

# EARLY CHILDHOOD HANDBOOK

2023-2024



Divine Savior Academy  
— DORAL —

handbook

# DIVINE SAVIOR ACADEMY

Dear Parents,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you and your children to Divine Savior Academy! As a Christian academy dedicated to excellence, Divine Savior Academy exists to serve students with college-prep academics and supportive teachers in a Christian environment to share Christ's love with students and their families.

We trust this handbook will help you to better understand our program of Christian education at Divine Savior Academy. To start, please read our Philosophy of Education below. It is a summary of what we believe about education; it motivates everything we do. We encourage you to read and discuss our entire handbook with your children, so that your family is equipped with a complete knowledge of our programs, services, and policies.

We welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you might have after reading. Please contact our school office to schedule a time to sit down with one of our administrators.

In Christ's Service,

Tim Biesterfeld, M.S.Ed.  
*Head of Schools - Divine Savior Ministries*

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

*A Christian Academy Dedicated to Excellence*

### ***A Christian***

We believe that every child should know the love of Christ.  
Sharing His love with children is the reason we exist.

### ***Academy***

Education gives our children a foundation for life.  
They are our future explorers and creators, innovators and leaders, neighbors and parents.

### ***Dedicated to***

We are a community of families, students, educators, and friends who are dedicated to working together to help our children thrive. That's why we call ourselves the "DSA Family."

### ***Excellence***

We believe our mission has an eternal impact and that education can change the world.  
Because we believe this, we strive to give our children excellence in all we do.

*"The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord," (Isaiah 11:2).*

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Divine Savior Academy exists to provide college-prep academics, supportive teachers, and a Christian environment to share Christ's love with students and their families.

## VISION STATEMENT

Divine Savior Academy is a Christian academy dedicated to excellence, rooted in the timeless truths of God's Word. The vision of DSA is to continue to provide excellence in its rigorous curriculum and Christ-centered environment. Together, the administration, faculty, and staff constantly strive to **have the hearts of servants, thrive through cooperation, and have a growth mindset** to best meet the academic, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of students.

## OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

By providing college-prep academics in a Christian environment, Divine Savior Academy gives students a foundation for future success. It is our goal to nurture students who are responsible to God and active in their communities while remaining true to the Christian faith. Students will be prepared academically, emotionally, physically, and spiritually to serve their families, neighbors, and communities.

## A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

Divine Savior Academy is part of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), one of the largest private school systems in the United States. The WELS has a rich tradition of academic excellence in its preschool through Grade 12 school system. The WELS has operated highly regarded schools across the United States, the Caribbean, and elsewhere in the world for over 165 years. Currently, WELS churches and associations operate over 400 early childhood centers, over 300 elementary schools, and about 30 high schools across the nation. The Wisconsin Synod has provided excellent instructors to these schools by training its own teachers since 1884.

It is gratifying to report that, on average, students attending WELS schools annually outperform their peers by a considerable margin on national achievement tests. We humbly thank God for His blessings upon our schools.

## ACCREDITATION

Divine Savior Academy is accredited by the following agencies:

- The Association of Independent Schools of Florida (AISF)
- The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
- Accreditation International (AI)
- The National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA)
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA-CESS)

## STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Divine Savior Academy prohibits harassment and/or discrimination against a student on the basis of gender, race, color, disability, linguistic preference, ethnic or natural origin, and guarantees all the rights, privileges, programs, policies, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We further abide by the laws of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

# ADMISSIONS AND ATTENDANCE

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

Divine Savior practices a non-discrimination enrollment policy and admits students of any race, color, religious, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of our school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national, or ethnic origin in its administration of educational policies, admissions policies, athletic, or other school-administered programs.

In order for a student to be admitted to the Academy, the following must take place:

- Schedule a meeting with the Admissions Department to learn more about Divine Savior's educational programs and student expectations.
- Fill out the Application Request form on the Admissions page of our website ([www.divinesavioracademy.com](http://www.divinesavioracademy.com)).
- Complete the online Student Application and submit with the Application Fee and Testing Fee.
- After the application is completed, the DSA Admissions Department will schedule a testing appointment. Students will be evaluated in several areas: language and communication development, willingness to learn, maturity, social skills, Christian conduct, manual dexterity, and general academic knowledge.
- After testing, the Admissions Department will notify the family of acceptance.
- Fill out the online Student Registration, pay the Enrollment Fee, and sign the Smart Tuition contract. Submit student's health and immunization records, as well as read and acknowledge the Divine Savior Academy handbook, new student agreements, and required policies. Florida state law prohibits children from beginning school without updated records.

Notes:

Students will be placed in the grade level that corresponds with their chronological age using September 1 as the cut-off date.

Children who transfer from another school must present a transfer or a report card upon enrollment. The scholastic rating of the previous school will be honored, so long as the student demonstrates achievement that merits this and completes the testing process that supports it.

## RE-ENROLLMENT POLICY

Re-enrollment takes place during the third quarter of each school year for the following school year. Families must submit re-enrollment paperwork with re-enrollment fees by the re-enrollment due date to secure placement for the following school year.

Because the Academy maintains high standards and expectations, re-enrollment in succeeding years is based on student achievement, Christian attitude, and parental support. Divine Savior Academy reserves the right to refuse re-enrollment to students due to poor achievement, attitude or Christian conduct, lack of parental support, or the inability to pay tuition.

**Re-enrollment fees are non-refundable.**

## TUITION PAYMENT POLICY

Divine Savior Academy is a non-profit organization, 501(c)3. Our tuition fees are needed to offer the level of educational excellence that is part of our philosophy of education (low student-teacher ratios, state-of-the-art facilities, quality programs). Specific information pertaining to registration, tuition, re-enrollment, and fees is established yearly and is included in the admissions and re-enrollment information, as outlined in a family's Smart Tuition agreement.

Guidelines are as follows:

- An application fee, testing fee, and enrollment fee are paid at the time of student application. These fees are non-refundable.
- Re-enrollment fees for current students are non-refundable.
- Before the start of the school year or student enrollment, families are required to sign a tuition contract which demonstrates a family's consent to pay. This is done through your account on PowerSchool and the information is then sent to Smart Tuition.
- Three tuition payment plans are available: annual, bi-annual, or monthly. Smart Tuition accepts a wide variety of payment options including credit, debit, and ACH. Please contact Smart Tuition ([www.smarttuition.com](http://www.smarttuition.com)) for a full list of acceptable forms of payment.
- The cost of after school care, hot lunch, and afternoon school snack is included in the tuition for PreK-3 and PreK-4.
- The cost of uniforms, and transportation are not covered by the registration or tuition fees. Some extracurricular programs and advanced high school classes are not covered by registration or tuition fees.
- Payments are due the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month. All payments received after the due date will incur a late fee.
- Payments made by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month are payments for the current month's tuition (i.e.: payments made by August 10<sup>th</sup> cover tuition for August 1-31).
- If a student withdraws from Divine Savior Academy, tuition will be refunded starting with the **month after withdrawal**. Tuition is not refunded for the current month, reflecting Divine Savior's "month started, month paid" policy. Tuition will be refunded for all months **not started** by the student (i.e.: If student withdraws anytime during the month of August, no tuition will be refunded for the month August. Tuition will be refunded beginning with September, **the month after withdrawal**).

## FINANCIAL AID

In an attempt to provide a Christian education for as many students as possible, Divine Savior Academy offers financial aid on a need basis only. The deadline for financial aid requests from returning member families is April 15 of each year. An example of this is a deadline of April 15, 2022, for the 2022-2023 school year. If this deadline is a non-business day, the first business day after April 15 will be used. All emergency requests must be completed as known by the member and will be handled as efficiently as possible. Financial aid is applied for through a third-party tuition management system. Each applicant must fill out a financial aid request application. The applicant will absorb the cost to apply for financial aid. The School Council will use criteria provided by Divine Savior Academy's third-party tuition management system such as financial need and the availability of funds when granting financial aid requests. A limited amount of tuition assistance is available to the families of our Academy. Therefore, not all financial aid requests may be granted.

\* Financial aid is awarded solely on the basis of need and not based on academic or athletic performance.

## STUDENT RECORDS

Divine Savior Academy adheres to the regulations in the 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). All scholastic records of a student maintained by the school are confidential. Scholastic reports, which contain only objective student data, will be kept permanently. Upon request to the principal, with a 24-hour notice, parents (or legal guardians) of students have the right to inspect their children's records. Transcript release requires the signature of the student and parent (or legal guardian).

## TRANSFER OR WITHDRAWAL

When a family transfers to another school, their account balance must be zero in order for Divine Savior Academy to forward final transcripts to their next school.



## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

- Divine Savior Academy office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- The PreK-3, PreK-4, and Kindergarten school day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 2:35 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. The day ends at 1:35 p.m. on Wednesday.
- Classroom doors open at 8:15 a.m. for PreK-4 and Kindergarten students.
- Morning Care is held in the cafeteria/auditorium/gymnasium beginning at 7:30 a.m. for PreK-4 and Kindergarten students.
- Morning Care for PreK-3 students is offered in their classroom beginning at 7:30 a.m.
- All parents may use the designated parent drop-off area in the front of school for morning arrival each day. Staff members will help children to get from their vehicles into the school building. Parents of PreK and Kindergarten children may choose to park in the designated parking lot area and walk children to their classrooms between 8:15 a.m. and 8:25 a.m.
- At the end of the school day, under teacher supervision, PreK-3, PreK-4, and Kindergarten students will be waiting to be picked up at designated areas between 2:35 p.m. - 2:50 p.m. (1:35 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. on Wednesdays). All parents must drive through the parking lot loop to their child's pick-up spot. Parents of PreK-3 and PreK-4 students must exit their vehicles to place their children in their car and safely buckle them. Students remaining on campus after the dismissal period will be taken to Afterschool Care.
- Children in the early childhood level are not allowed to walk to or from school without adult supervision.
- Divine Savior Academy maintains a closed campus. Children may not leave the school grounds without parental approval at any time during the school day. School policy and the safety of our children dictate that the teachers know where the children are at all times.

## BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

### ***BEFORE SCHOOL***

Divine Savior provides supervised care for students before school begins at 7:30 a.m. in the auditorium/cafeteria/gymnasium (PreK-4 and Kindergarten students) or in their classroom (PreK-3 students). Students may use this time to play with designated age-appropriate materials, read, or engage in another activity. There is no charge for this service.

### ***AFTER SCHOOL***

The Divine Savior Academy Afterschool Care program operates fifteen (15) minutes after the dismissal time and lasts until 6:00 p.m. It is designed to provide children of working parents, or those who have a late afternoon commitment, with a safe, caring and enriching environment. The cost of this program is cited on the tuition information sheet, available under the Admissions section on the school website. Afterschool Care is available only on days when school is in session.

Afterschool Care is not provided on the last day of the school year, or the day before the following breaks: Christmas, and Good Friday (Easter).

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular school attendance is both a right and responsibility of the parent and student. Divine Savior Academy recognizes that consistent school attendance is essential for academic success and that all absences affect learning. Therefore, a comprehensive student attendance policy has been developed to meet the following objectives:

- To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance
- To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts
- To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons
- To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance

According to Florida Law and Miami-Dade County requirements, 20 full-day absences during the course of a school year will result in a mandatory review by the administration, School Counselor, and classroom teacher to determine possible repetition of the class or the grade. An early childhood student who accumulates 10 full-day absences during a semester will not be issued a report card. Chronic illness and family emergencies that extend beyond the total number of absences allowed will be considered on an individual basis by the administration.

In the event of illness or an emergency arising during the school day, a student should proceed immediately to the office for assistance and permission to leave the school. It must be recognized that the school is responsible for the students' whereabouts from the time they enter school until they depart and, unless otherwise notified, the school assumes students are attending classes as scheduled.

#### ***HALF-DAY ABSENCE***

Students who arrive to school more than 30 minutes after their start time (or leave early more than 30 minutes before their end time) will be issued a half-day absence.

#### ***FULL-DAY ABSENCE***

Students leaving school before 12:00 p.m. (noon) or arriving at school after 12:00 p.m. (noon) are charged with a full-day absence. Students must be in school the entire day to participate in extra-curricular activities. Exceptions are made for pre-approved scheduled appointments.

#### ***REPORTING ABSENCES***

The school office must be notified no later than 9:00 a.m. if your child will be absent from school. When a student returns to school after an absence, he or she must bring a parent written note citing the reason for the absence.

#### ***TARDINESS AND ARRIVING LATE***

Students are expected to be on time and have transportation arrangements that will guarantee their punctuality. When a child arrives late to school in the morning, students should report to the office before going to class. If students in PreK-3, PreK-4, and Kindergarten are tardy more than 10 days in a quarter, the Early Childhood Director and classroom teacher will schedule a meeting with the child's parents to discuss the importance and benefit of children arriving on time to school. Ongoing tardiness could result in suspension from school. Continued tardiness after a suspension may lead to a student's dismissal from school.

#### ***LEAVING EARLY***

Students leaving early must check out through the office. The office calls the student out of class when the parent arrives. Whenever possible, the school requests that every effort be made to schedule appointments during non-school hours or on days when school is not in session. Parents should seriously consider the educational, social, and psychological effects of habitually removing their children from school early. (Please see policies above for half-day and full-day absences.)

#### ***TRUANCIES***

Any student who is absent from school without parent permission or school knowledge for more than three days in one year is a truant.

#### ***MAKE-UP WORK***

Teachers will allow students to make up and receive a grade for tests and assignments missed during absences. Students have two days to make up work for every day of an absence. Students are required to make up work for all absences, truancies, or suspensions. We appreciate the support of our parents and guardians in helping our students achieve this goal.

# ACADEMIC POLICIES

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum at Divine Savior Academy seeks to educate the mind and enlighten the heart through the timeless truths of God's Word. Divine Savior Academy's curricular framework is balanced and comprehensive. Its design promotes cognitive growth in all of its objectives, activities, strategies, and resources. The curriculum takes into account the wide range of cultural backgrounds and learning styles of its students, offering flexibility to remediate the struggling student while at the same time enriching the gifted learner. The Divine Savior student will be fully equipped with the tools needed to succeed in and out of the classroom.

### Religion

The key component in Divine Savior Academy's religion curriculum is the Christ Light series, which presents both Old and New Testament Bible stories in an exciting, colorful, and memorable way. Each lesson has a key truth that is meaningfully discussed and applied to the children's lives. This comprehensive curriculum gives students a strongly rooted foundation in God's Word, equipping them to live as children of God. Memorization skills are enhanced as students commit Bible passages to memory. Every Friday morning the students gather for chapel in the auditorium. Parents and friends are invited to join the students for this worship opportunity.

### Language Arts

A clear understanding of the English language is imperative for success in all areas of the curriculum and everyday life. Divine Savior Academy's language arts curriculum accomplishes this through a wide variety of emergent literacy components. The curriculum integrates high-quality children's literature and instruction in reading, phonics, writing, spelling, grammar, and oral expression. The curriculum is designed to be developmentally appropriate as it meets the needs of each child.

#### Reading

The early childhood years represent the critical stage of emergent literacy. This is the time when children begin to form the foundation of their language development. During the preschool years, children are exposed to high-quality literature and enjoy being read to. They begin to associate the words that they hear with the print that they see in books and in their environment. In the following years, children make the exciting transition to early reading. Through a balanced and developmentally appropriate approach, children become gradually more independent in this skill. The curriculum emphasizes listening and comprehension skills, while developing the ability to read critically. Each classroom has direct library accessibility for students to choose their own books for independent reading.

#### Writing

During the early childhood years, children display a wide range of emergent writing. In the beginning of preschool, children start by simply exploring with various writing tools. They then progress to drawing forms, shapes, and pictures to express their thoughts and represent their words. After they have made the association between letters and sounds and have a basic print awareness, they begin to experiment with conventional writing. This component of language arts is also taught in a developmentally appropriate way, adjusting to the unique stage that each child is in. Students are encouraged to be creative as they express their thoughts through their writing.

#### Spelling

The spelling component of the curriculum develops the sound/spelling connection in language. Beginning in Kindergarten, children are taught spelling patterns that are developmental and match their individual reading level.

#### Oral Expression

As early as the preschool years, children are encouraged to verbalize their thoughts and share them with their peers. Each classroom has various show-and-tell presentations and other opportunities given to students which allow them to practice their public speaking skills.

## Mathematics

A thorough mathematics curriculum is critical for success in our ever-changing world. Divine Savior Academy offers a developmentally appropriate curriculum which seeks to develop a strong foundation in children's math skills. During the early childhood years, children actively participate in countless math learning experiences. Children learn math concepts best when they involve a hands-on approach. As children grow and mature, they refine their math skills and begin traditional math computation. The math curriculum seeks to foster problem solving and critical thinking skills.

## Technology

The development and use of modern technology continues to evolve and shape our lives. In order to gain proficiency in this technological age, early childhood students make occasional use of iPads and other technology in the classroom to supplement their learning.

## Science

The science curriculum at Divine Savior Academy leads children to a greater appreciation of the awe-inspiring world which God created. Through hands-on experimentation, technology-aided presentations, and non-fiction children's literature, students discover various aspects of physical, earth, and life science. Special emphasis is placed on developing skills such as observing, comparing, hypothesizing, predicting, measuring, testing, and interpreting.

## Social Studies

During the early childhood years, it is essential that children develop an understanding of who they are and how they fit into this world. Their social development consists of how they interact with their peers and their environment. As children grow older, the social studies curriculum gradually transitions outward, through a study of themselves, their family, home, school, friends, peers, community, world, etc. Teachers make use of children's literature and technology-aided presentations in their lessons. This developmentally appropriate approach to social studies aspires to give students the necessary foundation and tools needed to be active, well-adjusted citizens and leaders in the future.

## Spanish

During the preschool years, children are exposed to Spanish children's literature, vocabulary, and songs.

The Spanish program at Divine Savior Academy begins in Kindergarten and contributes to preparing students as they become "global learners." Our endeavor is to transfer knowledge by instilling love for the Spanish language in a fun and engaging atmosphere. Each class is divided into two levels to meet the needs of advanced Spanish learners as well as those learning Spanish as a second language.

Our curriculum develops multiple competencies such as listening comprehension, reading comprehension, oral expression, written expression and cultural awareness in students based on their age and grade level, and in accordance with state and national standards for foreign language teaching.

The Spanish as a Second Language Program is designed to build a solid foundation for communication skills in the language through immersion Spanish classes. Explicit instruction, along with repeated exposure to the language in a variety of themes and contexts, will lead to a strong foundation of linguistic skills for these students. Students develop written Spanish skills and an appreciation of the Hispanic culture.

The Advanced Spanish Speakers Program (Language Arts Program in Spanish) is a challenging program which leads students to develop literacy and gain higher competence in their heritage language. Intellectually and affectively meaningful, this program expands their knowledge about their culture and the Hispanic world.

## Music

Divine Savior Academy's music program contains the integrated components of music theory, voice development, and music appreciation. Basic elements of music such as rhythm, beat, dynamics, pitch, and music terminology prepare the children to read music and explore musical instruments in future years. Students make use of musical/rhythm instruments and are encouraged to actively participate in these learning experiences. Children prepare songs to sing in several worship services throughout the year.

## Art

Children at all levels are encouraged to express themselves through a wide variety of creative art learning experiences. Young artists learn to value not only the product, but also the process that they use to create their artwork. Beginning in

kindergarten, children have a formal art class in which they are exposed to the elements of art. The children also enjoy exposure to well-known artists, their unique styles, and classical works. Other goals include development of fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

### **Physical Education**

It is vital that children develop their large motor skills during early childhood. This includes an ability to manage their bodies in their environment. Children learn about personal space and develop a wide range of basic locomotor movements. They also enjoy active learning experiences that help them develop physical fitness. Expectations of the students in physical education class include participation in the variety of activities, respect for peers and instructors, proper care of equipment, and cooperation. The physical education program is designed to enable each child to achieve success while developing an interest in life-long physical activity. Participation in physical education for students with medical problems or physical limitations will be modified as needed.

## **SCHOOL INFORMATION SYSTEM (SIS)**

At the beginning of the year, all families will be provided with login and password information to PowerSchool, our School Information System. This allows real-time access to view your child's attendance.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Student progress is documented and officially recorded on a quarterly report card. First quarter report cards are distributed at the parent-teacher conference. Subsequent report cards are sent home on the second Monday that follows the end of each grading period.

## **GRADING**

Below are the rating and grading scales used for children in Divine Savior Academy's early childhood program.

### **PREK-3 AND PREK-4**

The developmental ratings are given according to Levels: 0 through 7. These are based on specific documentation and observations of children and criteria matching 34 key developmental indicators in the following categories:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Language, Literacy, and Communication
- Mathematics
- Creative Arts
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies

### **KINDERGARTEN**

The developmental ratings in Kindergarten that are used on the report card are based on the following scale across all areas of the curriculum:

Future Standard-----Needs Development-----Approaching-----Proficient-----Exemplary

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

Each fall, winter, and spring, per our accreditation standards, standardized achievement tests are administered to the students in grades Kindergarten through high school. These tests compare our students with national averages using percentiles and grade placement equivalents. They are useful in evaluating strengths and areas requiring further development in the curriculum. Achievement tests can also be helpful in measuring each child's academic progress over the past year and identifying what children are ready to learn next. Results are shared with parents throughout the year.

## HOMEWORK

Homework is a valuable part of the educational experience - an extension and enrichment of the material taught in the classroom. It is the link between one lesson and the next. Students can expect to have 10 minutes of homework each night per grade starting in Kindergarten. The benefits of homework can be summarized as follows:

- Reinforces skills taught previously in the classroom
- Prepares students for new information
- Promotes creative thinking and independent research
- Communicates the ongoing classroom learning with parents
- Instills a sense of responsibility and personal accountability
- Helps to develop productive study habits and self-discipline

Parents should help their child set aside a quiet place and regular time for reading each evening. Daily time spent reading can have a great positive effect on children's success in school and later in life. Parents are encouraged to read to their children each night and then transition to listening to their children read when they are developmentally ready to do so.

## TUTORING

Paid tutoring for students desiring additional help is available after 4:00 p.m. Tutor availability is subject to several variables including extracurricular obligations, school responsibilities, etc. More information for tutoring through Divine Savior Academy can be found on the website and the *Academy Dispatch*, the weekly school newsletter.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips and experiences are planned during the school year to enrich experiences for the children and expand their educational horizons. Careful thought goes into planning each activity to ensure its educational value and the safety of the children. Examples include trips to theaters, farms, museums, the local library, and other special events. Experiential activities may be brought on campus in place of field trips, depending on the grade level. These educational trips are planned as a supplement to our curriculum; therefore, all pupils are expected to attend such trips as part of the regular school day. Attendance is taken for field trips and recorded accordingly on report cards.

Parent volunteers are needed to assist with student supervision; consequently, all volunteers and chaperones must adhere to all school policies and are under the direct authority of the classroom teacher. (Please note that all chaperones must attend a mandatory training session once every five years and be finger-printed before they will be allowed to chaperone a class field trip.) Students must travel to field trip locations on transportation provided by Divine Savior Academy. Trip information and permission slips are sent home to the parents prior to each trip.

## CLASSROOM SINGING PERFORMANCES

Music is an important part of the curriculum at Divine Savior Academy. On days when students do not attend regular music class, singing takes place in the classroom during Devotion, Religion class, Chapel, and various other times throughout the day. There are several times during the school year when individual classrooms are scheduled to sing a song for a Divine Savior service, program, or community function. Often these songs are religious songs that give the

students a chance to share God’s Word with friends and family. Students and their teachers spend many weeks and months learning these songs, memorizing the words, and practicing the music to perform. It is important, therefore, that every member of the class be present for every scheduled performance. When all members of the class or group are present, the students are able to perform to the best of their abilities and give praise to God for the talents he has given them. If a student has to miss a program or performance for a valid reason (prior family commitment, illness, etc.), the parents must inform the teacher of the absence ahead of time.

## STUDENT CARE AND SAFETY

### FACULTY

The dedication, professionalism, and training of any school’s faculty are determining factors in assessing the degree of excellence of that educational institution. In order to facilitate the exceptional academic quality for which Divine Savior Academy was established, Divine Savior Academy’s core classroom teachers possess at minimum a bachelor’s degree and are required to pursue certification in the State of Florida and the Wisconsin Synod. Additionally, in order to ensure staff expertise in a broad sphere of disciplines, teachers are encouraged to earn advanced specialist degrees in areas of interest, attend professional development seminars and workshops, or seek enrollment in a post-graduate program at an accredited university.

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Respect and educational purpose characterize the classroom environment at the Academy. The Divine Savior Academy code of conduct promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. This learning atmosphere is relaxed but orderly – a place where instruction can take place and the joy of academic accomplishment can be experienced. In maintaining structured, disciplined classrooms, the teachers provide an educational setting where children can focus more readily, apply themselves better, and realize greater success in their quest to learn.

### COUNSELING

In today’s changing society, children benefit from extra guidance during their formative years. School counselors are qualified to address all students’ academic, career, and social/emotional development needs. Divine Savior Academy offers a comprehensive counseling program from a Christian perspective that promotes and enhances spiritual, personal, social/emotional, and academic growth. The comprehensive school counseling program provides services to students, parents, school staff, and the community in the following areas:

- **School Counseling Curriculum:** Presented by school counselors and systematically delivered throughout the school year in K-8 classrooms at least once per month. Consists of structured lessons designed to help students with the knowledge and skills appropriate for their developmental level.
- **Responsive Services:** Designed to meet students’ immediate needs and concerns. Includes individual or small-group settings or crisis response.
- **Indirect Services:** Referrals, consultation, and collaboration with parents, teachers, and other educators.

Divine Savior Academy administrators, counselors, and teachers work together with parents as a team to identify student needs and provide a positive, personalized learning environment.

### FIRST AID AND CPR CERTIFICATION

CPR is a skill that can be the difference between life and death. All Divine Savior Academy faculty and staff are CPR and First Aid Certified and meet American Red Cross and American Heart Association recommendations. Knowledge

obtained through these courses permits Divine Savior Academy faculty and staff to be ready to handle emergencies due to sudden illness or injury to students.

## IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH FORMS

Florida law requires that all students have the necessary forms on file by the first day of class. Students cannot begin classes at Divine Savior Academy without a current, completed physical exam form and proper documentation of up-to-date immunizations. Forms are available from your doctor. Physical exams are valid for two years. Emergency contact information, filled out at registration time, is also required of each student.

## EMERGENCIES

Medical emergencies may, on occasion, occur at school. In the event of a life-threatening situation (i.e., unconsciousness), the school may need to contact the appropriate emergency medical service first, before calling the parents. In case of an accident or illness where immediate emergency care is not deemed necessary, but where a child is unable to remain at school, the school will contact the parents to arrange transportation home. Likewise, if a child shows symptoms of illness during the day, the child will be removed from the classroom, and the parents will be called. Parents, please remember that the school must be able to reach you at all times. If neither parent can be reached at home, work, or cell, the emergency contacts listed on the child's emergency card will be called and asked to pick up the child.

## MINOR ACCIDENTS

All minor accidents – cuts, scratches, bumps, and insect bites are given First Aid treatment and are recorded in an accident report form. Parents or an emergency contact person (if needed) are notified of the injury.

## SERIOUS INJURY

If your child suffers a serious injury, appropriate procedures will be implemented. This includes the school calling 911, followed by a telephone call to the parents. In addition, the school will provide First Aid until help arrives, and the administration will determine who should accompany the injured student to the hospital. An Accident Report form will be completed describing the nature and extent of the injury. All head injuries will be reported to parents.

## MEDICATIONS

All medications must be dispensed and kept in the school office.

### **Daily Medications:**

Daily medications administered at school require the completion of the Divine Savior Academy's Permission to Administer Medication form, available through your PowerSchool account. This form needs to be completed annually. At the end of the school year or when the medication has been discontinued, the parent should pick up the extra medication. Any medication left at the end of the school year will be properly discarded.

### **Discretionary Medications:**

Tylenol (or a generic substitute) may be administered at school with written permission from a parent. This permission is given on the Permission to Administer Medication form, available through your PowerSchool account and filled out by the parent or guardian at the beginning of each school year.

### **Self-medication:**

Only a student who requires an EPI-PEN or inhaler is allowed to carry and administer his or her own medications. Depending on the age of the child, these items may be carried and administered by teachers instead. Please contact the school office or the administration so the procedure may be reviewed and the medication sheet filled out.



### Short-term Medications:

Short-term medications will be administered to students at school if the parent signs a consent form for the administration of the approved medication. Medication must be provided in the original packaging with the student's name attached.

## STUDENT ILLNESSES AND CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS

Students should not be brought to school if they have cold or flu-like symptoms. Please note that students will be sent home from school if they exhibit symptoms of illness. Students who have been diagnosed with illnesses such as the flu, a fever, or any other contagious condition must be symptom-free for 24 hours prior to returning to school. In the event a student misses three or more days with a contagious condition, the student must obtain a doctor's note of clearance to return to school. With exceptions as provided by law, any student or staff member who suffers an infectious disease (other than an illness) must be removed from the premises until certified by a physician or a healthcare professional to be non-infectious and able to return to school.

## LICE

In the event that lice and/or lice nits (eggs) are suspected or discovered on any student, the student will be immediately removed from the classroom and sent home. While we understand how difficult it is to rid the hair and scalp of all the eggs related to lice, we also must recognize how easily lice can be spread. For this reason, an email will be sent home to parents in the classroom where lice has been suspected or discovered.

Therefore, if your child is sent home with lice and/or nits, they will be allowed to return to school when a verbal or written confirmation is given to the school that a treatment plan is in place.

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

A Divine Savior Academy Crisis Management Plan (CMP) has been formulated in the event of any threat to its students, teachers, staff and or physical plant. This multi-hazard management plan shall encompass, but not be limited to, evacuations for fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other hazardous storms or disasters in which serious bodily injury might occur (hostage siege, terrorist activities, bomb threats, etc.) The plan for lockdowns, sheltering-in-place, and evacuations shall be reviewed annually for each school building. The Crisis Management Plan shall be reviewed annually and updated as needed. The Crisis Management Plan will assist teachers, school administrators, and others in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergency incidents on school grounds.

## SEVERE WEATHER

Whenever possible, the Crisis Response Coordinator will inform faculty and staff of weather warnings. A severe weather warning is made when the weather service announces a severe weather watch for the area. Fixed and portable weather service radios are located throughout the campus. Designated shelter locations are revised annually and posted throughout the campus. Unless otherwise notified by Divine Savior Academy or the media, Divine Savior Academy will follow the Miami-Dade Schools' announcement regarding school closure and openings.

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS AND REPORTING

In compliance with state regulations, evacuation fire drills are performed once a month. Tornado and lockdown drills are practiced once per year or at administrative discretion. For the safety of all, detailed drill procedures are shared and periodically reviewed in each classroom.

## DRESS CODE

The following dress code has been developed in accordance with Divine Savior Academy's commitment to character education. We, as a school community, are committed to excellence in all areas of school life. We have worked toward developing standards of dress that are conducive to a positive learning climate and reflect pride in our Academy. Students must wear the school uniform at all times unless directed otherwise. School uniform purchases are made through Dennis Uniform at [www.dennisuniform.com](http://www.dennisuniform.com).

The administration reserves the right to interpret and make changes to the dress code. The following guidelines indicate appropriate dress:

### **Early Childhood Girls' School Uniform (All items purchased through Dennis Uniform)**

- Blue Polo Dress
- Plaid Dress
- Plaid Skirt no more than 3 inches above the knee
- Black Bike Shorts (to be worn under skirt and dress)
- Grey Pants
- Blue Polo
- White Turtleneck during cooler weather
- Grey or Black Pullover Sweater or Cardigan Sweater
- Blue Fleece Jacket
- Black or white socks or full-length tights
- Black dress shoes

### **Early Childhood Boys' School Uniform (All items purchased through Dennis Uniform)**

- Grey pants or shorts
- Blue polo
- White turtleneck during cooler weather
- Grey or Black Pullover Sweater or Cardigan Sweater
- Blue Fleece Jacket
- Black or white socks
- Black dress shoes

### **General Guidelines**

- Skirts, skorts, and shorts are to be worn no shorter than 3 inches above the knees.
- No hats or caps may be worn indoors.
- Shoes must be the approved black dress shoe, purchased from Dennis Uniform.
- Socks must be purchased from Dennis Uniform and have "DSA" printed on them.
- All articles of clothing should be marked with the child's name.
- All clothes must be neat, clean, and in good repair.
- For safety reasons, excessive jewelry is not allowed. Boys are not to wear earrings.
- Hair is to be neatly combed and conservatively styled. Dyed, treated, shaved designs, or faddish hairstyles are not permitted.
- Boys' hair may be worn no longer than the top of the shirt collar or below the eyebrows.
- No excessive headbands, hair accessories, or hair clips.
- Parental cooperation is appreciated.

## SPIRIT DRESS

Certain times throughout the year, our PTO or student council may call for a "spirit day" or "spirit week." During these days, students may be allowed to dress out of the normal dress code following the daily theme. A jean day is hosted

each month by our various school organizations. Students are allowed to wear jeans on these days with no rips, holes, or tears.

## LUNCH

Students may bring lunch from home or buy the catered meal in the cafeteria. Tammy's Catering provides the catered meals. Any questions regarding hot lunch should be directed to them at (305) 962-0146. Due to non-compete clauses, purchased meals may not be delivered or dropped off at school. Any student who does not bring a lunch will be required to purchase a lunch from Tammy's Catering. Due to time and sanitary conditions, teachers will not heat student lunches in the microwave. Therefore, if your student prefers to bring his or her own lunch, please plan accordingly.

## SNACK BREAK

Children will have a snack break during the day. Parents are encouraged to send nutritious snacks. Students in Afterschool Care should also bring along snacks to eat after school. Soda is not allowed.

## PARTIES

Many parents like to bring refreshments on their child's birthday. This may be done with prior approval from the classroom teacher. Because of time and space constraints, birthday celebrations at school should be kept short and simple and cannot be spontaneous. Arrangements must be made with the classroom teacher's approval at least one day in advance. Please note that due to the non-compete clause with Tammy's Catering, only cake or other desserts can be brought into school. These must be store-bought and not home-made. Parents cannot provide lunch for the class during the school day. Additionally, if invitations for parties are handed out at school, there must be an invitation for every student.

## LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found articles are to be brought to the front office where the owners may claim their property. The school will try to help students locate lost items, but cannot be responsible for such losses. Items not claimed after a reasonable amount of time will be removed.

## BOOKS

Textbooks are rented from Divine Savior Academy. Books found containing answers or unnecessary markings, damaged beyond normal use, or lost, must be replaced at cost by the student. Books are subject to teacher inspection.

# STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

In keeping with Divine Savior Academy's mission to develop Christian character and instill self-discipline, faculty and staff members strive to clearly communicate all school rules and classroom guidelines regarding student conduct. These rules and guidelines are shared with the parents at the start of the school year through the teacher's classroom management plan. Conformity to these rules is expected at all times, whether in the classroom, on the playground, or elsewhere on the school campus. Students are expected to follow these rules out of love for God, respect for their teachers, and consideration for their fellow students.

The administration and teachers use their discretion whenever discipline is deemed necessary. Parents can rest assured that all discipline is carried out in the spirit of Christian love by teachers who genuinely care about each child. Discipline comes from the word "disciple" – to teach. Discipline is our way of teaching children to make proper choices. Discipline, then, is viewed not as punishment, but loving correction. No form of physical, corporal, or emotionally abusive disciplinary measures are used at any time.

Discipline is administered for the following unacceptable behaviors and may lead to suspension, confiscation of material, or other disciplinary action:

- Being disrespectful, rude, or disobedient to school personnel
- Using inappropriate, vulgar, or obscene language
- Stealing or possessing items not belonging to you
- Violation of dress code
- Failing to complete assigned school work
- Tardiness (5 or more per quarter)
- Cheating on tests or homework
- Harassment of fellow students
- Vandalizing or defacing school property (parents will be financially liable)
- Leaving class or school without permission
- Skipping class without permission
- Attitude and examples which are detrimental to the welfare of other students
- No gambling, selling, or trading of items
- False pulling of fire alarms (fee may be incurred)
  
- Possession of water pistols, toy guns, knives, blades, radios, electronic games, iPads, cell phones, Fitbit watches, smart watches, or any other electronic equipment, or possession of illicit substances. (Cell phones brought to school must be given to the teacher for safe keeping at the beginning of the day.)

## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

In the event that a student fails to observe the Divine Savior Academy Discipline Policy, a discipline process is initiated as follows:

1. The incident is brought to the student's attention.
2. The teacher documents the incident.
3. By means of personal counseling, the teacher and student work together to achieve resolution. This may result temporarily in extra duties or the loss of privileges for the student. Whenever consequences are administered, they will be consistent, logical, and motivated by love for the child.
4. Parents may receive a phone call, hand-written note, or e-mail message from the teacher indicating concern for the student's behavior and inviting parental involvement.
5. Ongoing infractions may result in student conferences with the administration.
6. A teacher or administrator may request a parent conference in which behavioral issues are identified and solutions are discussed.
7. A student can be placed on probation for repeated violations. The student will remain on probation status until the next marking period.
8. A student may be suspended for continued violations of school rules. The types and quantity of violations are taken into consideration. A suspension will be served at home for the number of days indicated by the administration.
9. If a student persists in his or her lack of cooperation as indicated by an unwilling spirit, rebellious behavior, or unacceptable attitude, the parents will be asked to withdraw the child.

Parents with questions or concerns about disciplinary actions should address them to the administration. The administration will then decide on the proper course of action, whether that is through counseling or scheduling a meeting with the teacher.

As disciplinary situations arise, we will approach our concerns with prayer and Christian love, always seeking to arrive at peaceful and proper solutions that are in the best interests of the child.

Disciplinary procedures for unacceptable or inappropriate behavior by students may include, but are not limited to:

**Classroom teachers may discipline by:**

- Verbal Warning
- Recess or lunch detention
- Referring students to administration

**Students referred to school administration may be disciplined by:**

- Verbal Warning
- Parent conferences
- Action taken will be based on the severity of the offense and in accordance with the age and development of the student involved. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Out-of-school suspension
  - Probation
  - Loss of privilege to take part in extra-curricular activities
  - Legal action (court)
  - Recommendation for an alternative school

## DISCIPLINARY PROBATION

Under certain circumstances, a student's behavior may warrant a more severe disciplinary intervention. Probation is intended to serve as a formal and serious warning to the student and his parents. During the probationary period the student must be all the more intent upon improving his conduct. It is also a period during which a student violating school rules is subject to further disciplinary action. At the discretion of the administration, probationary status may include one or more sanctions such as restriction of participation in school activities and/or other privileges.

Conditions:

- A student can be placed on probation for repeated violations of school rules.
- Student progress will be reviewed periodically.

- Disciplinary probation can be started at any time during the school year.
- Parent cooperation is expected in monitoring concerns.
- Duration of the probationary status will be a minimum of one marking period.
- Both students and parents must meet school recommendations.
- Student failure to improve conduct may result in a recommendation for alternative schooling.

## SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY

The administration may suspend any student from attendance at school or any school-related activity on or off campus or from attendance at a specified class or classes. Please note that all suspensions will be served at home and off of the school premises.

The following infractions shall result in suspension or expulsion:

- Violation of the Divine Savior Academy Discipline Policy
- Fighting or assault
- Possession of tobacco, tobacco products, drugs or alcohol
- Possession or use of firearms, weapons, or explosives will result in an immediate expulsion and notification of the proper authorities.

## BULLYING

- **Definition:** An Imbalance of Power: Children who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. This imbalance can be the result of physical size or the result of emotional or cognitive capacity so that the child has trouble defending himself or herself. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Intentionality:** Those who purposely bully or harass others choose actions that hurt or intimidate the targeted child. Repetitive negative actions are targeted at a specific victim.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- **Unequal levels of emotional upset:** The child who is being bullied typically displays some level of emotional distress, whereas the aggressor demonstrates little emotion or anguish. The child doing the bullying is likely to show little or no empathy or caring for the other child.

### Normal Conflict Versus Bullying:

Normal peer conflict is typically characterized by the developmental level of the children involved. Conflict is an inevitable part of interaction as children learn the appropriate social skills. Aggression and hurtful remarks are part of conflict at all ages; they do not necessarily mean that a bullying situation exists. DSA staff will help recognize the difference between normal conflict and bullying to encourage and support our students in dealing with these issues.

**Bullying** may involve but is not limited to: teasing, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking, innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, social isolation, gestures, cyber-bullying or other verbal or written conduct. Cyber-bullying includes the following misuses of digital technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images, or website postings (including blogs and social network sites). This definition includes students who either directly engages in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student's act of bullying.

This policy prohibits bullying that occurs either:

- On school premises before, during, or after school hours;
- On any vehicle used as part of any school activity; or
- During any school function, extracurricular activity or other school-sponsored event or activity.

### Reporting Complaints:

- Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying to the school immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported to the administration.

### 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, counseling, parent conference, suspension, expulsion, or notification to the appropriate authorities. This disciplinary action may be unique to the individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the discretion of the administration.

False reports or accusations of bullying also constitutes a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate disciplinary action.

## ANTI-HARRASSMENT POLICY

Divine Savior Academy is committed to providing a positive and productive learning environment free from sexual or racial harassment. Sexual or racial harassment shall not be tolerated in the school. Harassment of students by employees, other students, or others having business or other contact with the school is strictly prohibited.

All forms of harassment are prohibited at school, on school property, and at all school-sponsored programs or events. Harassment may result from verbal or physical conduct or written or graphic material. Harassment may include, but is not limited to: verbal harassment or abuse; pressure for sexual activity; repeated remarks to a person, with sexual, discriminating or demeaning implication; unwelcome touching; or suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning a student's grades, participation in extracurricular activities, etc. All victims of harassment and witnesses of such harassment are encouraged to report the incident immediately. Reports should be made to the administration. An investigation by the administration is required in order to resolve the problem. If a person's alleged behavior is found to be harassment, that person will be subject to discipline under the employee or student code of conduct.

## TECHNOLOGY POLICY

### *INTRODUCTION*

In today's connected world, Divine Savior Academy recognizes the necessity for students to learn and build skills using technology. For that reason, Divine Savior Academy provides students access to a variety of devices, use of network resources, and Internet connectivity. Responsible use of these technological tools will be taught and fostered among students.

### *RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY USE*

As responsible users of Divine Savior Academy's technology resources, students will:

- refrain from using iPads for non-academic purposes during the school day (i.e. social media, messaging, games, videos, etc.).
- use devices, network and Internet resources as directed by Divine Savior Academy staff.
- take care of the physical devices provided by the school.
- refrain from eating and drinking while using school devices.
- protect personal accounts, passwords, and information.
- visit websites that have an identified educational value.
- interact with others online in a polite and positive manner.

### *RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES*

When using devices, network resources, and Internet access provided by Divine Savior Academy, the following activities are not allowed:

- Use of devices in non-classroom areas, such as bathrooms, locker rooms, gymnasiums, etc.
- Downloading software or applications without express teacher permission
- Participating in any form of bullying
- Viewing, downloading, publishing, or transmitting material that is derogatory, profane, or obscene in nature, as determined by school administration
- Use of camera and video settings without prior teacher approval
- Use of the device to commit acts of academic dishonesty
- Unauthorized access of network or other files
- Any hacking, circumventing security procedures, or transmission of viruses, spyware, adware, or SPAM
- Unauthorized use of copyrighted material
- Any activity which violates local, state, or federal law

### ***PRIVACY***

Students should expect that all network and Internet activity and use of Divine Savior Academy owned devices will be filtered and monitored in accordance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Student files on the network, school activated online accounts, or digital storage devices may be inspected at any time. Student activity may be disclosed to school administration when necessary and local law enforcement as required by law. In accordance with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), Divine Savior Academy will plan online activities for students under the age of thirteen that ensures no personally identifiable information is collected. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect all students when they use the Internet.

### ***VIOLATIONS***

Divine Savior Academy reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges, or take other disciplinary action, including suspensions or expulsion from school, for violations of this policy. Additionally, all handbook regulations, including the Discipline Policy, apply to use of Divine Savior Academy’s technology resources.

Divine Savior Academy shall not be held liable for the actions of individuals who choose to violate the acceptable uses of school technology resources. In addition, each user and user's parent(s) or guardian(s) shall indemnify Divine Savior Academy and hold it harmless from and against any damage, liability, loss, or deficiency arising out of or resulting from the user's use or misuse of such resources.

Divine Savior Academy will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of its provided technology resources.

## **CELL PHONES**

Cell phones brought to school must be turned in to the child’s teacher before the school day begins and will be sent home when the child leaves for the day. In the event a student’s cell phone is seen or rings during the school day, it will be confiscated and given to the parents. If it happens a second time it will be confiscated and given to the administration. On the third offense, the cell phone will be confiscated and held indefinitely by the administration until a meeting can take place; at which time a decision about the cell phone and student will be made.

# **PARENTS AND VISITORS**

## **PARENT CONDUCT CODE**

There will be times when parents have concerns or disagreements either with school policies or the way they are implemented (or not implemented). Divine Savior Academy is always willing to listen to constructive criticism that is shared in an appropriate manner. The following section describes how these concerns are to be handled.



## ADDRESSING CONCERNS

### *APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION ADDRESSING CONCERNS*

Divine Savior Academy administration, teachers and school staff work very hard to maintain an environment that nurtures academic excellence for our students. Differences of opinions need not create a divisive relationship between school and home. For the sake of the children, there is a mutual benefit if these differences can be resolved through communication and understanding.

To work towards this common goal, the following procedure is recommended:

- Maintain a calm and respectful attitude that will set a tone where real listening can occur and understanding can emerge.
- Step 1 - The first attempt to deal with a concern related to a classroom situation should be between the parent and the teacher. Please contact the teacher before or after school, or during other available times, to resolve a concern.
- Step 2 - If the matter remains unresolved, parents should set up a meeting with the child's teacher to discuss the concern.
- Step 3 - Parents or students with grievances or concerns regarding general school policies or procedures should set up a meeting with the administration to discuss these items of concern. The administration will then decide on the proper course of action, whether that is through counseling, scheduling a meeting with a teacher, or referral to the administration. Concerns regarding your child's academic performance should be brought to his or her classroom teacher through a scheduled appointment.
- Step 4 - If the matter is between the home and the administration, a conference with the administration is the appropriate starting point. If satisfaction is not accomplished, then the matter may then be referred to the Head of Schools of Divine Savior Academy or the School Council of Divine Savior Academy.

### *ADDRESSING CONCERNS TO THE SCHOOL COUNCIL*

When issues or concerns about the operation or policies of the school arise and you have not received a satisfactory resolution after following the steps listed above, we ask that you follow these steps:

1. Contact the administration with your concerns.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved, contact the School President or Head of Schools and discuss the issue.
3. Petition the School Council through the School President or Head of Schools. This should be done in writing ten days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting of the board.

Conversely, for the welfare of the faculty, administration, and most of all, the student body, the following behavior cannot and will not be tolerated on our campus:

- Use of profane or vulgar language – verbal abuse
- Defamatory statements directed to others about the school administration, faculty, or student body, whether online (chat rooms, social media, websites, etc.), in writing, or in person
- Physical harm, threat of physical harm, intimidating, or aggressive behavior
- Disruption of classroom
- Destruction of property
- Disturbance of peace (angry yelling or screaming)
- Approaching or reprimanding students about behavioral issues

## PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) at Divine Savior Academy is a volunteer organization comprised of parents and staff of Divine Savior Academy that meets periodically during the school year to provide active support for the school and its programs. The PTO is beneficial in that it promotes cooperation between the home and the school, provides opportunities for service and involvement, and encourages social interaction among our school families and staff. Several times during the school year, the PTO sponsors guest speakers and assists with special school functions and activities for students. Divine Savior Academy parents are automatically members of the PTO. A school representative attends the PTO meetings and shares school updates or wishes, teacher requests, etc.

## HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Divine Savior Academy desires to build a culture where parents and teachers join hands as partners in providing the finest education possible for the young people entrusted to their care. To that end, the staff of Divine Savior Academy is truly committed to maintaining open channels of communication with the parents or guardians of our students. The following list outlines some of the important avenues designed to promote efficient and effective home-school communication.

### ***PARENT ORIENTATION NIGHT***

In August, parents are expected to meet with the administration and teachers at a parent orientation to discuss the school's philosophy, policies, and procedures. Classroom visitation and a question-and-answer session provide parents with helpful insights and information they will need for a successful school year.

### ***SCHOOL INFORMATION SYSTEM***

Divine Savior Academy utilizes an online database called PowerSchool that is used by parents to check student information and attendance. Parents are encouraged to create their accounts at the beginning of the school year.

### ***PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES***

Following the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and midway through the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter grading periods, parents are scheduled to meet with the teacher in a 15 or 20-minute conference. Discussion items include the child's academic progress as well as their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development.

### ***TEACHER AVAILABILITY***

If at any time during the school year parents have questions concerning their child's progress or behavior, they are encouraged to contact the teacher and arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. Stopping by the school or calling the school office or e-mailing the teacher may accomplish this. The teachers will make every effort to return your call or respond to your e-mail no later than the following day.

### ***CLASSROOM VISITATION***

Parents may participate in the classroom activities through field trips, birthday parties, and other special events. These opportunities will be coordinated with the classroom teacher in advance. Upon arrival at school, parents will check in at the school office and obtain a visitor's pass.

### ***VOLUNTEERING***

Parents are welcome to volunteer at Divine Savior Academy. Opportunities are plentiful. At all times we keep the safety of our students at the forefront of our minds. Therefore, all volunteers and field trip chaperones must participate in a volunteer orientation meeting as well as submit a set of fingerprints that will be used for a background check. Failure to complete all the necessary requirements will prohibit the volunteer's opportunity. The cost of the "live scan" fingerprints is the responsibility of the volunteer.

### ***THE ACADEMY DISPATCH AND WEEKLY TEACHER NEWS***

The Academy Dispatch is Divine Savior Academy's way of keeping parents informed. This weekly newsletter is delivered electronically via email. Parents are encouraged to read it in order to stay informed about scheduled events, upcoming activities, and other informative news. Educational news items, parenting tips, and highlights of student work are also included.

Each teacher sends home a weekly update (included with The Academy Dispatch) that informs parents of curriculum units being introduced, projects students are working on, areas of schoolwork where parents can assist their children, and upcoming events. Additionally, student work is saved and sent home at the time specified by your child's teacher, so that parents are aware of their child's overall performance. Parent comments or questions are always welcomed.

## SCHOOL PROMOTION AND PHOTO POLICY

According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Divine Savior Academy has the legal right to use student directory information. The Academy exercises this right by occasionally posting or publishing photos, names, and grade levels of students engaged in school sponsored activities to promote our school and share the achievements of our students with the community. In order to safeguard the privacy of our families and students, we will not divulge any

other form of personal identification (such as addresses, telephone numbers, etc.). All photos will be used in a professional manner to positively promote our school.

Published materials include the school newsletter (Academy Dispatch), brochures, postcards, flyers, press releases, newspaper articles, and print advertisements. Photos, videos, or names may be posted electronically to Divine Savior Academy's official websites or social media pages that are controlled and maintained by Divine Savior Academy administrators. These sites may include, but are not limited to, sites such as Facebook, Vimeo, Google+, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Flickr. Proper security controls will be implemented whenever possible to safeguard the media contained within these platforms. The security of our students and their families is our highest priority. Because of extenuating circumstances, a family may request that a child's name, information, and photo be withheld from school publications and promotional materials. Families must meet with administration to discuss opting out of our school promotion and photo policy and fill out the **School Promotion and Photo Opt-Out Form**. Please set up appointments and obtain opt out forms through a Divine Savior Academy administrative assistant.

## ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

We offer to all of our school families and community partners opportunities throughout the school year to participate as advertisers and sponsors. We have many events and organizations that families and businesses may support. Some of these opportunities include:

- Parent-Teacher Organization Event Sponsorship Opportunities
- Athletic Sponsorship Opportunities
- Publication Advertising Opportunities

For information about any of these opportunities, please contact the school office.

During events, sponsors will be allowed to pass out information, display banners, and collect information from guests as long as they follow the guidelines specified in their sponsorship agreements. Sponsorships may also include social media exposure, additional banners displayed, and inclusion in our weekly school newsletter.

## SOLICITATION POLICY

Divine Savior Academy maintains a policy of no solicitation by businesses to our students or families. In order to provide an optimal learning environment, free from distractions, no persons will be allowed to distribute flyers or any other types of advertising to students, parents, faculty, or staff while on our campus, unless it is during an approved event. Only school sponsored events will be advertised in The Academy Dispatch. Additionally, all directory information is only to be used for personal, school-related matters. No email addresses or telephone contacts should be used for advertising or promotional messages.

# EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

## INDIVIDUAL MUSIC LESSONS

Individual piano and instrumental lessons are offered through various teachers. More information on these lessons can be found on the website and in the *Academy Dispatch*.

## ATHLETICS

In our athletic program, our coaches encourage students to develop personal commitment, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. Divine Savior Academy offers organized after-school athletic programs including soccer, tennis, karate, and dance to help young, aspiring athletes learn the rules and develop their skills. Active participation in athletics strengthens friendships, enhances team building skills, improves coordination and strength, and promotes physical well-being. The children ultimately learn to view physical activity as both fun and rewarding. Dates and times for these programs are released seasonally.

## CHESS

The chess program at Divine Savior Academy is offered to students from PreK-4 through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Emphasis on advanced calculation through math and spatial recognition will be prioritized in chess instruction. Critical thinking and memory development through problem solving will be fostered in this program. Students that participate in chess can compete at local, regional, and state tournaments as part of a highly competitive team. Chess also strengthens problem-solving skills, teaches them to make difficult and abstract decisions independently, and enhances reading, memory, language, and mathematical abilities among other benefits. A professional chess instructor coaches the program.

If you are interested in the chess program, please speak with Mr. Gil Luna ([gil.luna@divinesavioracademy.com](mailto:gil.luna@divinesavioracademy.com)), and he will assist you with your questions.

## ART CLASSES

Art classes are offered to early childhood students after school during a portion of the school year. More information about these classes and sign-up information can be found in the *Academy Dispatch*.

## LITERACY LEARNERS CLUB

Divine Savior Academy offers a literacy club that gives children enriching experiences in the area of language arts and early literacy. More information about this club can be found in the *Academy Dispatch*.

## GENERAL NOTES

Divine Savior Academy may make changes to these extra-curricular offerings and add additional activities throughout the school year. More details about each program and sign-up information will be posted in our *Academy Dispatch* newsletter.

# FACILITIES

## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

It is expected that all cooperate in the care of our school grounds, building, and equipment. There are many opportunities for everyone to help preserve our fine facility. Keeping classrooms and hallways clean, keeping the parking

areas and sidewalks free from debris, depositing waste in the proper containers, and handling equipment as carefully as possible are a few examples. As such, any student who knowingly vandalizes or defaces the buildings or grounds at Divine Savior will be responsible for the cost of repair and may face additional consequences. Additionally, students responsible for triggering the fire alarm will be responsible for the fine assessed by the Fire Department.

## ELEVATORS AND STAIRWELLS

Only individuals with prior approval may use elevators. Students are not permitted to congregate in the stairwells or the elevator entryways.

## TELEPHONE

A telephone is not available for a student's social use. In the case of an illness or by faculty permission, the office administration will make the necessary arrangements to place a call. All calls must be made from the office telephone during regularly scheduled breaks.

## GUM

For building maintenance and sanitation, gum chewing is never allowed within the building during school hours or activities.

***Thank you for taking the time to read the Early Childhood Handbook. If you have questions about anything you have read, please contact the administration.***

Revised 7/22