



# St. John's Evangelical Lutheran School



## St. John's Evangelical Lutheran School

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## Parent Handbook 2023

## **Introduction**

So that routine matters may be carried out in a consistent, orderly and God-pleasing manner, please carefully note and help to maintain the following standards, as adopted by your Board of Education.

## **Purpose**

Based on the Lord's Great Commission for his church (Matthew 28:18-20) and on his specific will for his church in regard to the Christian education of children (John 21:15), St. John's Lutheran School exists to assist parents in rearing their children "in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

## **Goals**

- We will provide students with an education based on God's Word.
- We will assist congregational members in preparing their children
- for a life of service in God's Word and in Christ's kingdom.
- We will assist non-members in introducing the love of God
- through his Son, Jesus Christ, to their children. We will assist students in living for Christ in every aspect of their lives.

## **Curriculum**

The subjects that are taught in St. John's Lutheran School are similar to those of any other school. The distinguishing factor is that, in a Christian school, God's Holy Word shines its light on all areas of conduct and curriculum.

- The Bible is the sure foundation in Religion.

- Science clearly shows God as both creator and preserver and discovers His marvelous works.
- History is the record that shows how God guides the destinies of men, nations, and the world.
- Social Studies teaches the duties of Christians towards their fellow man and their government.
- Mathematics encourages Christian stewardship of God-given property and goods. All other areas of the curriculum serve to discover and develop God-given gifts and abilities. Music, art, and physical education are not neglected and serve to ready the child for a useful and God-pleasing life, both here and in eternity.
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### **Enrollment**

Children of St. John's members are eligible and encouraged to attend our school. All others will be considered only after consultation with the principal and pastor and after approval of the Board of Education. Priority will be given to members of a WELS sister congregation on a tuition basis. Non-WELS members whose children become enrolled in K-8 will be required to attend the pastors' Bible Information Class. Furthermore, non-member parents must agree to cooperate with our goal of preparing their children to become confirmed members of our congregation, if they decide to do so after eighth grade. Their continued enrollment will be reviewed annually, along with that of all students. Students with a record of scholastic and/or discipline problems will be considered with extra care.

### **Church Attendance**

*"Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy."*

Since the Lord commands us in the Third Commandment to attend church faithfully, we consider regular attendance at worship services to be an integral part of our curriculum. All WELS parents who enroll their children in our school are expected to attend church with their children.

### **Nondiscriminatory Policy**

St. John's Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

### **Entrance Requirements**

The state of Michigan requires that children entering Kindergarten be five (5) years old before September 1st of the year in which they enroll. If there is any doubt regarding readiness, we strongly suggest that enrollment be postponed. Testing will be available upon request of the teacher or parents. Any transfer student can expect to be tested for grade placement. In keeping with state laws, each child must submit a physician's statement showing the required immunizations. A birth certificate copy is required and physical examination is strongly recommended.

### **Fees**

St. John's School is maintained and supported by the regular contributions of its members. This includes such items as

salaries, utilities, maintenance, etc. We do not depend on government money to operate. Our school operates at a cost of more than \$5,000.00 per student per year. Seventy percent of the offerings in the church are used for the support of our school's ministry. Parents are asked to keep this fact in mind as they plan their regular church offerings. The cost of tuition depends on if you are a member of our congregation or not. For a full list of tuition prices please visit our website or contact the school office.

### **Enrollment Fee Policy**

*If the tuition fee is unsuitable for some families, we are willing to work out an alternate payment plan. In some cases financial assistance is available; however, you must take the initiative and contact the school office to apply before July 1. In receiving assistance, the members of St. John's are given top priority. Parents will be contacted by the school office or our tuition management company, FACTS, if the payments are overdue. A Board of Education member will assist in the collection of overdue fees. The child will not be able to enroll for classes next year if any outstanding balance is remaining from the previous year. If you have any questions or concerns about your payment, please contact the Board of Education by calling the school office.*

### **School Hours**

*The school day begins at 8:15. The door locking schedule is as follows. The school doors facing Alp Street and the parking lot are open from 8:00 until 8:15. The school day ends at 3:00 pm. ALL children are to leave the school grounds as soon as possible after dismissal. Only those students who are directly involved in supervised activities may remain. If you are late for pickup and have not notified any teachers or staff regarding*

*pickup, your child will go to our after-school care, and you will be charged for at least a full hour of care.*

### **Parking Lot**

The school parking lot is open from 8:00 to 8:15 for drop-off only. After school the lot is also open for pick-up only from 2:55-3:15. If parents wish to enter the building, please park along Alp Street.

### **Attendance**

In accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan all children aged 6 to 16 are held to regular and punctual attendance. A written or oral excuse is required from a parent when a pupil is absent or tardy.

### **Student Conduct**

- God has given those he has placed in positions of authority the privilege and responsibility to discipline those that he has placed in their care. This authority includes both parents and teachers. The discipline at St. John's Lutheran School will strive to follow the guidelines of Law and the Gospel recorded for us in the Scriptures.
- While our school remains a Gospel-centered place of learning, the Law will be applied. Consequences for misbehavior will be carried out. Pertinent examples from Holy Scripture will also be used when deemed necessary. Because we live in a world where the devil is constantly trying to drive a wedge between God and his children.
- It is important that each party, the school, and the parent, have a correct vision of what God expects of them in defining their roles. This will allow peace to reign and strengthen relationships among God's people.
- The parent's role is primary in the discipline process. God has given the gift of children to parents and expects that

they be the primary model of the behavior that defines a child of God.

- When a school-related incident is brought by the child to the parent the proper course of action for the parent is to inform the school principal immediately. This allows both parents and school to be aware of the problem while it is fresh and it nurtures the most expedient solution.
- The teacher of each class has the responsibility to deal with sinful behavior immediately. If the behavior, in the opinion of the professional educator, is severe enough the parents and the principal will be informed. A special meeting that may include the parents of the child, the teacher of the student, the principal, and the Board of Education may follow this.
- The principal has a pivotal role in the discipline of students in the school. His job is to foster an attitude of peace between students and teachers and between parents and teachers. Upon being made aware of a discipline situation his involvement will depend on its severity. He reserves the right to assign detention or suspend a child at home or at school for a definite period of time if this seems to be the most advisable course of action. His ultimate goals will be to address the discipline in the school, bring peace back to the classrooms, and strengthen the team of parents, teacher, and principal.
- The Board of Education may also be involved in the discipline in the school. If both parent and child have demonstrated their unwillingness to listen and respond to teachers and principal the Board of Education will be involved. Only the Board of Education holds the responsibility to expel a child. This will only be done in extreme discipline situations.

- In discipline there are no "canned" answers. Each case must and will be taken on its own merit. The way to maintain a healthy school and a safe place for teachers to teach and children to learn is to be willing to communicate. Christ communicating his love motivates us to live in the freedom to serve one another. With pure hearts and proper motives, our school will continue to be a blessing to many families.

### **Universal Discipline Policy**

Our God, speaking through His inspired Word, requires the appropriate discipline of his children. He expects parents to be responsible for exercising such discipline in the home. By sending your child to St. John's Lutheran School, you have chosen to share this responsibility with the teachers and staff of this school. Following is an outline listing the reason and method for disciplining the children of St. John's Lutheran School.

#### I. Why we discipline

##### A. To follow the will of the Lord

1. "Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to (eternal) death." (Proverbs 19:8)
2. The corrections of discipline are the way to life." (Proverbs 6:23)
3. "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11)
4. "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him." (Proverbs 13:24)

5. Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

B. To lead a child to repentance and to receive God's assurance of forgiveness

1. Luke 17:3 If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.
2. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (I John 1:9-10)

C. To maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning in the classroom

## II. How we discipline

A. By counseling with God's Word

1. "Preach the word . . . correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and instruction." (II Timothy 4:2)
2. "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)

B. By following a progression of discipline by establishing the rules for the classroom and school:

1. After arrival, students must remain in the classroom until school starts unless given permission by a teacher.
2. Students listen and follow directions.
3. Students complete all assignments neatly and on time.

4. Students raise their hand for permission to talk before speaking except when given general permission for group discussion.

5. Students remain at their desks unless they have permission to leave.

6. Students keep their hands, feet, and objects to themselves.

7. Students keep rooms and desks neat.

8. Students leave gum at home.

9. Students refrain from recess play in the classrooms and halls: throwing objects, chasing, running, etc.

10. Students keep voices soft and other noise to a minimum in the halls.

11. Students walk in the hallways.

12. Students play and move with a mind for safety in the classrooms, halls, gym, and playground.

13. Students will ask permission to leave the classroom, gym, lunch area, etc.

14. Students will comply with silent reminders to correct minor misbehavior (e.g. a look, stand by student's desk, motion with hand for the student to desist, be seated, etc.)

15. Students will comply when teachers orally offer specific directives to correct minor misbehavior (e.g. "Please stop talking", "be seated", "return to your work", etc.)

C. Students will accept admonishment from the teacher for minor unacceptable behavior as listed above. The following behaviors are more serious. They will be corrected with loving admonishment, plus will likely result in further disciplinary action, such as a detention,

suspension, probation, or expulsion following the progression as listed below.

1. Repeated minor misbehavior
2. Stealing
3. Cheating
4. Physically harming, inappropriately touching, verbally threatening, bullying, or abusing others
5. Fighting
6. Misuse of God's name and/or obscene language or gestures
7. Being disrespectful or showing open defiance to a teacher or other adult in authority
8. Possession of a weapon or a controlled substance
9. Willful damage to property

### III. Progression

- The ultimate goal of our program is to teach children how to be self-disciplined. When teachers or principal discipline students, they are showing that they care too much for them to let them behave in a way that is not God-pleasing and want to take the time and effort to help them learn how to behave in a God-pleasing manner. This is done in partnership with the home. Certainly, it is critical that school and home cooperate in helping the child learn self-discipline. Teachers are encouraged to partner with families to address specific discipline issues within the classroom.
- Generally speaking, discipline is part of classroom management and is handled by the teacher. The exceptions to this are detentions, probations, suspensions, and expulsions, which involve the school administration and the Board of Education.

- Under most circumstances, discipline follows a progression until the desired outcome is reached. This progression would include discussions with the student, teacher, parents, principal, pastor, and Board of Education as appropriate.

School disciplinary action may include:

- Referral - When a discipline issue is not resolved at the classroom level, and the teacher has already contacted the parents, the student may be referred to the principal. The student's parents will be informed by the principal whenever a discipline referral is made.
- Detention - A period of time after the school day during which the student works on a predetermined project.
- Suspension – The student is removed from the classroom for a specified period of time. Conditions of the suspension may vary.
- Expulsion – Permanent removal from school. Situations that are considered extreme or present an immediate danger are determined by the principal and are dealt with immediately. The situation will be reviewed by the Pastor and the Board as soon as possible.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

- In Ephesians 4:32 Scripture teaches us to, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you." As Christians, we will want to model the loving example set for us by our Savior and be kind to one another in thought, word, and deed. Bullying, in all its forms, should not happen at St. John's Lutheran School where the students are brothers and sisters in Christ.

- Any student that harasses or intimidates another student in any form of bullying - gestures, written, verbal, physical, on the internet, or with cell phones - will be dealt with according to our school's discipline guidelines.
- One form of bullying behavior is exclusion. A seemingly innocent form of exclusion occurs when handing out invitations or gifts to a select few students while at school. To avoid offense or hurt feelings, this procedure is to be handled away from school.
- Any students, who persistently and unrepentantly continue any form of bullying, can expect to face appropriate consequences. When families face bullying problems that occur outside school hours, the teachers stand ready to offer counseling and advice.

### **Student Dress**

Being a student at SJLS is a high calling. It is your current God-given vocation, a step towards another high calling later on. The school, therefore, asks you to dress the part. As you consider what to wear each day, give thought to how it will enable you to be a good student, whether it is appropriate for the classroom setting, how you along with everyone else can instill pride in the student body, and whether it is modest, neat, and in keeping with the important business of the day that is before you.

The faculty will work with you so you can better understand what the school considers proper attire as you make decisions on what to wear. The faculty will also counsel you when they feel it is necessary and ask you to change your attire if it is considered inappropriate. A change of clean and appropriate clothes will be provided if the student does not have their own.

To show respect for classroom decorum...

- Hats and head coverings are not to be worn in the classroom
  - All clothing should be clean and in good condition
  - Shorts of sufficient length are only allowed in August, September, April, and May
  - Clothing should not display anything that might be inconsistent with our Christian Values
  - Items primarily meant for sleepwear are not allowed (such as slippers and pajama pants)
  - Items primarily meant for athletic and recreational purposes are not allowed in class (such as spandex)
  - To strive at all times for the decent and wholesome appearance that Scripture encourages...Skirts and tops should not be distasteful or provocative, covering the midriff and chest areas tight-fitting leggings and the like must be covered by a dress or skirt
  - Tank tops with spaghetti straps are not allowed in class
  - Undergarments should never be visible
- To help instill pride among the SJLS family...
- SJLS attire is strongly encouraged
  - Students should wear clothing that is of a higher standard in class than what is used for lounging.

### **Praise**

- Our whole lives, of course, are to bring praise and glory to God's name. However, several opportunities are given for children to offer praise in special ways.
- At various times throughout the school year the children will be scheduled to sing in our worship services. This beautifies the service and gives children a chance to bring praise to God in song. When the classroom teacher plays the organ for a funeral, the students in that classroom are frequently asked to sing during the funeral service. If a



parent prefers that his/her child not participate in this activity, please notify the teacher.

- Another opportunity is offered through our mission program. Special mission projects are chosen for each marking period of the school year. Free-will offerings are gathered on the first school day of each week. This helps our children to learn about the importance of sharing God's Word. It can also serve well to train our children in bringing regular, generous offerings freely given out of love for Christ and His church.
- Special children's chapel services are also planned on a regular basis. This helps the children to learn regular worship habits and permits us to focus more directly on the needs, concerns, and interests of our youth. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to join us for these services.

### **Playground**

Concern for the safety and welfare of others is one of many ways we show that we fear and love God. The playground is an excellent place for children to learn and practice such concerns. The following rules will help to ensure that all children can enjoy playing safely:

- No standing, twisting, or double swinging on the swings. Do not jump from swings while they are in motion.
- Do not grab clothing.
- Balls are allowed on grass or pavement only.
- Remain in the enclosed area.
- Do not climb fences.
- Food or hard candy is not to be taken to the playground.
- No objects are to be thrown at anyone except in teacher-approved games.
- Do not walk on top of the playground equipment

- The only way to play on the slide is to go down feet first, in a sitting position.

### **Extra-curricular Activities**

A variety of wholesome activities, outside of the regular curriculum, are available to the students. There are soccer, basketball, softball, track, cheerleading, handbells, and choir. A child will be eligible if the conduct and class work are satisfactory. The Athletic Director in consultation with the classroom teacher will determine this.

### **Nuisance Items**

In a school environment, certain items may interfere with learning, present difficulties for cleaning or they may be hazardous. Cell phones, handheld games, music devices, toys, and lighters are not allowed to be used during school hours. These and other items will be confiscated and returned at the teacher's discretion.

### **Safe and Drug-Free School**

In keeping with the state's requirement that we conduct emergency drills to promote safety, we annually conduct six fire drills, two tornado drills, and two lockdown drills. As you know, drug abuse and school violence are major problems in our society. It is possible that we could also encounter this problem in our school. In the event that improper possession and/or use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products is discovered on the part of any student on the school grounds, the parents, and possibly the police, will be notified and the child will be suspended from school. This also applies to possession of any item that can be used as a weapon, such as knives, razor blades, guns, etc.

Re-admission would occur only with the approval of the administration and the BoE.

### **Excuses for Recesses or Absences**

In the interest of good order, communication, and common courtesy, we ask that you excuse in the following instances:

- Regular attendance for all classes, activities, and field trips is important to every child's success. If a child is tardy or must be absent, a phone call before 8:00 a.m. or a note stating the date and the reason is expected. We ask that you make every effort to plan and schedule vacations and doctor appointments outside of regular school hours. Take note that the law in the State of Michigan allows up to nine unexcused/excused absences. If attendance becomes an issue, parents can expect to be contacted to work out a resolution with the teacher, principal, and/or the Board of Education.
- All children are expected to participate in regular recess and physical education activities. If, for reasons of health, a child is to remain inside or refrain from physical education activities, a note is to be given to the child's teacher. Please include both the reason and the duration the note is to be in effect. In cases of questionable weather, the teachers will use good judgment regarding outdoor activities.
- If a student is to be excused from singing for a worship service, please let the teacher know in advance when possible. Otherwise, a note is required upon the child's return to class.
- Only notes or verbal excuses from a parent or legal guardian of the child will be accepted.

### **Emergency Closing**

- *In case of inclement weather, sessions will not be held when the Bay City Public Schools are closed.*
- *Announcements regarding this are broadcast or on local TV channels WNEM, and ABC-12.*
- *In the event of emergency closings, parents will be contacted by text, phone call, and email.*

### **Health**

All communicable diseases are to be reported to the principal (such as chicken pox, measles, strep throat, lice, or pink eye) Children ill with a communicable disease should not return to school until the danger of relapse or spreading the disease is over. For example, when your child has a fever, bring the child back to school once the fever has been absent 24 hours after the last dose of fever-reducing medication has been taken. Parents should be encouraged to follow the advice of their doctor or Bay County Health Department. (893-3076) If the absence of a child falls into this category, parents should contact the child's teacher so special arrangements can be made and your child can receive special teaching attention.

### **Medication Policy**

The State of Michigan has stated that neither the school nor the staff is allowed to provide students with any type of medication, even simple pain relievers, like acetaminophen. If parents want their child to receive medication, they must send or bring it to the teacher. It must be in the original, labeled container. It must have written instructions giving the child's name, identification

of the medicine, times and dosages to be given, and the date of termination, and give the school permission in writing to administer the medicine. This also applies to cough drops.

### **Michigan Protection Law—Abuse and Neglect**

We are bound by state regulations to report any suspicious or obvious abuse and/or neglect of a child to Children's Protective Services.

### **Home and School Cooperation**

Parents and teachers share the responsibility to work together in a spirit of cooperation to benefit the child. Because we live in a sin-filled world, and we ourselves, parents and teachers, are sinful, mistakes and disagreements in dealing with students or situations arise. When problems develop, parents and teachers need to remember to deal with this according to Matt. 18:15-18.

*“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his sin just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And, if he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as an unbeliever or a tax collector. Amen, I tell you: Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (EHV)*

The concern should first be taken in a spirit of Christian love directly and privately to the person or persons concerned. Most often it's something that can be easily resolved or may even be a simple misunderstanding. If the result is not satisfactory, it should then be brought to the attention of the principal. After these steps have been taken, the matter becomes the concern of the superintendent pastor. If necessary, the matter will come

before the Board of Education. The Board will discuss the matter and attempt to reach a God-pleasing solution.

### **Social Media**

It is common in our country's culture to air grievances digitally, such as Facebook, email, etc. As Christians, we have learned from God's Word that the correct procedure is a personal face-to-face discussion. Problems are best solved with the involvement of as few people as possible. Parents and teachers are expected to keep all criticisms, complaints, negative comments, etc. off of social media.

### **Closing**

Our Lord wants us to fear and love him so that we follow what he commands and offer lives of service that are pleasing to him. It is our intent to help you instill the desire in your children to serve their Savior out of love. Compared to a normal lifetime, the school experience is quite brief. We are both honored and humbled to have each child that is entrusted to our care. Using God's Word as our daily guide, we will all grow in our faith, increase in godly living, and by God's grace share our eternal home in heaven. May God grant this to us all.