



BRINGING WISDOM TO LIGHT •

Parent/Student Handbook

2022 – 2023

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St. Catherine's Montessori retains the right to amend at any time the contents of this handbook and policies and procedures described herein.

WELCOME FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

We are delighted that your family has chosen a St. Catherine's Montessori education. We are a group of educators with a shared vision to provide a Catholic Montessori educational experience that awakens in our students the awareness of their gifts and responsibilities as individuals in relationship with Jesus Christ and as stewards of the global community.

During these formative years of your child's life, our community provides support, friendship, and guidance to educate the whole child in accordance with Montessori principles of respect and peace. We put forth our best effort to provide the optimal environment for children to develop to their fullest potential through purposeful and joyful experiences.

For the last 18 years, I have had the privilege of working with many children. It has been one of the defining experiences of my life — one that I hope to share with your children, as well.

This parent/student handbook is intended to introduce you to our school community, policies, and procedures. Please read it and use it as a resource throughout the school year. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us by email or phone any time!

We look forward to meeting your family and assisting you.

Blessings,

Lina Delgado
Head of School

MISSION

As a Catholic Montessori School, St. Catherine's is dedicated to an educational experience which awakens in our students the awareness of their gifts and responsibilities as individuals in relationship with Jesus Christ and as stewards of the global community.

PHILOSOPHY: BRINGING WISDOM TO LIGHT

St. Catherine's Montessori upholds the values of our shared Montessori and Catholic heritages. As an AMI school, we follow the curriculum and traditions established by Dr. Maria Montessori more than 100 years ago. More than simply a method of education, the Montessori approach fosters the development of the whole child—intellectually, physically, socially, morally, and spiritually. As a Catholic community, St. Catherine's additionally nurtures children's spiritual development so that each student may experience the presence of God both individually and in community.

Montessori Vision

Our complementary missions are perhaps most simply summarized by our guiding principle, "Bringing Wisdom to Light." Maria Montessori frequently described the inner wisdom inherent in all human beings and envisioned education as a spiritual mission to unleash each child's inner potential. In *The Secret of Childhood* she writes, "Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence." Montessori believed that properly nurtured, each child's wisdom radiates outward to create a more peaceful world.

Catholic Roots

Our guiding principle also resonates with our Catholic vocation to nurture and reveal the Spirit of God within each child. Revealing one's inner light is an aspect of service to God outlined in the Gospel of Matthew. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father." (Matthew 5:14-16)

HISTORY

Our school's Dominican foundresses, Sister Edna Ann Hebert, O.P. and Sister Shirley Owens, O.P., envisioned the rich potential of combining Montessori and Catholic principles, and their legacy continues to inspire our community. St. Catherine's Montessori is the third-oldest Montessori school in Houston and the first Montessori school in the area to include basic religious doctrine in its curriculum.

Sister Edna Ann opened the school as Dominican Montessori in 1966. Originally in the former St. Agnes Academy building, she and 43 Primary students were joined by Sister Shirley the following year. Both sisters held AMI diplomas and taught for many years, much to the delight of generations of students. Sister Shirley passed away in June 2012. Sister Edna Ann passed away in July 2021.

St. Catherine's has moved and evolved many times since its founding. In 1974, the school moved to Holy Rosary Parish, where Primary classes were located, followed by expansion to another building at Bering Memorial Methodist Church, where Elementary classes were held. In July 1982, Dominican Montessori was renamed St. Catherine's Montessori after St. Catherine of Siena, a Doctor of the Church and follower of St. Dominic, acclaimed for her preaching in the fourteenth century. In March 1983 the school moved to the Westridge "Castle" campus, and finally to our current Timberside campus in July 2006.

Expansion of our current campus was completed in August 2018 with the addition of two Upper Elementary classrooms and renovation of the Sister Edna Ann Hebert Library.

In February 2019, St. Catherine's was gifted three acres of land in Houston's Greater East End District to expand the Adolescent Community's environmental education activities at Japhet Creek.

We opened our high school in August 2017 and graduated our inaugural senior class in 2020.

St. Catherine's Montessori is a vibrant community of approximately 250 students from diverse backgrounds. Sustained by the support and work of dedicated guides, staff, parents and friends, our school continues to awaken students to their inner wisdom and to prepare them for service in the world.

ACCREDITATION

St. Catherine's Montessori is associated with Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, located at 2403 E. Holcombe Boulevard, Houston, TX 77021.

Phone (713) 741-8704 | Fax (713) 741-7379

We carry the highest "Recognized" level by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

We are accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED), under the aegis of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Cognia, formerly AdvanceED.

Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)

AMI is the international organization founded by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1929 to maintain the integrity of her approach to educating children. The organization continues to be recognized as the foremost authority on authentic Montessori education. St. Catherine's Montessori maintains certification as AMI "Recognized," which is the highest level of acknowledgment for Montessori schools worldwide. This accreditation requires that our school be in compliance with all AMI standards, the most significant of which is that there is an AMI-trained guide heading the classroom at every age level.

Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED)

TCCB ED accredits all schools annually and conducts an in-depth school visit once every seven years. The TCCB Accreditation Commission (TCCB AC) is made up of two bishops, six Catholic school superintendents and six educational professionals, and meets twice each year. This process is approved and authorized by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC), which monitors organizations that accredit private schools in the state of Texas.

St. Catherine's Montessori also maintains membership in the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA), Houston Area Independent Schools (HAIS), Montessori Administrators Association (MAA), Elementary Alumni Association (EAA), and Independent School Management (ISM).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As the governing board of an independent Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, the St. Catherine's Montessori Board of Directors is charged with the strategic, long-term protection and strengthening of the financial, physical, and programmatic assets of the institution. The Board is responsible for overseeing the mission and philosophy of St. Catherine's and focuses on strategic planning, fiscal review, policy development, advancement strategies, and employment of the Head of School to manage the day-to-day operations of the school.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement and support are integral to the spirit of St. Catherine's Montessori. The education of each child is the collaborative work of students, guides, staff, and families. Since the beginning years, St. Catherine's has appreciated and depended on parent support.

Parent Education

Students benefit the most from their journey at St. Catherine's when families connect with Montessori philosophy and understand the workings of our classrooms. We understand that the Montessori approach may be new to parents who have grown up with more traditional schooling. Throughout the year we offer several Parent Education opportunities. We encourage you to attend to deepen your awareness of your child's growth as they progress through the Planes of Development and transition from one classroom level to another. Our guides also use these opportunities to suggest practical applications of Montessori at home.

In August you will receive our *Year in Advance 2022-2023*, which will include information about Parent Education events for the upcoming school year.

Parent Service Organization (PSO)

The St. Catherine's Montessori Parent Service Organization (PSO) is dedicated to enhancing the experience of students, staff, and parents by creating a community founded on parent involvement and warm hospitality. **Each parent is automatically a member of the PSO with your child's enrollment at St. Catherine's.** The PSO strives to build a school where parents know they will be welcomed, and families are all known by name. Parental service reinforces the strong foundation of education, spirituality, and social and emotional development laid down by the school foundresses over 50 years ago.

A variety of activities during the year are made possible through parent involvement in the PSO committees. Visit the PSO page on the school website (www.stcathmont.org) to learn more.

Volunteering at School

To ensure the safety and well-being of our students, all volunteers are required to complete CMG Connect's Safe Haven online training course and a criminal background check before volunteering with students at St. Catherine's Montessori. Safe Haven training is not valid and complete until both the training and the criminal background check are completed. It may take up to two (2) weeks for completion of the criminal background check.

Sponsored by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, the Safe Haven course replaces the former safe environment course, VIRTUS "Protecting God's Children." Safe Haven training consists of three (3) vignette-style training videos (available in English and Spanish) and takes approximately 60 minutes to complete. All safe environment training is conducted online. If you completed VIRTUS training more than 5 years ago, please complete the Safe Haven renewal training. Visit www.stcathmont.org/safe-environment to learn more, register, and complete the course.

Parents volunteering to drive must also provide a photocopy of their current driver's license and current auto insurance to Emily Blackman at the front desk. For further information about volunteer driving, please refer to the Going Out and Field Trips section of this handbook on page 22.

Visitors

We are grateful to have parents and volunteers who actively contribute to our school's mission. For security, all school visitors must check in at the front desk upon arrival. You may be asked to show identification in the form of a driver's license or other government-issued ID. Front desk staff will ask you to sign in upon arrival and sign out upon departure. You will be given a designated visitor badge, which you are required to wear for the duration of your visit, and be directed or escorted to your meeting location. If you are volunteering during the school day, do not look in on your child's classroom, as this interrupts the guide and the concentration of the children working in the room.

Philanthropy

St. Catherine's Montessori is blessed to have a community that is deeply committed to the school's mission and gives generously in support of our advancement. As an independent non-profit school, we rely on tuition income and philanthropic contributions to support our operating expenditures and capital projects (campus expansion). Tuition covers approximately 90% of the school's operating expenses and fundraising covers the rest. We do not receive financial support from a parish. St. Catherine's has been able to grow and continue as an exceptional institution because of volunteer participation and a tradition of giving.

SCM Annual Fund

The SCM Annual Fund is the school's primary fundraiser. It is designed to provide additional support to our operating budget, helping us fund our daily operations and accomplish immediate campus improvements and program updates. The annual fund drive is the first and most important fundraiser for St. Catherine's and benefits every aspect of our operations from educational programs, campus utilities and maintenance, professional development for our guides and staff, technology, music and sports. The SCM Annual Fund is our largest source of unrestricted fundraising income – a key component to the school's overall budgetary health – and each year the Board of Directors considers SCM Annual Fund performance when setting tuition rates.

The motto of the SCM Annual Fund is "Every Family for Every Child," and we ask that 100% of our families make a meaningful contribution each year. This year, the annual fund drive will launch on October 18 and run through November 29. During this six-week drive, parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends can expect to receive appeals via mail and email, phone calls and visit requests from our advancement director, and communications from volunteer annual fund representatives. We encourage donors who work for organizations with employee matching programs to submit the appropriate paperwork to request the company match their contributions to the SCM Annual Fund.

Biennial Gala

Every other school year, we host a gala celebration to raise additional funds for special projects. The gala is an adults-only celebration that includes dinner, dancing, and silent and live auctions. Our next gala is scheduled for Saturday, April 15, 2023. Stay tuned for more details and contact Lyndsey Ray, advancement director, at lrays@stcathmont.org to join the gala planning committee.

COMMUNICATION

Open communication with your child's guide and the administration keeps everyone well-informed about your child's needs, your concerns, and pertinent information about the school's policies and activities. We welcome your ideas, feedback, and questions.

School-to-Parent Communications

Website

The school website is www.stcathmont.org. The site contains pertinent and timely information for the school community, prospective families, and the public. We encourage parents to use the subscribe feature on the website to sync their personal calendars to the school's online calendar.

FACTS Family Portal

FACTS Family Portal is a private and secure parents' portal used by St. Catherine's. Parents use the portal to access required school forms and other documents, make tuition and extracurricular activity payments, apply for tuition assistance, re-enroll, view and edit family information, and search the parent directory. Access the portal at <https://stcm-tx.client.renweb.com/pwr> and use district code "STCM-TX."

The Globe

The Globe is our biweekly e-newsletter that features upcoming school events, key deadlines, student and community stories, and engagement and volunteer opportunities. It is emailed every other Wednesday during the school year (except during school holidays). It is also posted on the school website, www.stcathmont.org, under the What's New tab. We encourage all parents to read *The Globe* to stay up to date on school happenings.

If you would like to submit something to be included in *The Globe*, please email it to globe@stcathmont.org by Monday at noon for approval.

Social Media

Our school's Facebook page is found at www.facebook.com/stcathmont and our Instagram is at www.instagram.com/stcathmont. St. Catherine's Montessori reserves the right to delete or block any persons engaging in behavior deemed inappropriate, or behavior that conflicts with the values or mission of our school.

Room Parents

Room Parents are parent volunteers who help the guides organize class activities and communicate with parents. You will receive emails from your Room Parent throughout the year to pass on information about classroom activities and school events, and to recruit volunteers. Room Parents may communicate via phone or email to all classroom parents. Class mailings are to be approved in advance by the guide. The guide, assistant, Head of School, and Advancement Director are copied on all emails from Room Parents. Every Room Parent is required to have current safe environment training on file with the school.

Emergency Contacts

The school must have a local phone number on file where you can reliably and immediately be contacted regarding unexpected closings, health emergencies, etc. Your emergency contact information must always be current. (**FACTS Family Portal > Web Forms > Family and Student Required Forms > Emergency Contacts.**) If you are traveling, please notify the school of your backup in the event of an emergency. **All families must have one (1) local emergency contact on file.**

Inclement Weather/School Closure

St. Catherine's uses the Parent Alert automated communication system to alert you of inclement weather delays or closings, or any other circumstances that affect the timing of the school day. In case of severe weather conditions, the school will initiate a telephone call, text message, and email message with school closing, delay, or early dismissal information.

Notifications will go to the telephone numbers and email addresses you provide in FACTS Family Portal. We follow the Archdiocesan School Closing Policy and will close when schools within the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston close. Please also check the school website and social media sites (Facebook and Instagram) for updates.

Updating Your Parent Contact Information

Update all changes to your contact information that occur during the school year (e.g., a move, separation of parents, change of phone number, or email address) via **FACTS Family Portal > Web Forms > Family and Student Required Forms > Parent Contact Information.**

Contacting Your Child's Guide

If you need to contact your child's guide, you may call the main telephone line to leave a message, or email the guide directly. Do not use a guide's cell phone or home number unless specifically given permission to do so by the guide. All guides check SCM voicemail and email daily. Be mindful that guides may not have a chance to respond during the school day.

Conferences

Conferences offer you and your child's guide an opportunity to share general and specific information regarding your child's progress and to discuss areas of improvement. Since the education of the child is a partnership between the guide and family, it is imperative that conferences are set and attended. We encourage parents to schedule a conference in both the fall and spring semesters when the scheduling link is sent via email. Additional conferences may be scheduled as needed. Adolescent Community and High School students conduct conferences with their parents and guides.

A narrative is mailed at the end of the school year for all Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students. This report is an evaluation of each student's progress throughout the year.

Classroom Observations

If you would like to observe your child in the classroom, please arrange the observation with your child's guide.

Contacting Office Staff

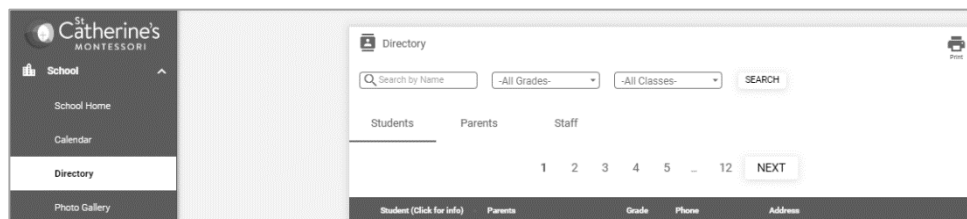
For Matters Concerning:	Contact:
School policies School mission and goals Safety and security Board of Directors	Lina Delgado, Head of School ldelgado@stcathmont.org Contact Emily Blackman at ebblackman@stcathmont.org to make an appointment.
Admissions procedures Enrollment and re-enrollment School tours Prospective parent classroom observations Room Parents	Amy Walz, Enrollment Management Director awalz@stcathmont.org
Tuition payments and billing Extracurricular activities billing After-School Program billing Financial aid Expense reimbursements	Holly Copeland, Business Director hcopeland@stcathmont.org
Academic records	Kesley Rodriguez, Registrar krodriguez@stcathmont.org
SCM Annual Fund Gala Alumni and donor relations Volunteering	Lyndsey Ray, Advancement Director lrays@stcathmont.org
Communications Yearbook <i>The Globe</i>	Annie Sallans, Communications Coordinator asallans@stcathmont.org globe@stcathmont.org
Student health conditions and medications (Sandra) COVID-19 (Emily) Health and Immunization Forms (Grecia)	Health Care Team clinic@stcathmont.org Sandra Espinosa, MSSW, Counselor & Health Care Coordinator Emily Blackman Grecia Parra
Counseling (Sandra)	Sandra Espinosa sespinosa@stcathmont.org
Requirements for volunteering at school Safe environment training	Emily Blackman, Safe Environment Coordinator ebblackman@stcathmont.org

For clarification, or questions about matters not covered above, please contact Emily Blackman at (713) 665-2195 or ebblackman@stcathmont.org, and she will direct you to the correct contact.

Contacting Other Parents

Parent Directory

To access the directory, please sign into FACTS Family Portal and select Directory. Contact information in the Parent Directory – including email addresses – may not be used for solicitation purposes.



Please Note: Your name, address, phone number(s), and email address(es) are automatically available to other parents in the FACTS Family Portal directory *unless you opt out*.

Parent Preferences:

Auto Email Gradebook Progress Report:

Directory: Block Name: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Directory: Block Address: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Directory: Block Email: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Directory: Block Phone (Home): ☐ Yes ☒ No
Directory: Block Cell: ☐ Yes ☒ No

Parent Alert: Home Phone: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Parent Alert: Cell Phone: ☒ Yes ☐ No
Parent Alert: Work Phone: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Parent Alert: No Text: ☐ Yes ☒ No

To Opt Out:

1. Click Web Forms > Family and Student Required Forms > Parent Contact Information
2. Click the button for each custodial parent. (You must repeat the following process for each parent.)
3. Scroll down to Parent Preferences.

SCM On a Whim

SCM On a Whim is a PSO-sponsored, informal, social Google group (email list) that is used to:

- Meet with other SCM parents (with and without kids) by extending invitations to be joined for outings, activities, events, and meetings "on a whim"
- Share information about events and opportunities that may be of interest around town
- Crowdsource the SCM community for recommendations on a variety of topics from pediatricians to plumbers

SCM On a Whim is **NOT**:

- A formal channel of communication from St. Catherine's Montessori to parents. (Note: Many of our parents are active in the school community, so you may see reminders about school events or requests for volunteer help. These reminders and requests are from parents to parents, and not from the school)
- A version of Craigslist or an online marketplace
- A discussion board or school forum

Parents will receive an invitation to join from the group moderator, typically during Labor Day weekend.

DAILY PROCEDURES

Schedule

Infant Community: Monday through Friday

8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Arrival
8:30 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.	Montessori Program
11:20 a.m.	Dismissal

The After-School Program is not available for Infant Community students.

Primary AM: Monday through Friday

8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Arrival
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Montessori Program
11:30 a.m.	Dismissal

The After-School Program is not available for Primary AM students.

Primary PM: Monday through Friday

8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Arrival
8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Montessori Program
3:30 p.m.	Dismissal (Friday Dismissal 2:30 p.m.)
3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Primary PM After-School Program (Friday starts at 2:30 p.m.)

Elementary

7:45 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Arrival
8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Montessori Program
3:30 p.m.	Dismissal (Friday Dismissal 2:30 p.m.)
3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Elementary After-School Program (Friday starts at 2:30 p.m.)

Adolescent Community

7:45 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Arrival
8:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Montessori Program
3:45 p.m.	Dismissal (Friday Dismissal: 2:45 p.m.)

The After-School Program is not available for Adolescent Community students.

High School

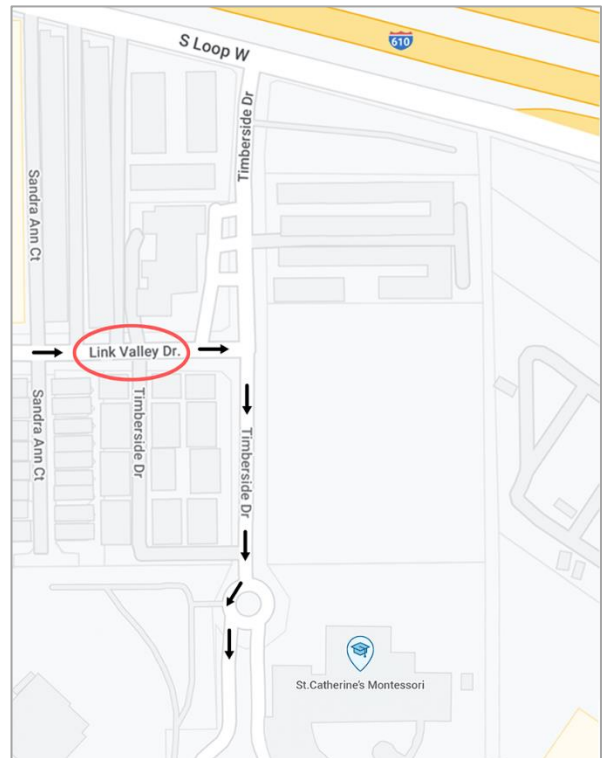
7:45 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Arrival
8:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Montessori Program
3:45 p.m.	Dismissal (Friday Dismissal: 2:45 p.m.)

The After-School Program is not available for High School students.

Arrival and Dismissal Transitions

Drop-off and pick-up are important transitions in your child's day, and we make every effort to encourage your child's confidence and independence. The following procedures are designed with your child's needs in mind, along with the safety and efficiency of the carpool line.

- Please use Link Valley Drive to queue up for the carpool line. This prevents the line from backing up on Timberside Drive and extending towards the 610 freeway. **If you do enter Timberside from the freeway, DO NOT jump the line. Turn right down Link Valley to join the end of the line forming there.**
- Primary – High School parents **DO NOT** park in the carpool lane during arrivals or dismissals.
- We ask that all parents stay in their vehicles during morning arrival and all dismissals (except for Infant Community parents who park at the black cones in the carpool lane and walk their IC students to the classroom via the Welcome Center).



Car Seats

If you need to leave a car seat at school, please label it and place it outside the Welcome Center entrance. Elementary students will occasionally need to bring their booster seats for Going Outs, and you will be notified in advance.

Arrival Procedures

A sign with your child's name will be distributed at the beginning of the year. This sign must be displayed in the center of the windshield, under the vehicle rear-view mirror, during arrival and dismissal.

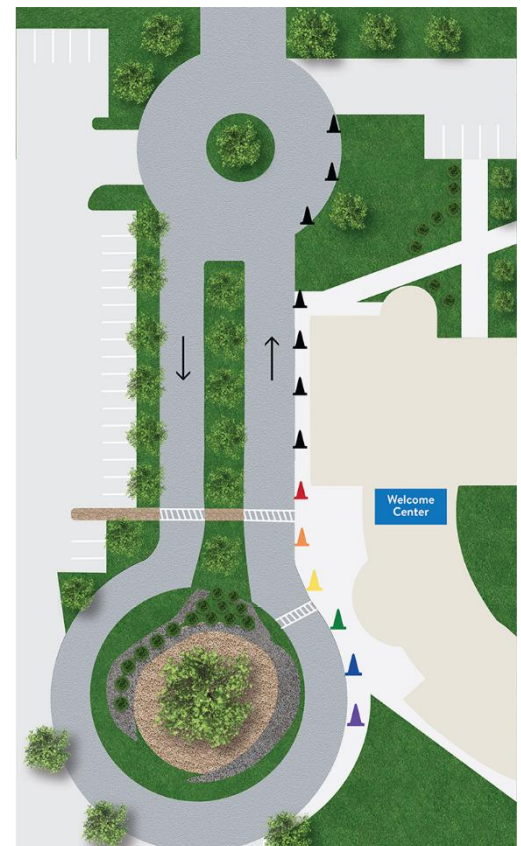
All students enter through the Welcome Center entrance. During arrival, Primary – High School parents pull all the way up to the first available cone (colors **purple through **red** only) when dropping off your student.**

Infant Community

Parents of Infant Community students should park at the black cones in the carpool lane and walk their IC child to the classroom via the Welcome Center no earlier than 8:15 a.m. Infant Community arrival time is between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m.

Primary

Parents of Primary students drop off their children at the curb in front of the school from 8:15 to 8:30 a.m. **All students must exit from the passenger side; please arrange car seats accordingly.** Staff will be present at the curb during this time to assist students from the car and



to ensure that students arrive in their classrooms. Initially, staff will walk children to their classrooms, but as children's familiarity and independence progresses, they will walk to class by themselves.

Please make sure that your Primary child has their lunchbox and jacket (if needed) in hand when you approach the curb for drop-off. Additionally, in consideration of the cars behind you, please do not use drop-off as a time to converse with staff. If you need to communicate with a guide or staff member, you may hand a note to an employee through the car window.

Primary children with siblings in Elementary, Adolescent Community, or High School may arrive at 7:45 a.m. and older students may walk their Primary siblings to their classrooms. If you have both an Infant Community and Primary child, please drive through the drop-off line to let your Primary child exit the vehicle, then park at the black cones at the front of the carpool lane to walk your IC child to class.

Calm, kind, and consistent drop-off through the carpool line eases the separation process for you and your child.

Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School

Parents of Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students drop off children at the curb in front of the school, pulling all the way up to the first available cone (colors **purple** through **red** only). **Students may not arrive earlier than 7:45 a.m.** The students' day begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. **Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will be marked tardy.**

If You Are Late for Arrival

If you arrive after 8:30 a.m., please park your car, walk your child to the front door and ring the bell.

Dismissal Procedures

A sign with your child's name will be distributed at the beginning of the year. This sign must be displayed in the center of the windshield, under the vehicle rear-view mirror, during dismissal (and arrival).

All drivers should approach the pick-up line as close to the curb as safely possible at the cone color designated by staff (colors **purple** through **red**). When you have come to a complete stop, a staff member will open the door for your child. **For safety, all students must enter and exit the car on the curbside.**

If you or the designated adult do not have the carpool sign displayed, you may be directed to the parking lot to park and present identification at the front desk.

We encourage students to do as much for themselves as possible. Patience is a requirement for this process to succeed, and if a student needs more than a moment to complete this process, you will be asked to pull forward and assist your child yourself. **If you or a designated adult are in the dismissal line, do not walk up to get your child.**

Please plan to assist them with securing safety belts after your child is in the vehicle. Staff are not able to assist with securing car seats and seat belts.

Releasing Students to Adults

The school must have on file the names of persons, other than parents, who are permitted to pick up each child. Your child will not be released to any person that has not been designated as a Pick Up Contact on FACTS Family Portal, unless we receive a note from a parent in writing or by email.

- Additions to the authorized to pick up list must be made on FACTS Family Portal > Web Forms > Family and Student Required Forms > Pick Up Contacts.
- When the authorized person arrives, their driver's license will be checked before your child is released.
- St. Catherine's Montessori will not release children to individuals whom they suspect are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or who display behavior that has the potential to put a child in danger.
- Unless there is an emergency situation, **a courtesy call at least thirty minutes prior** to an unscheduled early student pick-up should be made to the front desk.
- The latest a student may leave school early is 3:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 2:00 p.m. on Fridays.

Infant Community

Beginning at 11:20 a.m., Infant Community students will be picked up from the Welcome Center by a parent or designated adult. Parents should park at the black cones in the carpool lane and walk to the Welcome Center.

Primary AM

To ensure a safe and efficient dismissal time, students in Primary AM are to be picked up through the carpool line. At 11:30 a.m., the children walk to the front of the school with their classroom's assistant and are seated quietly on the benches. Once seated, no student is to stand up or walk around the area. Students will gather their belongings and walk carefully to the directed cone color with a staff member. **Please do not cut the line. You will be directed around at the appropriate time.** Staff are not able to assist with securing car seats. If your child needs assistance, please plan to assist them after they are in the vehicle.

Primary PM – High School

Students in Primary PM, Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School are to be picked up at the afternoon dismissal line.

Primary PM children and Elementary will dismiss beginning at 3:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 2:30 p.m. on Fridays from the benches at the school's main entrance.

AC and HS students will dismiss from their classrooms through the pedestrian gate beyond the main entrance by intercom beginning at 3:45 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 2:45 p.m. on Fridays

If You Are Late for Dismissal

If you will arrive late for pick-up, please call the school so we can let your child know. All students not picked up by the end of dismissal will be placed in the appropriate After-School Program. Families will be billed the daily rate for any portion of the day spent in an After-School Program. Primary PM and Elementary dismissal end at 3:40 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 2:40 p.m. on Fridays. AC/High School dismissal ends at 3:50 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 2:50 p.m. on Fridays.

Friday Dismissal

Friday is early dismissal day. Infant Community and Primary AM dismiss according to their Monday-Thursday schedules at 11:20 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., respectively. Primary PM and Elementary dismissal time is 2:30 p.m.; Adolescent Community and High School dismissal time is 2:45 p.m. The After-School Program is available from 2:30 to 6:00 p.m. for Primary PM and Elementary students.

After-School Program

Our After-School Program is offered to all Primary PM and Elementary students. The program is offered from **3:30 to 6:00 p.m. (from 2:30 p.m. on Fridays)** on a space-available basis. The After-School Program is not available for Infant Community, Primary AM, Adolescent Community, or High School students. **Students must be registered to attend.** The cost for the After-School Program is **\$250/student**, per month. The daily charge for children who attend occasionally is **\$20/student** for any portion of the day. Siblings of students in After-School Music or Sports will be billed a discounted rate of **\$10/day** if picked up by 5:00 p.m. on scheduled music and sports days.

A late fee charge of **\$10 for each 10 minutes** will be billed for pick-ups later than 6:00 p.m.

Pick-up from the After-School Program takes place at the front entrance. When you, or a designated adult, arrive to pick up your child, please park and come to the front door. Your child will be called to meet you outside the front entrance.

Careful Driving on Campus

Please be prompt, safe, and courteous while driving on campus. Your cooperation with our drop-off and pick-up procedures will keep arrival and dismissal periods as safe and efficient as possible.

Speed Limit

Please observe the 15-mph speed limit on campus at all times. Children, families, staff, and visitors regularly cross the carpool lanes and spend time in the Dominican Peace Garden. For safety, it is essential that drivers on campus proceed slowly and carefully.

Cell Phones and Hand-held Devices

The use of hand-held wireless devices in a designated school zone is against the law. **Do not use your cell phone while driving on campus.**

Parking

- Please park in the parking lot while visiting campus.
- Never leave unattended children in the parking lot or in your car.
- Do not leave valuables in your car, even if the car is locked.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Attendance/Tardiness

Regular attendance is essential for your child to progress satisfactorily in school. Each school day is a building block in their work progression. If your child will be absent, please email Emily Blackman at ebblackman@stcathmont.org, and she will notify the guide.

Your child will need to arrive at school on time so that all children may observe morning classroom rituals and an uninterrupted three-hour work cycle. A student who is late for class not only falls behind in their work but disrupts the other students as they enter. Students who arrive after the stated start time will be marked tardy.

Start times are as follows:

Infant Community – Primary **8:30 a.m.**

Elementary – High School **8:00 a.m.**

We consider more than five (5) tardies for the year to be a problem. Guides will speak directly to parents about late arrivals. If there is no improvement, then guides are expected to inform the administration when tardies are excessive.

State law requires that 9th-12th year students must be in attendance 90% of the school year to receive credit for graduation. This 90% rule applies to all absences, including excused absences. Please note, three (3) tardies are equivalent to one (1) absence for these purposes. A student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent, but less than 90 percent, of school days may be given credit if the student completes a plan approved by the Head of School that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class.

In the event of excessive tardies or absences, the school will contact the parent/guardian and together they will discuss how to manage more timely arrivals. When planning family vacations, please look carefully at the school calendar online at www.stcathmont.org. It is difficult for children to miss large chunks of school. Please try not to arrange trips when school is in session. There are many days when school is closed throughout the school year.

Dressing for Independence – Infant Community and Primary

Children should come to school in clothes that can be managed with minimal assistance. This encourages independence and improved coordination, particularly important for our youngest children learning self-care and toileting. Clothes for school should be casual and comfortable, allowing for daily activities including art and outside work. Please keep these factors in mind when assisting your child with dressing each morning:

- Ease of using the restroom
- The day's weather forecast
- Whether it's acceptable for clothes to come home soiled with dirt or paint

The following items are appropriate for the classroom work environment at St. Catherine's Montessori:

- Flat, rubber-soled shoes that cover the entire foot (Infant Community and Primary children should wear shoes with self-manageable Velcro or laces.)
- Walking-style shorts that are loose-fitting
- Pants, shirts, skirts, and dresses

The following items are **NOT** appropriate for school:

- Tank tops, crop tops, halter tops
- Short shorts or tight shorts (unless worn under a dress)
- Shirts that depict characters or advertisements from movies, TV, comic books, role-playing games, or other pop culture
- Footwear such as jellies, clogs, flip-flops, light-up shoes, shoes with wheels, high heels, or Crocs (except as needed for gardening)

Dress Code for Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary

- Attire must be school appropriate.
- No clothing with holes, tears, frayed edges, broken fasteners, or other damage.
- Hair is to be one's own natural color, kept clean and well-groomed.
- No shirts that depict characters or advertisements from movies, TV, comic books, role-playing games, or other pop culture.
- No shirts that have neck openings that allow the shirt to fall off the shoulders.
- Shorts and skirts must be 2" past fingertip length or lower.
- Skin may not be visible through the fabric of any clothing.
- Shoes must be closed-toe, lace-up shoes or sturdy athletic sandals with straps. No flip-flops, or any shoes with a heel higher than 1.5 inches. No backless, open-toed, high-heeled, or light-up shoes. No shoes with wheels.

Dress Code for Adolescent Community and High School

The goals of the Adolescent Community and High School dress code are to help adolescents transition to a more professional attire, fulfill the adolescent need for self-expression, and uphold the values of our Catholic Montessori community. Students choose their attire, and responsibility to the community requires that clothing be appropriate for the school day or school-sponsored activity. The following are limits to attire at the adolescent level:

- Shorts and skirts must be no higher than 3" above the knee.
- Shirts must fully cover the torso at all times.
- No shirts with inappropriate images or language.
- No shirts that have neck openings that allow the shirt to fall off the shoulders.
- No see-through clothing, or clothing that reveals undergarments.
- No clothing with excessive holes, tears, frayed edges, or other damage.
- No clothing should be used as a means to disengage or mask the adolescent from their community. Hoodies should only be worn covering the head while outside in cold weather.
- Athletic shorts or pants (yoga, sweatpants, joggers) may only be worn for physical expression, work at Japhet, or with guide permission.
- Shoes must be closed-toe and lace-up or sturdy athletic sandals with straps. No flip-flops, backless, open-toe, or high-heel shoes.
- Hair is to be kept clean and well-groomed.
- Business attire must be worn for presentations and some class outings.
- For Mass, if a student is not wearing Mass attire, then the school will contact the parents to bring Mass attire for the student. Alternatively, AC students will borrow a uniform.

Uniforms for Mass and Special Outings

Off-campus trips, including community service outings, require Upper Elementary students to wear SCM collared shirts with khaki slacks or khaki skirts. Upper Elementary students also wear this uniform to Mass. **The SCM collared shirts may be purchased online at Lands' End. Please use the link located on our website, www.stcathmont.org, on the home page beneath the News & Announcements section.**

Adolescent Community students are required to wear a navy-blue blazer, long-sleeve white dress shirt, and khaki skirts or khaki slacks to Mass.

High School students wear church attire to Mass.

If a student is not wearing Mass attire, then the school will contact the parents to bring Mass attire for the student. Alternatively, AC students will borrow a uniform.

The first Mass of the school year is scheduled for Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 2:15 p.m.

Uniforms and Practice Clothing for After-School Sports

St. Catherine's provides game-day uniforms for all after-school sports. Students must provide their own sport-appropriate footwear and accessories, e.g., cleats, knee pads, shin guards, etc.

All students must wear sport-appropriate clothing and footwear for after-school practice. Practice attire must follow the St. Catherine's dress codes.

What to Bring (and Not to Bring) to School

Change of Clothing

Infant Community and Primary children keep an extra set of clothes at school to support toileting and water activities. Please remember to label all clothing and to switch extra clothes as the seasons change. If your child needs to borrow something from our supply of extra clothes, please wash and return the borrowed items.

Clothing for P.E. Class

All P.E. attire must follow the St. Catherine's dress codes.

On P.E. days, Elementary students should wear shoes and clothes appropriate for physical activity.

Adolescent Community and High School students must bring an appropriate change of clothes to wear during P.E. class and wear appropriate shoes.

Reusable Water Bottle

All students must bring a reusable water bottle daily. Filtered drinking water is provided to students in their classroom or via bottle filling station.

Backpacks and Umbrellas

Infant Community and Primary children do not need a backpack or umbrella at school, so please leave those items at home. Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students may bring a backpack if necessary to accommodate books and follow-up work.

Toys

When preparing for the school day, please leave toys at home. They are a distraction in the classroom.

Skateboards

Skateboards and shoes with wheels may not be used on school grounds.

Cell Phones and Devices

Elementary students and younger may not have a cell phone at school or off-campus on school-sponsored trips. Adolescent Community and High School students are allowed a cell phone at school but must follow all school and classroom policies regarding use. If your Primary or Elementary student has a legitimate reason to need a cell phone for after-school off-campus purposes, you must inform the Head of School in writing.

There are school telephones that students may use with the express permission of a faculty or staff member. This use is limited to emergency purposes, not for telephoning parents to arrange visits with friends or to bring forgotten items to school, etc. Hand-held computers, including tablets, music players, game devices, and other devices with significant gaming, computing, or internet capability, are not permitted at school without direct permission. If such an item should come to the attention of an adult, it will be confiscated and brought to the Head of School. The parent and student must pick it up from the Head of School at the end of the day.

Nutrition

St. Catherine's Montessori encourages children to select foods with high nutritional content that are unprocessed or minimally processed. As part of our school-wide focus on sustainability, children of all ages learn to grow their own food, prepare snacks, cook, compost, and use reusable materials for dining. By the time students reach the Adolescent Community, they are managing a large community garden with various varieties of fruits and vegetables. We ask that you support the children's learning by helping them bring healthy foods to school. **Please see the Safety and Health section on page 28 for information on food allergies and our Nut Allergy Policy.**

Snack

All students are offered a morning snack break. This is only a snack and should not serve as a substitute for breakfast.

- Infant Community students bring their own nut-free snack from home.
- Primary students bring their own nut-free snack from home.
- Elementary snack is provided by the school, and students do the shopping and daily preparation. The cost of snack is included in the fees.
- Adolescent Community students take turns planning snacks, preparing grocery lists, and purchasing with their parents any outside ingredients needed for the week.
- High School students bring their own nut-free snack from home.

Lunch

Gathering for a meal instills children with a sense of community, and we use lunch time as an opportunity to emphasize language skills, etiquette, and table manners. Children of all ages learn to care for themselves and others by setting the table and cleaning up after a meal.

Students attending a full-day session should bring a well-balanced lunch, including protein. Finger foods and sandwiches cut into smaller pieces make handling easier for young children. Carbonated or sugary drinks, juice boxes, candy, gum, cookies, brownies, and other junk food are not appropriate at lunchtime. Please do not send these items to school. St. Catherine's has a Nut Allergy Policy; see page 29 for details.

Lunchboxes should be properly identified on the outside, and food containers should be reusable and child-friendly. Please avoid "handy" single packs, as these can be difficult for children to open and create excess waste. Uneaten food will be returned home each day. **Remember that all students must bring a reusable water bottle to school each day.** Filtered drinking water, napkins, and cutlery are provided to students in their classrooms.

Lunchtime Visitation Policy

At the discretion of each guide, parents, family members, alumni, and former students may be invited to have lunch in the classroom.

After-School Program Snack

Students enrolled in the After-School Program bring their own nut-free snack from home.

Birthdays

When planning a party of any kind for your child outside of school, please mail the invitations from home. Distributing invitations at school can cause hurt feelings for children who are not included.

The Montessori tradition honors birthdays as special celebrations of each child's journey from birth to the present day, and each class celebrates with their own interpretation of Montessori's unique rituals. Your child's guide will notify you of plans for your child's celebration ahead of time, if offered.

Gifts to Employees

Employees may not accept gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or that are used to obtain special advantage. This standard does not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service. Any group gifts or money for an employee must be organized and collected by a parent and must be voluntary.

Physical Education

Starting in Lower Elementary, students have designated P.E. class. Athletic footwear is required for P.E. activities. Students who are ill or unable to participate in required P.E. activities must bring a note from a parent or doctor describing the reason for abstaining.

Follow-up Work

The Montessori classroom provides an environment conducive to continuous work. Informal breaks, including snack and lunch, are part of the daily schedule. Because the day is filled with meaningful work, students are encouraged to participate in outside interests and activities for recreation and enjoyment after school. The scope of the Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School curricula requires that follow-up work be assigned to help students complete required work and to provide extra practice in particular subject areas that can be completed at home if students run out of time during the work cycles at school.

The goal is for this follow-up work to not be excessive in nature. If you find that your child is working on follow-up work for an excessive amount of time, please contact the student's guide or advisor to discuss an appropriate plan.

Late Work

Follow-up work that misses the determined due date will be discussed between the student, guide, and parent.

Grading

Grades are not issued in the Infant Community through Elementary. Grades are issued in the Adolescent Community and High School, using a rubric grading system, only for coursework that receives high school credit.

Moving Up to the Next Level

In consultation with the administration, and after discussion with parents, the decision to move a student from their current level to the next level is at the discretion of the classroom guide.

Standardized Testing

In alignment with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, St. Catherine's will administer the [NWEA MAP Growth](#) assessments three times a year (in September, January, and April) to help assess individual growth throughout the school year. This test will be administered to students in grades three through eight (3-8). MAP testing is designed to identify the student's zone of proximal development (ZPD), or the ideal spot where instruction is most beneficial for each student – which is just beyond their current level of independent capability. Lessons focused within each

student's ZPD is neither too difficult nor too easy; it is just challenging enough to help them develop new skills by building on those they have already established through classroom lessons and guidance.

Students in grades nine through twelve (9-12) are administered college preparatory tests aligning with their college application needs, including the [PSAT/NMSQT](#), [PreACT 8/9](#), [SAT](#), and [ACT](#).

Students with Special Needs and Learning Differences

Introductory Statement

Consistent with the contents of the Church document, "To Teach as Jesus Did," and the "Pastoral Statement of the U.S. Bishops on Persons with Disabilities," the Archdiocese seeks to include students with special needs and learning differences in our schools to the extent that the need of such students can be met within the scope of the programs and resources offered. The Catholic Schools Office is aware that it is unrealistic to serve all categories of special need students. However, St. Catherine's Montessori and the other Catholic schools are cognizant of the fact that admission of students with special needs and learning differences must be considered and reviewed on an individual basis.

Legal References to Special Services

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that local school districts locate, identify, and evaluate all private school students suspected of having a disability (for St. Catherine's Montessori, the local school district is Houston Independent School District). This "Child Find" process must be conducted in consultation with private school representatives to ensure equitable access for private school students. In IDEA, these children are often referred to as "parentally placed private school children with disabilities," and the benefits available to them differ from the benefits for children with disabilities enrolled in public schools. Parents may contact the school district to which they are zoned for further information.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 educational section (frequently called "Section 504"), provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from the participation in any program receiving federal assistance. Catholic educators strive to recognize and address the needs of all those who seek a Catholic education. Within our resources, St. Catherine's and other Catholic schools will offer services to eligible students with special needs, when possible. *However, private schools are not required to significantly alter their programs, or substantially modify their standards to accommodate a child with special needs or learning differences.* Private educational institutions are only required to make minor adjustments to accommodate eligible students.

Records for Students with Special Needs and Learning Differences

All psychological and educational evaluations/reports regarding special needs testing of students received from local public schools, persons, or agencies are forwarded to St. Catherine's Montessori upon request of the parent. These records are kept on file at the school for a period of seven (7) years after the exit of the student. These records are kept in a secure file and area accessible only to the Head of School and any other appropriate staff member working with the student. Parents may view their child's record at any time. These records may not be forwarded to any other individual or agency. If students have completed a formal assessment, parents should forward a copy of it to the SCM testing coordinator, Sarah Lewis, at slewis@stcathmont.org.

Criteria for Acceptance of Students with Special Needs and Learning Differences

In making a determination regarding the admittance of a particular student, the school will review the child's ability to meet the school's academic, behavioral, and physical qualifications. Each Catholic school determines its ability to meet the need of the student applicant. Consideration will be given to the following:

- The student's demonstrated ability to meet grade level requirements;

- The record of student's ability to follow school rules and regulations; and
- The students' ability to meet the physical requirements of attendance.

St. Catherine's Services for Students with Special Needs and Learning Differences

Prospective Students – When the school is notified that an incoming student may have special needs or learning differences, the administration will review current academic, social, medical, and psychological evaluations to determine if the applicant is qualified to enroll, with or without their disability. If the applicant is qualified for enrollment, the administration will then determine if reasonable adjustments can be made to the educational program which will accommodate the student's needs. If an admission is determined, the school will begin the procedures with parents to discuss a Catholic Accommodation Plan.

Currently-Enrolled Students – If a guide is concerned about a child's academic, behavioral, or emotional progress and determines that testing may be needed, they will discuss concerns with the parents and the administration as soon as possible. If a parent is concerned about their child's academic, behavioral, or emotion progress, they should discuss concerns with their child's guide as soon as possible. Parents, guides, and the administration will work as a team to do what is best for the child and will discuss:

- The student's current educational status, including attendance records, grades, assessment data, and classroom observations;
- Previous educational efforts and strategies provided for the student and the results;
- Documentation of recent vision and hearing screenings;
- Updated general health history inventory; and
- Other information provided by the parents or guides.

Parents will be expected to disclose any pertinent information that may assist us in educating their student. The school is responsible for recommending additional support, educational alternatives, and/or referrals to the local school district and/or private agency of the parent's choice for further evaluation. In some cases, the school may not have the resources necessary to help the child be successful. The administration will then assist the family to locate an appropriate educational program for the child.

If an evaluation determines the student requires minor accommodations, the school will begin the procedures with parents to discuss a Catholic Accommodation Plan. Accommodations for a child will be noted in the child's permanent folder.

Academic Support

St. Catherine's is dedicated to meeting each student's academic needs. This school year, through Catapult Learning, we have on-campus, AMI-trained support members who will work in partnership with Primary and Elementary guides, parents, and the administration to help students receive the support they need to succeed at the level appropriate to their learning development. If parents believe that more academic support is needed for their child, their first step would be to consult with their child's guide to discuss concerns and a course of action. Likewise, if a guide observes that support may be needed, they first will notify the student's parents. As needed, the support members will assess and work with the student. They also will maintain communication with the guide and the parents about the student's needs and progress. In the event support staff determines additional, perhaps outside, testing and support is warranted, St. Catherine's will assist the family in locating these resources. This academic support is funded through the Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS) program and provided through Catapult Learning.

Success Expectations for Students with Special Needs and Learning Differences

All available school resources shall be utilized to promote student success. Lines of communication will be kept open to inform parents of student progress in all areas. Concerns about a student will be addressed initially by the classroom

guide and parents. School success can only be attained through cooperation between parents and educators. Parents are expected to disclose any pertinent information from private resources (diagnoses and recommendations) that would be of specific educational value in programming adequately for their children. If it is determined that the school's resources cannot meet the needs of a student, or if parents fail to act on the school's recommendations for remediation or diagnostic evaluation, the Head of School may request withdrawal of the student or deny admission for the following year.

Accommodations for Students with Special Needs and Learning Differences

The purpose of an accommodation of any type is to provide the appropriate instruction according to the individual student's needs. As a result of a diagnostic evaluation, a student may meet certain criteria to qualify for accommodations to their schoolwork. In many instances, accommodations (changes in methods of instruction) can be made in the classroom for students with special needs or learning differences, or for students who are struggling due to other circumstances. Students who are diagnosed with a learning difference or who are diagnosed with a special need through the public school system, private physicians, or through special agencies may be referred for special assistance.

Standardized Assessment Accommodations for Students with Special Needs and Learning Differences

Standardized assessments are one of several means of evaluating student performance. All students in grades three through eight (3-8) participate in the Archdiocesan NWEA MAP Growth assessment program. Students with disabilities and learning differences identified through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) may require assessment accommodations. These accommodations must be planned for in advance through a meeting with the SCM testing coordinator, Sarah Lewis.

MUSIC AND SPORTS

St. Catherine's strives to help each individual reach their potential in all areas—intellectually, physically, socially, morally, and spiritually. It was Dr. Montessori's view that the mind and the body should operate as one, that thought should be accompanied by expression in action—or to put it another way, that the action should be an expression of the developing will and thought processes.

The After-School Music and Sports schedules are designed to make it possible for every student to participate in both activities if desired, and to avoid interrupting the Montessori work cycle.

St. Catherine's After-School Music and Sports Programs:

- Offer the opportunity for children to recognize their role as a member of a team
- Develop skills through repetition and rehearsal
- Provide opportunities to perform in front of others
- Encourage the development of positive attitudes and values

Those who have a particular affinity for a musical instrument or specific sport may also choose to participate in outside classes or teams to further enhance their skills. St. Catherine's encourages children to follow their interests and to experience time for unstructured play on a regular basis.

Music Eligibility and Schedule

Instrumental

- **Beginning Strings Lessons** for all new or continuing 2nd- through 12th-year players on violin, viola, cello, or bass (electric or double). Lessons will be **during the school day as part of the work period on Tuesdays and**

Thursdays. Students will move at their own pace on their instrument but will be expected to do some at-home practice.

- **Chamber Orchestra** for returning 4th- through 6th-year players on violin, viola, cello, or bass (electric or double). It is recommended that players have at least one year of experience on their instrument for this group. The Chamber Orchestra will play in small groups – “Chamber Music Style” – and meet **after school on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.** Players will be arranged in small trios and quartets and work on balancing melody and harmony in their groups.
- **Chamber Ensemble** for Adolescent Community and High School players on violin, viola, cello, or bass (electric or double). It is recommended that players have at least two years of experience on their instrument for this group. This small ensemble will practice **during the school day as part of their Creative Expression work period** and will have numerous performance opportunities during the year.

Vocal

- **Acapella Choir** for 4th- through 6th-year singers. Acapella Choir is an opportunity for young singers to develop their musical skills and hold their own parts in harmony. Choir will meet **after school on Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.** Singers should have desire to sing together and explore fun performance opportunities.
- **Choir Ensemble** for singers in Adolescent Community and High School. Choir Ensemble is an opportunity for older singers to sing in parts together with others who love to sing. The group will meet **once a week during the day as part of their work period.** Singers should have desire to sing together and explore fun performance opportunities.

Sports Eligibility and Schedule

- The After-School Sports program is open to Upper Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students (grades 4-12).
- The program will include volleyball, soccer, basketball, baseball, and track and field.
- Upper Elementary students will practice on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.
- Adolescent Community and High School students will practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:45 to 5:00 p.m.
- Varsity teams will compete in the Greater Houston Catholic Athletic Association (GHCAA).

Saturday Soccer for Primary and Lower Elementary

Primary and Lower Elementary Soccer, also known as “Saturday Soccer,” is a parent-led soccer program for our younger students organized by the PSO’s Friends of Athletics. It is a non-competitive soccer league; there are no goalies, and the score is not kept. The emphasis is on sportsmanship, learning beginner soccer skills, teamwork, and fun. The practices and games are held Saturday mornings from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. with a fall season that begins in October. Parent volunteers serve as coaches, and all parents are welcome to participate, regardless of soccer experience.

GOING OUT AND FIELD TRIPS

To expand awareness of the world outside our community, excursions off campus are planned throughout the school year for Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students. Excursions taken in small groups are known as “Going Out.” Field trips are excursions taken by the entire class. Pre-planning and preparation with the students help

make such outings more meaningful. Before each trip, a going out or field trip form will be sent home for parent approval of planned activities. Please complete, sign, and return the forms to school by the requested deadlines.

Students who fail to meet academic and behavioral requirements may be denied participation. This decision is at the sole discretion of the guide. Participating in going outs and field trips is a privilege, not a right.

Transportation

Local trips, including Houston and surrounding areas, may make use of parent vehicles with no more than six (6) students in each vehicle. Parent drivers must:

- Complete safe environment training and have their training certificate and criminal background check on file with the school
- Provide evidence of their current driver's license to the school
- Provide evidence their current automobile insurance to the school and understand that they, as the primary insurer, are responsible for the safety of the students they transport, as well as any traffic accidents they may be involved in
- Complete and sign the Going Out Form each time they drive students. The Going Out Form is available at the front desk or from your child's guide

All transportation will be arranged by the class guide, assistant, room parent, or student.

Students also may be transported in a St. Catherine's Montessori bus. Drivers will be authorized by St. Catherine's and will have completed safe environment training, have a valid driver's license, and will have their driving record checked annually.

Overnight Accommodations

Should a field trip involve overnight travel, every effort will be made to ensure that there is one (1) adult in every sleeping area with two or more students. Overnight settings include rental homes, dormitories, connecting rooms, or single rooms, either in cabins or motels.

Information necessary for the safety of all students and adults will be communicated prior to the trip and will include emergency contact information and a plan for the dispensing of medication. All medications being dispensed require both parent and physician signature on the Medication Permission Form – except for sunscreen and insect repellent. (This exception applies to trips only.)

Adult Chaperones

There will always be at least one (1) class guide included in the adult group of chaperones.

Packing List/Itinerary

A student packing list and itinerary of student activities will be sent to parents in a timely fashion.

Overnight Trip Communication

During overnight field trips, St. Catherine's will send an email alerting parents of the students' arrival at their destination. A second email will be sent on the day of return with an estimated time for the students' return and instructions for pick-up.

ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston admit all students to the rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to the student body. They shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, or national origin in the administration of their admission, loan, athletic or scholarship programs.

Archdiocesan Policy 652.1

St. Catherine's Montessori welcomes students of every race, color, creed, religion, and national or ethnic origin who otherwise meet admission criteria. We believe that our admissions policies, consistently applied, will result in the best Montessori experience for our students.

The admissions procedure begins with a mandatory school tour and classroom observation by prospective parents. More information about admissions procedures may be found on the school website, www.stcathmont.org, under the Admissions tab.

Infant Community

Children ages 14 months to 3 years who have established independent walking may begin their Montessori experience in our Infant Community.

Primary

The Primary level is a 3- to 4-year program, and the optimal time to enter is at 2 ½ to 3 years of age. Children remain in Primary through the age of 6. Admitting children during the first year of the Primary cycle is ideal so that they can derive full advantage of the materials and lessons designed for each phase of development.

Students are then prepared to move to the next level of Montessori when appropriate. By following this procedure, we are able to maintain the integrity of the classroom and to offer all students a quality Montessori experience.

Children ages 4 and 5 years old are considered for admission on an individual basis, with preference given to transferring Montessori students.

Elementary (Grades 1-6)

Lower Elementary (grades 1-3) and Upper Elementary (grades 4-6) students coming from another Montessori school are eligible for admission on a space-available basis. Students coming from non-Montessori backgrounds may be eligible for admission on a space-available basis, if it appears to be a good fit.

We require the most recent progress reports, report cards, and achievement test scores. These must be submitted to the school with the application. A confidential Teacher Recommendation Form, obtained from the school and signed by the parents, will be sent to the child's present school. A visit will be scheduled for the student, and an informal assessment will be made of the child.

Adolescent Community (Grades 7-9) and High School (Grades 10-12)

Adolescent students coming from another Montessori school are eligible for admission on a space-available basis after a review of the applicant's sample work portfolio and a meeting with the guides. Those without Montessori experience may be considered after meeting with the guides. All school records will be required as well as confidential Teacher Recommendation Forms.

Academic Records

If a parent or student wishes to see the student's cumulative records, it is possible to do so with 24-hours written notice. Student cumulative records include narratives, academic transcripts, and academic test results. Any request for official transcripts must be made by a receiving school in the case of a student's withdrawal from St. Catherine's Montessori.

All requests for transfer of records and for teacher letters of recommendation must go through the registrar, Kesley Rodriguez (krodriguez@stcathmont.org); **do not give any of this paperwork directly to your child's guide.** Please inform the registrar at minimum **ten (10) business days** prior to the date that recommendations and records are required. We will forward the end-of-year evaluations, results from standardized tests, and letters of recommendation directly to the receiving school. Student accounts must be current and up-to-date for records to be forwarded.

In transferring to another school, timing must be considered. St. Catherine's will expect parents to honor the terms of existing enrollment contracts. Upon receipt of an application to another school, the administration will contact the family to discuss their plans and any concerns surrounding changing schools.

Non-Custodial Parents and Academic Records

The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is up to the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

- If a child lives with a custodial parent, a complete and signed copy of the divorce decree is required to be on file in the office, by Archdiocesan policy.
- If parents share custody, the school provides duplicate copies of all relevant information upon request.

Tuition and Fees 2022-2023

PROGRAM	HOURS	COST
Infant Community (14 months - 3 years)	8:30 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	\$11,746
Primary (3 years - 6 years)		
Primary AM	8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	\$11,746
Primary PM	8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Friday dismissal 2:30 p.m.)	\$14,155
Elementary		
Lower Elementary (Grades 1-3)	8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Friday dismissal 2:30 p.m.)	\$15,348
Upper Elementary (Grades 4-6)	8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Friday dismissal 2:30 p.m.)	\$15,348
Adolescent Community (Grades 7-9)	8:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m. (Friday dismissal 2:45 p.m.)	\$16,676

High School (Grades 10-12)	8:00 a.m. - 3:45p.m. (Friday dismissal 2:45p.m.)	\$16,676
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AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM	DISMISSAL	COST
Primary PM and Elementary only	6:00 p.m.	\$250/month \$20/day \$10/day*

*Discounted rate for siblings of students in after-school music or sports program picked up by 5:00 p.m. on scheduled music/sports dates. **Note:** Students picked up after 5:00 p.m. will be charged the regular daily rate of \$20.

TUITION DEPOSIT

Due with Enrollment and Tuition Payment Agreement, non-refundable and is applied toward tuition	\$750/student
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FEES

Application Fee (<i>for new applicants, non-refundable</i>)	\$150
New Student Fee (<i>one-time fee due at initial acceptance, non-refundable</i>)	\$850
Facility Fee (<i>per student</i>)	\$600
Infant Community Fees	\$100
Primary Fees	\$100
Lower Elementary Fees*	\$200
Upper Elementary Fees*	\$1,000
Adolescent Community Fees*	\$2,250
High School Fees*	\$2,250

*Additional fees are incurred for in-class cooking and food on trips. Varies by level. If no trips are taken this year, the portion of the fees that would be used for that purpose will be refunded.

All payments should be submitted through FACTS.

Tuition Policy 2022-2023

- I. Tuition and any applicable fees are due and payable in full on or before **July 1, 2022**, or you can select either the 3-installment plan or the 9-installment plan. The tuition payment plans are as follows (All fees are still due on July 1, 2022):
 - a. Three (3) equal tuition payments due 7/1/2022 10/1/2022, and 1/1/2023.
 - b. Nine (9) equal tuition payments due on the first day of each month July 2022 through March 2023.
- II. Tuition is payable through FACTS. Both the 3- and 9-payment plans include interest at the fixed rate of 7.5%.
 - a. To make payments, parents will set up a FACTS Tuition Management account.
 - b. Through their FACTS account, parents will pay by checking account (no fee incurred) or credit card (2.85% processing fee). Returned checks will incur a \$30 fee.

- III. **Delinquent Accounts**
- a. In the event parents fail to make tuition payments on dates specified in the agreed schedule of payment, such payment will bear interest at the fixed rate of 7.5% from the date upon which it is due until paid;
 - b. After-School Program and other school charges or fees are payable in full upon receipt of the bill or by the date specified. Any payment not made on the date specified will bear interest at the fixed rate of 7.5% from the date upon which it is due until paid;
 - c. School records or teacher recommendations/evaluations will not be forwarded to other schools until all past due tuition amounts or other school charges have been paid in full; and
 - d. Late payments may affect the ability to finance tuition in the future.
- IV. **Current Family** Re-Enrollment and Tuition Payment Agreements for the 2022-2023 academic school year were due by **February 11, 2022**, along with a \$750 non-refundable tuition deposit.
- a. Parents may cancel this agreement without penalty, except for forfeiture of the non-refundable Seven Hundred Fifty Dollar (\$750) deposit, by giving written notice to the school's business office by **March 25, 2022**. After that date, parents are obligated to pay tuition for the entire school year, and the payment will not be waived or refunded. Withdrawal prior to or during the 2022-2023 academic year does not relieve parents of the tuition payment obligation.
- V. **New Family** Enrollment and Tuition Payment Agreements for the 2022-2023 academic school year were due by **March 31, 2022** along with a \$750 non-refundable tuition deposit.
- a. Parents may cancel this agreement without penalty, except for forfeiture of the non-refundable Seven Hundred Fifty Dollar (\$750) deposit, by giving written notice to the school's business office on or before **March 31, 2022**. After that date, parents are obligated to pay tuition for the entire school year, and the payment will not be waived or refunded. Withdrawal prior to or during the 2022-2023 academic year does not relieve parents of the tuition payment obligation.
- VI. **Full-Year Obligation:** Parents agree to pay the full amount required by Tuition Payment Agreements as applicable to the grade of enrollment for the entire school year, without rebate for the student's withdrawal, provided that a pro rata tuition rebate will be granted by the school if withdrawal from the school is the result of (1) extended illness or (2) an unforeseen move of the student's family from the Houston area. The obligation for payment of the full amount of tuition is not divisible or severable by reason of selection of a 3- or 9-installation payment schedule.
- VII. Families with more than one child enrolled in the school will receive a tuition discount of 10% for each younger sibling.
- VIII. All exceptions to the tuition payment policy must be approved by the Head of School.

Note: A \$750 non-refundable tuition deposit is due **every February** for each student re-enrolling for the following academic school year.

Tuition Assistance

To apply for consideration in the first round of the Archdiocesan scholarship fund, parents may complete the FACTS application found online at www.stcathmont.org under the Parents tab by the February 2023 deadline. This application *automatically* applies you to the St. Catherine's Montessori Tuition Assistance Program.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

St. Catherine's Montessori attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. All faculty and staff are trained in CPR and first aid. Additionally, there is a school clinic with a health care coordinator on staff. Emergency drills are practiced throughout the year in accordance with our Crisis Management Plan.

Surveillance Cameras

In an effort to help to enhance school safety and security of all individuals using St. Catherine's Montessori facilities, surveillance cameras are installed. Cameras are not placed in areas where students, staff, or community members have a reasonable expectation of privacy. Our goals are to promote and foster a safe and secure teaching and learning environment, and to diminish the potential for loss or destruction of property.

Use of School Grounds and Facilities

The use of school grounds and facilities is for the St. Catherine's Montessori community only, unless otherwise approved by the Head of School.

Asbestos Information

St. Catherine's Montessori is an asbestos-free school.

Non-Smoking Policy

St. Catherine's Montessori is a smoke-free building. Smoking is prohibited in the building and on the campus grounds.

Mandated Reporting of Abuse/Neglect

School administration will refer all cases of physical and/or sexual abuse to Child Protective and Regulatory Services within 24 hours of notification, as is our legal responsibility. These professional experts will give direction for further action regarding student safety in or out of school.

Required Immunizations

Texas law requires that students be fully immunized against specific diseases. St. Catherine's Montessori complies with the State of Texas Immunization requirements. Up-to-date immunization health records from a doctor's office are required to be returned to the school by **July 22, 2022**. The only exception is medical exemption. The Archdiocese does not allow for moral conscience exemption.

A schedule of required immunizations can be found at the following link:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/default.shtm>. Please read the schedules carefully.

A student may be provisionally enrolled provided they demonstrate evidence that they have begun and continue necessary immunizations as rapidly as is medically feasible.

Medical Contraindications

Exclusions from compliance to health policies are allowable on an individual basis for medical contraindications only. The child or student must present a certificate signed and dated by a physician licensed to practice medicine in the

United States and include their license number. This certificate must be renewed every year for the exclusion to remain in effect, unless a lifelong condition is specified.

Annual Student Screenings

Tuberculosis Screening

A completed Student TB Questionnaire is required for all students every school year. This form is distributed during the summer with other required forms and is available on the FACTS Family Portal in the Resource Documents section.

Vision and Hearing Test

Four-year olds; five-year olds; students in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9; first time entrants; and those with questionable vision/hearing problems must have a hearing and vision test during the course of the year.

Scoliosis (Spinal) Screening

All children in grades 6 and 9 must have a spinal screening. Exemption is granted only upon submission of a physician diagnosis.

Acanthosis Nigricans (AN) Screening

All children in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7 must have a screening for Acanthosis Nigricans. AN is a skin condition that signals high insulin levels in the body and serves as a risk indicator for Type 2 diabetes.

According to Texas State Law, vision and hearing, scoliosis, and Acanthosis Nigricans screenings are required for all school children in the state of Texas. If you do not wish for St. Catherine's Montessori to administer the above screenings, you may select a health care provider of your choice. However, you must notify the health care coordinator's and submit a copy of screening results to St. Catherine's Montessori at clinic@stcathmont.org by October 3, 2022.

Allergies

If your child suffers from food allergies, you are required to complete a Health Care Plan for Food and Life-Threatening Allergies as well as inform your child's guide and the school's health care coordinator. This form is distributed during the summer with other required forms and is available on the FACTS Family Portal under Resource Documents.

Food allergies in a classroom that require special accommodations will be communicated by the health care coordinator. Please honor any food restrictions in your child's class.

Nut Allergy Policy

St. Catherine's Montessori has the following policy regarding nuts: While every effort will be made to follow these guidelines to keep children safe from allergens, St. Catherine's cannot guarantee that a child will not be exposed to a potentially hazardous or life-threatening allergen.

The following procedures will be enforced regarding nut safety:

1. Children with known nut allergies may be admitted to St. Catherine's. They may attend classes when the following conditions are met:

- a. A Health Care Plan for Food and Life-Threatening Allergies is completed by a medical specialist (at least annually) and on file in the clinic.
 - b. An EpiPen (if required) is delivered to the school (along with completed and signed authorization form).
2. It is the duty of the parents of a minor child to inform the school of a nut allergy.
3. If a parent becomes aware at any time during enrollment that their child has a nut allergy, it is the duty of the parent to notify the school immediately. After the school has been notified, the parents have at least 5 days to meet the following conditions:
 - a. A Health Care Plan for Food and Life-Threatening Allergies is completed by a medical specialist (at least annually) and on file in the clinic.
 - b. An EpiPen (if required) is delivered to the school (along with completed and signed authorization form).
4. In All Classrooms:
 - a. Every classroom is nut-aware, and students may not bring or consume foods or beverages containing nuts while at school.
 - b. Snack and lunch items containing nuts will not be allowed in the classroom.
 - c. Parents of other children in the class will be notified about specific products that may cause serious to life-threatening allergic reactions to students within the classroom.
 - d. If a child does come with a lunch item containing nuts, every effort will be made to ensure that contact with the nut-allergic child is not made.
 - e. All classes will have the policy of children washing their hands thoroughly before and after lunch.
 - f. All classes will educate the children on allergies and not sharing food with their classmates.
5. All staff will be trained once a year in the use of EpiPens and on the signs/symptoms of an allergic reaction.
6. The After-School Program is nut-aware, and all children attending may not bring or consume food containing nuts while participating in the program.
7. Food brought to school for special occasions must be nut free, and parents must read labels of packaged foods to ensure they do not contain nuts and were not manufactured on equipment that processes nuts. Homemade food needs to be prepared avoiding cross contamination and labeled with a list of ingredients. Unlabeled homemade items and store-bought items labeled, “may contain nuts” or “manufactured on equipment that processes nuts” will not be served.

If Your Child is Ill

Communicable diseases spread rapidly in a school environment, and we do our best to protect students, employees, and families from illness. It is imperative that every family conduct a daily assessment to determine whether their child is well enough to attend school. If they are not, parents are required to keep them at home.

A child having one or more of the following symptoms at school will be sent home:

- Fever 100.0 degrees or above
- Chills
- Sore Throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Suspected contagious disease
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Does not feel well enough to participate in usual school activities
- Lice

If your child has any of the above symptoms in the morning before school, **they may not come to school**. If a child is absent, please contact the health care coordinator at clinic@stcathmont.org to inform us of the nature of the absence and receive guidance on when your child may return to school. If the child sees a physician, please provide a “return to school” note from your child’s physician prior to returning to school.

Please inform the school of any communicable disease your child’s doctor confirms, including COVID-19, conjunctivitis (“pink eye”), hand foot and mouth, flu, strep throat, scarlet fever, fifth disease, measles, German measles, mumps, or head lice. The health care coordinator will then confidentially notify your child’s class. Your child will remain anonymous. A child may not return to school until the child is symptom-free without medication (e.g., Tylenol, Advil, anti-diarrhea) for 24 hours. This includes a temperature of 100 degrees or above, diarrhea and/or vomiting.

In the case of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, St. Catherine’s will follow CDC guidance regarding return to school protocols and timelines and communicate the appropriate steps to families.

In the case of lice, the child may return when they are nit-free. The child must be checked by the health care coordinator before returning to class.

Medication Policy

If your child needs medicine during the school day, it may not be sent in a lunchbox or backpack. Parents must submit a completed Medication Permission Form signed by your child’s physician and provide the medication for the school to administer – prescription or non-prescription – following the protocols outlined below.

This includes Benadryl, Tylenol (Acetaminophen) or Motrin/Advil (Ibuprofen), cough drops, medicated creams, and any other over-the-counter medication. The Medication Permission Form is distributed during the summer with other required forms and is available on the FACTS Family Portal under Resource Documents. The Medication Permission Form must be signed by the student’s parents and physician. We will not administer medications without this form on file.

All necessary information (name of child, name of medication, frequency of administration, expiration date, etc.) must be on the medication container provided to the school. **Only the original prescription container will be accepted.** Non-prescription medication also must be in the **original** packaging. Please turn in medication to the clinic in the morning. Please try to work out a medication schedule with your doctor that would eliminate administration of the medication at school. No stock medications are kept on campus.

If your child suffers from asthma, severe allergies, diabetes, epilepsy or any other serious medical condition, St. Catherine’s Montessori wants to ensure that special procedures are followed to guarantee the best care for the child at school and during school functions. In August of each school year, parents will need to meet with the health care coordinator and provide doctor’s orders, health care plans, and completed medication forms. Please inform the health care coordinator about your child’s condition, and she will arrange and coordinate the meeting. For children with severe allergies, asthma or epilepsy, relevant Health Care Plans (distributed during the summer with other required forms and available on the FACTS Family Portal) are required.

If students are able to self-administer inhalers for asthma, the school requires that – on the Health Care Plan for Asthma – authorization is given by the health care provider that the student is able to self-carry and self-administer their inhaler. In addition, the school health care coordinator, guide, and coaches each need to be separately notified by the parents. Only rescue inhalers for the treatment of asthma may be carried by the child, all other medication needs to be stored in the clinic.

In case of any other emergency medication that requires storage in close proximity to the child (such as the classroom or gym), a duplicate medication needs to be in the clinic as a back-up. Parents will have to provide both medications.

School Counselor

St. Catherine's has a counselor on staff to support students when personal or social concerns arise that affect the student's learning experience. Students and parents may request counseling support through their classroom guide or by contacting the school counselor, Sandra Espinosa, MSSW, at sespinosa@stcathmont.org. Alternatively, a guide may recommend to a parent that their child seek this service. Scheduling will be coordinated between the guide and counselor.

Students and parents should be aware that conversations with the counselor may be privileged and confidential unless the nature of the communication reveals the immediate or imminent risk of harm to the student or others, or a violation of child abuse laws. Under those circumstances, the counselor will be required to report such communications to law enforcement or child abuse authorities.

In addition, if a student observes or receives information that another student may be struggling with personal issues or has concerns that a student may harm themselves or others, we ask that the student report such information to the counselor.

MANAGING BEHAVIOR

Because the child has many freedoms in a Montessori environment, self-discipline is essential in maintaining a productive classroom. The Montessori philosophy is based on order and self-discipline, and these concepts are incorporated in the lessons presented.

The child is responsible for integrating self-discipline into their daily tasks and for their own behavior. When we work with children exhibiting difficult behavior, the child is presented with alternatives to improve behavior, understanding that our responsibility as guides is to the child, as well as the other members of the group. Our goal is to support the child in recognizing that they have choices to make not only in their activities, but also in relation to behavior. Guidance can take several forms depending on the particular level of behavior and our knowledge of the child concerned.

Parents and students are expected to conduct themselves – whether inside or outside school, or at sponsored activities – in a manner befitting the stated philosophy, expected behaviors, and reputation of a Catholic school. Unacceptable behavior subverts the mission of Catholic education and threatens the educational experience and well-being of all affected persons.

Whether occurring inside or outside the school, when behavior jeopardizes the safe environment of the school, or is contrary to Gospel values, the student, staff member, volunteer, or parent can be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including expulsion, revocation of the volunteer's services, or being asked to withdraw their student(s) from the school.

While on campus to attend special events, students are expected to exercise the same level of self-discipline and respect for other students and their school environment. **We ask that parents help their children exhibit respectful behaviors when attending special events on campus as a family.**

Protocols for Threats to Harm Self and Others

St. Catherine's takes all threats to harm self or others seriously. In all instances, the Head of School and parents will be notified. In some instances, the student may be removed from school until the appropriate mental health and/or disciplinary response can be determined.

Threat to Harm Self

If a student threatens to harm themselves, before they are allowed to return to school St. Catherine's will ensure the following:

1. Parents have obtained a signed letter from the treating mental health professional that states the student is not a danger to themselves or others. The signed letter should be on the treating professional's letterhead.
2. Parents have signed a release allowing the school to directly communicate with the treating mental health professional. Parents may not opt out of this requirement. An action plan might be included with the letter to outline steps that will assist the student at school upon their return.
3. Parents have agreed to adhere to the treatment or action plan (if one is put in place).
4. Parents have agreed to allow the student to meet with the school counselor.

Threat to Harm Others

This situation involves two components of response:

- a. Mental health response with the school counselor
- b. Disciplinary response with the Head of School

The response will include the following, as appropriate:

1. The student who is alleged to have made the threat will be removed from the classroom and placed under supervision of an adult at all times. If there is an active and dangerous situation, the school will call 911.
2. Separately, the school will collect information from students who may have overheard the threat – in writing (if age appropriate).
3. Separately, the school will collect information from the student who is alleged to have made the threat in – writing (if age appropriate).
4. The Catholic Schools Office will assist the Head of School in determining appropriate next steps.

Use of Controlled Substances

St. Catherine's Montessori adheres to the Archdiocesan policy, stated below, regarding the use of controlled substances.

The use and unlawful possession of illicit drugs and alcohol is wrong and harmful. A student is subject to removal from class, which may result in suspension, expulsion, or referral for prosecution if, while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, there is question of:

- Chemical substance use, possession for consumption, sale or dispensing of illegal drugs and narcotics (hard or soft drugs, alcohol, inhalers, marijuana, or a controlled substance)
- Acting under the influence of an illegal drug, alcohol, narcotic, marijuana, or a controlled substance
- Medication misuse or over dosage
- Giving medication, prescribed or over the counter, to another student

The school health care coordinator and Head of School should work together with the student and family towards bringing about a complete recovery and elimination of the drug abuse for the student involved.

When removing a student from class, for the reasons stated above, the Head of School should:

- Report the incident to the superintendent of Catholic schools
- Notify parent(s)/guardian(s) immediately and request a conference
- Notify authorities when appropriate

After the conference with the parent and student, the student may be suspended for a period of three (3) days or expelled. During this time, it is recommended that the parents enroll in family therapy with the student, as suggested by the Head of School, a family physician, or the Archdiocesan office. At the completion of the suspension, the student will return to school with a contract to continue the therapy until the therapist feels a complete recovery has been made.

Harassment/Bullying

St. Catherine's Montessori seeks to be a community in which every individual is treated with respect following Catholic values and Montessori principles consistent with our mission. St. Catherine's is dedicated to fostering an environment that promotes grace and courtesy, kindness, and acceptance, and embraces differences among individuals. Therefore, the school will not tolerate any type of harassment or bullying by a student, employee, or any third party (including vendors, contractors, donors, volunteers, parents, and visitors). Students should be aware that their off-campus behavior is also covered under this policy, regardless of when and where the conduct occurred or who was affected by the student's inappropriate behavior. Harassment is broadly defined to include unreasonable conduct or behavior that is personally offensive or threatening, impairs morale, or interferes with the educational environment of students and includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, comments, teasing, and other offensive conduct relating to race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, or disability. Harassment also includes sexual harassment.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Demanding sexual favors
- Requests for pictures of a sexual nature
- Taking, sending, or posting images of a sexual nature without consent
- Spreading lies or information about another individual's sexual activity
- Coercing sexual activity by threat of punishment or offer of reward
- Obscene or sexually suggestive graffiti
- Displaying or sending pornographic pictures or objects
- Offensive touching, pinching, grabbing, kissing, or hugging
- Restraining someone's movement in a sexual way
- Sexual or lewd jokes, remarks, leering, whistling, brushing against the body, or other suggestive or insulting gestures or comments about another's body
- Intimidating or suggestive remarks about an individual's sexual orientation, whether actual or implied

Examples of other forms of harassment based on race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, or disability include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive, intimidating, or inappropriate comments, postings, or conduct relating to race, ethnicity, or color (using racial slurs, racial or ethnic jokes, comments, name calling based on race or ethnicity, etc.)
- Offensive, intimidating, or inappropriate comments, postings, or conduct, teasing or joking about another person's disability, failure to speak English clearly, religious background, clothing, or beliefs, or similar behaviors

Bullying includes a variety of behaviors, but all involve a person or group trying to take advantage of the power they have to hurt or reject someone else. These behaviors can be carried out physically (hitting, kicking, pushing); verbally (calling names, taunting, teasing, threatening, ridiculing, spreading rumors, etc.); electronically (sometimes called “cyber-bullying” – posting defamatory remarks or photos, sending threatening emails, creating fake profiles, taking over an account and posting as someone else); through relational aggression (harming or threatening to harm relationships or acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion); or emotional aggression (teasing, threatening, intimidating others).

It is important to note that not all aggressive behavior is bullying. Some children, without the intention or awareness that it causes distress, may exhibit behaviors that appear to be bullying. Some individuals may feel they are being bullied, even when there is no intention from others to cause distress. However, all perceptions of bullying will be taken seriously.

We need to know whenever anyone at school makes your child feel uncomfortable. In that regard, you should remind your child that it is not nice or permitted to call other students by mean names or to tease them in ways that are hurtful. It is also not nice or permitted to grab or touch another student’s “private parts,” to pull down or look up another child’s clothing, or to intentionally open the door on a student who is using the bathroom. You should explain that your child should not engage in these types of hurtful behaviors when your child talks, writes, draws, or plays with other children.

Bullying or harassment can occur through any type of communications method, including face-to-face communications, phone, text, email, postings on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, GroupMe, etc.), camera phones, or other forms of technology. The communications can be direct or indirect, such as through friends or others. Any type of offensive conduct, whether on or off campus, on a school bus, online or at a school-related event, can create an uncomfortable school environment.

It is the responsibility of all members of the St. Catherine’s community to ensure that their words, actions, and interactions with others always reflect the intent to promote respect and trust. Attempts to justify behavior as a “prank” or “joke” do not change its harassing or bullying nature if the object of the joke or prank is not a willing participant. Whatever the basis for the harassment or bullying, it is prohibited.

All concerns relating to harassment or bullying should be reported immediately to the administration. We also expect that anyone, whether student, faculty, staff, or family member who witnesses, or has knowledge of an incident of bullying or harassment, will report the incident to the administration. Delays in reporting may compromise the school’s ability to appropriately investigate.

When the school administration becomes aware of harassment or bullying, the situation will be promptly investigated. Any student found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal from school for serious violations, even in the case of a single expression, act, or gesture. Conduct need not meet the legal definition of harassment or bullying to violate the school’s expectations for appropriate behavior and be actionable. No adverse action will be taken against any person who makes a good faith report of harassment or bullying. Retaliation in any form against anyone for making a complaint under this policy or for participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Any retaliation should also be reported pursuant to this policy and is itself a cause for disciplinary action.

Factors that will be considered for determining the appropriate intervention by the school include consideration of the following:

1. Age and developmental level of the parties involved
2. Degree of harm
3. Nature, severity, and history of behavior

Interventions that the school may use include, in order of severity:

- Restorative communication, such as conflict resolution, problem solving, skill training, and counseling options
- Meeting with parents
- Temporary removal from conflict environment
- Withdrawal or expulsion

The school reserves the right to use some, none, or all of these interventions in its discretion.

Common questions for assessing school bullying, harassment, or threats:

- What is the motivation of the threat-maker and the credibility of the threat?
- Was there any cause(s) to elicit a threat?
- Could the threat-maker have the means (access to the tools) and the capability to carry out the threat?

In the case of bullying, harassment, or threats, the school shall act as follows:

- Promptly investigate the allegations of harassment, bullying, or threats
- Initiate appropriate corrections of the conditions causing such harassment, bullying, or threats
- Identify and enact a plan of action to prevent the reoccurrence of harassment, bullying, or threats
- Schedule a mandatory conference with the student and parents as deemed necessary and timely
- If the action continues, place student in Out-of-school Suspension or expulsion as determined by the administration
- Maintain appropriate measures to provide confidentiality in the process

Parental Code of Conduct

As a partnership, our parents understand the importance of a good working relationship. For these reasons we continually welcome and encourage parents to participate in the life of our school. To truly create the best outcomes for children requires the relationship between home and school to be based on the principles of care, integrity, trust, and mutual respect. The maintenance of this relationship is important to ensure that children are safe and not open to undue distress and anxiety caused by anyone. Appropriate conduct on school grounds by everyone is central to ensuring we achieve this goal. Our administration, faculty, staff, and students work to a Code of Conduct and this document is intended to provide similar principles for parents.

General Principles

Communication

Parents will use courteous and acceptable written and spoken language in all communications with students, faculty, staff, and other parents and members of the school community. No profane, insulting, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language may be used.

Ethical Conduct

Parents will act in the best interests of students, their families, and faculty/staff members. They will not engage in malicious or judgmental gossip and should ensure that anything they say about others is fair and truthful. Disruptive, threatening, or illegal behavior by a parent may result in barring the parent from campus, or in the expulsion of their student(s).

Expulsion

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter, and generally every other possible solution will have been explored with the student and their parents prior to taking action.

A student's continued enrollment at St. Catherine's will be subject to meeting the school's scholastic and behavioral standards. If any student fails to meet these standards, and if the Head of School believes that continued enrollment of the student is not in the best interest of the student or the school, immediate expulsion may take place for serious offenses in the discretion of the Head of School, including, for example, when a student or parent:

- Brings, sells, or distributes harmful substances on school property
- Has a weapon on their person or in their possession anywhere on school campus, including the parking lot, and/or at any school event
- Engages in assault that results in serious physical injury to another student or any school personnel
- Commits persistent acts of incorrigible behavior
- Exhibits continued verbal or physically threatening behavior

Administration, faculty, and staff will exercise professional judgment and strive to address each situation fairly and consistently.

GRIEVANCES

The purpose of this process is to provide students and parents of students enrolled in St. Catherine's Montessori with an orderly procedure for the equitable and prompt resolution of complaints. This process is intended to resolve disputes at the lowest possible level in a cooperative, conciliatory Christian atmosphere and not intended to be adversarial in nature. No person shall be discriminated against because of filing or participating in this complaint process; and no reprisals of any kind shall be taken against any person because of participation in this complaint process.

General Principles

- Complaints must be fully described by the person with the grievance.
- Each person involved should be heard.
- The person(s) against whom the grievance/complaint is made should have the opportunity and be given a reasonable time to put their side of the story before resolution is attempted.

Procedures

Level One

A student or their parent shall meet with the person with whom they are having a dispute. If the matter is not then settled satisfactorily, the complainant shall follow the guidelines outlined in Level Two.

Level Two

The parent shall state their complaint in writing, setting forth the nature of the complaint, all relevant details, and the remedy sought. The following procedure shall then be utilized:

- The written grievance shall be submitted to the Head of School within five (5) working days following the informal resolution/conciliation.
- The Head of School will meet with the grieving party within five (5) working days following receipt of the written grievance to hear such grievance and any other information that the Head of School deems relevant.
- Following the meeting, the Head of School may conduct a meeting between the grieving party and the individual to whom the grievance is filed against to resolve the issues.
- The Head of School shall issue a written decision within five (5) working days of the meeting or within a reasonable amount of time. The Head of School's decision is final.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Any member of the school community, including Board members, employees, students, volunteers, and parents, who has a concern regarding violations of the school's policies, suspected violations of law or regulations that govern the school's operations, financial improprieties, or fraud (including accounting and auditing matters), or the failure of any Board member, employee, student or volunteer of the school to perform their duties honestly and with integrity should follow one of the following procedures:

1. Head of School: A person wishing to raise a concern that does not involve the Head of School or a Board member should contact the Head of School.
2. Board Representative: If the concern involves the Head of School or a Board member, the concern should be submitted to the Board President or the Vice President of the Board of Directors.

Review of Concerns

How concerns are reviewed depends on the subject of the concern:

1. For concerns involving personnel or student/parent matters not involving the Head of School or a Board member, the Head of School will review the concern, conduct an investigation as appropriate, and respond to the person reporting the concern if that person has identified themselves.
2. For concerns involving the Head of School or a Board member, the Board President or the Vice President of the Board will review the concern and conduct an investigation as appropriate.
3. For concerns involving financial improprieties or fraud, the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors will review the concern and conduct an investigation as appropriate. If a member of the Finance Committee is implicated in the concern in any way, that member will recuse themselves from consideration of the concern.

Confidentiality

Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation, comply with applicable law, and for the school to make a determination with regard to the reported violation.

TECHNOLOGY AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (TAUP)

For Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School Parents and Students

St. Catherine's Montessori is pleased to offer students access to technology resources for educational purposes, which may include computer hardware and software licensed to the school. To gain access to the technology resources, each year all students must obtain parental permission as verified by the signatures on the Technology Agreement and Permission Form included with this handbook. Should a parent prefer that a student not have email and Internet access, use of the computer is still possible for more traditional purposes such as word processing.

Email and Internet Access

St. Catherine's students are assigned a school email address beginning in Upper Elementary. Access to the Internet and email will enable students to explore libraries, databases, museums, and other repositories of information, and to exchange personal communication with other Internet users around the world.

Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. While the purpose of the school is to use Internet resources for constructive

educational goals, students may find ways to access other materials. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet outweigh the disadvantages. Ultimately, however, parents of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Therefore, we support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not to allow access.

What Is Expected?

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network just as they are in a classroom or on a school playground. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. It is expected that users will comply with Archdiocesan standards and the specific rules set forth below. The use of technology resources is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for their own actions in accessing and utilizing the school's technology resources. The students are expected never to access, keep, or send anything that they would not want their parents or guides to see.

What Are the Rules of Appropriate Use?

Personal Safety and Personal Privacy

Students will not post personal contact information about themselves. Personal contact information includes home address, telephone number, etc. This information may not be provided to an individual, organization or company, including websites that solicit personal information.

Social Networking

Accessing social networking websites, blogs, video sites (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, GroupMe, Instagram, Twitch, TikTok, Clubhouse, Discord, etc.), except those used for educational purposes, is off-limits on school devices. The use of circumventors to get around school network security is prohibited.

St. Catherine's Montessori expects Elementary, Adolescent Community, and High School students to use the Internet for its educational potential, but to be careful of its many traps and opportunities for unhealthy and dangerous activity. We care about the safety and reputation of all of our students, families and friends. **The following must always be avoided:**

- Offensive and vulgar language
- Attacking a peer's character or that of anyone on the faculty/staff of the school
- Cruelty toward others, bully, harassment, assault, racial slurs, threats and demeaning comments, including terrorist threats

When websites created and maintained by our students mention the school's name or that of any student or employee, current or former, or use the school logo, the school can and must hold the student responsible for the content.

The school may take the following actions:

- Call the student in for a conference to request that they modify their website and/or take the school's name and/or logo off the website
- Communicate with a student's parents about any inappropriate material on a student's website
- If the student will not cooperate with the school administration as to making their website free of anything that would cause harm to them and to their reputation and/or the reputation of the school, disciplinary action will be taken until compliance is heeded

Illegal Copying

Students should never download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks. Nor should students copy other people's work or intrude into other people's files. The download/upload of any material in violation of any U.S., State, Board, Archdiocesan, or school policy is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted materials, threatening, violent or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret.

Inappropriate Materials or Language

No profane, abusive, or impolite language is allowed, nor should materials be accessed which are not in line with the rules of school behavior. Use of technology resources for gambling, chain letter communication, unauthorized email, chat or instant message, blogs, and discussion forums is also prohibited. Should students encounter inappropriate material by accident, they should report it to their guide immediately. Use of cell phones or smart phones to transmit unacceptable language and/or images that are harmful to self, other students, and/or other people is prohibited.