



# Parent/Student Handbook 2010~2011

Saint Robert Bellarmine Catholic School empowers students to:

- Achieve their highest potential,
- Live meaningful lives inspired by the teachings of Jesus, and
- Serve others while becoming leaders of all to Christ.

***"Becoming Leaders of All To Christ"***

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This Parent/Student Handbook is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute a contractual agreement between St. Robert Bellarmine Parish School and any student or any parent of any student.

The information contained in the Handbook provides a general description of rules and regulations. The school reserves the right to add to, modify or abolish any of the Handbook provisions without notice.

Non-enforcement of any of the rules or regulations does not serve as a waiver of their future enforcement.

This Handbook does not create any restriction upon St. Robert Bellarmine Parish School's right to institute any course of disciplinary action, which, in St. Robert Bellarmine Parish School's sole discretion, it believes is necessary and consistent with its Catholic educational mission.

Please refer to the Policy Book of the Archdiocese of Omaha School Board for further policies and details. A copy of these policies can be viewed by calling the school office. The St. Robert Bellarmine School Board has also approved these policies.

## COOPERATIVE ROLES IN THE STUDENT'S FAITH DEVELOPMENT

St. Robert Bellarmine School provides for all students:

- Formal instruction in the Catholic faith
- Opportunities for prayer and worship
- Community-building and service activities
- Knowledge and understanding of Catholic moral values
- Encouragement to grow in virtue
- Encouragement to live as Disciples of Christ

All that the school provides is meant to complement the efforts of parents in providing similar faith development experiences at home. When both the family and the school community make continuous efforts to assist students in the formation of their faith, students grow in and become committed to their faith. The Church is strengthened in its mission of proclaiming the Gospel.

We ask that you continue your efforts in all of the above areas and continue to model for your children, the discipleship of Christ, which is the fruit of our adult faith. Your own commitment to prayer, to the Eucharistic liturgy, to the Sacrament of reconciliation, to service of others and to compassion and assistance to those in need, will form your children in ritual and practices that will enable them to deepen their relationship with God.

## COOPERATIVE ROLES IN THE STUDENT'S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

St. Robert Bellarmine School's curriculum guides identify the knowledge and skills which students are expected to master. Teachers provide instructional experiences to assist the students in such mastery. Teachers assess each student through observation of spiritual, social, emotional, and academic growth. Through this assessment, teachers are able to encourage each student to achieve to the maximum of his/her potential.

Teachers also know that diligence and self-discipline are essential to academic success and the full realization of each student's potential. They expect diligence and self-discipline on the part of each student.

Parents who expect diligence and self-discipline of their students, who require development of good study habits, well-done assignments, and supplementary reading, greatly enable the academic achievement of their children.

We ask that you continue to expect from your children, diligence and self-discipline, that you require of him or her good study habits, well-done assignments and supplementary reading.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **pastor** has the ultimate authority for all educational operations in the parish. The pastor delegates the administrative responsibilities of the school to the **principal**. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, operation of the school program and plant, management of staff members (employment, supervision, professional development, and evaluation), establishment of educational programming, the management and evaluation of student behavior, and spiritual leadership.

The **Total Education Board** is an advisory group to the pastor. Two members are elected by the parishioners and two members are appointed by the Pastor. The Board meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The Board's role is to assume consultative responsibilities in the areas of planning, policy formation, finances, selection and evaluation of a principal, development (including public relations and marketing), and evaluation of the general educational program. The Board operates in the policy-

making process by formulating and adapting policies as needed. (The pastor enacts policies and the principal implements them.) Policies are broad, direction-setting guides to discretionary action by the principal. Individual matters of resolution of specific problems after the fact are not matters to be handled by the Board, but are the responsibility of the principal.

The **Home and School Association** is the organization that maintains good communication between the home and school, provides a vehicle through which parents can provide service to the school, offers a mechanism for parent education, and organizes fundraising activities. Membership is open to all parents of school children.

#### ----GENERAL INFORMATION----

### **ACADEMIC/ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The purpose of student participation in academic/enrichment activities is to foster:

- Good sportsmanship
- Leadership
- Self-Confidence
- Positive Peer Relationships
- The ability to embrace challenges
- Recognition of the usefulness of the subject matter outside the classroom
- The ability to cope with winning and losing
- The understanding that contest performance is not a measure of self-worth
- Enthusiasm and interest for the subject matter

Through the resources available to St. Robert Bellarmine School (staff, parent volunteers, student and parent interest, material resources, and appropriate scheduling), students will be presented with a variety of opportunities that will promote a well-rounded school experience.

A teacher advisor will lead the coordination of resources for each enrichment opportunity.

### **ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESSES**

In case of an accident or illness at school, the student will be sent to the office where care will be given and a parent notified. When a parent cannot be contacted, the person listed as the emergency contact will be called. Current emergency contact information is extremely important. When professional assistance is required, the rescue squad will be summoned and will provide transportation to a medical facility as necessary. The costs shall be the parent's responsibility.

### **ADMITTANCE POLICY**

St. Robert Bellarmine School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin or ethnic origin. St. Robert Bellarmine Parish has copies of the admissions policy available upon request from the school office.

### **ATTENDANCE INFORMATION**

Once arriving at school, a student may not leave or be sent from the parish grounds without parental permission or notification. When a student is to leave school before dismissal, a parent is to send a signed note or make a telephone call to the office giving the time the student is to leave and the reason for early dismissal. The parent must come to the school office to check the student out before they are allowed to leave the building.

When a student is going to be absent, a parent is to telephone the school before 8:00 a.m. at 334-1929.

This is necessary for safety reasons as well as record keeping. A voice mail can be left when calling outside office hours. When an absence occurs without parental reporting, school personnel will notify the parent or the emergency contact person as soon as possible.

A student is considered tardy when he/she is not in the classroom by the 8:05 tardy bell. Repeated tardiness is disruptive to the class and does not allow for the late student to begin the day in the most productive manner possible. Teachers will notify the office when a student is tardy more than five times within a quarter. A parent contact may be made and it may be necessary for the student to make up lost time in a manner determined by the teacher and administration.

When a child misses two hours anytime during the school day, he/she will be marked absent for ½ day. When a child misses part of the school day due to a doctor appointment, dental appointment, or other valid reason as determined by the administration he/she will not be counted tardy or absent unless this time away exceeds two hours, then the child will be marked absent for ½ day.

When an absence is planned, teachers need to be notified in advance. When students vacation during the school year, they will be provided with their make-up work upon their return. The teacher will set a reasonable timeline for completion of the make-up work. Although students make up work, valuable teacher/student instructional time can never be made up, and this often results in the student experiencing a disadvantage in their understanding of concepts. It is strongly suggested that families vacation during the vacation days listed on the school calendar.

When a student is ill, homework will be available on that child's desk at 3:00 p.m. or sent home with a designated person.

Any student who is absent more than fourteen days per semester continuously due to family crisis, illness or family vacation, must make special arrangements with the principal and teachers. Any student who is absent more than fourteen days per semester, habitually, not continuously, will be placed on failure status until the school work is made up to the satisfaction of the principal and teachers by the end of the semester in which the absence occurs.

Truancy is the violation of Nebraska's Compulsory Attendance Law through excessive absences from school. Administrators carefully review all student absences and communicate with parents whenever absences for reasons other than serious illness occur. They also advise parents of the following guidelines and procedures:

A teacher will make the principal aware when a student's absences (excused or unexcused) exceed five days or equivalent hours per quarter, or twenty days or equivalent hours for a given year, the school shall:

1. Notify parents of the potential for charges of truancy;
2. Work with the parents in documenting a plan to obviate excessive absences.

If the student fails to meet the conditions of the documented plan, the school will serve written notice to the parent or guardian, warning him or her to comply with the Nebraska Compulsory Attendance Law and advising him or her that failure to do so will be reported to the county attorney.

Upon the next failure to meet the conditions of the plan, the school shall file a report with the county attorney.

## **BAND**

The Music in Catholic Schools program provides band opportunities for students in grades 5 through 8. Music in Catholic Schools is a service offered to families at cost and is coordinated by an employee of the Music in Catholic Schools program. St. Robert Bellarmine School provides a location for lessons and permits students to be excused from classes twice per week for 30-minute sessions. All costs, personnel, and arrangements are under the control of the Music in Catholic School's coordinator.

## **BICYCLE SAFETY**

Students who ride bicycles to school must park them in assigned areas. Students are required to walk their bicycles on the school grounds, which will respect the safety of all students.

## **BIRTHDAY TREATS**

Students often enjoy bringing birthday treats for all their classmates on their birthdays. These treats should be simple, individually wrapped, and suitable for passing out at the end of the school day to be consumed at a later time. We have several children in the school with food allergies. Homeroom teachers will communicate this information at the beginning of the year, and we thank you in advance for your cooperation in providing treats that all the students may enjoy.

## **CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING**

Nebraska state law requires that if any form of child abuse or child neglect is detected or suspected the school must contact Child Protective Services of the Nebraska Department of Social Services and law enforcement officials. The school cooperates in the investigation of such cases; therefore, the school may be prevented from informing parents of such suspicions or investigations.

## **CURRICULUM**

In accordance with Rule 10 of the Nebraska Department of Education, St. Robert Bellarmine School schedules a minimum of 1032 instructional hours for students in grades K-8. The classroom teacher and administration are responsible for scheduling instruction in all curriculum areas on a daily and weekly basis in compliance with time expectations and curriculum guidelines of St. Robert Bellarmine School, The Archdiocese of Omaha, and The State of Nebraska. The instructional program will be based on the mission and goals of the school. Schedules are subject to change as necessary in the professional judgment of the teacher, administrator, or pastor.

School professionals are committed to a quality academic program with continuing evaluation to insure the best means of instruction. Textbooks are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. A standardized testing program is administered each year to grades 3, 5, 7, and 8 to monitor student progress and academic potential. Standardized test results are shared with the Total Education Board, parents, students, and staff. In addition, teachers use many other commercial and individually developed assessment and diagnostic instruments to monitor progress and improve instruction.

The academic curriculum includes:

Religion	Art	Physical Education
Reading	Science	Library/Research Skills
English	Spanish	Computer Technology
Handwriting	Vocabulary	Health
Phonics	Social Studies	Music
Spelling	Mathematics	Family Life

## **DAILY SCHOOL SCHEDULE**

First Bell	8:00 a.m.
Tardy Bell: School Begins	8:05 a.m.
Dismissal	3:00 p.m.

Students are to line up outside their entrance door and will be admitted at 8:00 a.m.

Students should time their arrival so they do not arrive before the time indicated. The school staff is involved in morning preparations for the day or in meetings so members cannot assume responsibility for the supervision and safety of students arriving before first bell times. If a student needs to arrive prior to 7:50 a.m. in the morning, the family may register in the extended care program.

Students who ride home in a car must be picked up by 3:15 p.m. If students are walking, they need to leave school grounds immediately upon dismissal.

School Hours: It is a parish policy that employees and volunteers are not allowed to let anyone into the school building after hours. The school is officially open from 7:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on school days.

## **DISCUSSION OF CONCERNS - RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS**

Parents are asked to contact the appropriate teacher about any concerns they have regarding their children or their children's education. If the parent's concerns are not resolved through discussion with the teacher, the principal will meet with both parents and teacher to assist in resolution of the concern. Concerns are most effectively addressed and resolved when parties to the concern speak from first-hand knowledge of events, remain open to and respectful of others' viewpoints, and focus their discussion on establishing the factual basis of the concern. Teachers are encouraged to be sensitive to and responsive to the concern parents have for their children. Parents are encouraged to be trusting of the teacher's professional competence and supportive of the teacher's role as an authority essential to effective instruction of groups of students.

The principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, and in accord with that responsibility, has authority to make final decisions relative to resolution of concerns. The principal also addresses concerns of parents relative to programs and operations of the school.

In the event that a parent feels that his/her concern has not been given due attention or that the resolution of the concern is not in accord with the mission, goals, and objectives of the school, he or she may request further discussion from the pastor.

If parents are seriously dissatisfied with an aspect of the school's program or activities which the administration has deemed as integral to or in the best interest of the school's goals, the parents may wish to exercise their option of choosing another school for their child or children (Arch. Policy 5502).

If serious dissatisfaction results in continued agitation on the part of the parents, the school administrators will assess the impact of such agitation, and after discussion of the matter with the parents, may exercise the school's prerogative to withdraw permission for enrollment of the child or children (Arch. Policy 5502).

## **DRIVING WHILE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

St. Robert Bellarmine School has, because of its location and size, special problems that necessitate particular driving and parking patterns on our property. It is imperative, for the safety of the children, to follow our traffic pattern and all the directions given by staff members and volunteers assisting with the traffic pattern. A special instructional flyer will be shared at the beginning of each school year to convey additions and revisions for these directions. It is the responsibility of all who drive on school property to

comply completely with all parking/driving regulations. This shows cooperation and respect for the safety of all students.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL OF A STUDENT**

Whenever possible, medical and other appointments should be made outside of school hours. However, if it is necessary for a student to be excused during the school day, a note from a parent or guardian stating the exact time for leaving and the reason must be given to the student. The student must give the note to the homeroom teacher who will send it to the office. The student must stop in the office and sign out before leaving the building through the main doors. These measures are in place to ensure the safety of each student.

### **EARLY SCHOOL DISMISSAL OR SCHOOL CLOSING**

The school recognizes the right and responsibility of parents to keep children at home when school is in session if they believe that bad weather poses a safety threat. Please call the school to inform us of such a decision. If weather is questionable, please listen to the radio for word of the **Omaha Catholic Schools** closing before the start of the day. Once school has started, the Catholic Schools Office has asked that we not dismiss school early due to weather. Parents are asked to use their discretion about picking up students during the day or bringing preschool students. Should unusual circumstances warrant a dismissal during the school day, parents may pick up their child or the child will be sent home according to the directions given to the school.

### **EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS WITH TEACHERS**

Parents and teachers may choose to correspond via email, but this communication should be brief and only for the purpose of simple clarifications, such as setting up a meeting time. Any student or personal concerns should be addressed in a phone conversation or face to face conference in order to promote the most effective communication.

Teachers will make every effort to respond to an email within 24 hours, but it must be understood that sometimes computer network malfunctions or pressing needs of students prevent responding sooner than that. Please call the teacher at school if you do not get a response to your email within 24 hours.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Children will have the opportunity to move beyond the classroom and into the community for educational study trips. Permission slips for these trips will be sent home. A parent or guardian must sign the permission form in order for the child to participate in the field trip experience. Adult drivers and/or volunteer participants must also complete information forms for insurance purposes.

### **FIRE, CRISIS, AND TORNADO DRILLS**

In accordance with regulations of the State Fire Marshal's office and the Omaha Fire Department, fire drills and tornado/disaster drills are held regularly.

All school personnel are versed in the defined procedures for emergencies, and students will always be protected and under close supervision.

Plans of action have also been developed for a variety of crises that may develop during school hours. The safety of the students and staff is always the highest priority.

### **FUND RAISING**

Fundraising is permitted only when it serves an educational purpose, it uses limited school time, record keeping is kept to a minimum, and permission of the principal is obtained. Money may not be solicited

from any student for any purpose without the permission of the principal. All additional fund raising for the school must have the explicit permission of the pastor, principal and the Total Education Board.

### **GRADING SCALE**

Students earn grades according to achievement using either numerical or letter grades:

99--100	A+
96--98	A
95—94	A-
93—92	B+
91—89	B
88—87	B-
86—85	C+
84—80	C
79—78	C-
77—76	D+
75—72	D
71—70	D-
69—0	F

The following scale is used for achievement where the following grades are used:

E:	The student has excelled
S:	The student has mastered the skills presented
N:	The student has not yet successfully mastered the skills presented

### **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM**

A full time Guidance Counselor is on staff to direct a program which focuses on the following components:

- Classroom Group Guidance
- Problem Solving Groups
- Small Group Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Support Services

The guidance and counseling program is a support to all students, teachers, families, and the administration of the school. Services are most often delivered with a proactive approach that helps students equip themselves to function at their best in varied situations.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

School health screening is not diagnostic nor is it intended to replace regular preventive health care. The goal is to assist parents in the identification of potential health problems so they may seek appropriate medical evaluation. According to state guidelines, our school is required to verify immunizations, verify physicals for students in grades kindergarten and seven, and provide periodic health screenings.

The *Annual Student Health Update* form is sent home at the beginning of the school year. It is important that the form be completed and returned to school as soon as possible so the school is aware of your child's health status. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office if changes occur.

In case of illness or injury indicating inadvisability for the child to remain in the classroom, the parent will be contacted by telephone to pick up the child. In events where parents are not available by telephone, emergency numbers will be utilized to make the necessary contacts. The exception will be in the event where, in the opinion of the school officials, immediate medical aid is needed. The authorized physician may be notified and/or an ambulance may be called, at the parents' expense, and the child will be sent to the emergency room of a medical facility.

It is the policy of St. Robert Bellarmine School to adhere to Rule 59 of the Nebraska State Board of Education, the Emergency Response to Life-threatening Asthma or Systemic Allergic Reactions. This rule mandates an emergency response by trained emergency responders within the school which may involve a protocol of administering an EpiPen, CPR, or nebulizer treatments. If you prefer the protocol not be provided to your child, you must notify the school in writing documenting refusal of treatment for your child.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a valid, essential task for the student. Every effort will be made by the teacher to see that assigned homework is constructive, helpful, and conducive to student learning. Parents are encouraged to set aside time each evening for skill practice - approximately 10 minutes per grade level is recommended through research. During skill practice time, children should read, write, or do assigned homework.

## **INTERNET/TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

St. Robert Bellarmine School provides computer equipment, computer services and electronic access for educational use. Our mission is to provide students with hands-on experience in computer technology as a tool to enhance learning. In a Catholic school setting it is necessary to stress responsible behavior in using this technology and any other technology that meets this guideline including but not limited to cell phones, or other personal computing devices.

In order to be allowed the privilege of access to computers and software connected to the Internet to accomplish educational goals, the acceptable use policies include but are not limited to the following:

1. Students will not give personal information about self, classmates, parents, teachers, or anyone over the Internet.
2. Students will never send anyone any personal information or pictures without parents' or teachers' permission.
3. Students will not respond to messages that are in any way inappropriate.
4. Students will alert a teacher immediately upon coming across inappropriate information.
5. Students will not arrange to meet anyone "met" on-line.
6. Students will represent themselves honestly on-line.
7. Students will never use the Internet in an immoral or hateful way.
8. Students will conduct themselves on-line as they would conduct themselves in any public place, keeping in mind that they are representing their families and community to a potentially world-wide audience.
9. Students, remembering the values of the Catholic Church and their families will not purposely seek out information on-line which is inappropriate or immoral in nature.
10. Students will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to a personal account or file of another individual.
11. Students will not use others' ideas without permission.
12. Students will only use the computers in ways that show consideration and respect.

Students violating the appropriate use guidelines will be dealt with according to the classroom management plan or the Four Step School Discipline Cycle outlined in this handbook.

## **LATE START WEDNESDAYS**

The first Wednesday of each month is designated as a *Late Start* day unless otherwise noted on the school calendar or in the THT newsletter. Students are not expected at school until 9:15 a.m. This allows the staff a block of uninterrupted time to explore various topics.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

School Administration and personnel are required to cooperate with law enforcement personnel or other government agents requesting access to students. Administrators are to grant access in accord with the expressed wishes of the student's parent(s) or legal guardian. Exceptions to parental/guardian wishes must be made in the case of warrants for arrest, suspects in a felony, and in the case of suspected child abuse as defined in Nebraska Statutes.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Medication, prescription or over-the-counter, recommended by a physician, must be kept in the school office and may be taken under the supervision of a staff member. For safety reasons a student may not carry any medication in school, this includes aspirin, cough drops, and any cold medications. Students are allowed to carry an inhaler at the discretion of the parent and doctor. Prescription and over-the-counter medications must be in the original container and labeled with the student's name. The label from the pharmacy must be on the prescription medication container. The label must include the doctor's name and the name of the medication. Directions for administering all medications must appear on the original container. A form must be filled out by the doctor and parent, detailing the instructions for administering all medications, including reasons the medication is needed. (These forms may be obtained from the school office and from the school web site).

## **MULTI-CULTURAL EDUCATION POLICY**

It is the policy of St. Robert Bellarmine School to utilize the resources of curriculum, instruction, in-service, counseling, and guidance to reflect the racial, ethnic, language, and cultural heritage of both historical and modern day United States of America by observing the following objectives.

1. To select materials and methods that will eliminate bias and stereotype in our schools.
2. To conduct in-service programs for our staff that will assist them to understand a multi-cultural approach and to reflect it in their teaching and administrative duties.

## **NEBRASKA FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS**

Parents are encouraged to join the Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents which is a Nebraska Catholic Conference Affiliate. The goals of the parents' federation are:

- \*UNITE Catholic-School parents in Nebraska;
- \*PROMOTE Catholic education statewide;
- \*INFORM all Catholic-School parents as to their rights and the rights of their children with regard to educational programs;
- \*FOSTER legislation that will support parental choice in education.

## **PARENTAL RIGHTS ISSUES**

Unless such rights are restricted by a legally binding instrument or court order, the custodial and the non-custodial parent:

- are entitled to exercise all parental rights regarding student records;
- may obtain information from their child's records on a regular basis;
- may receive general notices;
- may attend regularly scheduled teacher conferences or have separate conferences scheduled.

A child may not be released during the school day to anyone except the custodial parent unless the custodial parent provides permission.

If the parents are separated and/or neither is the primary custodial parent of the child, the school may release the child to either parent unless the school has evidence of a legally binding instrument or court order to the contrary.

Any contacts by non-custodial parents with the child during the school day will be governed by the legally binding instrument or court order in effect unless the school has received permission from the custodial parent providing for contact. Such permission must specify the type of contact. If the parents have joint custody, each parent shall be afforded all parental rights, unless restricted in some way by a legally binding instrument or court order.

The school may require custodial and non-custodial parents to provide a court certified copy of the court document in effect that sets forth the rights and restrictions pertaining to the parent's rights.

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

A minimum of two conferences are scheduled during the year to allow parents an opportunity to review student effort and achievement. Teachers are expected to maintain early, timely and additional communications throughout the year to maximize student progress.

Optional conferences are also provided for parents to recognize student improvement on goals that were set earlier or for those students who are not progressing satisfactorily in the academic and/or behavioral categories.

### **PERMANENT RECORDS**

St. Robert Bellarmine School voluntarily complies with the provisions of the Buckley Amendment regarding student records. Official records include: 1) academic transcript, 2) attendance records, 3) records of educational or related testing, 4) emergency information, 5) required health information, 6) factual, not observational, information. The content of these records will only be released to authorized persons. A parental signature will be required to send records to other educational institutions.

### **PERSONAL POSSESSIONS**

Students and their personal possessions including book bags, purses, pouches, and any other items brought onto school property are subject to being searched by school personnel.

### **PICTURES**

Occasionally we have requests for photos of students to be used in various publications such as the Omaha World Herald or the Catholic Voice. If you object to your child(ren) having their picture published, please inform us in writing within the first week of school.

St. Robert Bellarmine Parish has adopted a policy which includes pictures of students on the parish website. If you do not wish to have your child/children's pictures included, please inform the principal in writing no later than the first week of school. This process must be repeated each school year.

### **PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

All St. Robert Bellarmine teachers are expected to develop plans for students who exhibit special needs. Special needs include those students who exhibit special above grade level, academic, or behavioral needs. This recommendation is made so that all students can be challenged in accordance with their abilities. In addition to the individualization done by each teacher, St. Robert Bellarmine utilizes the services of three full time Learning Resource Specialists who coordinate tutoring programs and assist those students experiencing learning difficulties. The Learning Resource Specialists work closely with parent and classroom teachers to provide the best possible academic progress for these students.

Recognizing that individual differences exist among students, reasonable adjustments and accommodations are made to help students develop skills affecting academic growth.

### **PROMOTION - RETENTION**

Students are promoted on the recommendation of the teacher and the principal. The student will have shown evidence of the desired growth and a maturity level that supports continuous progress. Students must pass, at a minimum, one semester of every class in order to gain promotion to the next grade. In the event that a student does not earn the one semester passing grade requirement, a school approved alternate plan must be put in place over the summer.

The teacher will confer with the principal and notify a parent immediately of any difficulty a child is experiencing in meeting the academic, psychological and social requirements for promotion. After a concerted effort by the teacher, parent, and principal to help the student acquire the needed skills, a decision will be made as to promotion or retention.

### **RELIGIOUS TRAINING**

The main reason for our school to exist is to help parents pass the faith to their children. This mission is taken very seriously. Teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church are integrated into all subjects. Teachers are strongly encouraged to continue their growth and development of faith and knowledge of Church teachings. Faculty participation in the Foundations of Faith Program is one example of the means taken to ensure the Catholicity of our school.

Second grade students receive special preparation for reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation which occurs during the first semester, and First Eucharist which occurs during the second semester. Eighth grade students are prepared to receive the sacrament of Confirmation which occurs during second semester.

All students in grades K-8 and their teachers have the opportunity to attend Mass during the school day at least once per week. Religion classes are taught daily in all grades. Special activities are planned for Advent and Lent as well as for holy days and special feasts. Traditional practices such as Stations of the Cross and recitation of the Rosary are also studied and experienced. Opportunities for reception of Reconciliation are scheduled for all students who have received the sacrament.

Parents, the primary teachers of the Catholic faith to their children, must also grow and develop in faith. Sacramental review programs for parents as well as adult faith formation programs planned by the parish staff help foster this growth. Regular participation in the weekend parish liturgies and reception of the sacraments are essential to modeling our faith. Sharing Catholic values and practices also reinforce the lessons learned at school. Faith in action is our Catholic tradition. Students from the parish in grades seven and eight will be given an opportunity to serve Mass. Instruction for serving Mass will begin in grade six. Students are obliged to be present and punctual.

### **REPORTS OF PROGRESS**

Report cards are issued four times a year at the end of each quarter. The hope is that parents will study the report card carefully and will contact the school if there are any questions about the grading system or the organization of the report card. Each time the report card is sent home, it should be signed by the parent or legal guardian and returned to school promptly. It should be noted that only semester grades are recorded on permanent record cards. Quarter grades are halfway indicators.

Approximately halfway through each quarter, progress reports are sent home. Grades or comments contained in the progress report are not permanently recorded but are used as informal indications of progress to that point.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING**

The US Catholic Conference of Bishops has mandated that all people who work with Catholic school students, either as employees or volunteers, be background checked and take the Safe Environment training. Safe Environment training is offered periodically in the parish or throughout the Archdiocese so that we can continually expand the base of individuals able to work on behalf of our students.

The background check for volunteers consists of the following:

- A check that names match social security numbers
- A search of offenses through the Nationwide Criminal Index Registry
- A search of the Nebraska Sexual Abuse Registry

Volunteers may be asked to periodically update their Safe Environment Training as requested by the Archdiocese of Omaha. Providing the safest and most healthy environment for all students is the goal and purpose of this mandate.

## **SCHOOL DRESS CODE**

Uniforms are to be worn daily to promote a sense of community, to assure appropriate dress for school, and to de-emphasize fashion as a high societal value and expense. Requests to be out of uniform should be made by a parent to the principal. Only the principal may excuse students from following the uniform code.

Compliance of the school dress code is the responsibility of the parents. Students comply with the dress code as an indication of cooperation and pride in their school and themselves. The school faculty and administration shall enforce the school dress code.

St. Robert Bellarmine School utilizes Dennis Uniform for school uniforms. Parents should make every effort to purchase uniforms from Dennis Uniform in order to provide the necessary uniformity in required color and style.

Boys and girls may wear scouting uniforms on days of meetings.

## **Uniforms**

### **Girls**

1. Girls in grades K-3 may wear pleated bib-type uniform jumpers. Girls in grades 4-6 may wear pleated or A-line uniform skirts. Girls in grades 7 and 8 may wear A-line skirts. Girls in grades K—8 may wear uniform skorts. The jumpers, skirts, and skorts must be purchased at Dennis Uniform. Jumpers, skirts, and skorts shall be of a reasonable length. Final interpretation of excessively short jumpers, skirts, or skorts will be determined by the administration. Navy walking shorts may be worn the first and last two months of the school year. Navy blue slacks are optional during the fall and winter months. Uniform slacks can be purchased at Dennis Uniform Co. or similar navy blue slacks of woven fabric with no patch pockets, no flat felled seams and no noticeable decorations may be substituted.

2. Girls may wear a white tailored blouse or the uniform white polo with the St. Robert Bellarmine school logo. The polo shirt must be purchased at Dennis Uniform. Shirts must be tucked in the jumper, skirt, skorts, slacks, or shorts. If a T-shirt is worn under the uniform shirt or blouse, it must be a plain white short-sleeved T-shirt. Turtlenecks are not acceptable.

3. Navy blue uniform sweaters may be worn with the jumper, skirt, or slacks.

4. Solid white, solid navy blue, or solid green socks must be worn, and visible above the tops of the shoes. Girls may also wear tights or leggings. Leggings are defined as tight-fitting leg wear made of a

stretchy material that adheres to the leg in a similar fashion as tights. The leggings need to go to the ankle, just above the shoe.

5. Students may wear the approved uniform sweatshirt with the school logo. This shirt must be purchased at Dennis Uniform.

### **Boys**

1. Navy blue pants must be worn. They can be purchased at Dennis Uniform or similar navy blue slacks of woven fabric with no patch pockets, no flat felled seams and no noticeable decorations may be substituted. Navy walking shorts may be worn the first and last two months of the school year.

2. Boys may wear the uniform white polo with the St. Robert Bellarmine school logo. The white polo must be purchased from Dennis Uniform. Shirts must be tucked in the pants or shorts. If a T-shirt is worn under the uniform shirt, it must be a plain white short-sleeved T-shirt. Turtlenecks are not acceptable.

3. Solid white or solid navy blue socks must be worn, and visible above the tops of the shoes.

4. Students may wear the approved uniform sweatshirt with the school logo. This shirt must be purchased at Dennis Uniform.

School Personnel will determine conformity with the above dress code. Students not in compliance with the dress code/uniform policy will be sent to the office and their parents will be called so the situation may be rectified as soon as is practicable.

### **Personal Appearance**

Items of personal adornment, which could be a distraction to the learning environment, will not be permitted in school.

Unusual hair colors and styles with ornamentation would also be a distraction to the learning environment and therefore will not be allowed. Hair shall be of a reasonable length and style. Final interpretation of excessively long/short and/or inappropriateness of hairstyle will be determined by the administration.

Girls may wear small earrings, used to keep pierced ears open. Only one earring per ear is allowed. Students shall not wear earrings in the cartilage part of the ear. Make-up is not allowed on any school day except light make-up for grade 8 girls on picture day. Suitable shoes are to be worn. Backless shoes and sandals are not permitted. Boots may not be worn during the school day. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings.

Casual Dress Days: Occasionally during the school year, students will be granted the opportunity to dress casually. Students are not required to be in uniform on designated casual dress days. Jeans, t-shirts, and sweatshirts are permitted on casual dress days. Shirts must have sleeves. Tank tops are not permitted. If casual dress days occur during the shorts season of the uniform code, shorts are allowed.

Halloween Costumes: Students have the option of wearing casual clothes or appropriate costumes on the day designated for Halloween parties. Appropriate costumes must be in good taste and not be violent, disparaging to any person or group of people, or a distraction to the learning environment. Cross dressing is not considered an appropriate costume choice.

Any garment which advertises drugs or alcohol or contains reference to put downs or glorified destruction is inappropriate. School Personnel have the authority to decide when clothing and accessories are inappropriate, distracting to learning, or pose a threat to safety and they may instruct the student to remove such articles.

## **SCHOOL PARTIES, ACTIVITIES, SOCIAL EVENTS**

School parties, activities and other social events will be permitted at the discretion of the teacher and principal. The Home and School Association helps plan parties during Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day.

Members of the St. Robert Bellarmine Community emphasize mutual concern for the spiritual, social, educational, and psychological development of our students. We strongly discourage boy-girl parties outside of school activities for our students at all grade levels.

## **SMOKING**

The school provides a smoke-free environment. Smoking is not permitted in the school building or on the grounds by any school representative or visitor during any school activity. Possession of tobacco products by students is a violation of the law and will be treated as a very serious offense.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

Standardized Tests are administered each September/October to students in grades 3, 5, 7, and 8. This testing should not be looked at as the only indicator of student abilities. Regular student performance and teacher evaluation in the classroom are still the most reliable indicators of a student's abilities and progress.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

St. Robert Bellarmine School is a Catholic school with a mission to develop leaders of all to Christ. We believe that the direct teaching of self-discipline skills is a priority in fulfilling our mission. The fifteen skills outlined in the *Discipline With Purpose Program* form the basis of our discipline program. They are:

### **Basic Skills**

1. Listening
2. Following instructions
3. Questioning
4. Sharing time, space, people and things
5. Using social skills

### **Constructive Skills**

6. Cooperating with others
7. Reasons for rules
8. Accomplishing a task
9. Exhibiting leadership
10. Communicating effectively

### **Generative Skills**

11. Organizing time, space, people and things
12. Resolving problems of mutual concern
13. Taking initiative in problem solving
14. Separating fact from feeling
15. Sacrificing from a motive of love

We believe that these skills are developmental in nature and can be taught; several teaching and learning styles are used to teach them. Inappropriate behavior will be confronted in the context of teaching these skills, but the main focus is development of the skills in all students and staff. We will actively seek opportunities to teach and practice these skills.

St. Robert Bellarmine School has adopted three guidelines for success. When a student chooses not to follow these guidelines, the teacher will implement the classroom discipline cycle. If the classroom discipline cycle does not remedy the situation, a Four Step School Discipline Cycle may be put into action.

St. Robert Bellarmine Guidelines for Success:

1. Respect yourself and others as children of God.
2. Contribute to the learning environment.
3. Follow school and classroom procedures.

Occasionally, serious infractions occur that threaten the safety of our students. The infractions include but are not limited to physical/psychological danger, severe disrespect, and out of control behavior. If possible, the adult who removed the student will work quickly to help the student regain self-control. If this happens, the two parties can continue to work together to redirect the inappropriate behavior. If regaining control does not happen or the action warrants more serious attention, the student will be sent to the principal's office and the Four Step School Discipline Cycle will be set in motion.

#### **FOUR STEP SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CYCLE**

- Step One:** The student and principal develop a personal plan for the student to use in changing inappropriate behavior.
- Step Two:** If a student is sent to the principal a second time within a two-month period, a conference with a parent may be scheduled. A contract may be drawn up listing actions that will be taken by the parent, principal, teacher, and student.
- Step Three:** If a student is sent to the principal a third time within a two month period, or in extreme cases when the principal determines the seriousness of the action warrants starting at Step Three of the Discipline Cycle, a parent conference will be scheduled and the student will be suspended for an amount of time deemed appropriate by the principal. Depending on the severity of the situation, the conference would take place over the phone or in person. Step Three can be repeated as long as a student is able to demonstrate satisfactory improvement.
- Step Four:** The principal will recommend expulsion.

An office referral will result in the implementation of the Four Step Discipline Cycle. Office Referrals include, but are not limited to:

- Physical or psychological threat or assault
- Theft of valuables
- Severe defiance or disrespect
- Out of control behavior
- Repeated exhibitions of offensive conduct and/or harassment
- Any medications brought to school (Tylenol, cough drops)
- Punches thrown and student is unable to quickly gain composure.
- The classroom management plan, along with teacher interventions and parent involvement, has not remedied a situation and a negative pattern is developing.
- Talking about and/or threatening to use a weapon.

The following infractions will always result in an immediate move to step three or step four:

- Serious physical or psychological threat or assault.
- Illegal possession or use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs.
- Leaving the grounds without permission.
- Serious violence to a person or property.
- Weapon brought to school. This includes any kind of knife or “weapon like” instrument.

Weapons: Students are forbidden knowingly and voluntarily to possess, handle, transmit or use any instrument in school, on school grounds, or at school events that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon. Any object which could be used to injure another person and which has no school-related purpose will be considered a weapon for the purpose of this code.

The following are examples of instruments ordinarily or generally considered weapons: knives of all types, guns, lead pipes, chains, chuck-sticks, throwing stars, darts, metal knuckles, blackjacks, unauthorized tools, fireworks, matches, explosives or other chemicals.

No toy weapons of any kind are allowed at school or school-related activities.

Police will be contacted when there is suspected violation of criminal laws concerning weapons.

The first offense in violation of the weapons policy will result in immediate suspension and may result in expulsion. A second offense in violation of the weapons policy will result in immediate expulsion in accordance with Archdiocesan School Policy 5037.

Threats to use a weapon shall be thoroughly investigated and may be treated the same as possession of a weapon under this Policy.

Any other very serious infraction, in the judgment of the principal, could result in an immediate move to step three or step four.

Any conduct inside/outside the school which is a detriment to the school can result in disciplinary action.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL**

Student Council is an organization of elected student representatives selected to represent St. Robert Bellarmine School in a variety of school functions. The elected student representatives are expected to represent their respective homerooms and demonstrate qualities of leadership, initiative, and responsibility.

## **STUDENT OFFENSIVE CONDUCT AND HARASSMENT**

Student offensive conduct or harassment on the basis of a person's gender, sexual orientation, race, color, age, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability is prohibited. Repeated incidents of offensive conduct directed to the same person or group of persons constitutes harassment. Offensive conduct or harassment may result in suspension or expulsion.

Examples of offensive conduct which when repeated constitute harassment include but are not limited to the following:

1. Explicit and offensive sexual references or gestures;
2. Unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature and unwelcome verbal, written, or physical advances or suggestions of a sexual nature.
3. Name calling, taunting, or language of any kind, including graffiti, epithets, vulgar or profane jokes, which is disparaging or demeaning to others on the basis of their gender, sexual

orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability.

### **BULLY PREVENTION PLAN**

St. Robert Bellarmine School utilizes a Bully Prevention Plan to promote positive peer relationships. This plan revolves around educating students, parents, and teachers about the true definition of bullying and how they can best prevent it. The Four Step Discipline Cycle is used when incidents of bullying occur. The school depends on timely reporting of bystanders, use of anonymous reporting boxes in classrooms, and teaching students to report and equip themselves with strategies research has shown to best eliminate bullying incidents.

The role of parents is to stay in close and open communication with teachers if bullying concerns exist. Open communication between the home and school is important in eliminating a bullying issue. Open communication includes thorough and timely discussions and dealing in a straight forward manner with students involved. Parents should understand that consequences involving other students are private and will not be discussed.

### **SUPERVISION**

Students are supervised by an adult in all classrooms, the cafeteria, the gym, and the playground.

### **SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT, AND BOOKS**

A school supplies list is made available to parents each spring and again at the beginning of the school year. Textbooks and many classroom materials are provided with a percentage of their cost covered by the annual book/materials fee.

Students/parents are expected to pay for lost or damaged books, supplies and equipment. Students/parents will be held responsible to pay for willful damage to any school property.

Desks, lockers, or any other storage equipment remain the property of the school and as such can be opened, inspected, or cleaned at any time. The school is not responsible for items left in these storage spaces.

### **TAKE HOME TUESDAY**

Your child will bring flyers, bulletins, corrected school work, tests, progress reports, report cards and newsletters home from school on Tuesdays. This is called the Take Home Tuesday Program. It is important that you read these items in order to be informed about school events. Your interest in reading the material will encourage your child to continue bringing them home. The newsletter is also available online on the principal's page of the school website. You may sign up for an email alert which notifies you that the newsletter is available for viewing.

If you or your organization has an item for inclusion of the THT newsletter, please contact the school office the Friday before the inclusion date.

### **TELEPHONE USE**

The school telephone is a business telephone and should be used by students for emergency situations only and only with the permission of a teacher, the secretary, or the principal. The student must obtain a permission form and signature from his/her teacher. Before using the telephone, a member of the office staff must sign, and note the time on the permission slip. After the student has completed his/her call, a member of the office staff will sign the slip, note the time and return it to the student. The student must return the slip to the teacher when returning to class.

## **UNAUTHORIZED ARTICLES**

Common sense and consideration is the best guide in determining whether to bring personal possessions to school. In general, students should not bring toys or unusual items to school unless they are intended for a specific purpose in the classroom. Radios, cell phones, beepers/pagers, ipods and video games are not permitted to be utilized during school hours. If a teacher finds it necessary to remove any item, it will be sent to the office and remain there until a parent has an opportunity to pick it up.

## **VANDALISM**

Our school and school equipment are parish property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property or any property belonging to a staff member is vandalism and is cause for immediate suspension and possible expulsion. It is the student/parent's responsibility to repair or replace any damaged property. If a student accidentally causes damage, it should be reported to a teacher immediately so that the damage is not misconstrued as vandalism. Books and other materials are on loan to students. Parents and students are responsible for replacing damaged or lost books.

## **VIDEOS/DVDS/MOVIES**

Videos/DVDs/Movies with an educational purpose may occasionally be used to supplement instruction but should be used sparingly. All videos should be age-appropriate and reflect the teacher's professionalism in their selection. Parents and the principal should be informed in advance of the intent to show parts of a video for instruction that is not G rated.

## **VISITORS**

For security reasons all visitors are required to report to the school office upon entering the building. Upon check-in, each visitor will be issued a visitor pass. All staff has been instructed to report anyone who has entered the building and is not wearing this pass. In order to be consistent, this includes all visitors, even parents. Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school and classrooms, at the same time they are considered visitors and must report to the office first.

Items brought to school for a student must be brought to the school office. The item must be labeled with the student and teacher's names. Please do not take items directly to the classroom as this will be an unnecessary disruption to the class.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Many parents share their time and talents with the school by assisting in the classroom, library, cafeteria, and a variety of other ways. The efforts of volunteers genuinely bolster our educational programs, and any assistance is welcomed. Please contact your child's teacher or the principal if you are interested in assisting. All parents are encouraged to participate in some capacity or activity during the school year. All who volunteer in the school are required to comply with the US Catholic Conference of Bishops' Safe Environment Training policies.

## **WELLNESS**

St. Robert Bellarmine School plays an important role in creating a healthy environment for the prevention of childhood obesity and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and lack of physical activity. The school will continue to provide ongoing nutritional education, encourage physical activity, provide information about healthy food options, and promote a school environment which provides consistent wellness messages that are conducive to healthy eating and being physically active.