

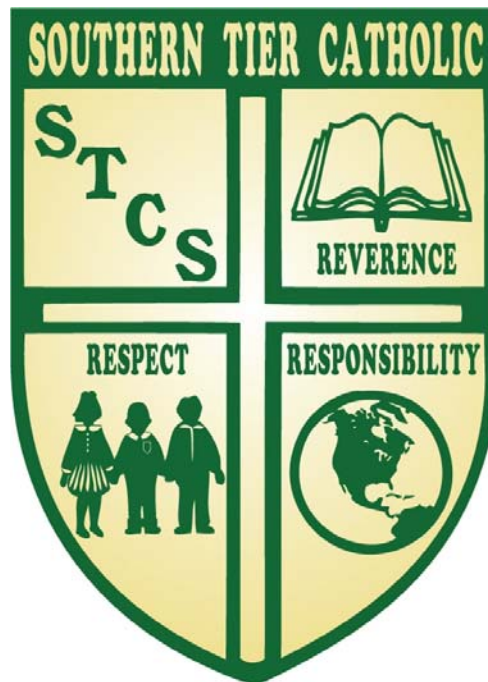
# SOUTHERN TIER CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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## PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK Revised 2009



This handbook of practices and policies for Southern Tier Catholic School of the Diocese of Buffalo is a readily available summary to increase your understanding of the basic principles of our Christian Education.

The regulations contained in this handbook are modeled after diocesan guidelines and school established policies, and are expected to be followed in our school.

After familiarizing yourself and your child with the pertinent information in the Parent-Student Handbook, please complete the compliance form which accompanies this book and return it to the school. Southern Tier Catholic School appreciates your cooperation in this matter. We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for the privilege of assisting you in the total education of your children. We welcome this responsibility.

## **SOUTHERN TIER CATHOLIC SCHOOL HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 3  | Welcome to Southern Tier Catholic School   |
| 4  | Our Mission  |
| 5  | Philosophy of Southern Tier Catholic School  |
| 6  | General Information  |
| 7  | Dismissal; Registration; Emergency Forms   |
| 8  | Visitors Policy; Emergency School Closing; Uniform/Dress Code; Lavatory Rules                                  |
| 9  | Electronic Devices; Bicycles; Damage or Loss of Textbooks; Extra Programs<br>Tuition Payments; Fire Inspection |
| 10 | Graduation Ceremonies; Insurance; First Aid/Medications; Picture Release Form                                  |
| 11 | Fieldtrips, Computer Usage Policy; Registration  |
| 12 | Non-Discrimination Policy; School Hours; Lunch periods; School records; Sports                                 |
| 13 | Transfer procedure; Transportation; Tuition Policy   |
| 14 | Our Curriculum   |
| 15 | Christian Teaching of Human Sexuality; Academics; Physical Education; Chorus                                   |
| 16 | Testing Program; Final Examinations; Standardized Testing; NYS Tests   |
| 17 | Student Evaluation Reports; Cheating/Passing Notes; Progress Reports   |
| 18 | Report Cards; Grading; Exemption from Foreign Language; Homework   |
| 19 | Promotion Standards; Retention; Criteria for Retention   |
| 20 | Authority of Teachers and Personnel; Student Behavior  |
| 21 | Generally Unacceptable Behavior; Probation; Suspension; Discipline Infractions                                 |
| 22 | Approved Disciplinary Actions; Search and Seizure  |
| 23 | Safety; Dismissal (Expulsion)  |
| 24 | School Board of Trustees   |
| 25 | Home School Association; Parent Involvement  |
| 26 | Parent/Student Handbook Compliance Form  |

## **WELCOME TO SOUTHERN TIER CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**Its mission is to provide a foundation for Christian living by integrating and nurturing faith through teaching and example and thereby becoming an extension of the teaching mission of the Roman Catholic Church. Southern Tier Catholic School is a Christ-centered community which stimulates academic excellence and emphasizes family values and respect of self and others all in an atmosphere of kindness, love and understanding. We are committed to balancing physical, spiritual, intellectual and social growth for our students so that they mature into responsible, self-disciplined citizens; developing and supporting a dynamic faculty and staff comprised of dedicated professionals; providing a physical facility conducive to reaching our goals, encouraging parental involvement of time and talent; continually developing and evaluating decisions, options and actions consistent with this mission, these values and beliefs.**

**Southern Tier Catholic School offers a high-quality education with a curriculum that adheres to both New York State and diocesan guidelines and offers excellence in Catholic education for children in grades Pre-kindergarten (3 & 4 year olds) through eighth grade. The core curriculum begins with reading, writing and mathematics. Social studies, science and language arts are also offered at each grade. It is, however, the variety of special classes that makes the educational difference at Southern Tier Catholic School: Spanish, Music, Art, Physical Education, Technology, Health, Library and Latin.**

**Religious education is also an integral part of our balanced curriculum at Southern Tier Catholic School. Our religious education program provides for the spiritual growth and development of each child by emphasizing fundamental truths of the Catholic Faith, the understanding of Scripture, the celebration of the Liturgy and Sacraments, and daily experience of living as Christians. These are made possible through daily prayer and religion classes including a Christian Family Life course. The students actively plan and participate in liturgies, paraliturgies, prayer and Reconciliation services. They are encouraged to develop community service projects.**

**Our New York State certified faculty is dedicated to the total education of the young child. They take pride in creating a classroom atmosphere of love and mutual respect where learning can take place. Children can feel secure in their surroundings, knowing that the classroom is an extension of the values taught in the home. The dedicated faculty employs a wide variety of teaching styles to motivate and prepare their students for success in their future challenges.**

**Southern Tier Catholic School students can also participate in enrichment and sports activities. We offer a hot school lunch program and a Before and After School program for those children who need supervised care before 8:00 a.m. and after school until 5:15 weekdays. Bus transportation can be arranged for families through their local school district.**

**Southern Tier Catholic School – a school to believe in!**

## **OUR MISSION**

Southern Tier Catholic School is a Roman Catholic institution with Catholic Doctrine as the base of its curriculum. Its mission is to provide a high quality of education in this tradition.

Southern Tier Catholic School stresses Catholic Values and Christian Community as a lived experience.

In light of this priority, all dimensions of the school (administration, faculty, students and families) make every effort to bring to reality the following:

1. A deep reverence for the unique giftedness of each person.
2. An appreciation of the traditions of all ethnic cultures with an expectation of mutual respect.
3. An environment that provides character development and responsible citizenship.
4. A policy of effective social action which is intended to bring about peace and justice in the larger community.
5. A place of stability in a challenging world.

## ***PHILOSOPHY OF SOUTHERN TIER CATHOLIC SCHOOL***

As a Christian institution, we are committed to the teachings of the Catholic Church, to prepare students to respond in faith to Jesus Christ and to understand His Message to follow moral standards of conduct, and to achieve integrity of character.

We intend to develop the uniqueness of each child by providing an atmosphere of learning and growth through spiritual, academic, aesthetic and social experiences in accordance with our mission statement.

We strive to establish a Christian Community among teachers, parents and students that will provide a warm, enjoyable and productive learning atmosphere.

To this end, the following goals have been formulated for the students entrusted to our care:

### **TO UNDERSTAND THE RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH BY:**

- Demonstrating command of the basic concepts inherent in Christ's teachings;
  - Learning the history of the Catholic Church;
  - Integrating Catholic religious truths and values into everyday living;
  - Understanding the meaning and importance of prayer in daily life

### **TO ACCOMPLISH THE ACADEMIC GOALS OF THE CURRICULUM BY:**

- Students demonstrating competency in challenging subject matter.

### **TO DEMONSTRATE GOOD CHARACTER AND SELF RESPECT BY:**

- Valuing self as a child of God with basic human rights and corresponding ethical responsibilities;
  - Disciplining self to work, study, and play constructively;
- Obeying rules of society and where those rules are in need of change, endeavoring to bring about change;
  - Instilling an appreciation of the tradition of each ethnic culture.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **Attendance/Arrival:**

The Education Law of the State of New York requires minors between the ages of 6 and 16 to be in attendance at an approved school for a full time day instruction. Regular, punctual attendance is fundamental to all school programs. Parental cooperation is requested so that only illness or an emergency will prevent attendance. The following procedure must be followed when your child will be absent and/or tardy:

- a. Parent notifies the school of the absence/tardiness.
- b. Students who are tardy MUST report to the office.
- c. A written excuse MUST be completed by the parent giving specific reason for absence/tardiness within 2 days of the actual occurrence. If an excuse is not received within the 2 days, the absence is recorded as unexcused.
- d. A note must be submitted to the school office when a student is going to be released early. The parent or guardian must come to the school office and sign out the student.

Punctual and regular attendance is very important. New York State Education Law requires student attendance each school day, except for the following reasons:

1. Sickness
  2. Death in Family
  3. Inclement Weather (Please listen to local radio station WPIG 95.7 FM, or closings on television stations 2, 4 and 7). *NOTE: If the Olean School District is closed due to inclement weather, Southern Tier Catholic School will also be closed.*
  4. Religious Observance
  5. Required Court Appearance
- 
- A. Students may begin arriving at school at 7:00 a.m., and must report to the flex room immediately. Students will obey school rules of conduct, show respect and obey adult monitors. These students will be sent to their homeroom at 7:45 a.m. At 8:00 a.m. a bell will ring which indicates the start of the school day. All students are expected to be in their homerooms by this time. Announcements will begin at 8:10 a.m. Students should be quiet and attentive. Anyone arriving after 8:10 a.m. is considered tardy.
  - B. STCS provides a flex room staffed with faculty to supervise the children prior to school between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. The flex room is also provided to children after 2:20 p.m. dismissal who are waiting for an older sibling who is dismissed at 3:08 p.m.
  - C. Due to the amount of material that is taught during the school day, we stress the need for students to be present on a daily basis. Extended vacations during the academic year are considered illegal absences. Students will be required to obtain missed assignments **UPON THEIR RETURN.** Hands-on activities missed and covered on tests are still the responsibility of the student.

**Dismissal:**

- A. All students grades Pre-K(3) through Grade 5, will be dismissed in an orderly fashion by the Homeroom teacher at 2:20 p.m. Students in grades 6 through 8 are dismissed at 3:08 p.m.
- B. Students may attend the After Care program conducted in the Pre-K(4) classrooms after their dismissal from the regular school day. Homework assistance is provided as well as educational games and computer access.
- C. Students who require busing will exit the main door in the elementary wing to board these buses.
- D. Concerning the drop-off or pick-up of students from the building: In an effort to provide a safe environment for our students, we request the following:
  - 1. Please pick up students by 2:25; students will not be allowed to stand outside and wait for a ride. Any students not picked up by 2:30 p.m. will be escorted to the flex room or the After Care Program in the Pre-K 4 classroom. Children who are waiting for older siblings to be dismissed, may wait in the flex room until their parent/guardian arrives to take them home.
  - 2. Please instruct younger children that whoever picks them up will meet them at the building and will walk them to the car. If this is not possible because of an infant in the car, please designate that either an older child in the family or a friend from a higher grade should escort the younger ones to the car.
- D. If for a legitimate reason, you must leave the school before dismissal, parents/guardians must write a note for this excuse. The note is given to the homeroom teacher before school begins at 8:00 a.m. You must come to the office where the parent/guardian or authorized person must meet you and sign you out.
- E. If you become ill in school, you may not leave school without a parent/guardian or authorized adult. You will meet this person in the office where s/he will sign you out.
- F. For the above reasons and your general safety and protection, please make sure that all phone numbers, both home and emergency, are up-to-date and on file with the school. Be sure to notify the school of any change in telephone number(s).
- G. If there is any permanent or temporary change in a child's transportation arrangements; the school must be notified in writing (e.g. not taking the bus).

**Registration/Release of students:**

It is imperative that divorced or separated parents file a court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce/separation decree with the principal's office. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known or changes that may occur to the original decree.

**Emergency Forms:**

Parents will be asked at the beginning of each year to fill out Emergency Procedure information forms and return them promptly. These list the names of persons to be contacted in case of an injury or sudden illness. Under the law, schools may give nothing more than first aid treatment. Immediate notification of parents may be necessary when hospitalization or emergency medical care is required, or the school nurse is not on the premises.

**VISITORS: ALL VISITORS TO STCS ARE TO REPORT TO THE MAIN OFFICE IN THE ELEMENTARY WING UPON ENTERING THE BUILDING AND SIGN IN.(Elementary Wing door is clearly marked and to the far right of the main building doors).**

- A. Students are not permitted to have visitors on the school property at anytime during the school day, unless visitors have permission from the principal.
- B. **Parents are not to escort children to their classroom, if they are late.** This can be disruptive. Please bring the child to the office. Large items that the student may be unable to carry will be taken to the classroom for them.

**Emergency School Closing:**

A. **General Policies-** In the event of an emergency dismissal, children will be sent to their homeroom to await dismissal. Students will be dismissed through the elementary doors only. Parents or the individual designated to pick up the student should enter through the elementary doors. Student's parents will be notified. When possible, the media will be notified that the school is dismissing early. In the event the children are unable to leave the building at the end of the school day, school personnel will be responsible to provide for the children's health and safety.

B. **Weather** – The following procedure will be followed when school must close because of weather: Parochial schools close when the public schools of the Olean Public School District close. **PLEASE LISTEN TO 95.7 FM. THE CLOSINGS ARE ALSO ON CHANNELS 2, 4, AND 7.** For the safety of families and students, if the district in which the child resides is closed due to inclement weather, students do not have to attend school on that day.

C. **Illness** – Closing will be considered only when many teachers are absent due to illness and/or fifteen percent of the students are absent as a result of flu-like symptoms or other contagious illnesses.

**Uniform/Dress code:**

Please see separate appendix for code.

Noncompliance of the uniform-dress code will result in the following: A non-compliance report will be sent home with the student; After three non-compliance reports the following steps will be taken: 1.) the students will call their parent at work/home to bring the item necessary to be in compliance. 2.) The student will stay in the office until such time as the required item is brought to school or the student is taken home.

**Lavatory Rules:**

Proper use of bathroom facilities means respecting the property of the owner. Parents will be notified if their child is involved in deliberate damage of a bathroom and fair and equitable resolution will have to be reached by all involved.

**Electronic Devices:**

Cell phones, iPods and mp3 players are not permitted on students during school hours. They must be left in student's locker or in student's book bag in the off position. If students are found using these devices during school hours, the item will be removed from their possession and sent to the office for parental pick-up.

### **Bicycles:**

Children in Grades 4-8 are allowed to ride their bicycles to school with prior written permission from their parents. Children are to time themselves to arrive at school at the appropriate time.

### **Damage or Loss of School Textbooks:**

Each student is responsible for the textbooks that are assigned to him/her at the beginning of the school year. If damage occurs to a book (e.g. cover torn off, pages missing, etc.) that student will be held responsible and charged a fee for that book. Fees will vary according to the type and age of the book. No books will be turned over to the family, as they are the property of Southern Tier Catholic School or the public school district.

All damaged books must be paid for before the child receives his/her final report card.

### **Extra Programs:**

Guest speakers, field trips, and assemblies are among our enrichment activities. Teachers are encouraged to plan field trips for their class. A written permission slip **MUST BE SIGNED** by a parent or guardian for all field trips and returned to the teacher at the designated time. Vocal permission **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**. Drivers for local trips must fill out a Volunteer Drivers Form to be kept on file for a period of one year. Volunteers must also **be VIRTUS trained and current on their bulletins**. **VIRTUS** trainings are offered throughout the vicariate. Please contact the office for more information or go to [www.virtus.com](http://www.virtus.com) to register for a training session.

Any student that is failing in one or more subjects at the time of a major fieldtrip, (i.e. Eighth grade class trip) will not be allowed to attend the fieldtrip. They will be required to come to school in proper uniform for the length of the trip. If a parent does not want a student to attend a field trip, then that student must still attend school and study in the main office or in another classroom during the trip.

### **Tuition Payments:**

Southern Tier Catholic School uses the FACTS Tuition Management service for the collection of monthly tuition payments. Full payment of tuition, prior to September 12<sup>th</sup> may be made directly to the school office. Tuition information will be distributed yearly with registration materials.

### **Fire Inspection:**

Each year, the City of Olean Fire Department inspects the building to be sure we are in compliance with fire safety codes and regulations. A copy of the report is available in the main office.

### **Graduation Ceremonies:**

**Pre-Kindergarten 3 & 4:** Pre-Kindergarten will end their session in mid-June (date appears on school calendar) .

**Kindergarten:** Kindergarten will end their session with a program. This program will take place prior to the screening of next year's Kindergarten children. Parents will be notified of the date in advance as it appears on the school calendar.

**Eighth Grade:** June- after examinations

**Insurance:**

All students participating in the physical education and/or extra curricular athletic programs of the school are covered by the school's insurance.

All children are required to participate in physical education classes, unless excused by the family doctor. This excuse must be in written form and is to be kept on file.

**First Aid and Administration of Medicine:**

First Aid services are provided to all students by the nurse or school personnel, who have been trained in Basic First Aid and Adult/Child CPR. In cases of extreme emergency, 911 would be called along with the parents. New York State Education Guidelines state that oral medications, including Non-prescription (over-the-counter) drugs, may be administered by school personnel, if a parent submits a written request for medication administration on the appropriate form. The following procedure must be followed:

1. The child's physician must request in writing that a specific medication be given, prescribe the dose to be given, the time and duration of the treatment, and the reason for the medication to be given.
2. The parent should sign the request asking that school personnel give the medication.
3. The medication should be delivered directly to the office by the parent.
4. The medication must be clearly labeled with adequate instructions.
5. The medication will be kept in a secure place in the office.
6. Most antibiotics can be taken before and after school, at dinner, and bedtime. Ask your doctor to establish times that a medication can be taken at home instead of during the school day.

**Picture Release Form:**

During the school year, there may be opportunities to have your child's/ children's picture in the Olean Times Herald, school brochures , the S.T.C.S. newsletter, and on our STCS website. A permission slip will be sent to each home at the beginning of the school year, to obtain permission or denial of pictures.

**Fieldtrips:**

Medication that is taken by a student must be documented with the Nurse. When a class is taking a fieldtrip, day or extended **ALL MEDICATION, even over-the-counter, needs to have the proper forms filled out for the administrator who will be administering the medication on the trip.** This includes such items as Dramamine, aspirin, etc., as well as prescription drugs. Forms are available in the office. **No medication will be allowed on the trip if the forms are not completely filled out.**

**ALL FORMS MUST BE IN ONE (1) WEEK PRIOR TO THE ACTUAL DATE OF THE FIELDTRIP. THE SCHOOL NURSE MUST PROCESS ALL THE FORMS AND MAKE SURE THAT ALL THE MEDICATIONS ARE CLEARLY LABELED IN THE ORIGINAL PHARMACY BOX. ALL MEDICATION THAT IS NOT ABLE TO BE A SELF-MED RELEASE WILL NEED THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ADULT CHAPERONE TO CARRY/DISPENSE MEDICATIONS AS NECESSARY. IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE ALL OF THE APPROPRIATE FORMS TO THE NURSE BY THE APPROPRIATE TIME.**

**FOR CLASSES THAT WILL GO ON MULTIPLE TRIPS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR (i.e. EIGHTH GRADE CLASS TRIP) IT MAY BE TO YOUR BENEFIT TO HAVE THE DURATION OF TREATMENT STATED AS "ALL DAY FIELDTRIPS". THIS WOULD COVER ALL THE POSSIBILITIES.**

**Computer Usage Policy:**

A separate computer usage policy is provided annually to each family for each individual student who gains access to any of the school's computer systems. The technology awareness changes rapidly and a separate more detailed authorization is required before the student may gain access. The form is sent home the first week of the school year, and must be returned promptly.

**Registration:**

- A. Multi-age (3/4): Must be three before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year and potty trained. This program is not a preparation for Kindergarten.
- B. Pre-Kindergarten: To be admitted into Pre-K, a child must be four years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.
- C. Kindergarten: To be admitted into Kindergarten, a child must be five years of age on or before December 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.
- D. Requirements for admission to above programs also include:
  - 1. A birth certificate
  - 2. A record of immunization
  - 3. A current physical from the family physician
  - 4. A dental certificate for Pre-K(4) through Eighth grade
  - 5. Acceptance of responsibility for tuition payments and Home School Association agreement.

E. Grades 1-8: Registration is conducted on a first come, first serve basis with priority given to members of our Southern Tier Catholic School family. Registration will then be opened to anyone wishing to attend Southern Tier Catholic School. For all admissions the following must be met:

1. Presentation of birth certificate, immunization records, current physical and records from former school district.
2. Acceptance of responsibility for tuition payments.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:**

Southern Tier Catholic School, being a part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, New York, adheres to the Diocesan policy of non-discrimination as stated in section 4014 of the Elementary School Handbook.

**School Hours:**

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| PreK-3                     | 8:00 a.m. -10:45 a.m. (half day) or 8:00-2:25 p.m. (full day); Tardy after 8:10 a.m. |
| PreK-4                     | 8:00 a.m. -10:45 a.m. (half day) or 8:00-2:25 p.m. (full day); Tardy after 8:10 a.m. |
| Kindergarten through Gr. 5 | 8:00 a.m. – 2:25 p.m.; Tardy after 8:10 a.m.   |
| Grades 6-8                 | 8:00 a.m. – 3:08 p.m.; Tardy after 8:10 a.m.   |

**Lunch periods:**

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| PreK3 & PreK4        | 10:45-11:10 a.m. |
| Kindergarten & Gr. 1 | 11:00-11:25 a.m. |
| Gr. 2 & Gr. 3        | 11:05-11:30 a.m. |
| Gr. 4 & Gr. 5        | 11:15-11:40 a.m. |
| Gr. 6-8              | 11:35-12:05 p.m. |

**School Records:**

Consistent with the provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, official records, files and data directly related to their child(ren) are available to parents upon written request to the principal, and must be reviewed in his/her presence in the school office.

**Sports/Extracurricular Activities:**

Southern Tier Catholic School sponsors the following activities that foster students' service, cooperation, and teamwork in settings other than the classroom:

A. Interscholastic:

- Boys' Basketball
- Girls' Basketball

B. Additional activities and clubs may be provided at the discretion of the principal in consultation with the faculty. School activities that may take place include:

- Assemblies
- Spanish Club
- Craft Club (Grades K-8)
- Before and After School Program
- Science Fair
- Computer Classes
- Art Show
- Fire Prevention

- Christmas Concert
- Spring Concert
- Harvest Moon Festival
- Food Drives
- Student Council (Grades 5-8)
- Modified Sports

Boys and girls **are encouraged** to participate in Archbishop Walsh modified sports. All activities taking place outside of school hours require that parents give their permission and make provision for transportation to and from the activity.

**Transfer Procedure:**

The procedure for public school parents' request for their child to transfer to Southern Tier Catholic School is the following:

1. Contact office for an appointment with the principal, and meet with them.
2. Arrange to have all records sent to Southern Tier Catholic School from former school.
3. Have student's report card available.

When parents wish to transfer a student from the public school during the school year, or in the hope that Southern Tier Catholic School will promote a child that the public school has retained, it becomes Southern Tier Catholic School's responsibility to inform the parent that it is policy to honor the promotion and retention policy of other schools in the area. Also, admission after the first quarter will be determined after contacting the public school to discuss discipline/grades with the principal/guidance office.

In transferring pupils from Southern Tier Catholic School, parents are expected to follow these procedures:

- Discuss the reason for the transfer with the principal and complete an exit survey
- Obtain report card of the student
- Sign a release for academic and health records to be sent to the receiving school
- Pay tuition balance in full and for any lost/damaged books

**Transportation:**

Children from outlying districts receive bus transportation through their school district. Parents must request bus service before April 1<sup>st</sup> for the coming school year. Forms are sent home in registration packets. For the safety of families and students, if the district in which the child resides is closed due to inclement weather, students do not have to attend school on that day.

**Tuition Policy:**

In order to educate each child, it is necessary to compute the cost per student according to the expenditure of school projects for the coming year and meet the expectations outlined by the Diocese of Buffalo. At registration time, parents and guardians will be given the tuition rates and asked to sign a tuition agreement. Parents have the choice to make monthly payments through the tuition management system FACTS, or a lump-sum payment (4% discount if paid by September 12<sup>th</sup>) paid directly to the school. Financial assistance is available through Southern Tier Catholic School and the Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo. Applications, for both, are available in the office. Families are encouraged to apply to the Foundation first, which is due in early May.

## **OUR CURRICULUM PROGRAM**

### **Religious Education:**

Religion classes for grades PreK – 8 will be conducted daily. Our guideline is the Diocesan Curriculum. The text that is used is the Silver Burdett & Ginn “Blest Are We”. By using this program, we hope to:

- A. Proclaim the message of Jesus, including the instruction on the sacraments. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to the students during Advent and Lent. The Sacrament of Holy Eucharist is offered at each liturgy.

The Sacramental ceremony and celebration for the First Reconciliation (Grade 2) and First Communion (Grade 3) will be conducted by each child’s own parish. Each parish’s Religious Education Director will contact parents at the appropriate time for their schedule of parent/student preparation meetings.

- B. Foster community
- C. Motivate our children to service
- D. Lead our children to prayer – formal prayers are taught and spontaneous prayer is encouraged.

All children in grades K-8 will attend liturgy at least bi-monthly and on Holy Days. Throughout the school year, grades 3-8 will have the opportunity to plan the Mass and to participate in the readings of the Mass. PreK will attend liturgy on Holy Days. Parents are invited to join our school community at these liturgies. On occasion, prayer services are held. Please note the bi-weekly newsletter for dates and times. Catholic and non-Catholic students alike will participate in all religion classes, liturgies and activities.

### **Faith Themes PreK – Grade 8:**

- PreK – K: Creation, Jesus, God’s Gift; Our Family
- Grade 1: Creation; God as Father, Son, Spirit, Jesus’ Family, The Church; Baptism
- Grade 2: The Person of Jesus; Reconciliation; Eucharist
- Grade 3: The Holy Spirit; The Church; The Mass
- Grade 4: Morality; Ten Commandments; Beatitudes
- Grade 5: The Sacraments; Worship
- Grade 6: Old Testament
- Grade 7: Jesus; New Testament
- Grade 8: Creed; Mystery and Mission of the Church

In addition to the required Diocesan Religion Curriculum, our students participate in the following activities, in correlation to our program:

- Bi-Monthly celebration of the Liturgy, with student – teacher preparation
- Weekly study of Sunday Scripture of the Church year
- School celebrations of the church (i.e. Holy Days, Seasons of Advent, Lent)
- Pastors’ visits
- Para liturgies
- School Assemblies with guest speakers
- Opportunities for community service

- Spiritual Guidance
- Religious retreats – Grade 8
- Service Projects

**Christian Teaching of Human Sexuality:**

The Family Life Series which accompanies our religion textbook is incorporated into the existing religion curriculum program of each grade. Southern Tier Catholic also provides lessons on Safe Environment as directed by the Diocese of Buffalo.

**Academics:**

The curriculum for all grade levels includes:

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Art  | Physical Education |
| Health   | Reading            |
| English Language Arts – grammar,<br>spelling, writing skills | Religion           |
| Mathematics & Advanced Math                                  | Social Studies     |
| Music  | Spanish            |
| Technology   | Latin              |
|  | Science            |

Spanish is studied in grades PreK – 8. An eighth grade student may take the Spanish Proficiency Test, which may give the pupil credit toward his/her high school foreign language requirement, depending upon the secondary school district’s regulations.

Latin is studied in grades 4-8. Eighth grade students also take a Latin Proficiency Exam.

**Physical Education**

All children are required to participate in physical education (gym) classes, unless excused by the family doctor. This excuse must be in written form and is to be kept on file in the school office.

Proper gym attire is required for grades 3-8. If a student does not have his/her gym clothes, he/she will not be able to participate in regular gym activities. Proper attire includes tee shirt [no tank tops], shorts or pants [comfortable enough to move around in – no jeans or jean shorts], and sneakers [no platform sneakers].

Students in Grades PreK (3) through Gr. 2 may stay in their uniforms or street clothes to participate in gym, but must wear sneakers.

For safety reasons, jewelry is not to be worn during gym classes

**Chorus:**

Students are required to participate in the Christmas and Spring concerts. Their music mark will reflect this participation.

**Concert Etiquette:**

Students and parents attending the concert will arrive promptly. Students should have proper attire as outlined by the school.

The audience is to remain seated for the entire concert. Students will not be dismissed before the end of the entire performance.

**Testing Program:**

The testing program for Catholic schools includes teacher-constructed classroom assessments, New York State standard assessments and national standardized tests.

**A. Local Assessment Program:**

The backbone of day-to-day evaluation in the school is the classroom test. Because of its flexibility it can be used to:

- stimulate pupil interest
- evaluate pupil abilities prior to instruction
- establish readiness for new learning
- determine the need for or the effectiveness of remedial work
- accomplish a variety of other special purposes

Classroom unit tests should be administered as each unit of curriculum is completed. The principal reserves the right to review these tests before they are administered to students. They are helpful tools used to assess student progress and the effectiveness of instruction.

**Final Examinations:**

Final examinations are composed and administered by the teacher and should reflect the required curriculum taught. They are to be constructed similarly to the format of the NYS assessments, as to have the students become familiar with the types of questions and the format they will see. Copies of the examinations are kept on file for one year. Final examinations are administered to students in grades 3-8 in June. The Eighth Graders review their report cards at their Graduation.

**Standardized Testing:**

Southern Tier Catholic School uses the IOWA Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) to evaluate student performance, assess program effectiveness and prescribe educational programs. Grades 3, 5 and 7 will take the ITBS. Grades 2 and 6 will be administered the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT).

**New York State Tests:**

New York State has developed assessment examinations in conjunction with the learning standards. Listed are the tests and grades in which given. Southern Tier Catholic administers all state tests, as directed by the Diocese of Buffalo, in the following curriculum:

English/Language Arts:

Grade 3 through Grade 8

Social Studies:

Mathematics:

Grade 4 and Grade 8

Science:

**Student Evaluations Reports (Report Cards):**

**Schedule for Distribution:**

PreK: Twice a year, January and June

Kindergarten: Three times a year beginning with the second quarter report cards

Grades 1 – 8: Four times a year, at the end of each ten week marking period

The Diocesan Report Card is not intended to exclude other means of reporting progress, such as conferences, phone calls, mid-quarter progress reports, etc.

**Marking Scale:**

Student achievement is to be assessed through:

- Class Participation
- Classwork/Homework Completion
- Final Examinations
- Performance on Projects
- Unit tests
- Weekly tests and quizzes

All of these areas are to be considered when preparing quarterly marks for a student. The weight of each in average may be determined by local school policy.

**Cheating/Passing Notes during a Testing Situation:**

While cheating is an inappropriate, unacceptable behavior in itself, note/letter passing during a test/quiz situation is also unacceptable. Regardless of whether or not your child(ren) is finished with their test, it will be considered a form of cheating. The test paper will be taken away, they will receive a zero for the test and a letter will be sent home to inform you of the situation.

**Progress Reports:**

All students will receive progress reports after the first five weeks of the first marking period. These reports are mailed home to the parent/guardian. After the first five weeks of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> marking periods, progress reports will only be mailed to the parents of students who are having difficulties.

In addition, parents are kept informed of progress during each quarter by a variety of methods. Corrected tests, bi-weekly envelopes, folders and class work requesting parent's signature are sent home for the purpose of keeping parents informed of their child's progress. Phone calls are also made informing parents of difficulties.

The use of discipline reports and discussion documentation are other means of keeping parents informed of the happenings in the class.

**Report Cards:**

Report cards for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters will be sent home with the students according to the dates specified in advance in the bi-weekly newsletter. Parents are asked to sign the report card envelope and return it to the homeroom teacher. June report cards will be passed out on the last day of school in June.

**Grading:**

Kindergarten through grade 2 will use letter grades in all areas as indicated by the marking code listed on the card. A numerical grading system will be used in all subject areas for grades 3 through 8. No letter grades will be given to any student. The comment area of the report cards follows the New York State Standards. The final assessment in a specific subject is calculated as one-fifth of the students overall grade. (The final average in a specific subject is calculated by adding the four quarters and then dividing by four. The final overall average is calculated by adding the four quarterly averages then dividing by four).

**Standards for Passing Grades:**

Passing marks for each grade level are as follows:

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Kindergarten to Gr. 2 | Letters A through D |
| Grades 3 to 8         | 70% or above        |

**Exemption for Foreign Language Instruction:**

Students are only exempt from Foreign Language instruction, after diagnostic testing and consultation between parent, teacher and principal. If and IEP is in place which might require the student be exempt from the Foreign Language, the student would be considered exempt. In place of Foreign Language instruction, the student will receive additional instruction in areas of weakness. The instruction will include, but is not limited to, Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) use, remedial instruction and enrichment activities.

A consent form will be completed and signed by the parent(s), teacher and Principal. Exemptions are for a period of one year, at the end of which, a follow-up evaluation will be made to determine the status of the exemption for the upcoming academic year.

**Honor Roll Criteria:**

- First Academic Honors [High Honor Roll]: 94 – 100%
- Second Academic Honors [Honor Roll]: 88 – 93.9%
- Give It Your All Award (Perseverance)

**Homework:**

Homework is an important part of a student's education and establishes a daily link between home and school. As such, homework offers parents the opportunity to be involved in the curriculum on a regular basis. Assignments are to be recorded in the student assignment notebook for grades 3-8, on a daily basis. The student is taught the proper procedure for using the assignment notebook in Third grade or upon entering Southern Tier Catholic School. It is the student's responsibility to record their assignment in their assignment notebook

and make sure that all their materials are packed to take home. Homework is also available on the website. Please encourage your child to prepare for tests in advance in case of illness or school closure. It is to their benefit to prepare a little each night, than to cram all in one night. Statistically, it has been proven that a student retains a much lower percentage of information when they try to study only the night before an exam.

The amount of time it takes for a student to complete their homework varies with each student. Some students complete the majority of their assignments, if not all of them in the allotted time in school. Some students may need additional time at home, as each student works at their own pace. You may need to review certain concepts or subject matter at home to reinforce the lesson that was taught. Homework is **the student's responsibility** and that includes the punctuality of returning assignments on designated due dates.

### **Promotion Standards:**

Factors to be considered in the promotion of student should include:

- Class performance according to grade level requirements
- Student age and ability
- Performance on standardized tests
- Student achievement on tests and examinations
- Competency tests
- Successful achievement of required passing average

### **Retention:**

Testing, diagnosis and actual performance may indicate that some students cannot complete a year's work in that time; therefore, it may become necessary to retain a pupil an additional year in a particular grade.

### **Criteria for Retention:**

1. The student has failed to pass the major subject at any given grade level. The list below indicates the specific failure(s) on each grade level that could result in retention at a particular grade level:

- ❖ Kindergarten – Failure to achieve competency in:
  - Recognition of letters (Upper & Lower case)
  - Emergent philological awareness
  - Visual and auditory discrimination of objects and sounds
  - Gross and fine motor coordination
  - Rote counting
  - Maturation level
- ❖ Grades 1 and 2 – Failure in Reading
- ❖ Grade 3 – Failure in both reading and mathematics
- ❖ Grades 4 & 5 – Failure to achieve an overall average of 70% in the major subject areas of Religion, Language Arts/Spelling, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science/Health. In addition failure to achieve a passing grade in Reading.

❖ Grades 6 – 8 - Failure to achieve an overall passing average

2. The student has failed to achieve a satisfactory score on a Standardized Test in Reading, Mathematics and Language Arts. The following list indicates the cut-off points for satisfactory scores:

- Grade 2 - five months below grade level
- Grades 3 & 4 - one year below grade level
- Grades 5 & 6 - one year, three months below grade level
- Grade 7 - one year, five months below grade level

3. The student has not demonstrated acceptable effort in achieving academic success. The following types of behavior indicate unacceptable effort.

- Consistent failure to complete school and homework assignments and projects
- Consistent inattention to classroom instruction
- Lack of preparedness for school assignments

4. Final decision of the teacher and administration.

### **Authority of Teachers and School Personnel:**

The authority of each teacher, substitute teacher, tutor, teacher aide, coach, lunchroom monitor, librarian, parent volunteer, kitchen worker, custodian and secretary applies to all children at all times in all places and also at school activities away from school. **Any student who is disobedient or disrespectful toward any of the above people, or who breaks a safety rule, or violates another individual's basic right, can expect to receive disciplinary action and/or be sent home.**

### **Student Behavior:**

1. Students are expected to treat themselves, each other and adults with respect.
2. Older students are expected to watch out for younger ones' safety and comfort.
3. Students should greet adult visitors to their classroom properly.
4. Students are expected to follow all school rules.
5. Students must follow the Uniform/Dress Code.
6. In the hall, students will stay on the right side and travel quietly.
7. During fire drills, students will maintain quiet and order, following teachers' instructions.
8. Students are expected to be cooperative and courteous at all times. These expectations apply to all school-related activities and on the bus.
9. Behavior, such as excessive talking in class, discourtesy/disrespect to the faculty, staff, other students or parent's use of improper language and general lack of cooperation are not acceptable. In case of disruptive behavior, the student will be sent to another room or the office, in order to regain and curb the disruption in the classroom.
10. In case of a fight (physical or verbal) the student(s) will receive the following disciplinary action:
  - A. Parent Notification – Student Disciplinary report/Discussion Documentation will be sent home.
  - B. One day in-school suspension or until parent/student/teacher/principal, conference takes place, with the possibility of suspension from school into parent's custody. Even when the student is suspended, they are

responsible for the work that is covered in the classes that they miss. In grades K – 4, the teacher will provide the work. The students in grades 5 – 8 must get assignments themselves, from all their teachers.

**Generally Unacceptable Behavior in School or on School Property:**

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| * Abusive Language | * Gum Chewing         |
| * Bullying         | * Lying               |
| * Cheating         | * Snowball throwing   |
| * Disrespect       | * Tardiness for class |
| * Fighting         | * Threatening abuse   |
| * Gambling         | * Vandalism           |

**Probation:**

A student may be placed on probation for a specified time for serious or continued misconduct which does not require immediate drastic action. The following procedures are to be followed:

1. A conference including the parents, student and principal (or sometimes the teacher) is held to discuss the nature of the misconduct and the terms of the probation.
2. A written account is made of the agreements reached at the conference, with a copy given to the parents. The student and parents are made aware that the student has been given a definite period of time in which to conform to the behavior code of the school community.

**Suspension:**

Suspension is a drastic punishment that should be used rarely and only after all remedial measures have been employed without success.

New York State Education Law 12:76 permits suspension of a student for:

1. Insubordination or disorderly conduct otherwise endangers the health, safety, morals, health, or welfare of others.
2. A physical or mental condition causing behavior which endangers the health, safety or morals of him/herself or other students.

In suspending students, the following directives should be observed:

3. In-school suspension indicates that a student will not be permitted to attend classes, but will be supervised and provided with study assignments to be done during the suspension.
4. Out of school suspension indicates that the student will not attend school but will be provided with study assignments during the days of suspension.
5. Parents are to be informed of the decision for suspension and reasons for the actions before the suspension date.
6. A conference must be held with the parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
7. A written record of the suspension, including the date, reasons, and conference with the parent(s) report is to be kept on file and placed in the student's permanent record card. The official Attendance

**Serious Discipline Infractions:**

The following are examples of serious types of misconduct which may warrant serious disciplinary actions such as probation, suspension or dismissal:

- Repeated disregard for Christian principles of moral conduct
- Chronic or incorrigible misbehavior which undermines the classroom discipline and impedes the academic progress of the other students
- Repeated acts of disobedience, disrespect and defiance of school personnel and regulations
- Persistent defiance of the authority of teachers and principal
- Assault and battery, or any threat or violence directed toward other students or school personnel
- Substance abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Possession of drugs or weapons

**Approved Disciplinary Actions:**

New York State Education Law 12:73 approves of the following types of discipline for violations of student disciplinary codes:

- verbal warning
- written notification to parents or guardian
- probation
- reprimand
- detentions
- suspension from participation in athletic events
- suspension from social or extracurricular activities
- suspension from other privileges
- exclusion from a particular class
- in-school suspension
- involuntary transfer
- suspension not in excess of five days
- suspension in excess of five days

**Search and Seizure:**

School personnel are free to enter a child's desk, back-pack or locker at any time to search for questionable items. The following materials may not be brought to school:

- Guns, firearms, bombs
- Alcoholic beverages of any type
- Drugs (except where procedures for medication have been followed)
- Fireworks
- Immoral or pornographic materials

If items found are illegal (i.e. drugs, weapons, fireworks), they will be turned over to law enforcement authorities. Other items will be given to the child's parents. Appropriate disciplinary actions will follow such an incident.

In addition, any items such as toys and radios are not allowed in school. They will be confiscated and kept in the office until picked up by a parent. Cell phones, ipods and MP3 players are not permitted on students during school hours. They must be left in student's locker or in student's book bag in the off position. If students are found using these devices during school hours, the item will be removed from their possession and sent to the office for parental pick-up.

**Safety: (drug, alcohol, dangerous items, etc.):**

It is the policy of the school that students shall not be permitted to possess or be under the influence of cigarettes, lighters, matches, alcohol or any other illegal drug or drug paraphernalia on school property or at a school related event.

In the event a teacher or staff member suspects a student to be in violation of this policy, the principal is to be informed and proper measures will be taken based on each individual case.

Under no circumstances may dangerous items (knives etc.), suggestive magazines or other materials contrary to Christian values and the moral teaching of the Catholic Church be brought to school or on the bus.

The following procedures are to be followed handling specific drug/alcohol related incidents:

A. Any student in an elementary school of the Diocese who is selling, or providing drugs or alcohol to other students in school or at a school sponsored event is liable for expulsion. The student will be suspended immediately and a conference with the student, parent(s), or guardian(s) principal and Canonical Administrator will be arranged soon after the incident. If not dismissed, the student will be put on probation. In addition to recommending counseling, the principal will invoked suitable penalties and procedures to ensure the terms of the probation.

B. Any student in an elementary school of the Diocese who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol in school or at a school sponsored event will be suspended and the student's parents or guardians will be notified immediately. After consultation with the Canonical Administrator, a conference with the principal, parent(s) or guardian(s) and the student will be arranged. In addition to recommending counseling, the Principal will impose suitable penalties and procedures and the student will be placed on probation. A second serious offense involving drugs or alcohol in any form will result in dismissal.

C. Any student in an elementary school of the Diocese who is detected using drugs or alcohol or in possession of drugs or alcohol in school or at a school related event will be suspended and the student's parents notified immediately. After a conference with parents or guardians and the student, the principal will recommend counseling and impose suitable punishment that will include probation.

**Dismissal:**

Valid reasons for dismissal from Southern Tier Catholic School may include:

1. Repeated disregard for Christian Principals of moral conduct
2. Parents' and/or student's continued lack of cooperation in supporting the school's mission and policies.

3. Student behavior that disrupts learning or presents a threat to the safety of others,
4. If the principal determines that the school's program cannot provide a benefit to the child

The following directive should be observed:

- An accurate record should be kept of all previous measure of remediation, counsel probation and suspension
- Parents must be notified in writing that dismissal is being considered
- A conference where the grounds for dismissal are presented and discussed should be held with parent(s)/legal guardian(s), student, principal and teachers
- The principal must provide the Superintendent of the Diocese of Buffalo with specific reasons for dismissal and previous actions taken to avert dismissal.
- The Superintendent of the Diocese of Buffalo assists the principal in making the final decision
- The student's records are appropriately marked

### **School Board of Trustees**

Southern Tier Catholic School has a Board of Trustees who meet monthly with key staff to assist and guide our school.

## Involvement of Parents

### **The Home School Association of Southern Tier Catholic School**

***The purpose of the Home School Association of Southern Tier Catholic School is to offer an opportunity for parents and teachers to cooperate in their efforts to educate children according to Catholic principles. The Association is very active in their efforts to afford all of our children an environment that is conducive to learning, opportunity for social activities and the educational materials needed.***

***All families become members of the Association upon registration of their child(ren) to share their ideas and talents toward the betterment of the group and Southern Tier Catholic School. It is the giving of ourselves that has helped to make Southern Tier Catholic School the vibrant school that it is.***

***The officers look forward to working with you in the years your family is a part of our school community. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend meetings and to participate in school affairs. The Home School Association meets on a regular basis throughout the school year.***

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK COMPLIANCE FORM

After familiarizing yourself and your child with the pertinent information in the Parent/Student Handbook, please return the form below to the school office with signatures.

We at Southern Tier Catholic School appreciate your cooperation in this matter. It is vital to the smooth operation of the school and our togetherness in the education of your child(ren).

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COMPLIANCE FORM

Upon reading this handbook, I agree to follow the rules and directives designed for the safety and protection of my child(ren), as well as the desired functioning of Southern Tier Catholic School.

Therefore, I state that I understand and accept the complete handbook and agree to abide by its directives.

(Please sign and return to the school office).

\*\*\*\*\*

**Student(s) Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s)' Signature(s):**

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_