

# EARLY CHILDHOOD HANDBOOK 2023-2024



Divine Savior Academy  
— DELRAY BEACH —

WELCOME TO:

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.

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, MSIE  
*Head of Schools - Divine Savior Academy*

## **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's Delray Beach campus is licensed as a childcare facility through the Environmental Health Office of Palm Beach County and adheres to the rules and regulations set by the county. In addition, Divine Savior's Delray campus 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 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 Blackbaud 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 must be toilet-trained in order to enter preschool. Children must be able to communicate when they need to use the restroom and do so independently.**

\* We are not able to provide assistance with dressing, wiping or other bathroom tasks.

\*An extra set of clothes is requested in case of occasional accidents.

## 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 Blackbaud agreement.

Guidelines are as follows:

- An application and 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 Blackbaud.
- Three tuition payment plans are available: annual, bi-annual, or monthly. Blackbaud accepts a wide variety of payment options including credit, debit, and ACH. Please contact Blackbaud (www.blackbaud.school) 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 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).
- It is important that tuition is paid on time each month, and we ask that parents proactively reach out to our business department if there are any issues with paying the monthly tuition payments by the due date. Payments are due by the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month. All payments received after the due date will incur a late fee. Please be advised that one or more of the following may also take place when tuition is past due:
  - Students will not be allowed to attend any trips that require an additional payment from the family.
  - Students may not be allowed to attend aftercare, athletics, and extracurriculars until the account is current.
  - Report cards and final grades may not be issued until the account is current.
  - Recommendation forms may not be completed until the account is current.
  - Students may not be allowed to attend school until the account is current.
- 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 of 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 administration, 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 2:45 p.m.
- Before Care is held in the classroom beginning at 7:30 a.m.
- Parents must sign children in on the form provided upon arrival.
- At the end of the school day, under teacher supervision, students will be waiting to be picked up at designated areas between 2:45 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. for students in PreK-3, PreK-4, and Kindergarten. Parents will need to sign their child out at dismissal on the form provided. Students will be escorted to After Care after the dismissal period.
- Only those adults (16 years or older) listed as authorized on the child's enrollment form will be allowed to pick-up the child.
- Students 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 beginning at 7:30 a.m. Students may use this time to play with designated age-appropriate materials, read, review assignments, or eat a light breakfast (provided by the parents). There is no charge for this service.

### ***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 homework completion and/or other class projects, outdoor play, puzzles and board games, and group activities. Students should bring along an afternoon snack if they plan to stay for an extended amount of time. After Care is available only on days when school is in session. After Care is not provided on the last day of the school year or the day before Christmas break.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **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

Divine Savior Academy does not designate absences as excused or unexcused. Students are expected to be in school every day that school is scheduled unless suffering from an illness or contagious condition as described in the handbook. Students who are absent more than the equivalent of 20 full-day absences in a school year may require a mandatory review by administration and the classroom teacher to determine possible repetition of the class and/or the grade level.

Chronic illness and family emergencies that extend beyond the total number of absences allowed will be considered on an individual basis by the administration.

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

Students who arrive to school more than 30 minutes after their start time (after 9:00 a.m.) or leave early more than 30 minutes before their end time (before 2:15 p.m.) 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 via phone or email no later than 9:00 a.m. if your child will be absent from school. If a parent calls the school office to report an absence, the student must bring a parent or doctor written note citing the reason for the absence upon return to school. Doctor notes should include the specific medical rationale for a student's absence. Please note the following in regards to how DSA is required to report attendance:

- Tardies, half-day absences, and full-day absences are reported on your student's report card (in Kindergarten and above) and become part of their permanent school record. Parents can check their child's attendance on PowerSchool at any time.
- DSA must report student attendance to state scholarship programs on a quarterly basis for students who receive a state scholarship. Per state scholarship program guidelines, students who receive a state scholarship cannot miss more than 10% of the school year including a combination of tardies, leaving early, half absences, and full absences. Students with more than five absences per quarter may be in danger of losing their scholarship.

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

Students are expected to be on time and have transportation arrangements that will guarantee their punctuality. Any student arriving after 8:30 a.m. must enter through the main entrance and check in at the school office. Any student arriving after 8:30 a.m. and before 9:00 a.m. will be marked tardy. If early childhood students are tardy more than 10 days in a quarter, the early childhood director and classroom teacher may schedule a meeting with the child's parents to discuss the importance and benefit of children arriving on time to school.

### ***LEAVING EARLY***

Students leaving early must check out through the office and the parent must sign him/her out. The office will call 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 all of the educational, social, and psychological pros and cons of habitually removing their children from school early.

### ***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. Florida law defines habitual truancy as a student being absent from school for 15 days or more within 90 calendar days with or without the knowledge or consent of the student's parent or guardian.

## **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. Students also learn memorable Bible passages and Christian songs that enhance their understanding of God's Word. Every Wednesday morning the students gather for chapel in the auditorium. Parents and friends 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 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. Students develop a love for reading through instruction that incorporates thematic units of high quality literature, poetry, short stories, and play.

### 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. As they progress, 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.

### Spelling

The spelling component of the curriculum develops the sound/spelling connection in language. Beginning in 1st grade, children are given a set of words to practice spelling each week, which incorporates and reviews vocabulary words in weekly units.

### 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, like oral reports and class presentations, 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 preschool 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 to develop math concepts, problem solving strategies, and data interpretation through daily instruction and review in a cumulative manner. Kindergarten classes use the Illustrative Mathematics program, a problem-based core curriculum designed to address content and practice standards while fostering learning for all. Students have countless hands-on opportunities to solve math problems and practice math skills in lesson activities and classroom centers. The curriculum places an emphasis on solving math problems in real-world contexts and collaborating with peers while using language to express thoughts and solutions.

## 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, at times, make use of iPads in the classroom to supplement their learning. Computer education at Divine Savior Academy begins in 1st grade, with an emphasis on typing instruction. Students are given the opportunity to develop familiarity with the physical structure of computers and with operating various computer programs to supplement cognitive growth.

## 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. Students are exposed to a variety of social science disciplines: world cultures, values and customs, history, geography, sociology, current events, economics, concepts of globalization, and civics. Teachers make use of children's literature and technology-aided presentations in their lessons. 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 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

The Spanish program at Divine Savior Academy 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. 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.

## 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. Goals for elementary students also include instruction in the rules, skills, and strategies of team and individual sports. Students also have practical experiences in leadership, teamwork, and sportsmanship, as well as the opportunity to develop a positive self-image in a safe and structured environment. 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 attendance.

## 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 out electronically following the end of each grading period.

## GRADING

Below are the rating and grading scales used for children in Divine Savior Academy.

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

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***

Students are rated in each standard for core academic subjects and for each specials course and learning skills according to the following categories:

**Exemplary** – Demonstrates broad in-depth skill/concept development that most often exceeds grade level standards

**Proficient** – Demonstrates skill/concept development that meets grade level standards

**Approaching** – Demonstrates skills/concept development that is beginning to meet grade level standards

**Needs Development** – Demonstrates skill/concept development that is significantly below grade level standards

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

Per our accreditation standards, standardized achievement tests are administered to the students in grades Kindergarten and above. These tests are taken three times during the year (fall, winter, spring) to help guide and measure student growth throughout the year. 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 also be helpful in measuring each child's academic progress over the past year. Results are shared with parents after each testing period.

## HOMEWORK

Divine Savior Academy believes in the development of the whole child. We encourage students to spend time in the evenings interacting with their families and friends as well as participating in extracurricular activities to support their social-emotional and physical development. Having a healthy life balance should be modeled for students at a young age. Though students may occasionally have at-home projects, additional activities, or classroom work to complete at home, students will not have daily homework at the early childhood level. Any time spent reading to and with children at home is extremely beneficial and limiting screen time will also help to improve overall school performance. Questions about classroom performance and/or additional at-home activity ideas can be brought to the classroom teacher.

## 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 are required to attain 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. Early childhood staff members also complete various training and continuing education units related to teaching and child development during the year.

## 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.

## 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. Any allergies will be recorded on this form and displayed in the necessary classrooms.

## 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 with the office. Administration is informed and parents and an emergency contact person (if needed) is notified of the injury and given an Accident Report form to review and sign for the child's file.

## 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 Invasive Medication form, available in the front office. This form needs to be completed annually. Only prescription medication can be given at school. Prescription medication must be in the original container with a label showing the name of the physician, child's name, name of the medication, dosage, and other medication directions. 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.

### *Self-medication:*

Only a student that requires an EPI-PEN or inhaler is allowed to have his/her medication in the classroom or in the possession of his/her teacher. 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. The following signs and symptoms must no longer be present:

- Severe coughing; causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Stiff neck
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a twenty-four-hour period)
- Temperature of one-hundred (100) degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

- Untreated infectious skin patch(es)
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool and yellowish skin or eyes
- Vomiting
- Pediculosis (head lice, nits)
- Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness

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 e-mail will be sent home to parents in the grade level 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 treatment has occurred, which includes the removal of all lice, lice eggs, and egg cases (nits).

## 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. During rainfall or whenever lightning is visible on the horizon or thunder is audible during outdoor playtimes, children will be moved inside immediately. 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 Palm Beach County Schools' announcement regarding school closures and openings.

## EMERGENCY EVALUATION DRILLS AND REPORTING

In compliance with state regulations, evacuation fire drills are performed once a month. Tornado and safety 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.

## MANDATORY REPORTING

According to state law, the teachers and staff at Divine Savior must report any knowledge or suspicion of injuries or incidents consistent with child abuse or neglect. If needed, these reports will be made to the Florida Abuse Hotline, local law enforcement, and the Palm Beach County Health Department.

## 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 address for their Boca Raton location is 7602 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Boca Raton, FL 33487. Questions regarding uniforms can be answered by calling their office at 561-226-9803. The administration reserves the right to interpret and make changes as needed.

The following guidelines indicate appropriate dress.

### Early Childhood Girls' School Uniform

- DSA dress or polo with skirt/pants
- Skirts must be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee
- Dresses should have biker shorts underneath
- DSA sweater or fleece
- Solid black or white socks, opaque tights, or leggings (no logo except DSA socks available through Dennis)
- Approved all black shoes (including logos, laces, and soles)
- A belt, if worn, should be plain black
- All hair accessories must match the uniform's colors and not detract from the overall uniform appearance

### Early Childhood Boys' School Uniform

- DSA polo with logo
- DSA grey shorts or pants with a plain black belt when appropriate
- DSA sweater or fleece
- Solid black or white socks (no logo except DSA socks available through Dennis)
- Approved all black shoes (including logos, laces, and soles)

### General Guidelines

- Skirts, skorts, and shorts are to be worn no shorter than 2 inches above the knees.
- No jeans, oversized clothing, hats, or caps may be worn.
- Shoes must be the approved black dress shoe.
- Early childhood students who have not yet learned to tie their shoes are encouraged to wear shoes with Velcro straps.
- Socks must be below the knee and without brand name logos (either DSA logo from Dennis or no logo).
- 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. No hats or caps may be worn.
- Parental cooperation is appreciated.

## SPIRIT DRESS

Certain times throughout the year, our administration 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 and established guidelines.

In addition, Fridays during the school year are considered DSA Spirit wear Days. On these days, students may wear DSA shirts purchased from our online Spirit wear store along with jeans or other appropriate bottoms. On Fridays, students may wear closed-toed shoes of their choice (no heels or sandals).

## LUNCH

Students may bring a lunch from home or when available, buy the catered meal option. When catered meals are offered, information, pricing, and menu choices will be provided to parents ahead of time. Due to time and sanitary conditions, teachers will not heat student lunches in the microwave. Therefore, if your student brings his/her own lunch, please plan accordingly. Students are not allowed to share food or beverages at school. Soda and candy is not allowed.

## SNACK BREAK

Children will have a snack break during the day. Parents need to provide these snacks each day and are encouraged to send along nutritious snacks. Students may also bring along snacks to eat before or after school. Soda and candy is not allowed. Students are not allowed to share food or beverages at school.

## PARTIES

Many of the parents like to bring refreshments on their child's birthday. This may be done with prior approval from the classroom teacher. To abide by licensing regulations, though, no homemade treats may be served in the classroom. 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. Additionally, if invitations for parties are handed out at school, everyone in the class must be invited. Invitations will be handed out at the end of the school day or at the teacher's discretion. Please note that parents will need to give written permission for their child to participate in food-related activities at school, including birthday treats and classroom cooking activities, on the form provided at the start of the school year.

## 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 and library books 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 staff assumes the role of parent when the children are left under their care each day. 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
- Harassment of fellow students
- Vandalizing or defacing school property (parents will be financially liable)
- Attitude and examples which are detrimental to the welfare of other students
- 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

As needed, students will be disciplined with Christian love, support, and forgiveness. Teachers use positive and gentle disciplining methods to redirect students and help them learn to respect God, their teachers, caregivers, and friends. Whenever consequences are administered, they will be consistent, logical, and motivated by love for the child.

In the event that a student fails to observe Divine Savior's discipline policy, teachers will document the incident, and the child's parents may be contacted by phone, handwritten note, or email so that teachers and/or administrators may work with parents to identify behavioral issues and possible solutions. A student may be placed on probation, suspended, or expelled for continued violations of school rules, and parents may be asked to withdraw the child if rebellious or harmful behavior or unacceptable attitudes persist. Such decisions will be made in consultation with the parents and Divine Savior's school council and with the best interests of the child in mind.

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, scheduling a meeting with the teacher, or referral to other administrative personnel.

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. In addition, teachers model and encourage problem-solving skills when disagreements between students occur in the classroom.

Disciplinary procedures for unacceptable/inappropriate behavior by early childhood students (preschool, kindergarten) may include, but are not limited to:

**Classroom teachers may discipline by:**

- Redirection
- Removal of an object if being used inappropriately
- Calmly stop inappropriate actions and remind children of the rules
- Giving choices of alternative, acceptable behaviors to replace the unacceptable behavior
- Positive reinforcement of acceptable behavior
- Warning or counseling
- Supervised time out from the classroom activity
- Referring students to administration

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

- Warning or counseling
- 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:
  - In-school or 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 student and parents must meet school recommendations.
- Student failure to improve conduct may result in a recommendation for alternative schooling.

## 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 engage 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, and/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 AND SMART WATCHES

Cell phones and smart watches 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 or smart watch 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 or smart watch will be confiscated and held indefinitely by the administration until a meeting can take place; at which time a decision about the cell phone/smart watch and student will be made. Watches that are not capable of two-way communication and do not have access to the internet are allowed as long as they do not interfere with the student’s focus during the school day.

# 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.
- Step 1 - The first attempt to deal with a concern related to a classroom situation should be between the student and/or parent and the teacher in that classroom. Please contact the teacher before or after school, or during other available times, to resolve a concern.
- Step 2 - 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 other administrative personnel. Concerns regarding your child's academic performance should be brought to his/her classroom teacher through a scheduled appointment.
- Step 3 - 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 (appropriate director or principal) with your concerns.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved, contact the President or Head of Schools to discuss the issue.
3. Petition the School Council through the administration. 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 Divine Savior Academy Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is a volunteer organization consisting of parents and school representatives. The PTO works to provide active support for the school administration and faculty by using parental talents and resources to promote Christian education and the welfare of children at home, school, and in our community.

The 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. 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. A school representative will attend the PTO meeting to share school updates or wishes, teacher requests, etc.

The purpose of the PTO shall be:

Early Childhood and Elementary Handbook

1. To contribute to and cooperate with the objectives of Christian training and preparation for Christian living for which our Academy is maintained.
2. To promote mutual home-school understanding, cooperation, and unity through a working partnership of parents, teachers, and the administration by organizing school events.
3. To assist in securing equipment and resources especially for the Academy, and such additional projects as the Organization desires.
4. To provide volunteer opportunities for the Academy's constituency.

This organization shall not interfere at any time with the administration of the school in its discipline, its curriculum, or its budgetary expenditures as administered by the Divine Savior Academy School Council according to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church and Academy.

Divine Savior Academy parents are automatically members of the PTO and as such Divine Savior Academy will share parent contact information with PTO for communication of school-wide and classroom specific activities, needs, and volunteer opportunities. If you do not want your contact information shared with PTO, please send your written request to the Principal prior to the start of the school year. If you decide later that you do not wish to have continued communication from PTO, you can communicate that directly to PTO via a response to the last PTO communication you received.

PTO general meetings will be held at minimum once per semester with all parents invited to provide input. In addition to the general meetings, PTO work will be accomplished through committees that will meet as needed. PTO officers will meet on a monthly basis to oversee the overall operations of the PTO. Elections are held in the spring of each school year to elect PTO officers for the following school year.

## 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.

### ***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. 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 VOLUNTEERING***

For prearranged classroom activities and other special events, parents may be asked to help in the classroom during the school day. Classroom volunteers need to be confirmed by administration at least one day in advance. All classroom volunteers should participate in a volunteer orientation meeting prior to volunteering. Upon arrival at school, parents will need to provide a photo ID to be scanned in at the office and obtain a guest pass from the school office.

### ***EVENT 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 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 school work where parents can assist their children, and 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.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

There may be special times when children are asked to bring something to school to show to the class. At all other times, items from home should not be brought to school. Please do not allow your child to bring gum, toys, weapons, candy, money, or other personal or inappropriate items to school. If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please first discuss them with your child's teacher.

## **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 the school office.

## **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. 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

Throughout the school year, various enrichment programs will be offered at Divine Savior for our students. These activities may include dance, tumbling, karate, soccer, theater or music experiences, chess, and/or art programs. More information about these extra-curricular activities will be shared with families in the weekly newsletter and sign-up forms will be provided as they become available.

## 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 desk tops 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.

### FACILITY USE

To ensure the health and safety of the children on our campus and to abide by Palm Beach County licensing regulations, smoking is not allowed on the premises. Additionally, firearms or weapons, alcoholic beverages, narcotics or other impairing drugs, and animals are prohibited in the early childhood facility.

### 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.

## REPORTING MISCONDUCT

All employees and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors. Reports of misconduct of employees should be made to the on-site administrator (principal and/or early childhood director). Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to a member of the school council, and if needed, to the Divine Savior Ministries staff, which includes the president of the organization.

Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services. Policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student are included in our school handbook and posted in the staff break room on campus and on our Web site at [www.divinesavioracademy.com](http://www.divinesavioracademy.com) on the parent resource page

*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 7/12/2023