



St. Helen School Family Handbook 2024-2025

**St. Helen School
2347 W. Augusta Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60622
Phone: 773-486-1055
www.sthelenchicago.org**

ST. HELEN SCHOOL

Mission Statement

St. Helen Catholic School strives to educate the whole child. In doing so, a spiritual, academic, and social foundation is created. This formation, rooted in Gospel values, enables the graduate to develop as a responsible Christian citizen.

We believe that it is a child's right to be educated in a nurturing and safe environment.

Daily activities encourage the sense of positive self-esteem as well as the development of self-discipline.

We unite for racial justice and celebrate cultural diversity.

We promote active service to the school, parish, and community.

Amendments to the Handbook

Updated November 6, 2024

Academic Procedures

Academic Program

All students study the following academic subjects in Preschool–Grade 8.

- Religion
- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies

The following are offered as integrated classes that support and enhance the core academic subjects.

- Physical Education – Health
- STEM
- Music
- Art
- Spanish

Homework

Homework is the responsibility of the child and may require parental involvement. Homework provides students the opportunity to practice and apply skills learned in class. Homework may include written assignments, projects, note-taking, studying, reading, iReady, STEM, and many other assignments. Depending on the assignment, listed below are *suggested* guidelines for daily homework.

Grades 6-8	60-90 minutes per night
Grades 4-5	40-50 minutes per night
Grade 3	30 minutes per night
Grades K-2	15-20 minutes per night

The curriculum can be viewed according to the subject at www.archchicago.org. Differentiation in the implementation of the curriculum is ongoing and includes teachers who will allocate time for small group instruction on an as-needed basis. Title I services are available for those who qualify. i-Ready diagnostic testing services are available to help determine individual learning needs or challenges.

Progress Reports & Report Cards

- Preschool sends out a second-trimester and third-trimester Report Card.
- K-8 Report Cards are sent out at the end of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd trimesters.
- Grades 5-8 will receive a Progress Report the 7th week of each trimester.

Standardized Testing

i-Ready is the only assessment used by the Archdiocese. It empowers students by connecting rich assessment data to personalized digital learning and powerful classroom instruction. With *i-Ready*, students can sharpen their insight into their needs with actionable data and access rigorous and engaging instruction to help them succeed. Students are encouraged to spend the required time recommended to show academic growth. Please encourage your child to spend time doing assignments on i-Ready.

Admissions

Age Requirements

In compliance with state law, the following age requirements will be followed:

- 3 year old Preschool: 3rd birthday on or before September 1.
- 4 year old Preschool: 4th birthday on or before September 1.
- Kindergarten: 5th birthday on or before September 1.
- Grade 1: 6th birthday on or before September 1.

The following documentation is required at the time of registration:

- Official Copy of Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate for Catholics
- Health and Immunization records signed by a physician
- Dental Records

Transfer Students: Parents shall present all transfer records from the previous school including a report card, Standardized Test Report, and health records. Transfer students shall interview with the principal before finalizing admission.

Registration for the following year begins in January. The priority registration day for current families is January 6th.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

St. Helen School operates under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a sole corporation, in the Archdiocese of Chicago. St. Helen School admits students of any race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin to all the rights and privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this school.

St. Helen School does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, athletic, or other school-administered programs. St. Helen School embraces the racial and cultural diversity of the family population evident within the school.

It is the policy of St. Helen School to provide equal opportunity in employment to all employees and all applicants. No person shall be discriminated against in employment because of such individual’s race, color, sex, national origin, age, military discharge, marital status, or mental or physical handicap unrelated to the ability to perform the duties of the position, except when one of these characteristics is a necessary qualification of a position.

Arrival and Dismissal

Hours

Office Hours	6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
School Day	7:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Arrival Times - Main Entrance

Grades K-8	7:45-8:00 a.m.	Tardy Bell for all classes rings at 8:00 a.m.
Preschool	7:45-8:15 a.m.	

Half-Day	7:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Early Dismissal Day	7:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Arrival – Parking lots are available for drop off. Motorists are to either park at the curb or enter the alley from Walton Ave. and proceed down the alley to the sidewalk at the

entrance to the school. Children exit the car at the sidewalk, and parents proceed to turn right on Augusta Blvd. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the caregivers of their child to follow the procedure for arrival.

Lunch Schedule

Preschool	11:30 a.m. – Classroom
Kindergarten	11:40 a.m. – Classroom
Grades 1-2	11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. (Lunch and recess)
Grades 3-5	11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. (Lunch and recess)
Grades 6-8	11:45 a.m. – 12:25 p.m. (Lunch and recess)

Lunch is not served on a half day of school. Lunch is served on Early Dismissal Days.

Dismissal Times

Preschool	2:40 p.m.	Side Gym Doors in Parking Lot
Kindergarten	2:40 p.m.	Main Entrance
Grades 1-5	2:45 p.m.	Main Entrance
Grades 6-8	2:55 p.m.	Courtyard

Release of Students from School

In the interest of safety for the children, parents/guardians must be at the school on time at dismissal. Children may not exit school grounds to purchase snacks, etc., and then return to school while waiting for a ride. Motorists are to either park at the curb or enter the parking lot between the school and the church. If the parent/guardian has not arrived by 3:00, the student will go to after care. Students will only be released to adults on the approved list.

Athletics

The Athletic Program of St. Helen School is an extension of the academic program and philosophy. It exists to instruct children in the fundamentals of various sports and to teach them the value of teamwork and sportsmanship. The program's main goal is to teach the children that participating in athletics is enjoyable and a way to learn teamwork and about one's ability. Students, coaches, parents, and spectators are to maintain a Christian standard of conduct and respect for others. If the standard of conduct is not respected, then the Coach or spectator will be asked to remove themselves from the gym. While winning is important, the object of the competition is to do one's best regardless of the outcome. The teams are all-inclusive; therefore, there may be quite a number of players on a team. It is the policy of St. Helen School that no child should be denied participation due to the lack of financial ability to pay fees. If the family is experiencing financial challenges, they should contact the principal. All coaches must submit an online criminal background check and VIRTUS training as mandated by the Archdiocese of Chicago. All families must volunteer at a game day for a total of three hours per year in order to guarantee their child's participation in the program. Students involved in athletics are required to have the following forms on file:

Minor Acknowledgement & Student/Athlete Code of Conduct, IESA Pre-participation Examination (Sports Physical), & Concussion Information Form.

Coach Expectations and Responsibilities:

Coaching is not just about winning games. In fact, winning is a very small component to the job. Successful coaches help athletes master new skills, enjoy competition with others, and help young athletes feel good about themselves. Most importantly however, successful coaches go far beyond teaching athletic techniques by teaching and modeling skills needed for successful living in our society.

Coaches must:

- Act in Accordance with Catholic Character
- Model Superior Sportsmanship, Humility, and Graciousness, both in Victory and Defeat
- Properly Supervise Student-Athletes
- Adhere to Professional Conduct
- Possess Basic Knowledge in Skills, Tactics, and Strategies
- Possess Basic Knowledge in Training, Nutrition, and Injury Prevention
- Comply with Established Policies, Philosophies, and Procedures
- Possess a Basic Understanding of Risk Management Procedures
- Possess Basic Athletic Administration Skills
- Understand Appropriate Disciplinary Procedures

Student Athlete Expectations and Responsibilities:

Student athletes are always students first. They are expected to maintain a solid academic and behavioral record in and out of season. If a student does not attend school, they are not eligible to participate in a practice or game that day. Students who are absent on a Friday may participate on a Saturday. Athletes must also attend and be on time for regularly scheduled practices. Athletes at SHS must remember that they are part of a community of faith, and thus must display respect for their teammates, opponents, coaches, & officials, as well as adhere to the following:

Student Athlete Code of Ethics:

- Play the game for the game's sake
- Be generous in winning and graceful in losing
- Display good sportsmanship and respect towards all opponents
- Work for the good of the team
- Accept the decisions of the officials gracefully
- Conduct yourself at all times with honor and dignity
- Recognize, applaud, and encourage the efforts of your teammates and opponents
- Show respect for your coaches
- Show respect towards fans and personnel from other schools

Parents/Guardians Expectations and Responsibilities

Parental support is valued and encouraged. Parents/guardians and spectators must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and act as positive role models for all participants.

Parents/Guardians must:

- Trust in their child’s ability to have fun as well as to perform and achieve excellence on their own
- Help their child to learn the right lessons from winning and losing and from individual accomplishments and mistakes
- Respect their child’s coaches, teammates and fellow parents as well as the players, parents, and coaches from opposing teams
- Give only encouragement and applaud positive accomplishments, whether for their child, his/her teammates, their opponents or the officials
- Show respect towards all officials and their decisions
- Never coach their child or other players during games and practices, unless they are one of the official coaches of the team

Attendance

School attendance is fundamental to the academic success and spiritual growth of our students. For this reason, students are expected to attend school on a daily basis for the school term, unless an absence is excused.

A student is absent from school when he/she is not physically present on a required student attendance day. A student is tardy when he/she is not physically present at the posted opening of a regular required student attendance day.

Absences and Tardiness

Any day that a student is absent from or tardy to school, the student’s parent/guardian must call the school office at 773-486-1055 or email Martha Torres-Santiago at mtorressantiago@sthelenchicago.org within 30 minutes of the opening of a regular student attendance day to report the student’s absence or tardy. If a parent/guardian fails to report a student’s absence, it will be recorded as unexcused. The school will contact the parent/guardian if a student is absent and a notice of absence is not received within 60 minutes of the opening of the student attendance day.

A student absence will be excused if it is due to: (1) student illness (including mental/behavioral health); (2) observance of a religious holiday; (3) death in the immediate family; (4) a family emergency; (5) other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the principal; (6) other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student’s mental, emotional or physical health or safety; and (7) other reasons approved by the principal.

Absences due to medical reasons may be required to provide medical documentation. If medical documentation is required and is not provided, the absences will be marked as unexcused. Students whose absences are excused will be allowed to make up missed assignments.

An unexcused absence is an absence from school for a reason other than those listed above as an excused absence. Students will lose credit for assignments on school days or for classes from which the absence was unexcused.

At times, an appointment during school hours is unavoidable, but this should not be a common practice. When informing the office and the teacher of an appointment, please indicate the date and time. If a child misses school due to a vacation, a schedule of make-up work should be coordinated with the teacher upon the student's return. A teacher is not expected to provide work for your child prior to a vacation. Tuition is not discounted if the child is absent due to vacation or illness. The cost of educating your child is based on an annual rate, not daily attendance.

Tardies

Students are expected to be in class on time so they maximize their learning opportunities. Students that arrive at school after the bell has rung are considered tardy and must report to the school office upon their arrival. After reporting to the office, the student will be permitted to join his/her class. Tardies are recorded in the school office and are reported on the student's report card. Excused tardies are not counted. Students may accrue up to 5 each semester – Excessive absences or tardiness will be addressed on an individual basis and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Early Dismissal

If it is necessary for a student to leave school during the school day, the student's parent/guardian must call the school office at 773-486-1055. Students to be dismissed early from school will be picked up from the school office.

Excessive Absenteeism

Excessive absenteeism means absences that total 10% or more of school attendance days in the current school year including both excused and unexcused absences. We will periodically review our student absence data to determine if any students are excessively absent and, if so, we may call the parent/guardian to discuss the reasons for the excessive absences. Additionally, if appropriate, the school may provide the parent/guardian with a list of resources where they may obtain counseling or social services that will encourage daily attendance and promote success.

If there is no improvement in attendance or cooperation by the student or parent guardian with its efforts for their child, the student may be withdrawn from the school.

Bullying & Harassment

Bullying and harassment in any form is unacceptable. The following will not be tolerated and may result in out-of-school suspension and or expulsion imposed by the principal.

- Electronic, face-to-face, or nonverbal body language that implies threatening behavior or meant to demean an individual
- Inappropriate use of social media to bully a student
- Electronic posting of pictures or opinions that identify a student as a member of St. Helen Catholic School
- Fighting
- Injury to another person
- Gang Activity
- Disrespectful behavior toward a staff member including inappropriate language, arguing with a staff member and/or leaving the classroom
- The possession of weapons, drugs, harmful materials and illegal substances
- Sexual which includes, but is not limited to many of the emotional acts or conduct described above (in person or through electronic communication or social media) as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, gestures, sexting, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact or sexual assault

Bullying is any intentional, repeated, hurtful act or conduct (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) including communications made in writing or electronically, occurring on campus or off campus during non-school time. When this behavior is directed toward another student that has or can be reasonably predicted to place the student or students in an unreasonable fear of harm to the student or student's person or property, it is also labeled as bullying.

Bullying may cause a substantially detrimental effect on the student or student's physical or mental health; and interfere substantially with the student or student's academic performance and substantially with the student's ability to participate in our benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

Bullying can take many forms, including violence, harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, cyberstalking, theft, public humiliation, and retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying.

Cyberbullying can include all of the above as well as the use of electronic tools, devices, social media sites, blogs, and websites to harm a student or students with electronic text, photos, or videos

Bullying by a student or students may result in suspension and/or expulsion from the school.

Behavior Expectations & Code of Conduct

All St. Helen students are expected to follow classroom rules and to conduct themselves in a manner that helps to create a positive learning environment.

Biting Policy for Preschoolers and Kindergarten

Biting is a serious offense that may cause harm to a student. If a child bites the parent/guardian is called and informed and the parent/guardian must come into the school to get the child. If the child bites a third time, he/she may need to withdraw from the program.

Biting Policy for Grades 1 through 8

If an older child bites, they may be suspended.

Calendar for the School Year

The school calendar can be found on the website: www.sthelenchicago.org/calendar

Catholic Identity

St. Helen School provides sacred space for students to learn how to view his/ her world with the eyes of faith. Every subject area is imbued with the central message of the Gospel. The administrators, faculty and staff are a focused Christian community, dedicated to making the school environment a household of faith and a place where the student can feel at home. Growth in the Catholic faith for the students who attend St. Helen School is essential to the identity and purpose of the school. At St. Helen School, students will experience learning while living fully integrated in the light of faith.

Child Abuse - Reporting Allegations / Suspicions

School personnel is mandated by law to report to the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) all allegations and or suspicion of child abuse and neglect. Calls are confidential.

Child Custody

Regardless of custody, both parents have the right to inspect and receive a copy of school records and reports in the absence of a court order to the contrary.

The school shall release a student to either parent unless the school has a copy of a court order giving one parent exclusive custody. If the non-custodial parent asks the school to release the child and it is determined the custodial parent is not aware, they must be informed immediately. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the principal with an official copy of the court order.

Communication

Teachers will communicate with families primarily via email. Please do not expect a teacher to respond immediately to your email during the school day. The school communicates through an email newsletter, website (www.sthelenchicago.org), Facebook and Instagram. Urgent updates and reminders will be communicated through phone.

Phone Calls/Email

It is very possible that a teacher may not be able to return your phone call or respond to an email until after dismissal. Please be aware that all calls and or emails will be returned within 24 hours. In the case of an emergency or schedule change, please call the Main Office.

Invitations

When sending invitations to a party for your child, you must send them through the mail or use email. A child is not allowed to bring invitations to school to distribute unless the entire class has recipes and invitations. Parents must discuss the invitation with the teacher prior to distributing them to students.

Curriculum

The Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Schools are voluntarily integrating the Common Core into our rich tradition because we view the standards as being in the best interest of the children and families we serve. At this point in our journey with the new CCSS standards, it is important to remember that the standards do not tell teachers how to teach or what texts they must teach. In fact, because Catholic schools do not have to meet state requirements for testing and student data collection, they are free to use only those elements of the standards that are in the best interest of their students.

We are confident that the integration of the Common Core State Standards will complement the existing expectations for academic excellence that have historically been at the core of Catholic education. By informing parents about learning outcomes, our intent is to make it easier for parents to collaborate with teachers in helping their children achieve success.

The Common Core standards offer a reasonable set of standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics instruction, which our school leaders must examine. Our goal is to provide a challenging curriculum to all students in the context of our Catholic faith.

Directory Information Procedures

Directory information may be released to the general public, unless a parent or guardian requests that any or all directory information not be released on his or her child. Schools shall notify parents or guardians annually of the information that is considered “directory information” and of the procedures to be used by parents or guardians to request that specific information not be released. Without written notification to the school

administrator, the school assumes that the parent or guardian does not object to the release of designated directory information.

Discipline and Code of Conduct

A positive, respectful approach to discipline is the hallmark of a Catholic school. Discipline techniques that respect the dignity and self-esteem of the individual students are essential to the mission of St. Helen Catholic School. **Some characteristics of positive discipline include as follows:**

- Students learn decision-making skills related to their own behavior and choices
- Discipline techniques are based on teaching appropriate behavior and effective consequences rather than power and punishment
- Student self-esteem is maintained and enhanced.
- Students share in the classroom, lunchroom, gym and playground responsibilities
- The environment encourages self-discipline and self-control

It is the expectation of the student that the following are followed:

- Attendance – daily and punctual
- Adherence to dress code and personal hygiene expectations
- Preparation for learning (supplies, homework)
- Courtesy and respect for self, adults, peers, and the environment
- Appropriate language
- Respect for school property and the property of others
- Work completed on time including class assignments, homework, and projects
- Expected behavior in school, at school-sponsored events, and traveling to and from school

Inappropriate behavior on the part of the student may occur and may call for a corrective response. Justice and fairness must be tempered with respectful kindness when dealing with a response. Conduct that is detrimental to or negatively affects the mission and reputation of St. Helen Catholic School, whether inside or outside of the school, may result in corrective disciplinary measures.

Code Of Conduct Violations Examples:

Fighting	Disrespect Teacher	Disrespect Student
Biting	Bullying	Profanity
Stealing	Disruptive behavior	Technology Abuse
Threatening Student	Threatening Teacher	Kicking Teacher
Kicking Student	Forging Signature	Hitting
Cheating/Plagiarism	Throwing Food/Things	Refused to Follow Instructions
Weapon Violation	Teasing	Pulling Another Student's Hair
Arguing	Drugs Violation	Destroying School Property
Cyber Bullying	Gang Activity	Plastic Weapon
Dress Code	Disrespect Administrator	Pushing, shoving

Leaving Classroom
Inappropriate Communication

Leaving School

Bullying Off Campus

Grades are subject to protection by the 14th Amendment. Grades cannot be lowered as means of punishment. Student grades should reflect academic performance level only. Conduct and effort evaluations are reported separately on the report card.

Students may receive a Conduct Referral for the following

All students who violate the Codes of Conduct may receive a referral for behavior that does not support our mission, interferes with the learning environment, and displays a lack of respect for school guidelines. When students violate the Code of Conduct, an email or phone call will be made by the teacher. Misbehavior will result in a loss of privilege imposed by the teacher or Vice Principal. If the misbehavior continues, the parent or guardian will be called in for a meeting with the teacher, student, parent, and Vice Principal. The parent will sign a Conduct of Referral form. When three conduct referrals are given, a meeting with parents will be called and the student may be placed on probation. This action may result in the loss of privileges including club or athletic participation. If the student is placed on probation, the student and parent will sign a contract. If the terms of the contract are not followed, the student may be asked to leave. The decision will be made by the Pastor and Principal.

Dress Code and Uniform

At St. Helen School, we believe that grooming makes a statement about a person. The staff of St. Helen School relies on parents to be the first monitors of the student dress code. If your child does not cooperate with the dress code, parents will be called to bring a replacement item of clothing. In the case of an emergency, a child must have a note from a parent stating the reason why he/she is out of uniform.

Uniform items can be purchased on landsend.com uniform shop using our school code 900182544.

Girls K - 3rd - Regular Uniform

- Polo shirt with St. Helen logo
- St. Helen plaid jumper
- Navy blue pants (not leggings)
- Knee High Uniform Shorts (During May, June, August, September)

Girls 4th - 8th - Regular Uniform

- Polo shirt with St. Helen logo
- St. Helen skirt
- Navy blue pants (not leggings)

- Knee high uniform shorts (During May, June, August, September)

Optional Uniform Items – Girls K - 8th

- Navy blue cardigan
- Navy blue V-neck sweater

- SHS logo sweatshirts

Grooming - Girls

Necklaces and chains are limited to one worn near the neck. Bracelets are limited to one per wrist. Earrings are limited to two per earlobe. All earrings must be studs or not dangle beyond the earlobe. Hoop earrings are not allowed that dangle beyond the earlobe. Students will be asked to remove any earrings that are not in keeping with the dress code. Cosmetics and grooming materials are not to be used or shared while in class, lunchroom, or hallways.

Boys K - 8th - Regular Uniform

- Polo shirt with St. Helen logo
- Navy blue pants

- Knee high uniform shorts (During May, June, August, September)

Optional Uniform Items – Boys K - 8th

- Navy blue cardigan
- Navy blue v-neck sweater

- SHS logo sweatshirts

Grooming - Boys

Boys' hair must not exceed the shirt collar and facial hair must be trimmed neatly, only moderate hairstyles and natural-looking hair color will be accepted. Hair must not be in the eyes. Jewelry is limited to one bracelet per wrist, watch, or small religious medal. All other jewelry is unacceptable. Earrings on boys are not to be worn.

Shoes – All Students K - 8th

Black, brown, white, or gray leather or athletic shoes in the same above colors may be worn. Athletic shoes must either be solid or may have one contrasting trim color. Soles

must be the type that does not create black marks on floors. All shoes must fully cover the toes and the heels. Flip-flops, crocs, clogs, mules, and high heels are not allowed. Socks must be worn at all times.

Gym Uniform

Students in grades K-8 must wear a St. Helen gym uniform on the days when they attend Physical Education (PE) classes. The uniform consists of either an SHS branded t-shirt and shorts or a sweatshirt and sweatpants. All gym wear can be purchased through landsend.com. The items can be mixed or matched depending on the comfort level of your child.

Non-Uniform Days

In order to participate in non-uniform days, students should be appropriately dressed for school. Clothing may include jeans, sweats, and shorts. Skirts and shorts must be kept at a modest length no more than 3 inches above the knee and messages on shirts must not be offensive. Hats are not worn in the building. Midriff and tank tops are not allowed. Sleeveless tops may be worn but the shoulder must be covered, spaghetti straps are not acceptable. Shoes must cover the toes and heels. Socks must be worn at all times. If the clothing worn is not acceptable, a call will be made to the home for a replacement. If the parent is unable to bring a replacement, the student will wear a t-shirt and/or sweatpants available in the Main Office. The dress code is well-defined in content.

Emergency Closing

In the event of an emergency, a notice of the closing of the school will be announced through email notification. There will be a message on the St. Helen Catholic Facebook page. Teachers may arrange e-learning during school closing. A copy of the emergency/evacuation handbook can be viewed in the Office.

Fire officials and school personnel conduct regular lockdown, fire and tornado drills.

In the event of an accident, illness or injury during the school day, we will notify you or your emergency contact.

Extended Day Program

Morning Care	7:00 – 7:45 a.m.
After Care	3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

The Extended Care is offered as a service to families who register and are up to date in their payments. It is expected that children will follow the rules during the time they are present and will not leave the area. Failure to cooperate with the Extended Day Care staff will jeopardize continued attendance in the program. Parents must be on time to

pick up their children at 6 p.m. There is a fee of \$1.00 per minute if a parent is late. Disregarding the 6 p.m. pick-up time or non-payment of the late fee will result in the suspension of service for the child. A child will not be allowed to attend if a registration form is not on file with the Extended Care staff. If there is a family emergency and your child needs to attend the program, please call the office so that the staff is aware of their attendance for that day. The Extended Care phone number is 773-486-1055. This phone is in operation between 3 - 6 p.m. Children who are not picked up following a club activity will be directed to the Extended Day Care program at a rate of \$6 per hour.

Field Trips

Field trips are learning experiences that enhance or extend the curriculum. Attendance is required on a field trip. A form for parental permission will be sent home in advance of the trip and must be returned to the school. A child will not be allowed to attend a field trip if a permission slip is not returned. Last-minute phone permission is not acceptable; however, an email is acceptable. Parents will be informed of the cost of the field trip. Prior to a trip, all chaperones must complete safe environment training, including an online criminal background check and a VIRTUS training class mandated by the Chicago Archdiocese. Younger siblings are not allowed to attend a field trip. Students will not ride in cars driven by parents or chaperones on a field trip.

Fundraisers

All parents are encouraged to support the fundraisers of the school. Parents are required to purchase one Christmas Fair raffle ticket totalling \$100.

Gang Activity

Gang-related activities are contrary to Catholic Social Teaching and have no place in the Catholic school. Intimidation and disrespect of any person are unacceptable.

The following may be subject to disciplinary action:

- Intimidation and threat of physical harm of others
- Symbols that may be gang-related in the manner displayed, including but not limited to jewelry, jackets, sweatshirts, caps or other forms of clothing
- Display of signs/symbols on paper, notebooks, textbooks, and other possessions that may be gang-related
- Conduct on or off premises that may be gang-related
- Imitation of gang signs, symbols, actions, clothing, etc., at play before or after school, at recess, on or off school grounds

Parents/Guardians are notified when their children are either suspected of being involved in gang-related activities or are a victim of gang-related activity. Gang activity may result in probation, suspension, and/or expulsion. The principal has the authority

and responsibility to investigate and report suspected gang activity to local law enforcement immediately.

Grading Procedures

Assessment

Assessment of a student’s achievement and progress is based upon several factors which include class participation, class work, homework, portfolio assessment, reflective self-assessment, quizzes, tests, observations, and i-Ready. Report cards are received at the parent conferences in November and March. A final report card is distributed on the last day of school.

The Preschool Grading Scale

The St. Helen standards-based report card records what a student knows, can do, and needs to achieve. This report card is aligned with the Archdiocesan Early Childhood curricula, which reflects state, national, and international learning standards. You are encouraged to review your child’s report card along with other performance information, which may include progress reports, projects, daily work, teacher notes, etc. General descriptions of the levels of achievement are provided below to help you better understand how your child is performing on specific standards.

Developmental Grading Scale		
Level	Descriptor	Description
4	Advanced	Independently and consistently exceeds expectations
3	Proficient	Frequently meets expectations
2	Progressing	Occasionally meets expectations
1	Beginning	Rarely meets expectations
>	Evaluate Later	Evaluate later
*	Not Evaluated	Evaluate when developmentally appropriate

The Kindergarten Grading Scale

Achievement Symbols

- 3 Outstanding Work
- 2 Satisfactory Progress
- 1 Needs Improvement
- N Not covered at this time
- M Skill has been mastered

Grades 1 through 2 Grading Scale

- M-Mastered-Consistently demonstrates
- S- Successful-Frequently demonstrates
- E-Emerging-Occasionally demonstrates/goal to work towards

3rd Grade Grading Scale

- M - Mastery (85%-100%)

- S - Satisfactory (77%-84%)
- E - Emerging (69%-76%)
- P - PASS (65%-68%)
- I - Improvement Needed (0%-64%)

Students in grades 4th through 8th receive grades on the following scale:

99 - 100	A+	79 - 82	C
95 - 98	A	77 - 78	C-
93 - 94	A-	75 - 76	D+
91 - 92	B+	71 - 74	D
87 - 90	B	69 - 70	D-
85 - 86	B-	0.5 - 68	F
83 - 84	C+	I	Incomplete
		NG	Not graded

Graduation/Academic Requirement

A diploma is issued to an eighth-grade student who achieves a passing grade point average for the entire school year. A Certificate of Attendance will be issued in lieu of a diploma for any student who does not meet the requirements. All academic and disciplinary assignments must be completed before a student participates in the graduation ceremony. All eighth-grade students must pass the U.S. and State Constitution tests and perform twenty hours of community service prior to graduation. All tuition and fees must be paid by the last day of class.

Health

Concussions

The State of Illinois has enacted specific requirements for schools when students receive concussion injuries. Schools must follow IESA concussion procedures.

Head Lice

Head lice are not a disease but a nuisance. Head lice are directly transmitted through a person who is infested or indirectly transmitted by contact with an object that has been contaminated with the lice (hairbrushes, combs, shared clothing, or towels). The symptoms of infestation include an itchy scalp as well as evidence of nits that adhere to the scalp.

Those who have become infested with head lice are to be excluded from school. Parents are advised to seek treatment for their child/ren from either their family physician or through over-the-counter medicated shampoo recommended by a pharmacist or physician. The student may return to school when the parent/guardian presents either a box label or note from the physician indicating that the child/ren has

been treated. Students are re-checked for head lice before readmission to the classroom. ‘

Families will receive a notification when an outbreak occurs, parent/guardian permission is not required for screening. If more than 10% of the children are infested with lice all the students in the room will be screened.

Food Allergies

- St. Helen School is not a nut free campus. Nuts and nut products are allowed in the cafeteria during designated lunch times. “Nuts” means peanuts (including peanut butter) and tree nuts (including walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, cashews, pistachios, and Brazil nuts).
- Teachers may ask students not to bring nuts into the classroom if there are allergies in the classroom.
- 1st-8th students with food allergies have the option to sit at an “allergy table” during lunch.

Inhalers and EpiPens:

SHS must permit the self-administration of medication by a student with asthma or the use of an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) by a student, provided that:

- The parents or guardians of the student provide the school with written authorization from the parents or guardians for the self-administration of medication
- The parents or guardians of the student provide the school with: the prescription label, which must contain the name of the medication, the prescribed dosage, and the time at which or circumstances under which the medication is administered

OR

- (For use of an epinephrine auto-injector,) a written authorization and a statement from the student’s physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse containing the following information is provided:

-

1. The name and purpose of the inhaler or epinephrine auto injector
2. The prescribed dosage
3. The time or times at which or the special circumstances under which the inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector is to be administered.

The information provided shall be kept on file in the office.

Diabetes – Care of Students With Diabetes Act

The State of Illinois enacted the Care of Students with Diabetes Act in 2010. Under the Care Act, a student cannot be denied access to any school or any school-related activities on the basis that the student has diabetes. The Care Act does the following:

- Allows parents/guardians to request assistance with their child's diabetes management from a "delegated care aide" during the school day and at school-related activities
- Allows capable students to manage their own diabetes care during the school day and at school functions
- Mandates certain minimum training requirements for all school employees in schools that have a student with diabetes

The Diabetes Care Plan

To receive assistance with diabetes management at school, the student's parent/guardian must submit a "Diabetes Care Plan" to the school. This document specifies the diabetes-related services needed by a student at school and at school-sponsored activities. It identifies the appropriate staff to provide and supervise these activities. The parent/guardian must include the following information in the Diabetes Care Plan, including:

1. The treating health care provider's instructions concerning the student's diabetes management during the school day
2. A copy of the signed prescription and the methods of insulin administration
3. Appropriate safeguards to ensure that syringes and lancets are disposed of properly
4. Requirements for diet, glucose testing, insulin administration, treatment for hypoglycemia, hyperglycemia, and what to do in emergency situations
5. Procedures regarding when a delegated care aide (defined below) must consult with the parent/guardian, school nurse (if available), or health care provider to confirm that an insulin dosage is appropriate
6. The signature of the student's parent/guardian

Student Self-Management

Students must be allowed to self-manage their diabetes in the school setting if they are authorized to do so by their diabetes care plans. The diabetes care plan should specify the nature of the student's self-management and may include: allowing the student to check blood glucose levels when and wherever needed; self-administration of insulin; self-treatment of hyperglycemia or hypoglycemia; and allowing the student to possess, at all times, supplies and equipment necessary for diabetes management including syringes, food and drink.

Training for all School Employees

The Care Act mandates basic diabetes training for all school employees in any school that has a student with diabetes during the required annual school in-service training which should be completed before the beginning of the school year. School employees shall receive training in the basics of diabetes care, how to identify when a student with diabetes needs immediate or emergency medical attention, and whom to contact in the case of an emergency.

Health Records

OLMCA follows the State of Illinois School Code of the Department of Public Health, requiring parents to submit specific health records for their children. These records

include dental, eye, and physical examinations at designated grade levels. All children entering OLMCA are required to provide documentation of immunization history to those diseases specified by the Illinois Department of Health. If a child is not in compliance with health and immunization requirements by the first day of school, the child will be excluded from school until proof of having had the required exams and immunizations is provided to the school. There are two avenues by which a physician may exempt a child from a required immunization:

- a physician statement of immunity
- a medical objection

Both of these must be signed by a physician and attached to the student's "Certificate of Child Health Examination" form. A religious objection to immunizations must be in writing and must set forth the specific religious belief which conflicts with each immunization. The written objection must be submitted to the school administrator by the parent or legal guardian. The parent's statement of religious objection should be attached to the student's "Certificate of Child Health Examination" form. Please notify the school in writing regarding any medical problem that would prevent your child from being totally involved in physical activities. If your child is to be exempt from physical education classes or outdoor recess, we must have a written statement from your child's doctor.

Medication Procedures

No school personnel shall administer any prescription or nonprescription medicine unless St. Helen Catholic School has the student's current and complete Medication Authorization Form on file.

Mental Health Protocol and Assessments

St. Helen School takes all indications of self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and other significant mental health concerns seriously. When we have concerns about a student's emotional well-being, we will ask for the student to receive a mental health assessment from a licensed mental health professional (licensed clinical professional counselor, licensed clinical social worker, licensed psychologist, or licensed psychiatrist) prior to the continuation of academics and co-curricular activities at St. Helen School.

Below are the steps parents/guardians follow when a student displays a threat of harm to themselves or others:

1. Require the child to undergo a crisis mental health assessment in the community by a licensed mental health professional as soon as possible. The school can help provide referrals to clinicians, agencies, hospitals, and services who may be able to assess the student.

2. Parents/guardians are expected to follow the recommendations provided by the clinician, which may include outpatient therapy, partial or inpatient hospitalization, and/or medication management.
3. Parents/guardians are expected to sign a consent for the release of information and arrange for the clinician to share the recommended treatment plan with the school to determine the student's reentry.
 - a. All information received from the student/family/treating medical provider is confidential.
 - b. All documentation should be faxed or emailed to the attention of the principal or school designee.

Post-Assessment Follow-Up

1. If the assessment and recommended treatment plan result in an immediate return to school, please see **step 3**.
2. If the assessment results in a recommended extended absence, defined as more than five days (or as designated by the school), the parent/guardian should contact the school principal or designee to communicate the preliminary treatment plan as outlined by the treating clinician. The principal or designee will communicate with any treatment facility and school faculty to collaborate on the therapeutic and academic needs for the student. The principal or designee will coordinate the provision of necessary information for the student's return to school in a sensitive and confidential manner. The principal or designee should utilize the assessment information to determine whether the school has the resources available to meet the child's needs and, if it is able to do so, to begin drafting the student support plan that will be finalized at the reentry meeting.
3. Reentry back to St. Helen School academics and co-curricular activities requires the following written statements from the evaluating clinician, which can be shared via fax or email to the principal and/or designee:
 - a. Evaluation date and crisis mental health assessment results
 - b. Safety statement: The student is not at risk of self-harm or of harming others, and it is appropriate for the student to return to St. Helen School.
4. Upon receipt of documentation, the principal or designee will review the documentation of assessment and any relevant treatment plans to determine if the school has the resources to provide a safe learning environment for the student based on their demonstrated needs. If additional information is needed to make this determination, the school will obtain such information from the treating mental health professional.

5. If the school determines it has sufficient resources to support students, schedule a meeting to discuss the student's potential return.
 - a. The purpose of this meeting is to review the recommendations from the assessment and treatment plan and to inform the family whether it has the resources to meet their child's needs. If it does, a draft student safety plan will be shared with the family. If necessary, this plan will include a plan to make up missing homework, tests, and other academic supports. The school may, but is not required to, revise this plan based on information presented by the parents during the meeting. The parents/guardians must indicate their approval with the plan by signing it and committing to implementing the plan (e.g., ongoing therapy, etc.) as a condition of continued enrollment. If the parents/guardians agree with the school's student safety plan, a date will be scheduled for the child's return to school. If the school does not have the resources to meet the child's needs, the child will be excluded for such reasons.
 - b. Once all aspects of the reentry meeting are accomplished and meet expectations, the student will be authorized to return to classes and co-curricular activities.
6. Following the child's return to school, the principal or designee will schedule a meeting to review the student support plan and determine what, if any, changes are necessary.

Supply of Undesignated Opioid Antagonists Policy

In accordance with applicable State law, the School will make all reasonable efforts to maintain a supply of undesignated prescribed opioid antagonists in the name of the School and provide or administer them as necessary according to State law.

To the extent the School is able to maintain a supply of undesignated opioid antagonists, they will generally be available during: school hours: 7:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. and after-school hours: 3:00-6:00 p.m. maintained in the following designated secure locations: school office. However, no one should rely on the School for the availability of opioid antagonists. This Policy does not guarantee the availability of undesignated opioid antagonists.

An opioid antagonist is defined as a drug that binds to opioid receptors and blocks or inhibits the effect of opioids acting on those receptors, including, but not limited to, naloxone hydrochloride or any other similarly acting drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. A school nurse or trained personnel, as defined in State law, may administer an undesignated opioid antagonist to any person that they, in good faith, believe is having an opioid overdose while in school, while at a school-sponsored activity, while under the supervision of school personnel, or before or after normal school activities. The School shall maintain a list of trained personnel. Prior to the administration of an undesignated opioid antagonist, trained personnel must submit to the School's administration proof of completion of a training curriculum to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose.

Upon any administration of an undesignated opioid antagonist, the School must immediately notify the student's parents or guardian or emergency contact.

Within 24 hours after the administration of an opioid antagonist, the School must notify the health care provider who provided the prescription for the opioid antagonist of its use. Within three days after the administration of an opioid antagonist, the School must report the required information to the Illinois State Board of Education on the form titled, Undesignated Opioid Antagonist Reporting Form.

The Catholic Bishop of Chicago, an Illinois corporation sole, the School, their employees and agents are to incur no liability or professional discipline, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the administration of an opioid antagonist regardless of whether authorization was given by the student's parents or guardians or by the student's physician, physician's assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse. A student's parent(s) or guardian(s) must indemnify and hold harmless the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, an Illinois corporation sole, the School and their employees and agents against any claims, except a claim based on willful and wanton conduct, arising out of the administration of an opioid antagonist, regardless of whether authorization was given. The parents or guardians of the student must sign a statement acknowledging that the School and its employees and agents are to incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the administration of opioid antagonists, regardless of whether authorization of was given by the student's parents or guardians or by the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse, and that the parents or guardians must indemnify and hold harmless the School and its employees and agents against any claims, except a claim based on willful and wanton conduct, arising out of the administration of an opioid antagonist, regardless of whether authorization was given.

Lunch Program

St. Helen School participates in the Hot Lunch Program of the Chicago Archdiocese. Menus are available and the lunch fee is paid online. Eligibility for Free and Reduced rates is determined by government guidelines and the parent report must be completed each year for continued participation in the program. Ordering is from the first to the fifteenth of the month for the following month. Orders must be made online at <https://fspro.boonli.com/login>. Milk is included in the price of the lunch. Milk may be purchased separately if your child brings lunch from home. White or chocolate milk is available.

All students are required to observe the following lunchroom rules.

1. Stay seated
2. No yelling or loud talking
3. Clean your area
4. Treat classmates and supervisors with respect
5. No throwing or tossing of food or garbage
6. All leftover milk must be emptied into the designated container

7. Milk is not to be poured into a garbage can

Students who consistently make the choice to not follow the rules will be removed from the lunchroom for a determined amount of time. The length of time will be determined by the teacher, supervisors, and principal. Students involved in any type of food or garbage “fights” will lose lunchroom privileges and will be expected to clean the area. Students are expected to keep the lunchroom orderly and free of debris on the tables, chairs, and floor.

Parent Association

All parents/guardians are members of the St. Helen Parent Association. This association has as its main goal communication between school and parents. It offers some programs for parents. It also organizes room parents and provides volunteers to assist with fundraising efforts.

Parent/Guardian Conduct & Attacks on Employees

As partners in the education of children, the parent/guardian of students with the community of St. Helen Catholic School is expected to demonstrate respectful behavior at all times with the faculty, support staff, administration, students, and volunteers whether on or off school grounds or at school-related events. If in the opinion of the Principal, the partnership is no longer viable, St. Helen Catholic School reserves the right to require the parent/guardian to either remove their child(ren) from the school or not accept registration for the next school year.

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to: harassment, verbal abuse, assault of, or threats to the faculty, administration, staff, students, and volunteers of the school.

Parents/guardians who post defamatory or threatening statements about the school, its staff, or students on social media can be required to remove the offensive material or withdraw their child/ren from the school.

When in the judgment of the principal, as confirmed by the pastor or juridic person, the behavior of a parent/guardian seriously interferes with teaching, learning, or a positive school environment, the administrator may:

- Inform the parent/guardians of their right to be present on school grounds and is temporarily or permanently suspended;
- Dismiss the child(ren) of the parent/guardian temporarily or permanently from St. Helen Catholic School.

Personal Property

Cell Phones

Cell phones may be brought to the school office for safekeeping or kept with the student as long as it is turned off. Any phones that are on or being used will be confiscated by the staff and kept in the office. A parent will need to claim the phone in the Office.

Electronics and Personal Games/Cards

All electronic games, audio electronics, headphones, CDs, MP3, cameras, recording devices, DVDs, and other electronic devices are not allowed on the playground or within the school building. Preschoolers may be allowed to bring a toy to school. If a parent allows a child to bring any of the above to school, it may be confiscated, lost, or damaged and School Staff and Administration will not be held responsible.

Photo Release

This form grants permission for students' photos or academic work to be included in any form of communication by OLMCA.

Powerschool

This student information system facilitates both emergency and routine communication with parents/guardians, gives transparency to student data, and allows accurate recording of grades, course work, discipline, and attendance. The information system serves as a repository for parent/guardian contact and emergency information, and demographic information required for the Illinois State Board of Education, AdvancED, and the National Catholic Educational Association. Each student is assigned a unique student code in the information system which allows the integrity of student data across schools, assists with funding, and aids in needed research. All elementary schools under the governance of the Archdiocese of Chicago are required to use the PowerSchool student information system. OLMCA is exempted from the parent portal and grading portions of PowerSchool, but student and parent/guardian data (including test scores) are still required to be posted in PowerSchool and the annual fee is still assessed.

Sacraments

Reconciliation - Children preparing for their First Reconciliation will receive this sacrament prior to receiving their First Eucharist. Baptismal Certificates are required.

Holy Eucharist - Children in 2nd grade, and any students new to the school who have not yet made their First Communion, will spend the year preparing for the reception of this sacrament in the spring. Baptismal Certificates are required.

Confirmation - This sacrament is usually administered every year to students in grades 8. Parents will be notified as soon as the school receives information regarding the date. Baptismal Certificates and First Communion are required.

Security

All visitors, including parents, must report to the Office upon entering the building. You will be given a visitor's pass which must be worn while you are in the building. Students have been instructed to never open the doors, even if they know the individual. If you are ringing the bell for entry, please understand that a child is not expected to open the door. In the case of a divorce or separation, a child may not be withheld from a parent unless there is a court order on file in the Office. The school assumes no responsibility for bikes or other means of student transportation. If children are biking or skateboarding to school, bikes must be walked and boards must be held while on Augusta Blvd. near the school property.

Safe Environment Requirements for All Volunteers

As required by the Chicago Archdiocese, all employees, class and field trip volunteers, coaches, and chaperones must complete an online criminal background check and VIRTUS training. Please check with the Main Office for further instructions.

St. Helen School staff are committed to maintaining professional relationships with school families. In the event that a parent threatens a staff member, another child, or another school parent, the police may be called. Continued verbally abusive or threatening language will not be tolerated by a parent and their child's continued attendance at St. Helen will be determined by the Pastor and Principal.

OPCY (Office for the Protection of Children and Youth)

All parents are encouraged to volunteer. For more information, please click on the Archdiocese's website. <https://protect.archchicago.org/>

Searches Conducted by School Personnel

School authorities have the right to inspect and search lockers, desks, and school property. School officials are required to report weapon violations to the local police.

Transfers

Transfer papers and student records will not be sent if any tuition or fees are outstanding at the time of the request. Families are requested to inform the school office of an upcoming transfer as well as a new address if applicable.

Technology Guidelines

St. Helen School reserves the right to impose consequences for inappropriate behavior that takes place off campus and outside of school hours. Thus, inappropriate use of technology (for example on a home computer), may subject the student to consequences. Inappropriate use includes harassment, use of school names, remarks directed to or about teachers or staff, offensive communications, and safety threats. The school, however, does not actively monitor student use of technology (Internet blogs, chat rooms, etc). While our filtering system establishes some parameters for

appropriate use within our building, students and parents/guardians are primarily responsible for the appropriate and ethical use of technology, especially in the home. St. Helen School does not seek to enforce the following guidelines for families, we take seriously our responsibility to keep children safe from situations that may prove injurious to their emotional or physical well-being. All adults must take seriously the risks posed by children who are not appropriately supervised while they are using the Internet. We must all work to protect children.

Children should only use computers that are in a common area of the home. This will provide an easy avenue for parents to properly supervise the sites which are being visited. Parents must speak to their children about the risks of using the internet and instruct them how to immediately turn off the computer in the event something is perceived to be dangerous.

Parents should regularly check the “history” of their child’s internet usage as well as their “phone history” in the event the child has a cell phone. Children should be instructed to never arrange to meet someone they have met on the internet unless it is first approved by a parent and the parent agrees to accompany the child.

A “Family Internet Contract” should be established by each family. This contract should clearly establish guidelines for usage and be signed by each member of the family. Filtering programs should be used on every computer to which a child has access. Children must be instructed to never upload images or send personal information over the internet unless they first receive their parents’ permission. Cell phones should be given to parents prior to the child going to bed at night.

Archdiocese Philosophy on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Like any technological advancement, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a powerful tool to be understood and used effectively in contexts where its use would be beneficial to students and staff in the short term and long term. As with any tool, it should be used only when it best serves the task at hand and the long-term objectives of the learning process. Using the tool in the wrong context or without proper training and understanding can yield negative results in the short and long term for both students and staff.

By following these principles, parents can help create a balanced approach to integrating AI into education, ensuring it serves as a beneficial tool without undermining essential learning processes. By following these principles, school leaders can effectively harness AI’s potential while mitigating risks and ensuring a positive impact on the educational environment. It is the responsibility of all three adult groups (school leaders, teachers, and parents) to work together to ensure that students have the understandings listed above. School Leaders do so through school-wide policies and programming. Teachers do so through direct lessons on AI when relevant in class. Parents do so through ongoing conversations with their students.

St. Helen will use a red light, green light policy for students with regard to using AI in school work. Students should assume that they are not to use AI in their work unless a teacher specifically gives permission and green lights it.

Tuition/Fees

All parents sign a tuition contract that stipulates the volunteer requirement as well as the intent to pay tuition on a timely basis. Parents may select a monthly payment plan for tuition or pay in full from August – June. Failure to make arrangements for past-due tuition will result in the account being sent to a collection agency. The tuition is an annual amount that can be divided based on time schedules listed in FACTS. The monthly payment plan does not infer that tuition is only paid for the months that your child attends school. The monthly plan is a convenience for the parent which allows for an affordable alternative to making an annual payment. By signing the contract, you agree that the payments are expected on the first or fifteenth of each month. Parents do not receive monthly statements. All families must enroll in the FACTS Tuition Plan.

Tuition and fees are determined on an annual basis before registration. This information is sent home to the parents along with registration materials in January. Aftercare fees are billed monthly through FACTS.

Scholarships are available for families who qualify depending on income and need. Please contact the principal for additional information.

St. Helen School Family Handbook

Acknowledgement of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have received the 2024-2025 St. Helen School Family Handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated.

FAMILY NAME

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

Grade