

**ST. SYMPHOROSA
CATHOLIC SCHOOL
of Two Holy Martyrs Parish
2024-2025**

**“SEAS” the Day at St. Syms
Parent/Student Handbook**



**ST. SYMPHOROSA
CATHOLIC SCHOOL
OF TWO HOLY MARTYRS PARISH**

6125 South Austin Avenue – Chicago, Illinois 60638

Phone: 773.585.6888

Fax: 773.585.8411

Website: www.stsymsschool.org

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SAINT SYMPHOROSA CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Parish School of Two Holy Martyrs

6125 S. Austin Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60638

Phone: 773.585.6888 Fax: 733.585.8411 www.stsymsschool.org

2024-2025 FACULTY AND STAFF

Pastor: Fr. Robert Regan

Associate Pastor: Fr. Kevin Gregas

Principal: Dr. Kathy Berry

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Chris Garza

Secretary: Ms. Cherie Vawter

Director of Religious Education: Mrs. Peg Siebenaler

Operations Director: Mr. Ken Hilliard

Tuition Coordinator: Ms. Maggie Koziar

PK-102 Ms. Pauline Baisa

PK-106 Mrs. Heather Horne

PK -104 Ms. Jaymie Mostacchio

KDG-103 Mrs. Dawn Gasior

Grade 1- Ms. Michelle Judeikis

Grade 2- Mrs. Sarah Augustine

Grade 3- Ms. Chelsea LeVander

Grade 3- Mr. Mike Dobbins

Grade 4- Mrs. Michelle Stankevicius

Grade 5- Mrs. Chris Garza

Grade 6- Mr. Jim Orsi

Grade 7- Mrs. Eileen Akroush

Grade 8- Mr. Frank Demos

Title 1-Andrea Kelly, Haleema Demir

Computers- Mrs. Ardis Seils

Gym- Ms. India Steward

Art- Mrs. Christina Casey

Spanish-Ms. Alexia Calderon

Music-TBD

STEM Studio- Mrs. Rege Phillips

Counselor- Mrs. Megan Evans

PK Aide 102- Mrs. Monica Scott

PK Aide 106- Mrs. Amber Pettenon

Kdg Aide- Mrs. Rosa Rios

Library/Catechist- Ms. Barb Grzenia

Academic Coach-Ms. Amber Diaz Speech Therapist-Ms. Rosie O'Malley
Aide- Mrs. Kristen Capparelli Aide- Mrs. Violet Karcz
Daycare- Ms. Gabby Cannella Daycare- Mrs. Arisbi Tiscareno
Daycare-Mrs. Inez Feliciano IDEA teacher-TBD
Athletic Director-TBD

Welcome to St. Symphorosa School! You are a valued member of our community and we are blessed and grateful that you have chosen St. Symphorosa School, the parish school of Two Holy Martyrs.

Our Vision

St. Symphorosa is the school of choice in the Midway area where students are known and loved, receive engaging and rigorous academics, and are supported to become disciples of Christ.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Symphorosa is a Catholic elementary school that educates diverse groups of students. We are committed to educate our students to embrace the values and traditions of our Catholic faith and integrate them with the continued pursuit of academic excellence. It is our mission to teach the gospel message of Jesus, to pursue academic excellence, to encourage service to others and to prepare our students to be responsible Catholic adults.

PHILOSOPHY

At St. Symphorosa School, we believe that education is a continuing process of challenge and growth. Our learning process instills a Christian attitude for the whole person. We believe that parents, guardians and caregivers, together with our teachers, facilitate the learning process for our students. We strive for our students to perceive themselves as unique individuals, who receive from and contribute to this community in preparation for their role as mature Catholic adults.

St. Symphorosa School exists as an integral part of the whole Two Holy Martyrs Parish Community. Our students are provided a complete education that incorporates a sense of Christian responsibility in their own families, the Parish community, and at St. Symphorosa School. We provide an environment where Christian values, initiated by the family, can be nurtured, enriched and encouraged.

St. Symphorosa School's curriculum formulates the foundation for a sense of

self-worth, self-esteem, a genuine love for learning, respect for oneself and others, and more. Through teaching critical thinking skills, the children will learn how to resolve conflicts appropriately, solve problems effectively, and make positive changes in their own lives both now and later as adults. The children of St. Symphorosa School are separate, unique individuals who enter the world of learning at various developmental levels, with natural abilities and diverse backgrounds. Therefore, our teachers will facilitate learning at the various developmental levels through challenging opportunities. The curriculum may be adjusted accordingly to meet the educational needs of each child.

St. Symphorosa School believes that it is essential to create and maintain a supportive and caring atmosphere where students and teachers are partners in a learning process that strives for academic excellence. We provide our students with the knowledge that they will need to successfully achieve future goals and be life-long learners.

ROOT BELIEFS:

All things are possible with God

A Community of Kindness, Love and Support equals Success

Our Children are Stewards of God's gifts

VISION OF THE GRADUATE-Disciples of Christ who love and serve

SPIRITUAL:

- To develop strong moral values based on Christian beliefs
- To develop a sense of community and service to others
- To develop an awareness of society beyond the community
- To develop an acceptance of ethnic, cultural, academic and social diversity

ACADEMIC:

- To develop academic skills necessary for an effective adult life
- To become an independent, life-long learner in pursuit of knowledge
- To become a critically thinking leader and decision maker

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL:

To instill the confidence necessary to meet the diverse challenges encountered in a changing world

To develop a sense of self with conviction about one's own opinions

To learn to accept responsibility for one's own choices including consequences for actions

The instructional program of St. Symphorosa School includes religion, language arts, mathematics, biological, physical and social sciences, fine arts and physical education and health.

PARENT - STUDENT HANDBOOK

Important Notices

Archdiocesan policies are St. Symphorosa School policies. Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The school principal will attempt to keep the school families informed of all changes as soon as feasible. Some changes might have to be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances. St. Symphorosa School is operated under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, in the Archdiocese of Chicago. As such, the school administration, faculty and governance board are bound to implement and follow all policies and procedures promulgated by the Archdiocese and the Office of Catholic Schools outlined in the Educational Policy Manual for School Administrators. Local school policies and procedures found in the St. Symphorosa School parent/student and faculty handbooks are additional directives developed to govern the local needs of the school and may not contradict Archdiocesan and/or Office of Catholic Schools directives.

All Archdiocesan Schools must be registered with the State of Illinois and be recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) School communities and their principals must comply with these requirements annually in order to maintain ISBE recognition. These requirements include meeting administrative deadlines as determined by ISBE to ensure compliance and recognition.

St. Symphorosa is recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education. We follow the applicable Illinois School Code. St. Symphorosa School admits students of any sex, race, color, national and ethnic origin and are accorded the rights, privileges, programs and activities available to all students. It does not discriminate based on sex, race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of education policies, school administered programs, athletic or other activities.

I. ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

Archdiocesan schools admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in these schools. Archdiocesan schools do not discriminate based on gender, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, loan programs, athletic or other school-administered programs. St. Symphorosa admits students who are not Catholic provided that both students and parents clearly understand that participation in Catholic religious instruction and school activities related to the Catholic identity of the school is required.

St. Symphorosa School shall admit students regardless of their citizenship status, provided that the student(s) has met all the other admission requirements in accordance with applicable state and federal laws to the extent that such anti-discrimination statutes do not conflict with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

Procedures for admissions:

1. Preference will be given in the following order; Registered Two Holy Martyrs parish members, Catholic non-parishioners, Non-Catholic
2. A child entering school must be in compliance with the age requirements of the State of Illinois regarding age of admission. (For example; a child entering Kindergarten needs to be 5 years old by September 1 and 3 yrs to start Preschool)
3. For enrollment at St. Symphorosa, the following is required:
 - a) An official copy of the child's birth certificate which is reviewed, copied and returned to the parent/guardian
 - b) The baptismal record (if applicable)
 - c) A record of compliance with local and State of Illinois health requirements
4. For admission of transfer students, parents shall present the proper transfer or some appropriate credential from the school previously attended. Upon written request from the receiving school, all records from the previous school shall be transferred within ten days provided financial obligations to the school have been met.
5. In all cases, the transfer, health records and unofficial record (if applicable) must be sent within ten days.
6. School personnel must verify that the person enrolling the child is the legal guardian of the child before accepting the student. (State ID or driver's license from parent or legal guardian must be presented)
7. As part of the admissions process the school will:
 - a) Parent will complete the educational report; b) Principal will hold an interview with the parent/guardian; c) Upon acceptance, the parent will complete the application form; d) Principal will explain the purpose of the probationary period for all new/transfer

students; e) Identify a shadow day if possible. Once admitted, all new and transfer students are welcome and will be accepted on a probationary period of 90 school days at St. Symphorosa School. During this probationary period, students are expected to maintain passing grades, have no major disciplinary issues, or require accommodations that the school physically or financially is incapable of supporting. Students with special learning needs may be accepted if the school has the staff and ability to make the necessary accommodations for the child's academic growth and success. During the 90-day probationary period, if the school determines the student is unable to perform with adequate growth in this environment, any prepaid tuition will be prorated and refunded.

Questions and/or concerns regarding discrimination in **admissions** should be directed to the principal (if applicable) the pastor and the Regional Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

B. RE-REGISTRATION OF ST. SYMPHOROSA STUDENTS

Families with children currently in the school are sent registration materials in early January. **Returning students are given first priority for registration, provided completed materials are returned by May 30.** New siblings may register at the same time. At Open House, during Catholic Schools Week, applications are accepted from new families to fill vacancies.

Parents must commit themselves to fulfilling all their financial obligations including tuition and school fees.

Past financial obligations including all tuition and school fees must be paid up-to-date.

All medical, dental, and vision exam requirements must be current and compliant with State of Illinois laws.

C. TRANSFERS

A family transferring from St. Symphorosa School should notify the school at least one week in advance in order to obtain the transfer slips. In order to secure a transfer, all tuition and fees must be paid in full. Once a transfer order is sent from the receiving school, student records will then be forwarded to the NEW SCHOOL. This is a school to school transfer of information requested by the receiving school.

II. ATTENDANCE

School doors open at 7:45 a.m. (first bell). Students should not arrive before 7:45 a.m. This allows plenty of time for the students to assemble in their classrooms.

Students must be in their classrooms by 7:55 a.m. (second bell).

Classes begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. (third bell). Any student not in his/her seat at 8:00 a.m. will be considered tardy.

Dismissal time is 3:00pm for Pre-K, K, and 2:50pm for Gr. 5-8 and Gr. 1-4 at 2:55 p.m. Failure to pick up your child by 3:05pm will result in the child being sent to Daycare at the family's expense, including incurring the registration fee, as warranted.

Aside from our extended care program, there is no outside supervision provided before or after school at either building. Parents are responsible for setting the schedule that will get their children to and from school on time, each day.

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

A student is absent from school when he/she is not physically present on a required student attendance day. A student is tardy when he/she is not physically present at the posted opening of a regular required attendance day. Any day a student is absent they must call the main office @ 773-585-6888 and leave a message on the absent voicemail. If no call is received within 60 minutes of the start of the school day, it will be recorded as unexcused.

NOTE: The school day consists of 7 total hours. If your child attends school for less than four hours in one day, it is considered a half day absence. It is considered a full day absence if your child attends less than one hour of class in one day.

A student's absence will be excused if it is due to: 1) student illness (including mental, behavioral health, 2) observance of a religious holiday; 3) death in student's immediate family; 4) a family emergency; 5) mandated court appearance; 6) testing for IEP or 504 plans; 7) other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's emotional or physical health or safety; 8) other reasons approved by the principal.

7th and 8th grade students who are attending a shadow day at a prospective high school won't be marked absent but will have his/her attendance marked as 'SA' (school activity). Please submit proof of shadow day attendance to the school office upon return so that we may update your child's attendance record.

Because we believe our children are stewards of God's gifts, when a child contracts a communicable, contagious disease, the Health Department advises treatment by a

doctor and requires that the child remain at home during the acute stage of infection. A student who had contracted said disease must bring a note stating that the child's doctor has approved the return to school. ***After an illness, the student should be fever, rash, vomit, and diarrhea free without medication for 24 hours before returning to class.***

The student is responsible for any classroom work missed due to absence. Make up work: depending on the grade level, the teacher will determine the due date for the make-up assignments. Parents and students can choose to be given the missing work upon their return to class or when the parent calls school to report an absence, they may request the child's work. **The work may be picked up at the end of the school day, only if it was requested by 7:45am** This procedure will allow the teacher time to prepare the work for pick up.

NOTE: A student will not be allowed to participate in or attend any school or sports sponsored activities which take place the evening of the same day a student was absent from school due to illness or extra-curricular activities planned during school hours. Some situations may call for Administrative consideration.

St. Symphorosa School has a written system/procedure in place that flags records for any current or former student who has been reported missing by the Illinois State Police.

A. ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

To ensure the safety of the students, we recommend parking in the church parking lots south on 62nd Street and walking with your children to the designated line-up area. No traffic is permitted in the parking areas between any and all of the parish/school buildings. **This also includes the alleys.** CHILDREN MUST CROSS THE STREET ONLY AT THE CROSSWALKS! No parent may double park to wait for a child or park in a "No Parking" or Fire Lane area.

School doors open at 7:45 a.m. (first bell). Students should not arrive before 7:45 a.m. This allows plenty of time for the students to assemble in their classrooms.

Students must be in their classrooms by 7:55 a.m. (second bell).

Classes begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. (third bell). Any student not in his/her seat at 8:00 a.m. will be considered tardy.

Parents will NOT be able to enter the building with the students.

Any parent who wants to enter the building will need to check in at the main office. This is an important part of our building security system. Thank you for your cooperation.

PreK and Kindergarten students will enter the school door on the north side of the A-building. PK will be dismissed out the same door, K will be dismissed out the main school doors.

1st thru 4th grade students will enter and be dismissed out of the 2nd school door on the north side of the A-building. Students in Gr. 5-8 will enter and be dismissed from the main school doors on Austin Ave.

B. TARDINESS *Punctuality is an important habit to be fostered in each child. As the child matures, this kind of responsibility becomes essential. Every instructional minute is important and tardiness will cause a student to miss important daily instruction.

A child is considered tardy if he/she is not seated at his/her desk by the 8:00 a.m./third bell. Trains are not an excused tardy.

If tardiness becomes problematic and consistently interferes with academics, there will be a conference with the principal, teacher and parents/guardians.

C. EARLY DISMISSAL The school office will contact the parent of a child who is ill. The parents will be responsible to arrange and provide the child's transportation home.

Students should not be picked up for early dismissal between the hours of 11-12 on Fridays as the students are in Church and that interrupts the reverence of the mass.

A written or verbal request from a parent and/or legal guardian is required for an early dismissal for any other reason. No student is permitted to leave the school at the request of any other adult other than the parents or legal guardian unless previous arrangements have been made with the principal by the parent/guardian.

Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled after school hours.

D. FAMILY HOLIDAYS Parents who wish to take their children out of school for several days because of family vacations are advised to discuss the child's progress with the teacher to determine what effect such an absence will have on the student's academic progress. The final decision, however, is the responsibility of the parents.

Make-up work for students will not be given in advance of a vacation.

Make-up work is the responsibility of the child and the parents. The student will be given at least one day to make up the work for each day missed and the teacher will determine the due date for the make-up assignments. See policy on "Absentees" section for excused and unexcused absences.

F. EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING Procedures for emergency closing because of weather or critical incidents have been established. You will receive email notification

through School Messenger. In addition, please listen to one of the following broadcasting stations for notification:

WGN 720 RADIO, WMAQ 670 RADIO, WGN CHANNEL 9 TV, or online at www.EmergencyClosings.com. A media announcement that all Archdiocesan schools are closed means that St. Symphorosa School is closed.

DO NOT CALL the rectory about possible school closing. The radio or television announcement is considered the official announcement.

G. TRUANCY STUDENT ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS Daily school attendance is compulsory in the State of Illinois for children 6-16 years of age. Therefore, students enrolled in Gr. K-8 at St. Symphorosa School are required to attend school daily. The responsibility for compliance with the law belongs to the parent(s)/guardian of the child. The school is responsible for keeping an accurate record of each student's daily attendance. The attendance record is placed in the student's permanent file each school year.

Excessive absence or tardiness will be addressed on an individual basis and may be subject to disciplinary action. Excessive absenteeism means that a total of 10% or more of school attendance days in the current school year including excused and unexcused. Each trimester we will review our attendance data to determine if students are excessively absent. If so we will contact the parent/guardian to discuss reasons for the absenteeism. If appropriate, the school will share resources and/or information about where they may obtain counseling or social services. mental health resources and specialized help in the state." Please consider visiting Safe2HelpIL.com if you are in need of resources. If there is no improvement, or cooperation by the student or parent/guardian, the child may be asked to withdraw from St. Symphorosa School.

ABSENCES: The school investigates student absences when: a student returns to school with no excuse or one that might not be valid; a student continues to be absent with no apparent reason; a student leaves the school building at any time during school hours without permission.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: Section 26-2a of the Illinois School Code defines a chronic "truant" as a student who is absent without valid cause for 5 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days. A student is considered truant when he/she is absent from school for a school day or portion thereof without valid cause.

ACTION STEPS / CONSEQUENCES: The parent or guardian is called to meet with the school principal, teacher(s), counselor, and student to discuss the reasons for the documented unexcused absences and the seriousness of the student's truancy. Counseling and/or Social Services may be suggested for the student and parent/guardian. The parents or guardian will be warned that the expulsion of the

student from the school may be the consequence, for lack of cooperation with the school efforts, for their child. If there is no improvement in attendance or cooperation by the student or parent/guardian with the school's endeavors for the student, options include: 1. Terminating the student's enrollment at the school in a meeting called by the principal with the student, parent or guardian, and appropriate school staff.

2. A transfer to an Alternative School in the district in which the student resides.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire, Tornado, Lockdown, Evacuation and crisis drills are important. They are designed to teach students and staff procedures to follow in case of an actual emergency. Crisis kits and maps for evacuation are in each classroom.

Fire Drills-The principal is obligated to conduct fire drills according to the procedures contained in the Regulations for Fire Drills. Many of these fire drills are conducted and supervised by the Fire Department. Students are to walk IN SILENCE during the entire drill from the time they leave their classroom until they return. All adults are required to vacate the building during these drills.

All regulations during the drills are in accordance with the State of Illinois. Periodic inspections are made in all buildings and boiler rooms by School Inspectors. A record of drills and evacuation times is kept in the school office.

Tornado Drills-A direct connection to the U.S. Weather Service is maintained. Students are notified in case of a "watch" or "warning." Students will be taken to a prearranged place of safety. No students will be sent home during a tornado warning.

Bus Evacuations-Practice will be performed yearly.

Lockdowns (Hard / Soft)-Procedures are in place as per our Crisis Plan.

In other emergency situations, the Crisis Plan will be implemented.

B. SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS:

In accordance with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Archdiocese of Chicago, all adults wishing to volunteer with children must be approved to do so from the Principal or other designated Safe Environment Local Coordinator. Approval is dependent on compliance with the following requirements:

1. Virtus Online Registration, Online training and Continuing Education.
2. Code of Conduct Agreement signed annually.
3. Submission of a current, completed Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Authorization for Background Check (C.A.N.T.S) Form-completed annually.

4. Mandated Reporter Training and accompanying CANTS 22 Form completed every 3 years.
5. Submission of a Background Check.

NO ADULTS MAY VOLUNTEER TO WORK WITH CHILDREN WITHOUT COMPLYING WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS. This includes lunch supervisors, coaches, chaperones, or anyone else who functions in the presence of students.

www.virtusonline.org

Contact siteadmin@stsymsschool.org with questions

All volunteers must be compliant at least one month prior to an event to be selected to participate.

C. LUNCH TIME RULES: Lunch is served for Gr. 1 & 4 from 11:50-12:10pm, Gr. 2 & 3 from 12:10-12:30pm for Gr. 6 & 8 from 12:30-12:50pm and 5 & 7 from 12:50-1:10pm. K is served 11:50-12:20pm and PK from 12:30-1:00pm. Since there must be an adult with the children at all times, teachers will be present, and parents are asked to supervise lunch time in the lunch area/classroom. Lunchtime supervisors need to sign in at the office. It is the responsibility of the teacher supervisor to report inappropriate behavior to the homeroom teacher when he/she returns to the lunch area/classroom. All supervisors and other students must be treated with respect and courtesy.

Lunchroom norms include: We raise our hand if we need help, we dispose of our garbage respectfully, we show respect for ourselves and others, we speak at a 3 voice level. Students are not permitted to leave the lunch area/classroom for the **washroom, wastebasket disposal, drinks of water, etc., unless given permission. Soda and energy drinks are not permitted, candy is strongly discouraged.** Lunch from fast food restaurants on non-fast food days are not allowed. **The school will not accept fast food deliveries for students.**

D. UPDATING RECORDS: Because we believe a community of kindness, love and support equals success, parents should **notify the school immediately, in writing, of address, email or telephone number changes.** Maintaining accurate school records is essential in facilitating communication between the school and the home when necessary. Because a sick child cannot be sent home alone, it is imperative that we have on file the names of two alternatives for contact in the event of an illness or other emergency matter.

E. PARENT – TEACHER COMMUNICATION: in an effort to keep families well informed about the school and your children, we utilize school messenger for our weekly communication via email as our process for communication between school and home.

Each Thursday, an email will be sent to the emails that are listed in the PowerSchool system according to student applications. Each Thursday, when a school messenger is sent it offers information about curriculum and announcements of school and parish activities. These handouts can also be found on our website under Weekly Communications. Periodically, you will also hear from your child's teacher with news about the things happening in his/her grade. We hope you will read this information carefully to keep informed and the lines of communication working effectively. Another good source of information is your Parish bulletin, distributed weekly at the Masses. Reading this will help you understand the dynamics of the parish and keep you abreast of parish activities in which you are always welcome to participate.

All teachers use Class Dojo, a free App, as another source of parent/teacher communication. Because we believe in a community of kindness, love, support and equals success all parents/guardians should provide an email or cell phone number in order to stay connected to your child's classroom, teacher and school activities and announcements. Please keep in mind that **dojo messages will be responded to within 24 hours, call the office if it is urgent, pick up, aftercare etc. Do not expect an immediate response as teachers are busy with instruction.**

As the parent/guardian, please feel free to send any questions, suggestions, or compliments via email or with your child in a note. Teachers are eager to work with you for the best educational experience for your child. The easiest way for this to happen is for you to write a note or send an email, asking for a response or suggesting times when the teacher can reach you by phone or an email preference. If more than a phone call is required to discuss a particular situation with your child's teacher, scheduling an appointment is the best way for both you and the teacher to be prepared to discuss your child's situation. Teachers are not free to meet every day after school due to faculty meetings, Extended Care responsibilities, or outside jobs, so please wait to see the teacher until he/she sets up a time with you. Please also note that it is the school's policy not to disturb teachers or children during school hours. The school secretary will take messages and telephone calls will be returned. Only in emergency situations will teachers/students be called from class.

The **parent-teacher conference** is a meeting of the parents and the teacher of each student in the school for the purpose of discussing the educational program and the progress of the student. Other possible reasons include- giving the parents an opportunity to get a true insight into the school and student; giving parents a chance to see what is going on in the school and why it goes on; providing parents an opportunity to understand more fully all the aspects of their child's education. The meeting of the parents and teachers is a basis for mutual cooperation and therefore, parental attendance is mandatory.

When additional conferences are necessary between a teacher and parent, a date and time for the conference will be agreed upon. Parents requesting a conference are to do so by calling the school office, sending an email, or by making a written request for a conference.

It is important to deal with any conflict that arises in the proper manner. If your child is having difficulty in a particular class, then you should discuss it with the teacher of that class. **The principal is willing and able to discuss any concerns; however you must first discuss your concerns with the teacher involved.** Approaching those directly involved also teaches your child some things about conflict resolution and models what we expect them to do in case a conflict arises in their day-to-day school life. The way you communicate about school in your home is also of great importance. Your children will develop many of their school attitudes based on how you discuss school issues, teachers, other students, homework assignments, etc. in their presence.

Thank you for delivering positive messages about school through your words, tone, and actions. If you have a complaint or criticism, it should first be discussed with the person with which you have the complaint. If, after this meeting the situation is not resolved, the matter can be brought to the attention of the principal. We hope that the partnership between school and home will be one based on mutual respect and our shared desire to provide what's best for all of the children.

Parent Back to School Night is held at the beginning of each school year to provide parents with an opportunity to meet the teachers and review classroom policies. **Parent Back to School Night attendance is mandatory.** Catholic Schools Week planned activities encourage and promote the quality of Catholic Education and foster parental/family participation in the School. The annual Open House takes place during this week of academic events.

Parent Teacher Conferences are held in the Fall and Spring (upon request).

“Sym”ply Shining Stars - “Sym”ply Shining Stars is a calendar - based discipline program used in Gr. 3-8.

PowerSchool – A parent portal that can be accessed to monitor student grades and attendance in real time for 1st-8th grade students. Download the app and create alerts to keep up to date on your student’s grades. Contact the main office to gain access. Please note your child’s username is the same throughout their time at St. Sym.

Conflict Resolution/ Grievance Procedures: All adults working at St. Symphorosa believe that a community of kindness, love and support equals success. Also, a main goal is the success, safety, and well-being of the students. However, not every decision or plan meets with universal approval. As in the case of all human relations, occasions will arise when, due to lack of communication, some differences of opinion may come

into being between a teacher and parents/guardian. **OUR POLICY DICTATES THAT ANY SUCH OCCASION MUST FIRST BE DEALT WITH IN A MEETING BETWEEN THE PARENT/GUARDIAN AND THE TEACHER.** If this meeting proves unsatisfactory, parents/guardian and teacher will meet with the principal. The student will be present if deemed necessary.

Throughout any conflict resolution procedure, it is important that all adults maintain respect for each other and for the student(s) involved in the issue. We expect that students will not hear either their parent/guardian or their teacher speaking disrespectfully about each other, no matter what disagreement the adults may have. This will help maintain the sense of a respectful community that we want to encourage in all parts of our school.

F. LEGAL REMINDERS: Child Custody-The name of the custodial parent/guardian must be on file with the school office. Non-custodial parents have the right to information about their children, unless court documents to the contrary are on file in our school office. The law generally allows students and/or student records to be released to either parent, to both parents, or to legal guardians. *If requested*, we will email copies of newsletters and report cards to a non-custodial parent unless there is a court decree prohibiting this. Parents should make sure the school is notified of the email address or phone number change of any parent or guardian. **In general, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to keep the non-custodial parent informed of school events and activities.**

Search and Seizure – St. Symphorosa School reserves the right to inspect all school and/or personal property. School authorities may request the assistance of law enforcement officials for the purpose of conducting inspections and searches of desks, parking lot and other school property and equipment owned or controlled by the school for illegal drugs, weapons and other illegal or dangerous substances or materials. This procedure may include the use of specially trained dogs.

School Incident Reporting System (SIRS) Illinois Compiled Statutes mandate that certain types of incidents (drugs, weapons, and attacks on school personnel) occurring in or on school property be reported to local law enforcement authorities and the Illinois State Police (ISP) within one to three days of the occurrence of the incident. In order to satisfy the requirement of reporting incidents to the ISP, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in conjunction with the ISP, have created the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS). The SIRS is a web-based application used by schools to report incidents electronically but which also requires schools to report incidents to local law enforcement authorities.

Mandated Report/Child Abuse-School Employees are legally designated as mandated

reporters and must, by law, report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). It is the responsibility of DCFS personnel to investigate allegations of abuse or neglect, and school employees are required to fully cooperate with such investigations.

G. STUDENT RECORDS: The school keeps full and accurate records of each child's attendance, academic progress, health, and directory information according to procedures established by the Office of Catholic Education. To help serve your child, we should also have on file copies of any outside testing that is done, indications from doctors of any medical needs and how these are best handled, and any other information necessary for us to more successfully help your child learn and grow.

Policy #316.2 (Privacy of Student Records) The right to privacy and confidentiality of student records must be protected. The Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education has adopted guidelines to protect the privacy and confidentiality of student records.

Policy #316.3 (Release of School Records) School records contain confidential data and are not to be released to unauthorized persons. Requests from attorneys for a pupil's attendance or academic records or subpoena of records may be granted according to the guidelines set by the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education.

IV. HEALTH INFORMATION

According to Chapter 122, Section 27- 8 of the Illinois School Code, physical examination forms must be completed and signed by a doctor, and submitted to the school for all new students, and those students entering **pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and 6th grades**. All students must have the required immunization. No child will be permitted to start classes unless all forms are completed and submitted before the first day of school. Full compliance with these laws is mandatory and will receive high priority at St. Symphorosa School.

In addition, students in the following grades must submit dental and/or vision exam forms or waivers in compliance with Illinois State law:

- Grades kindergarten, 2nd & 6th, Dental Exam form or waiver
- Kindergarten & transfer students from out of state, Vision Exam form or waiver

St. Symphorosa shall implement a Comprehensive Health Education Program as required by Illinois State Law and integrate the program into all applicable curricula.

A. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: A "doctor's permit" to be readmitted to school is required for all students who have been absent due to a communicable disease.

B. MEDICATION: All parents/guardians are required to complete and return the Medical Information and Emergency Form at the start of each school year. Illinois State law

forbids school personnel to administer any type of medication to students without written authorization from both a physician and parent / guardian. If medication is necessary to maintain the student in school, parents are asked to consult their physician in order to determine if the administration of medication can be scheduled outside of school hours.

If this is not possible, the ideal situation would be to have the parent or a responsible adult appointed by the parent, come to the school to administer the medication. In the event that this cannot be done and **if medication must be administered during school hours without parent supervision, the parent and physician must complete and submit an Archdiocese of Chicago Medication Authorization form and provide medication in compliance with Archdiocese of Chicago School Medication Procedures.** Both the Medication Authorization form and School Medication Procedures are distributed at the start of school and are also available from the school office. Students with asthma, allergies or other conditions that require the immediate use of medication are permitted to carry and self-administer such medication if so ordered by his or her licensed prescriber per that student's current and completed Medical Authorization form. Such medication should be carried in some type of fanny pack which would allow the child to have the medication with them at all times. For the latest clarification on this section, please contact the school office.

The school and school personnel incur no liability for injuries occurring when administering asthma medication, an epinephrine auto-injector, or an opioid antagonist. Parents and guardians must sign a statement acknowledging this protection.

Administration of Medical Cannabis:

Students are not permitted to use or possess cannabis in our schools except in accordance with the law and school policy. School policy should provide that if a parent/guardian of an elementary/secondary student who demonstrates his/her son or daughter is a "registered qualifying patient" and has an individual who is a "registered designated caregiver," both of whom hold medical cannabis registry identification cards, then the parent/guardian or registered designated caregiver must be permitted to administer a medical cannabis product to the student (non-smoking/non-vaping form) at school.

A parent or guardian or other individual may not administer a medical cannabis product in a manner that, in the opinion of the school, would create a disruption to the school's educational environment or would cause exposure of the product to other students.

C. STUDENT ACCIDENT/INJURY: In the event of a student accident or injury, the parents will be notified. In the event of illness, the school office will contact the parents of ill students. The parents will be responsible to arrange and provide the child's transportation home. **If a sudden/serious injury or illness should occur and the parent/guardian/alternative adult cannot be contacted, the school will call the emergency 911 number.** The school shall document all injuries on school property and

retain such records. **It is critical to have updated phone and emergency contact phone information on file in our main office.**

V. UNIFORM POLICY

We believe our students are stewards of God's Gifts, as such we have a dress code to uphold high standards of cleanliness, neatness, and good grooming. Moderation and modesty should guide appearance. In order to achieve this objective, the school assumes responsibility for enforcing the dress code. However, it is also the parents' responsibility to ensure that the children are dressed properly before leaving home each day. Uniforms are to be kept in good order at all times. No ripped or torn clothing is acceptable. Parents will be notified if children are not in the required uniform. Anyone out of uniform must present a note from home stating the reason. An excused note will only be accepted for one day. Any deviation from the uniform policy (including gym uniforms) will result in appropriate consequences/calendar marks.

The fact that some type of clothing, footwear, or hairstyle is not specifically forbidden, does not make it acceptable. Should a question arise with regard to dress or appearance the decision of the administration is final.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

- St. Symphorosa navy sweatpants
- St. Symphorosa gold tee-shirt and/or St. Symphorosa navy sweatshirt, St. Symphorosa spirit wear crew neck sweatshirt, St. Symphorosa fleece. Hooded sweatshirts are only permitted as part of spirit wear and the hood is NOT to be worn in school
- Gym Shoes
- Optional: Plain navy sweater
- St. Symphorosa gym shorts (allowed in August, September, May & June only)

BOYS – Grades Kindergarten through 8th

- Long or short sleeved Dark Navy knit polo or ribbed bottom knit shirt
- Polos must be tucked into slacks, ribbed bottom shirts do not need to be tucked in
- If a T-shirt is worn under the uniform shirt, it must be plain white
- Khaki dress slacks with recommended black, brown or navy belt. Students are required to wear the waist of the pants at the navel, and the pants must extend to the ankles. Pants/shorts must always completely cover underwear/boxers
- Absolutely NO Cargo, Painter's, or wide/flared leg pants
- Navy blue cardigan, Navy blue sweatshirt or Dry-Fit sweatshirt with "SSS" or "St. Symphorosa". St Symphorosa spirit wear crew neck sweatshirt, fleece, grey "Vikings" sweatshirt with navy blue knit shirt underneath. Hooded sweatshirts are only permitted as part of spirit wear and the hood is NOT to be worn in school

GIRLS – Grades Kindergarten through 3rd

- Round or v-neck pleated jumper
- Long or short sleeved navy blue knit polo, turtleneck or ribbed bottom knit shirt
- Polos/turtlenecks must be tucked into slacks, ribbed bottom shirts do not need to be tucked in
- If a T-shirt is worn under the uniform shirt it must be plain white
- Khaki dress slacks with recommended black, brown or navy belt
- Absolutely NO Cargo, Painter's, yoga, or wide/flared leg pants
- Navy blue cardigan, Navy blue sweatshirt or Dry-Fit sweatshirt with "SSS" or "St. Symphorosa". St Symphorosa spirit wear crew neck sweatshirt, fleece, grey "Vikings" sweatshirt with navy knit shirt underneath
- Hooded sweatshirts are only permitted as part of spirit wear and may only be worn on out of uniform days.

GIRLS – Grades 4th through 8th

- Kick-pleat skirt, split skirt or kilt skirt - knee length
- Shorts may be worn under skirts; they may not extend past the hem
- Skirts/shorts/skorts must be no more than 2 inches above the knee
- Long or short sleeved navy blue knit polo, turtleneck or ribbed bottom knit shirt-
- Polos/turtlenecks must be tucked into skirts and slacks
- Ribbed bottom shirts do not need to be tucked into skirts and slacks
- Khaki dress slacks with recommended black, brown or navy belt (no belt necessary if slacks are worn with ribbed bottom shirt as sold at Schoolbelles)
- Absolutely NO Cargo, Painter's, yoga or wide/flared leg pants
- Navy blue cardigan, Navy blue sweatshirt or Dry-Fit sweatshirt with "SSS" or "St. Symphorosa". St Symphorosa spirit wear crew neck sweatshirt, fleece, grey "Vikings" sweatshirt with white knit shirt underneath
- Hooded sweatshirts are only permitted as part of spirit wear and may only be worn on out of uniform days.

A. HAIR

- **Styles (boys and girls) must be appropriate to uniform and non-distracting (e.g., no tails, striped sides, shaved sides, mohawks, sculptured or shaved designs, etc.)**
Haircuts and styles that interfere with the educational process by drawing attention to the student or causing a distraction are not permitted
- Boys' actual hair length, when wet, must not extend below the shirt collar or over the ears
- Boys' and girls' hair must be kept out of their eyes and above the eyebrows
- Facial hair and **unnatural hair color is not permitted**

- Trendy headbands such as cat ears, unicorn horns or other fads are only permitted on out of uniform days

St. Symphorosa School does not prohibit hairstyles that are historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

B. MAKEUP

- Makeup, mascara, lip gloss, eyeliner, glitter, etc., are not allowed
- Nail polish and/or artificial nails are not permitted
- Tattoos and gang/cult signs, symbols or colors, permanent or temporary, are not allowed on school premises

C. JEWELRY

- Girls may wear a matching pair of small, simple earrings – no more than one earring per ear. For safety reasons, no dangling earrings permitted
- Girls and boys may wear a small cross, scapular, or religious medal on a neck chain
- Girls and boys may wear a simple, non-distracting watch-(no smart watches including FitBit, Apple watch etc.)
- St. Symphorosa will not be responsible for lost or broken jewelry
- No other jewelry is allowed such as bracelets, rings, etc.

D. PERFUME, COLOGNE, AFTER SHAVE

- Perfumes, colognes, after shaves, etc. are not permitted to be worn out of consideration of others who may be sensitive or allergic to scents

E. GYM UNIFORMS

- Gym uniforms consist of the St. Symphorosa navy sweatpants, St. Symphorosa gold t-shirt and/or sweatshirt/dry-fit, and gym shoes
- No hooded sweatshirts
- Gym uniforms must be worn for designated gym day
- St. Symphorosa knee-length gym shorts (optional) may be worn on gym days in August, September, May and June only. Gym shorts must clearly be identifiable as St. Symphorosa School gym shorts.

F. SOCKS

- White, navy, or black socks are always to be worn in school. Socks must be visible above shoes and at least to the ankle. Girls may wear white, navy, or black solid colored knee-highs or tights

G. UNIFORM SHOES

BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS ARE EXPECTED TO WEAR SOLID, brown, black, blue or white COLORED, SOFT-SOLED, NON-MARRING DRESS SHOES or GYM SHOES, white, black, brown, navy, gray with a stripe in one of the listed neutral colors

- Shoe heel height should not exceed 1 ½ inches

H. OUT-OF-UNIFORM CLOTHING (Dress-up/Dress-down Days)

Out-of-uniform day clothing must always be neat, clean, and modest. Appropriate length shorts (no more than 2in. above the knee) are allowed in August, September, May and June. Girls' skirts/dresses should be at or just above knee length (no minis). Thin "spaghetti" strap tops and dresses are not allowed. High heels, high platforms, flip flops, and back-less styles are not permitted at any time as they present a potential falling hazard. Inappropriate clothing styles: exposed cleavage, see-through or bare midriffs shirts, skin-tight clothing, tight yoga/leggings, shirts/sweatshirts with pictures, sayings, symbols, emblems, advertisements, or torn clothing etc. that are at all immodest, objectionable, offensive, or inconsistent with our School's philosophy – are always forbidden. If students wear inappropriate clothing, as determined by school administration, a phone call home will be made and new clothes will need to be brought to the school or the child will need to go home. **Dress-up Day** clothes should be "Sunday Best". Jeans, tee-shirts, sweatpants, yoga pants, wind pants/suits, and gym shoes are not considered dress-up clothes. **Dress-down Day** clothes may be casual. Jeans, tee-shirts, sweatpants, wind pants/suits, shorts in Aug/Sept, May and June.

Shoes on Dress Down Days-No boots or boot-like shoes, jelly shoes, sandals, flip flops, open-toed, open-heeled, clogs, platforms, light-ups, moccasins, , slipper-like shoes without backs, or fur-lined shoes are to be worn. Crocs with back straps may be worn

Students are not permitted to use dress down passes on Fridays or any other days we will be attending church.

St. Symphorosa School allows student/athletes to modify their athletic or team uniform for the purpose of modesty in clothing or attire that is in accordance with the requirements of their religion, cultural values, or modesty preferences. If a student chooses to modify his or her athletic or team uniform the student is responsible for all costs associated with the modification of the uniform and the student shall not be required to receive prior approval from the school for such modifications.

All uniform policy infractions are subject to consequences, calendar marks and/or Virtue Violation (a.k.a. detention)

I. LOST AND FOUND

Articles found in the school are kept in a Lost and Found area in the school office. Items of value, i.e., money, glasses, etc., are kept with the secretary. If items are not claimed by the end of the school year, the articles are packaged and donated to charity. **Mark the child's name on all articles and/or mark out previous names of clothing which may be lost or misplaced.**

VI. CODE OF CONDUCT

We believe our children are stewards of God's gifts and deserve to be in a safe, caring, attractive learning environment and develop positive attitudes toward themselves and others. WE believe that all things are possible with God and that kindness, love and support equals success. Our ultimate goal is that students become effective members of society by developing a sense of self-discipline and responsibility through evaluating the situations they find themselves in and making appropriate choices. To foster this outcome, we have established several rules. St. Symphorosa's expectations for our students are of a high level. Students are expected to follow all rules and maintain proper behavior at all times. The interpretation of these rules is the responsibility of the school staff.

A. MAINTAIN AN ATMOSPHERE OF MUTUAL RESPECT, COURTESY, AND COOPERATION

- Value yourself and others as children of God
- Strive to act according to the Viking Virtues
- Encourage each other to do well in all things
- Use appropriate language and comments
- The use of "please", "thank you", "excuse me", and "Good Morning", etc. should be part of our daily lives.
- Courtesy is an attitude that constantly needs to be reinforced. When the principal, priest, or another adult enters the classroom and greets the students, the students should return the greeting. If the adult enters the room and does not greet the students, then the students should continue with what they are doing
- Communicate with each other in a way that reflects Catholic values
- Treat each other with dignity and respect
- Act honestly with teachers and students: Do your own work, tell the truth
- Use problem solving to resolve conflicts; request assistance from a staff member or adult if unable to solve conflicts on your own
- Follow directions and take turns
- Cooperate with teachers' requests; refrain from arguing or talking back
- Obtain permission to touch others' belongings

B. MAINTAIN A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Listen courteously and attentively to teachers and fellow students
- Come prepared for class: homework completed on time, all books and materials needed
- Participate to the best of your ability in class
- Work quietly without disturbing other students
- Hand in assignments on time
- Complete assignments from absences in a timely manner
- Remain seated and follow classroom procedures for participation
- Demonstrate positive leadership
- Use a moderate tone of voice (indoor voices)
- Order and quiet are expected in the halls and bathrooms at all times while classes are in session
- The halls and stairways are not places for student visiting, loitering, or running

C. BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

- Be in your classroom by 7:55 a.m.
- Be at class or designated area on time
- Obtain permission to leave classroom or designated supervised area
- Follow dismissal procedures

D. MAINTAIN A SAFE, ORDERLY, PLEASANT ENVIRONMENT

- Act to keep yourself and others safe
- Keep your belongings picked up and organized
- Keep aisles clear of books, papers, etc.
- Respect the property of the school. Vandalism, willful destruction, defacing, or theft of school, parish, or personal property are considered a very serious offense and necessary action will be taken immediately and consequences awarded.
- Keep St. Symphorosa School beautiful: clean up after yourself in all areas of the campus
- Unless given permission, all toys, gadgets, and fidgets are to be left in backpacks, we are not responsible for items lost or stolen
- Report to the office when leaving the building for any reason

E. COOPERATE WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

- Participate respectfully at liturgy and prayer
- Maintain appearance in accordance with school guidelines regarding uniforms, makeup, haircuts, etc.
- Follow all classroom rules, lunchtime rules, school ground rules
- Have tests and work signed and returned as required
- Keep books and equipment neatly covered

F. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

- Actions that irritate or endanger others: fighting, play fighting, kicking, throwing objects, spitting, teasing, etc.
- Harassment of other students whether physical or verbal (name-calling, ridiculing)
- Insubordination or physical aggression toward any staff member including substitutes, supervisors or any adult representing the school
- Inappropriate language, noises, gestures, swearing, vulgarity, language with sexual connotations (See sexual harassment regulations) or racially offensive
- **Lying, cheating, stealing, forging of signatures, inappropriate use of artificial intelligence assistants like ChatGPT**
- Gum chewing on school grounds or eating food other than during designated times
- Possession of illegal substances or look-a-likes: alcohol, tobacco, vape pens, and/or other drugs
- Physical, verbal, electronic or written bullying
- Possession or viewing of sexually suggestive or pornographic material
- Possession of dangerous objects: matches, guns, knives, other weapons or similar items or look-a-likes
- Inappropriate touching/ public displays of affection
- Possession of Gang paraphernalia or other items that disrupt the educational environment, laser pointers, fidget spinners (unless approved)

****Consistent and appropriate consequences for unacceptable behavior are developed in collaboration with the teachers and administration and communicated with the student and parent in an effort to make amends and correct the behavior**

G. SEXUAL HARASSMENT REGULATIONS

Sexual harassment by one employee to another, or by an employee to a student, by a student to an employee, or by one student to another is unacceptable conduct.

Employees or students who engage in any type of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline, including suspension and/or dismissal. Retaliation in any form against an employee or student who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary

action. Any employee or student who knowingly makes false charges against an employee or a student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse or embarrass that individual shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The school will determine the facts regarding all allegations of sexual harassment in as prompt and confidential a manner as possible and will take appropriate corrective action when warranted.

H. DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

St. Symphorosa School is a Catholic educational community in which we believe our children are stewards of God's gifts. As a member of this community, every student has certain rights, privileges, and obligations. Violations of school regulations and guidelines that infringe on the rights and privileges of others will not be tolerated.

Primary classrooms, PK-2 will follow a teacher directed classroom discipline system. Grades 3-8 will follow the "Sym"ply Shining Stars calendar program which was developed in conjunction with the academic and behavioral guidelines found in this school handbook. If a student receives three behavior marks in one month, a Virtue Violation (detention) will be given. ***In 3rd grade, 5 behavior marks will result in an after school Virtue Violation served from 3:05-4pm**

Incentives: Students who have less than the three behavior marks in a month are rewarded monthly for working hard to create a safe, faith-filled and focused academic environment

Students **must** be sent to the office when the safety of the other students or self is in jeopardy, or for the following infractions:

1. Temper outbursts, harm, or danger to self or others in the classroom, gym, lunchroom etc.
2. Possession of any type of weapon in school or on the school grounds
3. Possession of drugs, alcohol, vape pens, or cigarettes in school or on school grounds
4. Refusal to obey the designated authority in the classroom, gym, lunchroom, etc.
5. Damage to the building, furniture, or learning materials.

We consider students attending social and athletic functions to be representatives of St. Symphorosa School and, therefore, subject to the discipline code of the school.

I. Virtue Violations

Behavioral Virtue Violations begin in grade 3. Virtue Violations will be issued to students who violate the school guidelines and infringe on the rights of others. Virtue Violations will be served before school, after school, or during lunch at the discretion of the teacher.

If a before or after virtue violation is to be served, the teacher issuing the virtue violation will inform the parent/guardian of the date and time via dojo or email. Failure to serve a virtue violation will result in a second virtue violation.

1. At the time a student receives a SECOND virtue violation in the same trimester, the teacher is to warn the student of the consequences should he/she receive a third virtue violation. **Two virtue violations, (detentions) in one trimester will make a student ineligible for honor roll (high honor, honors or effort honor roll).**

2. The THIRD virtue violation in the same trimester or two virtue violations in one week, results in the student having a conference with the principal/assistant principal, and a note sent home for parents to sign and return to school. This note will warn the parents that a fourth virtue violation results in a parent conference and in-school suspension. A third virtue violation also restricts the student from attending any school-sponsored activities such as dances, assemblies, sport activities, intra-murals, etc. These privileges will not be restored until consistent improvement is shown in behavior or work within a reasonably judgmental amount of time as decided on by the teachers and administration. Students will be allowed to attend educationally directed field trips and/or assemblies that are a part of the curriculum and all church services or retreats.

3. Upon issuance of a FOURTH virtue violation in the same trimester the parent/guardian will be notified, and the student will serve an in-school suspension. During an in-school suspension, the student will be given designated assignments and will be responsible for missed class work and homework. A record of the in-school suspension will be placed on file until the year's end.

4. Upon issuance of a second in-school suspension, the following takes place:

a. The case may be brought before a review board (pastor, administrators, teachers) for an expulsion decision.

b. Psychological assessment/counseling may be recommended.

c. A penalty appropriate to the seriousness of the accumulated offenses will be issued as decided upon by faculty and administration.

d. At a parent conference or review board meeting the parents may be told of the decision to expel the student or for the student to follow whatever disciplinary action the board issues. A parent may also be given the option to withdraw a student at this time.

J. SERIOUS INFRACTIONS

Serious student matters will be directed immediately to the administration. Parents will then be notified of the infraction and discuss next steps. During a phone conversation or meeting, the action will be discussed to determine the student's responsibility and the consequences of said action. Consequences for serious infractions may result in in-school or out of school suspensions and will be determined by the principal.

Serious infractions include but are not limited to:

1. Truancy
2. Fighting
3. Leaving the school premises without permission
4. Possession, use, sale and/or distribution of any dangerous or unlawful objects, i.e., cigarettes, liquor, drugs, matches, knives, laser pointers, fireworks, razor blades, weapons, look-a-likes, etc.
5. Repeated offenses of lying, cheating, stealing, etc.
6. Vandalism
7. Use of Racial slurs
8. Inappropriate use of Technology

The school retains the right to search and seize drugs, weapons, and other contraband when there is a belief such contraband is in the possession of a student. Such possession is in violation of the rules and regulations of St. Symphorosa School. The school will report all possession of contraband substances to appropriate authorities. The school will assist local governmental authorities when requested to do so, including notification of police as required by law. Drinking and/or possession of alcoholic beverages, use or possession of other drugs or drug paraphernalia, vape and other tobacco products, being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol are forbidden on the school premises or at school- sponsored events. No smoking is permitted on school premises or at school sponsored events. This no smoking rule is considered violated when a student holds an unlit cigarette, vape pen, throws a cigarette away, or carries a cigarette on his/her person.

St. Symphorosa does not tolerate violence, or violent and/or threatening remarks. This includes, but is not limited to threats involving explosive devices, weapons, verbalized, written, or implied threats. **Physical, Verbal, or Written bullying will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to Archdiocese of Chicago policies.** If a student is found violating any of the above policies, a conference will be held with the student's parents. The principal reserves the right to determine the consequences. Consequences will be discussed prior to suspension or expulsion.

K. ELECTRONICS

An acceptable use policy is signed by the student and parent. Adherence to the Acceptable Use policy is expected. Damage to any school issued equipment is the responsibility of the family. Use of cell phones/Apple/Samsung watches is not permitted on school grounds, unless approved by a faculty/staff member.

Headphones/Earbuds/Airpods are not permitted during the school day unless with teacher permission. The school will not be held liable for any electronics brought to school, i.e., Gameboys, iPads, calculators, smart watches, cameras, iPods, cellphones, airpods etc.

In the event of a student using their cell phone during the school day 8am-2:50pm, while in the school buildings/campus without permission, the phone will be brought to the office and locked up until a parent and/or guardian is able to pick the phone up. In the event a student comes to school wearing an Apple, Samsung or other brand of smart type watch, they will be asked to put it in their backpack.

Social media

Students and their parents/guardians are advised that St. Symphorosa School, by Illinois statute (Illinois Public Act 098-0129), may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a **social networking website**. The administration and faculty of St. Symphorosa School may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's rules and/or disciplinary policy. The school may require a student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

Parents/Guardians are primarily responsible for the student's appropriate and ethical use of technology outside of school. However, the inappropriate use of technology outside of the school may subject the student to disciplinary action. Inappropriate use of technology may include, but is not limited to, bullying and harassment of others, inappropriate use of the school name, remarks directed to or about teachers and staff, offensive communications including videos/photographs and threats. Unauthorized costs incurred for online purchases charged to the school are the responsibility of the student and her/his family. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to monitor their child's use and/or misuse of technology outside of school, including the age requirements for social networking websites.

L. BULLYING/HARASSMENT

We believe a community of kindness, love and support equals success. We respect the dignity of each person created in the image of God. From this reverence for the individual, we are committed to shaping Catholic school communities of faith and kindness, communities in which all students are welcomed and in which bullying or harassment is not tolerated.

"A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."

This definition includes three important components:

1. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
2. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time, or likely to be repeated.
3. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Bullying acts may be

- **Physical** which includes, but is not limited to, punching, poking, stalking, destruction of property, strangling, hair pulling, beating, biting, spitting, pinching, and excessive tickling, theft, destruction of property;
- **Verbal which** includes, but is not limited to, name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossip, and threats whether in person, through **any** form of electronic communication or social media, the Internet or written communication;
- **Emotional** which includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, perceived sexual orientation, manipulation of friendships, isolating, ostracizing and peer pressure;
- **Sexual which includes** but is not limited to many of the emotional acts or conduct described above (in person or through electronic communication or social media) as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, gestures, sexting, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact or sexual assault.

No student shall be subjected to bullying during any school-sponsored education program or activity, while in school, on school property, at school sponsored or sanctioned events and activities or through the transmission of information from school, home, or public computer network, or other similar electronic school, home, or public equipment.

All allegations and incidents of bullying are taken seriously; the complainant (student, parent, guardian, teacher, staff, bystander, relative or other) should report the bullying incident to a teacher, staff person, or principal. The complainant may also report the incident in writing. School personnel who witness or receive a bullying complaint are required to document the incident in writing and cc the principal.

STEPS FOR SCHOOL RESPONSE AND CONSEQUENCES TO BULLYING/HARASSMENT

- **INTERVENTION:** The inappropriate/unacceptable conduct should be stopped immediately.
- **INVESTIGATION:** The complaint will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially. In cases in which the severity of the incident may imply a criminal act, the matter will be turned over to the local police department and the parents/guardians will be notified.
- **DETERMINATION:** Parents/Guardians will be informed of the findings (Allegation Substantiated OR Allegation Unsubstantiated) when the investigation is complete.
- **RESPONSE:** Disciplinary or restorative action for bullying/harassment and/or violation of the School Code of Conduct may be taken which is not limited to an action plan, probation, suspension, and/or expulsion from the school.

VII. ACADEMICS/GRADING/CURRICULUM

All classes with the exception of Spanish class are taught in English. At St. Symphorosa School the following subjects are taught: Religion, Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, Computers, STEM, Spanish, Physical/Health Education.

A. Report Cards The report card is an instrument for communication. It is intended to be a summary statement of a student’s progress from one marking period to the next.

Grading Scale for 1st through 8th Grades

A+	100-99	10 points	C+	84-83	4 points
A	98-95	9 points	C	82-79	3 points
A-	94-93	8 points	C-	78-77	2 points
B+	92-91	7 points	D+	76-75	1 point
B	90-87	6 points	D	74-71	0 points
B-	86-85	5 points	D-	70-69	0 points
			F	68-Below	0 points

A grade of “1” will be given for a missing assignment. Once the completed assignment is received, it will be graded, and the achieved grade will then replace the “1”.

This grading scale is aligned with PowerSchool.

Honor Roll for Grades 4-8 and Grade 3 – Beginning 2nd Trimester

High Honor Roll: 48-60 Points in the 6 Major Subjects, No D's or F's.

Honor Roll: 30-47 Points in the 6 Major Subjects, No D's or F's.

Effort Award: Consistent effort in academic progress in any of the 6 core subject areas.

Virtuous Viking Award: Given yearly to a student from each classroom who consistently exhibits the virtues in words and actions

Subjects included in the Honor Roll: Religion, English (grades 5-8), Math, Social Studies, Science, Spelling (grades 3&4) and Reading .

iReady, Computers, Art, Music, Spanish and Gym are integral parts of our curriculum.

An unsatisfactory grade in these subjects will make the student ineligible for placement on the Honor Roll.

Grading Scale for Pre-K and Kindergarten Grades

4-Advanced

3-Proficient

2-Progressing

1-Beginning

N-Not evaluated at this time

Additional Grading Codes

S=Satisfactory

I=Improving

N=Needs Improvement

U=Unsatisfactory

This grading system is used for Primary Grades Science, Social Studies, and Handwriting and Auxiliary classes: Computers, Art, Music, Spanish, and Gym in 1-8 and iReady in grades 2-8 .

Math and Reading iReady is included on our report card and earned as an “S” if the student has a weekly passing average on lessons of 69% or higher and completed 35 or more minutes in the subject.

A “U” will be awarded if the student’s lesson passing rate average is 68% or below and the lesson minutes are below 35 for the week. iReady grades will be entered weekly and averaged for the trimester. An unsatisfactory grade “U” in

iReady math or reading for the trimester will make the student ineligible for placement on the Honor Roll.

If a student is not in attendance on the last day of school, report cards and all closing work will be held in the office and needs to be picked up no later than June 30th.

B. Progress Reports

Progress reports are sent home half-way through each trimester in grades 3-8 and must be reviewed, signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the homeroom teacher.

C. Health Education

As mandated by the state of Illinois, St. Symphorosa School provides health education in grades K-8 at age appropriate levels. The curriculum addresses many areas of wellness including human ecology, body systems, human sexuality, personal hygiene, growth and development information on communicable diseases, safety and substance abuse and information on HIV/Aids. Topics are introduced at age appropriate levels and integrated into Science, Physical Education and other appropriate curriculum areas. Parents may choose to have their child excluded from topics on Human Sexuality.

VIII. HOMEWORK: Homework is assigned as a means to help students review, comprehend and enrich subject matter taught in the classroom. Students have homework daily; written and oral assignments will be given. In addition to written assignments, it is necessary that children spend 20 to 30 minutes daily studying, iReady lessons, reviewing, and reading. Assignments are clearly given in class and must be written down in an assignment pad by the student.

Suggestions for success in homework are:

- a. Parental interest in the student's work
- b. Proper study conditions
- c. Good study habits

Assigned homework is the student's responsibility. At the discretion of the teacher, consequences for late or missing homework will be grade appropriate and may include working during lunch and/or staying after school to complete the work. As a form of teacher/parent communication, pink slips are used in grades 3 through 8 for missing assignments. Late work is subject to a point deduction at the discretion of the teacher.

DAILY HOMEWORK DURATION by GRADE

Grade K: 15-20 minutes

Grade 1: 20-30 minutes

Grade 2: 20-30 minutes

Grade 3 & 4: 30 - 45 minutes

Grade 5: 1 hour

Grades 6-8: Generally 1-2 hours, including time allotted for studying for tests. Long range assignments are additional.

IX. RETENTION

The decision to retain a student shall be made only if there has been adequate evaluation and documentation which indicate that the student would most likely profit from retention.

Procedures

- a) The decision to retain a student shall be a cooperative one made by parents, teacher and administration. Ordinarily, parents shall be notified of the possibility of retention **no later than the midpoint through trimester three. Parents have the final decision.**
- b) If a student is to be retained, the school shall provide a special program to ensure growth and progress.
- c) Retention should be used rarely above the primary grades.

In all cases:

- Retention is recommended by the principal in consultation with the teacher and parent/guardian.
- The parent/guardian should not have to choose between retention and transfer to another school.
- Absence in itself is an unacceptable cause for retention if the student demonstrates the ability to master academic materials.
- If a student is to be retained, the school shall make accommodations that support the academic growth and progress of the student.

A letter stating a **Recommendation for Retention** is written by the principal, teacher, and parent/guardian and retained in the permanent file of the student.

X. SPORTS PROGRAM

St. Symphorosa School wishes to acknowledge the value that competitive sports have for the physical development of students. Any student participating in sports activities sponsored by the Athletic Association should be working to the best of his/her ability in

his/her work. Participating in an athletic program and playing sports is a privilege and not a right. Athletes should be held to personal, academic, and disciplinary standards. Students who choose to participate in the athletic program of the school are representing that school and parish at all times. They must act in a manner that reflects favorably upon the school and on themselves. This expectation is not limited to the sports field or court, but should be evident at school, in the community, at other schools, as well as, before, during, and after the games. Regulations regarding the proper wearing of the uniform or other specified attire and hairstyles are physical manifestations of this reflection. The Athletic Director is required to submit a roster of players to the Principal for every sport before the first game.

Concussions/Sports Physicals:All student athletes who are enrolled in competitive play must have passed a sports physical within the past 395 days prior to practices or competitions. The State of Illinois also requires all students participating in school athletics to have a concussion information sheet on file. The signature of both the parent/guardian and the student athlete are required before a student can participate in any school sponsored sports. **If a student plans on participating in any interscholastic sport, they must submit these forms prior to participation. Parents are strongly encouraged to submit these physical and concussion forms prior to the start of the school year. Students who do not have these forms on file will not be allowed to participate. Note: 6th grade students who have submitted the required physical exam are exempt from a sports exam provided that the physician has indicated on the form that the student is physically able to participate in athletics.**

The school has a Concussion Oversight Team (“COT”) and appoints its members. Each student and the student’s parent/guardian needs to sign a concussion information receipt form each school year before allowing the student to participate in an interscholastic athletic activity. Students will be removed from an interscholastic athletic practice or competition immediately if any of the following individuals believes that the student sustained a concussion during the practice and/or competition. A student may return to play only after the COT review. A head coach or assistant coach may not authorize a student’s return-to-play or return-to-learn.

XI. FIELD TRIPS

Teachers plan field trips to extend educational experiences and support the curriculum. When the school offers a field trip for the students, a charge for the trip covers bus transportation and, if any, admission fee. Since the school does accept responsibility for such trips, it has the right and responsibility to exclude students who have discipline problems or students who are irresponsible in their schoolwork. Those excluded will attend school on the day of the trip and work will be provided. **Any student whose parent opts for them not to attend a field trip will not attend school and will be marked absent.** If

a student is ill on the day of the trip, return of bus transportation costs or other fees cannot be guaranteed. Only a copy of the official field trip form signed by the parent/guardian is acceptable permission. We regret that we cannot accept handwritten notes or phone calls as permission. **All Chaperones must be Safe Environment compliant.**

XII. GRADUATION

Diplomas will be awarded to those students who have completed the school's academic requirements, received a passing grade on the Constitution of The United States, the State of Illinois, Declaration of Independence and Flag examinations, adhered to the school's Code of Conduct, and returned all school materials. **All financial obligations must be paid in full at least one week prior to graduation.**

The Graduation ceremony is a special event that takes place in church. As such, we ask that families adhere to the following requests in an effort to maintain the dignity of the celebration and the sanctity of the mass. Please refrain from loud cheers following the student's name during the awarding of the diplomas. Leave any balloons, fatheads, and/or posters in the vestibule until after the ceremony and no decorations are permitted on student graduation caps worn in church.

Graduation celebrations at St. Symphorosa School of Two Holy Martyrs parish are reserved for our 8th grade students. We have a vision of a graduate and only students who have completed their final year at St. Symphorosa have realized that vision and earned the honor of an awarded diploma and graduation ceremony.

XIII: SERVICE HOURS

In keeping with our school mission to encourage service to others, all families are required to complete service hours to assist in the many activities that are held for the benefit of students and families of St. Symphorosa School and Two Holy Martyrs Parish.

Requirements: 7 hours ½ day Pre-K families, 15 hours for all other families, In addition, all families are required to volunteer for at least 5 hours with a Parish identified service during the year (July 1, 2024 - May 1, 2025) OR sell at least \$200 worth of the Two Holy Martyrs Grand Raffle tickets. If a family is unable to complete there will be a \$200.00 fee assessed (\$40 per unfulfilled hour). Any hours completed in excess of the required 5 hours are credited to the 2024-2025

school year requirement of 15 hours. Areas looking for volunteers will be updated quarterly.

Fees will be assessed on your FACTS account if the service hour requirement is not met. Please note that attending field trips and other individual classroom assistance does not qualify as service hours.

XIV: FACILITIES

Facilities Safety

St. Symphorosa School shall adhere to relevant state and local regulations and policies. The principal shall ensure that regular fire, safety, and health inspections take place and are properly documented, and that safety drills occur as required.

Asbestos

St. Symphorosa School possesses an up-to-date Asbestos Management Plan. This plan shall be maintained and made available to parents, building inspectors, and other personnel. St. Symphorosa shall inform parents each year of the presence of asbestos and the location of the Asbestos Management Plan Facilities personnel shall be required to participate in regular asbestos training, as required by federal law.

XVI: FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

It is critical to the school operations that your FACTS tuition account remains current. In order to manage our finances responsibly, **students who's FACTS account show 60 days or more delinquent on these dates will be automatically excluded from school and all school activities until payment is made.**

The exclusion dates for 2024-25 are:

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Students whose FACTS account show 30 days or more delinquent on these dates will be automatically excluded from school and all school activities until payment is made.

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

All financial obligations must be current in order to participate in any of the parish sports programs or any other extracurricular activities. All financial obligations, including service hours, must be current in order to participate in any of the "end of the year"

activities such as graduation, picnics, banquets and parish sports programs. **Per Archdiocese of Chicago Policy, academic records/student transcripts will not be forwarded unless all financial obligations are current.** Reinstatement will be allowed upon receipt of complete delinquent payment. Diplomas will not be awarded to students that have a past due balance.

Daycare accounts that are 60 days past due will prevent a student from continuing in the program until the past due balance is paid. **Daycare accounts that are past due 60 in May will result in exclusion from school.**

If your family has special circumstances preventing you from complying with keeping your account current, a request for special payment arrangements can be made in person by contacting the parish Director of Operations. Please do not leave a voice message. In addition, if there is a problem meeting the financial obligations, a written request can also be submitted prior to the 60-day delinquency, with the inclusion of a current parent/guardian contact phone number and email. If special tuition payment options are arranged, the revised terms must be met. Lack of compliance/communication may initiate the Exclusion Day process immediately!

Post-dated checks are not accepted, and we will not “hold” a check for a future deposit date. The preferred method is a check made payable to “St. Symphorosa School” but if Cash is submitted, please submit it in person and wait for a cash receipt.

FACTS late fees are the families responsibility. If a family cannot pay by the invoice due date and need a payment date change, contact mkoziar@archchicago.org ASAP. Late fees are assessed by FACTS, St. Symphorosa does not receive these funds, the late fee assessed by FACTS is the family's responsibility.

The Parish/School must have a valid cell phone number to call concerning all tuition matters. Failure to provide a valid phone number will result in the Exclusion process being instituted without additional follow-up from the Parish/School.

It remains the responsibility of the parent/guardian to check their stated emails/voicemail messages regularly. Failure to respond to School tuition communications in a reasonable timeframe will not extend the Exclusion Day process.

Because we believe a community of kindness, love, and support equals success, the School MUST ALWAYS have a valid means of communication, to address important issues to parents/guardians!

XVII. MENTAL HEALTH PROTOCOL

St. Symphorosa School takes all indications of self-harm, suicidal thoughts, serious threats to others, and other significant mental health concerns seriously. When we have concerns about a student’s emotional well-being, we will ask for the student to receive a mental health assessment from a licensed mental health professional (licensed clinical

professional counselor, licensed clinical social worker, psychologist or psychiatrist) prior to the continuation of academics and co-curricular activities at St. Symphorosa School. Below are the steps parents/guardians should follow to determine the most appropriate level of support for their child and to coordinate a smooth re-entry back to St.

Symphorosa :

1. Arrange for their child to be assessed by a licensed mental health professional as soon as possible. The school can help provide referrals to clinicians, agencies, hospitals and services who may be able to assess the student.
2. Follow the recommendations provided by the clinician, which may include but is not limited to: outpatient therapy, partial or inpatient hospitalization and/or medication management.
3. Sign a consent for release of information and arrange for the clinician to share the recommended treatment plan with the school to coordinate the student's re-entry back to school.
 - Student/family confidentiality is adhered to as dictated by the [Ethical Code of the American School Counselor Association](#).
 - All documentation should be faxed or emailed to the attention of the principal or school designee.
4. If the assessment and recommended treatment plan results in an immediate return to school, please see #6.
5. If the assessment results in a recommended extended absence defined as more than five days (or as designated by the school) from school, the parent/guardian should contact the school principal or designee to communicate the preliminary treatment plan as outlined by the treating clinician. The principal or designee will communicate with any treatment facility and our faculty to collaborate on the therapeutic and academic needs for the student. The principal or designee will coordinate the provision of necessary information for the student's return to learn in a sensitive and confidential manner. The principal or designee should utilize the assessment information to begin drafting the Student Support Plan that will be finalized at the re-entry meeting.
6. Re-entry back to St. Symphorosa school academics and co-curricular activities requires the following written statements from the evaluating clinician, which can be shared via fax or email to the principal and/or designee:
 - Evaluation date and outcome/diagnosis
 - Safety statement: the student is not at risk of self-harm or of harming others and it is appropriate for the student to return to X school

- Therapeutic recommendations, treatment plan, discharge summary and a plan for the transition back to the school environment
7. Upon receipt of documentation, the principal or designee will schedule a re-entry meeting.
- This meeting will occur in the morning on the school day the student will return to classes and will include the student, parent or guardian, principal/designee and teacher. Please know other stakeholders may attend this meeting if needed.
 - The purpose of this meeting is to review the recommendations from the assessment and treatment plan to determine the most effective support system for the student's continued care both inside and outside of St. Symphorosa school. Based on concern the school has about the student's continued personal well-being, an understanding of commitment to continued services and the school support process should be achieved. Collaborate with the student and parent in creating and implementing a safety plan.
 - Once all aspects of the re-entry meeting are accomplished and meet expectations, the student is authorized to return to classes and co-curricular activities.
8. Following the re-entry meeting, the principal or designee will schedule a meeting to review the Student Support Plan which identifies the schoolwork that needs to be made up, accommodations and supports.
- This meeting would occur in the morning or afterschool on a school day shortly following the re-entry meeting (3-7 days) and should include the student, parent or guardian, school counselor (if applicable), teachers and all other appropriate faculty or staff members as needed.
 - The purpose of this meeting is to allow the student and their parents/guardians an opportunity to share details and provide an update about the cognitive, physical, social, emotional and academic challenges associated with the extended absence. In addition, all stakeholders should review the school support plan. This meeting should be one that reassures the student and family that staff will be available to help the student with any academic issues, and that it will be important for the student to reach out if he or she is feeling worried about their schoolwork.

XVIII. PARENT/GUARDIAN CONDUCT

Parents/Guardians are expected to demonstrate behavior consistent with the Catholic values at all times with faculty, administration, support staff, students, and volunteers, whether on or off school grounds or at school related events.

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to: acts/behavior that are not aligned with the Catholic values and mission of the school, disrespectful, threatening, harassing, abusive behaviors/language, acts of intimidation, battery, assault, or other threats to the faculty, administration, staff, students, and volunteers of the school.

When a parent/guardian engages in any of the behaviors outlined above or in the school's parent code of conduct and, in the judgment of the Principal and of the pastor, such behavior negatively impacts the teaching, learning, or school environment, he/she may, after consulting with their assigned regional director:

- Inform parents that the right of the parent/guardian to be present on school grounds is temporarily or permanently suspended.
- Dismiss the child(ren) of the parent/guardian temporarily or permanently from the local Catholic School.

XVIII. Narcan/Opioid Antagonists in School

IDPH Issues Updated Standing Order Allowing Schools to Administer Medications to Counter Opioid Overdoses:

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued an updated standing order allowing schools to keep a supply of medications like naloxone on hand, and also permitting school nurses or other trained personnel to administer them to students in the event of an opioid overdose.

The updated order, signed by IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra, builds upon authority established in 2015 to expand access to naloxone, which can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. The new order makes clear that schools can obtain a supply of such medications, known as opioid “antagonists,” without a prescription, and that a school nurse or other person who has been trained in their use may administer the medications to someone exhibiting signs of an overdose on school property. Under Public Act 103-0348, which took effect January 1, 2024, public and private schools are now required to keep a supply of an opioid antagonist on hand to be used in the event of an overdose. Illinois is just one of nine states to have this requirement for schools.

The revised order also adds nalmefene as an approved opioid antagonist. In May of 2023, nalmefene was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use on persons 12 years of age and older.

“Medications like naloxone save lives,” said Vohra. “This updated standing order will ensure Illinois schools have the authority to use this treatment to prevent tragedies. While we continue to work vigilantly to steer young people away from misuse of opioids and other substances, a public health approach requires us to do everything in our power to reduce harm – preventing the most tragic and permanent consequences of these substances.”

“Access to naloxone in schools will potentially save the life of a student experiencing an overdose and give them a chance at getting help and recovery,” said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders. “It’s exceedingly rare that a student experiences an overdose in school, but if and when that happens, this order will reduce the time it takes to give them life-saving medication. I am proud of the collaboration between ISBE and IDPH to meet the needs of school districts, school nurses, and teachers who may respond in a crisis when someone needs the naloxone while on school grounds.”

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) records show that during the 2022-23 school year, there were ten instances where school personnel administered an opioid antagonist to a student exhibiting signs of an overdose. Each of the incidents happened during regular school hours.

“We are keenly aware that too many young people are at risk for overdose, due to the increased access to fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills,” said Laura Garcia, Director of the

Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery. "IDHS was honored to collaborate with ISBE and IDPH in the process of revising the standing order, ensuring schools have access to necessary overdose reversal medications."

Administration of an opioid antagonist reduces the time to treatment for someone experiencing an overdose. More than one dose of the medication may be required.

Both naloxone and nalmefene are seen as safe and effective in counteracting an overdose. They can be administered safely to persons showing signs of overdose, even if that person has not actually overdosed on opioids. Side effects are considered rare, and usually mimic the symptoms of opioid withdrawal, including fever, hypertension, nausea or vomiting.

Under the standing order, schools can obtain a supply of opioid antagonists without a prescription. The medications can be administered by a school nurse or other personnel who have undergone training in how to recognize an opioid overdose and how to administer treatment. Details of training for school personnel are also outlined in the Illinois School Code.

The revised standing order is in effect through early February, 2025.