning Star School provides a strong educational foundation to students with learning differences including ADD, specific learning disabilities, processing deficits, and high functioning autism. We provide academic, spiritual, emotional, and social instruction; physical education, music education and speech and language services

Morning Star School does NOT provide:

- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- One-on-One instruction
- Nursing services

Students with severe intellectual, physical, health, or behavioral disabilities are outside of the scope of services we provide.

All students are admitted on a trial basis.

TUITION / FEES:

Tuition of \$858.33 a month (\$10,300.00 for the year) is payable for twelve (12) months beginning June 20, 2019 and ending May 20, 2020. Collection of tuition will be handled by FACTS Tuition Management and will be made by automatic withdrawals. All tuition payments are due on the 20th of each month.

Morning Star School does not offer sibling discounts.

Financial assistance may be available for those unable to pay full tuition. A scholarship request for assistance should be made to the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, through the Principal.

The following fees are charged:

- Registration fees of \$450.00 (Primary), \$500.00 (Intermediate) and \$525.00 (Junior High) are to be paid by June 30, 2019.
- \$150.00 a month for the Extended School Day Program. A drop-in service is available at a daily charge of \$15.00
- \$25.00 is charged for any part of the first 15 minutes a parent is late picking a child up from the extended day program. After the first 15 minutes, an additional \$1.00 per minute is charged. Additional late fees may be charged when a parent is late picking up a child from Saturday detention.
- Parents may NOT cancel FACTS agreements. All changes in FACTS must be made through the front office.
- \$35.00 NSF bank fee will be charged for all returned checks.
- **Additional program fees may apply based on student individual needs.**

STATE SCHOLARSHIPS: MCKAY SCHOLARSHIP, FLORIDA TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP, GARDINER:

Morning Star School is proud to accept the McKay Scholarship for students with disabilities, Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, and Personal Learning Scholarships. Students with McKay scholarships must register and be enrolled by the statutory deadlines of the state of Florida. Parents should be aware that the scholarship may not cover your child's entire tuition and fees. Parents are responsible for any difference. **Additional fees are charged based on individual needs.** For more information visit www.floridaschoolchoice.org or www.stepupforstudents.org.

ATTENDANCE:

Students may be absent no more than 7 days each grading period to qualify for a passing grade for that quarter. This attendance requirement includes excused or unexcused absences. Extended illnesses may be taken into consideration, but these extended illnesses must be confirmed by a doctor. A note from a parent is required when the student returns after an absence. A doctor's note must accompany the child back to school after an extended illness. Vacations during the school year are discouraged and will be considered an unexcused absence. Florida School Law 232.09 indicates that parents are responsible for attendance of children. A parent who refuses to comply with attendance requirements is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by law. Excessive absences may affect your child's eligibility for state scholarship programs.

All absences must be explained by a written note from the parent or guardian.

TARDY:

School begins at 7:45, and **students may arrive as early as 7:15 a.m.** Children who arrive **after 7:45 are considered tardy.** Late students must be accompanied into the school by their parents and signed in. Students arriving late may not be allowed into the classroom until the next period has begun. **If a student arrives after 7:45, that student will receive a tardy notice.** Tardies will be considered unexcused unless accompanied by a doctor's note. Excessive tardies from one or more classes can/may affect a child's academic progress. It is imperative that students start their school day on time to teach responsibility, accountability, and dependability.

School is dismissed at 2:35 p.m. Students will be allowed to leave early only for an emergency or a doctor's appointment. The teacher checks assignment books and hands out notices during the afternoon homeroom time. **Please do not ask that we dismiss your child early because it is more convenient for you to pick him/her up at that time.** Parents picking up a child early must come into the school to sign out that child. Students not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be sent to extended-day care, and the parents will be charged the daily drop-in rate.

No student will be allowed to leave with another student or unauthorized adult unless we have written permission from the parents.

You may accompany your child into the school the first few days of the school year. After that, students should come in unassisted and leave by themselves.

SCHOOL PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

CURRICULUM:

Morning Star School is dedicated to helping children with impaired learning ability become successful students. The curriculum of the Diocese of St. Augustine is followed and is designed to implement the following objectives:

- The development of maximum efficiency in academic areas (reading, language arts, spelling, mathematics, perception, study skills, science, and social studies). To that end, specialized programs such as Lindamood-Bell, LiPS, visualizing and verbalizing, Wilson Language, and Touchmath are used.
- The development of technological skills and the integration of these skills into all areas of the curriculum through the use of computers, laptops, iPads, Smartboards and other technology.
- The promotion of socially acceptable behavior and personal relationships.
- The development of motor skills which are closely connected with academic skills, and the promotion of good health and sportsmanship
- The promotion of spiritual and moral growth through participation in religious instruction, Liturgical services, and service projects.
- The development of emotional and social maturity.

The guidelines of the Florida Catholic Conference and the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools are followed.

Accommodations to methods, materials and assessments as well as modifications to the curriculum will be made on an individual basis. Modifications may affect the grade level your child is working on.

PET THERAPY:

Pet Therapy Action Plan

Morning Star School is the only Catholic Special Education School in the Diocese of St. Augustine. We serve students each year from all over Northeast Florida. Our students are diagnosed as having specific learning disabilities, ADD, communication disorders, various processing disorders, mild intellectual disabilities, and Autism Spectrum Disorder. We provide a full curriculum of academic subjects including reading, language, math science, and social studies, as well as PE, music, and art. We also offer speech and language therapy as well as academic enrichment. Our students can participate in extracurricular activities such as Band, Math Lab, and Garden Club.

Through individualized instructional and behavioral plans, we help each child develop academically, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

The Mission of Morning Star School as a Catholic Special Education School in the Diocese of St. Augustine is to provide a strong foundation of faith, service, and academics for students with learning differences in an atmosphere of love, acceptance and respect; encouraging all students to reach their full potential.

Morning Star School is excited and grateful for the opportunity to integrate Pet Therapy into the services we offer. Nova, our golden retriever provided through the HEAL foundation and trained by Project Chance, will provide these services. The following is an initial Action Plan for our Pet Therapy Program.

Goals:

To improve student responsibility and independence through the care and nurturing of a therapy dog.

To increase use of language, leading to improved social interaction with others.

To ease anxiety and provide a calm and safe atmosphere.

To encourage and motivate students to read in a less stressful environment.

To improve and sustain focus in students with disabilities.

To reward and motivate students.

PARTICIPATION IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES:

In accordance with our mission to provide a Catholic educational program to the children attending Morning Star, it is required that all students participate in religion classes, liturgical celebrations, daily prayer experiences, and all other religious-oriented aspects of the school program. This includes, but is not limited to, making the sign of the cross, genuflecting, receiving ashes, singing religious songs, receiving a blessing from the priest, and attending and participating in all liturgies, masses, and prayer services. Please do not schedule appointments during our liturgy celebrations. **Students will never be dismissed during mass.** If you must schedule an appointment on that day, you must pick your child up **before or after mass.**

Students may participate in sacramental Preparation programs based on Diocesan guidelines.

PROGRAM DIVISIONS:

Each student is assigned to a classroom in one of the three basic divisions of the academic program. These divisions are Primary, Intermediate, and Junior High. Assignment to a classroom or division is based on a variety of factors, including academic achievement, social ability, and chronological age. Students are not automatically promoted to the next classroom each year, and a student may remain in one division or one classroom for more than one year. After successfully completing all subject areas, students may be promoted to the next division. Students who are working on **modified** curriculum may also be transferred to the next program division.

TESTING:

The STAR 360 testing program is used both to gather baseline performance data and for instructional intervention. It is also used as a norm referenced test to meet State of Florida requirements. Other assessment and achievement tests may be used.

We understand that many times doctors request written summaries of student behavior and progress from the classroom teacher. Please remember that during the school day the teacher is busy teaching and cannot always find time to write evaluations without prior notice. **We request that you let us know in advance of the need for written evaluations and allow at least one week for them to be done. These evaluations will be sent directly to the doctor's office for review.**

PLACEMENT AT CHRIST THE KING SCHOOL:

Some students may be selected to attend a class at Christ the King School. ***Placement at Christ the King is dependent upon classroom space being available at that particular grade level and subject area. It is important to remember that simply working at grade level does not warrant placement at Christ the King.***

EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM:

The extended school day program is available from 2:35 until 6:00 p.m. Parents should be aware that:

- **At the discretion of the supervising teacher and administration, a child who is disruptive and/or uncooperative may not be allowed to attend.**
- A current emergency contact form with telephone numbers must be on file for each student.
- The school must be notified by note or phone call if the parent wishes the child to stay in extended day on a drop-in basis.
- Any student who has not been picked up by 3:00 will go to extended day and be charged the daily drop-in rate.
- **Students may not be dropped off before 7:15AM. Morning Star is not responsible for any student dropped off before 7:15 AM**

HOMEWORK:

Homework is an important portion of the student's grade each grading period. Parents should be aware that:

- Homework is assigned on an individual basis Monday through Thursday nights, and occasionally on weekends.
- Homework is the student's responsibility. Parents are asked to encourage and support students with their homework assignments.
- An assignment not returned on time may be given a grade of "0", and the student will be expected to complete the work during lunch or after school.

MAKE-UP WORK:

Make-up work will be assigned when a child returns to school after an absence.

It is the *student's responsibility* to get make-up work from the teacher(s). All work must be completed and returned within the time frame given by the teacher. Grade credit will be given only for excused absences. In the event that a student is unable to make-up work in a timely manner an "Incomplete" may be given.

Major projects, book reports, and term papers which have been assigned in advance must be turned in as soon as the student returns to class. It is the decision of the teacher whether credit will be given for these assignments if turned in late.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES:

During the summer, parents receive a list of supplies which their student will need. Supplies must be replenished during the year as necessary. Supply lists are also posted on our website.

Only clear plastic or open-mesh book bags will be allowed for all students. Students may not bring books, magazines, video games, toys, cell phones, cameras, Apple watches, etc. to school unless they have the teacher's written permission. If one of these items is taken away, it will be returned at the discretion of the administration.

STUDENT RECORDS

REQUIRED PAPERWORK:

Each student must have on file:

- Birth Certificate
- Health certificate
- Shot record, with current shots
- Current Psychological (within the last three years)
- Custody papers, if applicable
- Current information updates

Catholic students must have:

- Baptismal Certificate
- Communion Certificate
- Confirmation Certificate

Senate Bill 622 *Omnibus Education Act* exempts the cumulative record from the Florida Public Records Law by limiting access to the record only to the Superintendent, the professional staff of the school, the parent or guardian of the pupil, a court of competent jurisdiction, and to such other persons as the parent, guardian, or principal may authorize in writing.

Records in Catholic schools are private records. When the student's record goes to the public school, it becomes subject to the public school's rules. When the records come to or are maintained by our schools, then they are not subject to the statute. Public records, or any other records, are subject to any control or restrictions which the Superintendent or principal wishes to place on them. Records should be available to parents, teachers, and school officials.

CONFERENCES AND STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS:

Student Individual Support Plan Reports will be issued twice yearly. These Reports are in-depth evaluations of each student's progress, academic level and accommodations, and will be retained in the child's school records. A day will be provided after the issuance of these Reports for a personal conference if the parent requests. *Support Plan Reports will be held for non-payment of tuition and fees, ASC charges, overdue library books, school store charges, and any overdue detention fees.*

Parents are encouraged to schedule additional conferences with the teacher(s) or principal at any time during the year.

When you have a personal or telephone conference with your child's teacher(s), you will be asked to sign a Conference Report form. This is a summary of the issues and/or concerns discussed at the conference and will be kept by the teacher.

If a teacher requests a conference, it is mandatory that the parent(s) comply with that request. Parents are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times when speaking with a teacher.

REPORT CARDS:

Report cards will be issued at the end of each quarter. Mid-term progress reports will be issued in the middle of each grading period. Reports are distributed via Renweb. Hard copies must be requested from the office.

It is important to remember that report cards reflect the individual grade level on which your child is working. Students may be working off grade level in one or more subjects. Current grade levels will be reflected on your child's Individual Support Plan Report.

After mastering the skills for that grade level, students will be promoted to the next level. Students may be transferred to another level in the school based on age and ability level.

Report cards will be held for non-payment of tuition and fees, Extended Day charges, overdue library books, school store charges, and any overdue detention fees.

A fee will be charged to make **extra copies** of reports cards or student records during the school year.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY

EMERGENCIES:

Written information is required in case of emergency listing the name, address, and phone number of the person to be notified. In addition, an authorization is required for us to begin treatment in the event we cannot locate parents. **It is important that we always know telephone, address, and workplace changes.**

Parents will be called if a child has soiled himself/herself. Teachers will not clean the students. If a parent is called to pick up a child at school, that parent must arrive at school within one hour of being notified or call a friend or relative to pick up the child.

HEAD LICE:

Students will be examined periodically during the school year for the presence of head lice and/or nits. The presence of lice or nits is NOT an indication of uncleanliness. If lice or nits (whether alive or not) are discovered in your child's hair, you will be immediately called to pick up your child from school. Your child may return when he/she brings evidence of treatment (empty box or box top) to school.

FLU OR FLU-LIKE ILLNESS:

Morning Star School follows the guidelines recommended by the CDC for flu or flu like illness. If your child has a fever or flu-like symptoms he or she must remain home for 24 hours after they are fever-free without the use of fever reducing medicines.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

Morning Star School policy follows the policy mandated by the Diocese of St. Augustine and the State of Florida Statutes.

Florida Statutes state that every school, public or non-public, shall require each student entitled to admission for the first time in a Florida school to present a certification of a school-entry medical examination performed within one year prior to enrollment in school. Consequently, out of state students enrolling in our school must present the above-mentioned certification.

Florida Statutes states that effective August 1, 1982, the policy shall be that "prior to admittance to or attendance in a public or non-public school, grades kindergarten through 12, or a public preschool, each child present or have on file with the school a certificate of immunization for the prevention of those communicable disease for which immunization is required by the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services." The chapter further states that "immunization shall be required for poliomyelitis, diphtheria, rubeola, rubella, pertussis, mumps, tetanus, and other communicable diseases as determined by rules of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services." In addition, all first-graders must have the chicken pox vaccine.

Effective August 1, 1998, children entering, attending, or transferring to kindergarten in Florida schools will be required to have completed the hepatitis B vaccination series. A second dose of measles

vaccine will be required for children attending grades kindergarten through fifth. Children entering, attending, or transferring to seventh grade will be required to have completed the hepatitis B vaccination series, a second measles vaccination (preferably MMR), and a tetanus-diphtheria booster.

Medical exemptions: Medical exemptions will be considered, but only if a determination can be made by diocesan officials that, based on medical evidence, admission of the child without a vaccination would not constitute a health risk to the school community under the circumstances. If such a determination cannot be made, a medical exemption will not be granted. This exemption is reserved to Diocesan officials and is not to be granted at the parish or school administrative level. **No religious or conscience exemptions will be considered.**

MEDICATION:

All medication, prescriptive or non-prescriptive, will be given out only by the principal and assistant principal, or their designee. It is important that you adhere to the following policies:

- All students must have a Medical Authorization form filled out and signed by their Physician before any medicine prescriptive or non-prescriptive can be administered to a student at school.
- Prescription medicines must come to school in a pharmacy bottle with the child's name, the name of the medication, and the prescribed dosage.
- All non-prescription medication must come to school in the original manufacturer's packaging.
- No student may carry any medication on their person, in their book bag, or have any in their pocketbook or desk. Any medication brought to school must be immediately given to the principal or assistant principal. This includes non-prescriptive medication.
- Florida Statutes authorize asthmatic students to carry a metered dose inhaler on their person while in school. The parent or guardian must supply the school with a written statement of approval from the physician authorizing the student to carry the inhaler.
- **The school must be informed if your child receives regular prescriptive medication at home and be made aware of any changes in dosage or type of medication. If you choose to stop or change your child's medication during the school year, you may be asked to keep your child home from school during the transition period.**
- If your child takes medication at home in the morning, the school requests that one dose be kept at school if the student forgets to take it at home.
- Please keep at least a two-week's supply of medication at school.

ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE POLICY:

Intoxicants or other controlled substances in any form, including but not limited to drugs, marijuana, beer, wine, or alcohol may not be brought onto, consumed or utilized on campus or any school-sponsored activity. A student shall not sell, possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind. Violators shall be subject to immediate expulsion as well as any action deemed appropriate by civil authorities for violation of any law.

Proper use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician shall not be considered a violation of this rule. A student on such medication must provide the administration with written notification from the parent/guardian if the medication is to be brought onto, consumed, or utilized on campus or any school-sponsored activity.

By acceptance of enrollment, students, their parents, and guardians' consent to and authorize all reasonable action on the part of school authorities to enforce this rule including, but not limited to, the utilization of searches, questioning, and other investigative tools.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION:

Parents will be notified by RenWeb of any school cancellation for emergencies or weather related reasons.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT:

All suspected cases of child abuse or neglect will be reported pursuant to Florida Law.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**DISCIPLINE:**

Discipline is individualized for each student. Behavior plans will be developed for some students. Parents and students should be aware that:

- Students are expected to follow school and classroom rules at all times
- Severe or persistent behavior problems may result in a conduct referral, suspension or expulsion *at the discretion of the administration.*

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children. We welcome the opportunity to work together as partners in your child's academic and behavioral education. Parents on school grounds should never approach a student to discipline that student or discuss that student's behavior.

DAMAGE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY:

Students will pay for any school property which they damage or deface. The cost of repair or replacement will be the determination of school personnel.

PEACE AND JUSTICE:

Morning Star School is an advocate for peace and justice. We promote an atmosphere of non-violence and Anti-Bullying. Students are taught to recognize and report all cases of bullying. Physical violence will not be tolerated.

HARASSMENT:

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The Principal will investigate all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the Principal.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

Catholic teaching recognizes that we are each made in the image and likeness of God and that we treat each person with dignity and respect. This teaching should be modeled by faculty and students alike from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other inappropriate oral, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following:

- verbal or written harassment or abuse;
- pressure for sexual activity;
- repeated remarks to a person with sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats.

Any student who alleges sexual harassment by another student should bring this matter to the attention of the principal, his/her teacher, or the guidance counselor. The principal should ultimately investigate the incident. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated.

The principal should follow the Florida Law relating to mandatory reporting of abuse. The principal should contact the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and/or the diocesan attorney should any question arise as to reporting requirements or other counsel.

A substantiated charge of sexual harassment against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action, which may include but not be limited to suspension or expulsion.

SUSPENSION:

Students who are given an in-school suspension may be required to report to school each day and work with a substitute teacher ***paid for (\$95.00) by the suspended student's parents***. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will be responsible for completing all class work missed during the suspension.

TERMINATION:

A student's enrollment may be terminated when:

- the administration determines that the services of Morning Star School are no longer required by the student.
- the administration concludes that this is not the most appropriate school to provide the educational, behavioral, social, or emotional needs for the student.
- a parent is considered un-cooperative and does not follow the policies as stated in this handbook.
- the student is disruptive in the classroom or may be considered harmful to another person.
- the student brings a weapon to school.
- a student is charged with a crime committed away from the school or after school hours.

THREATS AND VIOLENCE:

It is the desire and expectation of every administrator, teacher, parent, and student that all will be safe in our schools. The Catholic teaching of respect for the dignity of each person because he/she is made in the image and likeness of God provides the basis for who we are. It is important that this teaching permeates the Catholic school community. The teaching should be modeled by faculty and students alike from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.

There are times, however, when some fail to measure up to this standard, and we need to act accordingly. All threats of violence that are verified will be taken seriously. A threat is an expression of an intent to cause physical or mental harm regardless of whether the person communicating the threat has the present ability to carry out the threat and regardless of whether the threat is conditional or future.

Threatening behavior consisting of words or deeds that are intended to intimidate anyone in the school community is strictly forbidden.

Threats and other forms of harassment, other than sexual harassment may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Verbal harassment or abuse
2. Physical harassment or abuse

3. Written harassment or abuse
4. Electronic, or E-mail correspondence to or about a member of the school community which include implied or explicit threats, whether this correspondence originates on school computers or elsewhere.

Any adult member of the school community who alleges threats or harassment by another member of the community should bring this matter to the attention of the principal. Students should notify the principal or his/her teacher, or guidance counselor. The principal should ultimately investigate the incident. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes threats or harassment, totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. A substantiated charge of threats or harassment against any member of the school community shall subject that student or teacher to disciplinary action, which may include but not be limited to suspension or expulsion.

Students:

If a student makes a threat, the Principal, at her discretion, may suspend or expel the student from school. If suspended, the student may be required to receive psychological assessment and counseling, and, if required, the student may return only if he/she presents a written recommendation to that effect from the psychologist/psychiatrist, and the administration is willing to have the student return to school. A reinstatement conference should take place with the parent and student. Parents should be notified that a second offense will result in further disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion.

STUDENT SEARCHES:

The school personnel may search a student or a student's property at any time. If any item is found which is against school policy, that item may be confiscated and not returned.

DUE PROCESS FOR STUDENTS:

Although the Constitutional requirement of due process does not legally apply to the private school system, Catholic schools, as a faith community, should impart fairness and a sense of justice in all actions and judgments made by administrators and teachers in dealing with their students. While it is important to protect and maintain the rights of the students and their parents, it is also important that the students and their parents be made aware of their respective responsibilities which arise from and complement these rights.

Students and parents are presumed to be aware of established school rules and regulations in effect at the time of registration and as subsequently amended. Students and parents shall have the right to be informed *either orally or in writing* of the school rules which have been violated and of the specific grounds for disciplinary action.

The faculty and administration have consistently and diligently worked toward providing our students with a safe and wholesome atmosphere where education and values are taught and practiced. In order to ensure this atmosphere, the following procedures will be enacted when necessary. Students who pose a threat to themselves or others, or cause severe disruption may be expelled from Morning Star School.

1. When there is a major violation or multiple infractions of the student code of conduct or school rules which the handbook states may result in **expulsion**, the student's parents/guardians will be called and informed of the violation **and will be required to pick up the student immediately from school**. The student will thereafter be suspended from school until a decision is reached on the violation and the consequences.
2. *At the parent's request*, a review board will be convened within 72 hours after suspension, excluding weekends and holidays, to consider the violation and the consequences. The review board will consist of the principal, vice principal, and a teacher chosen by the student. The student and at least one parent/guardian may be present during the board hearing at which time the student will be allowed to present his/her case. The board will then make a recommendation to the principal.

3. The principal will make the final decision and notify the parents.
4. The disciplinary decision is not subject of appeal to the Diocesan Due Process Board. However, failure of the school to follow its discipline procedure as outlined in the handbook is appealable. However, if the school has followed its procedures as outlined in the handbook, there will be no appeal.

DANGEROUS WEAPONS POLICY:

REVISED 3A

Diocese of St. Augustine Dangerous Weapons Policy

The policy of the Diocese of St. Augustine (hereafter, "the diocese") regarding "dangerous weapons" (see definition below) is as set forth herein. The following policy provisions fully comply with state law, and therefore, should not be further revised, restated or tailored. These provisions are designed to balance the rights of individuals to bear arms, while at the same time, protect the interests of the diocese and its entities, our employees and those whom we serve.

Definitions.

Dangerous Weapon. A dangerous weapon is defined to include, but is not limited to, all firearms, explosives, munitions, electronic weapons (e.g. tasers), chemical weapons and knives, other than small pocket knives; a pocket knife is not "small" if, when opened, its blade is greater than 2½ inches in length. Razor blades or box cutters are also to be considered as dangerous weapons for purposes of this policy, unless they are possessed or used in support of a parish, entity or school-sanctioned activity.

For schools (see definition below), other items may be designated as dangerous weapons if so specified in the school handbook.

For persons 18 years of age or older, a chemical **self-defense** weapon such as mace or pepper spray is excluded from the above definition of "dangerous weapon."

Motor Vehicle. A motor vehicle includes any automobile, truck, minivan, SUV, motor home, recreational vehicle, motorcycle, motor scooter, or any other vehicle operated on the roads of the State of Florida and required to be registered under state law.

School. A school includes for purposes of this policy a parochial school, high school, early learning center, day care center, or a school for those educationally challenged or disabled in any way, and which is owned or operated by the diocese or any parish or entity of the diocese.

School Property. School property includes the buildings, facilities and grounds (including parking areas for motor vehicles) of any school.

At locations in the diocese where a school is co-located with parish facilities, the Pastor should designate the portions of the parish campus which are to be considered as school property. School property may be defined for purposes of this policy not only by physical boundaries, but also by time, or functional use, or a combination of time, functional use, and place. That portion of the parish campus designated as school property by physical boundaries and / or duration of time and / or functional use should be clearly noticed to employees, volunteers and parishioners by way of signs, charts or maps of the parish campus as appropriate. Any such designation of school property shall be only for the purpose of this policy and will have no other civil or canonical legal effect. A sample sign, provided merely as an example, is at the appendix to this policy.

Applicability. This policy applies to:

- all parish, school or diocesan entity employees or volunteers,
- all students enrolled in a school (see definition above), and to
- all visitors or invitees onto the property of a diocesan entity, parish, or school.

Prohibitions. Florida law allows individuals who are properly permitted, to bear and carry arms in public places. Further, Florida Statute 790.251 recognizes that individuals have a basic right to possess and keep legally owned firearms within their motor vehicles for self-defense and other lawful purposes. Both of these laws, however, provide for exceptions to protect certain entities and buildings in the interest of public safety (see Florida Statute 790.06). Accordingly, except as provided below:

- Firearms and other dangerous weapons may not be brought into any diocesan-owned workplace, building or facility. Nor may firearms or other dangerous weapons be brought into any facility leased or exclusively used by the diocese or one of its parishes or entities. Any such firearms must remain secured within the individual's motor vehicle, in accordance with state law.
- Firearms and other dangerous weapons may not be brought on to school property, even secured in a motor vehicle. This prohibition also applies to school buses and school bus stops.

Exceptions. Exceptions to the above prohibitions are as follows:

Persons. Federal, state, county and municipal law enforcement officers while on or off duty, or while acting in an official capacity, are not bound by the prohibitions of this policy. Duly authorized security personnel are also exempt from the above prohibitions, provided that advance approval has been obtained from the pastor, principal or agency head.

Places. A dangerous weapon as defined above may be maintained in a rectory for the personal safety of the priest or priests who reside there, or as a *bona fide* and properly registered hunting or sport weapon, if the pastor so permits.

Searches. The diocese retains the right to search all personnel, their belongings, their motor vehicles and their work areas to determine compliance with this policy. Employees who are found to have knowingly violated this policy will be subject to corrective or adverse personnel actions, up to and including termination of employment. Volunteers who are found to have knowingly violated this policy may be prohibited from future service within the diocese.

Refusal to submit to an authorized search will also be grounds for exclusion from the location to which entry is sought, or removal therefrom. Any consequences arising from the inability to obtain entrance, or to remain on the premises, as a result of refusal to submit to a reasonable search, will be borne by the individual concerned.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ARTICLES FROM HOME:

No games, toys, posters, magazines, cameras, i-pods, **cell phones, and/or any digital devices such as Apple watches, and smart watches, etc.** may be brought from home. If a student does bring some item from home without the teacher's special permission, the teacher will take the item and turn it in to the principal or assistant principal. The principal will determine when or if the item will be returned. A Fitbit only will be allowed, students may not use the Fitbit on an Apple watch at school.

ASSIGNMENT BOOKS:

Assignment books are used daily by students to record homework assignments and notes from teachers. **The assignment books are to be signed daily by the teacher and nightly by the parents.** Parents are encouraged to use the assignment books for any comments or questions for the teacher. If a student loses his/her assignment book, that student **must** purchase another one from the school store immediately.

CLASSROOM PARTIES:

Homeroom teachers will organize and coordinate parties for their classrooms at special occasions during the year. Parents may send in cupcakes or cookies for a student's class on his/her birthday. Parents should notify the teacher(s) in advance, so the teacher can plan accordingly. No gifts may be given out at school for any occasion. No party invitations may be given out at school unless invitations are given to the student's entire class.

COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENTS:

A Newsletter will be emailed each Tuesday with important information. Notices concerning school matters will be emailed or sent home as necessary. The newsletter and yearly calendar are also posted on the school's web site at [www.morningstar-jax.org].

Scholarship warning notices and referrals will be issued as necessary. These notices must be signed by the parent and returned to the school the following school day.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION:

It has been determined that classroom observation by parents or visitors is too disruptive to the students and, therefore, is prohibited.

FIELD TRIPS:

School sponsored field trips are an important part of your child's education; therefore, they are **mandatory**. Field trip notices signed by the parent must be turned in prior to the student's field trip. Students will not be allowed to attend any field trip without a parent-signed permission form.

Parents, guardians, or grandparents will occasionally be asked to serve as chaperons on field trips. Parent chaperons are a valued part of our school field-trip experience. Persons who chaperon field trips must agree to the following policies:

- The chaperon must be fingerprinted and cleared through the offices of the Diocese of St. Augustine.
- No siblings or other children may accompany the chaperon on a field trip.
- The chaperon must be willing to help with all of the children.
- Chaperons may not smoke or drink alcoholic beverages on a field trip.
- It is understood that the teachers are always in charge during school sponsored activities.
- All chaperones must be fingerprinted, complete the **Protecting God's Children workshop** and be approved or they may not attend any field trip.

FINGERPRINTING:

The Diocese of St. Augustine requires that all persons who have contact with the children be fingerprinted, and the fingerprint record and clearance must be on file at the Diocesan office. This includes people who volunteer in the school and parents who chaperon field trips. All employees and covered volunteers must be fingerprinted through LiveScan. The cost of fingerprinting is paid for by the individual. It may take several weeks for clearance.

In addition, anyone who volunteers in the school in any capacity must attend the diocesan **Protecting God's Children** workshop. Information regarding these workshops can be obtained in the school office.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY:

In virtue of the values professed in all Catholic schools of the Diocese of St. Augustine, appropriate use of the Internet available to students and teachers on our school site is assumed. We are very pleased to bring this access to our school community and believe the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence in our school by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

The most important prerequisite for someone to receive an Internet access privilege is that he or she takes full responsibility for his or her own actions and observes the moral teachings of the Catholic Church. Although our faculty will provide appropriate guidance and supervision of Internet use, our school and the sponsor of this Internet connection will not be liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet through this hook-up. All users and/or their parents or legal guardians shall assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions.

Pictures or video from school sponsored events may not be posted on social network sites.

Internet Terms and Conditions of Use:

- All Internet access must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of the Diocese of St. Augustine.
- The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in suspension or cancellation of that privilege.
- Do not post personal contact information about yourself or other people. Personal contact information includes your complete name, home address, telephone number, school address and credit card number. Do not access any chat room or initiate any personal contact online.
- Be polite and use appropriate language. Do not be abusive in your messages to others. Do not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language. Promptly report any message you receive that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable to your teacher. Remember that electronic mail (e-mail) is not private. Others also have access to all mail. Incoming e-mail will be received through a classroom account and will be reviewed by your teacher or the school's Technology Coordinator.
- Do not attempt to access information that is profane or obscene, that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other persons. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities. If you mistakenly access inappropriate information, immediately tell your teacher. Do not show the information to other users. This will protect you against a claim that you have intentionally violated this policy.
- Do not download any software without the prior consent of your teacher. Do not bring, USBs or CDs to school or use them without your teacher's permission. Do not make any deliberate attempt to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means.
- The school specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through Internet services. Do not use information in reports, etc., without citing the source. Use of another's work without a citation is plagiarism.

LUNCHES:

Since the school has no cafeteria facilities, lunch must be brought from home. Drinks may be purchased from the school vending machine for \$1.00.

No student will be allowed to "skip" eating a lunch, and each child must have a nutritious meal. Candy,

gum, **and fast food lunches are not allowed.** Parents should avoid excessive snacks such as potato chips and cookies.

Because of the disruption to the school routine, **Parents are asked to not deliver lunches to the school after 7:50 a.m.**

Student lunches may not be kept in the refrigerator or warmed in the microwave. **Due to space restrictions, parents are not allowed to eat lunch with the students.**

PARENT CONDUCT:

We, the staff of Morning Star School, consider it a privilege to work with you as partners in your child's education. We believe that as parents, you are the primary educators of your child. As such, we expect parents to model appropriate behavior at all times. Good example is the strongest teacher. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between home and school will only lead to disrespect of all authority. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good behavior and relationships and is expected at all times.

At any time if a parent is deemed uncooperative, the student may be dismissed from Morning Star School.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORMS:

Physical education uniforms must be purchased through RC Uniforms. P.E. is an academic subject and participation is mandatory. Parents/Students should be aware that:

- students must have a pair of sneakers for physical education that remains at school during the week.
- students must have a small gym bag (plastic grocery bag is preferred).
- uniforms are taken home on Friday, laundered, and returned on Monday.
- failure to have the proper physical education uniform will lower the student's grade.

TRAFFIC PATTERN:

The driveway in front of the school is one-way with traffic entering from the south end and exiting from the north end. Parking areas are provided along Mickler Road. In the morning your child may be dropped off at the door. In the afternoon students will be placed in the cars by the teacher on duty or the student safety patrol. You will receive a name card to display in your windshield during carpool ***No student will be allowed to walk across the drive to a waiting car for any reason.***

If a Morning Star student rides in a car pool with Christ the King students or has a sibling attending Christ the King, the Morning Star student may walk across to the Christ the King area to be picked up. *This is considered a privilege for older, more responsible students*, and the privilege will be revoked if the Morning Star student abuses the privilege with inappropriate behavior.

Please be considerate of other drivers and residents on Mickler Road by following these guidelines:

- Do not arrive too early to pick up your child. There is a teacher outside with the children until 3:00. If some parents will wait until after 2:30 to pick up, there will be less traffic on Mickler Road between 2:20 and 2:40.
- Do not block the residents' driveways.

- Do not block Mickler Road as you are waiting to turn into our driveway.
- Allow plenty of room for traffic approaching in the opposite direction.
- Stay within designated driving lanes at all times. Our driveway is a **NO PASSING ZONE**.
- Make a full stop as you exit our driveway.
- **Drive slowly.**
- Cell phone use is prohibited in the car pool line.

UNIFORMS AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE:

Students will be given a referral for any uniform violation. The administration reserves the right to determine appropriateness of uniform, haircut, etc. More than three referrals in a nine-week period will result in a Saturday detention. **Uniforms may be purchased from RC Uniforms, 11645 Beach Blvd. (904) 646-0493.**

Boys' Dress Code:

- white, button-down collar, oxford-cloth
- white or green polo shirts **with logo**
- navy shorts for Primary and Intermediate students only
- navy blue slacks with belt loops
- *solid navy, black, or white socks, **no low top athletic socks***
- brown, black, or navy belts
- pants must be worn at waistline
- solid white t-shirts only may be worn under the uniform shirt
- hair must be well groomed; in a short, conservative style cut above the eyebrows and ears; away from the face; above the collar. Appropriateness of hair style will be determined by the administration.
- sideburns may be no longer than mid-ear
- no shaved heads, portions of heads, designs, or shaved eyebrows are allowed
- no facial hair
- no earrings

Girls' Dress Code:

- RC Uniforms jumpers, skorts, skirts worn no shorter than 2" above the knee; pants are now allowed for girls
- white oxford-cloth blouses with logo
- white or green Polo shirt with logo (Primary, Intermediate and JH)
- white or navy socks worn above the ankles
- white or navy tights may be worn in cooler months
- navy shorts for Primary and Intermediate students only
- hair must be cut above the eyebrow and/or styled away from the face
- headbands, scrunchies, and bows matching the skirt/jumper may be worn
- one small post-type earring in each lobe that is no larger than the ear lobe
- No purses are allowed at school

All Students Dress Code:

- red sweaters or navy v-neck sweaters and the Navy-blue sport fleece (from RC uniforms) are mandatory.

- shoes must be solid black dress or athletic shoes. No swooshes, stripes, etc. Also, if possible no markings on the soles of the athletic shoes.
- ***no sweatshirts or flannel shirts will be allowed***
- shirts and/or blouses must be fully tucked in at the waist
- all clothing must be appropriately sized
- as uniforms become faded and worn, they must be replaced
- students must practice good personal hygiene which includes clean hair, deodorant, teeth brushing etc. and have uniforms clean and pressed
- no inappropriate hair coloring
- no flashy or showy jewelry
- no make-up or nail polish
- no perfume, after-shave, scented lotion, or cologne
- no hats (except on field trips days to outside locations)
- *no low top athletic socks*

Non-Uniform Day Dress Code:

- Shorts or skirts may be no higher than 2" above the knees
- Jeans and pants must be worn at the waist line
- No tank tops, bike shorts, crop tops, or t-shirts with objectionable writing or pictures

VISITORS:

All parents and guests must check in with the office and receive a Visitor's Pass before being permitted to enter classrooms. Parents and visitors must enter through the front door at the office area and must wear the Visitor's Pass while in the building.

Due to space limitations, parents may not visit the classrooms after 7:20 a.m. or before 2:35 p.m.