

WELCOME

Dear Parents,

We are very pleased that you have chosen our school for your children's education. Our commitment is to provide them a quality Catholic Education. We look forward to working with you and your children in presenting an atmosphere where Catholic Christian values are lived and encouraged.

Our goal in publishing this handbook is to inform you about our policies so that we may operate smoothly and successfully during the school year. Please review these policies with your children. The Administration of Saint Matthew Catholic School reserves the right to update our policies as necessary. Parents and students will be informed of these new revisions or additions.

On the last page is a form that you are requested to sign, stating that you have read the handbook and reviewed the policies with your children. Please sign and return to school no later than September 16.

We are extremely thankful for and anticipate your continued support and cooperation.

The Administration and Faculty of Saint Matthew Catholic School

"It is the policy of St. Matthew School not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, race and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities or employment as required by Title IX, section 504, and Title VI. Please direct questions about this policy to Mrs. Jamie DiDomenico, Principal, at 814-684-3510."

INTRODUCTION

Saint Matthew Catholic School is a Catholic elementary school which was established in 1869. Classes are offered for grades Kindergarten through Sixth Grade. In 1995 a three and a four year old preschool was established. The school is one of approximately 20 elementary schools in the Altoona- Johnstown Diocese. Children from all denominations are welcome at Saint Matthew Catholic School. The faculty at Saint Matthew Catholic School consists of teachers who are certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The School Council, consisting of members of the school and parish communities, is an advisory committee dedicated to promoting the philosophy of the school. The Council, established to assist in the operation of the school, meets once per month during the school year.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Matthew Catholic School serves its students and their families by providing a safe and positive learning environment in which to focus on academic excellence and convey the truths and beliefs of the Catholic Church. We recognize that each child is unique and strive to empower them to develop their God-given talents and abilities.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe that:

- All children have access to love, learning and safety
- Individual attention is an essential component to a student's academic and spiritual success
- Academic excellence is achieved through creative lessons and current technology
- Religion and Faith are something to be lived every day, not just on Sunday
- Prayer and Liturgical Celebration are the cornerstones of our students' faith-journey
- Communication and cooperation between home and school are the hallmarks of our small school community
- Understanding and appreciation of diversity are central to peace and harmony
- Guiding our students to become active and productive members of our parish and society is essential

POLICIES

Admissions

All children, regardless of race, color, or religious affiliation are eligible for admission to Saint Matthew Catholic School.

- Children entering Kindergarten must be 5 before September 1st.
- Children entering First Grade must be 6 before September 1st.

To register, parents are required to complete the registration form and present copies of the birth certificate, Baptismal certificate (if not baptized at Saint Matthew Catholic Church), and immunization records. All immunizations and health records must be completed before a child may attend classes.

Attendance Policy – approved July 2015

1. Pennsylvania school law requires a written excuse on the day a student returns from an absence. If this does not occur within three days of the absence, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. After three accumulated unexcused absences from school, the matter will be referred to the principal.
2. Students absent for more than three consecutive days are required to submit a physician's excuse upon their return to school. Failure to do so will result in those days being recorded as unexcused and the matter will be referred to the principal.
3. A letter of notification will be sent to the parents/guardians of all students who have accumulated five (5) days of absences (excused or unexcused). Phone calls will be made after ten (10) days of absences.
4. Upon accumulation of 15 days of absences without a physician's excuse during a school year, parents will be required to submit a physician's excuse for each subsequent absence. Failure to do so will result in those days being recorded as unexcused and the matter will be referred to the principal. Parents will be sent a letter notifying them when student absences have reached this level.

Absences from School

Parents are asked to call the school office by 9:00 a.m. to report that a child will be absent that day. A message may be left on our voice mail. Our attempt to receive information on the child is to ensure their safety. For extended illnesses, please call each day your child is absent from school unless you have already informed us about the extended illness.

Homework requests for students must be made by 11:00 a.m. of the day you request the work. This allows time for the teacher to prepare materials, which may be picked up in the office.

It is our belief that there is no substitute for a student being present in the classroom to learn and process the information being taught. Parents are asked to make every effort to have their children in school and on time as much as possible. Not only do absences and tardiness affect the progress and performance of the individual student, it also disrupts the classroom routine.

It is the student's and parent's responsibility to obtain and complete missed work when absent or tardy. After school help from the teacher to cover missed work is to be requested by the parent or student as soon as possible after the return of the student. For extended absences, there may be additional work that the teacher could not foresee, for which the student will be responsible for upon return to school. Assignments are to be completed as soon as possible after the student has returned to school.

Family Vacations

Family vacations are not encouraged during the school year unless there is no alternative. If it is known that a child will be absent from school for a period of time that extends three school days or longer, the parents must send written notification to the teachers one week in advance of the anticipated absence. It is the child's responsibility to obtain advanced homework assignments, complete the work for the period of absence, and submit upon their return to school.

Tardiness

Students arriving after **8:05 a.m.** are tardy. Parents must sign in at the office if arriving late. We will not mark your child tardy if he/she comes to school late due to a doctor/dentist appointment. We do ask, however, that upon returning to school, you provide an excuse from the doctor's office indicating that you are returning from that appointment. You must come to the office to sign your child in.

Also, it is helpful to our cook for you to let us know your child's lunch plans. When signing your child in, please let the secretary know their lunch plans.

Tardiness issues will be addressed by the principal.

Bell Schedule

7:50 am	Students may enter building and report to their classroom
8:05 am	First bell - Morning preparation - Students arriving after this bell are tardy.
8:15 am	Second bell – Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, Announcements
8:20 am	Classes Begin
11:30 am	Lunch
12:15 pm	Recess ends
12:25 pm	Afternoon classes begin
2:30 pm	Dismissal preparation bell
2:42 pm	Dismissal

Walkers are dismissed first and are to immediately leave the premises. Bus riders are dismissed second, followed by car riders. Car riders will remain inside the building until their ride is here. Parents picking up their children after school should park on Cameron Avenue or in the school parking lot. Please do not block the area by the main entrance where the bus waits for the students.

For the safety of your children, please inform the teacher in writing if your child will be leaving school other than their usual way, listed below under "Changes in Transportation."

Bus Transportation

Transportation is provided by the school district in which you reside. Parents should contact the Transportation Office of their school district to determine bus stops and pick up and drop off times. Our students must adhere to the rules of conduct each school district sets for student behavior on the bus. If a student is reported by the bus driver three times for disregarding the rules, the student is subject to losing busing privileges.

Bus riders always go home by bus unless the school receives a written note informing the school otherwise. Riders are not permitted to ride any bus but the one they are assigned.

Kindergarten and 1st Graders **must** be met by an adult at the stop or the child will not be permitted to leave the bus.

Pupils must obey the bus driver at all times while riding the bus.

Pupils should not attempt to enter or exit the bus before it makes a complete stop.

Pupils must always be seated while the bus is in motion and must not leave their seat until the bus has made a complete stop.

Bus riders may not take non-bus riders home due to lack of space.

Changes in Transportation

Please **notify us in writing** if your child is leaving school in a way that is different from what is listed on your transportation form. For example if your child is riding home in a car with another student, we would need a **written permission note** allowing us to dismiss your child with another parent. If your child is riding with “Aunt Sally,” who does not normally provide transportation, but **is** listed on the transportation form, we do **not** need a note.

Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT) Testing

The purpose of the CDT is to provide information that will help guide instruction by providing to teachers a snapshot of students’ stages of learning in Math and Reading, allowing them to plan targeted instruction. The on-line test will be completed by students in grades three through six.

The CDT is an untimed test which consists of 48-60 multiple-choice questions with no preparation needed. It will provide teachers with immediate access to detailed diagnostic reports that are designed to help the teachers better understand the strengths and needs of each student. The individual student report will set differentiated learning goals. Student scores will not be shared with the state or anyone other than the parent/guardian.

Conferences

General conferences are held twice a year, in November and March. Additional conferences may be requested by either parents or teachers. Parents are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher or principal if they have a question or concern regarding academic achievement or behavior. Phone messages may be left for the teachers between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. All teachers are available for conferences from 2:55 - 3:15 p.m. daily. Other times need to be scheduled with the teacher.

Discipline Policy

The Discipline Policy of Saint Matthew Catholic School is intended to develop the student’s sense of self-discipline and personal responsibility. We intend to emphasize the positive rather than the negative, by encouraging the child to replace unacceptable behavior with acceptable behavior.

The following rules and actions that will be taken should be discussed with your child so that they are aware of the possible consequences of their actions. The principal and teachers will familiarize the students with the Discipline Policy at the beginning of each year.

Classroom/School Rules (Minor Infractions)

1. Be respectful of others.
2. Obey safety rules.
3. Be respectful of school property and property of others.
4. Walk quietly through the school. No running, pushing shoving or shouting.
5. No gum chewing in school, on buses, or on field trips.
6. No food is to be consumed in the classroom except when directed by the teacher.
7. No toys or electronic items should be brought to school unless directed by the principal or teacher
8. All other rules set by classroom teacher and/or principal and made known to the student.

Cafeteria Rules

9. Follow direction of cafeteria personnel and volunteers.
10. Speak quietly in line and at lunch table.
11. Keep eating areas clean.

Recess Rules

12. Remain in designated playground boundaries.
13. Display good sportsmanship.

14. Use playground equipment for the purpose that was intended.

Assembly Rules

15. Enter/exit quietly.
16. Applaud appropriately
17. No talking during performance.
18. Be respectful of guest speakers/performers.

Behavior Modification Action Plan for Minor Infractions

If a student has difficulty complying with the expected behavior listed above the principal and/or teacher will initiate the Behavior Modification Action Plan for Minor Infractions. The steps of this plan are listed below.

- First Offense - Teacher and/or principal will discuss behavior with student. Student will be made aware that the behavior is unacceptable and acceptable behavior will be discussed.
- Second Offense - Student will be requested to complete a Behavior Modification Form with the guidance of their parents. This form must be returned on the following school day.
- Third offense. - Parents will be contacted and student's behavior will be discussed.
- Fourth Offense - Behavior Modification Action Plan for Serious Infractions , as listed below, will be initiated.

Serious Infractions

19. Fighting or other conduct that imposes danger to the well-being of others.
20. Swearing or the use of obscene language or gestures.
21. Defacing or damaging school property. Parents will be asked to pay for damages done to school property by their children.
22. Open defiance or disrespect of the authority of any teacher or person having authority over the student.
23. Making threats to do harm to other students, teachers, or anyone within the school community.
24. Any other infraction deemed serious by the principal.

Behavior Modification Action Plan for Serious Infractions

- First Offense - Parents notified. One day After School Detention (2:30 - 3:30 p.m.. Parents will arrange transportation home.)
- Second Offense - Parents notified. One day In School Suspension
- Third Offense - Parents notified. One day Out of School Suspension
- Fourth Offense - If the unacceptable behavior has not been corrected at this point, a conference with the principal, teacher and parents will be held to discuss the future of the student.

Severe Infractions

Students guilty of the following infractions may be subject to expulsion

25. Possession and/or drinking of alcoholic beverages on parish property, at school related activities, or enroute to or from school.
26. The unauthorized possession, using, taking, selling or giving of any drug or medication on parish grounds, at school related activities or enroute to or from school.
27. Possession of a dangerous object on parish property, at school related activities or enroute to or from school.
"Dangerous objects: instruments include but are not limited to guns, explosives, knives, or other instruments capable of doing bodily harm. Persons violating this policy also risk the possibility of prosecution under the Pennsylvania Criminal Code."
28. Possession of cigarettes or tobacco products and/or smoking on parish property, at school related activities or enroute to or from school.
29. Any other infraction deemed severe enough by the principal to consider expulsion.

Dress Code

Dress Code (revised May 2016)

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 6 are required to wear the school uniform at all times, including field trips, except when informed otherwise.

**All Dress Code items are available for purchase through Land's End or Schoolbelles (Please Note: there may be other companies out there, but those uniforms are not approved as part of the dress code.)*

St. Matthew T-shirts, sweatshirts, and gym uniforms are available through Cowfer's Custom Design in Tyrone.

Boys:

Slacks - Navy blue dress slacks. No jeans, skinny pants, cargo pants, or faded slacks are permitted.

Shorts – (Aug.- Oct. 15 & Apr. 15 - June only) Navy blue walking shorts. No cargo shorts are permitted.

Shirts - White long or short sleeved button down dress shirt, polo shirt, or turtleneck (no logos). Shirts must be tucked in. If undershirts are worn, they must be white and tucked in.

As announced last year, St. Matthew T-shirts or polo shirts, red or navy, may no longer be worn to school.

Ties – Solid navy blue or black neckties are required for Mass days. They may be worn on other days.

Socks – Solid navy, black, or white ankle or crew socks. No low cut or no show socks.

Girls:

Jumper – Plaid uniform jumper available only from Schoolbelles or Land's End.

Skirt – Plaid uniform skirt available only from Schoolbelles or Land's End (grades 4-6 only).

Shorts - (Aug.- Oct. 15 & Apr. 15 - June only) Navy blue walking shorts. No cargo shorts are permitted.

Blouses - White long or short sleeved blouse with Peter Pan collar, polo shirt, or turtleneck (no logos). Shirts and blouses must be tucked in. If undershirts are worn, they must be white and tucked in.

As announced last year, St. Matthew T-shirts or polo shirts, red or navy, may no longer be worn to school.

Slacks - Navy blue dress slacks. No jeans, skinny pants, or faded slacks are permitted.

Socks – Solid navy or white ankle or knee socks. No low cut or no show socks. Girls may also wear navy or white tights.

Hair Accessories – must coordinate with uniform colors: uniform plaid, navy, red, white, or black only. Accessories must be plain with no attachments.

Make-up, excessive jewelry, dangling earrings, fake nails, and nail polish are not permitted.

Boys/Girls Shoes: – Black, brown, gray, or navy dress shoes with a rubber sole suitable for recess activity. Boots, sandals, shoes with cut out heels, ballet style shoes, flip-flops, and Crocs, are not permitted. Sneakers will be worn only on gym day (see “Gym Uniform” below).

In the winter months, students may wear boots to school, but must change into uniform shoes upon arrival.

Sweaters - Saint Matthew School sweatshirts or sweaters (solid navy, red, or white) may be worn. No logos, pictures, fancy trim, stripes, etc. are permitted on sweatshirts and sweaters. No hoodies are to be worn during the day, but may be worn to and from school.

Haircuts: All hair, boys and girls, must be neat and clean. No part of the head may be shaved. Hair may not be dyed an unusual color. The boys' hair length must not exceed the neckline, hang over the shirt collar, or over the eyes. Please encourage your child to maintain conservative haircuts.

Required Uniform for Mass - When students attend Mass they are required to be dressed as follows:

Girls: Jumper or skirt (No shorts or slacks) and any style uniform blouse

Boys: Slacks (No shorts) and button-down shirt with solid navy or black tie

A Uniform Exchange where clothing items can be traded is available to all families. Call the school for more details.

Gym Uniform – Available only through Cowfer's Custom Design – Students are to come to school dressed in gym uniform every **Friday**. The uniform consists of a navy T-shirt, navy nylon shorts and navy sweatpants, with school logo in white. The nylon shorts can be worn Aug.- Oct.15 and Apr. 15 - June. An optional sweatshirt may also be worn (St. Matthew School navy, red, or white). Any sturdy sneaker may be worn on gym day with the exception of light-up sneakers.

Dress Down Days – Students will have a dress down day once per month. Shorts are permitted from August through October 15 and April 15 through June. Jeans, skirts, pants are considered acceptable attire. Shorts and skirts must be knee-length. Students should not wear frayed clothes or clothes with holes in them. Designs and writing on clothes should be appropriate to school. Students are not permitted to wear anything that sends an inappropriate message or conflicts with what we are teaching (for example, shirts that advertise beer or cigarettes are NOT permitted). Tank tops, sleeveless shirts and spaghetti straps are also not permitted. Students must wear socks or tights and all shoes have to be closed – no crocs, sandals, flip flops, or other open or unsafe footwear.

Occasionally special theme days will be celebrated. On those days, students are to wear the requested attire. Of course, uniforms are always appropriate.

Uniform Violation - In the case of a student not complying with the dress code, a uniform violation notice will be sent home by the teacher or principal. If the student continues to make the same violation, parents will need to bring the uniform items to school so the student can comply with the dress code. Other consequences will be determined by teacher or principal.

Emergency Closings

Saint Matthew Catholic School follows the Tyrone Area School District regarding cancellations, delays or early dismissals due to inclement weather. Please listen to radio station WTRN when these decisions are suspected. Do not call the station or the school to obtain this information. Please develop a plan for your child to follow when an early dismissal occurs. When school is cancelled, school activities are also cancelled. In the event of a school delay, Preschool is cancelled.

Emergency Contacts

In September, parents complete an Emergency Form which includes phone numbers of additional emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached. It is imperative that the information is kept accurate and up to date. When information changes, particularly cell phone numbers, please contact the school office immediately.

Family Communication Folder

Each student will be given a St. Matthew Catholic School Communication folder at the beginning of the year. This is only to be used to carry information to and from the school office. Check with your child each day about any communications that may be in the folder. Most communications will be sent home on Thursday of each week. Please read the information carefully and return any forms or payments to the school via this folder. Each student will also have a second St. Matthew School folder to be used separately for transporting homework, class work, and graded papers.

Grading

The following Diocesan Grading Guide is used throughout grades 1 through 6.

A --- 93 - 100 Excellent grade level work. Contributes generously to class discussion. Does more work than is required for the class. Assignments are always completed on time and well done.

B --- 85 - 92. Good grade level work. Contributes to class discussions. Does more work than is required for the average student. Assignments are always completed on time.

C --- 75 - 84. Does satisfactory work for the grade level. Assignments are completed on time or made up with a minimum of pressure on the part of the teacher.

D --- 70 - 74. Does work below grade level standards. Assignments sometimes are neglected. A great deal of pressure is needed to get the child to produce.

F --- 69. Does unsatisfactory work. Assignments are often neglected and carelessly done. Does not respond even under pressure.

O (Outstanding), V (Very Good), S (Satisfactory), I (Improving), N (Needs improvement) – Computer, Music, Physical Education, Art, and Penmanship.

Students in grades 4-6 are placed on the Honor Roll each marking period according to the following criteria:

High Honor Roll - Student must attain an average of 95-100% in each major subject area and at least a Satisfactory grade in Computer, Music, Physical Education, and Art.

Honor Roll – Students must attain an average of 90-94% in each major subject area and at least a Satisfactory grade in Computer, Music, Physical Education, and Art.

Penmanship will not be considered when determining High Honor Roll or Honor Roll status.

Honor Roll certificates are awarded each quarter.

Health Services

Nursing services are provided by the Tyrone Area School District. Screenings of all students are performed periodically and parents are notified if a more thorough exam is necessary.

If a student becomes ill or injured, he/she should make this known to the teacher. The school nurse will be contacted if necessary. If it is necessary to send the student home, the parents or an emergency contact will be called. Transportation home must be arranged by the parents.

Immunizations and Physicals

PreK 3 and 4, Kindergarten, and Sixth Graders need to have a physical. PreK 3 and 4 and Kindergarten must provide immunization records to the school on or before the first day of school in order to attend. Kindergarten and 3rd Grade Students must have dental exams. Physical and dental forms are available in the school office.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the learning process and must be completed regularly. It reinforces what has been taught and develops independent study habits. All students receive homework. The length of time spent on homework depends on students' grade level and ability. In general, the following time limits should apply:

Grades 1 and 2 --- 10 to 20 minutes

Grades 3 and 4 --- 30 to 40 minutes

Grades 5 and 6 --- 50 to 60 minutes

Students in Grades 1-6 are required to purchase an assignment book from the school. Please refer to this book to check daily assignments. Parents are encouraged to initial each day's assignment page upon completion.

If your child consistently has no homework, the parent should contact the teacher. The same is true if the child is experiencing undue difficulty in completing the assignments. At times, homework consists of studying with no written work required. If a child is absent, notify the office by 9:00 a.m. and make arrangements to pick up their work.

Internet Safety Policy (approved by School Council June 28, 2012)

All students and their parents sign the Diocesan “Acceptable Use Policy” at the beginning of the school year. This policy provides guidelines for Internet use at the school. The school will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response.

Leaving School Property

If there is a need for a student to leave, i.e. a doctor’s appointment, a note from the parent is required and arrangements must be made to pick up the student. If a child becomes sick during the school day, parents must arrange to have the child picked up at school. We will not permit a student to walk home during the middle of the day. Parents or guardians must sign students in and out of school at the office.

Library/Media Center

Students will visit the library once a week to borrow books. Books circulate for one week. Reference books may be checked out during the school day for use in the classroom, but must be returned at 2:30 p.m.

Students are responsible for returning books in good condition and paying to replace any book that is lost or damaged. Students with overdue books will not be permitted to borrow books until the book is returned or replaced.

Accelerated Reader

The Accelerated Reader (AR) program is used to motivate students to read and check their comprehension. The program recommends students read at their own individual reading levels. Parents are also encouraged to read books to their children as part of the AR program. Students take quizzes on the books they have read and earn points. Classroom teachers may require students to earn a specific number of points towards their grade.

Liturgies/Prayer Services

Throughout the school year, K-6 students participate either in a Prayer Service or Children’s Liturgy on a weekly basis. Each grade level takes turns preparing these services. Parents are welcome to attend.

Lunch Program

A Hot Lunch Program is available to the students. An order form for purchasing lunches or milk is sent home at the end of the week. **Parents are requested to complete the form and return it at the beginning of each week.** Please put the money in an envelope with the child’s name and grade. Paying ahead is allowed. In the event that a child is absent, that day’s lunch or milk money will be credited toward the following week’s purchases. Menu calendars are sent home monthly. Prices are as follows:

Hot lunch - Children \$2.00 - Adults \$2.65
Milk \$.40 (white – 1% or fat free, chocolate – fat free)

We discourage parents from bringing “fast food” to their child at lunch time. We participate in the Federal School Lunch Program. Families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced lunch by completing an application. Students who qualify are in no way singled out or identified as receiving free lunch. If your child has a food allergy, you must supply the school with documentation from your physician. Please call the office if there are any specific needs or questions. We do follow the National School Lunch Program guidelines. Due to Federal regulations we are not permitted to store drinks or lunches in the kitchen’s refrigerators.

Charges will not be extended beyond 4 calendar weeks or \$25, whichever comes first. At that time, you will receive a written note, then you will be contacted by the principal.

In the operation of the Child Nutrition Programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against, write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC.

Calendars, Menus, and Newsletters

Calendars, Menus, and Weekly Memos are sent home to keep parents and students informed of upcoming events and other information relative to the school schedule. Please read this information carefully and review with your child those topics that pertain to him/her.

Medications

Only a licensed health professional or the child's parent or guardian may dispense over the counter or prescription medications at school.

Administering medication during the school day is not recommended unless not doing so would jeopardize the student's health or prevent the student from attending school.

For their safety, students requiring rescue inhalers for asthma or Epipens for severe allergic reactions (usually for bee stings or certain foods) are to keep those items in the school office. Written documentation is required from the parent or physician. Forms are available from the office. Please call St. Matthew Catholic School Office with any specific questions.

Parties

Individual classrooms may hold parties for special events approved by the principal. Birthday Parties will be limited to a snack and a drink and will be held at lunch time or 2:15 p.m. Please confirm a date with your child's teacher if you would like to send in items for a party. If parents are having a private party for their child's birthday outside of school, students are not permitted to distribute invitations at school unless all of your child's classmates are invited.

Problems...Concerns?

Parents are encouraged to report any problems or concerns to the principal and/or teacher immediately. We cannot solve a problem if we are not aware of it. Please address your concerns with your child's teacher first. If you are not satisfied, contact the principal.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year. Parents are asked to discuss the grades with the children. If there is any question about the grades, please contact the teacher. Please sign the report cards and return them promptly. Mid-quarter reports will be sent to parents to inform them of their child's progress.

School Calendar

Saint Matthew Catholic School maintains a school year of 180 days. A calendar for the school year will be published and distributed during the summer. The school follows the Tyrone Area School District calendar as closely as possible with a few exceptions to meet obligations with the Altoona - Johnstown Diocesan Calendar.

School Office Hours

The School Office can be reached at 684-3510 from 8:00 a.m. to approximately 3:30 p.m. After hours or when the office is unattended, please leave a message on our voice mail and your call will be returned as soon as possible. If there is an emergency, you may call the Church Office at 684-1480.

School Supplies

It is essential for the efficient running of a classroom for all children to be supplied with the appropriate materials. The school office sells most of the required items, i.e., tablets, pencils, pens, erasers, loose-leaf paper, composition books, etc. Teachers will supply parents with a list of supplies. Please supply your child with these items before school or purchase them during the first week of school from the office. Grades 1 through 6 are required to purchase a special assignment book available only from the school office.

The office will not extend “credit” to students for school supplies. If it is essential for a student to have a particular item, the classroom teacher will provide the student with temporary supplies until the student can make a purchase.

Special Services

Guidance Counselor

The services of a Guidance Counselor are available to our school two mornings per week. All students are scheduled to meet with the counselor as a class. Individuals may be referred by the principal, parents, or teachers.

Reading - Title I

Reading instruction for students experiencing difficulties is provided by the Tyrone Area School District. Students are serviced at St. Matthew Catholic School. Parental permission is required for participation in this program.

School Psychologist

The School Psychologist is provided by the Tyrone Area School District on an as needed basis. Students may be recommended for testing by the principal, teachers, or parents. Parental permission is required for evaluation.

Speech

A Speech Therapist is available on an as needed basis. Students are evaluated and if they qualify, will be serviced at St. Matthew Catholic School. Parental permission is required for evaluation.

Tuition

The Tuition Plan for the 2016-2017 School Year is a fair and confidential program. The fee will be \$3700 per child with many ways of reducing that amount. Balance sheets will be sent home monthly. Parents **must** be registered in an area Catholic Parish to receive a subsidy. Diocesan scholarships and Parish grants are available to reduce the cost of tuition. A contract for tuition will be negotiated yearly. If these scholarships and grants are not sufficient for a family, there is tuition assistance available from the parish.

Fundraising

Each Kindergarten through 6th Grade school family is required to raise \$350 profit from the fundraisers or pay the balance by May 31st of each year. Each Preschool family is required to raise \$100 profit or pay the balance by May 30th. Families who have children enrolled in preschool and K-6 are required to raise just \$350. Purchasing Scrip all year round is fundraising while you shop. Family and friends can designate their Scrip purchases towards your family goal! Please refer to the Fundraising Handbook for more information regarding ways to easily meet this goal. **Any deficiency in your fundraising goal after May 31st will be added to your tuition balance.**

Delinquent Accounts:

The obligation of tuition payment is a very serious one for parents. It is essential for the financial vitality and stability of Saint Matthew Catholic School that these payments are made on time and remain current. Convenient payment options are available to best meet the needs of parents.

Families should contact the pastor or the school principal as soon as possible if circumstances have caused an overdue in payment so that the situation may be properly addressed. Any extended delinquency in payment without explanation will seriously jeopardize the continuing enrollment of the student at Saint Matthew Catholic School. Please avoid legal proceedings, remit your payment ON TIME.

Tuition Statements

- Tuition Statements will be sent home dependent on the payment schedule agreed to by the family and school pastor.
 - Parents are to be assured that each family's Saint Matthew Catholic School tuition statement is kept confidential, and the School in turn expects parents to keep their agreed upon terms confidential.
 - Payment is expected within two weeks of tuition statements being distributed.

Delinquent Account – Current Year

- A family tuition payment is delinquent when it is more than thirty (30) calendar days behind its payment schedule.
- The following steps will be taken by the appropriate school administrative personnel in dealing with delinquencies:
 - The responsible person(s) for tuition payments shall be contacted by the school office via telephone and/or e-mail notifying them of the delinquency.
 - If, after seven (7) calendar days there is no response from the responsible person(s) the school office shall send a delinquency letter, tuition account statement and delinquency policy via certified mail.
 - If there is a reason causing repeated delays or non-payment of tuition, the family should consult with the pastor or principal to make arrangements in writing for a payment plan. ***St. Matthew School and Parish are willing to work with anyone who is experiencing difficulty making payments.***
 - If the above does not result in payment, legal proceedings will be considered.
- Unless other arrangements are made, no child will be admitted to St. Matthew Catholic School if any of the preceding year's tuition or/and other fees have not been paid. Forwarding transcripts to another school may be delayed if there is delinquent tuition or/and any other fees on an account due.

Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to assist with fundraising, in the cafeteria, on field trips, and at times, in the school. All volunteers must complete the following requirements issued by the state of Pennsylvania prior to volunteering in any capacity: Youth Protection Program, PA Child Abuse Clearance (Act 151), PA Criminal History Check (Act 34), Arrest/Conviction Report Form (Act 24 – available in the office), Volunteer Application Form – available in the office, and FBI Fingerprinting (Act 114) only if you have not been a Pennsylvania resident for the past 10 years. Information packets with directions for completing these requirements are available in the school office.

In order to track your volunteer hours, please use the “Volunteer Commitment Worksheet” provided by the office. Complete the date, activity, and time and have the supervisor of that activity sign the form. Completed worksheets should be turned in to the school office.

Field Trips

When a field trip takes place during normal schools hours and transportation is provided, the following is in effect:

- A field trip is any designated activity where students will be leaving school property. Field trips always have a purpose that is related to your child's education.
- Students must have a field trip permission form signed by parent/guardian to attend the field trip.
- Students must ride the bus to and from the field trip location. Students are not permitted to be transported by parents, relatives, school employees, etc. No permission will be given for any transportation other than that provided for the field trip. Students should arrive at school in the morning as usual and will be dismissed at regular dismissal time.

- If there is room on the bus, parents who are chaperoning the trip should ride the bus. In situations where the bus is full, parents may want to car pool to the field trip site. Students may not ride with parents.
- Please read and keep a record of any special information we give you regarding a specific trip. (For example, if a student needs to bring lunches or other special items on the trip or if they need to wear certain types of clothing or shoes.
- Students are not permitted to bring cell phones or other electronic devices. An adequate means of communication will be available if needed.

These policies are in place to insure a safe, well-organized trip. The safety of the students is our first priority.

In a situation where a trip may be scheduled that goes beyond school hours, we will make sure you receive information at the time regarding transportation.

The school will determine the number of chaperones needed for the trip. Only adults who have complied with all volunteer requirements (See page 12) will be permitted to chaperone.

During any field trip, you can be assured that the teachers and/or staff members have a plan in place to account for the children. They plan ahead to make sure everyone will have a great time. Thank you for entrusting your children to us.

RODEO

The Central PA Rodeo is St. Matthew School’s major fundraiser. Without this event, tuition costs would surely increase. **All families are expected to work at this event and be willing to give your time and talents.** The next Central PA Rodeo will take place on June 16th, 17th, and 18th, 2017. (Please refer to your Fundraising Handbook.)

Parents, please sign below, detach and return to school by September 16. Thank you.

We (I) _____ have read the Saint Matthew Catholic School
 Parent’s Name(s)

Parent-Student Handbook and understand the policies presented. These policies were reviewed with our children.

Parents signature

Date

 ***Saint Matthew Catholic School*** 814-684-3510
A Tyrone Tradition Since 1869

*1105 Cameron Avenue
Tyrone, PA 16686
Jamie DiDomenico, Principal*

July 12, 2016

Dear Parents of New Registrants:

Thank you for enrolling your child(ren) at St. Matthew Catholic School for the 2016-2017 school year. We are pleased that you will be an important part of the life of our parish and school community throughout the school year.

As we prepare for the new school year, I am writing to remind you of the primary reason for our very existence as a Catholic school in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. As a Catholic school our primary purpose is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church. While we maintain an outstanding academic program, we have the responsibility to make certain that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of our school's

programs. In full partnership with you and your family, we are committed to upholding these principles which underlie our presence in the community as a Catholic school.

This Memorandum of Understanding will be included in the handbook and it will be necessary for you to complete it for your child(ren) enrolled in our school. You are required to complete and sign one form for all of your enrolled children at this time and return it to my office as soon as possible. This is necessary for the registration process to be completed.

Again, thank you for enrolling your child(ren) at St. Matthew Catholic School and for giving us the opportunity to help you educate your child(ren) spiritually, academically, emotionally and physically.

Sincerely,
Jamie DiDomenico
Father Jozef Kovacik

MISSION AND IDENTITY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

As a parent/guardian of a student in a Catholic school, I understand, affirm, and support the following:

1. The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
2. Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions operated as programs of the Catholic Church; they are not private schools but are administered and supported by the sponsoring parish(es) or the diocese.
3. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right.

4. While academic excellence and involvement in extracurricular activity (i.e. sports, clubs, etc.) are important, fidelity to the Catholic identity of the school is the fundamental priority.
5. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity.
6. In all questions involving faith, morals, faith teaching, and Church law, the final determination rests with the diocesan bishop.

As a parent/guardian desiring to enroll my child in a Catholic school, I accept this Memorandum of Understanding. I pledge support for the Catholic identity and mission of this school and by enrolling my child I commit myself to uphold all the principles and policies that govern a Catholic school.

Father

Mother

Guardian

Printed

Printed

Printed

Signature

Signature

Signature

Student(s) Names (Please print)

School

Date _____

Each registration must be accompanied by a signed and dated Memorandum of Understanding.