



Morning Star High School  
*In Partnership with John J. Snyder High School*

Parent/Student Handbook  
2021-2022

725 Mickler Rd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32211  
904-721-2144  
[www.morningstar-jax.org](http://www.morningstar-jax.org)  
***Elaine Shott, Principal***

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Morning Star High 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 students are provided with successful experiences, thus, enabling them to grow and mature as children of God.

## **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 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.

## **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 School 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.

### **Harassment and Discrimination**

Morning Star School is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, at assignments outside the school, or at school-sponsored events. All students/parents are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student or parent witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student/parent must immediately report the incident to the principal. If, however, the principal is the individual who is believed to have engaged in the inappropriate conduct, the student/parent should notify the Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of St. Augustine. If an investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the school will take corrective action based on the circumstances.

### **Open Admission Policy**

Morning Star School has an open admission policy. No person, on the grounds of race, color, gender, disability or national origin, is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the receiving of services. Nor does the school discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender, or national origin.

## **Registration, Enrollment, Student Records**

### **Admission: Morning Star High School is fully accredited through the Florida Catholic Conference.**

To be considered for admission a child must:

- Be aged 14 to 21
- Be diagnosed with a learning disability, speech/language impairment, 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 psychological evaluation or documentation of disability 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 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.

### **Statement of Services**

Morning Star School provides a strong educational foundation to students with learning differences including ADD/ADHD, specific learning disabilities, processing deficits, mild intellectual disabilities, and high functioning autism. We provide academic, spiritual, emotional, and social instruction along with life and transition skills; behavioral therapy, 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, which may last up to nine weeks.**

### **Tuition and Fees:**

Tuition of \$1,101.50 a month (\$11,015.00 for the year) is payable for ten (10) months beginning June 20, 2021 and ending May 19, 2022. Collection of tuition will be handled by FACTS Tuition Management and will be made by automatic withdrawals. All tuition payments are due on the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 is made to the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, through the Principal.

The following fees are charged:

- Registration fees of \$1300.50 are to be paid by June 30, 2021.
- Tech Fee of \$50 paid yearly.
- Graduation fee of \$150.00 for High School Seniors due by January 25, 2022.
- \$150.00 a month for the Extended School Day Program. A drop-in service is available at a daily charge of \$20.00
- \$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 business office.
- \$35.00 NSF bank fee will be charged for all return checks.
- Additional program fees may apply based on student individual needs.

### **State Scholarships Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, Gardiner Scholarship and Family Empowerment Scholarship**

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](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org) or [www.stepupforstudents.org](http://www.stepupforstudents.org).

### **Student Records Required Paperwork**

Each student must have on file:

- Birth Certificate
- Health certificate
- Shot record, with current shots
- Psychological / Documentation
- Custody papers, if applicable
- Current information updates

Catholic students must have:

- Baptismal Certificate
- Communion Certificate
- Confirmation Certificate

International Students must include:

- Social Security card (a copy)
- PassPort (a copy)
- Green Card (a copy)
- Approval will come from the Superintendent

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.

## High School Program and Curriculum

### Teacher Qualifications

All teaching staff have a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree and are certified by the Department of Education in the State of Florida.

### Curriculum and Graduation Requirements

Morning Star School is dedicated to helping students with learning differences become successful students and reach their full potential. 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, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies).
- 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 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.

Morning Star High School will provide a full curriculum of academic subjects along with speech and language therapy, guidance, as well as academic enrichment. Our students will be able to participate in extracurricular activities with Bishop Snyder High School such as student retreats, Catholic schools week, prom, and pep rallies. Our goal is to give Morning Star students the best possible high school experience we can provide in conjunction with Bishop Snyder High School.

### Graduation requirements

English	4 Credits
Math	4 Credits
Social Studies	4 Credits
Science	4 Credits
Physical Education /Health	2 Credits (.5/yr)
Foreign Language	2 Credits (Same Language) (.5/yr)
Fine Arts	1 Credit
<b>Electives</b>	
Reading	4 Credits
Learning Strategies	2 Credits (.5/yr)
Religion	4 Credits**

Learning Strategies, Reading, and Religion will fulfill the elective requirements. Transfer students are not

required to have taken religion, reading or learning strategies for entrance.

\*\*Students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average in order to earn credit

### Basic Course Sequence

9 <sup>th</sup> Grade		10 <sup>th</sup> Grade		11 <sup>th</sup> Grade		12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit	Course	Credit
Religion	1	Religion	1	Religion	1	Religion	1
English 1	1	English 2	1	English 3	1	English 4	1
Reading 1	1	Reading 2	1	Reading 3	1	World Literature	1
Mathematics	1	Mathematics	1	Mathematics	1	Mathematics	1
Biology/Lab	1	Environ Science	1	Earth Science	1	Phy. Science/Lab	1
World Cultural Geography	1	US History	1	World History	1	Economic Finc. literacy/Govt.	1
Spanish 1	.5	Spanish 1	.5	Spanish 2	.5	Spanish 2	.5
Learning Strat.	.5	Learning Strat.	.5	Learning Strat.	.5	Learning Strat.	.5
PE/Health	.5	PE/Health	.5	PE/Health	.5	PE/Health	.5
Fine Arts	.25	Fine Arts	.25	Fine Arts	.25	Fine Arts	.25

Students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale (C average) to be eligible for graduation. The guidelines of the Florida Catholic Conference and the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools are followed. **Please refer to the course catalog for specific information.**

**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 and noted on academic transcripts.**

#### Diploma

All Students will receive accommodations based on their individual needs. Students who are working two or more grade levels behind will be on a modified access point curriculum. Transcripts will reflect standard courses or standard courses with access points.

#### Program Assignment

Students are either working towards a standard diploma or a standard diploma through access points. Students who are working on modified curriculum (2 or more grade levels below grade level) will graduate with a standard diploma with access points. Transcripts will indicate courses with access points. Upon entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade this placement will be determined by transcripts and/or IEP/Psychological evaluation in a transition meeting.

#### Participation in Religious Activities:

In accordance with our mission to provide a Catholic educational program to the students attending Morning Star School, 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, and 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.**

#### Testing

STAR Reading and Math assessments are used to monitor progress.

#### Individual Support Plans

Student Individual Support Plans will be issued twice yearly-December and May. 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.

#### Conferences

Two parent conference days are scheduled each academic school year—one in January and one at the end of the school year. Parents have an opportunity to request or decline to meet with their student’s teacher during these two conference times. Parents are encouraged to schedule additional conferences with the teacher(s) and/or administration at any time during the year. 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. When you have a in person or telephone conference with your student’s teacher(s), you will be asked to sign a Conference Report form. This is a summary of the conference and items discussed at the conference. You will receive a copy of the signed form and a copy will be kept by the teacher.

### **Transition Plans**

Transition plans are started in eight grade and continue through twelfth grade. The transitional meeting will include either the principal or the assistant principal, the high school coordinator, parents/guardians, and the student. (?)

Transition plans will include

- Student strengths and interests
- Postsecondary goals
- Transition checklist
- Administration, Faculty, Parents, and Student in attendance

### **Mid-Term Progress Reports and Report Cards**

Mid-term progress reports will be issued in the middle of each grading period, and report cards are issued at the end of each grading period. Mid-term reports and report cards are distributed via email. 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 below grade level in one or more subjects. Current grade levels will be reflected on your student’s Individual Support Plan Report. Transcripts will reflect any class/classes taken off grade level.** *Report cards may be held for non-payment of tuition and fees, extended day charges and detention fees.*

### **Homework**

Homework is an important portion of the student’s academic growth and his or her grade for 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.

Please refer to our Homework Policy in our Policy Section of the handbook.

### **Make Up Work**

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

It is the *student’s responsibility* to get make-up work from the teacher(s). In the event that a student is unable to make-up work in a timely manner an “Incomplete” will be given and MSS Classwork and Homework Policy will be followed.

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.

### **Pet Therapy Action Plan**

Morning Star School is the only Catholic Special Education School in the Diocese of St. Augustine. We serve approximately 50 high school students each year from all over Northeast Florida. Our students are diagnosed as having specific learning disabilities, Speech/ language impairment, mild intellectual disabilities, ADD, communication disorders, various processing disorders, and High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder. Through individualized instructional and behavioral plans, we help each child develop academically, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.



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 has retired. She will drop by for visit and provide these services when she is at Morning Star. Morning Star has partnered with Project Chance and is in the process of training a new therapy dog, Mission. 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

#### **Evaluation Forms**

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.*

#### **Bishop Snyder High School Activities and Field Trips**

MSS' partnership with Bishop Snyder is a vital part of our students' high school experience, and therefore, student participation in joint events and activities during the school day are mandatory. Permission slips signed by the parent or guardian must be turned in prior to the student's field trip. Students will not be allowed to attend any Bishop Snyder field trip without a parent-signed permission form.

#### **Service Hour Requirement**

All high school students are required to complete 25 hours of community service each school year beginning in the 2021/2022 school year. Students are encouraged to explore various volunteer opportunities. It is the student's responsibility to seek out volunteer opportunities and complete the 25 hour requirement. MSS will share any volunteer opportunities with students and parents when these opportunities arise. Service hour sheets will be passed out at the beginning of the school year, and they can be printed from the MSS website as well. Signed service hour sheets are due in late spring (exact date to be determined by the religion teacher).

## **School Day Procedures**

### **Attendance**

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.

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

### **Tardy**

Students may arrive as early as 7:15 a.m. and the late bell rings at 7:45 a.m. Students who arrive **after 7:45 are considered tardy and will receive a tardy notice**. 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. 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. Excessive tardies may affect the student's eligibility for state scholarships.

### **Early Dismissal**

Students will be allowed to leave early only for an emergency or a doctor's appointment. Parents picking up a student early must come into the school to sign out the student out. Students may not be signed out early from 2 p.m. and dismissal at 2:35 p.m. due to front office staff preparing for dismissal.

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

### **Dismissal**

Dismissal is at 2:35. Students will be dismissed to carline when their authorized ride has arrived. Students must be picked up by 3 p.m.. Students who are not picked up by 3 p.m. will be sent to After School Care (ASC) and the ASC drop in rate will apply.

### **Extended Day/After School Care :**

The extended school day program is available from 2:35 until 6:00 p.m. High school students may attend extended day only with the express permission of the administration. Parents should be aware that:

- **At the discretion of the supervising teacher and administration, a student 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.

#### **Traffic Patterns:**

The driveway in front of the school is one-way with traffic entering from the south end and exiting from the north end. Students must exit and enter their car within the designated area marked by cones. **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 at 3 p.m.. 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 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. You must wait for the car(s) in front of you to move before you drive out of the driveway. You may NOT pass another car.**
- Make a full stop as you exit our driveway.
- **Drive slowly.**

#### **Authorized Pick Up**

Students will only be dismissed to authorized persons for pick up as stated on the student's registration form. Contact the front office to add or take off a person as an authorized pick up person for your student.

\*If a student is going home with another student, the school requires a written letter from both parents giving permission for the student to ride home/go to the other student's house.

#### **Student Drivers**

- Students must request permission from the principal to drive to school.
- Student drivers must maintain a 3.0 GPA
- Driving to school is a privilege, which may be revoked at any time at the discretion of the principal or her designee.
- A specific parking spot will be assigned to student drivers.
- Parking is limited. Parking spots will be assigned on a first come basis, with preference given based on seniority.
- A copy of the student's driver's license must be on file at school.

## **Health, Safety, and Emergencies**

### **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 to begin treatment in the event parents can not be reached. **It is important that we always have updated telephone numbers, addresses, and workplace changes.**

### **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 student's hair, you will be immediately called to pick up your student from school. Your student may return when he/she brings evidence of treatment to school.

### **Flu or Flu-like Symptoms**

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.

### **Suspected or Positive COVID**

Morning Star School will follow the guidelines set forth by the Diocese of St. Augustine and the CDC in COVID related matters.

### **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 form 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.
- At least a two-weeks supply of medication should be kept at school.

### **Alcohol/Drug Abuse Policy**

Intoxicants or other controlled substances in any form, including but not limited to drugs, marijuana, beer, wine, alcohol, or tobacco in any form or vapes 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 Cancellations**

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.

Discipline Policy for disruptive classroom behavior consists of the following steps.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Verbal warning with reteaching and modeling of appropriate behavior.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Written Referral to parent/guardian with required signature and a phone call home.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Detention (Served after school on assigned day after school from 2:35-3:45) This is NOT a homework detention. Students will not complete assignments during this time.

\*If a student receives three detentions, a behavior committee meeting will meet to discuss an individual behavior plan moving forward for the student. **Parents are required to attend this meeting.** If a student receives three more detentions (total of 6), he or she will serve an out of school suspension (receiving zeros for all missed assignments during the out of school suspension) and the parents will be required to attend a second meeting.

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.

### **Classwork and Homework Policy**

The completion of classwork and homework is imperative to the learning and growth of every student. Morning

Star School High School Department has the following policy in place to support each student in developing the sense of responsibility and independence in his or her academic work. Positive reinforcement, study and learning strategies, parent involvement and consistent appropriate consequences are focus of our MSS Classwork and Homework Policy.

- If a student has failed to turn in an assignment (classwork or homework), the student will receive an Incomplete and the teacher will note the missing assignment in the student planner. The student will be given an opportunity for clarification or help on assignment, and it is expected to be completed at the beginning of the subject's class period on the following day.
- If the student fails to complete the assignment and turn in on the following day, it will be noted in the planner again and a phone call will be made.
- If on the third day, the student has still not completed the assignment, it remains an Incomplete and will result in a Notice of Concern sent home to be signed.

\*At this point it is now the student's responsibility to complete his or her assignment(s) and turn it in to his or her teacher to be graded and receive credit BEFORE the FINAL TURN IN DAY for the midterm progress report and the FINAL TURN IN DAY for the end of the quarter. These days will be given at the beginning of the school year to both students and parents. **ABSOLUTELY NO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT AFTER THE FINAL TURN IN DAY FOR MIDTERM PROGRESS REPORTS AND END OF QUARTER GRADES. ANY INCOMPLETES THAT REMAIN AFTER THAT TURN IN DAY WILL RESULT IN A ZERO.**

This policy allows students numerous opportunities within a four week time period to make up missing or incomplete assignments as it is our goal that students complete assignments to achieve their full academic potential. However, if assignments are not completed and turned in within the allotted grace period provide above, students will receive a zero and zeros significantly impact students' grades. Please note high school students must have passing grade at the end of the school year to earn a credit in that subject.

### **School Property**

Students are expected to treat all school property with respect. Vandalism and/or defacing school property is not acceptable, and a student will be responsible for correcting the damage and/or paying for any school property which he or she damaged or defaced. 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, assistant 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.

### **Detention**

Detentions will be assigned following our Discipline Policy covered in this handbook. **Attendance at detention is mandatory.**

### **Suspension**

Students who are given an in-school suspension will be required to report to school each day and work in a designated area. School work completed in a in school suspension will be graded for credit. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will receive a zero for all missed work during the out-of-school 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:

- Verbal harassment or abuse
- Physical harassment or abuse
- Written harassment or abuse
- 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. 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.

- When there is a major violation or multiple infraction 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.
- *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.
- The principal will make the final decision and notify the parents.
- 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.

## Internet Acceptable 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.

**Dangerous Weapon 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  $2\frac{1}{2}$  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.

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**

If a student does bring some item from home without the teacher's 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.

### **Planners/Assignment Books**

Planners are used daily by students to record homework assignments and notes from teachers. The planner will be signed daily by the teacher (did we agree to this?) **If a student loses his/her assignment book, that student must purchase another one from the school store immediately.**

### **Communication with Parents and Guardians**

A newsletter is emailed weekly during the school year to all parents and guardians with school updates, news and events. The newsletter and an up-to-date calendar are posted on the school's website at [www.morningstar-jax.org]. Administration will send emails to inform parents and guardians of pertinent information.

Classroom teachers use Class Dojo and email to communicate with parents about regular classroom and school information. Classroom teachers use Clas Dojo, email, phone calls and conferences to discuss student achievement and/or concerns.

Email is typically the best way to initiate contact with your student's teacher. Please understand that your student's teacher is in the classroom the majority of the school day and may not be able to respond until later. Allow 24 hours for a response during the school week. Teachers are not required to check or answer emails on the weekends or holidays. Parents may request a conference to be set up at any time.

Student planners and Google Classroom are the best places to check upcoming assignments.

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 Observations**

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

### **School Supplies**

School supplies are necessary for students' academics. Every attempt is made to keep supply cost down for families. MSS partners with a school supply company at the end of each school year to allow parents the option to purchase their student's supplies for the upcoming school year. Supplies may be purchased through the company through the middle of summer or purchased by the parents. Supply lists are distributed at the end of the school year, emailed during the summer and posted on the school's website. Lost, damaged, or depleted school supplies must be replenished during the year as necessary. In addition to the supplies listed, students will need a backpack, lunch box and head sets for their school issued device.

### **Cell Phones**

Students may bring cell phones to school, but these must be turned in to the homeroom teacher at the beginning of the school day and will be returned at dismissal. Students may not carry a cell phone or wear a cellular device (ex. Apple watch) with them during the school day.

### **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. Students may purchase lunch on specific school days from an outside vendor. These lunch orders must be placed the week prior. Information on purchasing lunch on specific days will be distributed at the beginning of the school year.

Health Department Policy: Schools are no longer able to store/keep ordered food overnight from food vendors. If your child is absent on a food order day we will not be able to save the food or give a refund.

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.

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.

### **Fingerprinting/Volunteering**

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, or on the school website.

### **Parent Conduct**

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.

### **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 2:35p.m.