

# SAINT HELEN CATHOLIC ACADEMY



**83-09 157<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Howard Beach, NY 11414**

**Telephone: 718-835-4155**

**[www.sthelenatholicacademy.org](http://www.sthelenatholicacademy.org)**

## **PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our students, the adult Catholics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, will possess the skills, attitudes, and values necessary to be contributing members of society.

Because of their deep reverence for all of God's creation, they will share their gifts and talents in promoting a sense of respect, dignity, and equality for all, especially the poor and needy.

Their strong belief in the providential love of God will enable them to face the challenges and responsibilities associated with this complex technological age.

## **ST. HELEN CATHOLIC ACADEMY PHILOSOPHY**

We at St. Helen Catholic Academy welcome the children God has entrusted to our care. Our goal is to nurture our children spiritually, strengthen them morally, and support them in their academic, social, physical, and emotional growth. A supportive and challenging environment for the development of each child is provided, as well as the encouragement of self-motivation and self-discipline in all areas.

In our community of faith we strive to prepare our students to live the Gospel message of "love one another" in word and deed. Our daily prayer encourages the formation of a personal relationship between students and God.

Teachers are given the opportunity to share ideas and make suggestions in a professional atmosphere. Teachers strive to support parents in the education of their children through open channels of communication. Our Home School Association, parents, faculty, and administration work together for the benefit of our students.

At St. Helen Catholic Academy, the pastor, principal, faculty, and staff form a cooperative and respectful working environment. We understand, encourage, respect, and support one another. At faculty meetings, we are an informed body. We assess the present and the future needs of our students. Our ultimate goal is for each student to achieve his or her best according to their potential. Our caring, family atmosphere is a positive model for the children to emulate.

**INFORMATION/PHONE NUMBERS**

Christine Zerillo, Ed.D., Principal: 718-835-4155  
School Fax: 718-738-0580  
Ms. Michele Carollo (Tuition Office): 718-835-4155 x115  
Website: sthencatholicacademy.org

**Academy Board:**

John Spagnuolo, Chairman  
James Baglino James Gillespie  
Frank Bifulco Steve Giusto  
Maria Ford Vita Russo  
Joseph Trotta

**SCHOOL SCHEDULE**

**PRE-K 3 Year Olds**

Mon./Wed./Fri.  
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM  
8:30 AM – 2:50 PM

Tues./Thurs.  
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM  
8:30 AM – 2:50 PM

**SHCA PRE-K 4 Year Olds**

Mon.-Fri.  
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM  
8:30 AM – 2:50 PM

**Mom & Me**

Mon./Wed.  
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Mon.-Fri.  
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM  
8:30 AM – 2:50 PM

**PRE-K FOR ALL**  
Mon.-Fri.  
8:15 AM – 2:35 PM

**Kindergarten**  
8:10 AM – 2:55 PM

**Grades 1-8**  
8:10 AM – 3:00 PM

Doors will open at 8:00 AM for K-8 students; 8:05 AM for PKA, and 8:20 AM for Pre-K 3 & 4 year old students.

**Before and After-school Program** - Registration forms available in school office.

Before-school Program: 7:00 AM to start of school

After-school Program: Dismissal – 6:00 PM

**School Closing Due to Inclement Weather**

Announcements regarding school closing for the day will be made no later than one hour before school is expected to open. The classroom teacher will notify you by telephone and email.

The 2016-2017 calendar allows for two snow days. Should more than two emergency school closing days be necessary, snow makeup days will be scheduled as follows: June 23<sup>rd</sup>, June 26<sup>th</sup>, and June 27<sup>th</sup>. Additional modifications may be made to the calendar depending on the total number of lost days of instruction due to weather or emergency conditions.

## ***ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES***

Please observe the following procedures to ensure the safety of our children:

### **Arrival:**

- Drop off students in front of Father Dooley Hall/83<sup>rd</sup> Street.
- Please do not leave your car unattended.
- Teachers will be outside to help students exit vehicle and enter the building.
- Parking along curb in front of school will be towards 83rd Street.

### **Dismissal:**

- Parking is available on 157th Avenue, in the lot across from school and the 83rd Street lot.
- Do NOT double park or make u-turns in front of the school.
- Students who remain at school after dismissal, will be supervised in the St. Helen Catholic Academy After School Program. There will be a child care fee.

Student safety is our primary concern. These procedures are for the safety and welfare of your children. Please follow all directions.

## ***POLICIES***

### **Building Security**

All doors to the school are kept locked. Surveillance cameras monitor all the entrances to the school. Parents entering the building should report directly to the office.

### **Lateness**

If a child reports to school after 8:10 AM, he/she should go directly to the office to receive a late pass.

### **Attendance**

A note stating the **reason for and dates of** for your child's absence is required upon the student's return to school. New York State law allows absence for health or family medical or emergency reasons. A doctor's note is required for an absence of three or more days. Doctor's appointments should be scheduled for after school hours.

If your child becomes ill during school hours, he/she will be released only to an approved parent/guardian who will have to sign the **Released Due to Illness** book.

New York State requires you to call the school by 8:00 AM if a student is to be absent. Please give the following information when you call:

- Name of Student
- Grade
- Reason for Absence

Good attendance and being on time strengthens character development. It also provides the necessary environment for the child to fulfill their potential.

To this end, St. Helen Catholic Academy's comprehensive attendance policy has been revised to comply with NYS Education Law, Sec. 3204. This includes the taking of attendance any time a student changes classrooms during the day, which ensures a record of the student's movements throughout the day. In the case of absence, lateness, or early departure that is not due to illness, family medical reason or emergency or severe weather, the parent, not the school, is responsible for any missed work. In addition, students absent for more than 35 days are in jeopardy of retention.

## Uniform and Hair Code ~ Grades K-8\*

**All clothing is to be neat and clean.** If a student arrives to school out of uniform in any way, the student's parent/guardian will be called immediately to come to school with the proper attire.

### GIRLS:

- Grades K-6:** Plaid jumper & criss-cross tie
- Grades 7-8:** Plaid skirt & navy blue vest or navy blue v-neck sweater, criss-cross tie
- Lt. blue pointed-collar blouse or SHCA turtleneck
- Lt. blue golf shirts (Sept.-Oct. 31; April 1-June)
- Navy blue skirt (K-6: Sept.-Oct. 31; April 1-June)
- Shirt must be tucked in at all times**
- Skirt length must be 1 inch above the knee
- Solid navy blue/black knee socks or opaque tights – no prints or cut-off tights
- Navy blue pants
- Navy blue cardigan or pullover sweater, or St. Helen uniform sweatshirt
- Jewelry – Earrings only; only one stud/button in each lobe – no loop earrings, a wristwatch may be worn
- No tattoos
- No make-up, no nail tips, no polish, no fake nails
- Headbands may be either dark blue or school uniform plaid**
- Shoes – solid blue/black, no more than one inch heel; Grades K-3 students may have buckled blue/black shoes; No light-up shoes may be worn, black sneakers are not acceptable except for gym
- Gym – White or black crew-length socks

### BOYS:

- Navy blue trousers
- Lt. blue shirt with plaid tie or SHCA turtleneck
- Lt. blue golf shirt (Sept.-Oct. 31; April 1-June)
- Shirt must be tucked in at all times**
- Navy blue cardigan or pullover sweater, or St. Helen uniform sweatshirt
- White or dark-colored ankle-length socks
- Dark-colored belt
- No earrings or other jewelry, a wristwatch may be worn
- No tattoos
- APPROPRIATE HAIRCUTS – HAIR NOT PAST TOP OF COLLAR. NO DESIGNS, NO SPIKES, NO MOHAWK, NO TAILS, NO PARTIALLY SHAVED HEADS, NO FADDISH STYLES.**
- Shoes – solid blue/black, no more than one inch heel; Grades K-3 students may have buckled blue/black shoes; No light-up shoes may be worn, black sneakers are not acceptable except for gym
- Gym – White or black crew-length socks

**\*St. Helen Catholic Academy has the sole discretion in determining if a student's attire or appearance conforms to school standards.**

## Physical Education

A doctor's note is required if a child cannot participate or must have limited activity.

Gym Uniforms – On assigned gym days, students wear school gym uniforms and sneakers. No light-up, platform, slip-ons, retractable roller skates, or Keds sneakers may be worn. Crew-length white or black socks must be worn.

### **Uniform Ordering**

Flynn & O’Hara  
The Shops at Atlas Park  
8000 Cooper Avenue, Lower Level (accessible from North Garage)  
Glendale, NY 11385  
718-326-2704  
[www.flynnohara.com](http://www.flynnohara.com)

### **Cafeteria**

All students are responsible for maintaining good order and cleanliness in the cafeteria. Students who do not abide by the rules of good order will be disciplined and the privilege to eat in the cafeteria will be taken away.

**Lunch for Grades K-8 will be 11:35 – 12:25 PM. Students participate in recess activities for 25 minutes.**

Lunch bags/boxes that are brought to the school after the day begins **must** be left at the greeter’s desk. All lunch must be labeled with the name of the student and grade.

**NO glass bottles, NO soda, and NO fast food may be brought in for lunch.**

### **N.U.T. Card Rules**

A N.U.T. card must be given at the beginning of the day for a uniform not to be worn. No Uniform Today assumes appropriate dress. Jeans may be worn, but not jeans with holes in them. T-shirts must have acceptable logos and/or print. No short-shorts, bicycle shorts, cut-off midriff shirts, short tops, spaghetti straps, or low-cut or hip hugger jeans. Same jewelry policies apply whether in or out of uniform.

### **Student Conduct**

All students attending St. Helen Catholic Academy are expected to behave in a courteous and respectful manner to teachers, staff, visitors, and each other during and after the school day and at all extra-curricular events. All students are a reflection of the school and the values we embrace, so each member of the St. Helen community is expected to do his/her part to maintain these standards. St. Helen Catholic Academy Positive Behavior Matrix expectations must be followed.

When a student fails to respect school rules and policies, appropriate consequences are used. A student may receive a time-out, either in the assigned class or another room. More serious situations may require a time-out in the principal's office, missing recess, a class party, or detention after school. Parents will be notified of repeated discipline problems, and a conference with the teacher or principal may be required.

Serious infractions may be punished with in-school suspension, formal legal suspension and, if necessary, expulsion. Any of these consequences will require a conference with parents, and an agreement as to how the behavior will be improved, with help at home and in school.

Threats or behavior involving alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, or weapons, are extremely serious and will be treated accordingly.

### **Bullying**

Bullying refers to intentional, repeated, hurtful act (physical, verbal, written, or electronic) committed by one or more persons towards another person or persons. It usually involves an imbalance of power. These behaviors include, but are not limited to: physical violence, stalking, threats, aggressive or menacing gestures, exclusion from peer groups which is intended to isolate or humiliate the target, taunts, teasing, derogatory language, derogatory jokes, name-calling, slurs, spreading rumors, graffiti, and comments or stereotypes transmitted in any electronic form. Our school participates in the Olweus Bullying Prevention program, and our entire school community is responsible for preventing and reporting such behaviors. Reports of bullying will be investigated, and appropriate consequences will result. A detailed copy of our policy is available in the office and on our website.

### **Suspension**

The suspension of a student from school is a serious matter that requires a meeting with the student's parents/guardians and the principal. Any serious violation of school regulations including, but not limited to: disrespect, violence, fighting, theft, foul language, endangering others, vandalism, or repeated academic failure, may result in suspension.

The purpose of the meeting with the principal will detail the reason for the suspension and the corrective measures which must result in discernable improvement in the student's conduct. Repeated suspensions or failure to meet school standards may result in the expulsion of the offending student.

### **Expulsion**

The principal will make the final determination on expulsion of students. St. Helen Catholic Academy reserves the right to expel any student who in the judgment of the administration has committed a serious offense involving drugs, violence, alcohol, theft, weapons possession, abuse of a teacher/student, vandalism, failure to meet academic standards, or commits any combination of acts judged serious enough by the administration.

### **Electronic Devices**

Students may not bring radios, iPods or other MP3 players, tablets, infra-red devices, laser pointers, headphones, electronic games of any kind, or electronic equipment that can be used to communicate with other students during class (such as text messaging). Cell phones may



be brought to school if necessary, but they must be powered down and in the student's book bag during school hours. If a student uses a cell phone during school hours, it will be confiscated, and returned only to a parent. Repeated offenses may result in the phone being retained until June.

### **Bathrooms**

Every effort is made to assure that bathrooms are clean and in good working order. All students are asked to cooperate in this effort. Students may not jam toilets, run water on floors, destroy equipment, draw graffiti, or throw garbage on the floors or through the windows. Violators are showing the height of disrespect to others, and are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension/expulsion.

### **Parent Cooperation and Assistance**

To promote a successful Catholic education, parents are required to follow the rules and policies set forth in this handbook. Be assured that our teachers are dedicated to providing an excellent education to all St. Helen students. In order for our faculty and staff to assist students in reaching their fullest potential, we need your help and assistance in the following ways:

1. It is essential in keeping with the Catholic character of St. Helen Catholic Academy that parents/guardians make every effort to have their child(ren) attend Mass on weekends (Saturday or Sunday).
2. It is essential to make sure your child attends school regularly. **Arriving promptly is important for your child's achievement.**
3. Check your child's homework for completeness and oversee that deadlines for reports and projects are met. Students have homework every day. Assignments may be checked on your child's class page at [www.sthencatholicacademy.org](http://www.sthencatholicacademy.org).
4. Attend parent-teacher conferences.
5. Check academy calendar to keep informed about school events.
6. Support teachers' recommendations for improvement.
7. Make sure the school has your current address, phone number, work number, cell phone number, emergency contact information, and email address.

### **Non-Custodial Parents**

The law states that non-custodial parents do not cease to be parents when they no longer have custody of their children. St. Helen Catholic Academy abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

### **Report Cards**

Report cards are distributed three times during the school year. Progress reports are issued around the middle of the trimester as well. Grades are formulated based on class work, homework, tests, written assignments, oral expression, projects, reports, and other assessments as determined by the teacher.

Throughout the year, you will be able to monitor your own child's progress online. You will be given a web address (URL) and an access code.

### **Promotion Policy**

Promotions are made annually. All children who complete the work of the grade satisfactorily are advanced to the next grade. A child who requires more time to find his/her place in the school program may require home tutoring, summer school, or retention in a grade. If a child is to be retained in a grade, conferences will be held with the parents, teachers, and principal. The final decision is made by the school administration.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Early in the school year, a general meeting will be held between the parents and the classroom teacher. Individual conferences will be arranged at the time of the first report card. However, parents may request a conference with a teacher at any time simply by writing a note to the teacher. Parents are asked **not** to speak to teachers about their children **while they are in class, the lunchroom, on yard duty, or dismissing students**. If you arranged a conference before or after school, parents **MUST** report to the school office before going to classroom.

### **Withdrawing Student**

The procedure for withdrawal will require written notification to the school office. Request for records must be made by the new school.

### **Homework**

Homework can be viewed as a way to spend time with your child. In general, homework is a preparation for or reinforcement of work done in class. It is helpful to keep in mind that homework includes both written work and study assignments and varies by grade level. All written homework should be done neatly by the student. Parents with students in Grades 1-5 should sign their child's school planner pad each night to show that the homework has been completed. In Grades 6-8, signatures are required at the teacher's discretion. **All** tests of students in Grades 1-8 must be signed by a parent.

All students are required to read for 20 minutes each day including weekends. Students in Grades 3-8 should increase reading time each month so that by February, students will have stamina to read for 45 minutes independently each day. For Pre-K, Kindergarten, and early-First Grade students who are not able to read independently, this requirement may be met by listening to an older person's reading to them.

### **Learning Materials**

Students are responsible for all learning materials issued or made available to them—textbooks, library books, and supplies.

1. Books must be neatly covered at all times. No contact paper may be placed on textbooks.
2. Any marking of books, desks, and/or school property will call for disciplinary action and be subjected to a monetary fine.
3. Payment must be made for any lost or damaged items.

### **Library**

Books may be borrowed for two weeks. This two-week period may be extended for an additional two weeks upon request. All books borrowed from the library must be returned on time in order to allow others to enjoy reading them. No other book may be borrowed until all books are returned. Loss or destruction of borrowed books is the direct responsibility of the student and must be paid for according to the value of the book.

### **Testing Program**

Two essential means of evaluating student progress in a school are through teacher-made tests and standardized tests. The teacher-made tests are given frequently throughout the year to ensure that students are making satisfactory progress through the curriculum. They may take a variety of forms, and are used, along with classwork, homework, projects, and other assignments, to determine a student's level of learning and grade in the class.

The standardized tests provide a measurement of a student's achievements against those of larger groups of students.

Each year, our students participate in these standardized tests:

1. TerraNova Testing
2. New York State Assessment in English Language Arts (Grades 4, 6, & 8), Mathematics (Grades 4, 6, & 8), and Science (Grades 4 & 8).

Students with Individual Educational Plans that specify specific testing modifications will be tested accordingly.

### **Field Trips**

Since learning goes on continuously in and outside the classroom, teachers are encouraged to arrange field trips. Trips can be an effective means of enhancing the curriculum, thus total participation is encouraged. These trips usually require the hiring of buses. Permission slips will be sent home stating the place to be visited, the times of departure and return, and the cost of the outing. These permission slips must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the school with the trip fee in order for the child to participate. Trips are prepaid and there can be no refunds.

### **Emergency / Crisis Management Plans**

1. Emergency drills are held all year long to practice evacuation procedures. Practices for emergencies, lockout, lockdown, and fire drills are discussed with students and practiced.

2. Crisis management procedures are reviewed with teachers and students.
3. An emergency kit (a sealed storage box) is kept in the parish rectory containing class lists, student health information, family phone numbers, and emergency supplies.
4. Parents will be called if students were moved to another location to insure safety after all students are safely moved.
5. The administration, teachers, and staff work to provide a safe and secure environment for the students on a daily basis.

### **Tuition Payments**

#### ***POLICY & PROCEDURES – Grades Kindergarten through Eight***

1. Payments are to be made to *School Tuition Program*. The payments will be for ten consecutive months, beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending April 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. There is a monthly payment plan fee of \$30.00 per family, to be included in the total tuition and divided over the ten payments.
3. All payments are due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month.
4. Each tuition payment must include a payment coupon, the amount and the date.
5. There is a late fee of \$30.00 for any payment received **ON OR AFTER THE 15<sup>th</sup> DAY OF THE MONTH**. Please include this late fee when paying your tuition.
6. If there is going to be a late payment, or if there is a serious economic hardship, please contact the principal and arrange an appointment to discuss and resolve the matter fairly.
7. Any tuition payment in arrears for **2 months** will receive a **MANDATORY** meeting with the Tuition Review Board. There will be no exceptions to this procedure.
8. All tuition for the year is to be paid in full by **April 1<sup>st</sup>**.
9. If you have any questions or concerns about your account please write to us at the following address: School Tuition Program, P.O. Box 140170, Howard Beach, NY 11414 or call 718-835-4155 x115.

#### ***POLICY & PROCEDURES – Grades Pre-K 3 & Pre-K 4***

1. Payments are to be made to *School Tuition Program*. The payments will be for ten consecutive months, beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending April 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. There is a monthly payment plan fee of \$30.00 per family, to be included in the total tuition and divided over the ten payments.
3. All payments are due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month.
4. Each tuition payment must include a payment coupon, the amount and the date.
5. There is a late fee of \$30.00 for any payment received **ON OR AFTER THE 15<sup>th</sup> DAY OF THE MONTH**. Please include this late fee when paying your tuition.
6. If there is going to be a late payment, or if there is a serious economic hardship, please contact the principal and arrange an appointment to discuss and resolve the matter fairly.

7. Any tuition payment in arrears for **2 months** will receive a **MANDATORY** meeting with the Tuition Review Board. There will be no exceptions to this procedure.
8. All tuition for the year is to be paid in full by **April 1<sup>st</sup>**.
9. If you have any questions or concerns about your account please write to us at the following address: School Tuition Program, P.O. Box 140170, Howard Beach, NY 11414 or call 718-835-4155 x115.

### **Tuition Review Board**

The Tuition Review Board consists of members appointed by the Academy Board. The purpose of the Tuition Review Board is to assist in all matters relating to the collection of school tuition payments, and will recommend changes and improvements regarding the School Tuition Program. The Tuition Review Board maintains procedures for dealing with all delinquent accounts.

### **School Fees**

At the time of student registration/re-registration, you are required to pay fees per child for each school year. These fees help to cover the cost of religion books, workbooks, and materials not received under the NYS Textbook Law. They also cover student insurance, computer instruction, standardized tests, diocesan assessment per student, and classroom and teacher supplies. All registration/re-registration fees are **non-refundable**.

### **Fundraising**

All St. Helen Catholic Academy families are encouraged to participate in all of our fundraising endeavors. In order to avoid significant increases in tuition, we need to meet high fundraising goals. Your understanding, participation, and cooperation in contributing to our fundraisers is expected and of the utmost importance. Participation in the following fundraisers is **MANDATORY**: Walk-a-thon (Grades PK-3 – 8), Candy Sale (2 boxes per family Grades PK-3 – 8), and Field Day (Grades K - 8).

### **Home Academy Association**

As members of the Home Academy Association each family is required to give 20 hours of service to an approved school function and/or service area. A list of possibilities will be distributed early in the school year and must be completed and returned immediately. Committees will be formed for each large fundraiser and volunteers are necessary to make each event successful.

### **Church Community**

In choosing to send your child to St. Helen Catholic Academy, you indicate that you wish a strong religious and moral education. Therefore, we encourage you to be practicing registered members of our parish.

All parents are required to enter into a covenant agreement with the parish that outlines the responsibilities of both the parents and the parish in regards to the religious upbringing of their children. Included in this is the requirement that all parents attend workshops to enhance your family's faith experience when they are announced (no more than four in a school year).

### **Church Contribution**

Each family is expected to contribute a minimum of \$300.00 per **calendar year** to qualify for the Catholic Family Tuition Rate. If this obligation is not met, the family will be expected to pay the Non-Catholic Family Tuition Rate.

### **VIRTUS**

Parents/guardians/grandparents may perform voluntary service **ONLY** if they have been certified in the Virtus Program. For VIRTUS training contact: [virtus.org](http://virtus.org).

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

St. Helen Catholic Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, financial assistance, and athletic or other school-administered programs.

### **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

Students are expected to use the internet for school-related activities only. Personal use, accessing or sending e-mail, attempting to access objectionable sites are all strictly prohibited. Students may not use material printed from the internet as their own ideas and material. This is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade and parent conference. The misuse of computers and the internet at St. Helen Catholic Academy will result in students losing the privilege of using one or both, as well as those consequences otherwise outlined in this handbook.

### **Amending the Handbook**

The enumeration in this handbook of certain regulations shall not be construed to deny others retained by the school. The administration reserves the right to make additional policy decisions as situations arise and in a manner consistent with the philosophy of St. Helen Catholic Academy.

### **Parent Agreement**

All parents are required to read through this handbook. They are also required to sign a form indicating they have read, understood, accepted and will abide by the policies and procedures stated in the handbook.