

# Visitation Catholic STEM Academy

Family Handbook

2019-2020



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<http://www.visitationstemacademy.org/>



## Root Beliefs, Mission, Values and Schoolwide Learning Expectations (SLEs)

*As a Catholic school, we hold these beliefs that are central to our identity as a school:*

<i>Root Belief #1</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>We believe in One God, Father, Son &amp; Holy Spirit.</i>	<p>Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is a parish school, thus, it is a ministry of the parish and an extension of the mission of the Catholic Church. We are guided by God and our Catholic foundation in all things. Catholic education is rooted in history and it is rooted in transcendent values.</p> <p>As a parish school, the mystery of the Trinity is an essential belief. The Trinity reveals that God is relational. Through our communion and through our diversity, we encounter God. You do not need to be Catholic to be a student at Visitation because God’s grace is a gift for all people.</p>

<i>Root Belief #2</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>Every human is a unique creation of God.</i>	<p>The story of the Visitation grounds us in the joy of God’s gift of creation. After the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be the mother of God, she traveled with haste <b>to visit</b> Elizabeth. “When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant [John the Baptist] leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”” (Luke 1: 41-43)</p> <p>Visitation is a community where we joyfully encounter Christ in one another. Every member of our community brings us to an encounter with Christ. Every student, staff member, teacher and school leader comes to school with different experiences and prior knowledge. We all learn at different rates and in different ways. And we all hunger for a deeper relationship with God.</p>

<i>Root Belief #3</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>God created us to be a diverse community of faith.</i>	<p>This is a root belief of our community because we have students of many races, cultures and ethnicities and all are important and celebrated.</p> <p>We are a Catholic faith community so our beliefs are rooted in the truths of the church. Pope Francis speaks of our faith as a faith of “encounter.” In the encyclical <i>Lumen Fidei</i> (2013, <a href="http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html">http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html</a>), Pope Francis wrote, “through our encounter with others, our gaze rises to a truth greater than ourselves.” With the words of Pope Francis in mind, diversity and community are grace filled gifts, shared with us to strengthen our understanding of God, ourselves, and others, and ultimately to strengthen our relationship with God.</p> <p>We believe in the mystery of the Trinity, that God is one being in three Persons. God is relational and so as People of God, we are also made in relationship to God and to each other. By sending his son, Jesus Christ, God demonstrated the significance and value of the human person. We believe that Jesus Christ was fully man and fully divine, connected to God through the Person of the Son. Jesus ultimately suffered, died, conquered death, and rose to life, signaling God’s boundless love for all humanity and almighty power over death and sin. It is due to God’s immeasurable love for humanity, that we are intrinsically bound to love one another as God loves us. It is through this loving relationship with God, that we are brought closer to God by loving one another. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1, 2018. <a href="http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/P2.HTM">http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/P2.HTM</a>)</p>

<i>Root Belief #4</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>God is in all things.</i>	<p>This is a root belief for our community because we think beyond our own needs, rather, we see ourselves in relationship to all of God’s creation.</p> <p>This belief is a lens for our worldview, it instills us with a respect for the dignity of all human life. Moved by this principle, we are compelled to love and to embrace everyone in our community. Serving others is what Jesus called us to do. In the Gospels, Jesus cures the slave of a humble centurion (Luke 7: 1-10), shows respect to a samaritan woman at Jacob’s well (John 4), and washes the feet of His disciples on the same night He is handed over to be crucified (John 13). These examples of Jesus’s love, demonstrate the boundless love and mercy of God, and we are all called to give witness to God’s presence on earth through the way we live.</p>

	<p>God is in all things, Truth comes from God. Science, technology, engineering, and math complement theology, philosophy, and our faith. STEM expands the human capacity to understand the world, thus guiding us to a fuller understanding of ourselves and our relationship to God. STEM and theology are not exclusive of each other. Rather, together they reveal the fullness and greatness of our loving God. We engage the mind and imagination of all students through STEM, and all of our academic efforts enhance our discipleship in Jesus Christ.</p>
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<i>Root Belief #5</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<p><i>Catholic education forms the human soul.</i></p>	<p>This is a root belief of our community because we should be attracted to the highest things that yearn in our souls.</p> <p>Our graduates will have an encounter with Jesus Christ that will remain as a profound and unforgettable experience, resonating with the graduate throughout all of life. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy transforms the individual lives of our graduates who in turn will transform the lives of others in the communities, parishes, and families that they will serve in the future. In effect, graduates from Visitation Catholic STEM Academy will transform the world.</p>

<p>Mission Statement</p>	
<p><i>An essential element of systematic school improvement is a clear statement and understanding of the school's mission and philosophy. A clear mission and philosophy explicitly state who the school is, who the school serves, and what the school intends to accomplish. (From WCEA/WASC Accreditation Manual)</i></p>	

## Core Values

*We watch what we do to see what we believe. The following actions are the verbs that will become habits at our school to make our beliefs known.*

<i>Core Value #1</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>Pray</i>	We commit to this habitual action because we are a Catholic School and we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

<i>Core Value #2</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>Excel</i>	We commit to this habitual action because we strive for excellence in all our academic pursuits. We are committed to innovation in our teaching, and we commit to continuous self-improvement to achieve excellence in all our endeavors.

<i>Core Value #3</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>Love</i>	We commit to this habitual action because love activates, empowers and encourages the growth of our other core values. Love compels us to service. Serving the needy and the marginalized helps us to understand God's love in the world.

<i>Core Value #4</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>Embrace</i>	We commit to this habitual action because we encounter a diverse community of learners. We have students of many races, cultures and ethnicities and all are important and celebrated.

<i>Core Value #5</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>Persevere</i>	<p>We commit to this habitual action because STEM education emphasizes learning as an ongoing process. Rather than simply right or wrong, STEM education emphasizes ongoing improvement, problem solving, and critical self-reflection. The <a href="#">Engineering Design Process</a> is a cycle of improvement that includes ask questions, define the problem, develop solutions, and explain results.</p> <p>As a spiritual practice, perseverance reflects Mary’s dedication as the mother of Jesus. There was no room in the inn, yet Mary and Joseph found a home. There was no wine at the wedding party, but Mary’s joy led to Jesus’s first miracle. And after Jesus was taken from the cross, Mary’s heart must have been broken yet her faith remained steadfast until the resurrection. Mary’s dedication as the Mother of God is a model of perseverance.</p>

**Schoolwide Learning Expectations**

*Statements of what a student should know, understand, value, and be able to do by graduation. These learning outcomes are collaboratively developed and represent the focus of the entire school community. These may be different than core values but they can also be the same.*

A Graduate of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy will demonstrate...

1. Faith
  - a. Pray and participate in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church.
  - b. Demonstrate knowledge of the traditions, teachings and practices of the Catholic Church.
  - c. Demonstrate integrity through integration of faith and morality for guidance in decision making.
2. Lifelong Learning
  - a. Understand and apply knowledge in all academic areas, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics.
  - b. Communicate thoughts and opinions effectively and respectfully
  - c. Analyze, interpret, evaluate, and think critically to solve problems using a variety of resources and strategies, including project-based learning.

- d. Persevere for excellence in all endeavors, valuing every life situation as a learning experience.
3. Loving Kindness
    - a. Demonstrate tolerance, courtesy, and respect among people of all cultures.
    - b. Act as stewards of the earth through faithful participation in school and parish service projects on local and global levels.
    - c. Embrace all students, families, parishioners, and community members.

## **Parents As Partners**

As partners in the educational process at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, we ask parents:

To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Gets to bed early on school nights;
- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day;
- Is dressed according to the school dress code;
- Completes assignments on time; and
- Has lunch money or nutritional sack lunch every day.

To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences;

To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student;

To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy;

To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers;

To meet all financial obligations to the school;

To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health;

To complete and return to school any requested information promptly;

To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education;

To support the religious and educational goals of the school;

To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school;

To treat teachers and support staff with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.

Students whose parents have violated the Parents as Partners agreement in this handbook may also be excluded from Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

## Parent's Role in Education

We, at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life—physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 8), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

“Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area; they are educators, because they are parents”

(St. Pope John Paul II, 1994, *Letter to Families* (16)).

The primary purpose of the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Seattle is to promote the internalization of the Good News of Jesus Christ as it is expressed in the Catholic vision and world view.

Specifically, the Catholic schools are to aid Catholic families and Catholic communities in the formation of their children as Catholic Christians while providing a high quality academic education. The schools may also provide students of other faith traditions with a high quality education in the context of the Catholic value system and world view.

The goal is to develop within the students a Catholic identity and lived expression built on a base of Catholic history and acknowledging the student's cultural identity. This goal is to be met by explicitly articulating the faith and explicitly engaging society and culture from a Roman Catholic perspective. Catholic identity is to be expressed through an appreciation of Catholic values and the formation of strong moral character. It is understood that Catholic identity and expression becomes internalized over time through a process of formation.

This process must be supported by specific policies and programs designed to model, promote, support, clarify, teach and instill the Catholic faith in our children.

The Catholic schools will continue to be as diverse as their sponsoring communities while they remain linked together by their common faith and vision, by shared resources and services, and by a canonical and pastoral relationship to the Archbishop in his role as the chief teacher of the local church.

*Foundation Statement for the Catholic Schools Study of 1993*

This Family Handbook is your primary reference for information about Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. We ask that each family sit down together to read and discuss it as appropriate for each student's level of understanding and responsibility. Compliance with the rules and policies of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is part of the enrollment contract.

Once you have reviewed and discussed the handbook, please sign and return the *Receipt and Acknowledgement Form* found on the last page of this book.

The Principal retains the right to amend this handbook at any time. Parents will be notified of such changes through the school newsletter.

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Visitation Catholic STEM Academy prepares students to engage the world of today as disciples of Jesus Christ. In the 21st century world, where science, technology, engineering, and math are highly valued, Visitation students will fulfill this mission by learning to integrate faith and reason in the study of real-world problems, to understand how the world works through science, the arts, and religion, and to live out their Catholic and Apostolic Faith in service to the greater community. To reach this vision our school and parish community will work in collaboration with multiple partners to:

- Integrate STEM across all curricula
- Solve problems and think critically in all course work
- Discover and explore beyond the boundaries of our classrooms
- Employ new technologies and design solutions to real-world problems
- Inspire connections between questions of faith and reason
- Create connections to humanities such as languages, literature, philosophy, religion, and visual and performing arts
- Incorporate affiliations with local businesses, the military, and industries in aerospace and technology throughout the greater Puget Sound

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Mission & Vision Statement

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## Introduction

### 1.1 History and Tradition

By the time Father Demetrius Jeuneman, O.S.B. was appointed pastor of the Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in August of 1923, the parish had already been active in South Tacoma for more than thirty years. A strong proponent of education, Father Demetrius said in his first parish report he hoped “to see before long the laying of the cornerstone of a parish school.”

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy was nearly stopped before it started. No sooner had work begun in the summer of 1924 than an initiative was proposed to the voters of Washington to abolish parochial schools. It was only after the measure was defeated at the polls that construction resumed.

Reverend Mother Louise of the Benedictine Sisters of Minnesota visited the West in the autumn of that year. Father Demetrius asked her to send four Sisters to teach at the new school, starting in the following September. Reverend Mother sent six volunteers: Sister Humbeline became principal. She and Sisters Angeline, Elicia, and Ludovica taught classes. Sister Ramona was in charge of the house and cooking, and Sister Ositha, a Tacoma native, taught music.



Classes began on September 8, 1925 with 170 students in grades one through seven. Eighth grade began in 1926, with the first graduating class in 1927.

Athletics have played large part in VCSA history, from the 1933 Bellarmine Track championship, through four consecutive citywide football championships in the 40s, right to the present day.

VCSA had a strong music program right from the beginning. Sister Ositha taught music from 1925 through 1956 and founded a Boys’ and a Girls’ Choir that enjoyed a citywide reputation. In recent years, VCSA has continued that tradition, staging successful musicals and pageants.

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy has always looked to the future. In 1977, VCSA opened the first Catholic kindergarten in Tacoma. The Visitation Early Learning Center followed in 1985, becoming Pre-Kindergarten in 1992. With the opening of its new state-of-the-art Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) lab for the 2013-14 school year VCSA is once again pushing the boundaries of education as the first school in the Tacoma area to adopt such a program and the first school in the Archdiocese to do so as well.

## 1.2 Principal's Welcome

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Our Catholic faith informs and inspires everything we do at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. Our mission, our commitment to student learning, the behavioral expectations, and our parent participation are all seen in light of our Gospel values. In the story of the Visitation, we read about Mary's joy and enthusiasm when she says, "My soul magnifies the Lord." As members of Visitation parish community, our invitation is to mirror Mary's enthusiasm and to allow Jesus' presence in our hearts to magnify the goodness in our lives.

First and foremost, we are a parish school and we are a ministry of the parish. Our students will experience an environment that supports the development of a personal and meaningful relationship with God. Our commitment to excellence in academic preparation and Catholic faith formation serves to be evangelical. I say this because as we challenge students to grow in their talents and abilities, we do so in an environment that recognizes the dignity of each individual student as an unrepeatable creation of God. It is a privilege to serve the future leaders and community members of our church and our local community.

We are growing as a STEM school and we have taken significant steps in the past couple months. The introduction of Project Lead the Way curriculum is evidence of the passion and dedication of our faculty and staff. We will continue to grow in our application of inquiry based learning, project based learning, and collaborative learning methodology. In addition to a dynamic science curriculum, we will maintain a similar commitment to ongoing growth in reading, writing, math, and to all core areas of the curriculum.

The behavioral expectations outlined in this handbook are not meant to limit a person's experience. Our school was founded in 1925 and we have had many decades of happy and successful graduates. Our rules and guidelines are meant to support a positive and supportive community. It is my belief that these expectations prepare our young people to participate effectively and appropriately with others, with the intention that our young people will excel in their ability to respect others.

Finally, we are not complete as a school without the profound support of our parents and guardians. Parent participation begins at home, where we recognize parents as the primary educators of children. We also encourage and challenge our parents to support our school in as many ways as possible. We need your time and talent in the areas of fundraising, supporting the teachers, coaching, PTO, and generally maintaining ongoing support of our young people in all areas of their lives.

In closing, it is my prayer is that our graduates will carry with them a yearning for their souls to be magnified by the Lord. In all ways, may our work as individuals and as a community lift up our young people. May they grow in knowledge and ability, in faith and mercy, and may they know that they are loved.

Blessings,

Marc Nuno

### 1.3 The School Seal



Visitation's logo tells the story of our expert teaching, excellence in learning, and enriching faith formation. Our logo stems from the deep roots of rich tradition at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. From its founding in 1925 to the present, we continue to prepare students who understand the world and are steeped in a Catholic worldview. At Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, we believe that God is in all things and through our understanding of STEM we grow in our awareness of Christ's presence in our midst. Today, our students are empowered in STEM and enriched in faith. Our graduates will have the skills and dispositions necessary to enroll in STEM programs in college. We are in the world, rich in tradition, and encountering Christ in our midst.

The logo also represents our school's ongoing growth. Just as the leaf is part of a tree, we are a part of something greater than ourselves; breathing new life into the world as well as shaping the world around us. As an example, our 7th and 8th grade students had the unique opportunity to experience a state of the art medical research facility. There they participated in immunotherapy testing at Seattle Children's Hospital's new research facility. Our students were the only students invited and were [featured on Channel 5 News. \[king5.com\]](#) What a remarkable sign of our school's partnerships with the community, our growth as a STEM school, and the new energy that our school is bringing into the world.

### 1.4 The Visitation Viking

Our school mascot is the Visitation Viking. Although there is some disagreement as to whether his name is Sven or Olav, everyone agrees that he represents the spirit and determination of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

The Viking is proudly displayed at Visitation games and meets, and the *Viking Banner* has appeared in parades and events throughout the area.

**Go Vikings!**



## 2 Contact Information

School Phone Number: 253 474-6424

Office hours: 8:05 am – 3:30 pm

Extended Care Phone Number: 253 473-6807

### 2.1 Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Staff

**Table 2.1.** Staff and Faculty

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Bookkeeper	Heather Luifau	<a href="mailto:luifauh@visitationschool.net">luifauh@visitationschool.net</a>
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Kindergarten	Madeline Butterfield	<a href="mailto:butterfieldm@visitationschool.net">butterfieldm@visitationschool.net</a>
Grade 1	Kara Muller	<a href="mailto:mullerk@visitationschool.net">mullerk@visitationschool.net</a>
Grades 2 & 3	Colleen Lardie-Pardal	<a href="mailto:lardiec@visitationschool.net">lardiec@visitationschool.net</a>
Grades 4 & 5	Karalyn Meyers	<a href="mailto:meyersk@visitationschool.net">meyersk@visitationschool.net</a>
Grades 6 & 7	Marianne Floyd	<a href="mailto:floydm@visitationschool.net">floydm@visitationschool.net</a>
	Elizabeth Hemphill	hemphillb@visitationschool.net
Grade 8	Christopher Lyskawa	<a href="mailto:lyskawacvisitationschool.net">lyskawacvisitationschool.net</a>

P.E.	Shannon Higginbotham	<a href="mailto:higginbothams@visitationschool.net">higginbothams@visitationschool.net</a>
Library	Beth Hemphill	<a href="mailto:library@visitationschool.net">library@visitationschool.net</a>
Kitchen Manager/Cook	Cecilia Tun	<a href="mailto:tunc@visitationschool.net">tunc@visitationschool.net</a>
Aide/Recess	Christina Clinton	<a href="mailto:clintonc@visitationschool.net">clintonc@visitationschool.net</a>
Head Custodian	Binh Dang	

## 2.2 Church of the Visitation Parish Staff

Parish Rectory Phone Number: 253-473-4960

**Table 2-2.** Parish Staff

Pastor	Fr Martin Bourke	<a href="mailto:fathermartin@visitationchurch.org">fathermartin@visitationchurch.org</a>
	253 473-4960	
Admin Assist/Bookkeeper	Jeannine Wargo	<a href="mailto:calendar@visitationchurch.org">calendar@visitationchurch.org</a>
	253 473-4960	

## 2.3 Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO board meets on a regular basis as posted on the school’s monthly calendar. Visitors are always welcome to attend these meetings. Cluster chairpersons will meet with the three executive officers as needed throughout the year. We strongly recommend that parents attend two General PTO Meetings during the year—the financial reporting meeting held in late spring and one additional meeting. This is a great way to hear about what is going on in the school, meet other families and share ideas you have for fundraisers, social gatherings, and much more.

## 3 Basic Information

### 3.1 Daily School Schedule

**Table 3.1** Daily School Schedule

8:05 AM	Doors Open
8:05 AM	First bell rings
8:15 AM	Tardy bell/Class begins
10:20 -10:50 AM	Recess (2 sessions)
12 PM - 12:45 PM	Students in lunchroom (3 staggered sessions)
12 PM -12:45 PM	Students on playground (3 staggered sessions)
3:00 PM	Monday- Friday Dismissal
3:15 PM +	After school activities
3:10-6:00 PM	Extended Care Day

### 3.2 School/Home Relationship

At Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, we believe that education is a partnership between home and school. Parental cooperation is essential for the welfare of students. If, in the opinion of school leadership, parent behavior seriously interferes with the teaching/learning process, Visitation Catholic STEM Academy may require parents to withdraw their children and sever the relationship with the school.

### 3.3 Use of School Grounds

Neither Visitation Catholic STEM Academy nor Visitation Parish will be held responsible for any accidents occurring on the grounds during weekends, vacation days, or before and after school. Accidents occurring due to a student's failure to follow rules during school hours are not the responsibility of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.



### 3.4 Visitors

Visitors to campus must have a specific purpose, they must be supervised by a specific staff member and they must have a specific job. As high schools and universities close for the summer there is increased interest in visiting our campus. Even graduates may not be on campus unless they have signed in, they must be under supervision of school staff at all times, and must have a specific purpose. Even outside of school hours we will direct people who are on campus that we do not allow visitors.

All visitors must sign in through the office and wear a visitor's sticker while on the campus.

Parents bringing items to school (lunches, money, etc.) must drop them off at the office to avoid interrupting the instructional program.

### 3.5 Hot Lunch

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy participates in the Federal Hot Lunch program. The price for hot lunch is \$3.75. A student may only charge one lunch. Another lunch may not be charged until the first charge has been paid. Eligible families may apply for reduced or free lunches. Forms are distributed to all families at the beginning of the school year, but may be requested at any time. Applications are handled in strict confidence.

### 3.6 Lost and Found

Students' belongings need to be clearly labeled. Parents are requested to oversee this throughout the year. Unidentified clothing is hung in the basement corridor on the coat hooks next to the bathrooms. Every two weeks or so, unclaimed sweaters and sweatshirts will be sent to the uniform exchange coordinator. Small, valuable items are turned into the office. Unclaimed money will be given to the St. Vincent de Paul Society after two weeks.

### 3.7 Money

When necessary to send money to school, *please use a sealed envelope/Zip Lock bag and mark it with the student's name, class, amount, and the purpose of the money.* This includes hot lunch money, field trip fees, fundraising money, etc. Please keep Extended Care and any other fees on separate checks. All envelopes must be addressed to the appropriate person's (bookkeeper, lunchroom, Extended Care, PTO, Principal, etc.) attention. Large amounts of money and valuables should not be on a student's person. These can be secured in the school office when necessary. For example, a child going on an overnight directly after school should check in electronic devices or valuables at the school office until dismissal.

### 3.8 Records

Educational records are the property of the school. Access to them is available to parents and others as provided by Federal Law: Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 99: Privacy Rights of Parents and Students, passed June 17, 1976 (amended January 25, 1997). All parish and school records are confidential and cannot be released without written approval from the custodial parent. A certified copy of the custody section of any restraining order, parenting plan, custody decree, divorce decree or other court order (and the most recent amendments or modifications thereof, if any), which in any manner whatsoever, pertain to your children who are enrolled in this school, must be filed with the principal. The paperwork must be certified by the Clerk of the Court of the jurisdiction who made the parenting or custody determinations.

#### 3.8.1 Procedure for Parent/Guardian Review of Records

1. Through written request, the parent asks to view the student's educational records.
2. Within a reasonable time, the principal sets a specific date and place for viewing the file. The principal or his/her delegate must be present while the file is being read.

### 3.8.2 Health Records

Health cards and records of immunizations are kept on school file. Original health records are forwarded to the student's next school. Permanent record cards are kept permanently at the school. A copy of this record is forwarded at the time of transfer to a new school.

### 3.8.3 Attendance Records

Attendance records are kept on each student. Total days absent and tardy are transferred from Alma database records to the permanent record card. Detailed attendance logs are kept on file at the school for the current year.

### 3.8.4 Records Transfers

Transfers of records are made at the time of an authorized request by the receiving school. All records are mailed. All tuition fees must be paid in full prior to the transfer.

## 4 Admissions, Tuition, and Financial Aid

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy admits students of any race, color, gender, handicap, age, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, handicap (within the capabilities of the staff and facilities), age, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship, and loan programs, athletics and other school administered programs. The ability of the school to provide a sound educational program will be a determining factor in admitting students. Admission and readmission are on an annual school year basis. Registration is held each year in January for families returning to the school, and in late February/ March for new families. To retain enrollment priority, returning families must complete all fundraising and commitment hour obligations.

### 4.1 Admissions Policy

**PURPOSE:** To guide the principal and community on priorities and guidelines for new student enrollment.

**AUTHORITY:** The Principal is responsible for ensuring that enrollment priorities are followed.

**REPORTING:** The Principal will advise the School Commission on the effect of enrollment priorities before any changes are made.

#### 4.1.1 Administration

##### A. Registration

1. Registration is held each year in January for families returning to the school, and in late February/March for new families.
2. Registration is complete when the school has received all of the following:
  - a. Completed application/registration form
  - b. Records: Birth, Baptismal, immunization records
  - c. Non-refundable registration fee
  - d. Signed enrollment contract
  - e. Current school's progress report or report card (new applicants only)

- f. If available, current teacher's recommendation form (new applicants only)
- g. Standardized test forms, if available, (new applicants only). If not available, the School may request the applicant be tested at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.
- h. Signed tuition, commitment and fundraising contract
- i. Instructional Materials Fee
- j. All new applicants are interviewed by the school leader and/or the teacher.
- k. When the registration process is completed, the principal or his/her assistant will notify the family whether or not the applicant is accepted.
- l. Balance due: tuition amount, registration and materials fees, fundraising commitment and volunteer hours. Fundraising and commitment hours are due no later than May 19th, 2019.

#### B. Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten

1. The teacher must recommend all applicants for admittance after screening (new applicants and siblings).
2. The teacher will screen such applicants to determine readiness during the registration period.
3. Student and parent(s) will be interviewed by the Principal.
4. Students undertaking Kindergarten must be five years old on or before August 31.
5. Students who turn five years of age after August 31<sup>st</sup>, but before the end of the school year, may be considered for admittance into kindergarten.

#### C. First through Eighth Grade:

In addition to the above requirements

1. Review of prior school records.
2. Students and parent(s) will be interviewed by the Principal.

#### 4.1.2 Admissions Priorities

Priorities for new student enrollment at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, grades K-8, follow naturally from the mission of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy; to provide a Catholic education for children being raised in the Catholic faith. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is also open to families of any faith who wish to embrace Visitation's goal of providing an educational experience that integrates Gospel values with academic excellence.

**FIRST PRIORITY** is given to siblings of students currently enrolled in grades Kindergarten through 8. To retain enrollment priority, returning families must complete all fundraising and commitment hour obligations by the last day of April of the current academic year.

#### 4.1.3 Open Enrollment

Open enrollment will begin on May 1 of each year for the coming academic year. After May 1, new students will be considered for admission on a first-come, first-serve space available basis. Admission of prospective Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten students will depend on the results of a school visit to determine readiness and an interview by the principal. For students in grades 1- 8, admission will depend on review of prior school records and an interview by the principal. A child must be five years old by August 31 to enter Kindergarten. A birth certificate, completed immunization form and sacramental records (Baptism, First Eucharist, etc.) must be submitted by all new students before a child can attend school. All families of new students admitted for the following year will be notified in writing

of their final acceptance (*Admissions Policy adopted February, 1999; amended March, 2005, August 2006, September 2008*).

## 4.2 Transfer Students

Students transferring from other schools must bring copies of their previous report cards, including the most recent one and any testing information from the previous school as part of the admission process. If sufficient time is available at registration, transferring students are invited to spend a day at school as part of the mutual decision-making process. Transfer students accepted into grades 4th through 8th are accepted on a probationary basis for a period of time determined by the principal. Families will be informed as to the length of the probationary period at time of registration.

## 4.3 Tuition Assistance

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is committed to making Catholic education affordable to every family. Several different categories of assistance are available, most of which are grants. Some grants are restricted to students who meet the criteria set by the donor. Other grants are from a general fund for families in need.

1. **Archdiocesan grants through the Fulcrum Foundation:** grants are available to the neediest families of continuing students.
2. **PACE (Pierce County Association for Catholic Education) grants:** these grants are available to families of continuing students.
3. **Neighborhood Parish grants or subsidies:** many parishes make money available to their parishioners for their children to attend Catholic school. See your pastor or parish administrator for more information.
4. **VCSA new family grants:** these grants have been designated by donors as specifically for families new to Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.
5. **VCSA general tuition assistance grants:** these grants are available to all VCSA families with financial needs, whether the students are new or continuing.

### 4.3.1 Applying for ANY Tuition Assistance

Tuition Assistance Grant Applications are available online only from the Archdiocese's website at: [www.fulcrumfoundation.org](http://www.fulcrumfoundation.org)

To qualify for Archdiocesan or PACE grants for the following school year, an online application must be filled out and sent via FACTS to the Fulcrum Foundation. The window for 2019-20 Fulcrum Tuition Assistance Grant Program (TAP) opens in early October. The \$24 application fee applies and is non-refundable. The deadline for applications to be submitted and documents to be uploaded into FACTS is December 2018. Pre-K students are not eligible for Fulcrum Grants. New families may apply for VCSA new family grants and general tuition assistance grants upon admission in the same way as the TAP program even after the deadline.

### 4.3.2 What happens if the Aid is Not Enough?

You should write a letter to the VCSA principal and the Visitation parish administrator requesting additional aid. This may require a meeting to discuss further assistance. The school has pledged to give aid where needed, limited to funds available.

### 4.3.3 Tuition Payment Options

Families have two ways to pay their tuition:

- A. Full Payment of Tuition in Advance by August 5, 2019.** This payment is made directly to the school and entitles you to a 2% discount and exempt from 3% credit card charge. This applies to full pay contracts only. If payment is not received by August 1, 2018, the discount is not applicable. If payment is more than five days late, payments must then be made through FACTS.
- B. Monthly Automatic Withdrawal Payments through the FACTS. Payment Plan:** Payments can be made for 10 or 11 equal payments paid through FACTS. Automatic monthly withdrawals are in equal installments on either the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.
- C. Two Equal Payments paid directly to the school by August 5, 2019 and January 6, 2020.**

Payments are automatically transferred from your bank account and paid to FACTS. Please note that neither the FACTS Management Company nor VCSA ever see your family's bank account or have any direct access to the account. An annual per-account FACTS service fee of \$43 is charged to families for the services of FACTS. This non-refundable fee is automatically deducted from the account immediately upon receipt of the agreement form.

If a family should experience an unexpected financial crisis, you must call the school at least **ten days** before the next payment is due.

The FACTS Plan is extremely flexible and can be adjusted by a call from the school.

## 4.4 Financial Aid Policy

### 4.4.1 Purpose

To provide guidance to the Principal, parents, and community on the parameters used to request and provide tuition assistance in the form of financial aid.

### 4.4.2 Provisions

Requests for Visitation Catholic STEM Academy financial aid must be made through application and include the financial disclosure required. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy financial aid is determined by the Principal. The total school financial aid provided will not exceed the guidelines established by the School Commission. Visitation Parish grants are awarded by the Parish under guidelines established by the Parish (see Section 4.4.6).

### 4.4.3 Authority

The Principal is the delegated authority with requesting families to determine the amount of school financial aid provided.

### 4.4.4 Reporting

The Principal will report the amount of school financial aid money provided on an annual basis to the School Commission.

### 4.4.5 Exceptions

None.

#### 4.4.6 Qualifications for Parish Grant

To qualify for a parish grant a family should contact their parish pastor and follow whatever process their parish has in place (*Financial Aid Policy adopted June 2008*).

### 4.5 Tuition Policy

#### 4.5.1 Purpose

To provide guidance on tuition for Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

#### 4.5.2 Provisions

Visitation's tuition schedule is determined each year by the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy School Commission. All families shall be expected to make tuition payments according to one of the following payment plans. Each family's preferred manner of payment must be submitted each year at time of student registration. Options for payment shall include:

1. **Full Payment:** Under this plan the entire amount of tuition is paid on or before the first week of August. A tuition discount would be applied to the total tuition cost. The tuition discount shall be determined annually by the School Commission. This payment is made directly to the school.
2. **Monthly Payments:** Under this plan the entire amount of tuition is paid monthly over an eleven month period beginning in July through the FACTS Tuition Management Plan. This plan is an automatic payment plan made through the family's checking or savings account. Those choosing this plan will authorize their bank to make automatic monthly payments to FACTS on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup>, of each month. *FACTS charges an annual fee.*

#### 4.5.3 Late Registrations

1. Families registering after July 1 shall be expected to fulfill their tuition obligation according to the tuition policy stated above.
2. Tuition for students registering on or after October 1<sup>st</sup> shall be prorated over the number of school days they will be in attendance according to a formula established by the Principal.

#### 4.5.4 Tuition Refunds

Families withdrawing students prior to the first day of school shall be charged 5% of their total tuition. Families withdrawing students between the start of the school year and the end of the first trimester shall be charged 50% of their total tuition. Families withdrawing students between the beginning of the 2nd trimester and the end of the 3rd trimester shall be charged 100% of their total tuition. The registration fee is non-refundable and the instructional materials fee is non-refundable.

#### 4.5.5 Authority

The School Commission is required to annually calculate the tuition rate structure. The School Commission must determine the tuition rate structure prior to the enrollment process each year.

#### 4.5.6 Exceptions

Refer to Collection Policy 4.7 (*Tuition Policy adopted March 2000; amended June 2001, September 2007*).

## 4.6 Fundraising

### 4.6.1 Contractual

At registration, families can choose to participate in the fundraising activities available through the school, including SCRIP and our annual auction. SCRIP is a major fundraiser at our school. The primary function of SCRIP is to keep our tuition low. Each family must make a commitment to SCRIP.

- Option 1 purchase SCRIP with a net rebate of \$150 over the course of the school year beginning May 1, 2019 and ending April 13, 2020.
- Option 2 pay a onetime buyout of \$250 payable to the school SCRIP program.

Our school's auction is another major fundraiser for our school. The primary function of the auction is to strengthen the mission and vision of Visitation and contribute to the school's ongoing vitality.

- Option 1 procure auction items that sell for \$200 for the school auction and complete 5 volunteer hours towards the auction.
- Option 2 pay a onetime buyout of \$200 payable to the school and complete 5 volunteer hours towards the auction. This payment covers your auction procurement obligation only.
- Option 3 pay a onetime buyout of \$425 payable to the school's auction. This payment covers both your auction procurement and auction volunteer hours (5 hours at \$25 an hour).

Families are expected to provide at least **30 hours (15 hrs for single parents)** of service to the school and parish during the course of the school year. Any hours **not** completed will be charged a \$25 per/hour. Of these 30 hours, 5 hours must be auction-related, or you will be billed \$50 per/hour for incomplete hours. Families will be billed for outstanding balances.

### Enrollment Contract

Each family will be required to sign a contract with the school which obligates them to the terms agreed upon for tuition payment, fundraising, service activities and compliance with the school handbook. This contract must be completed as part of the normal registration process.

### 4.6.2 SCRIP

SCRIP order forms are sent home via email with the weekly Note Home.

All orders are processed on Monday mornings at 9am. Orders are filled on Fridays and your order will be delivered to your child's class or able to be picked up in the office on Friday.(whichever your order specifies.) SCRIP orders that you gather from family and acquaintances go toward your fundraising total. You can purchase SCRIP online. You can sign up to sell SCRIP after Mass and the fundraising dollars will go to your commitment (unless you are selling to a school family!)

**Visitation Catholic STEM Academy  
Financial Agreement and Enrollment Contract  
2019-2020**

**PARENT(S) FULL NAME(S):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NAME(S) OF STUDENT(S) TO BE ENROLLED:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**1. APPLICATION FEE**

A non-refundable fee of \$40 per family must be submitted at the time the application is received. (For new students only)

**2. REGISTRATION FEE**

Registration Fee & Instructional Materials Fee due at the time of contracting or before. If paid by March 18, 2019, there will be a \$50 discount.

- 1 child           \$250
- 2 children       \$350
- 3 children       \$450
- 4 children       \$550

**3. TUITION TOTALS**

**PK-8 Parishioner (if qualified)**

**PK-8 Non-Parishioner/Non-Catholic**

- 1 child           \$5,800
- 2 children       10,000
- 3 children       \$12,500
- 4 children       \$14,200
- Each additional child: \$1,300

- 1 child           \$6,500
- 2 children       \$11,400
- 3 children       \$14,200
- 4 children       \$17,200
- Each additional child: \$1,5

**Total Tuition: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:**

- Fulcrum Tuition Grant (y/n) \_\_\_\_\_
- Parish Subsidy (y/n) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other Assistance: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Financial Assistance: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Tuition Due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**5. FUNDRAISING/SERVICE HOUR EXPECTATIONS:** Please initial your acceptance:

\_\_\_\_\_ Every family is expected to purchase SCRIP with a net rebate of \$150 over the course of the 19-20 school year beginning May 1, 2019 and ending April, 13, 2020. You may choose to buy out for \$250.

\_\_\_\_\_ Every family is expected to PROCURE auction items that sell for \$200 for the school auction & work 5 hours.

\_\_\_\_\_ Families are expected to provide at least **30 hours** of service to the school and parish during the course of the school year. Any hours **not** completed will be charged a \$25 per/hour. Of these 30 hours, 5 hours must be auction-related, or you will be billed \$50 per/hour for incomplete hours. Families will be billed for outstanding balances.

**6. TUITION PAYMENTS:** Tuition payments are due in accord with this agreement. Continued enrollment is dependent upon prompt payment of tuition and fees. Please initial your choice:

\_\_\_\_\_ Option 1: Annual Payment. 1 payment paid directly to the school in full by August 5, 2019. 2% discount and exempt from 3% credit card charge. This applies to **full** pay contracts only.

\_\_\_\_\_ Option 2: Two Equal Payments. 2 payments paid directly to the school by Aug. 5, 2019 and Jan. 6, 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_ Option 3: Monthly. 10 or 11 equal payments paid through FACTS - automatic monthly withdrawals are in equal installments on either:

\_\_\_\_\_ the 5<sup>th</sup>  
\_\_\_\_\_ the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 months                      \_\_\_\_\_ Starting July 2019  
\_\_\_\_\_ 11 months                     \_\_\_\_\_ Starting August 2019

**PLEASE NOTE:** Add 3% of the charge to any tuition and/or fee payments made with a credit card. This includes any credit card payments through FACTS.

**8. FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS:** By your registration in Visitation Catholic STEM Academy you agree to the following:

**Please initial each line to indicate your acceptance of these policies.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I/we understand that there is a charge of 5% of the total tuition for a canceled registration before the first day of school, a 50% charge if canceled before the end of 1<sup>st</sup> trimester and a 100% charge after the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester begins.

\_\_\_\_\_ I/we understand that report cards/diploma may be withheld, transfer of records denied, registration for the following year denied, or services withheld if my/our account and/or fees are more than thirty (30) days in arrears or have not been satisfactorily met.

\_\_\_\_\_/we understand that the school reserves the right to impose sanctions, to withhold services, and pursue actions it deems necessary and appropriate in the event an account exceeds 60 days in arrears.

**INABILITY TO MEET CONTRACTED FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS:**

The school does not wish to deprive any child of a Catholic education if a family has a genuine inability to meet all its financial obligations. Therefore, if circumstances arise making the family unable to meet its financial obligations, the principal must be contacted to apply for special arrangements.

**FAILURE TO MEET CONTRACTED FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS:**

Failure to be current with tuition and full payment of fees, fundraising commitments, or failure to complete commitment hours by May 15, 2020 may result in your account being sent to collections, denial of report cards, holding other school records, dismissal from school, and/or denial of future registration. Families withdrawing prior to the end of the school year will be charged on a prorated monthly basis for their commitment hours and fundraising commitment. Families withdrawing students prior to the first day of school shall be charged 5% of their total tuition. The registration fee is non-refundable. I/We understand that this agreement will be in effect only after all tuition, fees, fundraising and commitment hours for the 2018-19 school year have been fulfilled. Tuition payments will be the responsibility of the party/ies whose signature(s) appear below.

PRINT NAME(s) \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

PRINCIPAL \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### 4.6.3 Annual Fund Campaign

All families are encouraged to donate to the school's annual fund campaign during contract signing. Monies raised from this campaign go towards the school's tuition assistance program, program enhancements, our endowment, and to maintain the operating budget. These donations are tax-deductible contributions and are non-contractual in nature.

## 4.7 Collection Policy

### 4.7.1 Purpose and Objectives

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy makes every effort to provide an affordable, quality, Christ-centered education to our students. Financial aid is offered based on need and the school's available resources. However, the majority of the school's funding comes from tuition and fees and we cannot fulfill our mission or provide fundamental school operations unless the obligations of every family are met on a timely basis.

Therefore, it is imperative that families pay all tuition and fees in a timely manner. To that end, the following is the School's Tuition Collection Policy.

1. **20 Days Past Due:** A "Past Due Notice" will be sent to any family with tuition 20 days past due. All past due tuition must be paid in full within 10 days of the "Past Due Notice" or a meeting with the Principal is needed to discuss an agreement to make alternative arrangements for payment.
2. **30 Days Past Due:** A "Past Due Notice" will be mailed to any family with tuition 30 days past due. If all past due Tuition is not paid in full, or according to the mutually acceptable agreement, within 10 days, report cards and/or student records will be withheld. In addition the Principal will contact the family for a meeting and within 10 days a meeting will be held, at which time some mutually agreed amount of payment will be made and a plan for future payments will be developed.
3. **45 Days Past Due:** A "Past Due Notice" will be mailed to any family with tuition 45 days past due. If the Family Tuition Account is not brought fully up-to-date or an agreement with the Principal has not been developed within 10 days of this Notice, the student(s) will not be permitted to participate in any School event(s) or extra-curricular activities (including, but not limited to CYO sports, band, play, etc.).
4. **60 Days Past Due (Last Notice):** The family will receive a letter from the Principal advising the family of their overdue tuition account and their need to pay in full the past due amount within 10 days. The family will also be advised that the child [ren] must be removed from the school if their account is not paid in full within 10 days and their account will be sent to collections. Further, the family will not be allowed to register for the following year unless their account is resolved.

In addition, it is Revised Code of Washington (RCW 28A.195.070) and Archdiocesan Policy that no student shall receive a diploma or transcript, if any financial obligations are outstanding. Lastly, in addition to the above, the School reserves all rights, at law or in equity, to collect any past due tuition (*TUITION COLLECTION POLICY adopted November 2014*).

#### 4.7.2 Parameters

Payment schedules are to be documented in the enrollment contract. Please see above for a copy of the 18-19 contract.

Families whose tuition payments, fees, extended care, lunch, or band payments are one month in arrears will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee. Each subsequent month that an account is in arrears without arrangements being made and a good faith effort to bring an account current will continue to be assessed an additional \$25.00 late fee.

#### 4.7.3 Authority

The Principal implements and enforces the authorities granted in this policy.

#### 4.7.4 Exceptions

In the event a family leaves Visitation during the school year, some tuition may be refundable; refer to the tuition policy for further information. Per the enrollment contract, the per-family registration fee is non-refundable and the per-student instructional materials fee is non-refundable. Fundraising and commitment hour requirements will be prorated to reflect the number of months a family attended Visitation. An exception may be possible only for one of the following reasons:

1. The uninsured death of a wage earner of the family or of the student.
2. A substantial change in the family financial situation due to extended liability, extended unemployment or illness of a wage earner.
3. Mutual agreement of the parents and the school for the child's welfare.
4. Military deployment resulting in a move for a family.

## 5 Communications

### 5.1 Friday Notes from the Office

The Friday Note home is sent to you electronically each week via the email you have supplied us with. It contains newsletters, calendars, notices, etc. Please be sure to let the office know if you should change your email address during the school year. Only school-approved communications are permitted to be sent in the school emails home. All correspondence to be sent home in the Friday note home must be pre-authorized by the principal. Organizations needing to use the family emails for distribution of materials must have them emailed to the office **no later than 9:00 AM Wednesdays for principal approval**. We encourage families to set up a regular routine of reading the note home each week. Non-custodial parents will be emailed weekly news from the school at their request. If you do not have access to a computer you may pick a copy up in the hall outside the office. We have the monthly lunch calendar, activity calendar and copies of the note home to the left of the office bulletin board in the main hallway.

### 5.2 Website

Our school's website address is: [www.visitationstemacademy.org](http://www.visitationstemacademy.org). The site is updated frequently and is a good source of continuing information about the school and our activities. Each teacher has created his or her own web page linked to the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy website.

### 5.3 Procedure for Contacting Teachers

Please call the school office and leave a message for the teacher to return your call. *Teachers will make any appointments directly with you.* E-mail can also be used to contact teachers, particularly if you have a quick question or want to pass on some information. E-mail addresses for faculty and staff are listed on the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy website and in this handbook. Teachers will do their best to return your phone calls/e-mails within 48 hours. We appreciate your patience and understanding. Parents are reminded of their responsibility to support the authority of school personnel by refusing to speak negatively in the presence of children. It is important to consult the teachers or principal before forming a final opinion regarding any situation in which a child seems to be treated unfairly.

### 5.4 Procedures in Case of Dissatisfaction with a Teacher's Decision

1. Contact the individual teacher involved.
2. If further action is warranted, contact the principal. A conference with the principal, teacher, and parent will be scheduled.
3. If still unsatisfied, the parent should contact the Pastor or his delegate.
4. Should resolution be necessary, a hearing procedure may be requested:
  - a. The pastor or his delegate acts as the hearing officer to review facts and determine the fairness of the action.
  - b. Pastor, principal, teacher, and parents or guardians are present at the hearing.
  - c. The pastor or his delegate, within three school days following the hearing, states his findings and evaluation of the situation.
  - d. These findings and evaluation are sent in writing to the following: parent and student, principal, teacher.
  - e. The decision of the pastor or his delegate is deemed final.

### 5.5 Procedures in Case of Dissatisfaction with School Policies or Administrative Decisions

1. Contact the principal by email or by phone to discuss the problem.
2. If dialog does not result in a satisfactory solution, contact the Pastor or his delegate (the parish administrator).
3. A conference with the Pastor or his delegate (the parish administrator), principal and parent will be scheduled if necessary or followed by step #4 as described above.
4. For a change in school policy, parents may request time to present their concerns at a School Commission meeting for consideration and possible change.
5. The decision of the pastor or his delegate is deemed final.

### 5.6 Conferences

Parent/Teacher/Student conferences are held in October and in February. Parents are requested to make every effort to be present at scheduled conferences. Student/Teacher/Parent Conference information will be sent home several weeks before conferences. To reflect the fact that the school's program emphasizes more student responsibility for learning, student-involved conferences are the norm at these twice-yearly sessions.

Conferences are encouraged at other times during the school year as needed. You can call the office and leave a message or e-mail your child's teachers to request a conference. The teacher will return your call and schedule the appointment with you. To allow for the total attention of the teacher to school duties, parents are asked to refrain from engaging teachers in informal conferences during carpool, before school, and when class is in session. Please feel free to leave a note for the teacher in the school office, or send an e-mail to your child's teacher, requesting they contact you to set up a conference. Unless a teacher or staff member specifically invites parents to call them about school business at home, please refrain from doing so.

## 5.7 Directory Information

Directory information is that portion of a student's record, which includes the student's name, family members' names, address and phone number. Parents who do not wish to have this information listed must notify the school in writing no later than Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. It is to be understood by families requesting this omission that they will still be contacted by phone or mail by school volunteers authorized to do so. It is further understood that parents will use the school directory only for school purposes.

## 6 Student Health

### 6.1 First Aid

Most school staff have had first aid and/or CPR training and periodically take refresher training. Minor injuries will be treated at school using wash and cover procedures. Office staff will call 911 as needed. For serious injuries parents/guardians or emergency contacts listed on registration forms will be contacted immediately. Please be sure that the persons you have listed on your emergency forms know they have been listed, and agree to come to school or a hospital as needed in your absence. Please be sure your child knows individuals listed and is comfortable with them. Please notify the school office of any changes, especially phone numbers on your emergency information.

### 6.2 Illness

Children who are ill must be kept home until they have recovered sufficiently in order to return to the regular routine of school. Children may not return until their temperature has been normal and/or flu symptoms (i.e. vomiting, diarrhea) have ceased for 24 hours. Children may be sent home due to an open rash of unknown source. **When a child is too sick to go outside at recess, they are too sick to be at school.** Any child with a temperature of 100° or higher will be sent home.

### 6.3 Medical Insurance

Families not having medical coverage may obtain insurance through WASHINGTON APPLE HEALTH at 1-855-923-4633

### 6.4 Medications

According to Washington State law, parents are to sign in all medications with the school office. *No student will be allowed to bring medications to the office for the parent.* Office personnel must verify the number of doses delivered to the school in the presence of the parent. The parent must sign and date verification of delivery and the amount of medication, with a witness signature from the attending office personnel.

Permission for the office to give prescribed medications and over-the-counter drugs must be given in writing each time medication is brought to school. Both the parent and a licensed physician (MD, ND, DO, or dentist only) must sign the authorization form or we cannot administer the medication. This is state law. Authorization forms can be obtained from the school office.

Medications must be in the original bottle with the expiration dates being current. Most pharmacies will supply a bottle for home and for school.

Over-the-counter drugs (e.g. cough drops, Tylenol, etc.) must be in a new unopened package. No baggies will be allowed.

We are unable to administer any medications that need refrigeration. A medication log is kept in the office for each student on medication. Office staff documents all medication distributed.

By law, designated office personnel may only administer approved oral medications. No other routes are approved—i.e. nose or eye drops, injections, topical or suppositories. These types of medications can be administered by a family member of the student, a licensed health care worker, or self-administered by the student, providing physician documentation with instructions have been submitted to the school. A three (3) day supply of medication for each student will be kept for use in the event of a prolonged stay at school. This quantity will be added to the monthly count the parent will bring to the office. If you have any questions please call the school office.

### 6.5 Admission of Students with Infectious Diseases and/or Life Threatening Illnesses

The Archdiocese of Seattle considers infectious diseases and/or life threatening diseases as a medical condition and considers it as a disability. Catholic schools do not discriminate on the basis of disabling conditions. However, there may be some particular situations in which limitations of the admission of a student with infectious diseases and/or life threatening illnesses is medically justifiable.

## 7 Student Behavior Expectations

Each teacher has developed a set of behavior expectations and appropriate consequences for their classroom. These expectations are posted in each classroom in a visible place, along with the school rules and principles. Time will be spent at the start of the school year, and as needed throughout the year, reviewing classroom expectations, school rules and principles, in addition to our anti-bullying policy.

The following are foundations upon which the discipline program at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is based:

1. Students have a right to be respected as persons and a responsibility to respect other persons, whether adults or fellow students.
2. Students have a right to learn in a school and a responsibility to follow classroom and school rules that ensure other students' right to learn.
3. Students have a right to use school materials and a responsibility to take care of these materials so that others may use them also.

4. Students have a right to personal safety and a responsibility to follow rules made to ensure each person's safety.
5. Students have a right to personal property without worry that it will be destroyed and a responsibility to respect other people's property.

The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary rules for just cause at his/her discretion. If a family is not satisfied with the disciplinary measures given to their child, they are asked to use the procedures outlined in Sections 5.4 and 5.5 to contact the Pastor or his delegate (the parish administrator) with their concern.

A student may be disciplined if his/her conduct, inside or outside of school property or the school day, is detrimental to the reputation of the school.

### 7.1 Principles

To assist students in meeting the school's behavioral expectations, the following principles are used throughout the school:

1. Respect Yourself and Others
2. Respect Property
3. Be Responsible

Students at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy will be treated respectfully and fairly. Corporal punishment is not used. Students, parents, and teachers realize they are a community of faith and recognize the presence of Jesus in themselves and in every other member of the community. Teachers will at all times expect that students behave respectfully. Students will be listened to and assisted in being the best they can be. Staff will handle offenses, as appropriate, as they occur in class, hall, playground, and other general areas of the school.

### 7.2 Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

Bullying will not be tolerated by the faculty and staff of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. We believe that, "bullying is unfair and one-sided and happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening or leaving someone out on purpose." Behaviors that can be associated with bullying include, but are not limited to, "physically hurting or threatening to hurt someone; insulting and/or calling someone names; leaving someone out on purpose; mean gossip and rumors; and sexual bullying" (*Taken from the Seattle based non-profit Committee for Children*).

### 7.3 Threats

Threats of violence will be taken seriously by the faculty and staff of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy and referred to the Principal. When appropriate, further outside assessment may be required.

### 7.4 School Rules

The following are common school rules that we expect all students to obey.

1. Walk quietly on the stairs and in the halls.
2. Use a considerate tone of voice in the school building.
3. Fighting, spitting, use of vulgar language and destruction of property are unacceptable.
4. Keep hands to yourself. Respect the personal space of others.
5. Refrain from chewing gum on the school grounds at any time.

#### 7.4.1 Lunchroom Rules

1. Use a quiet voice while in line.
2. Talk quietly with the people at your table. Students are not allowed to walk around the lunchroom during lunch.
3. Use manners.
4. Do not throw food.
5. Walk when entering or exiting the lunchroom.
6. Pick up around your table space.
7. Scrape your tray before stacking on the table.

#### 7.4.2 Upper Hall Rules

1. Gym shoes must be worn at all times when playing any activity on the gym floor unless given permission by a faculty or staff member to remove them.
2. Food or drinks are not allowed in the Upper Hall, except water in a closed container if given permission by a faculty or staff member.
3. Students are to stay off the stage unless given permission by a faculty or staff member to be on the stage.

#### 7.4.3 School Assembly Rules

1. Enter and leave the hall quietly and in an orderly way.
2. Use respectful applause and response.
3. No screaming at any time.

#### 7.4.4 Telephone

Students may use the school office telephone on an emergency basis. Permission to use the phone may be given by the classroom teacher in writing or by intercom. Students are not allowed to use classroom phones or the phone in the lunchroom during the school day unless with their teacher. Parents and students are requested to have after school plans set before students arrive at school.

### 7.5 Discipline Procedures

Discipline procedures are based on the belief that logical consequences are the most effective form of discipline. The principal is ultimately responsible for maintaining discipline and a positive learning environment in the school. Staff will handle most offenses as needed. Very serious incidents will be referred to the principal and entail parent involvement to work cooperatively to an immediate resolution of the problem.

#### 7.5.1 Serious Incidents

In the event of a serious incident, an Action Plan will be developed. Examples of serious incidents are: fighting, injuring/threatening another student, bullying, grave disrespect to a teacher or staff member, or repeated violation of school rules. Besides the student action plan, corrective actions may include an immediate phone call to a parent by the student to report a serious incident, service to the school, or restitution for damage.

### 7.5.2 Corrective Actions

The following is a list of possible corrective actions. This list is by no means all-inclusive and other corrective actions may be used. Corrective Actions includes:

1. Loss of recess
2. Phone call home
3. Student/teacher conference
4. Principal/student/teacher conference
5. Incident report sent home
6. Student action plan. The student is required to write:
  - a. a description of the incident
  - b. a plan of action to make things right
  - c. a plan for preventing/changing the behavior in the future

### 7.6 Suspension

#### 7.6.1 In-School Suspension

When a student has repeatedly violated rules, the principal may choose in-house suspension as a consequence. This means that a student will spend the entire day in the school office or another classroom, supervised by a staff member or another teacher. There will be no contact with peers at recess, lunch, before or immediately after school.

#### 7.6.2 Out of School Suspension

A student may be suspended from school for a period of time determined by the principal. School work will be completed at home as best as circumstances allow. The teacher, in consultation with the principal, will determine how much credit will be given for this work.

Procedure for Suspension:

1. Parents will be notified before a student is sent home and are expected to confer with the principal and teacher(s) before the student is allowed to return to school.
2. At the occasion of a conference regarding suspension, a parent may be notified by the principal or pastor that probation or expulsion could follow.

#### 7.6.3 Suspension Offenses

The following offenses committed by a student while under the jurisdiction of the school could be reasons for suspension. *This list is not all-inclusive:*

##### **A. Respect Yourself and Others**

1. Repeated disruption of the learning environment.
2. Disrespect shown toward school volunteers or personnel, verbally or by actions, this includes substitute teachers.
3. Willful disobedience to authorized personnel.
4. Harassment (refer to references above and Archdiocesan policy and in Section 7.14).
5. Fighting.
6. Bullying.

7. Lying.
8. Failure to cooperate with school personnel.

**B. Respect Property**

1. Stealing.
2. Unauthorized entry to or use of school facilities or materials (including desks and lockers).
3. Vandalism, which includes damage, destruction or defacing school or personal property.
4. Arson.
5. Violation of Technology Acceptable Use Policy.

**C. Be Responsible**

1. Repeated violations of any school rules.
2. Leaving school grounds without school and parent permission.
3. Conduct, whether inside or outside school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school, e.g. foul language at a sports event.
4. Forgery of documents and/or signature of parents or school personnel.
5. Failure to meet the condition of probation.
6. Buying or selling anything in the name of the school not approved by the school administration.
7. Possession, distribution, or use of alcoholic beverages, fireworks, illegal substances, drugs, drug paraphernalia or look-alike beverages, substances, or drugs.
8. Possession, distribution, or use of tobacco or tobacco products.
9. Possession of weapons or use of objects as weapons: Refer to Archdiocesan policy (Section 7.16).
10. Cheating. Cheating is defined as submitting for credit as one's own the work of someone else, obtained either in or out of school; giving or receiving from another student unauthorized assistance in the preparation of that work for credit; and using any unauthorized materials in the preparation of work for credit.
11. Unauthorized videos or pictures taken on Visitation Catholic STEM Academy grounds.
12. Engagement in social media, online blogs or sites such as FaceBook, YouTube, Instagram, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog or posting of video includes unflattering or defamatory comments or representations of the school, faculty, other students, or parish.

## 7.7 Probation

Probation is a defined period of time in which a student's behavior and/or academic performance (see Section 8.1.) is carefully scrutinized. A student can be placed on probation after preceding courses of action have met with little or no change in the unacceptable behaviors. Parents are notified in person and in writing of the probation: the reason for this step, the behavior(s) needing correction, the duration of the probation period. The student will be present for the verbal explanation of the terms of the probation.

## 7.8 Expulsion

Expulsion is the course of action for repeated and/or uncorrected violations of school rules, or for serious misconduct. The parents/guardians of the student will be required to withdraw the student from the school. When, in the judgment of the principal, the preceding offenses (those listed under suspension) are aggravated or repeated, they may result in expulsion.

### 7.8.1 Procedure for Expulsion

1. Parents will be notified in writing before a student is expelled.
2. In cases of expulsion, parents and/or student have the right to request a hearing from the pastor and/or his delegate.

### 7.8.2 Hearing Procedure in Case of Expulsion

The Due Process procedure for expulsion of a student is as follows:

1. When the principal decides to expel a student, a certified letter is sent to the student and parents or guardians.
2. The letter states observed behaviors of the student and notes the disciplinary action, while acknowledging the student's right to a hearing.
  - a. If a hearing is requested, it is held within five school days of such a request.
  - b. The pastor or his delegate acts as the hearing officer to review facts and determine the fairness of the action.
  - c. Pastor, principal, parents/guardians and the student are present at the hearing.
  - d. The pastor or his delegate, within three school days following the hearing states his findings and evaluation of the disciplinary action. The principal has the right, if necessary, to exclude the student from all school activities during the time of Due Process.

## 7.9 Desks/Lockers

Desks and lockers are the property of the school and may be opened without the presence or permission of the students who use them.

## 7.10 Electronic Equipment Prohibited

Electronic equipment of any kind (such as cell phones, tablets, Game Boys or cartridges, iPods, etc.) and headphones are strictly prohibited at school unless they are for academic purposes and have been previously approved by the teacher. In this event, the teacher will find a safe place to store the item(s) until they are needed. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy will not be responsible for the loss, damage or theft of electronic equipment brought to school without the approval of the child's classroom teacher. Electronic equipment brought to school will be confiscated and given to the principal.

### 7.10.1 Cell Phones

Parents, please help us! Cell phones can be stolen or lost, or used for purposes disruptive to the education process. In addition, confusion can arise when students make plans using cell phones and the office and parents are not adequately informed. **Cell phones must be turned off and stored in the student's backpack while on school grounds.** A student may ask permission of a staff member when a student's ride home has not arrived to use their cell phone after school. If a phone or electronic device is seen or heard by school personnel, the device will be confiscated and given to the principal. If a parent needs to get a message to his or her child, the approved and surest method is by calling the main office.

## 7.11 Trading Cards Prohibited

Trading cards of any kind (such as baseball cards, Pokémon cards or Yu-Gi-Oh! cards) are strictly prohibited at school unless they are for academic purposes and have been previously approved by the teacher. In this event, the teacher will find a safe place to store the item(s) until they are needed. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy will not be responsible for the loss, damage or theft of trading cards brought to school without the approval of the child's classroom teacher. Trading cards brought to school will be confiscated and given to the principal.

## 7.12 Discipline Policy

### 7.12.1 Purpose

To provide guidance for the principal, parents and community on the discipline program administered by Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

### 7.12.2 Provisions

1. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy strives toward a model of discipline, derived from Gospel values, that focuses on students growing into morally responsible and caring adults. The discipline program is based on the belief that logical consequences are the most effective form of discipline.
2. Disciplinary action may be taken that could result in probation, suspension, in-school suspension, and/or expulsion.
3. Families are provided the right of due process in requesting a hearing to discuss discipline which may result in expulsion.

### 7.12.3 Authority

The Principal is delegated the authority to administer the discipline policy and may waive any disciplinary regulation for just cause at his/her discretion.

### 7.12.4 Exceptions

None (Discipline Policy adopted June, 1998; amended August 2002).

## 7.13 Responsible Use Policy (Technology)

We at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy respect and care about each other and ourselves. We therefore conduct ourselves in a manner which will keep all of us intellectually, emotionally, and physically safe. As we use our classroom computers, the Local Area Network, and the Internet, we will never do anything that is unhealthy or unsafe. We have a responsibility to our school, community, and ourselves. Therefore we agree to the following:

- I will not knowingly cause a disruption of any sort when I use the computer. This means that I will use the computer for classroom assignments and work only. I will not intentionally make changes to any settings or programs on the computer without the consent of my teacher.
- Just as I would never accept a ride with, or give my name, address, or phone number to a stranger, I will never give personal information on the network, or on the Internet. This is because I want to keep myself, my family, and my community safe from harm.

- I will not install, download, or use programs from home or the Internet on school computers. I will not knowingly bring in disks from home that contain viruses on them for use on school computers. I will not use my personal e-mail account while at school.
- Time is important. I will use my time on the computer responsibly so that others may have access to the computer and network as well. I will not play games on the school computers. The only exception to this is when I have the teacher's permission.
- Because I know that Jesus teaches us to love each other, I will never intentionally hurt another student or staff member at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, nor will I hurt my family or community by writing abusive words or in any other way hurt others with the use of the computer either in the classroom or on the Internet.
- Just as I know that it is morally wrong to steal or destroy another's property, I will never take copyrighted material off the Internet, CD-ROMs or other software without the proper authorization and without giving proper credit. I will always respect the property rights of others who use the computers. I will never open the files of another person to read, change, or destroy them without that person's permission. I will also never take a disk that belongs to another to use or destroy. This is because I want to be trusted.
- We at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy are considerate of each other. Therefore, I will not use up valuable computer time, network time, or disk space on the computers to download files or games that are not related to my schoolwork. I will also make sure that I do not get into chat rooms, e-mail exchanges or newsgroup subscriptions unless authorized by my teacher. I know that these activities take up my time and they deny others the time that they need to get their work done. I do not want to be inconsiderate.
- I know that the adults at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy and my family are always concerned about my safety. However, the main responsibility lies with me. I will avoid sites, newsgroups, chat rooms, etc. that are not authorized. If I unexpectedly encounter uncomfortable or inappropriate material, I will tell a teacher and leave the site as quickly as possible. I will not share the information with other students.
- Just as no Visitation Catholic STEM Academy student would ever use the facilities, resources or students of our school for personal economic profit, I will never use the computers or network for any commercial purposes.

When using the computers or network at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, it may sometimes feel like I can easily break a rule. I still have to face myself if I do something wrong and God knows everything I do. My use of the computers, network and Internet can be a mirror that will show God what kind of person I am.

I know that I have been given a special privilege to use the computers, the Local Area network, and a vast worldwide network that can provide me with unlimited information and contact with an unlimited number of people. This is not a right, this is a privilege. Privileges are earned by showing responsibility and good judgment and a constant concern for the welfare and safety of my community and myself. I understand that should I fail to measure up to this responsibility, my privileges for use of the computers, network, and Internet will be subject to a range of disciplinary actions, up to termination of my computer privileges. I may also face other disciplinary and/or legal action in accord with school policies (*Responsible Use Policy adopted November 1998; amended September 2000 and June 2002*).

## 7.14 Archdiocese of Seattle Harassment Policy

### 7.14.1 Content

Employees and students of the Archdiocese of Seattle are treated with dignity and respect. The Archdiocese of Seattle promotes a healthy work environment. As part of that goal, the Archdiocese works to have the work place and school free from harassment of any kind. The Archdiocese will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt and thorough manner, and in as confidential a manner as possible in light of the need of the Archdiocese to investigate and, if appropriate, redress complaints of harassment. All allegations of harassment should be addressed and handled at the lowest appropriate level.

The Archdiocese of Seattle commits itself to provide appropriate support and assistance to the alleged victim and the alleged harasser during an investigative process; and to work for reconciliation between the person alleged or confirmed to have been harassed and the person alleged or confirmed to have harassed. The Archdiocese of Seattle further commits itself to prevent any retaliation or reprisal for initiating or filing a complaint of harassment. The Archdiocese of Seattle recognizes that allegations of harassment are not always or necessarily proven.

### 7.14.2 Definition

Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates and that:

1. Has a purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational or work environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individuals work performance or education; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the individual's employment or educational opportunities

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability; and
2. Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on the employer's or student's premises, or circulated in the school or workplace (*Archdiocese of Seattle Harassment Policy*).

### 7.14.3 Procedure for Dealing with Harassment

A person who believes he/she has been harassed has three options for initiating informal action:

1. A school employee or student who believes he/she has been harassed may elect to verbally express displeasure to the individual allegedly harassing before notifying the immediate supervisor of the objectionable conduct. If the person accused of harassing does not cease the objectionable conduct, the person verbally reports the harassment to the principal.
2. If harassment continues or if the person allegedly being harassed is not comfortable about approaching the person harassing, the person's report of harassment may go directly to the principal, unless that person is the one allegedly harassing.

3. If the person concerned is unable for any substantial reason (including that referenced in #2 above) to approach the principal, he/she should inform the pastor/ Pastoral Life Director, if the school is a parish school; or The Superintendent if the school is an Archdiocesan High School.

Likewise, anyone who is a supervisor who either believes, observes or has been told that harassment may be occurring is required to verbally report any such harassment promptly to the principal or pastor/Pastoral Life Director, as appropriate, who will promptly initiate an investigation of the concerns and attempt to resolve the situation without completing the formal written complaint of harassment.

A complaint regarding harassment becomes formal when the person allegedly being harassed prepares and signs a written statement describing the harassment and naming the alleged harasser. If there is difficulty in preparing this document, the complainant may choose to describe the harassment verbally to the principal (or, as appropriate, the principal, Pastor/Pastoral Life Director (or the Assistant Superintendent/Personnel if the complaint is against the pastor/Pastoral Life Director), who will prepare a verbatim written account of the conversation. The complainant will review it, revise it as necessary, and approve it as accurate by signing the written account.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint of harassment, the principal, pastor/Pastoral Life Director or their delegate (or the Assistant Superintendent/Personnel, as appropriate) will initiate an investigation of the complaint. This investigation will include a meeting with the person alleged to have harassed, identifying the nature of the allegations as well as the identity of the person bring forward the allegation.

The alleged harasser and the person filing the complaint will receive a copy of the written complaint filed. It will be the responsibility of the alleged harasser to complete a written response to the written complaint.

The first and foremost purpose of the initial contact is to effect healing and reconciliation, using all necessary resources to produce such a resolution. If deemed necessary, the principal, Pastor/Pastoral Life Director (or the Archbishop if the alleged harasser is a Pastor/ pastoral Life Director) may place the alleged harasser on paid administrative leave during the course of the investigation.

A written report of the findings of the investigation will be made available to the appropriate parties involved. The report will include an opinion and conclusion as to whether harassment has occurred, what resolution, if any, has been effected, as well as any other relevant information.

Based on the results of the investigation, the principal, pastor/Pastoral Life Director (and the Archbishop, if appropriate), in consultation with all appropriate persons, will determine what, if any, disciplinary action is warranted. The disciplinary action will take into account the nature, context and seriousness of the harassment and can include all disciplinary actions up to and including immediate termination or administrative leave if an employer or expulsion in the case of students.

If a complaint of harassment is found to be false, the Parish/Agency of the accused reserves the right to redress the complaint. Complaints of proven harassment and all subsequent relevant information about the investigation will be maintained by the principal, or, as appropriate, the pastor/Pastoral Life Director. At any point during this process, the Archdiocesan Office or the Catholic Schools Department Assistant Superintendent/Personnel is available for consultation. Any appeals about the process, findings and resulting decisions of the investigation will be conducted in a manner consistent with the Settlement of Disputes/Problem Solving Procedure.

### 7.15 Guns and Threats of Violence

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Seattle and Visitation Catholic STEM Academy that it is unlawful for any student to carry any firearm or dangerous weapon as defined by RCW 9.41.250 and RCW 9.41.280 onto the school premises, school provided transportation, or other facilities while being used exclusively by the school. Please refer to the Archdiocesan Weapons policy below for more details.

Any violation of this policy by any student shall result in expulsion for at least one year if a firearm is involved and may result in expulsion if another type of dangerous weapon is involved. The principal may modify such expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

Any object when used to intimidate, threaten or cause bodily harm must be considered a weapon. An examination of the situation by the principal will be needed to determine if the weapon falls into the category of dangerous weapons which require expulsion.

The principal shall promptly notify the law enforcement and the student's parent or guardian regarding any allegation or indication of such violation.

All threats of violence will be taken seriously by the faculty and staff of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy and referred to the Principal. When appropriate, further outside assessment may be required. Refer to the Discipline Policy for further information on additional possible consequences for threats of violence.

### 7.16 Archdiocese of Seattle Weapons Policy

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Seattle that it is unlawful for any student to carry any firearm or dangerous weapon as defined by RCW 9.41.250 and RCW 9.41.280 (see below) onto the school premises, school provided transportation, or other facilities while being used exclusively by a school.

Dangerous weapons as defined in RCW 9.41.250 and RCW 9.42.280 include: Any instrument or weapon of the kind usually known as sling shot, sand club, or metal knuckles, or spring blade knife, or any knife the blade of which is automatically released by a spring mechanism or other mechanical device, or any knife having a blade which opens or falls, or is ejected into position by the force of gravity, or by an outward, downward, or centrifugal thrust or movement; who shall furtively carry with intent to conceal any dagger, dirk, pistol, or other dangerous weapon; or who shall use any contrivance or device for suppressing the noise of any firearm (RCW 9.41.250). Any firearm; any device commonly known as "nun-chu-ka sticks," consisting of two or more lengths of wood, metal, plastic, or similar substance connected with wire, rope, or other means; or any device commonly known as "throwing stars," which are multi-pointed, metal objects designed to embed upon impact from any aspect; or any air gun, including any air pistol or air rifle designed to propel a BB, pellet, or other projectile by the discharge of compressed air, carbon dioxide, or other gas. (RCW 9.41.280)

Any violation of this policy by any student shall result in expulsion for at least one year if a firearm is involved and may result in expulsion if another type of dangerous weapon is involved. The principal may modify such expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

While fixed blade knives, small key chain knives, and pocket knives do not fit the state definition of a dangerous weapon, if the student was using the knife in such a manner as to threaten, intimidate or injure, it should be treated as a dangerous weapon.

**Likewise, if a facsimile is used as a weapon to threaten, intimidate or coerce, it should be treated as a real weapon.**

Some fireworks, such as M-80s and other high powered fireworks should be considered dangerous weapons as they are capable of causing grave bodily harm and are basically small bombs. They should be treated as dangerous weapons, and the fire marshal should be notified in addition to the police referral.

Any object when used to intimidate, threaten or cause bodily harm must be considered a weapon. An examination of the situation by the principal will be needed to determine if the weapon falls into the category of dangerous weapons which require expulsion.

The principal shall promptly notify the law enforcement and the student's parent or guardian regarding any allegation or indication of such violation (*Weapons Policy Effective September 1998*).

## 8 Academics

### 8.1 Academic Standards

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Catholic School expects all students to maintain passing grades in all subjects. A student will be on time to school and to each class, be prepared with the needed materials and completed assignments, submit quality work as directed by each teacher, and maintain satisfactory behavior.

A student in grades 4-8 must maintain an overall average of at least 70%. In grades K-3 a student must perform consistently at grade level.

#### 8.1.1 Promotion

Promotion of students will occur upon satisfactory completion of all academic work at grade level. This includes, but is not limited to, completion of all assigned homework, class participation, and any or all teacher assignments. Conferences with parents, teacher and principal will occur if there is concern about a student not being able to be promoted.

#### 8.1.2 Retention

The parents will be informed as early as possible if a student is experiencing difficulties which may result in retention. Reasons a student may be retained include, but are not limited to, prolonged absence, student is experiencing difficulties due to maturation and/ or student is receiving failing grades in two or more core subjects. The principal will send a letter home when informed of an extraordinary number of absences.

#### 8.1.3 Academic Probation

If a student is not meeting standards, he/she will be placed on academic probation. If, after being placed on academic probation and receiving support from the school and parents, the student continues not to meet standards, he or she is no longer benefiting from attending Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Catholic School and will be dismissed.

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy cannot meet the needs of every student. Hopefully, the student will be successful in another academic setting.



The following will be considered before placing a student on Academic Probation:

1. In the primary grades, a student must complete the grade level work and be able to fit into an instructional grouping in order to be moved to the next grade or accepted.
2. A student who is receiving 70% or below in two subjects, or has an overall average of 70% or below at the end of the first or second trimester will be placed on academic probation. A student on academic probation is required to follow a daily homework plan and is monitored closely by the school and his/her parents.
3. A student who begins a trimester on academic probation and then continues to have an overall average of 70% or below, or is receiving a 70% or below in two core subjects (including Religion) at the end of the trimester may be dismissed from school.
4. A student who has received a 70% or below in two core subjects (including Religion), or who has an overall average of 70% or less at the end of the third trimester may not be promoted to the next grade level and/or allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.
5. All new students in grades 4 - 8 enter on probationary status.

## 8.2 Curriculum

The basic curriculum in place at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Catholic School meets Archdiocesan requirements for textbooks, materials and time allotments for subject areas. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy's curriculum has also been cross-referenced with Common Core Standards, Washington State's Grade Level Expectations and Essential Learning Requirements so that it meets or exceeds current state standards. A copy of the school's curriculum is available for review with the principal. Subject areas include the following: religion/family life, reading and language arts, mathematics, STEM, social studies, science, music (band), physical education/health, library skills, and substance abuse education. Integration of technology into the curriculum is an ongoing effort in the improvement of instruction.

Extra-curricular activities include sports and clubs, yearbook (Grade 8), student government (Grades 5-8), safety patrol (Grade 7), and scouting groups that meet at school.

The ideal toward which Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is striving is best expressed in the following passage: The curriculum is the critical component of a school program. It must be flexible enough to serve the needs of all students. It must promote growth along both horizontal and vertical lines. It must be current, encompassing critical issues. It must build process skills and higher order thinking skills. It must reflect current research on learning. It must allow the learner to build new learning upon past learning in a continuing fashion. It should allow concepts and skills to be developed in a wide spectrum of areas. It must promote the continuous learning of students of widely varying interests and abilities.

It is our goal to design and implement a curriculum that:

- Allows students a continuous progression of learning
- Has subject areas integrated into thematic units
- Uses children's literature as its language focus
- Offers a multitude of resources and choices for students
- Emphasizes all communication skills in a whole language approach
- Includes self-pacing programs for continuous and individual progress
- Accommodates the varying learning styles and intelligence of the students
- Emphasizes higher order thinking skills

- Focuses on concepts and processes rather than isolated facts
- Provides enrichment and opportunities for acceleration of learning
- Will give students the opportunity to create their own learning opportunities
- Expands basic curriculum areas to integrate technology.

### 8.3 Instruction

The instructional program at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy continually strives toward implementing the best and most appropriate teaching practices in current use. These determinations have followed intensive study through university course work, Archdiocesan workshops and individual professional reading.

### 8.4 Religious Education

Besides daily instruction in the Catholic faith, Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is responsible for promoting Gospel values in every aspect of school life. This responsibility includes daily prayer, frequent and regular school liturgies, service learning, the mutual respect of teachers, staff, and students, and the implementation of school policies and programs.

Students in grade 8 will also be required to perform additional outside service hours as part of their overall Religion grade.

Parents are the primary educators in the faith formation of their children. The role of the school is that of support to families in this very critical aspect of parenting. Since children closely follow the example of their parents, families are encouraged to be active participants in their respective faith communities by regular attendance at Mass or church services and by sharing their talents and time with these communities.

“Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area; they are educators, because they are parents” (St. Pope John Paul II, 1994, Letter to Families (16)).

#### 8.4.1 Sacramental Preparation

The Sacraments of First Eucharist and Reconciliation, while covered in the classroom, are taught in more depth at the parish level and are offered through the Church of the Visitation Parish Religious Education. For additional information contact the church office at 253 473-4960. All students enrolled in the second grade will receive extra faith formation in preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion whether they are receiving the sacraments in the spring or not. Those students who are eligible for these sacraments must have a Baptismal record on file and will participate in Parish retreats.

#### 8.4.2 Moral Instruction

Students in grades 5 - 8 are taught Family Life as part of the Religious Education program. In 5th and 6th grades, this program includes instruction in Human Sexuality. A consent form will be sent home before this instruction begins and parents will have the option of having their child(ren) receive this instruction in the classroom, in classes offered through Visitation Parish (or your own parish), or at home.

## 8.5 Assessment

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy's understanding of assessment includes many parts, not the least of which is the teacher's consistent tracking of each student's progress. This progress is documented in individual student records kept by each teacher, in portfolios of student work showing their progress and pride in achievement, in parent/teacher/ student conferences, in report cards and in standardized tests.

### 8.5.1 Report Cards/Progress Reports

**Report cards** are issued each trimester for Pre-Kindergarten–Grade 8. If you have any questions regarding information on the card, please contact the teacher within seven business days of distribution. ***Parents of students in grades 4-8 receive instructions and passwords to track student progress through Alma. We also encourage parents to allow their students to track their own progress through Alma. If parents experience problems accessing their child's grades, they should immediately notify the school.***

Parents are encouraged to confer with teachers if any student work or the report card itself warrants concern. Requests for a grade change need to be made directly to the teacher within seven (7) business days of the report card date. The request itself does not guarantee a grade change.

**Brief progress reports** for grades 4 through 8 are distributed at mid-trimester in each of the three trimesters (at a minimum). They are distributed as needed in grades PK - 3.

### 8.5.3 Standardized Tests

The standardized tests in current use at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy include the MAP reading test (Grades 2-8) in the fall, winter and spring. Results are shared with parents. Grades 5 & 8 are administered an NCEA religion test called ACRE.

## 8.6 Home Study

The scarcity of family time makes it even more important for homework habits to be incorporated into the family routine in a way that helps children grow in responsibility, keeps parents informed and involved in their children's learning, and sends the message that disciplined home study is important.

Typically, homework assignments are extensions of current topics in the curriculum and should be completed independently by students. Parents are urged to provide regular study time with no electronic or other distractions, a regular study space with good lighting, and abundant encouragement. Students and parents can count on homework during the school week. The specifics of homework expectations are at the discretion of the individual teacher but should generally fall within the following ranges:

### Daily Homework Expectations

Kindergarten	Bedtime reading
Grades 1-2	10-20 minutes
Grades 3-4	20-30 minutes
Grades 5-6	40-60 minutes
Grades 7-8	60-120 minutes

These allotments are approximations of the time to be given to daily homework. On occasion, long-range assignments may require more time. Ordinarily, no homework will be assigned over weekends (with the exception of 7th and 8th graders).

Seventh and eighth graders will typically have math assignments and long-range projects that will influence their weekend schedules. This is considered to be a realistic expectation as they approach their high school years, which require more home study.

Families lead very busy lives. If occasional family commitments interfere with completing homework, please write a note to the teacher asking for an extension to the following evening.

Teachers will keep parents informed of incidents of unexcused missing assignments and enlist their support for disciplined study habits. Students are required to make up any missing assignments, including those missed through absence.

Each teacher's procedure for notifying parents of missing assignments and the amount of time allowed to complete the assignments will be outlined at Back to School night.

Students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 who have unexcused missing homework will be required to stay after school to complete their work.

If a parent notices that a student is spending excessive time on homework, please call the teacher at school to discuss the situation. Homework expectations and communication links for keeping informed about assignments are shared at Back-to-School night in September and are listed on individual teachers' web pages.

Questions regarding the policy for missing work due to illness and vacation during the school year should be directed to individual teachers.

## 9 Attendance

Each school day is valuable and cannot be compromised by unnecessary absences. Regular attendance is essential to the successful completion of requirements for each grade level. It is impossible to retrieve missed instruction at school simply by performing paper/pencil and reading exercises at home. It is, therefore, very important that every student attend school every day except for very serious reasons. Attendance is a consideration when determining promotion for students.

According to Washington State Law regarding school absence: Teachers shall require excuses from the parents/guardians of pupils in all cases of absence, tardiness or dismissal before the close of school and no excuse shall be deemed valid except that of illness and such other causes as may be approved by the school district (WAC180-44-030).

### 9.1 Absence

When a student is ill, or for some other reason is not able to attend school, a parent or guardian is **expected to call the school office between 8:00 and 9:00am**. You may also call prior to this time and leave a message on our school voice mail. If this is not done, the school's automated phone system will telephone the parents with the number you have supplied. If a parent cannot be reached, persons

listed on the emergency form will be contacted. When a student returns to school, a note verifying the date and reason for the absence is required. This written excuse should be given to the teacher. It is kept on file for the year. When a student has had three unexcused absences in any given month, the principal will be notified. A pattern of unexcused absences will result in the principal contacting the parent for either a telephone conference or a school conference to develop an attendance plan.

## 9.2 Tardiness

At the sound of the 8:15 bell, all students should be in their classrooms ready to begin their day. A student who is tardy for school must report to the office for a tardy slip before going to class. A written note or phone call to the office, explaining the reason for being late is needed for an excused tardy. Excessive tardiness will have a direct impact on a student's academic evaluation and promotion to the next grade.

Students arriving late from medical and dental appointments will be given an excused tardy with verification from the physician's office or parent.

When a student has had ten tardies in any given trimester, the principal will be notified. Not only does late arrival impact your child's learning, but also the learning of their classmates. We believe in the importance of developing good attendance habits. A pattern of unexcused tardies will result in the principal contacting the parent for either a telephone conference or a school conference to develop an attendance plan.

## 9.3 Arrival/Departure of Students/Extended Day

The safety of our students is extremely important and we ask for your full cooperation. Students enter the building directly from carpool/drop-off between 7:45 and 8:15 each morning.

Students are allowed to go to Extended Care between 7:45 and 8:05AM at no cost to the family. Any student dropped off at school before 8:05 will be directed to the extended day program unless they have a previously arranged appointment with their teacher.

The school Safety Patrol is on duty after school at the crosswalks to ensure the safety of the students. All parents and guardians are asked to obey the carpool procedures at all times.

Students who are not picked up by the end of afternoon carpool will be taken to the Extended Day program. Late drivers must park and enter the building to pick up their riders and may be charged an extended day program fee (please see extended care rates for information). Students may remain after school only for activities under the direct supervision of school personnel or for sports practices held immediately after dismissal and under the direct supervision of an adult.

Visits to local convenience stores either before or after school are highly discouraged and will be reported to parents if they are observed or reported to school personnel.

## 9.4 Illness in School

A student who becomes ill at school will remain in the office until a parent/guardian or an adult designated on the emergency form comes for the student. The school has neither a health room nor a school nurse. If a child is too uncomfortable to be in class, that child must recover at home.

## 9.5 Appointments/Early Dismissal

Parents are asked to schedule dental, orthodontic, and doctor appointments outside of the school day whenever possible. If this is unavoidable, please send a note to the teacher and office stating the time needed for dismissal. Please follow this procedure for any other early dismissal also. When you arrive, please sign out your child at the front counter. Teachers will dismiss the students to the main office after receiving a call from the office.

Students will be released only to persons who have the proper identification. Persons picking up your child(ren) other than yourself must be listed on the contact information on your registration papers, or have a signed note from you and a number where you can be reached. Occasionally, parents will be given a pass to pick up their student from a classroom or other school facility.

## 9.6 Students Leaving School Grounds

Upon arriving on school grounds, all students are expected to remain on the grounds. Any student leaving the school grounds during school hours must have a note from a parent documenting the need and the person responsible for picking up the student. Any student leaving the building during the school day must be signed out at the office by the parent/ guardian or designee.

# 10 Dress Code

## 10.1 Uniform Policy

Visitation Catholic STEM School maintains a strong tradition of school uniforms which reflect school pride and appropriate regard for personal appearance. Uniforms are a first opportunity to make an impression. Uniforms express a commitment to modesty, safety, professionalism, and ensure a distraction-free learning environment providing a level playing field for all students. To achieve this, the following guidelines are to be observed at all times for grades PK-8:

- Students are expected to wear and maintain clean, sharp, crisp, and appropriately sized uniforms.
- Uniforms that are either too large or too small will need to be replaced.
- When uniforms become tattered or show signs of wear they should be repaired or replaced.
- Students should be in uniform every day except for free dress opportunities granted occasionally by the principal, or a valid reason in writing from the parent/guardian requesting an exemption for that day.
- Parents will be notified of uniform code violations through written warnings and/or phone calls. Students who repeatedly violate the uniform policy, (e.g.—more than three violations in a trimester, will be denied free dress privileges or serve detention).
- When needed, the faculty and staff of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy are given the authority to decide what is appropriate and what isn't.
- *The principal reserves the right to amend this policy for just cause. Parents will be notified of such changes through the school newsletter or a note home.*

- Uniforms are required for all students beginning the first day of school. The uniform dress code is in effect from 7:55 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. including lunchtime and recess and must be worn to school sponsored events (e.g.-field trips) unless noted/approved by principal.
- Sweatshirts are not part of the standard uniform and are optional for Spirit Days on Tuesdays only!
- Regulation uniform is only available for purchase through The Dennis Uniform Company online <http://www.dennisuniform.com/> (School code: XSV315) or at the store outlet: 12608 Interurban Avenue S. , Tukwila, WA 98168 Phone (206) 431-2000

**“Full Dress Uniform” is required on all-school Mass days (every Thursday),** class picture days and any other days designated by the principal as full dress days. “Full Dress Uniform” is considered the appropriate blue sweater, a white collared blouse or button down shirt, appropriate uniform jumper or skirt for girls and long navy blue pants for boys (**shorts are not considered to be part of the full dress uniform**). Please see below for specifics.

Boys (K-8) *PK optional*

- Navy blue chinos (these are twill pants) must be worn with a solid black or brown belt (no fancy or elaborate belt buckles permitted). **Belts required for grades 5-8.**
- **Walking shorts optional.** 1<sup>st</sup> day of school until Oct 31<sup>st</sup>. Then again the 1<sup>st</sup> Mon after Spring Break.
- White Oxford button-down short-sleeve or long-sleeve shirt or white polo shirt.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- Lloyd Plaid tie with Oxford shirt **are required for Mass on Thursdays. No polo shirts allowed on Thursdays.**
- Navy blue V-neck sweater vest; V-neck long-sleeve pull-over; V-neck cardigan with embroidered Visitation Catholic STEM Academy logo.
- Black or brown dress shoes or black or white tennis shoes. Slip-resistant sole styles. Always excluded are high-tops, slippers, sandals, flip-flops, athletic slides, house shoes, moccasins, or any glitter/sequin styles. Boots are not permitted.
- Solid black, navy blue or white socks (must cover the ankle; no footies)

Girls (K-8) *PK optional*

- Lloyd Plaid jumper (PK-optional; required for grades K-4)
- Lloyd Plaid skirt (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee; required for grades 5-8)
- **Walking shorts optional.** 1<sup>st</sup> day of school until Oct 31<sup>st</sup>. Then again the 1<sup>st</sup> Mon after Spring Break.
- White Oxford button-down blouse; short or long-sleeve or white polo shirt.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- Tie Crossover/Pearl Snap-Lloyd Plaid with Oxford shirt **are required for Mass on Thursdays. No polo shirts allowed on Thursdays.**
- Navy blue V-neck sweater vest; V-neck long-sleeve pull-over; V-neck cardigan with embroidered Visitation Catholic STEM Academy logo
- Solid navy blue or black footed-tights (optional)
- ***Leggings are not allowed***
- Solid black, navy blue or white knee-high or crew socks (must cover the ankle; no footies or anklets)
- Black or brown dress shoes or black or white tennis shoes. Slip-resistant sole styles. Always excluded are high-tops, slippers, sandals, flip-flops, athletic slides, house shoes, moccasins, or any glitter/sequin styles. Boots are not permitted.
- Navy blue chinos/twill pants permitted **with the exception of Mass on Thursdays.**

**Hair:** Hair is to be clean and well groomed. Any style or color that would draw undue attention to a student during school is not permitted. Only natural colors are permitted. No Mohawks or scalp designs are allowed. Hairstyles or colors deemed distracting by the principal are not permitted. For boys, hair shall not extend below the top of the collar and shall be cut above the eyebrow line. Girl's hair must be above the eyebrows and/or held back from face with pins, headbands, or barrettes. Hair ornaments are permitted for girls, but should be in the colors of white, green, navy, black, red or school plaid and complement the colors of the uniform (Available through Dennis Uniform). When in doubt about a prospective style or color, please consult the principal beforehand.

**Free dress** will be a privilege that is earned and shall be granted occasionally throughout the school year and will be outlined specifically with notification from the school principal. Free dress must be neat, modest, and appropriate. Jeans or khakis in good condition (no holes or tears in jeans allowed); shirts with only appropriate message/design. No sweats or spandex type fashions, cut-offs, bare midriffs, miniskirts or tank tops. Baggy or ill-fitting clothes are not permitted. Shoe, make-up, and jewelry regulations apply on non-uniform days. Shorts/skirts/dresses need to be the same length as uniform skirt, or jumper.

**Make-up and Jewelry:** No make-up is permitted for any student in any grade. **Nail polish of any kind is not permitted.** No false nails. Watches are permitted. For safety reasons, body piercing is not permitted at school, with the exception of small stud-type earrings in the earlobe, single or double may be worn. Boys may not wear earrings. Nose rings, eye brow rings and earrings in the ear cartilage may not be worn by any student. No ankle bracelets, no necklaces, chains, pucca shells or medallions, except for religious medals or crosses. No more than one bracelet may be worn. No friendship bracelets, no rubber bracelets/wristband, etc. except religious in nature or supporting acceptable cause. Bracelets/wristbands must be compatible with Catholic moral values and not incompatible with Catholic teaching. For safety reasons and loss of student property fine jewelry is not allowed.

**Group Uniforms:** Students may wear their full-dress Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Brownie or Girl Scout uniform on authorized meeting days. Standard uniform requirements takes precedence over group uniforms on Holy Days of Obligation and Mass each Friday.

**Coats/jackets:** are a requirement between November 1st and March 31st.

**Hats:** No hats or head covering will be allowed in the building for either boys or girls. Winter hats (e.g. - knitted hats; made from wool or acrylic, also known as a ski cap, knit hat, knit cap, stocking cap) permitted for recess on playground November 1-March 31st. Medical exceptions for hats/head coverings permitted with prior permission of the principal.

**Free Dress for Uniforms at Church:** Students who wear their Visitation Catholic STEM Academy uniform to church (whichever church the family attends) on the first Saturday or Sunday of the month may wear free dress the following Monday. A note from the students' parent must accompany the student and be given to their teacher in either case.

**T-Shirt Tuesday:** Every Tuesday, students may wear Viking CYO T-shirts or sweatshirts (Red or Blue) instead of the Visitation uniform sweater. Students are still required to wear the uniform pants or skirt with the t-shirt or sweatshirt. Spirit wear shall include: Visitation Viking T-shirts/sweatshirts, fleeces, pull-overs, embroidered school sweatshirts, monogrammed sweaters and/or fleece vests, etc. Spirit

wear can be purchased via Dennis or Ink, Inc. in Tacoma through the school office. Spirit wear may be only worn on Tuesday Spirit Days.

**Free Dress First Tuesdays:** The first Tuesday of every month is a free dress day if students bring a can of food for the Visitation Parish Food Bank. Please see Free Dress rules above.

## 11 Student Activities

### 11.1 Field Trips

Teachers plan field trips to extend learning experiences from the classroom to real life. Teachers will notify families in advance of these trips. All students must bring the required permission form in advance of the field trip. No child can be permitted off the school grounds without written permission. Verbal permission is not acceptable.

Field trip drivers must have a current insured driver forms on file in the office and must have completed the Safe Environment Training Class, Protecting God's Children. A volunteer back-ground check is also required prior to the field trip day. Side trips while students are being transported to or from the field trip destination are not permitted. Normally, money collected for field trips is not refundable. **Parent chaperones are not allowed to bring their students' younger siblings or other people on a field trip as per our Archdiocesan insurance policy.** Their duty is to assist in the supervision of the students on the field trip.

Effective July 1, 2007, children less than 8 years old must be restrained in a child restraint system, unless the child is 4 feet 9 inches or taller. A child who is 8 years old or older, or 4 feet 9 inches or taller, must be properly restrained either with the motor vehicle's safety belt or an appropriately fitting child restraint system. Children under 13 years old must be transported in rear seats where it is practical to do so.

### 11.2 Parties

In class birthday parties for individual students are permitted. A small treat - no large cakes please! - may be brought to celebrate a child's birthday. Juice boxes are also fine. Because of the potential for food allergies, parents must contact the teacher in advance to arrange this. Classroom treats will not be permitted without prior approval from the teacher. Classroom parties for other occasions will be at the discretion of the classroom teacher. **Invitations to birthday or other parties may be distributed at school with teacher's permission as long as there is an invitation for each student in the class.**

### 11.3 Playground

Supervision of the playground during both morning and lunch recess is the responsibility of support staff with the assistance of volunteers. Students can identify playground volunteers and other parents by the visitor's ID label worn on their top.

Difficulties on the playground will be handled directly by the playground monitors. Whenever possible, students will be encouraged to solve disputes themselves. When that does not resolve the matter, monitors will be expected to help resolve the problem. Serious disciplinary incidents on the playground will be brought to the attention of the classroom teacher by support staff.

When possible, accidents are dealt with on the playground. Whenever necessary, more serious accidents will be referred to the office. The two support staff personnel on the playground have walkie-talkies so additional help from the office can be called if needed.

### 11.3.1 Playground Equipment

Playground Equipment is provided by the school. Students are requested to care for this equipment so that it is not lost or damaged. No hardballs or baseball bats are permitted. Jump ropes are to be used for jumping only. Students may bring their own (appropriate) equipment from home provided it is clearly marked with their name and that no one is excluded from games when equipment is brought from home.



The playground monitors have the right to ask a student not to play with equipment brought from home if they believe it is not appropriate for the playground.

### 11.3.2 Playground Rules

Teachers periodically review playground rules with their students. These rules include:

1. Outdoor voice: no screaming.
2. Use playground equipment safely and appropriately.
3. Stay within the fenced playground. (Unless weather and extra playground monitors permit use of Berntsen Park).
4. Follow directions of the playground monitor.
5. Report all injuries to the playground monitor immediately.
6. Do not talk with strangers on the other side of the fence.
7. No food on the playground.

## 11.4 Extended Care Program

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy provides an Extended Care program after school. Hours are 7:00AM until 8:00AM and 3:00PM until 6:00PM. Extended Care is an auxiliary program of the school and as such comes under the ultimate responsibility of the school principal. Day-to-day management is the responsibility of the director. Families needing to drop-off their children before 8:00AM can drop them off anytime between 7:45 and 8:00AM and they will not be charged for child care. The Extended Care door can only be opened with a code number. **Extended Care parents are asked not to share this number with their children or any non-users of the program.** Parents/Guardians must come into the Extended Care room to sign their children out in the afternoon both for the safety of the student as well as ensuring accuracy of billing. **Students are not allowed to sign themselves out.** Students not picked up from school by 3:10pm will be walked to the Extended Care room and parents will be charged a drop-in fee beginning at 3:15pm. Children who attend Extended Care on a day they are not registered to attend will also be charged the drop-in fee. Families using Extended Care receive a handbook of information with more specific information on the policies and procedures of the program. The phone number to be used exclusively for Extended Care business is 253-473-6807.

## 12 Expectations for Families

### 12.1 Commitment Hours

Contractual: As part of the enrollment contract, Visitation Catholic STEM Academy requires families to commit to a specific number of volunteer hours in service to the school. Annual commitment hour requirements are 30 hours per year for PK-8 and 15 hours per year for single-parent families. **Five of the required hours must be performed in service to the annual school auction.**

Families sign-up to participate in those activities that would most benefit from their skills or talents and/or are of interest to them as part of the registration process. Unfilled commitment hours will result in a charge of \$25 per hour to the family. Failure to fulfill the auction hour commitment will result in a \$50 per hour charge. Families not fulfilling their commitment hour contract will be placed at the bottom of the re-enrollment priority list and will be billed for uncompleted hours in May 2019.

#### 12.1.1 Volunteering

All volunteers must have completed the Safe Environment Training Class, Protecting God's Children. A volunteer back-ground check is also required prior to volunteering. Volunteer Service Hour Logs can be obtained in the school office. We will also send home with your child upon request. Families are asked to complete the log(s) and return them to school. Updated commitment hour reports are sent home throughout the year.

#### 12.1.2 Copy Machine/Office Equipment

Proper use and care of machinery and equipment is the responsibility of all that use them. Please report needs for repair to the administrative assistant immediately. Authorized groups requesting that office staff run infrequent or one-time materials should expect a 24-hour turnaround so that office staff is not continually interrupted during work hours. Great care should be taken by all users of the equipment in following copyright laws.

### 12.2 Commitment Hours Policy

#### 12.2.1 Purpose and Objectives

To encourage participation in Visitation School and community related activities and to help defray the cost of educating students.

#### 12.2.2 Parameters

Commitment hours are to be contained in the enrollment contract. Annual commitment hour requirements are 30 hours for a two-parent family and 15 hours for a single-parent family. Five of the required hours must be performed in service to the annual school auction. One third of the commitment hour requirement may be delegated to another adult family member. Failure to fulfill the annual commitment hour requirement will result in a charge of \$25per/hour. Failure to fulfill the auction commitment hours will result in a charge of \$50 per hour.

#### 12.2.3 Authority

The Principal implements and enforces the authorities granted in this policy.

#### 12.2.4 Reporting

Parent commitment hours are to be reported on a regular basis to the office for activities listed on the Commitment Hours Form. A periodic updated of recorded hours is sent to families during the school year from the Service Hour Recorder.

#### 12.2.5 Exceptions

Any exceptions to this policy are the responsibility of the School Principal (*Commitment Hours policy adopted March 2000; amended June 2002*).

#### 12.3 Classroom Interruptions

All visitors to the school are asked to enter through the front door and to check in at the main office for safety reasons. The forgotten lunch or school bag is to be delivered to the office to eliminate unnecessary class interruptions.

#### 12.4 Traffic Procedures

For the safety of our students, families are asked not to park on the playground during morning or afternoon carpool. If you need to come in the building or will be staying after school gets out, please park in the parking area along Lawrence Street. Do not park in the crosswalk. **Parking in a crosswalk, or within twenty feet of a crosswalk is a violation of (RCW 46.61.570) and may result in a traffic violation fine by the City of Tacoma. No person shall stop, stand or park a vehicle with its side next to or adjacent to another vehicle which is stopped, standing or parked on a street, or alley, except while angle parking (RCW 46.61.570)—violation may result in a traffic violation fine by the City of Tacoma.**

##### 12.4.1 Pedestrians

Students who walk home are to follow instructions given by the attending teacher. Students are to use marked crosswalks consistently. Safety procedures will be reviewed at school periodically.

##### 12.4.2 Car Pools

It is vital to the safety of our students that proper carpool procedures be followed at all times. **(Please see diagram on back cover)**.

#### A. Morning Drop-off

- a. Cars enter the morning drop-off area by way of Lawrence Street. Cars pull forward to the first three spaces before releasing their riders. Cars exit by way of the alley and proceed either north or south (*see map on back cover*).
- b. **Please do not drop your students off in any other area of the school site.**

#### B. Parents who need to come into the school office before school may park along Lawrence Street or in front of the school when the gates are closed.

#### C. Afternoon Pick-up

- a. All students are to be picked up from the carpool area unless special circumstances warrant an exception. A waiver explaining the special need is required by the school's insurance carrier, and must be on file in the school office each year.
- b. Parents who need to come into the school office after school are asked to park along Lawrence Street or in front of the school.

#### D. Carpool Waivers: In order for a student to be picked up anywhere other than carpool (or in Extended Care), the school office must have a waiver from the child(ren)'s parent/guardian on

file. If you want your child to wait for you somewhere other than the playground or to pick your child up from somewhere other than the playground, you will need to complete and return a waiver that releases the school from any responsibility in ensuring that your child(ren) is picked up by the correct person and that you accept responsibility for any injury or accident that may happen. School-time volunteers are asked to park in any available space on the Lawrence Street side of the school.

#### 12.4.3 Field Trip Vehicles

When dropping students off from a field trip, park in any available space, bring your group of students into the building, and check them into the office.

#### 12.5 Vacations Taken During School Times

Vacations taken when school is in session, extending Christmas or Spring Break on either end, additional days taken for a long weekend, or day trips to local attractions are highly discouraged because there is no way to make up for missed instruction. No amount of textbook assignments, worksheets, or independent reading can replace personal instruction. Please take these issues into close consideration when planning vacations. When a family does take a vacation while school is in session, the principal and teacher must be notified in advance. Each teacher has a policy for how assignments given during vacations will be made up.

### 13 Emergency Information

Please notify the school office of any change of address, phone numbers (home and work) and emergency contacts as soon as possible so that all information is current. If a parent/ guardian leaves a student in the care of another person while out of town, emergency information must be sent to the attention of the school's administrative assistant before departure.

#### 13.1 School Emergency Closure

If an Emergency Closure takes place at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy (for snow, earthquake, etc.), students will be released according to instructions received from parents/ guardians on their Registration Application under Emergency Contact Information. Students will be supervised until all are released.

*Visitation Catholic STEM Academy has a lockdown procedure in place. On rare occasions, the school has implemented lockdown procedures in response to events that might put students or personnel at risk. **In the event of a lockdown, parents should not telephone the school or their children. Please listen to the news media for information. If a lockdown occurs that extends into the end of the day, we will do our best to get information to parents. After a lockdown occurs, the school will always send information home detailing the incident.***

#### **Lockdown**

In the event of an emergency that requires the school to be locked down for security purposes, the following procedures will be followed:

- The signal will be three short rings of the school bell that will be repeated once
- Principal, or designated person, will announce "This is a lockdown" over the intercom

- Front office staff will lock the front door
- Teachers will lock their classroom doors and instruct students to sit quietly in closet (if classroom has one) away from all windows or doors.
- If students are in transit in the hallway, teachers will bring students into the nearest classroom and follow procedures above.
- If students are on the playground or in the lunchroom, they will be instructed to go to their classrooms with teachers following procedures above.
- If students are in the bathroom, they should go to the nearest classroom. Teachers with students other than their own can call the child's classroom to let the teacher know their whereabouts.
- If students are in the Upper Hall, the teacher will be called on the phone and asked to shut and lock the doors to the Upper Hall until told otherwise.
- Staff without a specific work space should divide themselves among classrooms to assist the teachers, as directed.
- Teachers and staff should refrain from using building telephone/communication devices unless absolutely necessary. Teachers and staff are encouraged to text or use email communications only if absolutely needed for emergency updates.
- The "lockdown" will continue in place until the principal, or designated person in his/her absence, announces otherwise. When the drill is over, principal or designated person will announce that the lockdown is over.

## 13.2 Inclement Weather/Emergency Schedule

### 13.2.1 Weather

We will be following Tacoma Public Schools District for all weather related delays or closures. Please check the news stations for school delays and closure updates. We will also update the school's Facebook page with any school closures or delays. You can follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/VisitationCatholicStemAcademy>. If we have late start (10:00 AM Start) please be aware that there is NO Morning Extended Care. Lunch will be served but it may not be what was stated on the monthly menu. All parents are to remain with your student(s) until school doors are unlocked. (This signals enough teachers present to supervise children adequately.) As always, if you do not feel comfortable driving, please keep yourselves home and safe!

**Icy Weather:** When extreme temperatures keep ice on the ground, the carpool area may be closed. Please find a place to park your vehicle on the streets around the school. Before School: Please walk your student(s) into the building. After School: Come into the building and pick up your student(s) from the classroom (anytime after 3:00).

### 13.2.2 Earthquake

Parents should not telephone the school or attempt to enter any school building after an earthquake occurs. Parents should listen to the radio for information. The school has an earthquake plan in place. A copy of the plan is available for review with the principal. In the event of an earthquake, students will be dismissed from the southeast section of the school grounds to the parent/guardian or designee as indicated on the *Emergency Closure Form*.

## Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Handbook: Signature Page

The provisions in the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Family Handbook are designed to provide parents and students information and guidance as to the procedures and rules of the school. The provisions in the handbook are not a contract and impose no obligation on the school. The contents of the handbook may be changed as necessary at the school's discretion, and if changed, written notification will be provided to parents and students.

**Please return this form to school office.**

Parent Agreement

I/We \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

have read the material in the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Handbook and agree to follow and uphold the school policies while my son/daughter is enrolled as a student.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Administration reserves the right to alter, amend, modify, change, or terminate any of the policies in the handbook and will notify parents of changes.

**Failure to return the above form does not waive the responsibility for the contents of the 2019-20 Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Family Handbook.**

**If we do not receive your "Signature Page" we will assume that your signature on your tuition enrollment contract will demonstrate your agreement.**

