

# ELEMENTARY 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 serve students with college-prep academics and supportive teachers in 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 403 early childhood centers, 313 elementary schools, and 25 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 Academy 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 Academy'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 extended care, hot lunch, 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 (ie: 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 Academy'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, 2016, for the 2016-2017 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.
- Classes begin promptly each day at 8:15 a.m. for 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.



- Dismissal time for 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade is 3:15 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday (2:15 p.m. on Wednesday). Dismissal time for 1<sup>st</sup> grade is 2:55 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday (1:45 p.m. on Wednesday).
- Parents are asked to use the designated parent drop-off/pick-up areas for both arrival and dismissal each day.
- Classroom doors open each morning at 7:55 a.m. for students in 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- At the end of the school day, under teacher supervision, students will be waiting to be picked up at designated areas between 3:15 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. for students in 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade (between 2:15 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays) and between 2:55 p.m. and 3:10 p.m. for 1<sup>st</sup> grade (between 1:45 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Wednesdays). Students who are not picked up within the designated pick-up time will be escorted to after school care.
- Children in the elementary levels 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.

## AFTER SCHOOL CARE

### *AFTER SCHOOL*

The Divine Savior Academy After Care program operates fifteen (15) minutes after each level’s 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. The schedule provides opportunities for outdoor play, puzzles and board games, group activities, quiet reading, and time to work on homework. After Care is available only on days when school is in session.

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

## 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 elementary 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 student’s whereabouts from the time he or she enters school until he or she departs and, unless otherwise notified, the school assumes the student is 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 to 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***

When students arrive late to school in the morning, they should report to the office before going to class. Students are expected to be on time and have transportation arrangements that will guarantee their punctuality.

- Students will serve an after-school detention after every fifth tardy per quarter.
- Excessive tardies (more than 10) will require a meeting with the administration, which 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 pros and cons 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. Requests for homework due to scheduled absences should be made in advance to give the teacher time to prepare materials. 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 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 Wednesday morning the students gather for chapel in the auditorium. Parents are invited to join the students for this devotion.

### 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 its integration of reading, phonics programs, writing, spelling, grammar, and oral expression in a sequential and developmentally appropriate order.

### Reading

Students develop a love for reading through instruction that incorporates thematic units of high-quality literature, poetry, short stories, and plays. The curriculum emphasizes listening and comprehension skills, while developing the ability to read critically. In addition to the written curriculum, Divine Savior Academy makes use of the supplemental, computer-based Accelerated Reader program. It provides opportunities for independent reading that assess the learner's reading comprehension and progress, while stimulating and rewarding the reader. Each classroom has direct library accessibility for assistance with appropriate book selection and checkout.

### Writing

Students are taught to be proficient writers in a step-by-step composition process that includes phrases, sentences, paragraphs, reports, letters, poetry, journals, and short stories. Grammar is taught and stressed in all writing lessons. Students are encouraged to exercise their free expression in creative writing class.

### Spelling

The spelling component of the curriculum develops phonetics awareness, provides dictation practice, and incorporates and reviews vocabulary words in weekly units.

### Oral Expression

Students develop public speaking skills through experiences in show-and-tell, oral reports, and class presentations.

### Mathematics

A thorough mathematics curriculum is critical for success in our ever-changing world. The traditional math approach at Divine Savior Academy gives students a firm foundation in computation, math concepts, problem solving strategies, and data interpretation. This foundation is constructed through daily instruction and review in a cumulative manner. To promote fluidity, all students in 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade use Reveal mathematics. The math program is experiential in nature and employs manipulatives and real-life situations to build mathematical knowledge. Basic math facts are developed and practiced through a variety of teaching methods. In addition, students in 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade use *IXL Math* in the classroom, which is a program designed to allow individualized math enrichment practice to take place.

## Technology

The development and use of modern technology continues to evolve and shape our lives. In order to gain proficiency in this technological age, computer education at Divine Savior Academy begins in first grade. Students are given the opportunity to develop familiarity with the physical structure of computers and with operating various computer programs to supplement cognitive growth. Each classroom is equipped with state-of-the-art computer equipment, iPad carts, numerous educational software titles, and high-speed Internet access that are utilized in a variety of contexts and disciplines. Educational software programs (Microsoft Office, Learn 360, EduTyping, Renaissance Place) are incorporated into the curriculum as a way of enriching the overall academic program. Computer labs are equipped with educational software and are utilized to complement student needs. Students in 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade begin typing instruction to practice and develop these skills.

## Science

The science curriculum at Divine Savior Academy leads children to a greater appreciation of the awe-inspiring world in which they live. By means of textbook investigation, hands-on experimentation, special group projects, and technology-aided presentations, 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

The scope of study in Divine Savior Academy's social studies curriculum includes exposure to a variety of social science disciplines: world cultures, values and customs, history, geography, sociology, current events, economics, concepts of globalization, and civics. Instruction and activities in these areas are structured to help young students develop skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, cause-and-effect relationships, and reading charts, maps, and graphs. This curriculum aspires to give students the necessary tools to be active, well-adjusted citizens and leaders in today's world.

## Spanish

The Spanish program at Divine Savior Academy contributes to preparing students as they become "global learners." The instructors 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.

The 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 such as notation, rhythm, and music terminology prepare the children to read music and explore musical instruments. Students practice note reading and rhythmic exercises using recorders, boom whackers, ukuleles, drums, and other percussion instruments. Vocal skills are developed through pitch exploration, ear training, and daily classroom singing. Students are introduced to famous composers and some of their works. To showcase the musical talents and accomplishments of our young musicians, several public performances are planned throughout the year.

## Art

Concepts such as line, shape, form, color, pattern, design, and composition are developed in an art curriculum that allows children to express their creativity and discover their talents. Young artists learn to value not only the product, but also the process. The children also enjoy exposure to well-known artists, their unique styles, and classical works. Other goals include development of fine motor skills, improvement of hand-eye coordination, and experiences in collaborative learning. An annual Art Fair allows the children to receive recognition for their favorite masterpieces.

## Physical Education

The goals of Divine Savior Academy's physical education program include instruction in the rules, skills, and strategies of team and individual sports. In addition, physical fitness and cardiovascular development are key components of the curriculum. Finally, it provides practical experiences in leadership, teamwork, and sportsmanship, as well as the development of a positive self-image in a safe and structured environment. Expectations of the students while in physical education class include participation in all games and 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

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 grades and attendance.

## WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORTS

Parents are encouraged to sign up for weekly progress reports through PowerSchool. This can be done after an account is created for each student, and it is an option that is available on each student's PowerSchool home page after logging into the site. These weekly reports, which are emailed at the beginning of each week, will help parents to stay informed about their child's educational growth and effort. Part of the value of the progress report is that they help prevent any surprises at report card time. Parents should contact the school office if they have not received the electronic progress report once it has been started.

## REPORT CARDS

Student progress is graded 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

All grades are reported as letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) in 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

A	100-95	4.00	B-	82-80	2.67	D+	69-67	1.33
A-	94-90	3.67	C+	79-77	2.33	D	66-63	1.00
B+	89-87	3.33	C	76-73	2.00	D-	62-60	0.67
B	86-83	3.00	C-	72-70	1.67	F	59 or below	
						I	Incomplete Work	

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

Each year, per our accreditation standards, standardized achievement tests are administered to the students in grades Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. 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. This serves to foster change and improvement. Achievement tests can be helpful in measuring each child's academic progress over the past year. Results are shared with parents as soon as they are made available to the school.

## 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 a night per grade starting in Kindergarten. (For example: a fourth grade child may have 50 minutes of homework.) The benefits of homework can be summarized as follows.

Homework does the following:

- Reinforces skills taught previously in the classroom
- Prepares students for new information
- Promotes creative thinking and independent research
- Communicates with parents the ongoing classroom learning
- 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 study each evening. Additionally, parents are encouraged to monitor their child's homework. Scheduling a quiet reading time and limiting screen time will also help to improve overall school performance. Parents who find that their child consistently has no homework, or spends an inordinate amount of time on homework assignments, or is experiencing difficulty, should contact the teacher.

## TUTORING

Paid tutoring for students desiring additional help is available after 4:00 p.m. (3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays). All tutoring requests should be made by contacting the tutoring coordinator, who will assist you in finding an available instructor who will best meet your child's academic needs. The cost for one-on-one tutoring is \$55 for each one-hour session, and the payments are made directly to the tutor.

Additional information about tutoring options and the contact information for the tutoring coordinator can be found on the school website under the Parent Resources section and in the Academy Dispatch.

## FIELD TRIP EXPERIENCES

Field trips and experiences are planned during the school year to enrich the curriculum 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 and experiences 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 may be 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 fingerprinted 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. Elementary students will receive a music participation grade for each performance scheduled during the school year. Students that present a valid excuse ahead of time will not be penalized.

## 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. To help them cope with the issues associated with growing up, Divine Savior Academy offers a developmental counseling program. These services focus on the needs of students from a Christian perspective, addressing the typical concerns, questions, and choices they face today. They will learn about interpersonal skills, relationships, and problem solving. The program is designed to enhance spiritual, personal, social, and academic growth. While the primary goal is to help students learn more effectively and efficiently, an added benefit is that it will ultimately make school life more satisfying and rewarding. The school counselor makes at minimum one visit per month to each homeroom in Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade. 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. An emergency card, 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 the 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 with the office. Administration is informed and parents or an emergency contact person (if needed) is 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. This includes cough drops.

### **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, parents should pick up the extra medication. Any medication left at the end of the school year will be properly discarded.

### **Discretionary Medications:**

Tylenol (or generic substitutes) 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 that requires an EPI-PEN or inhaler is allowed to carry and administer his or her own medications. 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 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 health care 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 grade level where lice has been suspected or discovered.

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. These standards of dress 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 Uniforms at [www.dennisuniform.com](http://www.dennisuniform.com). Questions regarding uniforms can be answered by calling their store at (305) 254-0000.

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

### **Elementary Girls' School Uniform**

- Grey pants with a black belt
- Approved skirts or skorts no more than 3 inches above the knee
- A Divine Savior Academy polo with logo
- Approved dress blouse
- White turtleneck during cooler weather
- Sweaters or jackets with Divine Savior Academy logos
- Black or white socks or full-length tights
- Approved black dress shoes
- A separate pair of non-marking gym shoes for physical education class
- Friday is chapel day. Girls in 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> should wear the dress blouse with the pearl crossover tie.

### **Elementary Boys' School Uniform**

- Grey pants or shorts with a black belt (for pants with loops)
- A Divine Savior Academy polo with logo
- Divine Savior Academy oxford shirt
- White turtleneck during cooler weather
- Sweaters or jackets with Divine Savior Academy logos
- Black or white socks
- Approved black dress shoes
- A separate pair of non-marking gym shoes for physical education class
- Friday is chapel day. Boys in 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grade should wear the Divine Savior Academy oxford shirt with a tie.

### **General Guidelines**

- Skirts, skorts, and shorts are to be worn no shorter than 3 inches above the knees.
- A black belt is to be worn in pants and shorts that have belt loops.
- No jeans, oversized clothing, hats, or caps may be worn.
- Shirts are to be worn tucked in at all times.
- Shoes must be the approved black dress shoe.
- Socks must be below the knee and without brand name logos.
- 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.
- Good hygiene is an important part of a child's growth and development.
- 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. Once a month different school organizations host a Jean Day. Students are allowed to wear jeans with no rips, holes, or tears.

## **LUNCH**

Students may bring a 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 After Care may also bring along snacks to eat before or after school. Only water is allowed in the classroom during teaching hours. Juice boxes are allowed during snack break. Soda is never allowed. Water bottles should not become a distraction in the classroom.

## 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. 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 it 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 detention, 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 turned in to the front desk or 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:**

- Warning or counseling
- Recess or lunch detention
- After school detention
- Referring students to administration

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

- Warning or counseling
- Detention
- Parent conferences
- Action taken will be based on the severity of the offense and in accordance with the physical 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

## AFTER-SCHOOL DETENTION

It is important for students to accept responsibility for their actions. The purpose of after school detention is to correct minor behavior problems. Detention notices are given to the students to take home to their parents. The teacher may also follow up with a phone call or email.

In looking at a student's past behavior and facts of an incident, the administration may assign a different penalty. The administration, after consultation with the teacher, has the final decision for disciplinary action. School community services may be substituted for detention in some instances.

Detentions will be assigned for the following infractions - as deemed necessary:

- Habitual refusal or failure to do homework
- Habitual refusal or failure to do class work
- Infractions of the teacher's code of conduct and classroom policy
- Excessive tardiness (5 or more)
- Failure to abide by school policies and procedures (dress code, etc.)

Detentions are to be served on the day indicated on the detention form from 3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Please note that students not picked up at 4:00 p.m. will be signed into After Care. In addition, detentions take precedence over any extracurricular activities.

## 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 more intent upon improving his or her 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 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 determined by counselor and administration.
- Both student 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 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. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people. This behavior is repeated consistently over a period of time. (Bullying is malicious behavior and involves more than joking behavior between friends.)
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

**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, detention, 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 constitute a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate disciplinary action.

## ANTI-HARASSMENT 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 the 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 homeroom 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 found in the classroom (in the backpack, cubby, or on the student) 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 even disagreements either with school policies or the way they are implemented (or not implemented). Divine Savior Academy is always willing, and desirous, 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.
- The first attempt to deal with a concern related to a classroom situation should be between the student and the teacher. Please encourage your child to contact the teacher before or after school, or during other available times, to resolve a concern.
- If the matter remains unresolved, parents should set up a meeting with the child's teacher to discuss the concern.
- 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.
- 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 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 administrator with your concerns.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved, contact the Head of Schools and discuss the issue.
3. Petition the School Council through the 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, assists with special school functions, and activities. Divine Savior Academy parents are automatically members of the PTO. A school representative will attend the PTO meetings to share 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 and 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 night 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 offered to parents to track attendance, grades, and behavioral progress. Parents are encouraged to create their accounts at the beginning of the school year and to regularly check their child's progress. Weekly reports can be generated via e-mail through the parent portal.

### ***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, school disposition, and interaction with teacher and classmates.

### ***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. The teachers will make every effort to return your call or respond to your email within twenty-four hours.

### ***SCHOOL VISITATION***

Parents may participate in classroom activities through field trips, birthday parties, and other special events, so long as it has been communicated to the teacher at least one day in advance. Upon arrival at school, parents will sign in and obtain a guest pass from the school office.

### ***VOLUNTEERING***

Parents are welcome to volunteer at Divine Savior Academy. At all times we keep the safety of our students at the forefront of our minds. Therefore, all volunteers and 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 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 school work where parents can assist their children, or 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 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 events sponsored by Divine Savior 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

## DIVINE SAVIOR ACADEMY CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Children who enjoy singing are encouraged to further their musical interests through membership in the Divine Savior Academy Children's Choir. Opportunities for part-singing, solos, small group ensembles, and choreography add to the excitement of this weekly after-school activity. Public performances at church, school, Friday morning chapel, and in the community, provide the children with an opportunity to share their faith, promote their school, and expand their musical horizons. Students in 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade may choose to join our Children's choir.

## INDIVIDUAL MUSIC LESSONS

Individual piano and instrumental lessons are offered through various teachers. The cost for this service is \$27.50 for each 30-minute lesson, and \$55 for a 60-minute lesson. Students who have enrolled in a minimum of eight (8) lessons each semester will be eligible to participate in the school recitals.

If you are interested in piano or instrumental lessons, please see the school website or Academy Dispatch for more information.

## THEATER PROGRAM

Students with an interest in acting have a variety of opportunities within the theater program to develop their talents both on and off the stage. Students may audition for plays at the elementary level. Whether it is acting, singing, dancing, or working behind the scenes, young performers will reap many benefits from their involvement in theater while at the same time delighting appreciative audiences.

## ATHLETICS

In our athletic program, our coaches encourage students to develop personal commitment, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. Through outside companies, Divine Savior Academy offers organized after-school athletic programs including karate, dance, soccer, basketball, volleyball, tennis, archery, and track to help young, aspiring athletes learn the rules and develop their skills. Active participation in athletics strengthens friendships, enhances teambuilding skills, improves coordination and strength, and promotes physical well-being. The children ultimately learn to view sports competition as both fun and rewarding. These classes are available to elementary students for an additional fee. Classes are held on campus after school. Dates and times are released seasonally. As Divine Savior Academy grows and expands, the athletic program will also grow, thereby offering additional sports in years to come.

## 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 have the opportunity to 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.

## ART

Divine Savior Academy offers after school art classes for elementary students. Classes are taught by one of our art teachers. Students learn about and experiment with different art mediums and techniques.

# 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 desks 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 Academy 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 from the office may use elevators. Students are not permitted to congregate in the stairwells or the elevator entryways.

## TELEPHONE

Classroom telephones are for staff use only. 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 Elementary Handbook. If you have questions about anything you have read, please contact the administration.***

Revised 7/1/2023