



"Educating the Whole Person"

PARENT/STUDENT
HANDBOOK

2008-2009

SAINT SEBASTIAN SCHOOL
BELLE VERNON, PA

SAINT SEBASTIAN SCHOOL HANDBOOK
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PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint the parents and students with the policies and practices of Saint Sebastian School. The participation by and cooperation of parents and students are vital factors in the development of a successful school program

To insure the success of the educational program with Saint Sebastian School, parents and students are encouraged to consult this handbook and to become familiar with the policies and practices of the school.

PHILOSOPHY

Saint Sebastian School emphasizes educating the whole person. We attempt to do this not only by teaching Gospel values, but also by showing our students how religion is incorporated into their daily lives. Consequently, we endeavor to provide the academic atmosphere, the human association, and a discipline vital to the students' spiritual, intellectual, personal, social, and physical development.

The basis for Saint Sebastian School's Philosophy is "to teach as Jesus did." Christian education is intended to make our faith become living, conscious, and active. We encourage those values taught in the Gospel to be an integral part of daily education and interaction. In school our children can experience a community of faith lived out in the staff's daily interaction with each other, with the children, with their parents, and with the community at large. As a community of learning, and a family of faith, we encourage each person's self worth as a child of God. In the classroom, in small groups, and with individual attention, we strive to develop the students' capabilities, talents, and critical thinking skills necessary for them to progress at their own pace.

Together with parents who share in the responsibility, we seek to offset the forces (drugs, media, peer pressure, etc.) within society. It is important that the children know that their choices can affect their relationships with each other, their family, and those in the community. As they mature, there will be an increased awareness that these choices will affect government, the homeless, the hungry, people of special needs, the oppressed, the impoverished, and the use of the world's resources.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL CALENDAR

At the beginning of each school year, each family will receive a copy of the school calendar, which may be extended or altered in case of emergency closing of schools. This calendar will designate free days, teacher in service days, and days of early dismissal. The school must adhere to state and diocesan guidelines concerning hours of instruction and number of days in session, and provisions for teacher in service and staff development.

Every family will be informed of school activities, and family participation in school activities is strongly encouraged.

A copy of the calendar can be found posted on the website.

ADMISSION

Students belonging to Saint Sebastian Parish shall be given preference with regard to admission to Saint Sebastian School and must file with the school the appropriate diocesan admission forms. **Priority in admission shall be as follows: siblings, preschool, parishioners, non-parishioners, and non-Catholics.** The school adheres to the age requirements of the local public school district (Belle Vernon Area). Any child who reaches the **age of five** by August 31st of the current school year, may be admitted to kindergarten unless there is evidence that the child is not ready to begin. In May of each school year, the kindergarten teacher will administer a readiness test to determine placement. Any child who reaches the **age of six** by August 31st of the current school year may be admitted to the first grade unless there is evidence that the child is not ready to begin. Parents and/or guardians must accompany the child to school for purposes of registration and verification of residency. Registration for the following school term will be held in January. On the date of registration, the following documents must be presented: a) birth certificate or copy of birth certificate; b) immunization record; c) verification of residence (if living with a person other than a parent). In the event the child resides with a person other than the parent or legal guardian, a conference with the school principal may be necessary for verification of residence. Children of any race, color, or national origin are eligible for admission to Saint Sebastian School. Children of any religion are likewise eligible for admission subject to the rights of the Catholic children as stated above.

Parents of students entering at other levels must contact the principal of Saint Sebastian School to fill out a registration form and a release of records form. The release form is sent to the sending school, and the records are then forwarded to Saint Sebastian School.

Continuance at Saint Sebastian School for each successive year will be based on attitude, behavior, academic achievement, and tuition payment. This is entirely the decision of the principal in conjunction with the pastor of Saint Sebastian Parish.

TUITION

Parents and parish share responsibility for the cost of Catholic education. Parents shall pay a reasonable amount of the per pupil cost of education as established by the parish and set forth in the Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding.

Payment of tuition must be submitted in accordance with the payment schedule established at the time of registration. It is the obligation of the parent to contact the principal for financial assistance. In the event of a failure to make timely payment of tuition, the student may become ineligible to attend school unless special arrangements with the school authorities are made for the payment of tuition other than as provided above.

St. Sebastian School, along with all other Diocesan Schools, uses the FACTS Tuition Management Services. Filling out a FACTS application is a request for tuition assistance. If an application is not filled out, the family will be expected to pay the full announced tuition amount.

If a student transfers to another school, tuition may be refunded on a prorated basis. Arrangements for any such refund should be made through the principal.

Any parent not paying the full tuition, or not obtaining clearance for an extension, will be asked to withdraw their child before the next school year. Transcripts will not be forwarded to the sending school until all tuition is paid in full. Report cards will not be given at the end of any given school year if tuition is not paid in full.

ATTENDANCE

Children of compulsory school age, up to age seventeen, are required by law to attend an approved educational institution, unless legally excused pursuant to Diocesan Policy No. 4110. The school

recognizes a number of specific reasons for which a child may be excused from school for all or part of a school day, including, but not limited to: a) observance of religious holidays; b) receipt of religious instruction; c) educational trips not sponsored by the school; d) attending medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged after school hours; and e) illness or other urgent reasons of an emergency nature.

Unexcused or unlawful absences include, but are not limited to: a) truancy; b) parental neglect; c) illegal employment; d) pupils who run away from home; e) shopping, and f) trips not approved in advance.

Students are expected to report to school on time. ***In the event of an absence, students must bring an excuse from their parent/guardian upon returning to school the first 3 days after an absence.*** The excuse must contain the following: a) date of the note; b) name and grade of the student; c) date of the absence or tardiness; d) nature of the absence or tardiness; and e) signature of parent or guardian.

The student is responsible for making up all assignments and tests missed during an absence from school. The student will be permitted to have **three school days** to make up work missed. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the assignments and return them to the teacher at the time designated.

Regular attendance is essential for good academic performance.

- In the event of an absence, **it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to call the school office before 8:30 a.m. This does not count as an authorized excuse.**
- On a day that the student has been absent at least a half day for reasons of illness, the student may not attend or participate in extra-curricular activities.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day, the office manager will contact a parent or the designated person on the emergency card to come and pick up the child at the office.
- Students who wish to leave school early, or be absent from school for an extended period of time, must request permission in writing to be signed by the principal.

If a student is absent for 5 consecutive days or 15 total days, they must provide the school office with a signed doctor's excuse for each absence thereafter. If an excuse is not provided, it will count as an unexcused (illegal) absence. **After 3 unexcused absences, the student will be released back to their home district and reported to the truant officer.**

As a sign of our commitment to each other in Christian community, students may attend the funeral of a parent or sibling of a student in their class. Any parent, who feels that their child cannot attend, should make their feelings known to the principal at the time of the event.

TARDINESS

A student is tardy if he/she is not in the classroom for the opening exercises at 8:30 a.m. Repeated cases of tardiness will be brought to the attention of the principal so that parents will be notified. A student will not be sent home for tardiness. Any student who is tardy may be required to submit a note of explanation signed by a parent or guardian. Three unexcused instances of being tardy will be counted as a ½ day absence. The teacher is responsible for recording tardiness in the daily Attendance Register, on a student's report card, and on the Permanent Record Card.

If you are dropping your child off late (after 8:30 a.m.) you must take them to the **office by way of the front entrance** to sign them in to school. A student will not be allowed to sign in late.

If a student arrives after 8:30 a.m., **it is the responsibility of the parent to sign the student in at the school office and add the child's name to the lunch list in the cafeteria with the cafeteria supervisor. If a student arrives after 9:30 a.m. it is considered as a ½ day absence.**

SECURITY DOORS

After 8:30 a.m. and before 2:45 p.m., all doors to the school will be locked. Students and parents in the building are instructed not to open the doors for anyone but a teacher. All visitors must report to the front entrance of the school to be buzzed in. There can be no exceptions when safety of the children is an issue.

ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

When a student arrives by bus in the morning prior to 8:10 a.m., they are to go directly to the cafeteria and find a seat. They may talk quietly to the students around them. If they arrive after 8:10, they may proceed to their classrooms.

If a student is being dropped off by a parent, there are a few important rules to remember:

- If you park in the lower lot you must use the crosswalk and obey the crossing guard at all times.
- Keep all cars outside of the roped off area in front of the doors.
- Please exit the lot quickly and carefully to avoid a long line of cars.
- Please refrain from using cellular phones when driving in the school zone.

EMERGENCY CLOSING OR DELAY OF SCHOOL

When classes are canceled or delayed due to snow or inclement weather, Saint Sebastian School will follow the designated program of cancellation or delay as specified by the principal, as follows:

**School closings or delays should follow the
Belle Vernon Area School District. These announcements
are made over the radio on KDKA (1020 am), or television stations KDKA or WPXI, as early
as 5:30 a.m. Unexpected early dismissals will be handled by the school office
or by the homeroom mother telephone chain.
The announcement will say “Belle Vernon School District, including
Saint Sebastian School.....”**

Parents, guardians, and students are directed not to call the school for such information.

In the event of a 2-hour delay, please do not bring your children to school before 10:00 a.m.

PARENTS AND VISITORS

Anyone entering or leaving the building must first report to the school office by way of the front doors. Use the buzzer and intercom located on the wall to the left. For reasons of safety, the school principal must know who is in the building. Any person not following this procedure may be asked to leave the building and may be subject to future exclusion from the building.

Parents are not to take lunches, shoes, books, etc., to the classroom. Any such transaction to child or teacher must be made through the school office. This practice helps to eliminate interruptions to the teacher and the students during class hours.

Students who need to be dismissed early *for medical or health reasons* will be met by the parent or guardian in the school office.

Volunteers are encouraged and are often needed in the cafeteria, on the playground, and during field trips and specific events. Please follow the same guidelines as if you were visiting.

TRANSFERS

Transfers to or from Saint Sebastian School are normally to take place at the beginning of the school term. In the event of a transfer from Saint Sebastian School to another private or public school, parents must submit written verification from the receiving school confirming enrollment at the new school and to request release of school records. No student records will be released until receipt of such written verification or in the event that any tuition remains due and owing to Saint Sebastian School.

TIME SCHEDULES

Because of transportation restrictions, the time schedule will be adjusted to coincide with any revisions by the public school districts in which Saint Sebastian School is located. The school will adhere to the following schedule, regardless of starting and dismissal time, to the extent practicable.

- Students should arrive at least **ten minutes before the school starting time of 8:30 a.m.**
- Morning prayers and salute to the flag are required.
- Class periods/time allotments for specific subjects shall follow the recommendations of the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Pre-lunch prayers are prescribed
- Lunch and playground with supervision
- Class periods
- Closing prayers
- Dismissal under supervision

HEALTH SERVICES

The local public school district (Belle Vernon Area) provides limited health services to Saint Sebastian School through the school nurse. Health testing and screening shall be administered to the student in accordance with the policies and procedures set by the local public school district.

Children must be immunized before entering school, as **required by state law**. No child shall be permitted in school without the following immunizations:

- **Four doses** DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus)--**one dose after fourth birthday**
- **Three doses** OPV (oral polio vaccine) or **four doses** Salk polio
- **Two doses** MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- **Three doses** Hepatitis B vaccine
- **Chicken pox immunity** (documentation of having chicken pox or vaccine)

In case of an emergency concerning the health of a student, the school nurse and/or school principal shall be immediately notified. The school nurse shall be primarily responsible for rendering medical assistance. If the parent, guardian, or person designated on the student's emergency card cannot be reached, the school nurse or school principal shall decide whether hospitalization or further treatment at a medical facility is necessary.

The school office will maintain an emergency card for each enrolled student, which shall contain the following information:

- Student name
- Name and address of parent or guardian and where they can be reached during normal school hours
- Name, address, and telephone number of a third party who may be contacted in the event the parent or guardian can not be reached

In the case of illness during school hours, the principal may send a child home after a parent or guardian (or designated third person) has been notified and transportation arrangements have been made. Children are not permitted to call the parents to dismiss themselves.

MEDICATION POLICY
(See Appendix A attached hereto.)

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parents. If children live more than one and one-half miles from school, the public school district in which the student resides will provide transportation.

Students are expected to behave properly on the bus. The safety of all is the primary concern. All rules that apply to behavior in school apply to the bus. A lack of cooperation of safety rules established by the local public school district or the transportation provider may result in suspension from riding the bus, and may result in disciplinary action against the student by Saint Sebastian School or transportation providers up to and including possible suspension and/or expulsion from school.

If for any reason a student needs to change transportation arrangements, the parents must write, sign, and submit a note to the school office. All issues dealing with transportation should be directed to the providing district.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Saint Sebastian School participates in the National School Lunch Program. Students may take advantage of the program by filing an application for free and reduced lunch. Applications will be reviewed accordingly. Rules for acceptance and participation in the program are the same for each student without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or religion.

Hot lunches may be purchased at the school cafeteria. A menu will be sent home each month in the Parent Envelope. Milk (chocolate and two percent) may be purchased.

CAFETERIA RULES

The school cafeteria is operated as a service to pupils and teachers. Students may purchase a lunch, ala Carte items, or may bring a lunch from home. All students will eat in the cafeteria.

- After eating, students should leave the table clean, and put milk cartons, trays, and all lunch paper in the paper containers.
- Students must remain in the cafeteria until dismissal time.
- The following manners should be observed in the cafeteria:
 1. Purchase lunch as quickly as possible
 2. Do not handle food that is not intended to be purchased.
 3. Eat as if in the home of your family/friend.
 4. Be sociable, but not boisterous.
 5. No food should be taken from the cafeteria and eaten elsewhere in the school.
 6. Before being dismissed by the teacher, all students are expected to cooperate and see to it that their general area is clean.

Infractions of the rules will be left to the discretion of the persons on lunch duty. The teacher on lunch duty is in charge of the students during that time.

TELEPHONE

It is important that the school telephone be available for office calls. Children may use the school telephone only with the permission of the principal, the office manager, or a teacher, and only for school related business.

Teachers and children will not be called from the classroom to receive a telephone call. A message for the child or teacher may be given to the office manager. Arrangements concerning transportation and after school activities are to be made before the child leaves in the morning.

COMMUNICATION

Open communication among parents, teachers, and administrators is important for student progress and for maintaining a healthy school climate.

Attempts should be made to solve problems on the lowest level possible. Only when this is proven unsuccessful should higher authority be contacted. If there is a classroom problem, please contact the classroom teacher. If there is a school problem or contact with the classroom teacher has not helped, please contact the principal. Due to the fact that some of our teachers have children in the building, they are listed in the St. Sebastian Phone Directory. **They are not to be contacted at home for school issues.**

A parent may make an appointment to speak with a teacher by sending a note or calling the school office. **Because of the interruptions in the teaching-learning process, spontaneous visits to the classroom are not permitted.** Please keep in mind that not all of the teachers employed at St. Sebastian are full-time employees. It may take a day or two for them to receive and respond to phone and email messages. If there is an emergency situation, please contact the school principal.

At the end of each month, the youngest child in each family will take home the Parent Envelope. This envelope contains monthly communication between the school and home. One parent or guardian is to sign the front of the envelope, and return it to the homeroom teacher the following school day. Duplicate Parent Envelopes may be obtained upon request.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM

Saint Sebastian School offers an instrumental music program. Weekly music lessons are offered to any student in grades two through eight on the following band instruments: guitar, flute, clarinet, alto sax, trumpet, trombone, drum, piano, and keyboard. Performing bands are available for students to experience the joy of playing with a group. Children need two years of lessons before they are members of the band. The instructor charges a fee for the instruction. All business transactions are through the band teacher and student.

Recruitment meetings for all prospective instrumental music students and their parents are held at the beginning of each school year. For additional information, contact the Program Director, Mr. Andrew Talarovich, at 724-568-5564.

OUTREACH

Integral to the Catholic faith, is a faith that practices loving concern and practical care. It is in this spirit that every class shall be involved in some kind of outreach. These activities need not be a burden financially to the family. Presence, rather than presents, is the true gift in these situations.

FACULTY MEETINGS

Faculty meetings are usually held the first Friday of each month. All students are dismissed at 12:00 noon. Refer to the monthly calendar for the exact date of early dismissals. Due to scheduled faculty meeting times, any student not picked up by 12:00 noon will be sent to the After School Care Program. On these half days After Care runs from 12:00 until 3:00 p.m. sharp. **Repetitive lateness in picking up of a child will result in a late fee charge.**

AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

The After School Care Program will be available for all students in grades kindergarten through eight. The time is from 3:00—5:15 p.m. During that time, students complete homework, receive extra tutoring, complete special projects, or play games. The After School Care Program is available on all early dismissal days. The cost per family is **\$6.00 per day or \$18.00 per week**. If you want your child to stay in the program, a note should be sent to the school office or contact the office manager by telephone. **Repetitive lateness in picking up of a child will result in a late fee charge.**

BOOKS

The students are to care for the books that they use. All books are to be covered. Students may only take books home in a book bag, back pack, etc. Students are not permitted to bring roller-type backpacks. They do not fit in the lockers and storage becomes a problem.

Any lost or damaged book must be paid for before the student can receive a replacement.

Students in grades four through eight will compete in the English Fest at Duquesne University. Students will be responsible to purchase their own books for this event.

SPORTS

Saint Sebastian Parish sponsors a basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading program. Any student attending Saint Sebastian School may participate in these programs. There is a Saint Sebastian Parish Athletic Association that all players must join. Rules of the Athletic Association are in guidance with the Diocese of Greensburg.

All students must be in good academic standing in order to participate in the athletic program. If a student is currently unsatisfactory or incomplete in any subject area, they will not be allowed to participate until cleared by the teacher or principal.

Improper behavior in school that results in multiple detentions or a suspension will keep the student athlete from their next event(s).

DANCES

Dances are limited to the seventh and eighth grade students. It will be at the discretion of the principal whether to invite guests. The time of the dances will be announced for parent information. Once a student has entered the Parish Hall to attend the dance, he/she must remain there until the dance is ended or an adult comes for him/her. The teacher in charge will enforce the dress code. Students are to be orderly and courteous toward all supervising personnel. For improper conduct at a school dance, parents will be notified to come and get their child.

DEFICIENCY/PROGRESS REPORTS

All student grades are available online via PowerSchool. The passwords will be assigned and communicated to the parents within the first few weeks of school. Please do not share your passwords with anyone else. Passwords will be distributed within the first weeks of school. Access to the ParentPortal can be found at <http://powerschool.dioceseofgreensburg.org/public/>

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are always needed at the school to help it run smoothly. Lunchroom helpers, playground supervisors, chaperones, and party helpers are just some of the ways that parents can help in the school. Contact the office or classrooms to find other opportunities.

LITURGY

All students, regardless of their religious affiliation will attend Mass and religious services scheduled within a school day. Opportunities are provided for the children to celebrate together at the Liturgy of the Word and to participate in the Eucharist. Parents are encouraged to attend.

II. CURRICULUM

Saint Sebastian School endeavors to provide a well-balanced curriculum through which the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for daily living can be acquired. The students are challenged to develop their full potential with an open, inquiring mind while always realizing a sense of accomplishment. The education of Saint Sebastian School will be technology in orientation, international in outlook, and multicultural in commitment.

The curriculum is designed to meet and exceed the minimum standards established under state law. Courses include religion, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, library, French, health, physical education, and technology. Curriculum will constantly be updated as changes occur nationally in educational standards.

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The religion course is a most important course in the curriculum. Opportunities for prayer, preparation to receive the sacraments, and participation in a community of faith are important components of the religion program. The goal of religious instruction is to help the child develop a relationship with Jesus Christ and lead a lifestyle based on the Gospel values.

All students, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, are required to study religion and to participate in the religious activities.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards showing the student's progress shall be issued in accordance with the dates established on the official school calendar. Progress is determined by the degree to which the child learns subject matter according to ability, accomplishes daily work, participates in class discussion, uses class time effectively, participates in group/class research and projects, and does homework assignments. The official Diocesan Report Card shall be utilized unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Parent-teacher conferences shall be used in conjunction with the report card as a means of evaluating progress. The principal will establish a procedure for the scheduling of parent-teacher conferences. **At least one such conference shall be held for each student during the school year.** Kindergarten students receive report cards at the end of the first and second semester in January and May.

ACADEMICS

Grade Eight

The average of the four-quarter grades for the eighth year in the core subjects (religion, reading, mathematics, science, social studies, English) must be no less than the letter D.

If an average of E is attained in any of the core subjects, the student will receive a certificate of attendance at the time of graduation. When the child has been tutored at the parent's expense, and the principal and teacher are satisfied that a passing grade has been attained, a diploma will be issued.

In the unlikely event that a student receives **three or more** letter grades of E as a final average in any of the core subjects, the child will have to repeat the eighth grade. It is obvious that this amount of work could never be made up satisfactorily in one summer.

If an incomplete (I) has been given on the Report Card for any of the quarters, no diploma will be given until the teacher informs the principal that the incomplete letter grade has been removed.

Any tuition or unpaid fees must be paid in full prior to graduation,

Grades Four Through Seven

Any student in grades four through seven who receives a final average of E in any of the core subjects must be tutored during the summer months. The tutor is to be in touch with the administration regarding what is expected of the student. More than one failure in any of the core subjects may result in the student being asked to repeat the grade.

The **first time** a child is asked to repeat a grade and a parent refuses to allow it to happen, the parent will be asked to sign a statement to that effect. This document will be kept in the student's Permanent Record file. The **second time** a child is asked to repeat a grade, it will happen unless the child withdraws from the school.

GRADING SCALE

Kindergarten Through Grade Three

O – Outstanding Progress
G – Good Progress
S – Satisfactory
H – Having Difficulty

Grades Four Through Eight

A – 93—100%
B – 85—92%
C – 75—84%
D – 65—74%
E – Below 65%

I – Incomplete

Computation of Grades

Teachers use many combinations of assignments to stimulate learning. Parents should be aware that in computing quarter grades, teachers give varying “weights” to tests, essays, quizzes, projects, class participation, etc. If you have any questions concerning your child’s grade, please contact the teacher in question. Parents will have access to view student grades via our school’s computerized management system, **PowerSchool**.

HONOR ROLL

Grades Five Through Eight

Highest Honor – All As with no negative comments

High Honor – All As, 1B with no negative comments

Honor – All As and Bs with no negative comments

Students in grades 5-8 are eligible for Honor Roll.

STUDENT RECORDS

The collection and maintenance of information about students that is essential to promoting student welfare and accomplishing the educational objective shall be in accordance with state and federal law. The Permanent Record card, approved by the Diocese of Greensburg, will be maintained in the office of the principal.

Guidance records will be kept either in the principal’s office or the guidance office. Student records, in accordance with state and federal law, are made available only to parents and to staff who have need for access to the information, or with consent of the parent, or as otherwise provided by law. A parent or guardian wishing to review the records of his or her child should make a request for review in writing at least 24 hours in advance. Student record information will not be disseminated by telephone.

In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial parent will be given access to the academic records and other school-related information regarding their child. If there is a court order specifying responsibility of the custodial parent or otherwise limiting or eliminating the rights of a non-custodial parent with regard to a child’s education, the custodial parent shall provide the school with an official copy of the court order. All other requests for student information will be referred to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, the Diocese of Greensburg, for approval.

HOMEWORK

Homework is essential for the full scholastic development of the child. Children are expected to do a reasonable amount of home study, and it is the responsibility of the parent to supervise this work being careful, however, not to promote dishonesty or forestall learning that results from actually doing the homework for the child. Homework may consist of written work, reading, and study for review, memorization, or work on special projects. It is the responsibility of parents to provide time and a quiet place for homework to be done.

TESTING

Saint Sebastian School follows the testing program established by the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools. The tests include: The Stanford Achievement Test (grades three through eight), including the Cognitive Abilities Test (grades three, five, and seven). Results of the test programs will be sent home and discussed at a local Parent-Teacher Guild meeting. A comparison of data will be analyzed to guide instruction and curriculum.

Students in grades K-3 will take the DIBELS assessment tests.

There is a Readiness Test for kindergarten and grade one to determine entry eligibility for those grades.

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Students are required to compete in the following programs: Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (grades seven and eight), Forensics (grades seven and eight), and the English Fest (grades four through eight). If a child is unable to compete in one of the programs, then the student will earn a lower grade for that semester in the particular subject area. Certain registration fees and costs will be required by the parent to sponsor these activities.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips relate to the instructional program. Each child participating in any field trip must submit to the school the field trip participation form established by the Diocese of Greensburg, signed by a parent or guardian. No student may participate unless a signed field trip participation form for the specific event is on file with the principal.

The permission form is to be submitted to the teacher at least three days before the scheduled trip. Parents may be asked to provide part or all of the costs involved. When possible, bus transportation will be provided. Any person volunteering to provide private passenger transportation must submit a signed volunteer driver information sheet to the principal for each vehicle used.

Participation in field trips is a privilege. Students may be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavior requirements of the school. Students who do not participate in field trips will be provided alternative assignments during the period of the field trip.

Each driver and/or chaperone will be given a copy of the approved itinerary, including the routes to be followed and a summary of their responsibilities.

DRESS CODE

Students in kindergarten through grade eight must enter and leave school in uniform.

GIRLS – KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3
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- Uniform plaid jumper with choice of short or long sleeve white pique polo shirt (no scalloped edging or no piping or pockets)
- Uniform plaid culottes with flap with choice of short or long sleeve white pique polo shirt (no scalloped edging or no piping or pockets) or short or long sleeve white oxford shirt
- Uniform style khaki walking shorts or khaki uniform style pants with navy blue short or long sleeve pique polo shirt (no scalloped edging or no piping or pockets)

- Navy or white knee socks or navy or white tights; white, navy, or khaki anklets; no athletic socks; no low cut, no show style socks
- Facial makeup is not permitted for girls in grades kindergarten through three.
(Khaki items are not the light colored khaki, but the darker colored khaki)

BOYS – KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3

- Uniform style khaki walking shorts or uniform style khaki pants with navy blue short or long sleeve pique polo shirt
- Navy, black, or khaki socks; no athletic socks; no low cut, no show style socks
(Khaki items are not the light colored khaki, but the darker colored khaki)

GIRLS – GRADES 4 TO 8

- Uniform plaid double kick pleat skirt; uniform plaid kilt skirt; or uniform plaid culotte with flap with choice of short or long sleeve white pique shirt (no scalloped edging or no piping or pockets) or short or long sleeve white oxford shirt
- Uniform style khaki walking shorts or uniform style khaki pants with short or long sleeve navy blue pique polo shirt (no scalloped edging or no piping or pockets)
- Navy or white knee socks or navy or white tights; white, navy, or khaki anklets; no athletic socks; no low cut, no show style socks
- Modest facial makeup is permitted for girls in grades four through eight.
(Khaki items are not the light colored khaki, but the darker colored khaki)
All skirts, shorts, or culottes must be no more than 2 inches above the knee.

BOYS – GRADES 4 TO 8

- Uniform style khaki walking shorts or uniform style khaki pants with short or long sleeve navy blue pique polo shirt
- Navy, black, or khaki socks; no athletic socks; no low cut, no show style socks
(Khaki items are not the light colored khaki, but the darker colored khaki)

FOOTWEAR – ALL STUDENTS – KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 8

- Students in grades kindergarten through grade eight are expected to wear appropriate school type shoes—NO tennis shoes, boots of any type, clogs, sandals, heels higher than two inches, or Heelies are permitted to be worn in school. Snow boots are permitted during the winter months, but must be removed once the student arrives at school (change of shoes should be sent to school for the student to change in to).

SWEATERS – ALL STUDENTS – KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 8

- Sweaters are an option. However, if a child chooses to wear a sweater, it must be the navy blue cardigan style sweater purchased from Schoolbelles.

GYM UNIFORM – ALL STUDENTS – KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 8
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- Students are expected to dress in a gym uniform for physical education class. The uniforms may be purchased from Schoolbelles or Penn Print and Graphic. A plain white or red tee shirt (during

the warmer months) or a plain white or red sweatshirt (during colder months) and plain red gym shorts (warmer months) or plain red sweatpants (colder months) may be worn if a parent chooses not to order the uniform from Schoolbelles or Penn Print and Graphic.

Tennis shoes and white athletic socks are required as part of the gym uniform.

On dress down days, the student must be in appropriate attire. No spaghetti straps, tank tops or sleeveless shirts, open-toed or backless shoes are permitted.

Children may be excused from physical education either by a doctor’s note or a note from a parent or guardian for good cause. These notes are given to the homeroom teacher, routed to the school office, and on to the physical education teacher. This is an excused absence.

Children out of uniform may not participate in physical education classes. This is an unexcused absence. After **three unexcused absences, children will report to the principal.**

At any time a teacher may not retain a child during physical educational class to make up work or to participate in other activities. Physical education is an integral part of the school curriculum.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Discipline is an integral part of a learning process. In order to develop self-control, the student must be helped to understand his/her emotions and impulses to live in harmony with others, to respect the rules of family, to keep the laws of the country, and to obey the laws of God.

Every teacher and the principal shall have the right to exercise the same authority as to student conduct and behavior as do the parents or guardians of the student. Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort and classroom work, and conformance to school rules and regulations. Students share with the administration and faculty the responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.

No student has the right to interfere with the education of his fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators, and all others who are involved in the educational process. Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner so as not to offend or slander others.

CATEGORIES OF MISCONDUCT

<u>LEVEL I MISCONDUCTS</u>	<u>DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom disturbances (ex. calling out, throwing objects, safety violations) • Classroom tardiness • Cheating, lying and plagiarism • Improper language • Repeated failure to complete an assignment • Repeated failure to carry out directions • Violations of the dress code • Violations of bus riding regulations • Or any other behavior which disrupts the orderly classroom procedures or interferes with the orderly operation of the school (minor fighting, horseplay, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal reprimands • Student/teacher conferences • Special seating • Written assignments pertaining to acceptable behavior • Reasonable withdrawal of classroom privileges • Restriction from school activities (e.g. cannot attend field trips, assemblies, athletic events, etc.) • Parent conference (personal or telephone) • Behavior contracts • Detention (3 detentions in a 9 week

	<p>period = 1 day of In-school Suspension.</p>
<p><u>LEVEL II MISCONDUCTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated or more severe Level I misbehaviors • Bullying behaviors • Class cuts • Truancy • Student tardiness • Being disrespectful • Falsifying papers and excuses • Failure to comply with the instruction of a teacher or other staff member • Disruptive classroom behavior • Failure to attend detention • Loading of illegal software on any system or computer • Disclosing a password or using an unauthorized password • Sending inappropriate, vulgar, or derogatory emails or messages • Downloading, viewing unauthorized websites • Violation of computer usage regulations • Unauthorized use of technological/electronic devices such as cellular phones, beepers, paging devices, games, mp3 players, etc. • Unauthorized use of radios, walkmans. • Unsportsmanlike behavior at athletic events, assemblies, school activities. • Persistent violation of school rules and regulations (gum chewing, running in the halls, etc.) • Persistent violation of bus riding regulations. • Or any other behavior whose frequency or seriousness tends to seriously affect the student’s education or the education of others. 	<p><u>DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal of school privileges • Restriction from school activities • Confiscation of an object • Student/teacher conference • Behavior contract • Parent/teacher conference • Referral to counselor/principal • Detention • In-school suspension (ISS) • Out-of-school suspension (OSS) • Withdrawal of bus riding privileges • Referral to outside agency or social agency
<p><u>LEVEL III MISCONDUCTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated or more severe Level II misconducts • Physical abuse: physical aggression toward any other person • Vandalism such as writing on walls, seats, chairs, defacing or destroying school property including school buses or damaging computer system/software • Stealing including software theft • Installing a computer virus • Threats to others (physical, written or verbal) 	<p><u>DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administrator or his/her designee will take into account the increased severity of Level III misconduct. With this in mind, s/he will utilize the options listed at Levels I and II accordingly. • Referral to law enforcement agencies • Restitution for any damages

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorderly conduct • Harassment • Gambling • Or any other acts of misconduct which involve a violation of the personal or property rights of others, including the school district (e.g. being on school property at unauthorized times) 	
<p><u>LEVEL IV MISCONDUCTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated or more severe Level III misconducts • Extortion • Bomb threats, terroristic threats/acts • Possession/use/transfer of weapons including any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle and anything capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. This definition includes box cutters, kitchen knives, pen knives on key chains and other common household items. • Possessing/using/furnishing/selling of unauthorized substances (such as drugs, look-alike drugs, non-controlled substances, alcohol, etc) • Possession /use/transfer of detonating or explosive devices • Possession and/or use of tobacco products • Setting fires (arson) • Setting off false fire alarms • Tampering with fire extinguishers • Intimidation, extortion, or blackmail of another student or school personnel under threat of physical harm • Inciting to riot • Violations of the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • Possession and/or use of tobacco products • Or any other acts of misconduct which result in violation to another’s person or property or which pose a direct threat to the safety and welfare of others including the school district. 	<p>Disciplinary Options/Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administrator or designee will take into account the increased severity of Level IV misconduct. With this in mind, s/he will utilize the options listed at Levels I, II, and III accordingly. • Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) • Expulsion from school • Referral to law enforcement agencies • Referral to the Board of School Directors for appropriate action • Restitution of any damages

BULLYING POLICY

BULLYING

Saint Sebastian strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students in the school. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the school to maintain an educational environment in which bullying in any form is not tolerated. The school shall annually inform students, staff, parents, independent contractors and volunteers that bullying of students will not be tolerated by means of publication in school handbooks.

The term **bullying** can be defined as repeated and systematic harassment and attacks on others, perpetrated by individuals or groups. Bullying is deliberate, hurtful behavior, repeated over a period of time and it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying involves someone mentally, physically, or socially stronger taking advantage of someone with less power. Bullying takes many forms and can include many behaviors. A person can be guilty of bullying if she/he:

- Systematically and chronically inflicts psychological distress on one or more students.
- Has an imbalance of physical or psychological power, with the bully actually being stronger or perceived to be stronger than the victim.
- Uses direct behaviors such as teasing, hitting, threatening or restraining another.
- Uses indirect behaviors such as intentional exclusion from a group and starting rumors.

Each staff member shall be **responsible** to maintain an educational environment free from all forms of bullying. Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of his/her fellow students and to ensure an atmosphere free from all forms of bullying. Students shall be encouraged to report bullying complaints to teachers or the principal. All employees who receive a bullying complaint shall investigate to determine if bullying has occurred. If the behavior is found to meet the definition of bullying a written documentation must be submitted to the building principal. The principal or his/her designee will inform parents of the bully and the one who is bullied.

A substantiated charge against a district student shall subject such student to **disciplinary action**, consistent with the student discipline code.

INDIVIDUAL TEACHER DISCIPLINE PLAN

Each classroom and itinerant teacher will have their own rules to be followed in addition to the school wide discipline policy. The rules and regulations for each teacher will be distributed, read, signed, and returned to the teacher the first week of school. All individual classroom rules will have been approved by the principal and enforced accordingly. A copy of each teacher's rules and procedures will be available on the school website at <http://www.ssbv.org>.

PLAYGROUND RULES

Students are not to violate any of the school rules or incite in action, which can follow the definition of a bully during the playground time. All students are allowed to play in any organized game or event. All school rules apply to the playground area as they do inside the school.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS

Any student found to be in possession of a weapon will be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including expulsion, and reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency for criminal prosecution under the Pennsylvania Crime Code, 18 PA. C.S., paragraph 912. A weapon is described as including, but not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, stick, firearm, shotgun, file or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury, or object which looks like any such weapon or is intended for such use. Students are also not permitted to make any verbal threats concerning the use of a weapon.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

A student who, on school grounds during a school session, or anywhere at a school-sponsored activity, does sell, use, possess, or aid in the procurement of alcohol, narcotics, or restricted drugs, including but not limited to prescription drugs, marijuana, or anabolic steroids or other material purported to be such restricted drugs, or look-a-like drugs, shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

The parent or guardian of the student will be contacted immediately in the event of any such occurrence. A recommendation will be made to the parents that the student be taken to a physician or health care provider for a complete examination, and will be requested to notify the school of the results of any such examination. The principal shall also give immediate notice to the police of the incident for possible legal action and for the purpose of identification of the substance.

The Student Support Team (SST) of Saint Sebastian School, in conjunction with the Office of Catholic Schools, will work to educate, prevent, and intervene in the use and abuse of all drug, alcohol, and other destructive behaviors, seeking to promote wellness in all realms of the student's life.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Unauthorized use of technological/electronic devices such as cellular phones, beepers, paging devices, games, mp3 players, etc. is not permitted. Handheld video games are not permitted. Should a cell phone be needed to contact parents during an after school event, it must be registered with the office upon arrival in the morning. Failure to do so will result in confiscation of the device. A parent will need to retrieve the device from the office. Detention will be assigned for repeated offenses.

POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Diocese of Greensburg and Saint Sebastian School that students enjoy a learning environment free from all forms of discrimination including sexual harassment. All forms of sexual harassment toward any student in any learning area, activity area, or any other place under the permanent or temporary control of Saint Sebastian School are strictly prohibited.

Any student who feels that he or she is, or has been a victim of sexual harassment may bring the matter to the immediate attention of any teacher, administrator, principal, counselor, any parish priest, or to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. All reports of alleged sexual harassment will be investigated in as confidential a manner as possible. Upon the completion of such investigation, the parent or guardian of the student will be advised of the findings, recommendations, and conclusions as to the accuracy of the charges alleged. In all cases when the investigation has verified the allegations and a decision has been made to take disciplinary action against the accused, the complaining student and his/her parent/guardian will be advised of such action.

In the event that it is determined that a student has intentionally, falsely accused another student or school employee in engaging in sexual harassment, the student may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

SAFETY DRILLS

Fire drills will be held on a regular monthly basis, or more frequently if required by state law, without prior announcement. To ensure safety, students are to move quickly, quietly, and in order according to the fire exit directions posted in each classroom.

Drills for other emergencies will be held periodically throughout the year and the teachers will review procedures. Students are to remain quiet and given attention to the teacher during all safety drills.

GUIDANCE SERVICES

Guidance services are funded through Pennsylvania Act 89 and allocated by the Westmoreland County Intermediate Unit. The intermediate unit contracts with Education and Training Consultants (ETC) to provide a certified guidance counselor to the school. Guidance services may include but are not limited to whole class participation for help in study skills, career interests, social concerns, school problems, etc. Classroom teachers are involved in deciding appropriate topics according to the Diocese of Greensburg curriculum guidelines.

Counseling services for individual students or small groups are provided for specific needs based upon teacher and/or parent referrals. Parents will be notified, and written consent will be obtained before ongoing sessions and/or assessments are scheduled.

The ETC Guidance Counselor is available to the students, parents, and school faculty.

TITLE I AND SPEECH SERVICES

Students who require speech and Title I (reading) will receive the services during the school day. These services are provided at no additional cost.

<p><u>PARENT/STUDENT</u> <u>HANDBOOK</u></p> <p>2009-2010</p>

SAINT SEBASTIAN SCHOOL
BELLE VERNON, PA

Dear Parent/Guardian:

At the start of the 2009-2010 school year, you have read (via the website) a copy of our Saint Sebastian School Parent/Student Handbook.

Please print, sign, date, and return this sheet to the school office. Your signature does not necessarily mean that you agree with the content of the Handbook, but that you have read, and understood its content.

Student(s) name(s) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date