



Dear Parents of St. Gabriel Students,

The faculty and staff feel it is a privilege to assist you in the education of your children. We believe that you will come to know that St. Gabriel Catholic School is a wonderful place for children to learn, to love, and to grow in faith and share the message of Jesus to all they meet.

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize you with the philosophy and procedures of our school.

May God bless us as we work together with your children.

Mrs. Snoke, Principal

Mrs. Fischer, Assistant Principal



The Jerusalem Cross

The Jerusalem cross is an ancient Christian symbol.

The central cross represents Christ. The four smaller crosses surrounding the central cross represent the four evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Additionally, the Gospel represented by the central cross is proclaimed through the corners of the earth, that is, to the north, south, east, and west.

The Jerusalem Cross is similar to the Greek cross with arms of equal length, and has also been called the Crusaders' Cross. It was derived from the Crosslet. It may also be called the Evangelization Cross, the Cross Potent, or Tau Cross.

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ST. GABRIEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St. Gabriel Catholic School is to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel and to develop each student spiritually, emotionally, physically, and socially, so that each is prepared to live and serve in a changing society as a self-respecting and responsible citizen. St. Gabriel Catholic School's purpose is to create an environment in which the teachings of Jesus are promoted and proclaimed as the basis of the values they teach and uphold.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide a sound religion program that will deepen the child's relationship with God through the sacraments, personal prayer, liturgical, and para-liturgical celebrations.
- To foster the Christian experience in which the child's individual character and contribution are accepted and are a vital part of the Catholic faith community.
- To strive for a proper balance in the curriculum that provides opportunities to demonstrate personal and social responsibilities.
- To function as a center for community involvement, educational, and spiritual enrichment.
- To provide opportunities to strengthen a spirit of family life through parental involvement in school functions and activities.

ACCREDITATION OF ST. GABRIEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St. Gabriel Catholic School is accredited by Cognia. All members of the learning community continue to work together as a team to formulate and implement plans for improvement towards a common vision consistent with our school's mission. The ultimate goal is to provide a learning environment where students can learn and grow in God's love every day.

GENERAL SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND INFORMATION

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Curriculum - The curriculum is designed by the Diocese of Charlotte and is in compliance with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. It includes a sequential program in religion, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, music, art, computer, physical education and health, and foreign language. The School has a media center program which offers quality reading selections. St. Gabriel has a school guidance-counseling program that provides students opportunities through classroom instruction, small groups, or individualized sessions to realize the importance of self-esteem, decision-making, positive peer influence, and anti-substance abuse information.

Report Cards - Report cards are electronically issued three times a year through the Parent Portal. Please refer to the school calendar for issue dates. Progress reports for grades K-5 are available in the Parent Portal at the midpoint of each of the trimesters.

Retention - In such cases that it is the recommendation of a student's teacher and the principal that a child be retained in the present grade, parents will be notified prior to the last grading period of the academic year.

Standardized Testing - Standardized tests are used as a part of the student evaluation program. They provide a basis for educational guidance and measure effectiveness of curriculum, teaching procedures, and student achievement. The tests are administered according to the schedule determined by the Diocese of Charlotte.

ADMISSION POLICY

All Mecklenburg Area Catholic Schools admit students of any race, color, sex, religion, national and ethnic origin to all programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at these schools. A child must be five years of age on or before August 31st of the year in which the child is presented for enrollment, as verified by a birth certificate. If a child has been attending school in another state in accordance with the laws and regulations of school authorities of such state before becoming a resident of North Carolina, the child is eligible for enrollment in school regardless of whether he/she has passed the fifth anniversary of birth by August 31st. For more information, please refer your questions to the Mecklenburg Area Catholic Schools (MACS) office at 370-3273 or 1123 South Church Street, Charlotte, NC, 28203.

Students must provide proof of immunization and be in compliance with North Carolina immunization requirements within 30 days of starting school. Kindergarten and new students in grades 1-5 must provide proof of physical examination (completed no more than 12 months prior to the anticipated date of school entry). PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THIS RECORD. For any questions regarding a religious exemption for immunizations, please contact Kathy Holder, Director of Health for MACS (kaholder@charlottecatholic.com).

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYERS

Each morning we will begin with announcements, prayers, and Pledge of Allegiance. During this time students must stand quietly in respect for God, our loving Father. If students or teachers are in the hallways, they must stop immediately and wait until prayers are completed.

ARRIVAL

Arrival – Students may arrive as early as 7:00 am. Before school care begins at 7:00 am and is provided free of charge. Students will be supervised in the gym. **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE STUDENTS UNATTENDED BEFORE 7:00 am.**

Students arriving after 7:15 am will go directly to their classroom. Music will be heard over the loud speaker at 7:45 am, cueing all students to prepare for announcements. As soon as the music has ended, our Jaguar TV broadcasters will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and read all announcements. The Principal or Assistant Principal will read the daily gospel readings and recite morning prayers immediately following the Jaguar TV segment.

Arrival Car Lane Directions - Please follow the directions of the paid police officer and the faculty on duty. Enter the school lot from the Providence Road Entrance only. Do not enter from Sharon Lane since our campus becomes a one-way street at this time. Drive to the entrance of the school, following the car in front of you and forming one line, stop the car, and let the students out of the car from the backseat on the passenger side only onto the sidewalk adjacent to the school. **Do not pull around stopped cars!** As the traffic begins to back up, you will be directed to the center section of the parking lot and/or additional lines set up in the Lower Lot. Please pay close attention to the teachers directing traffic. Please be respectful to the teachers as they help each of the children enter into the school safely.

All cars must exit up the hill and follow the directions of the paid police officer. You may not exit out the entrance. If you need to exit north or east, turn right on Sharon Lane. If you need to go west (to Holy Trinity), turn right on Sharon Lane, left on Providence Road and then left on Wendover Road. Please allow yourself enough time to get to work so that carpool is not so stressful.

**DO NOT CHALLENGE THE TEACHERS DIRECTING TRAFFIC;
PLEASE FOLLOW THEIR DIRECTIONS.**

Carpool - After the first week of school, parents are strongly discouraged from walking their student into the building. This is unsafe and can interrupt the planned carpool flow. When it is necessary to assist a student into school, please park in the parking lot adjacent to the Ministry Center lot, and walk on the sidewalk to the school.

Rainy Day Arrival - Morning arrival will not change during rainy weather; however, afternoon carpool may be modified to an indoor dismissal in the case of severe weather, taking the safety of the teachers on duty into consideration. (See Rainy Day Dismissal.)

Tardiness - Arriving on time to begin class is critical towards a child's successful productive day. At 7:50 am the school day begins and the front doors to the school will be locked. Any students arriving at 7:50 am must wait outside with a parent until announcements and prayers have concluded, when parents will sign the child in at the office. Tardiness is disruptive to the entire class.

Any student arriving after, or leaving prior to 11:00 am will be counted as absent for that particular school day.

ATTENDANCE

The Mecklenburg Area Catholic Schools calendar includes approximately 177 days of student attendance, in accordance with accreditation standards.

The educational program at St. Gabriel Catholic School depends heavily upon the content of each school day, and all areas of the curriculum are considered valuable. Regular attendance is vitally important to each student as it directly affects his/her progress academically and his/her development of attitudes and habits for later life. Studies of student progress in school show a high correlation between attendance and success, and absence and failure. For this reason, every student is required to attend every class, except when excused for illness or other reasons deemed acceptable by the school. Vacations and holidays are planned to provide both maximum conveniences in observing traditional holidays and maximum benefits to the educational process. When considering removing children from scheduled classes, parents are urged to carefully weigh the important factors:

- School represents a commitment to intellectual and personal discipline. Unnecessary absences may weaken that commitment. While such absences may be highly educational and beneficial to the child, they are not to be regarded lightly.
- It should be recognized that absences and disruptions of schedules (tardies) and procedures affect others in the class and faculty. In the primary grades in particular, instruction is often teacher-directed and activity-directed; it is not usually possible to duplicate the experience outside the classroom setting.
- There is almost a month of free time within the school year calendar, published well in advance, in addition to the summer months, in which trips can take place.
- **The teacher is not obligated to plan special work, prepare in advance any assignments, or class work that will be missed, or to spend extra time on work that was missed by the student.**
- Make Up Work Due Dates – The number of days a student is allowed to make up work missed during an absence will match the number of days the students was absent. (For example: A child who was absent for 5 days, for any reason, will have 5 days to turn in make-up work. Tests must be made up within a week of return.)

Students who have an excused absence are still marked absent. Students receiving educational services off-campus (e.g., speech, occupational therapy) are marked tardy. Students arriving tardy due to medical appointments will also be marked tardy.

BULLYING

The faculty is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all students while on campus. As such, bullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Definition - Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power. Most often, it is repeated over time. Cyber-bullying includes the misuses of digital technology.

Disciplinary Action - Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, expulsion, and/or notification to appropriate authorities. The disciplinary action may be unique to the individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the principal's discretion.

False Reports - False reports or accusations of bullying also constitute a violation of this policy, and the accuser may be faced with disciplinary action.

Reporting Complaints - Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying occurring during the school day to the school immediately. (See definition of "Scope" below.) If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported to the school principal.

Parents may not confront or question a student about incidents of bullying at school. The responsibility of obtaining all facts of a bullying incident is the responsibility of the school's administration.

School Counselors will work with Administration, students, and families to resolve any reports of bullying on campus.

Scope - This policy prohibits bullying that occurs on a school bus as part of a school activity, during any school function, extracurricular activity, or other school sponsored event during school hours.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is important that the school has an up-to-date phone number and address, as well as an emergency number. Please log into the parent portal to verify and/or change any information at the beginning of the school year. If these facts change during the year, please remember to update the

portal at that time. Please inform the MACS business office of your address and/or phone number change as well.

CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS AND BIRTHDAYS

Classroom celebrations are held during the school year at Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine’s Day (when not falling during Lent). The celebration is for the students in the class. Teachers may request help from parent volunteers to set up for the celebration. For reasons of safety and practicality, classroom celebrations are designated “no sibling” events. We ask your cooperation in respecting these guidelines by marking your calendars and making arrangements for **all** siblings (birth-grade 12) in advance if you volunteer to help with set up for a classroom celebration.

There are no class parties for birthdays. The delivery of balloons, limousines, flowers, etc. should be reserved for celebrations at home. **Invitations to private birthday parties or other celebrations may not be distributed at school unless the entire class is invited.** The teacher will return the invitations to the student to be distributed from home should the entire class not be invited. It is very difficult for elementary age children to understand, and not have their feelings hurt when they realize they have not been invited. **Please arrange for parties and party pickup not to be part of carpool for this same reason. Birthday gifts may not be brought to school.**

Recognition and celebration of a student’s birthday is seen to be an important aspect of that student’s development. To assist in this, parents may send to school and drop off in the office **nutritious** birthday treats. **Our teachers work hard to encourage and educate our students on healthy choices and request your help by not sending in donuts, candy, cupcakes, cookie cakes, or any other sugary treat for a birthday or celebration.** Here are a list of preferred and recommended birthday treats:

- Fruit – apple slices, clementine, strawberries, grapes, fruit kabobs, or fruit cups
- Mini Muffins w/o nuts
- Mini Bagels with cream cheese
- Goldfish, Pirate Booty, or Pretzel packs
- Carrots w/ Ranch dip
- Raisins
- Fruit Popsicles
- Graham Crackers
- Apple Sauce

CLASSROOM PERFORMANCES AND ACTIVITIES

In an effort to comply with capacity at classroom performances and events held in the school, and for reasons of safety and practicality, classroom performances and events are designated “no sibling” events. We ask your cooperation in respecting these guidelines by marking your calendars

and making arrangements for **all** siblings (birth-grade 12) in advance if you plan to attend the performance/event.

For performances/events occurring in the church, we encourage you not to sign out St. Gabriel siblings to attend. **The only exception is the 5th Grade Bridging.**

COMMUNICATION

Every Thursday all families will electronically receive the school newsletter containing information from the school and the PTO. Please try to read the entire newsletter each week so you can be aware of all school events, family activities, volunteer opportunities, and service projects. The school newsletter may also include other flyers or letters of importance such as fund raising activities or letters from our Diocesan Superintendent.

Once a week, each teacher will send one classroom newsletter directly to all parents. Please read this email thoroughly as there will be detailed information about classroom activities, upcoming tests, opportunities to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips, and special videos or photos the teachers enjoy sharing with their parents.

Teachers use the REMIND app to send quick and brief reminders to parents about dress down days, food drives, and/or a classroom event. **This app is not for communicating back and forth with teachers.**

Room parents will also send one email each month to preview the month's events and Sign-Up Genius links.

The **school directory**, located in the parent portal, is for the exclusive use of St. Gabriel Catholic School families, and **cannot be used** for personal gain or made available for political, commercial, or solicitation purposes.

The **school web site** is located at www.stgabrielcatholicschool.org . The web site contains the MACS school year calendar and other important school information.

CONFERENCES

Personal contact between parent and teacher is the most effective way of discussing a child's development. The teacher or parent may request conferences any time there is a need or concern.

Request for conferences by the parent or teacher should be made by a written notice or telephone call to/from the school. This request should be made in advance to allow time for any necessary arrangements to be made. **Please do not call or text the teachers on their cell phones.**

Do not arrive for any early morning conference that has not been previously scheduled.

The MACS scheduled conferences are held in November of every school year. Dates and times are available on the MACS calendar. It is recommended that parents attend this one conference to discuss a student's progress, to share information regarding your child's academic and social abilities, and to establish goals and objectives for the future.

If parents choose not to attend the November conferences, the conference time will not be made up.

DISCIPLINE CODE

As a Catholic school, St. Gabriel is committed to uphold the principles of a Catholic way of life. Catholic values are foremost in the school's code of conduct.

Code of Conduct

- **Respect God**
- **Respect others**
- **Respect yourself**
- **Respect your school**

It is the individual student's responsibility to follow the Code of Conduct, along with guided and supported direction of the school leadership, faculty, staff, and parents to contribute to an atmosphere conducive to Catholic living.

It is expected that all students adhere to the established school rules and regulations, as well as the ordinary rules of courtesy, good behavior, and respect for others. It is the hope of St. Gabriel Catholic School that each student learns the necessity of a proper code of conduct for the formation of their own character and as a resistance to peer group pressures. The student's discipline starts at home. It is our goal to maintain the respect that parents have taught the children in their own home.

Mutual respect for the dignity of the individual, both student, teacher, and a positive trust and understanding are the foundation upon which responsible behavior is formed. Emphasis on the positive qualities and contributions of conduct builds that type of behavior, which will have meaning and permanence.

The authority of the teacher, rules of St. Gabriel Catholic School, and the Catholic formation of all students are to be upheld. When a student's behavior violates the rights of others, it becomes subject to disciplinary measures. The teacher concerned will handle discipline on an individual basis. This may involve a meeting with the principal and/or assistant principal, although the violation may not be of a "suspendable" nature. We work as a team; the administration and/or counselor may be helpful in such a meeting. Parents should not misinterpret such a conference as the "last step" before suspension. If corrective conduct measures are to be taken, parents will be notified. In general, and contingent upon the nature and severity of the disciplinary matter, when a student is sent to the office for a disciplinary matter the following measures will be put into effect:

- **First Visit** – An Administrator will discuss the situation with the student and contact the child's parent. The administrator will log the action and consequence so both administrators are aware of the most recent student discipline.
- **Second Visit** – An Administrator will decide an age-appropriate consequence, which may include removal from the classroom, missing out on all activities for the rest of the day. All consequences will be decided at the discretion of the Administrator as appropriate in a Christ-centered environment. The Administrator will contact a parent to inform them of the situation and explain the student's consequences.

- **Third Visit** – Administration will contact a parent to discuss the situation and the parent will be instructed to remove their student from school. The parents will also be asked to return the next day to participate in a conference with parents, teacher, and administration. At the end of the conference the student will be asked to come into the meeting to discuss a plan for moving forward.

Depending upon the severity of the behavior, student consequences may include in-school suspension, immediate removal from school by student’s parent, out of school suspension, or denied participation to field trips and/or highly anticipated school activities.

Other measures not contained herein may be imposed according to the nature of the infraction, and any other factors that may arise on an individual basis.

Parents will be asked to come to school for a conference with the administration, teacher, and student when further serious disciplinary problems arise. An Individual Action Plan will be created for the student to follow to encourage more appropriate behaviors. Continued or serious violations of school regulations and disrespect toward authority are punishable by suspension or expulsion.

Violations of school rules and a Catholic behavior which are subject to disciplinary action include, but are not limited to the following:

- Refusing to obey a faculty or staff person
- Talking back when corrected for behavior
- Showing rude, flippant, bold, or impolite speech or behavior
- Consistently violating the dress code
- Cheating
- Disturbing class; interrupting teacher by talking, making noises, or laughing when the situation does not warrant it
- Running in the hallways
- Name-calling
- Making fun of other students
- Pushing or shoving others, fighting, or injuring other students
- Speaking unkindly or rudely to other students
- Tampering with or taking other students’ or staffs’ personal belongings
- Leaving school without permission
- Vandalism
- Possession of any weapon or toy weapon

DISMISSAL

Dismissal Car Lane Directions – We will have teachers on duty and signage to help direct cars with the traffic pattern for the afternoon. Teachers will also be assigned to help monitor the safety of the students. Cars will be released to move when all students are loaded in each designated area of the parking lot. **Do not pull around stopped cars!**

Plan your arrival in the carpool line to accommodate any appointments or after-school activities. If you park your car, you will be asked to return and join the carpool flow of traffic. By order of the fire department, no one shall be dismissed during a fire drill.

Dismissal Procedures

- Prayers will be read at 2:18 pm. At 2:20 pm, dismissal will begin for only K-1 students scheduled for first dismissal.
- At 2:30 pm all K-3 students registered in the MACS After School Enrichment Program will be dismissed; the students in grades 4 and 5 attending ASEP will be dismissed at 2:45 pm.
- Students in grades 2 and 3, as well as their siblings or carpools who are in Kindergarten and/or 1st grade will begin dismissal at 2:35 pm.
- Students in grades 4 and 5, as well as their siblings or carpools, will begin dismissal at 2:45 pm.

All students attending various after school clubs/activities will be dismissed at the end of carpool. Students remaining after regular carpool is over (approximately 3:00 pm) will be escorted to the school office, and parents must park and sign the student(s) out from the office.

Please understand that our focus is on the children's safety during dismissal. While we are most interested in communication with families, the staff will not be available for discussions during these critical time periods.

In addition, there is no admittance to the building between 1:45 pm and 3:00 pm to ensure the safety and security of our students as well as an efficient dismissal process.

School Pass™ - Parents all have a unique carpool number to display on their vehicle's dashboard. Parents will receive instructions for the School Pass™ application used to streamline our carpool system. All parents must use this application to manage student's dismissal arrangements.

Students will be allowed to leave school only with those adults listed on the Emergency Form.

Please note:

A phone call is not an acceptable means to change your child's dismissal/pick-up procedure.

REMEMBER:

- **Drive carefully and slowly.**
- **Keep children buckled in their seats.**
- **Obey carpool personnel.**
- **Have patience.**
- **Refrain from cell phone use.**
- **Watch for children!**

The “rule of thumb” is: IF THE CARS ARE MOVING, THE CHILDREN ARE NOT. IF THE CHILDREN ARE MOVING, THE CARS ARE NOT!!!

Rainy Day Dismissal - Afternoon carpool may be modified to an indoor dismissal in the case of severe weather, taking the safety of the teachers on duty into consideration. In the event of a change in dismissal procedures based on available information from weather forecasts, it is our intent to notify parents by 1:30 pm.

DRESS CODE

MACS and St. Gabriel Catholic School believe that an appropriate dress code is important in educating our students in the necessity of good grooming and acceptable appearance, without an over emphasis on commercialization. Our students are, therefore, required to wear a school uniform, as outlined below.

The Dress Code outlined below must be followed based on the biological (God-given) gender of the student.

All clothing should be free of designs, emblems, or labels, other than those of the school. All jumpers, skorts, and shorts should be of a conservative length. In the case clothing worn deviates from this policy, parents will be notified.

Students’ names should be on uniform items in case they are misplaced.

St. Gabriel Catholic School emblem polo shirts in white and gray, uniform jumpers, emblem skorts, pants, sweaters, and uniform gym clothing may be purchased through Flynn and O’Hara Uniforms (1-800-441-4122) or at the uniform store located at 1730 Abbey Place in Charlotte (704.525.0002). Pants, shorts and white shirts may also be purchased from local retail stores or through mail order catalogs.

Our PTO sponsored Spirit Store, link located on the PTO web site, offers sweatshirts to be worn with all uniforms and t-shirts that may be worn on PE days.

Charlotte Catholic High School Spirit Day – Every Friday, students may wear their CCHS spirit t-shirts or sweatshirts with uniform bottoms.

Coats and Jackets- Coats of any type are permitted for outside use on the playground. Only the approved uniform sweatshirts may be worn inside the school and church building during the school day.

Dress Down Day - On the monthly dress down day, students may wear clothes other than the school uniforms. Students will still be required to dress appropriately and neatly within the conservative standards of a Catholic school. Hats, headbands, sunglasses, visors, etc. are not allowed unless otherwise specified by the teacher, principal, or assistant principal for a special occasion.

Girls may wear dresses, skirts with blouses, jeans that are neat with no holes, cuts or tears, or shorts of a conservative length so that sitting, bending, or kneeling will not cause embarrassment to the student or to others around her. Strapless dresses, “spaghetti” straps, halter, and tank tops are not appropriate for school.

Boys should wear shorts, pants, or jeans that are neat with no holes, cuts or tears. Tank tops, muscle shirts, midriff jerseys, see-through mesh jerseys, and torn clothing are not acceptable wear for school.

The uniform shoe requirements remain in effect on Dress Down Days. If a student comes to school in clothing which is considered inappropriate by the school staff, he/she will be asked to call a parent to bring something more acceptable.

Any article which advertises alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or displays violence, satanic symbols, or suggestive words is prohibited.

Mass Day Participants - On days of a Mass when students are participants (e.g. reading, bringing up gifts, etc.) girls (K-4) are to wear jumpers with white shirts, and boys are to wear navy blue pants or shorts with white shirts and a belt. Fifth grade girls may either wear the plaid kilt, or navy blue skort with emblem, with a white or navy polo shirt. Students participating in a School Mass may not wear jackets during the church service.

Students selected to participate in Mass should not wear a PE uniform.

Hair – Boys and girls hair should be well groomed. Feathers, beads, and/or color rub are not permitted for students; students must maintain their natural hair color.

- Girls may wear hair accessories of any color, but not out of character with the uniform. **Hair should not cover the eyes.**
- Boys' hair length may not touch the collar **and should not cover the eyes.**

Parents will be notified by Administration if a student’s hair creates a distraction from learning. Notification requires the parents to take necessary actions of compliance.

Jewelry - Simple jewelry, (e.g. single chain or bracelet, watch, small earrings.) For the safety of the student, earrings may not extend below the ear lobe.

Jumpers - Girls in K-4 must have the blue and gray plaid jumpers, which are available in two styles, from Flynn and O’Hara Uniforms. Shorts must be worn under the jumper (any color shorts).

Kilts - All Fifth Grade girls must wear plaid kilts with a white blouse or white or navy blue knit polo style shirt if they are participants in the celebration of the Mass (e.g. reader,

bringing up the gifts, Prayers of the Faithful, etc.) The hem of a kilt may be no shorter than one inch above the knee.

Pants and shorts - Solid navy blue twill, tailored, and hemmed pants or shorts only. Belts (dark, solid colored) should be worn with shorts or pants with belt loops for students in grades 2-5. Baggy and oversized pants, cargo pants, and carpenter-style pants are not permitted.

Physical Education Uniform - Navy mesh shorts with the school emblem and gray t-shirts with the school emblem are to be worn on scheduled PE days. Students may wear navy blue sweatshirts and sweatpants with or without the St. Gabriel Catholic School emblem on scheduled PE days. St. Gabriel Spirit Wear (Gabe's) can also be worn with the PE uniform. All PE uniform shorts, t-shirts, and sweatshirts and sweatpants are required to be worn with sneakers.

Shirts - Short or long-sleeve white knit polo shirt with collar, with or without the school logo; short or long sleeve gray knit polo shirt with collar and school logo; short or long sleeve white blouse with Peter Pan collar; white turtleneck. No other logo besides school emblem is allowed (i.e. no Polo, Izod, etc.). **Shirts must be tucked in.**

Shoes – Only sneakers/tennis shoes that are appropriate for school can be worn. Please make sure these shoes are safe for use on playground equipment. No light-up shoes/sneakers, sneakers with wheels, clogs, Crocs, or sandals. No hiking, combat or ladies' style boots.

Skorts - Only Grade 5 girls may wear the navy skort, and it must be the Flynn and O'Hara skort with the school emblem on it. No other skorts are allowed.

Socks - All students must wear socks. Socks may not be distracting in any way to other students. Navy blue, white, gray, or black tights are acceptable.

Sweaters - Solid navy blue or white cardigan or crew neck, with or without the school emblem may be worn over a uniform shirt.

Sweatshirts - Navy blue or gray St. Gabriel Catholic School emblem sweatshirt which is available at Flynn & O'Hara (1-800-441-4122) may be worn over a regular uniform shirt. Plain navy blue or gray zippered or hooded sweatshirts are allowed to be worn during the school day as part of the school uniform. St. Gabriel Spirit Outerwear (Gabe's) can also be worn with the school uniform.

Winter Dress Code – As soon as the temperature dips below 50 degrees girls and boys are allowed to wear full length to the ankle black, navy blue, white, or gray leggings under their uniform bottoms, including gym shorts, plaid jumpers or fifth grade skorts. **Students are not allowed to wear any type of boots with their uniform.**

Uniform Exchange Program - A uniform exchange program sponsored by the PTO, is held on specified dates throughout the school year. This program allows parents the opportunity to obtain uniform jumpers, St. Gabriel sweatshirts, t-shirts, polo shirts, pants, shorts, sweaters, or cardigans, at no charge. Access to extra uniforms from this exchange program is available during the school year.

In an effort for your child to comply with the uniform policy, we ask all parents to support and uphold the uniform requirements of St. Gabriel Catholic School.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students may be released to a parent/guardian before the end of the school day. All parents must use the School Pass application to manage student's dismissal arrangements. When you arrive to pick up your child, please report to the office and sign the child out. Do not go to the classroom. The student will remain in class until called to the office for release. When returning your child to school, **please accompany him/her** into the office to sign back in. **When your child must leave school near dismissal, please arrange to pick him/her up by 1:45 pm. Please do not ask for special consideration.**

EMERGENCY CLOSING or SNOW DELAY

In case of snow or other emergency conditions, St. Gabriel Catholic School WILL NOT automatically follow the policy of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public School System. The decision to close school or to open at a later hour of the day will be made by the Diocesan Superintendent. In case of storms or other emergencies, there will be an announcement on the local radio or television stations concerning Mecklenburg Area Catholic Schools. Please listen to the announcement for the closing or delayed opening. You will also be notified via phone through our School Messenger parent contact system. Do not call the school or staff.

If inclement weather develops during the day, and it becomes necessary to close school, please listen to local radio or television stations for an announcement. **A message will also be sent to your phone numbers via School Messenger.** Please listen for Charlotte Catholic Schools, St. Gabriel Catholic School, or Mecklenburg Area Catholic Schools on the announcements.

There will be **NO before school care** on days with delayed openings - for example, a two-hour delay would indicate that the school will open at 9:15 am, two hours after our normal 7:15 am opening time. On delayed start days, there will be **NO HOT LUNCH**. Students must bring a bag lunch!

After school care is cancelled on days when students are dismissed early due to emergency situations.

Phone chains will only be activated at the direction of the principal or assistant principal if and when sufficient notice cannot be given through television, radio, or School Messenger. Thank you for your help and cooperation.

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips will be instructional in nature and related to the curriculum being taught. Students will not be allowed to participate in a field trip without a school issued permission form completely filled out and signed by a parent or guardian. Telephone calls will not be acceptable in lieu of the signed form. MACS or charter buses are used for field trip transportation.

All students must depart from the school with their teacher and return to the school with their teacher at the end of a field trip. Students are not allowed to be transported to a field trip, or picked up from a field trip by a parent. If the field trip's departure or return time creates a conflict for the student and family, then the student should not attend the field trip and will receive an excused absence for the day.

Please see additional information and requirements in the Volunteer section below if you are interested in volunteering for off-campus field trips.

FIELD TRIP CHAPERONES

Parents interested in chaperoning field trips must have all required volunteer paperwork on file in the school office prior to field trip. Chaperones must accept the responsibility of remaining with the group of students assigned for the entire time at the off-campus field trip. Chaperones may not exchange students within groups. Chaperones cannot leave a field trip until students are safely under the supervision of the teacher either at school or when delivered to the bus for the return trip to school.

GRIEVANCE

Complaints from individuals concerning educational programs or facilities should be directed to their lowest possible level for an equitable solution according to the following sequence:

1. Student/Parent
2. Teacher
3. Principal
4. MACS Board of Education
5. Superintendent of Schools
6. Diocesan Board of Education
7. Chancellor
8. Bishop

Complaints from individuals concerning personnel should be directed to their lowest possible level for an equitable solution according to the following sequence:

1. Student/Parent
2. Teacher
3. Principal
4. Superintendent of Schools
5. Chancellor
6. Bishop

Social media in any form, including bulk snail mail, email, texting, Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter, etc., is not an appropriate forum to discuss complaints & grievances about St. Gabriel Catholic School. We also recommend that all parents refrain from using social media to discuss sensitive issues about the school. Failure to follow this policy will be reported to the Catholic Schools Office and could result in the immediate dismissal of your child(ren) from St. Gabriel Catholic School.

GUIDANCE & COUNSELING

The guidance and counseling program focuses on serving the needs of our students. It provides programs and services that help children develop spiritually, academically, emotionally, personally, and socially. The St. Gabriel staff includes guidance counselors who are available to assist your child with his/her transition to our school community. Counseling is a helping relationship that focuses upon assisting the individual's growth and adjustment as well as problem-solving and decision-making needs.

HEALTH EDUCATION

The MACS nurse, in response to curriculum or student needs, offers a variety of health education programs each year. At the elementary level, the following programs are currently offered:

- FACT (First Aid for Children Today) - An American Red Cross program for first grade.
- BAT (Basic Aid Training) - An American Red Cross program for fourth grade.

Other programs and topics such as Dental Health, Nutrition, Heart Health, and Drug Education, etc. are offered as requested.

HEALTH SERVICES

Emergency Information - Parents must complete the online emergency information located in the parent portal for each student so that the school is able to reach parents quickly in the event that the child is injured or becomes ill at school. Parents will also be required to submit a hard copy of the Health Questionnaire, which includes some of the same information, to be kept in the school Nurse's office. The Health Questionnaire will be distributed at Open House and should be returned on the first day of school.

Health problems or allergies should be indicated. Any medication your child is taking should be noted. An important part of that information is listing emergency contact persons who may be available to assume responsibility and/or pick up the child in the event that the school is unable to reach a parent. It is helpful to let these persons know that they are listed so that they can be prepared to help out.

If any of this information changes during the school year, we ask that it be updated promptly in the parent portal. Please also contact the school nurse.

Health Problems - Please communicate any health problems, allergies, or special needs to the classroom teacher, office personnel, and school nurse so that we can be prepared to help

your student. If medical equipment and/or supplies are required, it is the parent's responsibility to provide the necessary equipment and supplies.

Health Room - A Health Room or area is provided in each MACS school where students may come if they are injured or become ill. The Health Room at St. Gabriel Catholic School is staffed by a MACS Nurse (RN) 5 days per week. The nurse is available for consultation by phone. The school office staff is CPR and First Aid certified and able to manage situations as they develop. While we are able to provide for the initial evaluation of student injuries or illnesses, we are not staffed, nor do we have the space to provide more than an initial evaluation. The school nurse or staff will notify you in the event of suspected serious illness or injury.

As we all know, children do, despite our best efforts, become ill. Please do not send your child to school if he or she has experienced any of the following within the past 24 hours:

- Fever (Temperature over 99.5)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rashes which may be infectious or contagious
- Drainage from eyes or ears, yellow or green drainage from the nose

If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease (strep throat or conjunctivitis or "pink eye," etc.) please keep him/her home until he/she is no longer contagious. For strep throat, this means for 24 hours after the Penicillin is started or 36 hours if Erythromycin is used.

In addition, we will ask you to pick your child up from school if we see any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Fever (Temperature over 99.5 with no other symptoms)
- Fever (Temperature over 99.5 accompanied by other symptoms)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rashes which may be infectious or contagious (Scarlet fever, chicken pox, impetigo, and ringworm are common examples) or about which we are uncertain
- Drainage from eyes or ears, yellow or green drainage from the nose
- Cough that is productive (produces mucus)
- Other symptoms if they exist so that they interfere with the student's ability to learn and participate in class (example, a student with the flu may be so tired that he needs to go home and rest)
- Lice - If your child has lice, please notify the school nurse. Once your child has been treated with a pediculicide and nits have been removed, the child may return to school. Your child needs to be checked by the school nurse or the designee before returning to the classroom.

Health Screening - Vision screening will be conducted by MACS nurses in the fall of each year in grades 1, 3, and 5 only. Any abnormal findings will be reported to the student's parent/guardian.

Medications - If possible, all medications should be given at home. However, medications will be given to students during the day, if needed, as prescribed by a physician. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide any required medications in their **original package** to the nurse along with the completed required forms, and to provide complete directions concerning the administration of the medication, and to obtain the signature of the physician when required. It is also the responsibility of the parent to communicate any changes in medication. Refer to MACS Administration of Medication Policy for complete instructions. Medication is given only by MACS nurses or by designated trained office staff who work closely with the nurse and parents.

Notification and records of any medication that is administered to student at home must be given to the Health Room in case of an adverse medical reaction during a school day. The Health Room holds all information regarding student's medication confidential.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an extension of the learning process, intended to help the child learn self-discipline, accept responsibilities for him/her, and to reinforce objectives taught during school that day. The best way for parents to help their child with homework is to provide an organized routine at home for homework. The child will benefit from a planned time (perhaps after dinner) and planned location (a good working area, such as a table or desk with little or no distraction). Children will appreciate parental support in the way of a good, positive attitude about homework.

Special Projects – When teachers assign special projects, parents should only assist children and refrain from doing their child's work for the project. The learning experience is in the doing, not necessarily the end project. Grades are given for effort as well as presentation.

Grade Level Homework Policies

LEARNING SUPPORT

The Learning Support Program is available to all students in grades K-5. The St. Gabriel staff includes four learning support teachers. Each teacher has a Master's Degree in either Reading, Math, or Special Education. All four teachers are trained and/or certified in the Orton Gillingham methodology of teaching reading. Their goal is to support students with interventions or remediations in a small group setting. If your child receives additional tutoring, speech therapy, occupational therapy, or an educational evaluation from an outside agency, please make sure a copy of this information is forwarded to the administration. All student information is held confidential.

LOST AND FOUND

If a child has lost an item (e.g. coat, lunch box, backpack, water bottle) or any other uniform item during the school day, the item may be in the designated area for Lost and Found.

Any item not labeled or claimed by the end of the school year will either be moved to the Uniform Exchange or be donated to charity. ***It is highly recommended that all personal articles be marked with some kind of personal identification.***

LUNCH PROGRAM

Cafeteria Rules - Students are requested to follow certain rules of decorum to ensure the efficiency and safety of the lunchroom. These are:

- ❑ Be polite to all cafeteria staff and volunteers
- ❑ Sit in the place assigned for your class
- ❑ Practice good table manners
- ❑ Stay seated while you are eating
- ❑ Talk quietly to the students around you
- ❑ Finish eating before you leave the cafeteria
- ❑ Clean up after yourself, placing litter in proper containers
- ❑ Leave the cafeteria when directed by staff

Cafeteria Volunteers - In addition to the school cafeteria staff personnel, volunteers are sought from among the St. Gabriel parents to assist with cafeteria duties. Parental involvement and assistance is encouraged, especially in the lower grades.

Ice Cream – (NEW this year) - **The Cafeteria sells a variety of ice cream only available to students on Fridays.**

Late Delivery of Lunches – Parents dropping a lunch box off during the day must place the lunch in the designated area found on the front table located at the entrance of the cafeteria, lunches must be labeled with child’s first and last name. Children will not be called down to the office to pick up their lunch. All students without a lunch will check the “Lunch Box” table prior to going into the cafeteria. If the child’s lunch has not been dropped off, it is the responsibility of the student to let the Teacher Assistant know that he/she needs a lunch. The student will then be given the option of a peanut butter or peanut butter and jelly sandwich and milk.

Lunch Periods - Lunch periods begin at approximately 10:15 am and continue until 1:15 pm. Each grade level K-4 begins by going to recess together, then each grade level in K-4 will eat together in the cafeteria. Fifth grade students will eat lunch first, followed by recess. Students participate in prayer in their classroom before recess/lunch. Each class has designated tables for lunch. A “peanut-free” table exists to accommodate students with peanut-related allergies.

Parents and families are welcome to join students for lunch ***only on Fridays or the child’s birthday***, and should consult their child’s teacher for specific lunch times. Please sign-in at the front office before proceeding to the cafeteria. Visitors may bring their own lunch or include their pre-order on their child’s lunch order form.

Meals - The MACS system contracts with a number of restaurants in the Charlotte area to provide hot lunches to students at affordable prices. Parents/students may choose from a list of entrees from the designated restaurant. The school cafeteria also sells milk, water, and snacks. Detailed ordering information will be made available at the beginning of each school year.

Students may also bring their own lunch. Please do not send with, or bring for your child, soda beverages. Do not send food that must be heated up. Those who choose not to order the school entrees still have the option to purchase beverages and snacks from the cafeteria.

MACS AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (ASEP)

Mecklenburg Area Catholic Schools (MACS) has designed an After School Enrichment Program to meet the needs of K-5 children at St. Gabriel and their working parents. The purpose of the program is to provide a child-centered, safe, stimulating, and happy environment that allows children to interact freely with others. They serve snacks, assist with homework, and even offer periodic outside entertainment programs such as karate lessons, DJ parties, puppet shows, etc. After-School Enrichment Program booklets and applications are available upon request. Ellen Buening, Director of ASEP 704.370.3268

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT

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

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

Mission - The mission of the Parent Teacher Organization is to assist the principal, assistant principal, teachers, and families of our school in reaching the goals of the school. We do this by serving two major functions:

- 1) To raise the needed funds to help implement our goal, and;
- 2) To help foster a school community that will enable our teachers and families to best care and nurture our children so that they may learn and grow in faith as they strive to become the adults that Jesus calls them to be.

More information about the PTO can be found on the PTO's web page at www.stgabrielcatholicschoolpto.org/ .

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The school does not accept responsibility for lost or misplaced items.

Students may not bring ANY toys, electronic devices, cellular phones, trading cards, or Apple style watches (like Fitbit, Garmin, Gizmo, or tracking devices, etc.).

A teacher will remove these items if brought to school.

PETS

Due to liability reasons, household pets are not permitted in the school building or on the school campus at any time. This policy is in place to protect the health and well-being of the pet and students of St. Gabriel.

PHOTO RELEASE

All parents MUST sign a Photo/Video Release form at the beginning of the year that will remain on file for one school year. This release provides the school with permission from the parent that their child can have pictures taken for promotional material, social media, and/or classroom activities. This policy is an “all in” policy and no exceptions can be granted.

PLAYGROUND

Each class is assigned at least 1 outdoor recess each day. Weather permitting, a teacher and/or teacher assistant will escort the class to the playground. During recess, the students are asked to adhere to the following rules:

- Proceed to playground in an orderly manner
- Do not leave the playground without permission from your teacher
- Use equipment properly
- Demonstrate the spirit of cooperation and good sportsmanship
- No pushing, shoving, tackling, kicking, fighting, or teasing
- No picking up or throwing sand, rocks, wood chips, or any other items
- Have FUN!

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

St. Gabriel Catholic School participates in the parish sacramental program. This program is under the direction of the Director of Evangelization at St. Gabriel Catholic Church.

While it is the privilege of St. Gabriel Catholic School to help prepare the students for First Penance and First Eucharist, all other procedures are under the parish direction.

It is the responsibility of parents to inquire about the Sacramental programs at their individual parishes.

SCHOOL MASSES

Masses celebrated during school hours are prepared by students, teachers, and the St. Gabriel Catholic Church. The students may take an active role in creating the theme, selecting appropriate readings, writing prayers of the faithful, choosing songs, supporting the choir with their voices, and participating as lectors.

Masses are held weekly on Wednesdays at 8:15am. Students must be in appropriate uniform when requested to read or present on the altar. Students are permitted to wear regular uniform and PE uniform when attending Mass.

One Mass a month is prepared by the school with student participants and the school choir. All other weekly Masses are prepared and led by St. Gabriel Church staff.

TECHNOLOGY

We have an abundance of technology at St. Gabriel Catholic School thanks in a large part to our generous PTO. All students, faculty, and staff are expected to use all hardware and software with the utmost care, respect, and regard for the work of others. Below you will find our newly adopted Acceptable Use Policy.

Acceptable Use Policy

The use of technology and, in particular, the Internet, in education has grown by leaps and bounds. Technology tools are now as common as textbooks. St. Gabriel Catholic School offers Internet access for students, teachers and staff. The Internet offers information and resources otherwise unavailable to our school. Because the Internet is a necessity in supporting our curriculum goals, it has become an integral part of our instructional program for all teachers and students.

The goals of Internet access are:

1. To support curriculum standards
2. To enhance learning opportunities and instructional resources
3. To promote life-long learning

Students will be monitored when the Internet is used during class. Under the direction of the Diocesan IT Department, St. Gabriel will continue to utilize filtering software to block students' access to inappropriate websites.

Acceptable Use of the Internet: It is the expectation of St. Gabriel Catholic School that the Internet is used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner by all members of the St. Gabriel community, and is used in support of the educational objectives and the student behavior guidelines of St. Gabriel. Transmission of any material in violation of any federal or state regulation is prohibited. Unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to, the following: violating copyright laws, reposting (forwarding) a person's communications without the author's prior consent, and using threatening or inappropriate language.

Netiquette Rules: Users must abide by network etiquette rules. These rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Be polite; rudeness is never acceptable.
2. Use appropriate language.
3. Do not reveal your personal address or telephone number or those of anyone else.

Privileges: The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use of the Internet or equipment will result in limitation or cancellation of user privileges. In addition, inappropriate use may result in suspension or expulsion from the school.

VISITORS

For the safety of the children and to reduce interruptions, parents and other visitors are not permitted to go directly to the classrooms. Visitors must report to the school office upon arrival, sign in, obtain a Visitor Pass, and be given permission to enter the classroom area. Parents and visitors are not permitted to “sit-in” or attend a class. It is a disruption to learning.

Persons bringing school papers or any other items left at home by the students must bring the items to the school office where a staff member will then deliver them accordingly and/or the student will retrieve the items at a time that does not interfere with instruction. For the same reason, students will not be called to the office to pick up forgotten items.

VISITOR PARKING

Visitors are asked to park in the main parking lot. No parking is permitted in the school parking lot during morning arrival or after 1:30 pm. If you are visiting the school during dismissal time, please park in the lots adjacent to the Ministry Center or the Church.

Do Not Park in the Fire Lane to drop off or pick up students or items at any time during the school day.

VOLUNTEERS

St. Gabriel relies on the volunteer efforts of parents and grandparents. Active participation by parent volunteers in school is considered an integral part of their child’s social and scholastic development. There are many activities in which parent volunteers may participate, such as classroom celebrations, cafeteria helpers, field trip chaperones, and other PTO opportunities. Volunteers must sign in at the school and obtain a Visitor Pass.

All Volunteers of St. Gabriel Catholic School must complete and submit the following documentation as required by the Bishops’ Charter and the Diocese of Charlotte Safe Environment Program before volunteering at the school. Please ensure you have completed all of the following requirements to be able to volunteer in any capacity--chaperoning a field trip, helping with centers, helping in the lunchroom, etc.

- 1) Completed Volunteer Profile
- 2) Signed Acknowledgements for the Diocese of Charlotte Safe Environment Policies – which include the *Sexual Misconduct Policy* and the *Code of Ethics*.
- 3) Completion of *Protecting God’s Children* training workshop
(*Virtus publishes additional training bulletins monthly. It is required that volunteers stay current with monthly bulletins.*)
- 4) Current and approved Background Check (Background Checks must be completed at least every 5 years. When you complete your request for a Background Check, be sure to list your volunteer location as St. Gabriel Catholic School.)

You can complete most of these requirements and your background check online through www.virtus.org. Virtus online registration instructions are available on our web site in the Quicklinks menu.

<https://www.stgabrielcatholicschool.org/quicklinks>

If you can't complete an online registration or already have a Virtus account and just need to complete some documents, these forms can be accessed in both English and Spanish via the following link:

<https://charlottediocese.org/human-resources/safe-environment/information-for-volunteers/>

Special Notes:

- The cost of the background check varies depending on the level of detail required. The minimum cost is \$8.00. We will notify you when we receive the invoice for your background check to let you know the exact cost. Payment can be made at that time to St. Gabriel Catholic School. *There is no need to send payment in advance. Thank you!*

Special Notes Continued:

- Any future training required by the Diocese will also require completion and submission of documentation to St. Gabriel Catholic School.
- If you sign up to volunteer and your paperwork is not complete, you will be notified of the missing paperwork; however, **please note that the absence of any required paperwork at the time of the volunteer commitment will result in the inability to volunteer.**

Questions? Please contact the school office.

Weapons

St. Gabriel Catholic School prohibits all persons who enter the building/campus from carrying a handgun, firearm, or prohibited weapon of any kind, regardless of whether the person is licensed to carry the weapon. The only exception will be on-duty law enforcement officers, or other persons who have been given written consent by the principal to carry a weapon on St. Gabriel Catholic School campus.

Acknowledgement of Receipt

This will acknowledge that I have personally received a copy of the St. Gabriel Catholic School Parent Handbook. I agree that I am obligated to read and familiarize myself, and my family, with its contents. I further understand that I, and my family, must agree and comply with the contents therein.

The handbook is the sole property of St. Gabriel Catholic School, who can revise, supplement, and/or rescind any of the policies at any time without prior notice to me.

Parent Signature

Date

Names of Children:

