

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT ACADEMY  
**FAMILY HANDBOOK**  
2023-2024

*DISCIPLES EMERGE ON THE WINGS OF SGGA*



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## WHO WE ARE

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint all stakeholders in our Academy with the foundational documents, policies, and procedures that govern the operation of St. Gregory the Great Academy.

Revisions to this Handbook for the current school year are indicated in red.

## VISION

St. Gregory the Great Academy aspires to be a loving and faith-filled center of academic excellence passionately grounded in our Catholic tradition so that all students are empowered to succeed, to grow in the knowledge of the faith, and to be 21st-century learners through discipline, accountability, and global responsibility.

## MISSION

Saint Gregory the Great Academy, a ministry of Saint Gregory the Great Parish, is committed to empowering students to become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ and lifelong learners as they journey toward academic excellence and moral formation in an authentically Roman Catholic environment.

## BELIEFS

We believe in the values revealed through the Gospels, which are centered in God's love and rooted in our Catholic faith, and the application of these values, which should permeate all facets of the St. Gregory the Great Academy community.

We believe in an integrated, interactive, and challenging academic environment, that recognizes and addresses different learning styles and the individual needs of every student.

We believe in the need to provide students with quality opportunities for community service involvement, to develop their personal growth, and an obligation to affect social justice.

We believe in a commitment to a Christian vision that promotes self-discipline, self-discovery, and the self-worth of every student, through fairness, tolerance, accountability, responsibility, and compassion.



## ACADEMY PHILOSOPHY

St. Gregory the Great Academy takes measures to ensure that students and their families understand and uphold the Academy's philosophy and mission. Faculty and staff collaborate to instill the Gospel vision by integrating the spiritual, academic, social, and physical development of the children within a comprehensive program of academic excellence. Students learn about themselves and the global community and are empowered to become faith-filled disciples, responsible citizens, and life-long learners in the Roman Catholic tradition. Data and surveys affirm that parents, faculty, and staff support the philosophy and mission which is consistent with ethical norms and demonstrates respect for persons of all races, creeds, and cultures. Through brochures, promotional materials, policy, procedural handbooks, websites, and similar resources, St. Gregory the Great Academy's philosophy and mission are clearly communicated.

## OBJECTIVES



## POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Students will be primarily responsible to classroom teachers. The instructional and non-instructional services that are provided at St. Gregory the Great Academy will be brought into the life of each child in a manner determined by the classroom teachers, support staff, and administration. Catholic education requires the active interest and involvement of parents in their child's school progress. However, involvement will not be permitted to become interference. Where parents repeatedly and insistently attempt to impose their views as to the educational process upon the Academy Administration, the educational progress of both that child and of other students will be adversely affected. In such instances, the parents will be requested to remove the child from the Academy.
2. Any actions or comments that are viewed as scandalous or detrimental to the school, its students, the operation of the school, or the reputation of the school in the community are subject to the school's disciplinary code, whether or not such actions or comments occur on school grounds, the internet or during the school day.
3. Enrollment in St. Gregory the Great Academy by yearly contract, which takes the form of the Parent Academy Agreement. Either party, namely the parents or the Academy, may terminate the contract at any time for any reason or no reason. Upon enrollment, parents understand that the enrollment agreement term is for one full school year and agree that the Academy may require the withdrawal of or dismissal of any student if, in its sole discretion, it concludes that such student's attitude, influence, or behavior does not serve the best interests of the Academy. Parents further understand that a positive and constructive working relationship between the Academy and a student's parents (or guardian) is essential to the fulfillment of the Academy's mission, and agree that the Academy may terminate enrollment, or decline to re-enroll a student, if the Academy, in its sole discretion concludes that the actions or inactions of a parent (or guardian) make a positive and constructive working relationship impossible, or interferes with the Academy's accomplishment of its mission. Parents agree that per the Academy's tuition policy, no portion of any tuition or fees for a student is either refunded or canceled upon early withdrawal or dismissal of the student for disciplinary reasons.

The Academy reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to request withdrawal or suspension of a student, or deny enrollment or re-enrollment of a student if:

- A student's behavior or performance demonstrates an unwillingness or inability to be productive within the Academy community.
  - A student, parent, guardian, or another individual closely associated with a student fails to cooperate with the Academy or is unable/unwilling to abide by the rules and regulations of the Academy.
  - The Academy determines that the continued involvement of a parent or guardian with the Academy is not in the best interests of a student or the Academy.
4. The Principal retains the right to amend the handbook for just cause. The Principal will give parents prompt notification of changes that are made in school policy.
  5. Enrollment of a student at St. Gregory the Great Academy assumes that parents will support and accept all policies and procedures contained within this handbook.

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### ADMISSION/REGISTRATION

Admission to St. Gregory the Great Academy occurs on a rolling basis as space and conditions allow. The annual registration period begins in December for the school year that begins the following September. St. Gregory the Great Academy gives preference in admission to siblings of students who are currently enrolled.

Registration/Reregistration materials are published on the Academy website. St. Gregory the Great Academy is a nonpublic school of parental choice, which means that the enrollment of all students is governed by contract law. **By signing the annual enrollment agreement, parents acknowledge and understand that both the parent(s) and the Academy agree to the enrollment of a student freely and that either party may withdraw from the enrollment agreement at any time for any reason (or no reason).** Such a withdrawal from the enrollment agreement by either the parent(s) or the Academy will have the practical effect of disenrolling the student.

There is an annual registration fee of \$275.00 per child (Grades Preschool 3- 8) and is **non-refundable**.

To be eligible for Preschool 3, a child must be 3 years old by September 30th of the school year. To be eligible for Preschool 4, the child must be 4 years old by September 30th of the school year. To be eligible for Kindergarten, the child must be 5 years old by September 30th.

New students entering any grade must present the following prior to final acceptance for enrollment:

- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate (if available)
- Immunization Records and a complete physical from the student's physician
- Report Cards/Standardized Test Results (Grades 1-8)
- Proof of Residency

Students entering the Academy are accepted on "probationary" terms and must sign a copy of the probation agreement.

**Nondiscrimination Policy** St. Gregory the Great Academy admits students of any race, color, national, and/or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the Academy. It does not discriminate based on race, color, disability, sex, or national and/or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational and admission policies and practices. While the Academy does not discriminate against students with special needs, a full range of services may not always be available to them. **In justice to all parties, St. Gregory the Great Academy will not knowingly enroll students for whom the Academy reasonably believes it cannot provide proper accommodations. Decisions concerning the admission and continued enrollment of a student in the Academy are based on the student's emotional, academic, and physical abilities and the resources available to the Academy in meeting the student's needs.** All students and their families must uphold the Mission and Vision of St. Gregory the Great Academy.



## ATTENDANCE (GRADES K-8)

Children must be present each day that school is in session unless illness or other serious reasons prevent attendance. A child must be present ONE FULL HOUR of each session (AM or PM) to be counted present for that session. This means that anyone who leaves before 9:05 AM is absent for the day; anyone who leaves after 9:05 AM but before 1:00 PM is considered absent for the afternoon; and anyone who comes in after 11:00 AM is considered absent for the morning. **A student may not participate in or attend any extracurricular activity on the day he/she is absent from school (i.e., dance, clubs, EDP, etc.) without the permission of the Principal or the Assistant Principal.**

Parents must report all student absences using the online form available [HERE](#). Students are marked “Present” only when they are physically at school and are marked “Present – Remote” only when authorized to attend class using remote means. Students who are not physically at school and have not been authorized to attend class using remote means are marked “Absent.” While the Genesis system may label absences as “excused” or “unexcused,” there is no distinction or label of attendance type on the report card.

When a child becomes ill during the school day, the Academy nurse will call the parent to pick the child up. Parents should pick up a sick child as soon as possible after the nurse’s call. We urge you to make doctor, dental, and orthodontist appointments after school hours. Family vacations should be planned relative to the school vacation schedule. Written assignments cannot replace class attendance. **The only way to truly remediate three days out of school is with an additional three days of school; makeup work is an APPROXIMATION. IT IS ACADEMY POLICY THAT TEACHERS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO PROVIDE PRE-PLANNED MATERIAL FOR UPCOMING TIME OUT OF SCHOOL.**

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, every parent, guardian, or other person having control and custody of a child between the ages of six and sixteen shall cause the child to regularly attend school. Interrupting the educational process can prove detrimental to learning. **STUDENTS WHO ARE ABSENT EIGHT (8) OR MORE DAYS DURING A TRIMESTER MAY BE CONSIDERED AS HAVING NOT MET THE REQUIREMENT OF ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY AND MAY BE REPORTED TO THE LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION’S TRUANCY OFFICER AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PRINCIPAL OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL. Exemptions to the Attendance Policy will be considered in the case of illness or a family emergency when proper explanation/documentation is provided. Parents will be invited to make an attendance appeal and provide documentation of extenuating circumstances when a student surpasses seven (7) absences in a trimester. The Principal or Assistant Principal may grant an exemption when warranted. When absences are deemed unwarranted and excessive, an Attendance Memorandum will be entered in the student’s cumulative file. Parents will be provided with a copy of all Attendance Memoranda.**

When absolutely necessary, parents must contact the Main Office to make arrangements to pick up a child early from school. When being excused early, the student is to report to the Main Office or wait to be called by the Main Office when the parent arrives. Parents or their designee must pick the student up at the Main Office and SIGN THE STUDENT OUT. Consistently signing students out early at the end of the day impedes their ability to be prepared and organized for the following school day. Depending on the current protocol, students MAY or MAY NOT be allowed to return to school after being dismissed early. If a return is permitted, the returning student must be signed back into school in the Main Office. **Students are not to use their private cell phones to make pick-up arrangements with parents or guardians bypassing the Main Office. Doing so is considered a Level 1 discipline infraction.**

An incomplete mark (I) may be used for any subject when a student violates the attendance policy in a given marking period. Students will have a specified period after the report card is issued to make up all work which will be communicated to the student and his/her parent(s). If the assigned makeup work is not completed satisfactorily by

the specified date, an incomplete mark (I) will automatically be changed to the lowest available mark according to the student's grade level.

Since lateness disrupts classes in session, please help us by having your child at school ON TIME. A student who arrives after the late bell is late. Lateness demonstrates a lack of respect for the school community. Lateness disrupts learning, as students coming in late disrupt the classroom routine or lesson).

## COMMUNICATION

**Demographic Information** Please notify the Main Office immediately if you should have a change of address, email address, or telephone number. This also applies to your work and emergency telephone numbers as well as any change in the FAMILY STATUS. You may use [THIS FORM](#) to do so.

**Email** All instructional and administrative staff members are available via email. When emailing teachers, please know that teachers are not expected to reply to messages in the evenings and on weekends. Generally speaking, it can be expected to receive a response from a teacher via email within 2 school days for non-emergency matters. Note that emails for the @stgregorythegreat.org domain are often blocked or sent to junk mail folders when sent to email addresses using the "@optonline.net" or "@hotmail.com" domain names. Users of these services may wish to consider creating another email account using an alternate provider, such as @gmail.com. **Teachers are not expected to read and/or respond to emails during the school day. Please do not email a teacher during the school days with dismissal change instructions or for any urgent matters.**

**Main Phone Number** The main number to telephone the Academy is 609-587-1131. You may press "3" when the auto-attendant begins to speak to be connected to the Main Office or listen to the message and make a selection to reach one of the listed individuals.

**Students** Student cell phones/devices are to be properly stowed during class time and other designated times per teacher instructions. Students may only use their devices with the permission of a teacher/administrator. The Academy assumes no liability for the protection of student-owned devices. Students who bring devices to school do so "at their own risk." **Any student who is found to be using a device inappropriately by any Academy staff member is subject to having the device confiscated and handed over to the Principal or Assistant Principal.** The Principal, Assistant Principal, or designee can search any student-owned device on school grounds for any reason or no reason.

**Teachers** Teachers will not be called to the office for a telephone call during school hours unless it is an emergency call. Teachers DO NOT have voicemail boxes. If you desire a phone conversation with a teacher, please email the teacher and request a return phone call OR call the Main Office to leave a message requesting the teacher to return your call. If you leave a message, the teacher will return your call after school hours. Please do NOT contact teachers on their personal numbers unless requested to do so. **Be aware that it is inappropriate for teachers to receive any official notifications on personal devices, including change of dismissal instructions. Doing so puts your child at risk, since the teacher may be unwilling or unable to relay a message sent to a personal device to the proper Academy personnel in a timely fashion.**

**School Messenger** This system is used to communicate school closings, delayed openings, health emergency information, and other high-priority information. Parents are responsible for keeping the Main Office informed of any changes to current names, email addresses, and telephone numbers that will be used in the event of weather closings and emergencies because the School Messenger system pulls data directly from Genesis. Dr. Briggs frequently makes use of parent email addresses for Academy communication, so please be sure that your email address on file is kept up to date. Changes in email address should be supplied to the Main Office immediately.

**Transfer Procedures** If a child will be withdrawing from St. Gregory the Great Academy, please contact the Main Office as soon as the plan to transfer has been decided. This will allow proper time for paperwork to be processed. Records will only be released once the appropriate form has been submitted and all financial obligations have been met.

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

St. Gregory the Great Academy has an obligation to operate as a responsible steward of time, talent, and treasure. As all are aware, it takes a great deal of money to educate children today. When parents register their child in the Academy and sign the Parent Academy Agreement, the parent(s) agree to pay the full amount of the family tuition cost. The Church of St. Gregory the Great, through fundraisers and a parish subsidy, subsidizes every family in the school by covering the portion of the true per-pupil expenditure over and above what tuition covers.

**By enrolling in the Academy, parents accept full legal responsibility for their child(ren) and agree to pay in full on the date due all tuition and fees payable for such student(s).** Failure to meet financial obligations may result in the child(ren) not being permitted to attend classes until all financial obligations for the student have been satisfied in full. The Academy will have no obligation to transfer credits, grant a diploma, or release interim or end-of-year records or transcripts for any student whose tuition account is delinquent. **Access to Parent Portal may also be restricted due to financial delinquency.** Re-enrollment may be denied to students who have outstanding tuition obligations from the previous year(s).

Should a child complete less than a full school year at St. Gregory the Great Academy, the family is responsible for a percentage of all tuition and fees equal to the actual percentage of the school year that the child attended the Academy. **REGISTRATION AND TECHNOLOGY FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.**

**Students may be EXCLUDED from the Academy if any tuition account falls more than 60 days behind.**

## HEALTH

Nursing services are provided under New Jersey Chapter 226, which authorizes the state to provide a certain amount of funds on a per-pupil basis to nonpublic schools. Since St. Gregory the Great Academy is located within Hamilton Township, these state funds flow to the Hamilton Township Board of Education which has the choice to either provide the nursing personnel or to contract with a third party for this purpose. Currently, the Hamilton Township Board of Education contracts with the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey to provide nursing services to the Academy. Since the per-pupil state funding does not cover the cost of full-time nursing, the Academy supplements the

Chapter 226 amount using local funds to ensure proper nursing coverage. Chapter 226 may not fund any nursing services for preschool students. As a result, preschool medical care is funded through St. Gregory the Great Academy.

**Immunization** [N.J.A.C. § 8:57-4.2 \(Lexis Advance through the New Jersey Register\)](#) A Principal, director, or another person in charge of a school, preschool, or child care facility shall not knowingly admit or retain any child whose parent or guardian has not submitted acceptable evidence of the child's immunization, according to the schedules specified in this subchapter. **St. Gregory the Great Academy limits exemptions from New Jersey mandatory vaccinations to MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS ONLY. Medical exemptions may only be requested when recommended in writing by a physician with a relevant specialty who has a bona fide patient relationship with the student. RELIGIOUS and MORAL exemptions from New Jersey mandatory vaccines ARE NOT GRANTED. The COVID-19 vaccine is NOT a New Jersey mandatory vaccine.**

Vaccination requirements as of August 23, 2023, are shown in this table. The full documents may be found [HERE](#).

FOR SCHOOLS AND PARENTS: K-12 IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS



**NJ Department of Health (NJDOH)  
Vaccine Preventable Disease Program**  
**Summary of NJ School Immunization Requirements**

Listed in the chart below are the minimum required number of doses your child must have to attend a NJ school.\* This is strictly a summary document. Exceptions to these requirements (i.e. provisional admission, grace periods, and exemptions) are specified in the Immunization of Pupils in School rules, New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 8:57-4). Please reference the administrative rules for more details [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/imm\\_requirements/acode/](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/imm_requirements/acode/). Additional vaccines are recommended by Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for optimal protection. For the complete ACIP Recommended Immunization Schedule, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>.

Grade/level child enters school:	Minimum Number of Doses for Each Vaccine						
	DTaP Diphtheria, Tetanus, acellular Pertussis	Polio Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)	MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)	Varicella (Chickenpox)	Hepatitis B	Meningococcal	Tdap (Tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis)
Kindergarten – 1 <sup>st</sup> grade	A total of 4 doses with one of these doses on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday <u>OR</u> any 5 doses <sup>1</sup>	A total of 3 doses with one of these doses given on or after the 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday <u>OR</u> any 4 doses <sup>2</sup>	2 doses <sup>3</sup>	1 dose <sup>1</sup>	3 doses	None	None
2 <sup>nd</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> grade	3 doses <i>NOTE: Children 7 years of age and older, who have not been previously vaccinated with the primary DTaP series, should receive 3 doses of Td. For use of Tdap, see footnote.<sup>1</sup></i>	3 doses	2 doses	1 dose	3 doses	None	See footnote <sup>1</sup>
6 <sup>th</sup> grade and higher	3 doses	3 doses	2 doses	1 dose	3 doses	1 dose required for children born on or after 1/1/97 given no earlier than ten years of age <sup>4</sup>	1 dose required for children born on or after 1/1/97 <sup>5</sup>

Medical exemptions for vaccines will be reviewed for compliance with [N.J.A.C. § 8:57-4.3 \(Lexis Advance through the New Jersey Register\)](#). If found to comply with the code, the medical exemption will become part of the student's vaccination record for a period of one year. **Medical exemptions may only be requested when recommended in writing by a physician with a relevant specialty who has a bona fide patient relationship with the student.** Medical exemptions must be renewed annually.

Religious exemptions for vaccines are not consistent with the current teachings of the competent authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, are therefore it would be inappropriate for St. Gregory the Great Academy to grant religious exemptions. For example, the following links detail the importance of the “common good” when determining if vaccines are morally permissible at the [global](#), [national](#), and [local levels](#). It is not appropriate for the Academy to take a different path than that which has been clearly articulated by the Holy Father, the National Bishop’s Conference, and the Bishop of Trenton.

**Physical Health** Screenings for height, weight, vision, and blood pressure are conducted annually for all students in Grades K-8. Auditory screening occurs in Grades K, 1, 2, 3, & 7. All screenings are conducted by the Academy nurse, and any abnormal findings are reported to parents.

Scoliosis screening occurs in Grades 5 & 7; parents will be informed ahead of time before this screening occurs and may contact the Academy nurse with any concerns before the screening date.

All students entering St. Gregory the Great Academy must have a complete physical exam no earlier than 6 months before the beginning of school. The examination report from the doctor and all immunization records must be submitted to the Academy Nurse prior to the opening of school. **Students with incomplete health records will not be permitted to attend school until the necessary forms are received. Issues regarding doctor appointments and insurance requirements may cause the Academy to delay enforcement of this policy for a reasonable amount of time provided that the parent provides an estimated date of compliance.**

Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) are located on the campus per the requirements of “Janet’s Law” (N.J.S.A. § 18A:40-41a). Specifically, an AED is located in the Academy building outside of the Main Office, the Parish Center building in the hallway outside of the gym, and the Church building outside of the sacristy.

The requirements of the New Jersey “Epinephrine Access and Emergency Treatment Act” (N.J.S.A. § 24:6L-1) are met with stock epinephrine autoinjectors available in three locations, namely in the cafeteria on the first floor of the Academy building, in Hallway B on the second floor of the Academy building, and at the junction of the two hallways in the Parish Center building.

**Medication** St. Gregory the Great Academy requires that the following procedures are followed concerning student medication:

- A completed **REQUEST TO ADMINISTER MEDICATION FORM** (available [HERE](#)) must be submitted to the Academy Nurse. **This form must be signed by the parent for over-the-counter medications (Tylenol, Advil, etc.) and signed by the parent and the prescribing physician for prescription medications. In no event will any medications be administered without the signed form. Verbal authorizations are NOT sufficient.**
- Students whose parents wish to allow their child to carry epinephrine autoinjectors and inhalers may ONLY do so if a completed **REQUEST TO SELF ADMINISTER EPI/INHALER FORM** (available [HERE](#)) has been submitted to the Academy Nurse. This form must be signed by the child’s doctor and the parent.

- Children are NOT permitted to carry any medication in school, except for epinephrine autoinjectors and inhalers.
- All medication must be kept in a locked facility in the nurse's office and the Academy nurse will administer it provided these procedures have been followed in their entirety.
- All medication (even over-the-counter medicines) must be kept in the original container and labeled with the child's name and proper dosage.
- Medications must be administered by the Academy nurse or by the parent. Children are NOT permitted to take the medication themselves.

**Allergies** St. Gregory the Great Academy recognizes the unique dignity of every person, and that each child has been created by God. To this end, the Academy has established reasonable policies for dealing with student allergies which are designed to both protect the well-being of our students and be realistically manageable in a large, multi-use institution. The Principal will modify this policy as necessary and provide notification to the Academy community. To this end, the following policies are in place concerning student allergies:

- St. Gregory the Great Academy **IS NOT** able to provide an allergen-free environment to meet the needs of students with severe inhalation allergies. The Academy building is used by multiple parish groups, and we, therefore, cannot guarantee that allergens are not brought into the Academy building.
- St. Gregory the Great Academy **IS** able to take reasonable steps to protect students from allergens during the school day. These reasonable steps include:
  - Preferential seating during student eating
  - Allergen-free classroom materials (modeling clay, balls, toys, etc.)
  - Prior parental notification of foods/treats scheduled for the entire class if parents complete the **ALLERGEN ALERT FORM** (available [HERE](#)).
- St. Gregory the Great Academy **IS** able to establish a system of parental notification when a class/whole Academy treat is planned. This will be accomplished via the **"ALLERGEN ALERT EMAIL LIST."** This list is generated from the responses to the ALLERGEN ALERT FORM. All Academy organizations who intend on distributing a treat/snack to students (PTA, Room Parents, Walk-a-Thon, etc.) must send a notification via the Allergen Alert Email List at least 48 hours before the time of the snack. Parents of students who have an allergy who receive the email have the option of 1) allowing the child to eat the snack, or 2) sending an alternate snack.

**Student Accident Insurance** Students are covered by the diocesan accident insurance policy during all times at school and school-related events. This is an "excess policy" which begins to pay once the student's primary insurance has paid all covered claims. **Parents are responsible for requesting the insurance from Dr. Briggs within seven (7) days of the injury if it is anticipated that a claim will be made under this policy.**

**COVID-19** Due to the rapid nature with which COVID-19 develops, specific COVID-19 policies and procedures will be distributed periodically in dedicated communication if the need arises.



## OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

### ACCESS TO RECORDS/PARENT CUSTODY

At the beginning of each school year when demographic data is gathered/updated, it should be noted if there are any custody arrangements in force for a student. If the court extends or limits the rights of either parent there should be a valid court order of entry specifying these extensions or limitations. A parent (custodial or non-custodial) should produce a valid certified copy of such an order to the Principal if they are seeking a right outside the usual rights. **The parent must inform the Academy of parent separation or any court order that prevents a parent or other adult from contact with a child. The Academy WILL NOT enforce custody agreements, covenants, etc. The Academy will only prevent a parent from access to a child if there is a current restraining order on file with the Academy. The Academy has no role in how parents adhere to custody arrangements and has no role in enforcing any such arrangements unless a parent is legally impeded from contact with a child. Any matters related to the agreement or issues between the parents need to be settled using whatever legal manner is appropriate between the parental parties. The Academy needs to be informed if: 1) a full restraining order is issued regarding a child or one of his/her parents which would require our security guard to enforce or 2) a judge removes permission for a parent to have a child enrolled at St. Gregory the Great Academy. St. Gregory the Great Academy cannot and will not become involved in any grievances between parents.**

A student's cumulative record (so-called "permanent record") consists solely of report cards, attendance records, standardized assessment scores, and provided demographic information. All official Academy records will bear the child's first and last name as it appears on the birth certificate. Special education records are separate files and must be specifically authorized for release in addition to the cumulative record.

In 1965, the Buckley Amendment, also known as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act gave parents the right of access to records. Opportunities for review of records will be provided in the Main Office upon written request. The Buckley Amendment provides for access to student records by non-custodial parents unless a court order restricting such access is currently on file. For purposes of the Buckley Amendment, non-custodial parents will be granted access to all academic information in Parent Portal provided said parent requests a separate account by contacting the Assistant Principal. Furthermore, non-custodial parents will be included in all Academy communication provided that said parent has his/her email and other demographic information on file with the Main Office.

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

**Schedule** The school day begins at 8:00 AM for students in Grades K-8. Students may be dropped off for school beginning at 7:30 AM in Ferrante Hall, and they are considered late at 8:05 AM. The official time of dismissal for Grades K-8 is 2:30 PM. Bus riders are dismissed to their buses, followed by car riders and EDP students. **All students in Grades K-8, as well as preschoolers and students in Grades 7 and 8 with younger siblings, will report to Ferrante Hall. Once all grades are present, parents of car riders will be invited to enter the hall to pick up their children. Students in Grades 7 and 8 without younger siblings will be dismissed from the front portico of the Parish Center.** Please follow the instructions of the staff.

The school day for the preschool grades begins at 8:15 AM. Students may be dropped off for school beginning at 7:30 AM. Preschool 3 students are to be brought directly to the exterior classroom door, and Preschool 4 students will be brought to the Preschool Entrance of the Academy building (located around the back side of the building.) Parents are not to accompany their child inside the classroom or past the foyer. Half-day preschool students are dismissed at 11:30 AM, and full-day preschool students are dismissed at 3:00 PM. Full-day preschool students who have siblings in Grades K-8 are dismissed at 2:30 PM to coordinate with their older siblings.

Morning arrival for all grades, Preschool 3 – Grade 8, begins at 7:30 AM. **There is NO SUPERVISION for any student who arrives before 7:30 AM and doors will not be unlocked prior to this time.**

**Bus Transportation** Decisions about providing bus transportation are made by the local Board of Education in which the student resides; the Academy has no authority to add a child to a bus route or to change the route. Students **ARE NOT PERMITTED** to ride any bus other than the one they are assigned by the local school district. Neither the parent nor the Academy can permit them to ride another bus. Students can be refused a ride if they do not carry the passes issued to them by those in charge of transportation.

Students who ride buses MUST observe the following regulations per the public school districts:

- Students should be on their corners five minutes ahead of schedule and should wait in an orderly fashion.
- Courtesy is to be extended to all on the bus, especially the bus driver.
- Respect is to be shown for the rights, property, and safety of others.
- Students MUST wear seat belts and remain seated **at all times**.
- Speaking must be in a moderate tone of voice so that the bus driver is not distracted from his/her responsibility.
- The driver's permission is required to open windows.
- Hands are never to be put out the windows.
- While on the bus, students are not permitted to eat or drink, change out of uniform, or throw anything out of the windows.
- **The Academy takes NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR radios, electronic readers, iPods, cell phones, electronic games, or any other devices that students bring on the bus. Students who use such devices on the bus DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK.**
- The public school district and/or the nonpublic school Principal may deny a student transportation if his/her conduct warrants such action. Parents will be notified if it is necessary to deny school bus transportation for a reasonable amount of time, in which case the parents become responsible for seeing that the student arrives at school.



**Arrival and Dismissal Procedures** Arrival and dismissal procedures are modified as necessary and will be distributed via dedicated updates; therefore, these specific procedures are not currently included in this handbook.

All parents and staff are asked to enter and leave the parking lot according to the parking lot patterns, and at a **VERY CAUTIOUS SPEED**. **The directions of the Security Officer are to be followed at all times.** All cars must park in a designated space in the parking lot.

**DISMISSAL CHANGES ARE NOT TO BE EMAILED OR SENT VIA TEXT TO ANY ACADEMY PERSONNEL, AS THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT SUCH MESSAGES WILL BE SEEN IN TIME FOR DISMISSAL OR THAT A PARTICULAR TEACHER IS NOT ABSENT.** Teachers are not expected to read and/or respond to emails during the school day. Please do not email a teacher during the school days with dismissal change instructions or for any dismissal matters.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

St. Gregory the Great Academy believes in the development of the whole child. As a result of this belief, the Academy frequently offers activities similar to the following after-school activities: Choir, STEM Club, School Play, Spanish Club, Coding & Photography Club, Book Club, Student Government, and Scouts.

All extra-curricular activities are to be considered a “privilege,” and any student who fails to meet the basic requirements (such as practices) or behavioral expectations will be dismissed from the activity.

**Sports** Our Academy offers many opportunities for our students to enjoy competitive games and sports. These Parish CYO-sponsored activities foster school spirit, sportsmanship, and loyalty. The CYO sports programs available are basketball, soccer, track, and field, and cheerleading (girls). St. Gregory the Great Academy also fields interscholastic softball and baseball teams that compete against other area middle schools when there is sufficient interest and parental volunteers. Students who are members of the interscholastic teams must meet all criteria regarding sports physicals, opioid awareness, and sudden cardiac event awareness. Students who participate must be representative of our Academy as well as maintain academic requirements. If scholastic achievement or behavior is deemed unsatisfactory, the Principal may remove the students from the team either temporarily or permanently. If a child is absent from school or sent home ill on the day of a practice or game, the student may **NOT** participate in the sport on that day. As a courtesy, all sports injuries should be reported to the Academy nurse on the next school day.

**WHEN A TEAM PRACTICE IS SCHEDULED BEFORE 6:00 PM AND THE CHILD IS NOT GOING HOME FIRST, THE CHILD MUST GO TO EDP UNLESS ALTERNATIVE PLANS HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE PARENTS. A WRITTEN NOTE SIGNED BY THE PARENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE MAIN OFFICE OUTLINING THESE PLANS. ONCE A CHILD LEAVES THE ACADEMY GROUNDS, THE ACADEMY IS NO LONGER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHILD.**

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are educational in nature and expand the learning process. These trips are a privilege and not a right and may be denied to any student if he/she fails to meet academic, **attendance**, or behavioral requirements.

Prior to a scheduled trip, an electronic information and permission form will be sent via email to the appropriate grade's parents. Students whose parents do not complete and submit this official form will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. Telephone calls will not be accepted in lieu of proper forms. **Parents may refuse to allow a child to participate in a field trip; however, the child must remain home during the time of the trip since the trip is that day's curriculum.** All staff members responsible for the grade will be on the trip, and no staff members will be available to remain back at school to supervise students who do not attend.

Parents are asked to chaperone field trips and are NOT PERMITTED TO BRING SMALLER CHILDREN with them. **Any service opportunity that takes place during the school day with students WILL ONLY BE OPEN TO PARENTS WHO HAVE BEEN SAFE ENVIRONMENT CLEARED. This includes being a trip chaperone.** This means that such a person has current Virtus certification (within the past 4 years) and has been fingerprinted and cleared THROUGH DOE/SGGA\*. (\*It is great if you have been fingerprinted through work, coaching, the military, a police department, or Starfleet, but unless it is via the DOE/SGGA process it does not work for us.)

## PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

It is a well-established principle of the Catholic philosophy of education that parents are the primary educators of their children. Those parents who have chosen to send their children to St. Gregory the Great Academy have delegated responsibility for the formal educational process to our Academy staff. Through their active membership in the PTA, and its various committees, these parents may participate with the Academy in carrying out this responsibility. This organization is dedicated to providing information to its members concerning the operations of the Academy and furnishing assistance, where needed, to help conduct the formal educational process. Some areas of parental involvement are:

- **Preparation for Sacraments:** Programs are provided to assist parents in preparing their children for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. Your active participation in these programs is of utmost importance.
- **Academy Service:** The purpose of SERVICE is twofold: Family involvement is vital to a vibrant school community, and parent participation in the many aspects of our school operation helps keep tuition costs affordable. Each family is required to complete 25 service hours to maintain the Category A tuition rate.
- **Enriching Experiences:** Parents also have the opportunity to enrich the students' background by sharing experiential resources such as career information or travel.



## PROPERTY

**Academy Property** Each student is responsible for the Academy technology and texts entrusted to him/her. Lost and/or damaged books shall be paid for by the student. Students are required to return the same textbook they were issued by the teacher. All textbooks must be covered at all times. We ask you to see that your child has a school bag and has his/her books covered.

Certain grades will be issued devices ("Chromebooks") for instruction. Some student texts will only be available online, which will require the use of the Chromebook during school. Students who are issued Chromebooks will be bound by the "Chromebook Policy". Only students whose parents indicate so on the policy will be permitted to take the Chromebook home. At all times, the Chromebook must be transported carefully in an appropriate carrying case.

**Student Property** Students who bring mobile phones to school must follow all faculty/staff member instructions concerning device use during school hours. All devices are subject to confiscation at any time, and any confiscated devices will be handed over to the Principal or Assistant Principal for further action. School hours are defined as beginning the moment the student arrives on Academy grounds and lasting until the student is picked up or leaves the bus. Any student who is found to be using a device to call, take photos, text message, or receive the aforementioned **WITHOUT A TEACHER'S PERMISSION** will have the phone confiscated and be subject to disciplinary actions. **The Principal reserves the right to inspect any and all electronic communication devices at any time and for any reason, and to confiscate such devices at any time and for any reason.** Mobile phones are not to be used to bypass the Main Office or Nurse's Office to make arrangements. Doing so will be considered a discipline infraction. Teachers, at their discretion, may require students to remove smart watches during quizzes and tests.

The Academy takes NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR radios, electronic readers, iPads, mobile phones, electronic games, or any other devices that students bring to school. Students who bring such devices to school DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK. The Principal reserves the right to inspect any and all electronic communication devices (phones, iPads, electronic readers) at any time and for any reason and to confiscate such devices at any time and for any reason.

## SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Good dress habits promote good work habits and a healthy self-image. Students are to be neat, clean and dressed appropriately for school. All oxford shirts must be tucked in at all times. A plain white undershirt or tee shirt may be worn underneath all shirts but may not be longer than the shirt. We count on parents to ensure that hair is clean, away from the eyes and styled in such a manner that it is not distracting. **Boys'** hair length must not be distracting. **Boys** are not permitted to wear earrings or caps while in school. **Girls** are not permitted to wear excessive makeup; only clear nail polish may be worn. All other makeup is inappropriate for school, and students wearing non-clear nail polish or makeup to school will be sent to the Academy Nurse to remove it. Jewelry is limited to a watch, religious medal or cross, and post, stud, or small hoop earrings. Pierced tongues, noses, eyebrows, and any other areas aside from ears are not acceptable. Colored hair extensions or adornments ("feathers", etc.) are not permitted for **boys or girls**. Students may not dye their hair any color that is not "**naturally occurring**" (defined as black, brown, blonde, auburn, or a shade of one of these colors).

On **out-of-uniform days**, long pants, jeans, capris, or shorts **that reach at least to the mid-thigh** may be worn with an appropriate shirt. **Cut-off shorts, yoga pants, and pajama pants are never acceptable.** To promote a positive, Christian self-image, we count on parents to reinforce the uniform code with their children. **Students who are found to violate the uniform code will need to contact a parent to bring appropriate attire OR clothing will be provided from the used uniform closet and billed to the parents.** The complete school uniform is to be worn at all times to and from school. The Academy **physical education uniform** must be worn to school on the day the student is scheduled to have physical education class. Uniforms must be purchased from the school uniform company, [Flynn and O'Hara](#). **Shoes, for students in Grades 1-8, must be COMPLETELY BLACK and EITHER OXFORD, SPERRY, LOAFER, OR MARY JANE style. Such shoes may be purchased at any retailer. The distinction between shoes and sneakers has become blurry, and provided that the footwear is completely black it will be deemed acceptable unless it is backless. Crocs, dress boots, and jellies (for children whose parents are children of the 1980s) are not permitted. If there is a question about the appropriateness of shorts or a shoe, the Assistant Principal should be consulted and will make the final judgment.**

### **Winter Dress Uniform (October – April)**

#### **GIRLS AND BOYS PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

All students in Grades 1-8 wear the physical education uniform to school on the day of their assigned Physical Education class. Kindergarten wears the physical education uniform to school every day.

- **BOYS AND GIRLS - Grades 1-8**
  - Navy blue uniform sweatpants (elastic around ankles must be kept intact and sweatpants may not be worn tucked inside sneakers)
  - Navy blue uniform sweatshirt (hooded or non-hooded)
  - Navy blue mesh shorts and a grey tee-shirt (long or short sleeve) with Academy seal (top and bottom must be worn under sweats)
  - NO jewelry may be worn during physical education class.

#### **GIRLS REGULAR UNIFORM**

- **GIRLS- Kindergarten**
  - Navy blue uniform sweatpants with the Academy seal (elastic around ankles must be kept intact and sweatpants may not be worn tucked inside sneakers)
  - Gray uniform tee shirt with the Academy seal (long or short sleeve) or navy-blue uniform sweatshirt with the Academy seal. (non-hooded)
- **GIRLS - Grades 1-4**
  - Option #1
    - The uniform **jumper** may be worn with a white peter pan collar blouse (short or long sleeve)
    - Navy blue knee socks or tights
    - Black non-scuff Oxford, Sperry, or Mary Jane shoe – **The distinction between shoes and sneakers has become blurry, and provided that the footwear is completely black it will be deemed acceptable unless it is backless. Such shoes may be purchased at any retailer.**
    -

- Option #2
  - Navy blue uniform **pants** with the white knit shirt with the Academy seal, with or without a navy-blue sweater or V- neck sweater (both sweaters with the Academy seal.)
  - Navy blue or white crew socks which must show above the shoe
  - Black non-scuff Oxford, Sperry, or Mary Jane shoe – **The distinction between shoes and sneakers has become blurry, and provided that the footwear is completely black it will be deemed acceptable unless it is backless. Such shoes may be purchased at any retailer.**
- Option #3
  - Black Watch Plaid “2-pleat” uniform skort with white knit shirt with school seal, with or without navy blue sweater or V-neck sweater (both sweaters with school seal.) **NOTE: NAVY BLUE SKORTS HAVE BEEN PHASED OUT.**
  - Blackwatch uniform skort may be worn if the proper size is available.
  - Navy blue knee socks or tights
  - Black non-scuff Oxford, Sperry, or Mary Jane shoe – **The distinction between shoes and sneakers has become blurry, and provided that the footwear is completely black it will be deemed acceptable unless it is backless. Such shoes may be purchased at any retailer.**
- **GIRLS - Grades 5-8**
  - Girls in Grades 6-8 are to have a uniform girl’s blazer with the Academy seal to be worn every day during Winter Uniform, except for Physical Education days. Girls in Grade 5 have the **OPTION** to wear the uniform blazer.
  - Option #1
    - Uniform Black Watch Plaid “2-pleat” uniform skort (no shorter than 2½ inches above the knee) **NOTE: “PANEL” STYLE SKORTS HAVE BEEN DISCONTINUED BUT EXISTING SUPPLY MAY CONTINUE TO BE WORN. EXTRA LONG SKORTS ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH FLYNN O’HARA.**
    - A white or light blue oxford cloth shirt (short or long-sleeve)
    - Blazer/Sweater as follows:
      - GRADE 5: A navy blue sweater or V-neck sweater with the Academy seal may be worn OR the navy-blue girl’s blazer with the Academy seal may be worn.
      - GRADE 6-8: The navy-blue girl’s blazer with the Academy seal must be worn.
    - A plain white tee shirt or camisole may be worn under the shirt.
    - Navy blue knee socks or tights
    - Black non-scuff Oxford, Sperry, or Mary Jane shoe – **The distinction between shoes and sneakers has become blurry, and provided that the footwear is completely black it will be deemed acceptable unless it is backless. Such shoes may be purchased at any retailer.**
  - Option #2
    - Navy blue uniform ladies’ pants may be worn with:
    - A white or light blue oxford cloth shirt (short or long-sleeve)
    - Blazer/Sweater as follows:
      - GRADE 5: A navy blue sweater or V-neck sweater with the Academy seal may be worn OR the navy-blue girl’s blazer with the Academy seal may be worn.
      - GRADE 6-8: The navy-blue girl’s blazer with the Academy seal must be worn.

- A plain white tee shirt or camisole may be worn under the shirt.
- Navy blue knee socks or tights
- Black non-scuff Oxford, Sperry, or Mary Jane shoe – **The distinction between shoes and sneakers has become blurry, and provided that the footwear is completely black it will be deemed acceptable unless it is backless. Such shoes may be purchased at any retailer.**

## **BOYS REGULAR UNIFORM**

- **BOYS- Kindergarten**
  - Navy blue uniform sweatpants with the Academy seal (elastic around ankles must be kept intact and sweatpants may not be worn tucked inside sneakers).
  - Gray uniform tee shirt with the Academy seal (long or short sleeve) or navy-blue uniform sweatshirt with Academy seal. (non-hooded)
- **BOYS - Grades 1-4**
  - Navy blue uniform pants - a navy blue, black, or dark brown belt is suggested. The pants are to be worn with one of the following options:
    - White knit shirt (short or long-sleeve) with the Academy seal
    - White or light blue oxford cloth shirt (short or long-sleeve) worn with or without any appropriate necktie of the student's choice.
  - A white tee shirt may be worn under any of the shirts
  - Navy blue sweater (vest or V-neck) with the Academy seal
  - Navy or white crew socks which must show above the shoe
  - Black non-scuff Oxford, Sperry, or Mary Jane shoe – **The distinction between shoes and sneakers has become blurry, and provided that the footwear is completely black it will be deemed acceptable unless it is backless. Such shoes may be purchased at any retailer.**
- **BOYS - Grades 5-8**
  - Boys in Grades 6-8 are to have a uniform boy's blazer with the Academy seal to be worn every day during Winter Uniform, except for Physical Education days. Boys in Grade 5 have the OPTION to wear the uniform blazer.
  - Navy blue uniform pants - a navy blue, black, or dark brown belt is suggested.
  - White or light blue oxford cloth shirt (short or long-sleeve) This shirt will be worn with any appropriate necktie of the student's choice. (A white tee shirt may be worn under the shirt).
  - Blazer/Sweater as follows:
    - GRADE 5: A navy blue sweater or V-neck sweater with the Academy seal may be worn OR the navy-blue boy's blazer with the Academy seal may be worn.
    - GRADE 6-8: The navy-blue boy's blazer with the Academy seal must be worn.
  - Navy or white crew socks which must show above the shoe
  - Black non-scuff Oxford, Sperry, or Mary Jane shoe – **The distinction between shoes and sneakers has become blurry, and provided that the footwear is completely black it will be deemed acceptable unless it is backless. Such shoes may be purchased at any retailer.**



## Summer Uniform (September, May, and June Only)

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION OPTIONS

**BOYS AND GIRLS - Grades 1-8:** All options for winter remain available; students may wear the uniform navy-blue mesh gym shorts and a gray uniform tee shirt.

### REGULAR UNIFORM OPTIONS – GRADES 1-8

- **GIRLS - Grades K-8**
  - All options for winter dress code with the additional option of navy-blue uniform **shorts**.
  - Grades 5-8: The oxford cloth shirt will be worn; **students do not wear the knit shirt above Grade 4.**
  - White or navy crew socks (must show above the shoe).
  - Same shoe code as the winter uniform
  - Kindergarten may wear the uniform blue mesh shorts.
- **BOYS - Grades K-8**
  - All options for winter dress code with the additional option of navy-blue uniform **shorts**
  - Grades 5-8: The oxford cloth shirt will be worn; **students do not wear the knit shirt above Grade 4.** The necktie is OPTIONAL with the summer uniform.
  - White or navy crew socks (must show above the shoe).
  - Same shoe code as the winter uniform
  - Kindergarten may wear the uniform blue mesh shorts.

## SERVICE HOURS

Each family with students in Grades K-8 must complete 25 service hours each school year. Service hours may be earned in a variety of manners. **Parents who wish to earn their service hours by participating in any events or activities that involve direct contact with students MUST be Safe Environment cleared. Service hours are tracked using the [x2VOL platform](#), and all parents are responsible for creating their Academy-connected account on the platform and entering completed service hours in an accurate and timely manner.**



## ACADEMICS

### ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students are expected to adhere to the highest moral standard concerning academic honesty. Cheating of any type is considered most serious and will result in a loss of credit for the assignment and communication with the student's parents. Plagiarism, defined as the copying of text from a print or electronic source and attempting to pass the copied text as if it were the student's own words, is a grave offense. Any student who is found to have committed plagiarism will receive a failing grade for the assignment and serve a Level 2 detention for the first offense. Parents are encouraged to discuss these policies with their children to ensure that the policies are clearly understood.

### CONFERENCES

Any parent is free to make an appointment to meet with a teacher or teachers by emailing or calling the Academy for a conference. No parent is permitted to see a teacher before school, during the teacher's lunch break, or after school without an appointment. NO PARENT IS PERMITTED TO GO TO A CLASSROOM WITHOUT FIRST CHECKING IN AT THE OFFICE. All parents will be provided with an opportunity to meet the teachers during Back-to-School evenings and for regularly scheduled conferences.

Non-authorized persons should not be in the building or on the Academy premises at any time. **All visitors, defined as individuals who are neither students nor staff members with official identification, shall report to the Security Desk before proceeding further into the Academy.** Any non-authorized person in the building or on the Academy premises will be requested to leave and if his/her activities or actions disrupt the orderly operation of the Academy, he/she may be subject to prosecution. Therefore, it is important that "parent helpers" wear visitor badges while on campus.

### EXAMINATIONS

Mid-term and final examinations, as a form of cumulative assessment, can be appropriate for Grades 7 and 8 in the proper context. Alternate and developmentally appropriate assessments of student achievement can be utilized in other grade levels, as cumulative mid-term and final examinations are not appropriate for Grades 6 and below.

Thus, teachers may give book tests, chapter tests, end-of-unit tests, or end-of-book tests in January and June which function as mid-term or final examinations. January's tests will be averaged as part of the second-trimester grade. June's tests will be averaged as part of the third-trimester grade. Such examinations will not be given extra "weight" in the final trimester mark.





## HOMework POLICY

The faculty of St. Gregory the Great Academy recognizes the positive relationship between homework and academic achievement. We are committed to a reasonable and consistent homework policy that fosters the development of self-discipline, time management, and sound study skills. Students may be asked to apply newly acquired skills to real-life situations or to prepare for class participation about a topic. The amount of homework time, generally speaking, will increase at an appropriate pace from grade to grade. This progression intends to encourage the student to realize the regularity, continuity, and importance of home study while they develop the study skills necessary to maximize learning. Homework is about learning to make choices about when to do homework, how to do homework, where to do homework, and when to turn it in. Homework will be posted on the SGGA Eboard each day which may be found [HERE](#).

Homework guidelines maintain communication between home and school. Parent support for homework is an extremely important factor in building positive attitudes and successful study habits. Parents have an opportunity to become actively involved in their child's education and gain insights into the Academy's philosophy, curriculum, and objectives. When parents show interest in their child's schoolwork, it reflects a belief that school is a priority. The student should do the homework with minimal parental assistance, when possible. It is appropriate for parents to give examples, clarify directions, provide encouragement, and assist in organization, but the assignment is the student's responsibility to complete.

**Types of Homework** Assigned homework may take many forms. Generally, homework will ask students to complete a hard copy activity, submit an electronic assignment, or investigate something at home. The assignments are checked for understanding and accuracy and graded depending on the purpose of the assignment. Not all homework is graded for correctness, especially when it is the PROCESS that is being assessed rather than the PRODUCT. Most assignments will be mandatory. However, some assignments may be optional. Most assignments are meant for the students to complete independently. Others may be designed for the students to work cooperatively with other students, or even to work with parents and other family members.

**Personal Responsibility** Some students have difficulty taking responsibility for completing their homework and turning it in on time. Kindergarten, first and second-grade teachers send weekly homework assignments and handle concerns as they arise. Teachers in third and fourth grades also communicate with parents when missing homework becomes a pattern. In kindergarten through fourth grade, parents should check nightly that all homework is completed by reviewing completed homework with the student. For fifth through eighth grade, parents may readily monitor homework completion (and other graded assessments) via Parent Portal.

Certainly, it is much better to focus on positive ways to reward students for completing homework. Ideally, the student will experience the intrinsic satisfaction that arises from completing a task to the best of his/her ability. Incentives can also be established by parents as a very effective way to motivate the student. When a child is having difficulty getting work completed and handed in, parents can help motivate by setting a weekly goal. They can also establish ways to celebrate after the child successfully reaches that goal.

## HONOR ROLL CRITERIA (GRADES 6-8)

**St. Gregory the Great Academy will be piloting a new diocesan report card for the 2023-2024 school year. This new document will reflect “letter grades.” In the interest of continuity and because this document is a pilot report card, for 2023-2024 honor roll eligibility will be determined numerically without regard to letter equivalents according to the protocol previously used and reflected below. (Note that the co-curricular indicators have been changed to the equivalent indicators on the new document)**

The Academy sets particular criteria for an academic Honor Roll for students in Grades 6-8, recognizing that high academic achievement is a laudable goal. In recognition of the uniqueness of each child's strengths and weaknesses, the computation of the Honor Roll is completed without the use of so-called “quality points” tied to students' courses. Every student is encouraged to use their God-given abilities to the fullest extent possible. The following criteria are used to compute the Honor Roll each trimester:

**First Honors** The average of the grades in the five core subject areas (Religion, ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies) must equal 93.5 or higher with NO single grade below 89.5. Additionally, marks in all co-curricular subject areas (Art, Music, World Languages, STEM, Physical Education) must be **“M” or “E”**.

**Second Honors** The average of the grades in the five core subject areas (Religion, ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies) must equal 85.5 or higher with NO single grade below 79.5. Additionally, no more than ONE mark in a co-curricular subject area (Art, Music, World Languages, STEM, Physical Education) may be **“D”** (all remaining marks must be **“M” or “E”**).

Students who meet one of the criteria for First Honors and one of the criteria for Second Honors will achieve Second Honors.

## PROGRESS REPORTING

Parents in all grades are encouraged to keep in regular contact with teachers; please do not wait until the end of the trimester to share your concerns. The opportunity for formal parent/teacher conferences is offered around the midpoint of both the first and second trimesters. Conferences may be in-person or remote.

**Preschool 3** A written progress report is sent home at the end of the school year. Individualized feedback from teachers is provided on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.

**Preschool 4** A written progress report is sent home at the end of each trimester. Individualized feedback from teachers is provided on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.

**Grades K, 1, & 2** A written progress report is sent home at the midpoint of each trimester

**Grades 3-8** Parents of students in Grades 3-8 have constant access to student progress via Parent Portal.

## PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Parents will be kept informed about the inability of students to progress satisfactorily. Ordinarily, this requires input from the Child Study Team, diagnostic testing, and conferencing. If retention is recommended, arrangements will be made for a conference with parents no later than the end of the second trimester. Students completing a grade's work to the best of their ability generally are to be promoted to the next grade.

Any student failing one or more major academic subjects for the year (i.e. Religion, Integrated Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science) shall successfully complete summer school or tutoring before receiving notification of graduation or promotion. Provisions for this remediation will be provided to parents upon becoming necessary.

## REPORT CARD/PROGRESS REPORT MARKING INDICATORS

**St. Gregory the Great Academy will be piloting a new diocesan report card for the 2023-2024 school year. This new document will reflect "letter grades." In the interest of continuity and because this document is a pilot report card, for 2023-2024 honor roll eligibility will be determined numerically without regard to letter equivalents according to the protocol previously used and reflected below. (Note that the co-curricular indicators have been changed to the equivalent indicators on the new document)**

The school year is divided into three marking periods. Trimesters conclude three times a year: November, March, and June. At the conclusion of each trimester, grades are posted and a report card is generated in Parent Portal for Grades K-8. Hard copy report cards are only issued at the end of the third/final trimester.

**A summary of the marking indicators is provided in the following table; however, parents are encouraged to review the full Pilot Report Card explanatory document for a complete overview of how achievement will be reported.**



<b>Preschool 3 &amp; Preschool 4</b>	All learning and development goals will be reported using the following indicators:	
	<b>E = Exceeding Expectations</b>	<b>D = Developing Proficiency</b>
	<b>M = Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>L = Limited Proficiency</b>

<b>Kindergarten - Grade 4</b>	Academic and Co-curricular subjects will be reported using the following grading indicators:	
	<b>E = Exceeding Expectations</b>	<b>D = Developing Proficiency</b>
	<b>M = Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>L = Limited Proficiency</b>
	Performance in each of the four strands of English/Language Arts will be reported using the following performance indicators:	
	<b>4 = Surpassing Benchmarks</b>	<b>2 = Approaching Benchmarks</b>
	<b>3 = Meeting Benchmarks</b>	<b>1 = Needs Support</b>
	<b>NOTE:</b> The ELA performance indicators are <u>informational</u> and are not computed mathematically to determine the ELA grading indicator	

<b>Grade 5 - Grade 8</b>	<b>Academic subjects will be reported using the following grading indicators:</b>		
	<b>97 - 100 = A+</b>	<b>83 - 87 = B</b>	<b>70 - 72 = D</b>
	<b>92 - 96 = A</b>	<b>78 - 82 = C+</b>	<b>Below 70 = U</b>
	<b>88 - 91 = B+</b>	<b>73 - 77 = C</b>	
	<b>Particular strengths or weaknesses in each of the four strands of English/Language Arts will be reported using the following comments:</b>		
	<b>06+ = Strength in Reading</b>	<b>08+ = Strength in Writing</b>	
	<b>06^ = Growth Needed in Reading</b>	<b>08^ = Growth Needed in Writing</b>	
	<b>07+ = Strength in Listening</b>	<b>09+ = Strength in Speaking</b>	
	<b>07^ = Growth Needed in Listening</b>	<b>09^ = Growth Needed in Speaking</b>	
	<b>Co-curricular subjects will be reported using the following grading indicators:</b>		
	<b>E = Exceeding Expectations</b>	<b>D = Developing Proficiency</b>	
	<b>M = Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>L = Limited Proficiency</b>	

<b>Grade 3 - Grade 8</b>	Student conduct, that is, obeying school policies will be reported using the following indicators:	
	<b>S = 0, 1, or 2 detentions</b>	<b>U = 4+ detentions OR a suspension</b>
	<b>N = 3 detentions</b>	

## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Each week all students in grades one through eight receive at least 150 minutes of religious instruction. Lessons include content relating to doctrine, moral behavior, scripture, prayer, liturgy, Church history, devotions, and service. Each day begins and ends with prayer, and students are encouraged to pray frequently. Students of all faiths are welcome at St. Gregory the Great Academy; however, all students are required to participate in regular classroom religion instruction and prayer experiences (except for receiving Sacraments.) **NO STUDENT WILL BE GRANTED AN EXEMPTION FROM RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.**

**To properly nurture the students' proper love of the Eucharist, students attend Mass regularly and on holy days of obligation. Preschool classes visit the church as appropriate.** Academy participation at Mass and prayer services for special occasions is an important part of our Liturgical calendar. Students receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, when appropriate. We encourage parents to share these special occasions with us as well as attend Sunday Mass EVERY WEEK. **The love of the Eucharist that is fostered at school must begin in the home!**

The pre-sacramental programs are an ESSENTIAL part of the preparation of parents and students for the sacraments of RECONCILIATION, EUCHARIST, and CONFIRMATION. Information on these processes shall be published and distributed by the St. Gregory the Great Office of Religious Education.

**St. Gregory the Great Academy fully observes all directives from the Bishop's Office regarding the Safe Environment Program training for adults and Safe Environment education for students.** The Loyola Press Growing with God series is used as part of these directives.

## STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT

Computer adaptive standardized assessment, namely the Renaissance STAR Assessment, is employed as one source of student achievement data for students in Grades 2-8. The types and classes of test items adjust based on the student's responses as the test progresses. Essentially, the assessment adapts using a vast bank of test items as it progresses. Instead of each student taking an identical test, each student takes a test that adapts to his or her strengths and weaknesses. The STAR Assessment is given three times per year in both Reading and Math, with each test taking approximately 20-30 minutes. As a result, the student experience is 40-80 minutes of testing (20-40 each for Reading and Math) during three testing windows each year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). The STAR Assessment is taken on a computer, Chromebook, or iPad, and the score data is delivered to teachers promptly in order to provide data that can inform instruction in the current school year.

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES (GRADES K-8)

**Counseling** Student counseling is provided by St. Gregory the Great Academy on an as-needed basis. The Academy employs a full-time licensed school counselor. Students may be referred to the counselor by teachers or administrators based on classroom observation or issues that are brought to the attention of the administration. The Academy counselor is a vital member of the Administrative Team and is often the first administrative point of contact when an

interpersonal situation develops that negatively affects a student. The Academy counselor is delegated full authority to advocate and assist students to promote and protect their social/emotional wellbeing. The Academy administration reserves the right to mandate regular outside counseling sessions in response to serious student issues or behaviors. Parents are also encouraged to contact the Academy counselor to discuss concerns that they may have about their child, especially concerning major changes or tragedies that may have occurred in the student's life. For more information, please contact the Academy Counselor at **587-1131, extension 230**.

**Child Study Team Referral and Evaluation** A student may be referred for a Child Study Team evaluation by a teacher or administrator when it appears that there is a barrier preventing the student from reaching his or her full potential in the classroom. Once a teacher makes a referral for an evaluation, the parent will be asked to sign Form 407-1, which authorizes the Child Study Team to begin the evaluation process. The team will conduct observations of the student in the classroom, and complete a variety of assessments with the student. The results of the observations and assessments will determine if the student meets the criteria for classification. Once these results are obtained, an eligibility meeting will be scheduled with the parents, the Child Study Team, the student's teacher(s), and the Principal or his designee. At this meeting, the team will share the results of the evaluation with the parents and make its recommendation regarding classification and the specific modifications and goals that this classification would entail. This information will all be incorporated into the student's Individualized Service Plan (ISP), which is a document governing the classified student's modifications. If a student is classified, there will be an annual meeting with a member of the Child Study Team to determine progress toward the goals stated in the ISP, as well as a re-evaluation every three years to determine if the stated goals need to be adapted or if classification needs to be removed. **Modification and accommodations in a nonpublic school are implemented at the discretion of the school based on the school's ability to provide training, funding, and appropriate staff. There is NO entitlement to specific modifications and accommodations in the nonpublic setting.** There are significant differences in the regulations governing Special Education in public schools and nonpublic schools; parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the New Jersey code in this area by visiting [THIS SITE](#). **The Child Study Team is funded by New Jersey Chapter 193 monies which are delegated to the Hamilton Township School District to provide the service. Currently the school district contracts with the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNJ) for this service. The case manager, school psychologist, and learning consultant are independent contractors of ESCNJ and not employees of St. Gregory the Great Academy.**

**English Language Arts Lab (ELA Lab)** St. Gregory the Great Academy employs full-time Special Education teachers who plan and implement alternative reading and writing programs for qualifying students in Grades 1-8. Students qualify for ELA Lab instruction based on the recommendation of the general education teacher and the ELA Lab teacher, with the approval of the Principal and the consent of the parent. ELA Lab instruction covers the same essential English Language Arts curriculum at each grade level as instruction in the regular classroom does but does so using alternative methods in small student groupings. The Orton-Gillingham approach, supplemented with aspects of the Wilson Reading program, is routinely used to assist students in achieving the goals outlined in their service plan. More information may be obtained about the St. Gregory the Great ELA Lab by contacting St. Gregory the Great Academy Director of Special Services. **Students must have completed, or be in the process of, a child study team evaluation to qualify for ELA Lab placement; however, exceptions are made in extraordinary circumstances with the approval of the Principal. In no circumstance will any extraordinary approvals be continued from one school year to the next school year. ELA Lab uses the full replacement model for Grades 1-4 and the push-in model for Grades 5-8.**

**Compensatory Education** Compensatory Education is provided to students who qualify under New Jersey Chapter 192. Services are available to students in both communications (reading and/or writing) and computation (mathematics). Students may be referred for this service by their classroom teacher, based on classroom observation and achievement on standardized tests and report cards. Essentially, students are referred for Compensatory Education when, in the teacher's judgment, the student can benefit from some extra personalized attention in communications and/or computation. Services are provided by qualified teachers who are contracted by the Hamilton Township Board of Education using Chapter 192 funds, as funding permits. Referral for Compensatory Education does not require classification, nor should it necessarily be viewed as the first step toward classification. More information may be obtained from the New Jersey State Department of Education by visiting [THIS SITE](#). **Currently the school district contracts with the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNJ) for this service. The teachers providing this service are employees of ESCNJ and not employees of St. Gregory the Great Academy.**

**Supplementary Instruction** Supplementary Instruction is provided for students who qualify under New Jersey Chapter 193. Supplementary Instruction is provided to a student with a disability classified as eligible for special education and related services as an addition to the primary instruction for the subject being taught. The program of supplementary instruction shall be specified in the student's services plan. This program is designed to meet specific learning goals for the student as outlined in the service plan and is intended to augment the student's classroom instruction. Services are provided by teachers who are contracted by the Hamilton Township Board of Education using Chapter 193 funds. Referral for Supplementary Instruction is discussed at a student's Child Study Team evaluation. More information may be obtained from the New Jersey State Department of Education by visiting [THIS SITE](#). **Currently the school district contracts with the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNJ) for this service. The teachers providing this service are employees of ESCNJ and not employees of St. Gregory the Great Academy.**

**Speech and Language** Speech and Language services are provided under the New Jersey Chapter 193, as funding permits. These services provide therapy for issues including language, articulation, voice, and fluency. Students are screened for speech issues at the request of teachers. Speech and Language services are provided by a licensed speech therapist who is contracted by the Hamilton Township Board of Education using New Jersey Chapter 193 funds. More information may be obtained from the New Jersey State Department of Education by visiting [THIS SITE](#). **Currently the school district contracts with the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNJ) for this service. The therapist providing this service is an employee of ESCNJ and not an employee of St. Gregory the Great Academy.**

**Occupational Therapy** Occupational therapy services are provided by St. Gregory the Great Academy as funding permits. Such services are included in a student's service plan when the student has difficulty with fine or gross motor skills or has a physical disability. **Currently the Academy contracts with Penn Medicine for this service. The therapist providing this service is an employee of Penn Medicine and not an employee of St. Gregory the Great Academy.**

**In-Class Support Teachers** In-Class Support is provided under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) using the nonpublic proportional share as funding permits to students in Grades 5-8 whose service plans specify such support. This is accomplished by scheduling dedicated in-class support teachers into specific classes throughout the day in Grades 5-8. The function of these teachers is to implement the modifications mandated by the classified students' service plans in the regular classroom. **Currently the school district contracts with the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNJ) for this service. The teachers providing this service are employees of ESCNJ and not employees of St. Gregory the Great Academy.**



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

### DISCIPLINE/SELF-DISCIPLINE

The attainment of self-discipline is inherent in the philosophy of St. Gregory the Great Academy because the essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. Recognition of human dignity and rights leads to a wholesome discipline to safeguard liberties rather than restrict them. Our Academy rules are not merely restraints on personal freedom; they promote the responsible use of freedom so that others may enjoy their full rights.

**Courtesy** Courtesy has often been described as a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. At St. Gregory the Great Academy, we encourage our students to be outstanding in this area and we appreciate parental support. Practicing courtesy helps students learn to treat others the right way, which lessens instances of discipline. We expect each student to:

- be considerate of the rights of others
- respect his/her own property and that of others
- display appropriate conduct and language on the way to and from school, on the Academy grounds, in church, on school buses, and during extra-curricular activities
- practice courtesy, honesty, and self-discipline at all times

**Discipline** Discipline is the underlying framework around which other aspects of education are structured. The ultimate goal of learning is self-discipline and self-direction. Good discipline begins with the earliest training in the home and extends to the Academy and the community. Discipline in a Catholic-Christian educational community is part of the **teaching/learning process**; therefore, it shall be the responsibility of Catholic schools to attempt to provide each individual student with moral guidelines and leadership. **Mutual respect and cooperation between home and school must exist if discipline is to be maintained.**

There must be complete unity in authority between parents and teachers. It is a good policy to WITHHOLD JUDGMENT on what appears to be a problem or grievance until you receive all the facts from the proper person. Classroom teachers are the appropriate first contact when a problem is suspected; if this is not fruitful it is then appropriate to contact the Assistant Principal if necessary. Problems discussed with neighbors and friends may not be factual at times and can hurt all involved. **In the history of St. Gregory the Great Academy, not a single problem has been solved using the forum of social media.**

Our students come to school to develop spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically. To this end, we endeavor to develop and foster within each student:

- Respect for adults, fellow students, their persons, and possessions.
- Respect for Academy and Church property (books, desks, equipment, buildings, and grounds).
- Courtesy, good manners, and proper and respectful language.
- Neatness, cleanliness, and proper dress at all times.
- Good sportsmanship and school spirit.
- Responsibility for one's actions.



## DISCIPLINE CODE

In the interest of fostering an atmosphere where academics can be better developed, and Christian responsibility and attitudes can be nurtured, St. Gregory the Great Academy has adopted a **4-tiered Code of Conduct** to address infractions, including communicating with parents by email/phone and/or lunch detention. Should student behavior not improve, it may become necessary to move to an after-school detention, meeting with members of the Administrative Team, suspension, or expulsion. The focus of disciplinary procedures will, in all cases, be to improve behavior and counsel students so that expulsion is a last resort. **The Academy administration reserves the right to adapt the Code of Conduct as individual situations arise. The Principal, in consultation with the pastor, is the final authority on all discipline matters.**

**Accountability** In Grades 4 and below, student accountability is generally handled using classroom procedures and logical consequences issued by the teacher. In Grades 5-8, students are issued an Accountability Card that is used to assist the students in self-monitoring their behavior. Students are responsible for keeping their Accountability Card in a safe place and producing the card any time a faculty member requests it. Below is a sample of the Accountability Card. For reference, students often refer to these as “Pink Cards”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

### Student Accountability Card

#### LEVEL I INFRACTIONS

*Five marks on the accountability card (in any combination of the below categories), along with any subsequent marks, will result in a detention being issued.*

Off Task					
Out of Bounds					
Improper Use OF Electronics					
Inappropriate Language					
Disorderly Conduct					
Other					

#### LEVEL II INFRACTIONS

*One mark on the accountability card in any of the below categories will result in a detention being issued.*

Disrespect					
Destruction of Property					
Academic Dishonesty					
Other					

PRIOR DETENTION(S) ISSUED:

There are four primary levels of infractions:

- **Level 1** infractions indicate that a student chose behavior that was disruptive toward others or the Academy. Lunch detention is the usual logical consequence; however, other consequences may be implemented depending on the situation. Lunch detentions will be served in the Counselor's Office, the Principal's Office, or another appropriate area. **In Grades 5-8, Level 1 infractions are marked by a faculty member's initials on the Accountability Card. Five Level 1 marks on the accountability card in any combination of categories, along with any subsequent marks, will result in a detention being issued. Students are issued new Accountability Cards at the start of each trimester in order to provide them with a fresh start and to encourage improvement.**
- **Level 2** infractions indicate that a student made a choice that was disrespectful, dishonest, or dangerous to oneself, others, or the Academy. **In Grades 5-8, Level 2 infractions are marked by a faculty member's initials on the Accountability Card. Each Level 2 mark on the accountability card will result in a detention being issued. Students are issued new Accountability Cards at the start of each trimester in order to provide them with a fresh start and to encourage improvement.** After-school detention is the usual logical consequence; however, other consequences may be implemented depending on the situation. After-school detentions will be served after school between 2:45 PM and 3:30 PM. Teachers will communicate scheduled detention via email, and parents will be required to inform the teacher of how the student is to be dismissed from detention (i.e., parent pick up, dismissal to EDP, etc.) Parents will be notified at least 24 hours before after-school detention.
- **Level 3** infractions show a pattern of inappropriate behavior or a major disciplinary infraction, both of which are contrary to the good order of the entire Academy community. Parents will be notified via email/phone by the Principal or Assistant Principal. A suspension is the usual logical consequence; however, other consequences may be implemented depending on the situation. The Principal or his designee is responsible for determining whether an event warranting suspension has occurred. In determining whether a suspension is warranted, and the duration and nature of the suspension to be imposed, principles of fairness and proportionality will be followed. Credit will be given for student work performed during suspension when work is required for grading purposes. In-school suspension is a one-day suspension where the student is removed from the regular classroom and is required to do regular classwork under a staff member's supervision in an alternate location. Parents and students will be notified in advance concerning the reason for the suspension. Out-of-school suspension is the most serious consequence imposed short of suspension. Parents and students will be informed of the Academy's actions. The student will also be allowed to present his/her side of the situation.
- **Level 4** infractions are any actions that indicate that the student's interest would be better served in another environment or that the individual's behavior is a serious threat to the Academy or both. Expulsion is the usual logical consequence; however, other consequences may be implemented depending on the situation.

Because of the nature of the school environment and the ever-changing nature of children and their interactions with the world at large, it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of infractions for each level. In order to help provide guidance, however, some representative samples are provided below. Please note that a particular infraction may or may not be adjusted in level given the particulars of a situation. It is not appropriate to use these examples as a

“checklist” since the Academy administration is the final authority on how to appropriately address all disciplinary matters. **In all cases, the individual facts of a situation will determine the course of action. There are NO AUTOMATIC CONSEQUENCES for particular actions because the individuals involved in a situation and the facts of the situation are rarely automatic. The Principal or Assistant Principal may adapt any portion of this code, including the infraction level and/or consequence at his or her discretion based on the situation.**

**Level 1 Infractions** The behaviors below are representative samples that would ordinarily be considered Level 1 infractions. This list is neither exhaustive nor immobile. These behaviors ordinarily result in a mark on the Accountability Card.

- Disruptive off-task classroom behavior
- Dress code infractions
- Out of bounds **(presence in any part of the buildings at an unauthorized time or in any unauthorized part of the buildings at any time. This also applies if a child goes somewhere without a teacher’s permission.)**
- Disorderly conduct
- Disorder during an emergency drill
- Misbehavior on the bus
- Misuse of Academy devices (Chromebooks, tablets, etc.)
- Improper or unauthorized use of any electronic device
- Crude/Inappropriate language

**Level 2 Infractions** The behaviors below are representative samples that would ordinarily be considered Level 2 infractions. This list is neither exhaustive nor immobile. These behaviors ordinarily result in a mark on the Accountability Card in the Level 2 section and result in after-school detention.

- Profane language
- Verbal and/or nonverbal harassment, gestures, and/or disrespect of authority
- Dishonesty – lying, cheating, stealing, etc.
- **Out of bounds triggering a search – in an unauthorized location causing a search by the administration**
- **Defacing or tampering with Academy property \$250 in value or less (restitution required)**
- Serious schoolyard misconduct
- Academic dishonesty

**Level 3 Infractions** The behaviors below are representative samples that would ordinarily be considered Level 3 infractions. This list is neither exhaustive nor immobile. These behaviors ordinarily result in suspension, which may either be in-school or out-of-school.

- HIB Offenses
- Physical aggression
- Ongoing defiance of authority
- Truancy
- **Defacing or destruction of school property \$215 - \$500 in value (restitution required)**
- Any type of disturbance endangering the safety of others whether in school or on the school bus (i.e., throwing snowballs or other objects, lighting matches, bringing any controlled substance to school or Academy-sponsored functions)
- Bringing any look-alike weapon to school with the intention of, or actual practice of, intimidation, threat, or other inappropriate actions
- Other inappropriate behavior or conduct unbecoming a Christian student and contrary to the good order of the entire Academy
- **Accumulation of 3 after-school detentions**

**Level 4 Infractions** The behaviors below are representative samples that would ordinarily be considered Level 4 infractions. This list is neither exhaustive nor immobile. These behaviors ordinarily result in removal from the Academy, which may either be immediate or scheduled.

- Three suspensions during an academic year
- Arson
- Continued and willful disobedience or /defiance of authority
- Alleged criminal activity, including pending criminal charges or indictment
- Extortion or attempted extortion
- Gambling for financial gain
- Gross disorder including mob action and/or inviting unauthorized individuals to the campus
- Defacing or destruction of school property above \$500 in value
- Ongoing HIB infractions

- Assault of personnel
- Hazing of a student or group of students
- Significant violation of the Acceptable Use Policy (use of the internet and digital devices)
- Improper use of social networking sites
- Possession of a weapon
- Possession and/or trafficking of pornographic materials, including internet pornography
- Possession, use, and/or sale of an illegal substance
- Using electronic or other means to share or forward images of nudity, including self-nudity

In all cases resulting in removal from the Academy, the Academy will work to ensure that the student and/or the parents/guardians have the opportunity to present the student's account of events and provide mitigating information during either an informal or formal hearing. Nonetheless, the Academy may decline to hear evidence offered by the student and/or his/her parents if, at its discretion, the information offered is irrelevant, inappropriate, or vexatious.

A student and his/her parents/guardians have the right to appeal an order of removal from the Academy to the Superintendent of the Diocese of Trenton within seven school days of the final notice.

## **HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND/OR BULLYING (HIB)**

**HIB Policy Statement** St. Gregory the Great Academy is committed to creating and sustaining a safe, caring, respectful learning environment for all students. We will treat all members of our community with civility and respect in an inclusive environment. Keywords that represent our actions and our words are the three traits we value as an Academy: respectful, responsible, and ready to learn. Our Academy strictly enforces a prohibition against bullying of any students or staff. The Administrative Team expects that in collaboration with teachers, families, and community members, the Academy will implement the anti-bullying policy and procedures as published in this handbook.

A safe and civil environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, bullying, and like behaviors will not be tolerated as they are contrary to the mission of Roman Catholic schools to educate the whole child in a God-centered environment and to facilitate growth and self-actualization.

**Definition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB)** Harassment, intimidation or bullying (HIB) is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on Academy property that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that it will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student, damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property;
- has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Electronic behavior, postings, etc. MAY be considered HIB under this policy depending on the particular circumstances. While the Academy has limited ability to deal with matters that occur off-campus, off-campus behaviors that substantially disrupt or interfere with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students MAY be addressed by this policy at the Academy's discretion. Examples of cyber-bullying include, but are not limited to: posting inappropriate pictures or personal information of a student or individual on the internet; using social media to post or send harassing, intimidating, or inappropriate messages about or to another student or individual; and sending harassing, intimidating, or inappropriate text messages or email about or to another student or individual.

**Retaliation** Retaliation for reports of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying is prohibited. The procedures in place for addressing harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying apply with equal force to allegations of retaliation.

**Reporting HIB Incidents** Individuals who have reason to believe that a violation of this policy has occurred, are to contact the student's teacher. Academy personnel are to report any violations of the anti-harassment policy to the Assistant Principal within a school day. When a case of bullying is reported or suspected, the Assistant Principal and/or Academy Counselor will contact the parents of the students involved to set up a time to meet to discuss the situation. During this meeting, a formal report will be provided to the parent and student with which to make their complaint. The goal in all cases of bullying shall be the elimination of the offending behavior and healing for all parties involved. Parents are STRONGLY encouraged to take any communication from the Academy regarding bullying seriously, regardless of how "out of character" it may seem.

**Resolving HIB Complaints** In the course of resolving a complaint under this policy, the Academy will strive to balance the need to fully investigate the allegations with the privacy of the individuals involved. Therefore, information gathered during the investigation and resolution process will only be shared on a "need-to-know" basis.

The resolution of a complaint of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying depends on the context and circumstances of each case. The Academy will strive to balance the interests of the students involved as well as the needs of the Academy as a whole when confronting these issues. Disciplinary measures will be consistent with the Academy's disciplinary policies and diocesan guidance for student discipline. In addition, the Academy may consider implementing appropriate remedial and preventive measures in response to a finding that harassment, intimidation, or bullying has occurred.

**Examples of Possible HIB** The behaviors below are representative samples that would ordinarily be considered possible examples of HIB. This list is neither exhaustive nor immobile. These behaviors ordinarily result in a HIB investigation.

- Verbal bullying including derogatory comments and bad names
- Bullying through social exclusion or isolation
- Physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting
- Bullying through lies and false rumors
- Having money or other things taken or damaged by students who bully
- Being threatened or being forced to do things by students who bully
- Racial bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Cyberbullying

**Role of Parents** Parents need to have an open line of communication with their sons and daughters. Please make an effort to engage your child(ren) in conversation about the school day. Do not accept the answer “nothing” when you ask what happened in school each day. Take it seriously if the same name comes up multiple times as having hurt your child. At the same time, do not treat every word that your sons and daughters utter as gospel, because sometimes facts get embellished. Remember, studies have shown that children who are comfortable and accustomed to talking to their parents are much less likely to be untruthful. Look for warning signs of behaviors similar to the “Why Students Bully” list above. Bullies almost always engage in such behavior because of something lacking in their own lives; try your best to prevent these behaviors.

**Role of Students** Students need to feel empowered to report when they are mistreated. In the primary grades, the challenge is helping students distinguish between tattling and justified reporting. This is a learning experience. In the intermediate and middle school grades, the challenge then becomes overcoming the fear of repercussions when justifiably reporting mistreatment. This becomes an issue of teaching these children that they have the right to feel safe and comfortable at school. Bullies are empowered when they “get away” with inappropriate behaviors; a powerful way to counteract this power is to foster a culture of respect and make it clear that such behavior will be addressed.

**Role of Academy Personnel** Academy personnel need to take reports of mistreatment seriously. A key component of addressing bullying is establishing a pattern of behavior. A single incident between students is usually not bullying, but a repeated pattern is! Teachers and aides must be aware of the school environment and be proactive about observing student interactions. The Academy will also offer bullying awareness/prevention programs to the students proactively. The Academy also has a responsibility to the child who is displaying HIB behavior. We are dealing with children here too, not hardened criminals. The Academy must take all possible steps to help these children avoid bullying behaviors.

**Prohibition of False HIB Reporting** False reports concerning HIB will be subject to appropriate school discipline, including short or long-term consequences as previously outlined within this policy.



**Police Notification** When bullying behavior involves conduct that violates criminal law, the police department shall be notified immediately by the victim's family or school administration.

**Mediation Board** The Principal of St. Gregory the Great Academy may establish a Mediation Board to resolve complaints of bullying in circumstances where mediation may provide an appropriate remedy. The Mediation Board could include clergy, administrators, teachers, school social workers, and where appropriate, students.

**Voluntary Participation in Mediation** No student who is the victim of bullying shall be required to participate in mediation or to accept any apology tendered by the bullying student. The decision of a victim of bullying not to participate in a mediation program shall not diminish the obligation of the school to impose discipline against the student who has committed an act of bullying.

## **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE**

This policy provides the procedures, rules, guidelines, and codes of conduct for the use of the internet, social media, email, and similar applications. The use of such technology is a necessary element of the mission of Catholic schools in general, and St. Gregory the Great Academy in particular, and is provided to users as a privilege, not a right. The Academy seeks to protect, encourage, and enhance the legitimate uses of technology by placing fair limitations on such use and sanctions for those who abuse the privilege.

**Summary** "Technology" includes, but is not limited to, computers, wireless & LAN access, electronic mail, internet access, and all other forms of instructional, networking, and electronic communication tools that are provided as a service by the Academy to users. Users are required to be good technology citizens by refraining from activities that disrupt education or can be considered unethical, illegal, immoral, and/or unprofessional (for staff) conduct.

The user is responsible for his/her actions in accessing the internet, social media, email, and similar applications, whether through school-owned hardware or through personal hardware (including desktops, laptops, and portable devices) that use the school network, Wi-Fi, or hotspots. Failure to comply with the guidelines of technology use may result in the loss of privileges and/or appropriate disciplinary action. Severe violations may result in a civil or criminal action under the New Jersey Statutes or Federal Law.

**Parental Responsibility** Given the dynamic nature of technological advancements and the wide spectrum of resources available on the internet, the Academy acknowledges its inability to completely regulate and monitor the information received or sent by users, although appropriate filters are used. The Academy cannot assure parents that users will be denied access to all inappropriate materials or prohibited from sending or receiving communications contrary to the Academy's philosophy, goals, and educational mission.

Parents or guardians should be aware that some material accessible via the internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, offensive, and/or inconsistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. In addition, it is possible to purchase certain goods and services via the Internet that could result in unwanted financial obligations for which a student's parent or guardian will be held responsible.

**Specific Parameters** The parameters below apply to all users of technology at St. Gregory the Great Academy:

- Access to computers, Chromebooks, networks, and devices within the school network is a privilege and must be treated as such by all users.
- The network will be used solely for research, education, and school-related business and operations.
- Devices shall only be used by the authorized user's user account. Account owners are ultimately responsible for all activity under their accounts.
- All communications and information accessible and accessed via Academy-owned technology are and shall remain the property of the Academy.
- Student use of Academy equipment shall be supervised and monitored by authorized staff. Student use must be related to the school curriculum.
- The internet, social media, email, and similar applications are to be used primarily for school purposes. The occasional use of such technology for personal purposes is permitted provided it is not abusive, excessive, or violative of this policy.
- Any defects or knowledge of suspected abuse of the school systems, networks, security, hardware, or software shall be reported to the Principal or Assistant Principal.

### **The Academy's Rights and Responsibilities**

In order to ensure a safe, efficient, and secure school environment, the Academy reserves the right to monitor, inspect, and review all internet, social media, email, and similar uses by users and perform random scans on the user's computer as well as any network devices to ensure the internet access, social media and/or email systems provided to users are not abused or used for purposes contrary to the Academy's Catholic teachings and educational mission. This includes personal web-based emails accessed and stored using the Academy's equipment and/or computer systems. **Users should have no expectation of privacy in any information stored, sent, received, or accessed on the Academy's equipment and/or computer systems.** The Academy will ensure that all technology users complete and sign an agreement to abide by the Academy's acceptable use policy. School administrators must both permit and be given access capability to any Academy-affiliated social media pages created by teachers or staff members. **Unauthorized use of the Academy seal is a copyright violation and appropriate resolution will be sought.**

**Unacceptable Use** The behaviors below are representative samples that would ordinarily be considered an unacceptable use of technology. This list is neither exhaustive nor immobile. This list includes behavior that:

- Interferes with or disrupts other users, services, or equipment, or destroys, alters, dismantles, disfigures, or otherwise interferes with the integrity of computer-based information resources, whether on stand-alone or networked computers. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, distribution of advertising and propagation of viruses, spyware, malware, ransomware, or the like.

- Attempts to disable, bypass, or otherwise circumvent the Academy's content filter that has been installed per the federal Children's Internet Protection Act. This includes the use of proxy servers and mobile hotspots.
- Seeks to gain or successfully gains unauthorized access to information resources or confidential records, obtains copies of, or modifies files or other data, or gains and communicates passwords belonging to other users.
- Installs unauthorized software, applications, or material for use on Academy hardware.
- Uses the systems for illegal, harassing, vandalizing, inappropriate, obscene purposes, or in support of such activities, or violation of any Academy policy.
- Accesses or transmits material that promotes violence, hatred, or advocates the destruction of property including information concerning the manufacture of destructive devices or which advocates the use, purchase, or sale of illegal goods or services.

**Electronic Mail** Electronic mail (e-mail) is a private electronic message sent by or to another person having Internet mail access. Students may not access private email at the Academy unless directed to by a teacher, they are under the direct supervision of the said teacher, and the purpose is educational. Students are to understand that all activity on the SGGG Google Workspace must conform to the standards outlined in this handbook. Student Google Workspace email accounts cannot send or receive messages from outside of the St. Gregory the Great Academy domain (i.e., they will only accept messages from email addresses ending in "@sggacademy.org") Messages received by the system are retained on that system until deleted by the recipient. Members are expected to remove old messages in a timely fashion. The system administrators may remove such messages if not attended to regularly by the member.

The system administrators may inspect the contents of mail sent by one member to an identified addressee, and investigate complaints regarding mail alleged to contain inappropriate, unkind, inaccurate, abusive, profane, sexually-oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or otherwise illegal material. SGGG reserves the right to cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any mail transmitted on the academy network. **There is NO expectation of privacy for any message, content, or other content created, sent from, or sent to any account in the Academy Google Workspace.**

**Social Media Policy** Social Networking sites and apps are a part of the 21st-century culture for students. Catholic elementary and secondary students must understand that they have a responsibility to participate in Social Networking sites and apps appropriately. The values and ideals of the Catholic faith are to be followed in posting comments on a Social Networking Site. Social Networking sites and apps, for purposes of this policy, are defined as online websites or smartphone applications including, but not limited to, Facebook, **"X" (Twitter)**, Instagram, Kik, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.

**No student is to access or post to social media sites, including but not limited to Facebook, **"X" (Twitter)**, Instagram, Kik, Snapchat, or TikTok, at inappropriate times while on the Academy campus. Students are also prohibited from making postings on such sites which threaten or degrade St. Gregory the Great Academy, its teachers, and/or students. Students are prohibited from using the Academy seal without written permission. Students who make**

postings that are deemed inappropriate by the Principal will face disciplinary measures. Students who make postings that are deemed threatening will be reported to local law enforcement, and St. Gregory the Great Academy will cooperate fully in legal investigations of such behavior. **PARENTS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ONLINE CONDUCT OF THEIR CHILDREN. The Principal is the final authority as to what is considered inappropriate content. Refusal to remove content that is contrary to the good order of the Academy shall be deemed a violation of the enrollment agreement and is grounds for permanent dismissal from St. Gregory the Great Academy.**

**Social Media Prohibitions** The behaviors below are representative samples that would ordinarily be considered violations of the Social Media Policy. This list is neither exhaustive nor immobile.

- Students are not to comment, post, join, or otherwise affiliate with or publish any information on social networking sites, including (but not limited to statements, comments, photographs, groups, profiles, or links to third-party websites) that in the discretion of the Academy or the diocese contains inappropriate content.
- Students are not to infringe upon another's copyright or trademark without appropriate permission.
- Students are not to write or post anything that is sexual in nature.
- They are to refrain from postings that involve illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct and that involve the use of drugs or alcohol or support or sell drugs or alcohol.
- Students will refrain from postings that are offensive in nature or are considered discriminatory or harassing in nature.
- Postings are to be free from elements that harm the reputation of or cause embarrassment to the Academy, diocese, co-workers, or teachers.
- Students are not to interact with current administrators or teachers on social media. This includes but is not limited to, listing current administrators or teachers as friends or connections on social media or posting any comments whatsoever on current administrators' or teachers' pages or profiles.
- Students shall screen, block, and/or remove any comments that violate this policy.
- Students should critique any third-party comments or postings before publication.
- Students are not to write or post anything that is sexual.

**Parents agree to direct their children to remove any posting on social media which is brought to their attention by the Principal and which the Principal requests to be removed. Failure to cooperate with the Academy in meeting a request to remove objectionable content from social media shall be deemed a violation of the enrollment agreement and is grounds for permanent dismissal from St. Gregory the Great Academy.**

The Academy and Diocese reserve the right to conduct periodic internet searches to determine whether students have violated this policy. Openness to such searches and consequences for finding objectionable material are requirements for enrollment at St. Gregory the Great Academy.

**Consequences** Users who violate this policy will be subject to revocation of system access up to and including permanent loss of privileges and discipline up to and including expulsion or termination of employment. Violations of law may be reported to the Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of Trenton and law enforcement officials.

## **ACADEMY ISSUED DEVICES**

Each student in Grades 6, 7, and 8 will be issued a Chromebook for his or her academic use for the entire school year which will be transported to and from school as needed. This device remains the property of St. Gregory the Great Academy (SGGA) unless and until SGGA deprovisions the device and transfers the device to the student (typically upon graduation from Grade 8.) The Asset Identification Tag number for each Chromebook will be recorded as each student is issued his or her device. Students in Grade 5 and below may have access to assigned Chromebooks in school; however, these devices are not to be understood as "personal" devices. These Chromebooks may be the property of SGGA, the Hamilton Township School District (via the NJ Nonpublic Technology Grant), or the State of New Jersey (via the COVID-19 EANS Grant.) Regardless of ownership, SGGA policies apply to all provided devices. Students in these grades will generally be assigned to use the same Chromebooks simply out of convenience. When deemed appropriate, students in Grade 5 will be permitted to bring Chromebooks to and from school.

**Care of Chromebook** Students are responsible for the general care of assigned or issued Chromebooks. Students in Grades 5 and below must NEVER affix stickers to the Chromebook or otherwise alter its physical appearance or function in any way. Students in Grade 6 and above are responsible for the care of the device and are not to alter its physical appearance or controls in a manner that interferes with its function. All Chromebooks will be labeled with an Academy and/or public entity asset tag. Asset tags are not to be modified or tampered with in any way.

Students who are bringing their Chromebooks to and from school are to make sure that the device is charged every night so that the charge lasts throughout the school day. All students in Grades 5 and above are to come to school with a protective Chromebook case for transporting their Chromebooks. For purchasing purchases, cases should accommodate a Chromebook that is 13 inches by 9 inches.

**General Precautions** Care is to be exercised at all times when using Chromebooks. Some specific steps are:

- When leaving a room, Chromebooks should not be carried in backpacks; they belong in dedicated carrying cases.
- No food or drink should be next to the Chromebook.
- Cords, cables, and removable storage devices must be inserted carefully into Chromebooks.
- Heavy objects should never be placed on top of a Chromebook.

- Chromebooks are never to be lifted by the screen.
- Chromebook screens can be damaged if subjected to heavy objects, rough treatment, some cleaning solvents, and other liquids. The screen is particularly sensitive to damage from excessive pressure.
- Nothing should ever be placed atop a closed Chromebook
- Do not store a Chromebook with the screen open.
- Nothing should be left on the keyboard before closing the lid (e.g., pens, pencils, etc.)

**Damage** Broken screens are the **most common AND most preventable form of Chromebook damage**. Virtually all screen damage can be prevented by handling Chromebooks with care. Students are responsible for damage that occurs to their Chromebooks both in school and outside of school.

- **Preventable Damage** - Broken screens are considered preventable damage, and will be billed a replacement fee of \$75.00. Other preventable damage includes, but is not limited to: bent charger contacts, spill damage, lost chargers, and punctures. Repairs for preventable damage will be billed to parents. A repaired Chromebook will NOT be returned to a student until all repair fees are paid.
- **Wear and Tear** - Some malfunctions occur that are outside of a student's control, and repair of these types of problems will NOT be billed. Wear and tear issues include, but are not limited to: battery issues, booting issues, operating system issues, etc.
- **Insurance – The Academy has purchased a limited insurance policy for Chromebooks issued to students in Grades 6 and 7 ONLY. This policy covers Wear and Tear issues, and in some cases, it will also cover certain isolated cases of preventable damage up to a coverage limitation amount. The Academy will issue an invoice to parents for any preventable damage repairs required that exceed the coverage limitation.**

Chromebooks that are damaged or not functional MUST be brought to the Main Office so that a repair ticket can be created. Loaner Chromebooks may be issued to students if a Chromebook is under repair IF a spare is available. A student borrowing a loaner Chromebook will be responsible for any damage to or loss of the loaned device. Chromebooks on loan to students having their devices repaired are not to be taken home. All teachers are responsible for providing students with hard copy (paper) materials to complete all assignments if a student's Chromebook is out of commission.

**Appropriate Use** Inappropriate media may not be used as Chromebook backgrounds or themes. The presence of such media will result in disciplinary action. Sound must be muted at all times unless permission is obtained from a teacher. Headphones may be used at the discretion of the teacher. Students should never share their account passwords with others unless requested by an administrator. The Academy will not be responsible for the loss of any student work. This Chromebook policy is an addendum to the general Technology Acceptable Use Policy, and all provisions of that policy apply to using SGGA Chromebooks.