

# St. Didacus Parish School Parent/School Handbook

4630 34<sup>th</sup> Street

San Diego, California 92116

(619) 284-8730

FAX 284-1764

Preschool: ext. 307

Bookkeeper: ext. 303

Extended Care: ext. 310

Parish: 284-3472

Website: [www.stdidacusparishschool.com](http://www.stdidacusparishschool.com)



*We at St. Didacus Parish School recognize that a Catholic education is one of the most effective ways available to assist parents in the education of their children. We believe that Christ is the center of our school. He is the unseen but ever present teacher, the model for our faculty, and the inspiration for our children and their parents. We provide a quality Catholic education that endeavors to enrich the spiritual and intellectual development of our students. We strive to prepare them to be the Catholic leaders of the future – in their parishes, their communities and their world.*

***2009-2010 School Year***

## Table of Contents

<b>Absences</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Access to Student Records</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Accreditation</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Admissions Policies</b>	<b>12-14</b>
<b>Advisory Board</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>After School Activities</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Alcohol/Smoking Policy</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Altar Servers</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Athletic Program</b>	<b>19-20</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>Bicycles</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Book Care and Book Bags</b>	<b>7 and 20</b>
<b>Cars/Parking</b>	<b>7-9</b>
<b>Child Abuse Reporting</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Classwork Standards</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Communication Between School and Home</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Counseling Services</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Daily Schedule</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Development Core Team</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Discipline</b>	<b>20-23</b>
<b>Doctor/Dental Appointments</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Emergency Contact Information</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Emergency Procedures</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Extended Daycare Program</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Family Directory</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Field Trips</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>General Administration</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Government Programs</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Grading Policy</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Health Programs</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>History of School</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>Homework</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Honor Societies</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Illness/Injury</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Library</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Lost and Found</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Lunch/Milk Program</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Mass Attendance</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Medications</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Minimum Days</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Mission Activities</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Office Procedures</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Official School Groups</b>	<b>25</b>

<b>Parent Responsibilities</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>Parent-Teacher Conferences</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>PTG</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Parties</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Philosophy and Mission Statement</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Physical Education</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Policies and Procedures</b>	<b>18+</b>
<b>Principal/Teacher Availability</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Progress Reports</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Promotion and Re-admittance</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Religious Instruction</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Report Cards</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Retention</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Sacramental Programs</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Saturday School</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>School Pictures and Yearbook</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Student Council</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Student Learning Expectations</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Summer Reading and Math</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Supervision of Students</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Supplementary Insurance</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Tardiness</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Textbooks</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Testing, Standardized</b>	<b>14-15</b>
<b>Traffic Control</b>	<b>26-27</b>
<b>Tuition Assistance</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Uniform Policy</b>	<b>27-29</b>
<b>Uniform Policy Free Dress</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Use of School Phone by Students</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Visitors</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Website Address</b>	<b>Cover page</b>

## ST. DIDACUS PARISH SCHOOL

### PHILOSOPHY

St. Didacus Parish School shares the common mission of Catholic education to proclaim the message of Jesus, to create Christian community, to worship God, and to serve one another and the world. Our school supports and enhances the parents' role as the primary educators of their children.

We engage students from all cultural backgrounds in a developmental curriculum promoting spiritual growth, academic excellence, and social responsibility. The school identifies its wider community as faculty and staff, students, families, parish, interested outside individuals and groups, neighbors, and alumni. Within this dynamic, the young learner develops as a whole child, grounded in God's love, preparing to shape his/her life in a pattern of excellence, morality, service, and commitment.

### MISSION STATEMENT

**St. Didacus Parish School is a Catholic elementary school engaged with parents, community, and child in the ongoing educational development of the student. We empower the student to be spiritually, academically, and socially prepared to live today and tomorrow both morally and effectively.**

### HISTORY

In 1939, St. Didacus Parish School was dedicated under the leadership of Msgr. Luke Deignan. There were six classrooms and an enrollment of 160 students for all eight grades. Sister Rita Jane Dosch, a Sister of the Holy Cross, assumed the duties of principal and House Superior, assisted by four other sisters.

In the school year 1940-1941, with an enrollment of 220 children, the school community added a ninth grade. The first graduating class of twenty students received their diplomas on June 13, 1941. Enrollment in 1941-1942 was 250 children; the following school year saw an additional ten students. Msgr. Deignan died of a heart attack in December of 1968; the new pastor name was Msgr. Charles P. Young, who arrived at the end of the school year in June, 1969. After thirty years of service to St. Didacus Parish School, the Holy Cross sisters were recalled to their Mother House. At this critical point, Msgr. Young was successful in bringing five Sisters of Mercy to San Diego from Tuam, County Galway, Ireland. The enrollment at that time was 339 students in Kindergarten through eighth grade.

In 1969, the Evaluation Committee recommended that a central library be established. During the next few years, the community's population was aging, and enrollment went down to 188 students. In March of 1972, a new room was built to house a Kindergarten in order to attract younger families.

In September of 1972, arrangements were made to bus students from Mira Mesa and the Scripps Ranch areas. By 1977, enrollment was 334 students. During the late seventies and early eighties, a computer center was established, equipped with ten computers, and individual classroom computers were installed.

St. Didacus Preschool opened in 1992 in the former library, and was licensed for 15 children, ages 2.5 to 5 years, and in 1993, the Kindergarten returned to the main building, and preschool expanded into the Kindergarten building, allowing licensing accommodations for 30 children.

One by one, the Sisters of Mercy either returned to Ireland to retire or to teach there; some went into parish work in the San Diego Diocese. In 1995, Sr. Maire Naughton, the last Sister of Mercy at St. Didacus Parish School, left to teach at Nazareth School. The Convent was then named Mercy Hall, in tribute to the nearly thirty years of service of the Sisters of Mercy. For a brief planning period, the building was used for offices and storage. Then in October of 1996, the new Media Technology Center was completed. Known as the Magdalen Room, in honor of Sr. Magdalen Flannery, this large room accommodated the computer holdings and the library. Mercy Hall now houses the Magdalen Room, the Athletics Office, the Counselor's Office, the faculty room, a teacher work room, the PTG Office and PTG storage, and an Educational Resource room.

The San Diego City Council and People for Trees worked with the school to plant six trees in the large playground in the fall of 1998, and the Preschool planted an ash tree in memory of longtime parishioner Mickey Daley. The spring of 1999 saw the adoption of the school spirit name, the "St. Didacus Padres" – especially fitting as the name "Didacus" is in fact the same as "Diego," our city and Diocesan patron saint.

The school Development team continues to advance the school in the surrounding community. In the 65<sup>th</sup> year of its existence, over \$70,000 was raised for new technology for the school, including laptops for the teachers, new computers for the lab, a movable laptop cart, Smartboards and projectors and a central server for the school.

In 2006, permission was received from the city to close the alley that runs through the campus, making the school a closed campus.

Lay principals Dorothy Jean Woody, Andrea Deebes, Linda Armstrong, Marian Jacobs, Lynn Scherer, Rosemary Watson and Elizabeth La Costa all served between the years 1987 and 2007.

In Fall 2007, Sister Mary Kiely, OFM, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis in Philadelphia, assumed the leadership of the school, and Elizabeth La Costa returned upon Sister Kiely's retirement from administration.

The school received its most recent WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation of a full six years, in 2004, and full certification by WCEA (Western Catholic Education Association).

## I. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

### ACCREDITATION

St. Didacus Parish School is fully accredited by the Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

### ATTENDANCE

A. Absence: California school law requires that students attend school regularly, unless they are specifically excused for a good reason. Students should be absent only for illness/injury or emergency. Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a successful education.

B. Extended Absences: When a parent plans for a student to be absent for any reason whatsoever, it is mandatory that, prior to the absence, a note be sent to the principal, the student's teacher and the office explaining the reason for the absence.

C. Illness/Injury: If your child is absent due to illness or injury, please call the office and inform the secretary before 9:00 a.m. This only needs to be done on the first day of an absence. We will call your home/office after 9:00 a.m. to check on an absent child if we have not heard from you. Always send a written excuse, listing the dates and reason for the absence, to the teacher the day the child returns to school (California Education Code regulation). These notes must be kept on file for a year following the absence and are noted on the child's permanent record card. (Credit for hot lunches purchased for students on the days of absences will be given, if you notify the school office before 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence.)

D. Tardiness: It is the parent's responsibility to see to it that the student arrives at school before 8:00 a.m. Children will be considered tardy if they are not with their class when the bell rings at 8:00 a.m. Students should report to the office for an admit slip if they arrive after the 8:00 a.m. bell, and should bring a written excuse from the parent. All tardies and absences are recorded on the student's permanent record card. Excessive absences or tardies may result in non-promotion or discontinuation of enrollment. Local Catholic Elementary Schools include tardy/absence records as part of admission decision. Excessive tardies may also result in detention.

E. Release of Students During Class Hours: No student is permitted to leave the school grounds at any time during school hours or to be released from class without a written and signed request from the parent to the teacher and the office. This request should include the time you will pick up your child. We will send for your child when you arrive. School staff will get the student – please do not go to the classroom as it disrupts instruction. The parent must meet the student at the school office and sign the student out before the student may leave the school grounds. The school assumes no liability in cases where students leave in violation of this policy. If this policy is not respected, parent will be asked to withdraw their child from the school.

F. Doctor/Dental Appointments: **Doctor and dental appointments should be made after school hours if at all possible.** If a student is to be taken off campus during school hours, the above-listed release policy will be followed. The school requires that students have a note from the doctor's/dentist's office when

returning to school, otherwise, the absence is not an excused absence. The student should take this note to the office when he/she returns to school. Parents are reminded that frequent absences of this type are detrimental to the student's class work and should be kept to a minimum. Appointment or unexcused absences should not conflict with the dates of standardized testing, usually in October, and we ask for your cooperation in this.

G. Truancy: any student who is absent from school without a valid excuse for more than 3 days, or who is tardy in excess of 30 minutes each of 4 days or more in one school year, is truant and can be reported to the attendance office of the local school district.

H. After-school Activities: Any student involved in after-school activities, e.g. sports or other school-sponsored programs, is never to leave campus (to go to a nearby store, or walk home and return to school) except with the adults charged with their care. A student who does not comply with this policy is liable for dismissal from the said activity. School uniforms are to be worn at practice. Free dress is not permitted at this time. If a student leaves school or is absent from school, he/she may not attend or participate in any extra-curricular events after school or that evening.

## BICYCLES

Students in fourth grade and up may ride bikes to school. Students must walk bikes on the school grounds and use safety procedures at all times. Students must wear a helmet. Bikes must be locked and the bike racks must be used. The school accepts no liability for bicycle damage or theft.

## CARE OF BOOKS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

All books must be covered. Students are not to write in any textbook or workbook, unless directed to do so by the teacher. Most textbooks and library books are the property of the school. Lost or damaged books must be replaced at cost to the student. School bookbags or backpacks are to be used every day and are required of all students. No rolling backpacks until 4<sup>th</sup> grade. No suitcases.

Students are not allowed to chew gum anywhere, at any time, on school premises because of the problem it poses to floors, carpets, furniture, playground, sidewalks, and academic materials. Detention and/or fines will be issued for infractions of this rule.

The school has been built, equipped and maintained at great expense to the parish and school community. Buildings and equipment should be kept in good condition. Any damage to school property is the direct responsibility of the student and his/her parents.

The school is not responsible for any non-school items. Students are not allowed to bring any personal electronic equipment, athletic equipment, radios, CDs, cameras, toys, trading cards, or any such equipment to school.

## CARS/PARKING

Please follow the directions of the Safety Patrol when driving on the school grounds from the Felton St. entrance. Cars may ONLY make a right turn into the back parking lot off of Felton Street. No vehicle is to

be parked on the large playground during arrival or dismissal times, or during the school day because it becomes a hazard during physical education classes and fire drills. This is necessary for the safety of the children.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

7:55 a.m.	Students should be on the <b><u>small playground</u></b> . (Preschoolers to preschool building)
8:00 a.m.	Bell rings. Morning assembly and prayer. (Students are tardy after 8:00 a.m. bell.) Instruction begins.
10:00 – 10:15 a.m.	Kindergarten recess.
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	Recess (grades 1 – 8)
12:00 – 12:40 p.m.	Lunch
2:45 p.m.	Dismissal
3:00 p.m.	School grounds must be cleared. Any student not picked up is taken to daycare.

Children arriving between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. – including those accompanied by their parents – enter the school grounds via the south gate on 34th St. (if on foot), or the large gate (if in a car) on Felton St. If adults bringing children to school have business in the School Office, he/she may send the child in through the gate, while the adult enters through the main double doors to reach the Office, or through the doors fronting on the small playground.

## EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

It is **extremely important** that the school secretary be notified when there is a change in your address or phone numbers so that our emergency information remains up-to-date in case of an emergency.

## EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM

St. Didacus Parish School conducts an extended care program both before and after school hours, with a separate charge. Please contact the school office for details, program hours, and fees.

## ILLNESS OR INJURY DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

A. Families are notified immediately of serious injury or sudden illnesses that occur during school hours. For this reason, **it is of the utmost importance that families keep the Emergency Card information up-to-date.** Any change in phone numbers, alternate contact persons, addresses, doctors, etc. must be communicated to the office, in writing, when the change occurs. If it is impossible to reach a parent or responsible person, St. Didacus Parish School reserves the right to select emergency care providers. No liability would attach to such decision in the event parents cannot be reached. Any expenses incurred will be borne by the child's family. The school will not be responsible for anything that may happen as a result of false information given to the school. ***If your child has allergies, or any other condition necessitating special arrangements, this should be noted on the emergency card.***

**B. If parents are going out of town, the school office must be notified of the responsible person in charge of their children. A written note with instructions and dates of parental absence should be sent to the school office in advance.**

C. If an injury occurs, the same procedure will be followed. In addition, insurance forms are available from the school secretary and must be completed within three months of the accident.

## LUNCH/MILK PROGRAM

A reasonably-priced, nutritious hot lunch, with milk, is served Monday through Friday in the school auditorium. A monthly menu is sent home in the Family Envelope and families may purchase the lunches, if they so desire. Students who bring their own lunches may purchase milk on a monthly basis. We ask parents not to bring in fast food lunches since they are often not nutritious, and they disrupt the lunch routine as other students are distracted. Lunches are not to contain soft drinks, high energy or high caffeine drinks, glass bottles, food that must be heated, candy or other empty calorie foods. In addition to lunch, parents should send a healthy snack for recess to reinforce the child's energy level. If a student stays for after-school sports or other programs, it is especially important to provide adequate nutrition.

**If a student forgets to bring a lunch, they will be given a hot lunch and a bill will be sent home to the parents that day.**

## MEDICATIONS

All medication, including aspirin, non-aspirin or inhalers, must be kept in the school office accompanied by written instructions, signed and dated by the parent and doctor, regarding dosage and the procedure for administering. Please mark the medication with the student's name in large, easy-to-read letters. Enclose the medication and instructions in a plastic bag and bring it to the school office. A student is not permitted to have any type of medication in their possession. Parents or guardians should notify the teachers, in writing, if the student needs to take medication (to be dispensed from the school office) during school hours for a temporary period; students taking medication on an ongoing basis should have written information to that effect in the school office.

## MINIMUM DAYS

Faculty meeting days (first Friday of each month) will be minimum days. Students will be dismissed at 12:00 noon. Half-day schedules may also be followed on certain days for special meetings, in advance of holidays, or at the discretion of the Principal and/or Pastor. Parents will be notified in advance.

## OFFICE PROCEDURES

School office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily from mid-August through the month of June. When school is not in session (e.g. during vacations), the office is not staffed. Phone messages may be left on the office phone number and will be responded to as soon as possible.

## PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER AVAILABILITY

Principal/parent/student meetings: The principal is available to meet with any parent or student. Please call the office for an appointment.

Teacher/parent meeting: teachers are usually available to meet with parents and students from 3:00 p.m. (or at a mutually agreeable time) by appointment only. Please call the school office to schedule an appointment, or send a note to the teacher in advance of the day and time you wish to meet. Trying to speak with a teacher right before school or right at dismissal often interferes with the teacher's supervision responsibilities or class preparation and should be avoided if at all possible.

## SUPERVISION

Parents are asked not to have their children on the school grounds before 7:30 a.m. when supervision begins, unless children are in the extended care program. Upon dismissal at 2:45 p.m., students are to leave the school grounds immediately, unless they are requested to stay by a teacher, or are in detention, or are participating in a school-organized activity. *Please notify the school office in writing (special form in the school office) if your child walks or rides a bike home at the end of the school day.* Supervision ends at 2:45 p.m., or at 12:00 noon on minimal days. The school accepts no liability for providing supervision before 7:30 a.m. or after school hours unless a child is enrolled in the St. Didacus Extended Care Program. Any student on the school grounds before/after school hours will be escorted to the on-site extended care program, and parents will be billed accordingly. Our insurance liability ends at 6:00 p.m. and the appropriate authorities will be notified if any child is left at school after 6:00 p.m.

Supervision is provided when students are taking part in the after-school sports programs. If such an event is cancelled, parents will be called to pick up their child/children and the children will be escorted to the extended care program.

Students are never to be in any room (classroom, library, auditorium) without a teacher present to supervise.

## SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE

All students in Diocesan schools participate in the student accident insurance program. This insurance provides supplemental benefits for students injured at school, on the playgrounds, while participating in athletic games, and while directly going to or coming from school-sponsored activities.

## USE OF SCHOOL PHONES BY STUDENTS

Students are not permitted to use school phones without school staff permission. If an emergency arises, the office secretary will place the call for the student. Students are generally not permitted to call home for forgotten items, or to make arrangements for after school.

**USE OF CELL PHONES: We discourage cell phones on campus as they are distracting and disruptive to the learning process. If a student must have a phone for after school arrangements, it must be turned OFF during the school day and should be stored out of sight in a backpack or purse. If a student is seen in possession of a cell phone, the phone will be confiscated, placed in the office safe and a parent must come and claim the phone. Those who violate any of the rules regarding cell phone use outlined here or in the discipline policy may forfeit their privileges of bringing them to school.**

## II. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

### CURRICULUM

The curriculum at St. Didacus Parish School is designated by the Diocese of San Diego for elementary schools. It includes a course of study for each of the following subject areas: Religion and Family Life, Reading and Literature, Language Arts (spelling, vocabulary, the writing process, handwriting, grammar), Mathematics, Science and Health, Social Studies/History, Computer Skills, Music, Art, and Physical Education.

### GRADING POLICY

The administration and faculty of St. Didacus Parish School seek to measure total student performance. In conjunction with the Diocesan requirements for the grading system, written grades are given for each student so as to keep students and parents aware of the student's progress in the completion of the curriculum. Cumulative quarter grades are posted on the report card, and individual grades for specific work is written on that student's work. Grades are based on such areas as class work, homework, test and quiz performance, class participation, effort and conduct, independent and group work, special projects, appearance of completed work, attitude, etc. The school looks for and encourages the best from each child. Frequent communication among the student, teacher, and family is encouraged. Any matter involving a student's work or behavior must be discussed with the teacher first, before being brought to the attention of the principal. Any conferences with teacher or principal are by appointment only.

### HOMEWORK

A. Homework is designed to reinforce the learning and instruction and has an essential place in the educational program. Homework is assigned daily, for the most part, unless a long-term project is assigned. It is intended to reinforce concepts and skills that have been presented in class, foster students' creativity and discipline through enrichment projects or research, guide the student to work independently and to accept responsibility for completing a task in a timely manner – all considered as preparation for life skills and further education.

B. Homework timeframes include the following: Grades K – 2: 15 – 30 minutes; Grades 3 – 5: 15 – 60 minutes; and Grades 6 – 8: 15 – 90 minutes. If home study exceeds these amounts on a consistent basis, please contact the teacher.

C. Students will be held responsible for any assignment missed due to an absence. If you wish to request assignments for a student who is ill, call the school office before 10 a.m. and the secretary will arrange a time when you can pick up the work in the office. In unexcused absences, the parents must accept the responsibility for the student's lack of schoolwork and the resultant lowered grades. To receive credit for work missed during unexcused absences, the work must be made up. It is the student's/parent's responsibility to obtain the required assignments and to arrange for examinations missed.

## HONOR SOCIETIES

Both the California Junior Scholastic Federation and the National Junior Honor Society have active chapters on the St. Didacus campus. A combination of grade point average and exceptional character and behavior qualify one for membership, as outlined in the societies' constitutions. Students in the seventh and eighth grades are eligible for membership by the semester. A gold honor cord is worn at graduation by the eighth grade students who have qualified for membership at least once in the seventh grade, and both semesters in eighth grade.

## MASS ATTENDANCE (WEEKENDS)

**As a Catholic school, we recognize that there is a great opportunity for parent-directed religious education in the celebration of Saturday night or Sunday Mass. It is essential to our mission as Catholic educators in partnership with parents that families attend Mass on a regular basis. As the primary religious educators of their children, families are encouraged to consistently follow through on this most serious obligation.**

## MISSION ACTIVITIES

St. Didacus Parish School actively participates in the Holy Childhood Association. This branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith creates opportunities for young people to become aware of the needs of people around the world. This program fosters an awareness of, and concern for, human and spiritual needs, and develops a spirit of generosity and sharing. Various activities are held throughout the year to provide opportunities for students to give to those who are less fortunate by contributing their time, talent, or treasure in such experiences as bake sales, collection drives or other forms of giving.

## PARENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES

A formal parent-teacher conference will be scheduled at the end of the first report card period, usually in November. This conference is mandatory. Appointments will be scheduled for parents, and students may be required to attend. Other conferences may be scheduled throughout the year at the discretion of either teacher or parent, by appointment only, and are recommended any time a parent or teacher recognizes a need. Informal contact by note, phone, or visit is welcomed with the reminder that arrangements must be made in advance for a visit with the teacher.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A. The physical education program has been designed to increase flexibility, agility, and endurance, promote a healthy lifestyle, improve physical conditioning, and create an environment where good sportsmanship is practiced and encouraged.

B. All students in Kindergarten through eighth grade are required to actively participate in the physical education program. If there is a medical reason for non-participation or limited activity, a written notice from a doctor to this effect, listing the restrictions and the length of time the restriction is to be allowed, must be on file in the school office each year. The parent also must provide a copy of the notice for the classroom

teacher and the PE teacher. Students who are well enough for regular class (e.g. colds or returning to school after being sick), but not for strenuous activity will be excused from active play during PE, recess, and lunch, and may be excused from active play for the day, provided the parent sends a written, dated, and signed note requesting such privilege; such requests are to be exceptional, but will be honored.

C. Students must be in proper attire on the days scheduled for PE. Failure to comply will result in a reduction of the grade for that day's class. (See the section on Uniform Requirements)

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports will go home in the family envelope at the mid-term of each quarter (additional reports may be sent at other times if the teacher deems it appropriate) to students who are experiencing difficulties. The Progress Report must be signed and returned to the classroom teacher the next day. It is the responsibility of the parent and student to inquire at that time as to the steps to be taken to correct any deficiency.

## PROMOTION AND RE-ADMITTANCE

A. To be promoted, a student must have passing grades in all core academic subjects; that is, he/she must demonstrate competency in the grade level requirements in order to advance.

B. At the end of the school year, students who have exhibited a spirit of cooperation and effort in conduct and studies are invited to return to St. Didacus Parish School for the coming school year.

## REPORT CARDS

A. Report cards are distributed quarterly. The grading scale is that which is defined and mandated by the Diocese of San Diego Office for Schools. These report cards are to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school within the week they are given.

B. If a student is absent more than 12 days during a report card period, he/she will not receive grades for that period without special arrangement with the teacher and principal. An incomplete grade on a report card will need to be fulfilled according to the requirements of the grade and the guidelines of the teacher. Diocesan regulations will be followed.

## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION/LITURGIES/PRAYER

A. The educational mission of the Catholic Church and the reasonable expectations of parents require that the Catholic school be distinguished by an atmosphere and a formal program that relate religious belief and practice with the normal development and education of children. Regular religious instruction is an integral part of the educational program for all students at all grade levels.

B. School liturgies are important in developing a Catholic school spirit and are celebrated once a month for the whole school at St. Didacus Parish Church. Each Wednesday, two classes attend 8:30 Mass with the parish. Other seasonal or special prayer services or Masses may be scheduled as the opportunities arise.

Students are involved in the preparation of these Masses, paraliturgies, and prayer services. Our emphasis is on providing a religious education for all students.

C. Fostering a prayer life is an essential part of our program. As a Catholic school community, we recognize the importance of both formal and informal prayer. From the opening assembly with prayer, to the closing of the day, prayers are said regularly. Specific prayers are learned each year as part of the religion curriculum in each grade, and additional prayers and prayer forms may also be introduced.

## RETENTION

If a teacher determines that a student is experiencing grave difficulty with grade-level learning expectations, that teacher will confer with the principal in a timely manner, and by the first quarter report card (early November), or before, a conference will be arranged with parents, teacher and principal to discuss the options for the child to be successful. If retention is to be considered, parents are notified as early as possible so that if tutoring or other programs can be planned to assist the child, they be put into operation before retention is considered. Retention of a student will be effected only after consideration of all the facts related to the student's development, and consultation between the teachers, principal, and families.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

A. Families of students in the second grade will participate in the Sacramental Preparation program, which readies Catholic students for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist. The second grade teacher, working with the pastor, principal, and parish director of religious education, schedules these events in conjunction with the parish CCD program to prepare the children for the reception of these two sacraments. There are regularly scheduled meetings which parents must attend because the parent is the primary educator of the child.

B. Children not in second grade, who wish to receive Baptism, Reconciliation, or First Eucharist, can speak to their teacher or the principal. With the families, arrangements can be made to accommodate such students, with the help of the parish director of religious education and the classroom teacher.

## SUMMER READING AND MATH

Summer reading and a math program are to be completed by each student over the summer as part of the curriculum. The assignments support our philosophy of the importance of lifetime learning as a goal and value for our students. The students' reading, writing and math skills are sharpened over the summer by the work on these assignments. Because students review the math concepts of the previous year over the summer, teachers are able to lessen review time at the beginning of the year and get into the grade level material more quickly. Students receive a grade for the work done which has a significant impact on their first quarter grade.

## TESTING

Standardized tests adopted by the Diocese of San Diego Office for Schools are administered to all students during the year. Currently, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is given, and in addition, at the fourth and

seventh grades, the Otis-Lennon Test of Learning Styles is also given. Grades five and eight take the ACRE test of religious education. The purpose of these standardized tests is to measure each child's academic achievement as compared with national and local Catholic school norms. Tests, both formal and informal, help to evaluate programs and curriculum needs. Parents receive copies of the results for their child showing strengths and weaknesses. Details about the dates and times of testing will be sent home in advance. We ask that you not schedule doctors or other appointments during these dates. It is important that each child is present for every test to insure a more accurate record of his/her achievement. These national testing programs are not recorded as either pass or fail, nor are they used for grading purposes, but rather they are measures of student learning in the subject matter.

### III. ADMISSIONS POLICY

#### ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. St. Didacus Parish School admits students of any race, color, and national/or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of this school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national/ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic, or other school administered programs.

B. Since the Catholic schools of the Diocese of San Diego are established and maintained by the Diocese and parish as religious schools, preference is given to practicing members of the Diocesan Catholic community. Preference in admission shall be given to the children of active supporting members of St. Didacus Parish. In the case of Catholic students, preference shall be given to the admission of siblings of students already enrolled in the school.

C. No person shall be admitted as a student unless that person and his/her family subscribe to the school's philosophy and agree to abide by the educational policies and regulations of St. Didacus Parish School and of the Diocese by signing the Registration and Philosophy Agreements of the school. These agreements state that parents will uphold the standards of the school, recognizing the parents' responsibilities as primary educators of their children, and the importance of maintaining a Christian atmosphere in the home, by supporting the policies of the school and the curriculum being taught. We encourage a structured learning environment, prayer, family worship, and active peace in the home. We stress active communication with the principal, teachers, and other school staff, and compliance with all school, Diocesan, and state regulations. We also stress active participation by parents in the parent/teacher group and the fundraising activities of the school. Parents who consistently resist or ignore these commitments put at risk their children's continued enrollment at St. Didacus Parish School.

D. An interview with the Principal is required for all new applicants. Approval of the Principal is necessary in order to be admitted to St. Didacus Parish School. The administration and staff of the school may not be able to accommodate those students who demonstrate severe grade level deficiencies or behavioral problems. We will recommend and assist parents in alternate school placement if we cannot meet the needs of the student.

E. Parental support is essential. Parents must agree to actively support the spiritual and academic standards of the school and to participate in school functions, fund-raisers and the volunteer programs. Because we

affirm the role of the parent as the primary educator, most especially in the area of religious and moral formation, it is essential that families recognize the importance of family prayer and weekly participation in the Sunday celebration of the liturgy and a commitment to the school's philosophy, rules, and regulations.

F. Newly admitted students must have a completed application form, including school contract, Baptismal and birth certificates, and a report card from the previous school, if applicable. Immunization records and physical exam forms are due before the first day of school. It is California state policy that no child will be admitted without an immunization record. (San Diego Public Health Department and California School Immunization Law, Health and Safety Code, Sections 120325-120375)

G. A test (\$10 fee) will be administered to determine the student's strengths and weaknesses. The administration may refuse admission or grade placement if the child is not ready developmentally or if the testing finds that the child is substantially below grade level. All new students will be placed on academic and behavior probation for at least one term.

**H. A child must be five years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to Kindergarten, and six years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> to be admitted to First Grade (Diocese of San Diego requirement).** Such evidence shall be in the form of a Birth or Baptismal certificate, duly attested, a passport, or an affidavit of the parent, guardian or custodian of the child. (Education Code, Sec. 10504) Any child transferring from another school must bring all report cards from that school before admittance is accepted. Health records and transcripts are requested from the previous school by the principal.

I. California law requires specific health screening and immunization procedures for all students admitted to school. The school office will present information on all necessary records. A physician's certificate, indicating that the student has been immunized and the dates of immunization and health exams, is required. A student who lacks the required immunization and health forms will not be admitted to school. (AB 2068)

J. It shall be the responsibility of the parent of each student to inform the school office in writing concerning the medical welfare of a student. Any allergies, hypersensitivities (drugs, antibiotics, bee stings, food, etc.), or chronic illness should be reported on your child's permanent health record on file in the school office. Other health factors pertaining to your child should also be reported.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. Specifically, this includes the responsibility:

- to establish a home environment which teaches the moral values, religious habits, social skills, self-discipline, and commitment to learning upon which successful Catholic schooling is based;
- to be fully informed regarding all aspects of their children's developmental progress, and where needed, to take and/or support the appropriate remedial action; and,
- to make every effort to establish and maintain a collaborative and mutually supportive relationship with the school which they have selected for their children.

St. Didacus Parish School has the correlative responsibility to guide, assist, support, and complement parents in their efforts to meet these responsibilities. Of particular importance is the school's obligation to assist parents in gaining the information and insight necessary to make informed judgments regarding the religious and moral education of their children.

Spiritually, St. Didacus Parish School expects parents to actively support the religious formation that the school, as a Catholic institution of learning, seeks to develop in the students. Parents can foster spirituality by taking time to talk to their children about God and sharing their own faith, praying together, participating in the celebration of Mass together on Sundays and Holy days, being knowledgeable about the religious concepts the student is learning, participating in that part of the sacramental program offered for parents for the purpose of the reception of a sacrament (Baptism, Reconciliation, and Holy Eucharist), and continually reaching out to develop their own faith life.

Practically, parents, teachers, and students are all members of the total school community. With the help of parent volunteers, and parent participation in school functions, all members of the school community will benefit. Each family is expected to be involved. Minimum responsibilities include:

- a willingness to volunteer your services and to help build a strong school community by giving of yourself
- an active interest in, and participation in fund-raising activities
- regular attendance at PTG meetings and other meetings held to foster your child's education or religious growth
- open communication with, and trust in, the teacher involved including questions, concerns, doubts, etc., or with the principal regarding school policy
- support of the school's educational programs by fostering good study habits and stressing the importance of study at home
- respecting school rules and policies, discussing them with your children and stressing compliance.

***Financial Responsibilities: A. Tuition and Fees:*** Tuition constitutes the major source of income for St. Didacus Parish School. It is imperative that it be paid promptly as the school depends on it for its operating budget. Late fees are assessed if payments are delinquent and progress reports and report cards will not be released, nor will eighth grade students be allowed to participate in graduation exercises if tuition is not current. FACTS is the tuition collection method used by the school and details are available in the office or from the bookkeeper. Every effort is made to keep tuition rates as affordable as possible. The financial responsibilities of enrolling a child in St. Didacus Parish School include – an initial testing fee, an annual registration fee (non-refundable, and due at time of registration), tuition (paid annually or monthly through the FACTS tuition collection program), uniform, supplies, and support of PTG fund-raisers. The policy regarding late or missed payments is delineated in the agreement signed by all parents at registration (and re-registration each year). At the time of re-registration each spring, all commitments to the school must be cleared or up-to-date or a student will not be considered re-registered. These commitments include: all tuition payments, minimum levels of PTG fund-raisers, scrip, service hours, extended care payments, miscellaneous fees (texts, library books, camps, etc.). The deadline for completion of PTG fund-raisers, scrip, and service hours is April 1.

***B. Registration fee:*** A registration fee is paid upon registration or re-registration; this covers processing of registration, standardized testing, photocopying of materials and records throughout the year, student insurance, educational materials and supplies, costs associated with new texts, textbook rental, Diocesan tax, and physical education equipment. Registration is not considered confirmed until this fee is paid, and it is non-refundable.

***D. Other fees:*** Sixth grade camp, eighth grade graduation and retreat, and other fees which may be attached to field trips, will be assessed during the year and payments in full are required before any student can attend the function. Eighth grade graduation fees, tuition, and parent commitments are due and payable on a pre-

determined date to be announced to parents. If such eighth grade fees, tuition, and commitments are not paid as due, the student will not take part in graduation activities. Financial aid is sometimes available.

**E. Volunteer service:** Each family contributes thirty (30) service hours to the school between May 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30th of the following year. The school depends on the dedicated efforts of its families in contributing this assistance. These hours are logged in by the parent and submitted to the office before May 1st in order to be credited. Donation of goods of cash may also be credited as service hours and must be logged in to be credited. A donation in lieu of participation will be made to St. Didacus Parish School by May 1<sup>st</sup> for any service hours not completed. Volunteer hours may be completed by helping in any one of the following: classroom aide work or helping any teacher, officers and committee members of the PTG, room parents and assistants, coaches for after-school sports, hot lunch worker, office assistance, transportation on field trips. Call the school office or PTG officer for other ideas.

**F. Scrip:** The sale of scrip is an important fund-raiser. When you purchase scrip, you receive a gift certificate for the full purchase amount. The participating businesses donate a percentage of the purchases to the school. Scrip is available in the school office and at the church rectory during the summer. Families are required to purchase \$3000 in scrip between May 1st and April 30th of the following year. A donation in lieu of participation will be made to St. Didacus Parish School by May 1<sup>st</sup> at the rate of 10% of the value of the scrip that remains to be purchased.

**G. Fund-raisers:** Fund-raising efforts generate needed income for the school's operating budget. Families are expected to participate in a preset amount for certain fund-raisers, to be determined by the principal and PTG. A donation in lieu of participation will be made to St. Didacus Parish School by May 1<sup>st</sup> for any portion of the parents' commitment remaining on these fund-raisers.

## TUITION ASSISTANCE

St. Didacus Parish School provides some tuition assistance through donations from the parish and the generosity of people who contribute to the school. The amount is limited and is only a partial assistance program. The pastor must approve all applicants for tuition assistance. Applications are available at re-registration time.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Students at St. Didacus Parish School are expected to respond fully to the religious, academic, behavior, social, and physical requirements of the school not only on campus, but also at extra-curricular activities, school-sponsored programs, and to- and -from such activities. Students are seen as ambassadors of their families, their school, their Church, and their neighborhood, and their behavior must reflect the highest standards of the school.

## IV. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### ABUSE OF TEACHERS

Any parent, guardian or other person who insults or abuses any teacher in the presence or hearing of other school personnel or students and at a place which is on school premises or public sidewalks, streets, or other public ways adjacent to school premises or at some other place if the teacher is required to be at such other place in connection with assigned school activities, is guilty of a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine of not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.00). (EC 44812).

## ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

A. A student's parents or legal guardians have the right to inspect all of their child's records in the presence of the principal or his/her delegate; and any behavioral records will be inspected in the presence of the person qualified to interpret the records. Challenges to the content of the student's permanent record are concerned with the correction of data in the student record, not with the substantive decisions on academic grades. Such challenges are to be settled through proceedings at the local school site. The family of the student may file a written request with the principal to correct or amend any information in the child's record which is seen as inaccurate, or an unsubstantiated personal conclusion.

B. Official transcripts are mailed from St. Didacus Parish School to the receiving school, including the high schools of potential graduates. Official transcripts are not given to parents, guardians, or students for delivery to the school. An unofficial copy of the child's report card may be given to the student's parents or guardians upon request.

## ALCOHOL/SMOKING POLICY

In order to maintain a positive and wholesome atmosphere, St. Didacus Parish School has adopted a policy that no alcohol will be permitted at any school function on campus at which students may be present. We appreciate your cooperation. Smoking is not permitted at any function, or in any building on the school grounds.

## ALTAR SERVERS

Boys and girls in grades four through eight may be altar servers. This privilege is highly regarded, and the pastor trains candidates for this important service. The servers assist at all school Masses, and when parents so commit, also assist at parish Masses, funerals, weddings, and other special ceremonies. The parish staff publishes a monthly schedule, and families are responsible for seeing that the servers arrive at church consistently and on time.

## ATHLETIC PROGRAM

A. In addition to the regularly scheduled PE classes, the school administers participation in various sports and leagues with other Diocesan Catholic schools throughout the school year. Such activities are in addition to the school day. Practices and games are after school or on the weekends. Parent volunteers may coach, and are supervised by the school's athletic director. A league fee is charged for each sport, and varies with the sport. It includes referee fees, use of the sport uniform, awards, etc.

B. Typical sports played include volleyball, football, soccer, and basketball. The athletic program is designed to promote physical fitness, team spirit and cooperation, and wholesome recreation. The students gain experience with healthy competition, working as a team, gracious winning and losing, and the challenge of commitment to a season of practices and games.

C. All behavior, student and adult, at practices and games, is consistent with the philosophy and spirit of St. Didacus Parish School.

D. To remain eligible for a team, a student must maintain a “C” or better on all major subjects (religion, literature, language arts, math, science, and social studies). Behavior and Study Skills must be a “G” level or better. Teachers inform the students and the Athletic Director of ineligible players every two weeks; the Athletic Director keeps the coaches and parents informed. Ineligible players still attend practices but may not play in any games until their averages show improvement. Ineligibility does not carry over from one year to the next.

## BOOKBAGS AND EXTRA SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Students are to carry texts, binders, and school supplies in durable backpacks. Extra athletic uniforms and supplies may be brought in duffle bags or backpacks. These supplies are only those required by the athletic director and may not include personal sports equipment. The school is not liable for any personal property brought to school by students or parents. No roller backpacks in grades K-3 and no suitcases.

## CHILD ABUSE REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

In accordance with Diocesan policy and California law, school staff are obligated under penalty of fine and imprisonment to report the reasonable suspicion of emotional or physical abuse or neglect, inadequate supervision, or sexual abuse and exploitation. According to the law and the seriousness of the situation, the school will not contact parents in advance of making a report to legal authorities.

## COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME

Each Tuesday, the school sends home the yellow Family Envelope which contains all important school information. This is given to the oldest or only student in the family. The envelope must be returned, signed and dated, the next day, with responses to all pertinent forms included. Typically, the envelope contains the principal’s newsletter, items from the PTG, hot lunch or milk order forms, scrip order forms, grade-level communications, and other important information. **Please read it carefully as it is the school’s means of communication with you, the parents and families.** Duplicates may be requested when there are two households for a child. Contact the school office if you would like an additional copy sent home. Information is usually available on the school website and via email as well.

## COUNSELING SERVICES

St. Didacus Parish School makes available the services of counseling interns from Catholic Charities. This service is provided on a limited basis. A fully licensed professional psychologist from the Catholic Charities office supervises the interns. Referral forms are available from the teachers or the school office. A child may self-refer. The counselor will not proceed with sessions beyond the first meeting unless he/she has a signed permission form from the family. There is no charge for the in-school program.

## DISCIPLINE

A. Discipline in a Catholic school is an essential aspect of Christian development. Discipline is a positive teaching opportunity – one in which the families, students, and the school staff are in accord. Founded on the Assertive Discipline program, St. Didacus Parish School’s expectations for all students are directed by

the belief that each child has the full right to learn, and play, and grow, and that no other child has the right to interfere with that process. Inherent in this belief is that every teacher has the full right to teach each student, and no child has the right to disrupt that vital activity. Discipline is necessary in order to educate students to an appreciation of the importance of developing responsibility and self-control, provide a classroom situation conducive to learning, and help build a sense of community. Discipline provides moral guidance within the framework of the teachings of the Catholic Church and growth in self-discipline based upon Christian values. Reverence for others and respect for property are important student attributes. The common good of the school requires conduct conducive to the fulfillment of spiritual, academic, and social goals, as well as the preservation of good order. It is the aim of the disciplinary process to help the students understand that their decisions have consequences, and thus further the development of personal responsibility.

B. School-wide expectations are posted in the school, and classroom expectations are displayed in each classroom. Students at St. Didacus Parish School are expected to act so that their behavior reflects favorably on the individual and the school. This includes behavior while on any school-sponsored activity: field trips, the playground, at sporting events, etc. and these basic expectations are of doing one's best and respecting others. Each person must recognize and accept his/her individual responsibilities and obligations in accordance with school regulations allowing a harmonious school atmosphere.

C. At Back-to-School Night, each teacher distributes and discusses the school and classroom expectations and consequences; parents are to review and sign these sheets. It is understood that parental involvement, trust in the school, and support in the area of discipline, as in all other areas of school policies and procedures, is a necessary component of the program at St. Didacus Parish School. When parents, teachers, administration, and staff are in accord regarding these policies, success is possible. If questions arise, please contact your child's teacher first, as the principal will not discuss any issue with a family that has not already been addressed with the teacher in question.

D. Our discipline plan recognizes that children need consistent, clear standards. Positive reinforcement of correct behavior is part of the process, while consequences for inappropriate behavior may include detention or a conference with parents and student. The procedure for approved disciplinary measures include (ranked in order of severity:

- warning the student about inappropriate behavior
- detention after school
- teacher conference with student
- teacher conference with parent/student
- conference with principal (teacher/parent/student)
- assignment of special tasks or contract between teacher and student
- denial of privileges and removal from positions of responsibility
- probation
- suspension
- expulsion.

E. Specific guidelines which apply to all students and which are grounds for disciplinary procedures, whether committed on campus or off, are:

- disrespect shown to a teacher or adult in charge
- disrespect of anyone on campus

- failure to adhere to classroom or school rules
- leaving the grounds at any time during the school day without written permission from parent/guardian and clearance from the office
- students entering unsupervised classrooms, hallways, or any school building or room
- fighting, kick-boxing, and imitations of such
- defacing school property (e.g. desks, walls, furniture etc.) or one's property or that of others
- use of unacceptable language such as profanity or obscenity
- tackle football or other rough play is not allowed
- students may not leave the classrooms without permission
- riding skateboards, skateshoes or bicycles on school grounds
- gum chewing
- actions occurring off campus, but within activities related to school, shall be dealt with as if they occurred at school.

#### POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC DISCIPLINE ITEMS:

**Cheating:** Any student caught cheating (including plagiarism of any type) will receive an automatic zero on the test or assignment and will be sent to the principal who will contact the student's parents. The student will automatically appear before the Discipline Board.

**Bullying:** Bullying will not be tolerated at the school.

**Student Threats:** The Diocese and school take student threats seriously. If a student makes a serious threat of harm to self or another student, the principal will be notified immediately. If the principal is not available, the vice principal or supervise teacher will begin procedures. The police will be notified, parents will be contacted and the student will not be readmitted until a comprehensive mental health evaluation and risk assessment are conducted by an independent psychologist or psychiatrist.

F. Suspension from school is not ordinary punishment. It will be used when other corrective measures have failed **or a serious offense is committed**. Parents will be notified of the suspension and the reason for this disciplinary measure. A student may be placed on suspension for serious misconduct, on campus or off campus, during school related activities, or for continued misconduct after having been placed on probation. Lack of cooperation with the suspension plan could lead to expulsion. Official suspension means that the student is sent home immediately with a parent/guardian for the entire period of the suspension. Students lose the right to participate in any school activity on or off campus for the period of the suspension. Students must make up any work missed during the loss of class time.

G. A student may be expelled from school for misconduct of a serious nature calling for immediate dismissal without suspension or for a repetition of conduct for which the student has been suspended one or more times.

H. Grounds for suspension and expulsion include, but are not limited to:

- actions gravely detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of other students
- incorrigible or disruptive behavior which impedes the progress of the rest of the class

- use of cell phones for the purpose of harassment, cheating, threatening or any other use deemed abusive of appropriate cell phone use.
- habitual or persistent violation of school regulations
- continued willful disobedience, habitual profanity or vulgarity, open and persistent defiance of the authority of the school personnel, or assault or battery upon a student, upon school premises or while under the authority of school personnel, or any theft or force or violence directed toward school personnel at any time or place, shall constitute good cause for suspension or expulsion from school (Calif. Education Code)
- smoking or possession of tobacco on school premises
- harassment
- fighting
- bullying or threatening another student, verbally, or in written form, including on the computer, internet or cell phone
- possession, use, or sale of narcotics or other drugs on school premises or elsewhere (Calif. Education Code)
- possession or use of alcohol or other intoxicating substance on school grounds or elsewhere (Calif. Education Code)
- willful destruction or defacing of school property (and the parent or guardian is liable for all damages so caused by the minor) (Calif. Education Code)
- when other measures or correction fail to bring about proper conduct
- theft, extortion, arson, hazing, or habitual truancy
- possession of dangerous weapons on school grounds.

## I SATURDAY SCHOOL

Saturday School is assigned at the discretion of the Discipline Board or the principal.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

A. Earthquake Packs: At the opening of each school year, every family will prepare a disaster food package for each child, preschool through 8th grade. Guidelines for this will be distributed in the Family Envelope. These packs will be sent home with each child at the end of the school year as fresh supplies need to be provided by the families in September.

B. Emergency Closing: In the event of an emergency necessitating closing school during regular hours, the students and faculty and staff will proceed with practiced procedures. If the situation is such that it is safe and advisable that children be picked up, only those adults identified on the student's emergency card will be permitted to pick up students. If families are unable to reach the school grounds, school personnel will remain with the students for the number of hours required by Diocesan and Emergency regulations. During this time, every effort will be made to communicate with the family to arrange safe pick-up of students. Parents/guardians of students who live in more than one household must notify the school of release information for those students. St. Didacus personnel will release students to the first adult who arrives and is identified on the Emergency Card.

## FAMILY DIRECTORY

A family directory is presented to each family for their convenience. The directory includes student/key family name, cross-references for that name, phone numbers, address, email, child's grade, and parent names. A family may opt to delete certain of these items, or may choose not to participate in the directory at all. The information in the directory is considered confidential to our school families, and is to be honored as such, and is not to be used for any out-of-school promotions, sales, etc. These restrictions apply to e-mail addresses also.

## FIELD TRIPS

A. Students will be allowed to go on school-sponsored field trips **only** if their field trip permission slips have been sent in signed by the parent or guardian. Permission for a student to attend a field trip may not be given verbally (e.g., over the phone). We are able to accept a faxed permission slip (619-284-1764). Students not attending a field trip will complete their work under the supervision of another classroom teacher, at the school. **Field trips are a privilege and not a right, as they are in addition to the regular curriculum. Students can remain at school under the care of another teacher if their behavior does not warrant the privilege.**

B. Volunteer drivers for school field trips must provide proof of insurance, minimum \$100,000 liability, and Driver Information sheet verifying that the driver is at least 21 years of age. In addition, individual seat belts are required for each passenger, and car seats for any student who weighs less than 60 pounds. No siblings, school age or younger, are allowed on school-sponsored field trips. Each driver must carry the original permission slips/medical release forms for the students riding in that car; the teacher will have copies of all permission slips. The children in each car are the responsibility of the driver for the entire trip. No teacher will drive any of the students. Drivers must go directly to the site to be visited and return to school immediately after. Stopping for treats or other side trips is not permitted.

## FORGOTTEN ITEMS

To minimize distraction and interruptions in classroom learning time, any forgotten items brought to school during the day must be left, with student's name and grade, in the school office. Parents may not take these items directly to the classroom. The secretary will see that the child gets the items.

## GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

St. Didacus Parish School receives a small amount of federal funds for library books, student computer-assisted instruction, and other AV materials.

## HEALTH PROGRAMS (SCHOOL SPONSORED)

The school will offer preliminary health screenings such as hearing and eye testing, and scoliosis screening, for certain grades. Colorblindness is tested for among first grade boys only. Parents will be given the results for all screenings and a specialist should be consulted if any difficulties are indicated.

## LIBRARY

- A. The school librarian and teachers schedule regular weekly classes and visits to the school library. Students may borrow books. The librarian strives to connect student interests and the school curriculum to the books in our library. Additional books are gained through the federally funded programs, school book fairs, and other donations.
- B. If a book is lost or damaged, the student is responsible for the cost of its replacement.
- C. Parents may assist in the library as part of their volunteer service hours.

## LOST AND FOUND

Please label all uniform and supply items with the child's name. Items that have been found on school grounds are kept in the Lost and Found box in the Auditorium. If these items are not claimed, they are distributed to the Uniform Exchange or given to local charities.

## OFFICIAL SCHOOL/PARENT GROUPS

- A. **Advisory Board** -- The Advisory Board consists of parents and community members whose goal is to advise pastor and principal in matters concerning school policy, business, technology and maintenance issues. This Board networks its efforts with those of the PTG Board and the Development Core Team. The Board usually meets monthly.
- B. **Development Core Team** -- The Development Core Team is concerned with the long-range planning and development processes to ensure the continued existence of St. Didacus Parish School. The Development Core Team, with the pastor and principal, also implement development plans which include community, alumnae, financial planning, outreach, public relations, and other avenues which identify, inform, invite, involve, implement, invest in, and improve St. Didacus Parish School. The focus of the Development Core Team is "the meaningful involvement of people in our mission and vision for the future."
- C. **Parent-Teacher Group** -- All parents and guardians of children in the school are automatically members of the Parent-Teacher Group at St. Didacus Parish School. The PTG is an important source of support for both school staff and parents on many levels – spiritual, educational, and financial. Parent participation in the many activities sponsored by the PTG promotes increased communication within the school and parish community. Throughout the year general PTG meetings are held and parents/guardians are asked to attend; parents will be notified of dates and times of these meetings and unless otherwise noted, children do not come to PTG meetings. The purpose of the PTG is to bring about a closer relationship between school, home, and parish based on an appreciation of the ideals of a Catholic education by providing volunteers to carry out many school programs and events, and a solid organization to improve the school's fund raising efforts.
- D. **PTG Board** -- The Parent-Teacher Group Board consists of parent and staff representatives and meets monthly. The pastor, principal, and a teacher are ex-officio members. The Board is responsible for planning fund-raising efforts and special events at the school. Board members are vital liaisons in communicating ideas and concerns from home to school and from school to home. Though the Board provides critical input

to the principal and pastor, it acts in an advisory capacity only as the principal, in consultation with the pastor, makes decisions regarding the operation of the school.

## PARTIES

A. Class parties to celebrate special days will be permitted on certain holidays and parents will be notified beforehand. Room parents will arrange these parties after consulting with the teacher. No other class parties during school time are permitted. If a parent wants to recognize a child's birthday, the purchase of a book for the classroom or library is the accepted method for doing so. Please arrange with the child's teacher if this is to occur.

B. Please do not send or bring party invitations to school to be distributed unless everyone in the class is invited. The disturbance in the classroom and the instructional program caused by these parties is detrimental to the learning process. Failure of parents to abide by this request places an unreasonable burden on the students and the teachers. Mixed parties involving students in the upper grades held on weekends or after school are discouraged because of the difficulty of guaranteeing appropriate adult supervision.

## SCHOOL PICTURES AND YEARBOOK

The school photographer takes pictures of all students in the fall. Families are given the opportunity to purchase these pictures, though there is no obligation to do so. Package prices are sent to all families in advance. Whether or not the family purchases individual pictures, all students' pictures will appear in the school yearbook, printed in May, for sale to all families. This soft-cover book features all the classes from preschool through eighth grade, and a wide variety of photographs from the year's activities and events.

## STUDENT COUNCIL

Made up of elected representatives from grades 5 through 8, the Student Council serves as a link between the school and the student body, the student body and the community, school, and home. Under the guidance of the Student Council Moderator (a faculty member), the Student Council meets to plan and carry out activities in service, ecology, school spirit, fund-raising, and communications involving the varying needs of the student body at all grade levels, including preschool. The Student Council may publish a newsletter; they represent St. Didacus Parish School at public functions, and as hosts and hostesses for special events. Students learn about leadership and service by being part of this process.

## TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are purchased by the school and loaned to the students. All books must be covered and well-cared for. Students may not mark or damage the books in any way. Books, lost or damaged, must be replaced at cost by the student/family.

## TRAFFIC CONTROL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

A. In the morning and afternoon, students must be dropped off/picked up (in cars) in the large playground with parents following the directions of the Student Patrol Leaders for entry and exit of the school's parking

lot. No parking is allowed on the large playground. Preschool parents must park outside the grounds on Felton and 34<sup>th</sup> St. and walk their child to the preschool. Every effort is being made to protect the safety of the students. Double-parking on Felton or 34<sup>th</sup> St. is both illegal and dangerous. The San Diego Police Department will ticket violators. **NO LEFT TURNS** off of Felton Street into the parking lot. Please approach **NORTH** on Felton and make a **RIGHT** into the lot to avoid traffic congestion. Students expecting to be picked up at the end of the school day will be escorted to the small playground and parents are to follow the same procedures at the end of the day as they did in the morning. Parents are reminded that any student not picked up by 3:00 (full day) or 12:15 (half day) will be escorted to Extended Care, and parents will be billed accordingly. The school assumes no responsibility for supervision of any child left on the school grounds unless he/she is in a school-sponsored program or Extended Care.

B. If students arrive between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. on foot, – including those accompanied by their parents – they must enter the school grounds via the south gate on 34th Street. If adults bringing children to school have business in the School Office, he/she may send the child in through the gate, while the adult enters through the main double doors to reach the Office, or through the doors fronting on the small playground. Remember, there is no parking on the school grounds. Please be courteous to those who live in the surrounding homes and apartments and their traffic needs as our school is a neighbor here in Normal Heights.

C. If you are coming to pick up your child/children, we ask that you wait in the small yard where the students will be dismissed. Please do not wait in the school hallway as this is disruptive to teaching/learning time and distracting during closing prayer.

## UNIFORM POLICY

St. Didacus Parish School believes that a uniform and dress code are necessary both as an economic consideration for families and also as a lesson in Christianity. To de-emphasize material goods based on what one wears is a way to foster an appreciation of the individual worth of each student.

All students must be in the appropriate uniform everyday unless it is a non-uniform (free dress) day. It is the responsibility of parents to see that children are neat, clean, well-groomed and in complete uniform. Parents will be called if there are violations of the uniform code, and students may be detained in the school office until the student is dressed properly. A uniform infraction notice may also be sent to parents.

A. Grooming standards: Students who come to school without proper attention having been given to personal cleanliness and neatness may be sent home to be properly prepared for school, or shall be required to prepare him/herself before entering the classroom.

- Shoes are to be firmly fastened, clothes are to be cleaned and free from rips or missing buttons, shirts and blouses are to be tucked in, no make-up of any type, nail polish, nail tips, or artificial hair coloring.
- Boys' hair must be cut above the shirt collar and out of their eyes in the front. No student should appear in school with hair cut or worn in such a way that the style, color, or length are opposed to our standards of neatness and good taste. No grooming gels, sprays, etc. are to be used in the hair to spike it long and upright; nor are they to be used to excess.

- No jewelry is to be worn with the exception of a watch, or (for girls only) post earrings. A crucifix, an appropriate cross or a religious medal may be worn as a necklace.
- No long-ribbon headbands for girls.
- No sweaters or jackets, other than the regulation ones, are permitted in the classroom or church.
- All students are to go to and from school in the school uniform and are not allowed to change to other clothes after school hours while on school property or in a school-sponsored event.

B: Uniform requirements: All uniform pieces worn by students must be clean and in good repair at all times. All items with the school logo must have the current school logo.

**Boys: Must have at least one of each of the following uniform pieces.**

- Royal Blazer Navy twill pants (only Royal Blazer acceptable beginning 2007-2008)
- Royal Blazer Navy twill walk-length shorts (only Royal Blazer acceptable beginning 2007-2008)
- White, red, or navy short or long-sleeved polo shirt with school logo
- Black or navy belt (**must** be worn with pants or shorts for grades 5 to 8, optional for other grades)
- Navy PE T-shirt with school logo (for PE class only, with navy walking shorts. PE shirt worn under uniform shirt on PE day.
- Dress uniform consists of long pants and uniform shirt worn on Wednesdays and Mass days.

**Girls: Must have at least one of each of the following uniform pieces.**

- Dunbar plaid jumper (for girls in grades K through 5 only) or Dunbar plaid skirt (girls in grades 6 through 8 only) or Skort (K-8)
- Navy twill walk-length shorts (only Royal Blazer acceptable beginning 2007-2008)
- White, red, or navy short or long-sleeved polo shirt with school logo
- Black or navy belt (must be worn with pants or shorts for grades 5 to 8, optional for other grades)
- Navy PE T-shirt with school logo (for PE class only, with navy walking shorts) PE shirt worn under uniform shirt on PE days.

Dress uniform consists of Dunbar plaid jumper or skirt or skort with white, red or navy short or long-sleeved polo shirts on Wednesdays and Mass days. On other days, navy twill shorts, or Dunbar plaid jumper or skirt or skort may be worn with your choice of white, red, or navy short-sleeved or long-sleeved polo shirts with the school logo.

Outerwear uniform pieces that may be purchased. (At least ONE is required for cold days)

- ❖ Red button-front cardigan or V-neck pullover with school logo
- ❖ Navy zip-front polar fleece jacket with school logo
- ❖ Navy windbreaker with school logo

No other outerwear is acceptable

**Footwear:**

- Boys: Solid color white crew socks- No ankle or low socks  
Shoes: (no logos) – low top only. Solid black lace up athletic shoes with black laces;  
Formal: Black dress shoes with black laces
- Girls: Solid color white anklets or knee socks; white tights- No ankle or low socks  
Shoes: (no logos) low top only. Solid white shoes with white laces or black/white saddle shoes with white laces or black low heel Mary Janes (heel no higher than 1 inch)

**PLEASE MARK ALL ITEMS OF THE UNIFORM WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME IN INDELIBLE INK.**

**NON-UNIFORM (FREE – DRESS) POLICY**

Occasionally students are permitted an out-of-uniform day as a treat and a privilege. With this privilege goes the responsibility of appropriate attire. Extremes of any sort are to be avoided. The same expectations as those for the uniform policy are applied to non-uniform days. Since proper dress is conducive to proper behavior, free-dress must be modest, appropriate and in good taste. In general, these items are not to be worn on non-uniform days: jeans, tight-fitting garments, sandals or shoes that do not cover the feet or backless shoes, bare midriffs, spaghetti straps or cut-off tops, excessively short hemlines or shorts, transparent or clingy fabrics, low-slung shorts or pants, over-sized pants, sweat pants or sweat shorts, or clothes with sayings/ads on them. Clothes must be clean, well-fitting, modest, appropriate, and non-distracting. The decisions of the principal/teachers as to what is acceptable dress for any student will be final. Those in violation of this policy may lose the free dress privilege for the next free dress day, and, in certain cases, may be asked to have the secretary call home for a change of clothes. It is your responsibility as parents to see that your children are neat, clean, well groomed, and in appropriate dress.

**VISITORS**

All persons entering the school must enter by the main double doors on 34<sup>th</sup> Street. All visitors (even parents, relatives, workers, etc.) must first go to the office to introduce themselves, and then sign in the guest book in the main hall. We require this because safety is of the utmost importance. If a person is dropping off an item for a child or for an activity, we ask that he/she come through the main doors and leave the item with the secretary in the office and we will see that it is delivered, unless otherwise directed by office personnel. It is imperative that we know exactly who is on our school campus, and for what purpose. In this day of heightened awareness for children's safety, we know you would want no less than that cautionary responsibility.

Parents who wish to observe classroom procedures must obtain permission from the principal and arrange a time with the teacher.

# Student Learning Expectations

The St. Didacus graduate will be:

1. A Christ-centered person who:
  - a. knows, respects, and values Catholic beliefs
  - b. respects and appreciates God's gifts
  - c. understands that moral choices have consequences
  - d. answers the Gospel's call to serve others
2. A life-long learner who:
  - a. uses information, technology, and media responsibly
  - b. learns independently and cooperatively
  - c. practices critical thinking, problem-solving, and computational skills
  - d. applies organizational skills to achieve short and long term goals
  - e. knows the importance of physical well-being
3. An effective communicator who:
  - a. reads for understanding
  - b. writes and articulates ideas clearly and correctly
  - c. actively listens
  - d. has experienced a wide range of activities in the fine arts
4. A responsible citizen who:
  - a. is reliable, trustworthy, and courteous
  - b. demonstrates an awareness of cultural diversity
  - c. learns and practices civic responsibility both locally and globally

revisedd 4/09

## **Classwork Standards for St. Didacus Parish School**

### **What does good work look like in this school?**

#### Grades K-3

- age appropriate heading
- neat
- looseleaf
- no crossing out
- cursive after ½ year 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- proper spacing between words
- follow rules of spelling, mechanics and grammar
- indent paragraphs and do not skip a line between paragraph
- black and blue ink pens only

#### Grades 4-8

- typed, double spaced, in Times New Roman or Ariel 12 point font or written in cursive
- proper heading
- title if applicable
- no cross outs or white out
- follow rules of spelling, mechanics and grammar
- neat
- looseleaf, clean and neat
- black and blue ink pens only

For your portfolios, students should hand in one excellent piece of work a week. We are looking for growth over time when comparing.

Revised June 17, 2009

**The principal reserves the right to amend the handbook for just cause.**