



# St. Helen Catholic Academy

*Peter Vercessi, Principal*

August 29, 2022

Dear Academy Parent/Guardian,

The 2022-23 school year is soon to begin. The first day of classes will be **Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>**. It will be a half day of school with a 12:00 pm dismissal.

We are returning to this school year without COVID restrictions, similar to the opening in September of 2019. Should that change, due to New York State/New York City Department of Health or Diocesan mandates, we will be obligated to comply and you will be notified accordingly.

Morning arrivals/afternoon dismissals will be coordinated as follows:

83<sup>rd</sup> St. Entrance (across from Church)

- **Grades 5, 7, 8 (8:00 am arrival begins/3:00 pm dismissal)**
- **Grade 2 (8:00 am arrival begins/2:50 pm dismissal)**

Main Entrance

- **Grade 6 (8:00 am arrival begins/3:00 pm dismissal)**
- **Grades 3, 4 (8:00 am arrival begins/2:50 pm dismissal)**

Dooley Hall Entrance

- **Grades K, 1 (8:00 am arrival begins/2:50 pm dismissal)**
- **Pre K 3/Pre K 4 (8:20 am arrival begins/2:50 pm dismissal)**

## ***REGULAR CLASS SCHEDULE***

**Period 1 – 8:15 – 9:05 am**  
**Period 2 – 9:05 – 9:55 am**  
**Period 3 – 9:55 – 10:45 am**  
**Period 4 – 10:45 – 11:35 am**

**Period 5 – 11:35am – 12:25 pm**  
**Period 6 – 12:25 – 1:15 pm**  
**Period 7 – 1:15 – 2:05 pm**  
**Period 8 – 2:05 – 3:00 pm**

### ***EARLY DISMISSAL SCHEDULES\****

The following are the schedules for classes on early dismissal days. They have been designed to offer equitable meeting opportunities for specialty and departmentalized classes. One schedule (A) offers instructional time for subjects meeting periods 1-4 on a typical day. The other schedule (B) offers instructional time for subjects meeting periods 5-8 on a typical day:

#### **Early Dismissal Schedule (A Day)**

Period 1 8:15 - 9:10 am  
Period 2 9:10 - 10:05 am  
Period 3 10:05 - 11:00 am  
Period 4 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

#### **Early Dismissal Schedule (B Day)**

Period 5 8:15 - 9:10 am  
Period 6 9:10 - 10:05 am  
Period 7 10:05 - 11:00 am  
Period 8 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

The Academy has developed our attendance policy in accordance with New York State Education Law. It will help us uphold the philosophy and mission statement of our Academy. ***Should a child be absent from school on a given day, it is imperative that a parent/guardian call the school (718-835-4155) and notify us of the absence by 8:30 am on the absence date.***

**Found on the FACTS parent portal is a copy of your child's schedule/teacher assignment for the 2022-23 school year. If for any reason you have trouble logging in please email [info@sthelencatholicacademy.org](mailto:info@sthelencatholicacademy.org).** The FACTS Parent Portal will continue to provide you access to your child's schedule, progress reports, report cards, and attendance throughout the school year.

Since it is our goal to minimize and balance class size on all grade levels where multiple classes are offered, it is to be noted that ***schedule change requests will not be honored.*** Teachers worked to ensure that all students were equitably placed into classes under the following criteria:

1. Student populations were academically heterogeneous so that all levels of intellectual ability were represented equally in each class.
2. Students were assigned with other students with whom they were identified as having a friendship or level of social success.

Families are reminded of several important items, policies and administrative tasks. Please review and feel free to download any and all documents, as they can be found in the parent/guardian section on the school's website ([www.sthelencatholicacademy.org](http://www.sthelencatholicacademy.org)):

- The Academy bell schedule
- Grade specific supply lists
- Uniform ordering information

- Weekly lunch sheets
- The 2022-2023 Parent-Student handbook
- Cyber-Bullying Policy for Catholic Academies within the Diocese (*page 51 of the handbook*)
- The Diocese of Brooklyn technology/acceptable use policy (*page 55 of the handbook*)
- The parent declination of use of student photo/video/image\*

***\*The parent declination should be filled out only if you do not wish to have your child's likeness used in any school, HAA or Diocesan publications.***

If you are unable to access any of this information electronically, please contact us to make arrangements to retrieve hard copies. These items will remain on the school web site for the entire school year.

***Additionally, parents/guardians are asked to confirm that they have read and understand the following items, by clicking on the Google link below:***

- The 2022-2023 Parent-Student handbook:
- <https://forms.gle/rE6DqsF9BLo81J1F7>
- The Diocese of Brooklyn technology/acceptable use policy:
- <https://forms.gle/qzK8EKsndEsFfmDw7>

Many opportunities exist within our school structure to assist students who are experiencing difficulties at any time. Help is available during the school day in a variety of different centers in the building. Other resources are available which can be discussed with your child's counselor or the District Coordinator of the subject area in question. Please encourage your child to avail themselves of these opportunities as they feel the need.

We will continue our Before/After school programs this year. The "before school" option will run from 7:00 am until students report to classes (8:15 am). The "after school" opportunity will run from dismissal (3:00 pm) until 6:00 pm. The program will include homework/study time as well as arts/crafts and recreational activities. Further details, including program fees, will be sent to families shortly. ***Please note that there will be no after school services on early dismissal days.*** The Before School program will start on Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> and the After School program will begin on Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>. ***Applications for the after school program will be sent out shortly in a separate electronic message.***

Please review with your child all activities (sports, drama, music, etc.) which he or she intends to undertake during the year that may infringe on the success of his or her academic performance. Many students often take on too much and wind up not being able to devote sufficient attention to all of the courses in which they are enrolled. You know your child and his or her capabilities. We wish to have students be committed, but not overwhelmed by the activities in which they are involved.

In September, we will be initiating the following measures at the Academy to enhance student focus on instruction and help them make positive choices related to personal behavior and interaction with others:

### **Cell Phones/Electronic Devices (*Found on page 15 of the handbook*)**

Students should bring their school issued/approved electronic devices to school (e.g. chrome books, calculators) on a daily basis. ***All other electronic devices, such as but not limited to I-Pads & Apple watches, must be left at home.*** The Academy is not responsible for valuables that are lost or damaged.

It is understood and accepted that many students carry cell phones to and from school as a means of communicating with their families to ensure safety and security. Due to the enormous distraction to the educational process during the instructional day, however, ***student cell phone use will be restricted during the school day.*** Phones will be collected by period 1 homeroom teachers as follows:

- Students will place their phones in a numbered slot in a portable lock box as teachers pass by their desks.
- The lock boxes will be locked and placed in a secured teacher closet for the entirety of the regular school day (8:15 AM – 3:00 PM).
- At the end of period 8, homeroom teachers will remove the portable lock box from their secured closet and ask students to retrieve their phones from their numbered slots as the teacher passes by their desks.

***Any students found in possession of an unauthorized electronic device (such as a cell phone, I-Pad, Apple watch, etc.) during the regular school day will have the device confiscated by the Principal. A parent/guardian will be required to come to school to pick up the unauthorized item and a disciplinary consequence will be issued.***

Each year, St. Helen Catholic Academy identifies an extremely limited number of students who have medical conditions that require testing/screening via their cell phones. Families of those students will receive a medical exemption by coordinating with the School Nurse (Ms. Mundy) and the Principal.

If a parent/guardian needs to reach a student, he or she must call the Main Office 718-835-4155. Similarly, if a student seeks to call his or her parent, the student must make the request to the Main Office

### **Discipline Policy (*Found on page 16 of the handbook*)**

The Academy may need to involve disciplinary measures from time to time. The purpose of disciplinary measures are to provide structure to students and for them to learn self-discipline, which strengthens and promotes the values incorporated in our Catholic faith. Disciplinary measures should have as an end the development of the human person who respect's one self, other persons, and those in authority.

*The administration will handle disciplinary matters in a variety of ways depending on the frequency and/or severity of an incident. Consequences will include the following: student/Teacher conference, student/Principal conference, parental contact, parental conference, counseling, detention (lunch & after school), loss of privileges, suspension. In the most extreme cases, police notification and expulsion may need to be considered should a matter be deemed criminal.*

### **Detention Procedures (*Found on page 18 of the handbook*)**

Lunch Detention (*Conducted during a student lunch period*)

- Students will purchase lunch/snacks and receive an escort to a designated area where they will be supervised by a staff member.
- The student(s) will eat, then spend the remainder of the lunch period engaged in homework completion and/or quiet study.

After school Detention (For **grades 5-8**; conducted from 3:00 – 4:00 pm, Monday - Thursday)

- Parents/guardians will be notified, via phone call, of an after school detention assignment.
- Detention will be assigned one day after the contact with a parent/guardian has been made.
- Students will receive escort to the designated detention room at dismissal (3:00 pm).
- The student(s) will spend the assigned time engaged in homework completion and/or quiet study.

***In keeping up with recommendations from the New York State Department of Education, the Diocese and many law enforcement agencies, St. Helen Catholic Academy will be a closed campus during the school day.*** All visitors seeking to meet with school personnel must have a pre-arranged appointment, which can be verified with security at the main entrance. ***Walk in requests will not be honored.*** Any visitor who does not have an appointment will be asked to call the main office (718-835-4155) to plan a scheduled visit.

Parents, guardians, students and guests will always be welcome at the many public events we plan to offer this year.

The gym floor in Dooley Hall is in the process of renovation. A timeline for completion has not yet been determined. We will be able to use the Hall for morning line ups and the parent meeting on September 13<sup>th</sup>, but Physical education classes will need to be relocated for the short term. Additionally, unfortunately, we continue to be without use of the outdoor playground area. The Parish and Academy Board worked tirelessly to have the projects addressed as soon as possible. I thank them for their efforts and will update you with any news as it comes in.

***Students will be expected to be in full uniform on the first day of school, as well as all days where special circumstances (e.g. NUT redemption & Spirit Days) are not scheduled.***

We will continue the tradition of NUT card dress down day opportunities this year. Books may be purchased through the Home Academy Association. In order to make the process more manageable, these dress down days will take place on Tuesdays throughout the school year. Makeup NUT card redemption days have been scheduled for the last week of classes in June for those students who may miss opportunities for use during the year.

Additionally, we will have Spirit Days on the third Wednesday of each month, beginning in October/November (depending on delivery of orders). Spirit gear can be purchase through the HAA. ***Please note that the Academy policies on appropriate attire must be adhered to on all NUT card redemption and Spirit days.***

***Please note that food services will not be available on half days, as students are released at noon. During the first week of full day classes (9/8 – 9/9) lunch service will also not be provide as we are setting up and receiving supplies. As such, all students will need to bring a brown bag lunch on Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup> and Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>.***

Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> as we will be hosting our annual “Meet the Teacher” Night. It will be held from 7:30 – 8:30 pm, following the first Home Academy Association meeting, which starts at 6:30 pm in Dooley Hall. A comprehensive schedule of sessions, times and room locations have been attached to this electronic mailing.

Our goals for the year will include challenging our students intellectually, helping them to grow socially and become independent thinkers and allowing them to develop a spirituality fostered in Christ’s values, rooted in faith and commitment to service.

We encourage parent communication and involvement. Please feel free to contact us with any concerns or questions you may have. We are all excited about the return of our students to a school year that promises to be both challenging and rewarding for them.

Sincerely,

*Peter Vercessi*

Peter Vercessi

Principal