



VisitationCatholic
STEM ACADEMY

VISITATION CATHOLIC STEM ACADEMY

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2021-2022

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy was founded so that every member of our community could form a relationship with Christ. Visitation is guided by the virtues of Mary and the Catholic faith. In partnership with families and the parish, we inspire a diverse community of learners to follow Christ, pursue understanding, and transform the world in a STEM-integrated, project-based environment.



Visitation Catholic STEM Academy
3306 S 58th St
Tacoma, WA 98409
visitationstemacademy.org



This family Handbook is your primary reference for information about Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. We ask that each family read and discuss it as is appropriate for each student's level of understanding. 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 send in the Receipt and Acknowledgement Form.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

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

DIRECTORIES

2021-2022 SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF

Principal	Marc Nuno	nunom@visitationschool.net
Bookkeeper	Heather Luifau	luifauh@visitationschool.net
Administrative Assistant	Kelli Bostwick	bostwickk@visitationschool.net
Pre-Kindergarten 3	Stephanie Johnson	johnsons@visitationschool.net
Pre-Kindergarten 4	Laura Price	pricel@visitationschool.net
Pre-Kindergarten Aide	Josefa Torres	torresj@visitationschool.net
Pre-Kindergarten Aide	Arly Moreno	morenoa@visitationschool.net
Kindergarten	Madeline Butterfield	butterfieldm@visitationschool.net
Grade 1	Kara Muller	mullerk@visitationschool.net
Grade 2	Jalen Penn	pennj@visitationschool.net
Grade 3	Karalyn Meyers	meyersk@visitationschool.net
Grade 4	Melissa Missall	missallm@visitationschool.net
Grade 5	Melissa Missall	missallm@visitationschool.net
Grade 6	Bethany Hojnowski	hojnowskib@visitationschool.net
Grade 7	Bethany Hojnowski	hojnowskib@visitationschool.net
Grade 8	Beth Hemphill	hemphillb@visitationschool.net
PE/Library/STEM Teacher	Kevin Kealy	kealyk@visitationschool.net
Head Custodian	Binh Dang	not available
Kitchen Manager	Cecilia Tun	tunc@visitationschool.net
Extended Care	Allie Zeeb	zeeba@visitationschool.net
Recess/Aide	Jim Vaughn	vaughnj@visitationschool.net

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Pastoral leader	Fr Tuan	frtuan@msn.com
Deacon	Dcn Mike Teskey	deaconmike@visitationchurch.org
PAA	Jeannine Wargo	admin@visitationchurch.org
Choir Director	Erica Minneman	erica@visitationchurch.org
Faith Formation	Rebecca Braun	rebecca@visitationchurch.org
Communications	Kathy McSperitt	bulletin@visitationchurch.org

SCHOOL PARENTS CLUB/ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

Head Auction Co-Chair	Lindsay Isaacson	isaacsonl@visitationschool.net
Head Auction Co-Chair	Tara Sitienei	tsitienei@gmail.com

SCHOOL LOCATION

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is a Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade Catholic elementary school. It is located at 3306 S 58th St in Tacoma, WA.

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

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

ROOT BELIEFS

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

1. We believe in One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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.

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.

2. Every human is a unique creation of God.

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 to visit 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)

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.

3. God created us to be a diverse community of faith.

This is a root belief of our community because we have students of many races, cultures and ethnicities and all are important and celebrated.

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 [Lumen Fidei](#), 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.

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](#))

4. God is in all things.

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.

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.

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.

5. Catholic education forms the human soul.

This is a root belief of our community because we should be attracted to the highest things that yearn in our souls.

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.

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.

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 and 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.

HISTORY OF VISITATION

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.

ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

The ministries of the Archdiocese of Seattle continue the work of evangelization to encounter Christ, who calls and sends missionary disciples, and who himself provides lifelong formation and nourishment in the Church.

OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

In the spirit of communion, solidarity, and subsidiarity, the Office for Catholic Schools provides high quality professional development, resources, and best practices to expand the evangelizing mission of our Church as we help one another form the school leaders God has designed for our time.

VISITATION PARISH

We are a Roman, Catholic community located in South Tacoma, grounded in Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition in unity with the Pope and the Magisterium. We are a vibrant, alive parish that lives and believes St. Paul's message of One body but Many parts. Our parishioners have great ownership of our ministries so come join Mother Church in South Tacoma.

VISITATION CATHOLIC STEM ACADEMY

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy was founded so that every member of our community could form a relationship with Christ. Visitation is guided by the virtues of Mary and the Catholic faith. In partnership with families and the parish, we inspire a diverse community of learners to follow Christ, pursue understanding, and transform the world in a STEM-integrated, project-based environment.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy admits students of any race, sex, sexual orientation, faith traditions, color, national and ethnic origin, and disability to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, color, national and ethnic origin, age or disability in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Although we do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, color, national or ethnic origin, it remains our primary purpose and mission to serve Catholic members of the parish. Under some circumstances, medically justifiable limitations may be placed on the admission/retention of students with infectious diseases and/or life threatening illnesses. Likewise, limitations may be placed on the admission/retention of students whose needs the school is unable to meet. Decisions regarding admission/retention of these students is decided on a case-by-case basis by the principal or his/her designee.

ACCREDITATION

WESTERN CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is accredited by the Western Catholic Education Association. Accreditation is just one way of ensuring that the school meets acceptable environmental standards, has a valid school improvement plan, and is engaged in an on-going self-study and on-site peer evaluation process.

COMMUNITY COVENANT

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy's community strives to be a covenant community. The teachers and staff at VCSA are committed to work in partnership with all families to live out the parent/student/teacher covenant to build a respectful and loving faith community.

Covenant implies a **sacred relationship**. The parent-student-teacher covenants help us all remember that through good times and tough times we have a commitment to each other to walk a journey of faith, trust, respect, and hope, guided by the Lord.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHER'S COVENANT

Each teacher at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy accepts the responsibility of cooperating with parents in the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual education of their children. Each teacher further commits that his/her mission is to educate children and to form Disciples of Christ consistent with the mission and teachings of the Church. Therefore, teachers at VCSA agree to:

- be a Christian role model and maintain an atmosphere which ensures each student's right to an education and personal growth.
- be respectful to the parents of their students, work towards developing good communication with them, and continue to build a trusting relationship;
- provide appropriate and challenging academic instruction;
- embrace the diversity of their students and build bridges between all cultures;
- set clear standards for behavior and be fair and consistent in discipline; and

CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENT'S COVENANT

As a student at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, I am blessed to be given the opportunity to be educated spiritually and academically. Each student understands his/her parents have made this choice out of their love and concern for them. Therefore, students will:

- behave in a respectful manner toward all school and parish personnel, volunteers, and visitors.
- respect all students and treat each one with care regardless of race, gender, or other differences.
- obey all rules.
- respect school property and the personal property of other students.
- display proper manners and show common courtesy at all times.
- assume responsibility for all their actions and not make excuses.
- always do their classwork and homework without excuses or disrespect.
- be on time, ready to learn, and give their best effort.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT'S COVENANT

As the primary educator of their child, parents understand that they teach their child best by their own example of reverence, responsibility, and respect. Parents chose Visitation to assist them in forming their child as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and understand and acknowledge that their own conduct and the example they set for their child can impact whether their child is allowed to remain enrolled in

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. Parents understand that their child's teacher is a dedicated professional who chooses to teach in a Catholic school. Therefore, parents will:

- be a Christian role model by regularly attending Sunday Mass with their children, if they are Catholic.
- promote respectful behavior in their child by setting a good example in their own speech and behavior.
- show respect for the school personnel, volunteers and visitors and teach their child to do the same.
- practice confidentiality and use appropriate communication to solve differences in a peaceful manner.
- follow the policies and procedures of the Visitation Catholic School Handbook.
- accept and embrace the diversity at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.
- respect the privacy of the faculty, staff, students, and their families.
- not consume smoke or vape prescribed cannabis products on school grounds, school transportation and/or at school activities and events.
- set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
 1. Gets to bed early on school nights
 2. Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
 3. Is dressed according to the school dress code
 4. Completes assignments on time
 5. Has lunch money or nutritional cold lunch every day
- actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences
- notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers
- meet all financial obligations to the school
- inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health

GENERAL INFORMATION

It is understood that Visitation Catholic STEM Academy exists to support the parents in their role as the primary educator of their children in the Catholic faith and to educate those parish children whose families are committed to the Catholic faith and a Catholic education. It is also understood that much of a child's faith formation and moral foundation comes from their experiences at home. All parents and legal guardians are expected to respect and support the Church's teachings and moral authority as administered through the pastoral leader of their Catholic parish.

All parents and guardians must also be aware of their obligation to model Christ and the Church's teachings, and that their own conduct can impact whether a student is admitted or remains enrolled, at the discretion of Visitation. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy reserves the right to dismiss any student, or to deny reenrollment to any student who, in the sole judgment of the principal, is not making satisfactory progress, has engaged in conduct which is detrimental to the school, or whose parent has engaged in conduct which is detrimental to the school.

Prior to entry, attendance or transfer to a Catholic pre-school through high school in the Archdiocese of Seattle, students must present proof of having had the immunizations as required by Washington State law.

Every student enrolled in a Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Seattle shall be immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Washington State Department of Health Services. The only exception to the foregoing requirements for students in our Catholic schools is a medical exemption signed by a licensed professional (M.D., N.D., D.O., ARNP, or PA) authorized to practice in the State of Washington, including the physician's license number. Failure to obtain required immunizations prior to admission or to maintain required immunizations during enrollment may result in a denial of attendance.

1. Applications and registrations will be considered on the following priority basis:
 - a. Current students presently enrolled at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.
 - b. Students of families who have children presently enrolled in the school.
 - c. Students of families who are registered, supporting and active in Visitation Parish.
 - d. Students of families who are registered in and supporting other Catholic parishes with first priority given to parish-subsidized families.
 - e. Baptized Catholics who are not covered by the above qualifications.
 - f. Non-Catholic students.
2. As openings occur for each grade level, students will be admitted and/or placed on a waiting list.
3. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy admits qualified students of any race, sex, sexual orientation, color, national and ethnic origin, and disability and makes no distinction among such students in the administration of its educational policies and scholarships. Students possessing physical or emotional disabilities will not be denied admission solely by reason of the disability.
4. Final admission of students is dependent upon the results of an interview with the principal and review of current school records and entrance exam results.
5. The completion of application forms, the approval of a tuition contract, a determination of available space, and a finding that the school has the ability to meet the needs of the individual student are also required.

6. A child must be 5 years of age for kindergarten and 4 years old for pre-kindergarten by August 31st immediately preceding the school year for which the student seeks to enroll. There are no exceptions made to this requirement.
7. A copy of a Baptismal certificate (if Roman Catholic), birth certificate, and immunization form **MUST** be submitted by all new students before school begins.
8. All new students are accepted on a probationary basis. (Please refer to policy on Academic Trial Period). Students must meet and maintain academic standards and expectations.
9. Registration will begin each year during Catholic Schools' Week at the end of January.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students who are not permanent residents of the United States will be admitted in accordance with the requirements of the United States Department of State and/or the United States Department of Homeland Security. Any foreign student who is not a permanent resident of the United States who desires to enroll in Visitation Catholic STEM Academy must have complete legal documentation required by the United States government in order to do so.

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Students with special needs shall be given the same consideration as all applicants. However, prior to admitting a student with diagnosed learning differences, Visitation Catholic STEM Academy shall make a determination as to whether it can provide an appropriate education for that child in light of the school's resources and staff/support capacity. Each child will be considered on an individual basis.

VCSA will consider:

1. the severity and degree of the disability;
2. the level of support needed from special services and any special equipment or related services the student may require;
3. the school's resources, such as available support personnel, class size, and accessibility of school facilities;
4. the accommodations, if any are necessary, and the school's ability to provide those accommodations;
5. the child's Student Support Plan (SSP) if one exists, and/or the school's ability to meet a current IEP or behavioral plan; and
6. Any other considerations that may apply to the particular situation.

Parents and/or the public school district in which the student resides shall be responsible for any additional special education services that a student may require.

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy will accept any child for whom an appropriate program can be designed and implemented. Each child is to be considered for admission based upon his/her emotional, academic, and physical needs; the school's ability to support the student in adhering to all health/medical requirements; and the resources available to the school in meeting those needs. Visitation determines continued enrollment based on these factors.

There is a limit to what schools have the capacity to do. However, Visitation will not discriminate against otherwise qualified individuals on the basis of disability if, with reasonable accommodations, school staff can assist a student in meeting the requirements of the school program.

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy honors the following procedures in trying to serve students with special needs:

Phase 1: Identification – Identification of the specific area of concern(s), documentation of concern, consultation with the student’s family.

Phase 2: Assessment – Comprehensive assessment through the local public school or through private, professional consultants.

Phase 3: Planning and Placement – Determining the most appropriate and affirming long-term educational plan for the student. A modified plan would be created to match the needs of each individual student with on-going communication and assessment.

****For the complete procedural plans for serving students with special needs, please contact the school office.**

ADMISSION FOR RE-REGISTRATION

Students who are enrolled for the current year may be re-registered for the next school year through the following process:

1. Parents must return the intent form, stating their desire to re-enroll. If this form is not returned to the school office by the designated date, the student may be removed from the class list for the next school year.
2. After review of the family’s current tuition contract/covenant compliance a contract/covenant for the next school year will be offered provided that all current contract/covenant obligations have been met. This review will include current tuition payments, fundraising obligation, current active parish status (including but not limited to financial responsibility, participation in parish life, and current service hours recorded) and health/medical compliance. The registration fee is non-refundable and due with the tuition contract.
3. Non-compliance could result in a change of tuition contract status.

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

In the event students are withdrawn from school, parents are asked to follow this procedure:

1. Notify Visitation of the withdrawal via a note to the school office with a copy sent to the principal.
2. All financial obligations must be met before a student’s education records will be released.
3. Student’s records will be sent at the request of the student’s new school

WITHDRAWL REGARDING FINANCIAL MATTERS

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy enters into covenants or contracts with faculty and staff and incurs financial obligations for the entire school year. In order for Visitation to meet these financial obligations, when a student is enrolled, the parent/guardian assumes the obligation to pay the tuition/fees in full.

In order to receive a full refund of tuition paid, the parent/guardian must advise the principal by July 31st, if the student will be withdrawing. The registration fee is non-refundable under any circumstances.

- If a student is withdrawn by the first day of school, 95% of the tuition is refundable.
- If a student is withdrawn between the first day of school and the end of the first trimester, 50% of the tuition is refundable.

- If a student is withdrawn after the end of the first trimester, 100% of the tuition is owed.

Extenuating circumstances regarding the withdrawal of a student will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

The school reserves the right, if any tuition payment is past due, to remove the student(s) from the school. The school has the further right to refuse re-enrollment for the following school year until financial commitments have been met. No transcripts of grades or school records of any child enrolled in the school shall be provided without prior payment of tuition due to the school.

PRINCIPAL PRIVILEGE

The Principal interprets and reserves the right to amend or adjust the handbook after consultation with and approval from the pastoral leader. Parents will be notified of any changes in the handbook through the school newsletter.

RESPECT OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Care of school property portrays a sense of pride and also strong school spirit. For this reason, all students will treat school property with care and respect. This includes being respectful of restrooms and classrooms and all that they contain.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The principal and/or his/her designee may search student desks, lockers, and personal belongings, including, but not limited to, handbags, briefcases, purses, backpacks, clothing and other items in a student's possession. The local police, using drug detecting dogs, may be invited into the school on a random basis to search lockers as a proactive, preventative measure.

USE OF STUDENT INFORMATION AND PICTURES

The School reserves the right to use student pictures (or video) in publications and on the school's website. Student names will not be published with pictures or video. A parent who does not wish his/her child's picture used must notify the principal in writing prior to the beginning of the school year.

USE OF SCHOOL/PARISH GROUNDS

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy grounds are not supervised outside of school hours or school events. Please respect the dedicated space and usage of the covered play area, field, and play zones during active school hours.

SCHOOL/HOME RELATIONSHIPS

Visitation believes that education is a partnership between home and school. If, in the opinion of the administration, parent behavior seriously interferes with the teaching/learning process and the Christian community, Visitation may require parents to withdraw their children and sever their relationship with the school.

TUITION

General Information

1. The School Commission, in consultation with the principal and pastoral leader, is responsible for setting the non-refundable registration fees as well as tuition rates.
2. All tuition contract/covenant obligations for the prior year must be paid in full to insure a student's registration for the following school year. Tuition contract obligations for eighth graders must be paid before graduation. All report cards, mid-term reports, and school records, including eighth grade diplomas, will be withheld until all fees are current. If special arrangements are necessary, please contact the principal.

Tuition Goals

1. To try our best to make Catholic School education affordable to all who truly desire and value it for their children.
2. To foster a trusting, community relationship between the parish, the school, and the Catholic family.
3. To generate funds so the school has a solid financial base that can more effectively improve programs and services.

VCSA Tuition Rates

1. In-Parish Tuition Rate
 - a. A Visitation In-Parish family is one who is registered in the parish prior to school registration.
 - i. If relocating to this area from another Catholic school, a letter from the former parish expressing active parish family status would be acceptable.
 - ii. If coming from another parish that does not have a school, a letter from the pastoral leader expressing active parish status would be acceptable.
 - b. A Visitation In-Parish family is one who is participating in the sacramental life of the parish by regularly attending Mass and supporting parish activities.
2. Monitoring of the Visitation In-Parish Tuition Rate Privilege
 - a. A Catholic family receives the gift of the “In-Parish” rate provided the criteria of being parishioners as stated in the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Admissions and Enrollment policies and included in the registration materials is met. These criteria do not in any way stand in judgment of a person’s depth or quality of faith, but rather as objective ways of establishing a person’s commitment to Visitation Parish. So that each parent/guardian might be treated equally and fairly, the most objective means of monitoring parishioner status is through the financial giving records kept by the parish.
 - b. Each year, the School Commission will establish the actual cost of educating a student at Visitation School and apply the gift of the parish subsidy to determine the “In-Parish” rates for Catholic students.

- c. For returning students, family financial obligations will be assessed each spring. Catholic families receiving the “In Parish” rate may be moved to “Catholic Out-of-Parish” rate for failure to live up to the requirements of the tuition contract and the Family Handbook. This decision is made by the pastoral leader in accordance with the principal.
3. Non-Catholic Tuition Rate
- a. A non-Catholic student is one who has not been baptized into the Catholic Church and does not receive in-parish tuition.

TUITION PAYMENT OPTIONS

Recognizing that payment of school tuition is a requirement of each family and that the need to maintain a continuous and consistent cash flow is essential to the well-managed school, the following policy applies to tuition payments:

- A. Tuition is due on or before the day agreed on in each contract monthly. Should a situation arise that a payment will be late, the parent is responsible for notifying the school principal or bookkeeper as soon as possible. In the event that a family fails to pay tuition on time, the school principal will initiate the following procedures:
 - a. If at the end of **thirty (30) days** the tuition account is not current, the parent will be notified by bill or phone call of the past due amount. A late fee of \$25 will be added to the total tuition balance, and additional late fees of \$25 each month will continue to be added until the account is current. Report cards/student records will be withheld.
 - b. If at the end of **forty-five (45) days** the past due condition continues to exist, the parent will be notified by the Principal that the account must be brought current. 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.
 - c. If at the end of **sixty (60) days** the account has not been brought current, the family will be advised that school services may be discontinued. The family also will not be allowed to register for the following year unless their account is resolved.
- B. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy reserves the right, if any tuition payment is past due, to remove the student(s) from the school. The school has the further right to refuse re-enrollment for the following school year until financial commitments have been met. Re-enrollment in the current year or enrollment for the following year will not be accepted until tuition and fees are paid in full. The school will withhold all report cards, mid-term reports, and school records, including eighth grade diplomas until all financial obligations are met. Additionally, families who have past due tuition are not eligible for tuition assistance.
- C. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy offers multiple tuition options to school families:
 - a. Tuition paid in full by August 5th, entitling you to a 2% discount
 - b. 2 equal payments (August, January)
 - c. 10-12 equal payments monthly
- D. Families that are experiencing financial difficulties should contact the principal immediately.
- E. **All tuition payments will be made through FACTS Management Company.** 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. The FACTS plan is extremely flexible and can be adjusted by a call from the school.

- F. No charitable (goods or services) contribution shall be accepted in consideration of a student's enrollment at Visitation.

TUITION CONTRACTS or COVENANTS

1. Each family signs a tuition covenant/contract, agreeing to the rights and responsibilities each has to promote the common good of the Christian community in accord with Catholic teachings, traditions and tenets as directed by the principal and pastoral leader at Visitation. Volunteer hours, participation in major fundraisers, supporting the parish, and participation in sacramental life are key elements to the partnership between the school and each family. Questions or concerns about the tuition contract should be addressed to the principal or school bookkeeper.
2. The person who signs the tuition covenant/contract is the person who will be held financially responsible for all obligations. Any modifications occurring with the tuition contract/covenant must occur in writing and have the approval of the principal.
3. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known regarding divorced or separated parents or custody arrangements.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

Fulcrum Foundation Tuition Assistance

The Fulcrum Tuition Assistance Grant program is designed for families and students currently enrolled or applying for the next school year in any Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Seattle. A family must apply each year through FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment to qualify for a grant. All awards are made based on financial need.

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Financial Aid

Local financial assistance can be requested by any current school family. However, families must first apply for the annual Archdiocese of Seattle Tuition Assistance Grant funded by the Fulcrum Foundation (See above). At the same time, an application for the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Financial Aid will be filled out through FACTS. There is a \$24 non-refundable fee to apply. The confidential form is processed by the school administration and awardees are based on financial need only. Each new school year, the applicant must reapply for the Fulcrum Tuition Assistance Grant and Visitation Catholic STEM Academy financial aid. Any special circumstances will be handled confidentially by the principal and pastoral leader.

The principal will determine the process and amount of tuition assistance based on specific criteria. VCSA families who belong to Visitation Parish receive first consideration for assistance. Families will receive notification from the principal regarding their tuition assistance award.

Some neighboring parishes give financial assistance to their registered families. Families are expected to complete a Tuition Assistance Application from their parish and submit it to their pastoral leader for

his signature. When it is signed, it should be returned to the school along with the completed contract/covenant.

Emergency Financial Aid

Life status changes occur and Visitation Catholic STEM Academy tries to respond to the situation. If a current school family has experienced a life status change, the family may ask for an emergency scholarship request. If any funds are available, the principal will work with the pastoral leader to assess the need and respond accordingly.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

New Student Registration Fees:

1. Families of new students must pay a \$175 registration fee per family to secure the student's placement at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. All registration fees are non-refundable. This registration fee is due at time of contracting.
2. Registration begins the first Monday of February for new families.
3. All new students are required to take part in an assessment to determine if they are eligible to attend Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

Re-Registration Fees:

Re-registration is held each year in January on the first Monday of Catholic Schools Week for families currently enrolled at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. The registration process is complete when the school has received:

1. Tuition Assistance applications if applying.
2. Tuition Contract along with the \$175 registration fee.
3. Emergency information forms that have been completed in full.
4. Records: Baptismal and birth certificates, immunization, health records, and transcripts from any previous school.

Building Fees:

Beyond registration and tuition, there are several additional fees that may be charged:

1. 6th Grade Camp Fee—for full details please refer to 6th Grade Camp Policy.
2. Field Trips—Prices vary due to field trip destination and costs.

FUNDRAISING

Each school family will be required to participate in fund raising.

Scrip

1. One fundraiser at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is the selling of SCRIP or gift cards. For complete details and ideas to make SCRIP sales successful, please contact the SCRIP chairpersons. **Statement of liability/ waiver:** The School assumes permission to send/receive financial statements and actual SCRIP directly home with the students. Parents who prefer not to participate in the delivery process of SCRIP at Visitation must communicate in writing to the SCRIP Chairperson that they will relieve the school of the burden of delivery of SCRIP and establish an appropriate system for their family.

2. All scrip order forms are sent home via email with the weekly note home and are available on our website. SCRIP is available to purchase through paper forms or online. All orders are processed on Monday morning by 9am. SCRIP orders are filled on Fridays.
3. Per the tuition contract, families are obligated to either participate in the SCRIP program, or can choose to buy-out for a fee of \$150.

Auction

The auction is Visitation Catholic STEM Academy's largest fundraiser. It is an annual dinner gala with a silent and live auction dedicated to support the full mission of the school and is held each year. The Auction Committee and a team of volunteers work throughout the year to create a special evening celebrating and financing the gift of Catholic education.

Per the tuition contract, families are obligated to donate, "procure" items for the auction, or they can buy out for a fee of \$200. Buy-out money is used by the Visitation Auction Committee to purchase quality items for the auction. If donating or procuring items, the items need to make \$200 or more at the auction for families to receive their full credit. Families will be responsible for the remainder of the balance if items are sold for under \$200.

Annual Fund

Every family is encouraged to financially support the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy's Annual Fund, which helps with the current and future viability of the school.

SERVICE HOURS

As part of the tuition contract or covenant, each family is responsible for finding, recording, and tracking their service hours during the school year. The annual commitment hour requirement is 30 hours for a two-parent family and 15 hours for a single-parent family. 5 of these hours must be auction-related. Failure to fulfill the annual commitment hour requirement will result in an assessment charge of \$25 per hour and \$50 per hour for auction hours. Families may choose to buy out of their required service hours at time of contracting for a fee of \$875.

It is the parent's responsibility to find opportunities to serve the school or parish. Families are encouraged to document their hours on the monthly school calendar and submit the calendar at the end of the month for recording purposes. There are also volunteer hour forms available by request in the school office. A periodic update of recorded hours is sent to all families through the school year.

How can I fulfill my service hour commitment? Any service supporting the good works of the school and parish are counted as volunteer hours. Ideas include, but are not limited to: room parents, working in the classroom, take home projects, Visitation's auction, gardening or cleaning around the grounds, serving on a commission, driving and chaperoning on field trips, attending the monthly PTO meetings and MORE!

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy exists to teach the message of Jesus Christ to its students. The curriculum taught at Visitation meets Archdiocesan requirements for textbooks, materials, and time allotments for subject areas. Visitation's curriculum is cross-referenced with Common Core Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and Washington State's Essential Learning Requirements, so that it meets or exceeds current national and state standards. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is fully accredited through the **Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA)**. A copy of the accreditation study and report is available on the Visitation website and/or school office.

CURRICULUM

1. The Archdiocesan curriculum guidelines are consistent with the Archdiocese of Seattle Religion Standards, State of Washington learning requirements, and the National Common Core Curriculum State Standards subject areas. We strive to offer a program which makes use of many sources of reading material, a wide variety of audio-visual and technology tools, and a multi-text approach to the content areas. Textbooks are approved by the Archdiocese of Seattle.
2. Our STEM curriculum integrates real-life applications of science, technology, engineering, and math through experiential hands-on learning. Students develop 21st-century skills such as problem solving, collaboration, and communication, in this interdisciplinary and applied approach to education. STEM integrates all core disciplines (reading, writing, social studies, religion, science, technology, engineering & math) into a cohesive learning paradigm which will spark curiosity and prepare students for future career paths in not only math and science but all other fields of study.
3. Our Curriculum Resources at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is as follows:
 - a. PK3, Creative Curriculum
 - b. STEM classes grades PK4-5th, Project Lead the Way
 - c. STEM classes grades 6th-8th, Stanford NGSS Curriculum and Assessment
 - d. Math and English/Language Arts grades PK4-8th, Engage NY
 - e. Religion grades 1st-8th, Blessed Are We Curriculum

Instruction

The instructional program at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy continually strives toward implementing the best and most appropriate teaching practices. These practices include: circulating, direct instruction, coaching, guided practice, presenting, modeling, problem-based learning, hands-on experience, use of technology, incorporating learning centers, writing process/workshops, employing close reading, text and evidence questions and answers, teacher directed questions and answers, high level questioning, discussion, and observing.

Religion

The school is committed to promoting Gospel values in every aspect of school life. Besides daily instruction in the Catholic faith, Visitation Catholic STEM Academy emphasizes daily prayer, frequent and regular worship, service projects and outreach, training and preparation for the

sacraments, and Catholic Social Justice teaching. This is inclusive of the mutual respect of teachers, staff, students, and parents, and the implementation of school policies and programs, which are just.

Parents are the primary educators for the faith of their children. The school's role is to support families in this critical aspect of parenting. Families are encouraged to be active participants in their respective faith communities by regular attendance at Mass and by sharing their time, talent, and treasure. Sunday or Saturday Vigil Mass attendance is expected of all Catholic families. Friday or daily Mass is not a substitute for Sunday or Saturday Vigil Mass attendance.

Non-Catholic Students are expected to participate in school religious experiences and to attend religion classes which are assessed as academic subjects. Non-Catholic students shall be considered an integral member of the student body, expected and required to participate in all aspects of the school program.

1. Non-Catholic students are required to attend and participate in religion classes. Teachers will be sensitive to the student's ability to understand and be respectful of his/her personal religious convictions.
2. Non-Catholic students shall be required to be present for Mass and other religious services. They are not required to actively participate in such services, but are invited and encouraged to do so to the extent they desire. In accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, non-Catholic students are not permitted to receive communion or other sacraments.

Religion Class - Religion is taught regularly as part of the school curriculum, using the Standards approved by the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Seattle, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Sacrament of Penance - Opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Penance are made available to the students throughout the school year. This is not meant to take the place of the students receiving this Sacrament on their own or with their families.

Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living - The school will offer ongoing formation in chaste living, using an approved text, as part of Catholic moral formation, as required by the WCEA's Catholic Identity accreditation standards, and by standards published by the USCCB (2008): Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living.”

Community Service - Each student and class takes part in Christian service activities throughout the year.

ACRE Test - The elementary religion curriculum will be evaluated by a uniform means of assessment, including national assessments, with oversight by the Office for Catholic Schools. Students in grades 5 (level 1) and 8 (level 2) will take the ACRE (Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education) assessment offered by the **National Catholic Educational Association** (NCEA) in the month of April. The school will receive a group report for each ACRE leveled assessment used in the school.

Mass – Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is foremost a Catholic School. We are committed to the spiritual development of our students. In pursuit of this goal, the school community gathers weekly for the celebration of the Eucharist. The school Mass is not a substitute for the obligation of each Catholic to attend Sunday Mass.

Prayer - In order to foster the habit of daily prayer in our lives, the school day begins and ends with prayer. Students are each encouraged to use these and other opportunities to ask forgiveness, give thanks, and praise and recall God's blessings.

Academic Subjects

English Language Arts - The English/language arts curriculum is aligned with the Common Core State Standards for all grade levels. Students are taught a variety of skills and strategies in learning to read, including decoding, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary development. Writing classes are based developmentally on the fundamentals of grammar, usage, spelling, and mechanics, as well as writing a variety of forms for different audiences and different purposes, including argument writing, informative/explanatory writing, and narrative writing.

Mathematics - The math curriculum is aligned with the Common Core State Standards for all grade levels. The program emphasizes individual student abilities, and students can be placed in higher-level math classes. The math program also emphasizes basic math facts, hands-on activities, and an online visual-spatial technology program for grades K-5.

Social Studies/History - In social studies, PK through 3rd grade students learn about communities, geography, and map skills. In 4th and 7th grade the focus is Washington State history. In 5th and 8th grade the focus is United States history and geography. In 6th grade the focus is world history.

Science - STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) activities that include engineering design are infused into our whole school curriculum. Science is taught at all grade levels incorporating the Next Generation Science Standards and the content domains of physical, life and earth/space sciences.

Physical Education - Physical education is aligned with the Washington State standards. Students work on coordination, movement, and physical activities. The 6th through 8th grade curriculum also includes team-based activities.

Technology - Students are introduced to major operating systems that may include Windows, IOS/Apple, and Google. Technology components include keyboarding, documentation, visual presentations, and other curriculum-aligned projects.

Students are preparing for a world in which technology literacy is an important part of their future educational and vocational careers. Technology allows students to develop their learning styles and explore more creative ways to demonstrate their mastery of skills, concepts, and information. Technology is a tool by which teachers can reach each student at his or her own level, pace, and interest to enhance their lifelong learning process. This is an integral part of the educational program at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

Students accept the responsibilities and guidelines outlined in the agreements they sign each year for the use of all VCSA electronic devices. Any damage to any electronic device through improper use will be the responsibility of the student and their parent. Internet access is available to students for educational purposes only. Visitation staff has taken precautions to restrict access to inappropriate information and students are not to use the internet without a teacher present.

Library Skills – All students visit the school library once per week and kindergarten through 8th grade students are given the opportunity to check out books to read for growth in reading and academic skills, as well as for enjoyment. Students are taught strategies for locating information, selecting and evaluating both paper and electronic resources, and extracting information from those resources.

Art - Art instruction takes place in PK through 5th grade and is connected to subject areas, liturgical seasons and holidays, and is facilitated by the classroom teacher.

Assessment

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy teachers use a variety of methods and types of assessments to monitor and ensure student learning. Students are assessed informally through observing, listening, asking questions, discussion, and requiring written responses to ensure the students understand a concept or skill. Students are also assessed through formal assessment, which include, but are not limited to portfolios, written tests, oral tests, performance tasks, and projects. Progress reports are sent home to parents in the middle of each trimester and report cards are sent home three times a year. Students in grades 2 through 8 take the Measures of Academic Progress (**MAP**) standardized tests. The data the school collects from these tests and classroom assessments is then disaggregated and is used to help inform instruction and curriculum.

LIBRARY

Mission Statement

The Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Library exists to help develop reading skills; to encourage recreational reading; to help familiarize students with the world around them, both present and past; to enhance the curriculum taught in the classrooms; and to promote a life-long love of reading.

Philosophy Statement

The school library staff is committed to providing highly responsive service to the entire school community. The staff strives to inform, enrich, and empower every member of the school community by providing access to high-quality, appealing, timely, authoritative, and reputable materials in a variety of genres for a variety of age levels. The library staff acquires, organizes, and provides a variety of children's literature; Catholic resources; other relevant library materials; and serves the entire school community with caring and expert assistance. All students are encouraged to visit the library regularly and often so that they may enjoy and benefit from these materials.

Responsibility Policy

It is a **privilege** for students to use this facility and its materials. With this privilege come the following **responsibilities**:

1. **Students are responsible** for knowing what books they have checked out and for knowing where those books are at all times.
2. **Students are responsible** for taking proper care of library books and for returning them on time.

3. **Students are responsible** for learning and demonstrating proper library etiquette at all times in order to maintain a quiet, studious atmosphere.

Overdue Notices: Overdue notices will be sent home periodically throughout the year. The notices are a reminder to the student and his/her parent to return the book(s) for others to use.

Final Overdue Notices: In May, as the library prepares to close for the year and take inventory, the final due date will be announced; all books will be due; and final overdue notices will be sent. If books are not returned by the final due date, a replacement cost will be incurred.

Damaged Library Books: Students whose books are returned damaged beyond what would be considered “normal wear and tear” will incur a fine in an amount commensurate with the extent and type of damage. If the damage is so extensive that the book is no longer fit for circulation, the amount of the fine will be the replacement cost of the book.

Lost Library Books: If a student believes he/she has lost a library book, the library staff should be notified as soon as possible. If the book is still lost when the library prepares to close for the year, the student/parent will be billed for the replacement cost of the book.

Questions, Comments, Concerns: If you have a question, comment, or concern about our materials, service, or library in general, please submit it to the school Librarian. The librarian and the school administration will meet with you to respond to your concern, and the pastoral leader will make all final decisions regarding materials available for the students.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned by the teacher to enrich the curriculum. They are a privilege afforded to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements.

Teachers will notify families in advance of these trips. **All students must bring the required permission slip form in advance of the field trip day.** Phone calls will not be accepted in place of the written form. Only students currently enrolled at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy are allowed to participate in field trips. Parents who volunteer for field trips must find childcare for their children not enrolled at Visitation.

If necessary, fees will be collected from school families to pay for the cost of the field trip and the transportation. School uniforms are to be worn on field trips unless otherwise indicated by the principal.

In accordance with Washington state law, the following requirements must be met for all field trips and other school-sponsored events involving vehicles that are privately owned and driven:

1. The driver must be at least 21 years old
2. The driver must submit to a background check and show no felony, DUI, or reckless driving convictions
3. The vehicle must be insured by the driver for the minimum limits required by the Archdiocese’s insurance company
4. Effective January 1, 2020
 - children under age 2 must be properly secured in a rear-facing car seat,
 - Children ages 2-4 must be properly secured in a car seat with a harness which may be either rear facing or forward facing,

- Children ages 4 and older and less than 4'9" tall must be secured in a booster seat with seat belt (or continue in harness seat).
- Children over height 4'9" must be secured by a properly fitted seat belt (typically starting at 8-12 years old).
- Children under age 13 are required to ride in the back seat when practical to do so.

RCW 46.61.687 says a child must remain in a booster "until the vehicle lap and shoulder seat belts fit properly, typically when the child is between the ages of eight and twelve years of age, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, or must be properly secured with the motor vehicle's safety belt properly adjusted and fastened around the child's body."

For children under 2 years old, they must remain in rear-facing car seats until they reach the height and weight specifications set by the seat manufacturer.

Children not enrolled in the school shall not accompany the class field trip.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

The Outdoor Education Program at CYO Camp Hamilton is a part of the 6th grade curriculum at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy School and attendance and participation in camp and camp activities are strongly advised. The outdoor education program is in direct alignment with Washington State Educational Standards and the Archdiocese of Seattle religion standards. Camp Hamilton is owned by the Archdiocese of Seattle and is operated in accordance with values and morals uplifted by the Catholic Church. Students attending camp will practice academic risk-taking skills through critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and working cooperatively in addition to participating in the liturgical celebration of the Mass.

Attending Camp Hamilton is strongly encouraged. If a student misses camp the student's family must make arrangements for the student not to be at school during camp week.

Payment for this important educational experience is the responsibility of the parents of 6th grade children. There is an option for parent-run fundraisers if 6th grade parents choose to organize and execute fundraisers. Payment for camp must be paid to Visitation Catholic STEM Academy in full before a student is allowed to attend camp.

Adult chaperones are needed for the successful implementation of camp activities and events. Any interested chaperone must fill out a camp chaperone application. Only current 6th grade parents, guardians, or grandparents can be selected as a parent chaperone. Chaperones must be over 21 years old and must abide by the rules set forth by Visitation Catholic STEM Academy and Camp Hamilton; these include cell phone and other electronic device usage which are not allowed. All chaperones must have completed the Archdiocesan Safe Environment training. The 6th grade science teacher and the administration will make the final determination on the selection of parent chaperones. In addition, all 6th grade parents must attend a mandatory camp meeting which will outline important information and expectations of camp policies and procedures for both the student and chaperones.

STUDENT SERVICE HOURS

As part of our mission to help the students understand their role in the larger community and to develop in them a sense of service and responsibility, students in 7th and 8th grades will be required to perform 15 hours of community service per year. Service is giving of one's time to help someone who is less fortunate. Hours may be earned in parish, school, or community service beyond the school day. The service is required to be completed and recorded by the middle of May. The students will record their

hours and have them signed by an adult. Failure to complete the hours may result in a religion grade reduction in the third trimester.

HOMEWORK

The Visitation Catholic STEM Academy faculty is committed to assigning homework that is authentic and relates to the learning concepts that are taught in the classroom. Homework assignments are considered an extension of classroom work and are a means of reinforcement and, with few exceptions, can be completed by the student on his or her own. Studying for tests and quizzes are also an essential part of the homework process. Much can be accomplished if parents help foster systematic home study habits in their children and provide adequate study space, lighting, and a proper environment free from distraction.

Pre-Kindergarten

Homework assigned to Pre-Kindergarten students is under the discretion of the Pre-Kindergarten teacher and there is no specific amount of time for this grade.

Kindergarten and First Grade

Each child is responsible for daily homework from Monday through Thursday. The average length of the daily homework assignments is approximately 20 – 30 minutes.

Second and Third Grade

Each child is responsible for daily homework from Monday through Thursday. The average length of the daily homework assignments is approximately 30 – 45 minutes.

Fourth and Fifth Grade

Each child is responsible for daily homework from Monday through Thursday. The average length of the daily homework assignments is approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

Middle School – Sixth Through Eighth Grade

Each child is responsible for daily homework from Monday through Thursday. The average length of the daily homework assignments is approximately one hour to one and one-half hours.

Additional Homework Notes

1. If a student consistently spends more time than is recommended in real studying (without television and other distractions), the teacher should be notified, and adjustments will be considered.
2. Various assignments and long-term projects may involve homework on the weekends. The teacher will monitor the progress of long-term projects.
3. Middle school students (Grades 6th – 8th) may periodically expect homework on the weekends and it may be to a student's advantage to complete assignments outside of the school week.

Late Work

In Pre K - 8th grade, the late work policy is under the discretion of the teacher.

Make-Up Work

When a student is absent from school due to an illness, he/she will be given the same number of days he or she was absent to complete and turn in missing work. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for all make-up work. Parents may call the office to pick up work if the student has been absent for more than one full school day.

GRADING

Students in the primary grades (PreK-5) are assessed using a grading scale based on meeting the academic standards for their grade level. Students in grades 6-8 are assessed on a hybrid-letter grade system that is aligned with the academic standards of their grade level. Students' effort and personal development are also assessed. A modified academic plan may be established if a student has specific academic needs. This academic plan would be prearranged between the teacher and the principal in conjunction with parents.

GRADING SCALE FOR GRADES Pre K - 5:

- 4 Consistently exceeds expectations
- 3 Displays full understanding of concept with few mistakes
- 2 Meets some expectations at grade level, experiencing difficulties
- 1 Meets few or no expectations at grade level, needs extensive support

GRADING SCALE FOR GRADES 6 - 8:

A	95 – 100%	C+	80-82 %
A-	92 – 94%	C	77-79 %
B+	89 – 91 %	C-	74-76 %
B	86 – 88%	D	68-73 %
B-	83-85 %	F	67-50 %

If there is any discrepancy with a grade, parents may send a written inquiry to the school within one week of the issuance of the grade.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Frequent communication between home and school is encouraged regarding your child's academic progress. Progress reports are not part of a child's permanent school record. At a minimum these reports are sent home mid-trimester in each of the three trimesters. 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 contact teachers with any questions and/or concerns. Appointments should be made with the teacher, and a meeting should never be attempted during class hours, carpool, or recess periods.

REPORT CARDS

Trimester report cards are issued at the end of each 12-week term. We encourage parents to discuss these reports with their child and to work cooperatively with teachers in their efforts to help each student develop to his or her potential. Report cards are not intended to provide a complete evaluation of a child's progress. They are tools of assessment that are used to measure a student's achievement, effort, and performance. A conference may be scheduled when needed to give a more complete view of a child's overall progress.

PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT CONFERENCES

Mandatory Parent-Teacher-Student conferences will be scheduled for each family in the middle of the fall and winter grading periods. The purpose of these conferences is to provide an up-to-date and personal evaluation of the students' work and progress and to discuss with parents the ways to assist their children. Conferences also give parents opportunity to ask questions and to become informed of school activities. The conferences are student-centered; each student is an active participant and all students in grades 1-8 are expected to attend. Attendance of Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students is up to the discretion of their teachers. Registering for conferences is done online.

Additionally, conferences may be requested at any time by parents or teachers. To schedule a conference, please email your child's teacher.

RETENTION

If the teacher feels that another year in the same grade would be beneficial for the student he/she may be retained in that grade. If retention is being considered by the teacher; parents will be notified by February conferences, with a final decision regarding the retention being made by mid-May. A parent may call and ask the classroom teacher and/or administrator to discuss retention at any time.

If a middle school student (Gr. 6-8) does not pass two out of three trimesters in a core subject, he or she is in jeopardy of not passing to the next grade level or not graduating from Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. In all cases, the final decision rests with the principal.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Probation may occur if a student is not meeting the academic requirements of his/her particular grade, or if there is continuing serious academic deficiency. A student can be placed on academic probation by the principal in consultation with the teachers. The principal will determine the length of the probation period. If there is no improvement during the probation period, the student may be asked to withdraw from Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

ACADEMIC PROMOTION

Students are promoted from one grade to the next once a year based on the student's satisfactory completion of the grade requirements. Final decisions regarding the promotion of a student is the sole responsibility of the principal.

ACADEMIC TRIAL PERIOD

All students who are newly enrolled in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 8th at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy are admitted on a six-week trial basis. Parents/guardians will be notified of their child's progress through regularly scheduled progress reports, report cards, and at parent/student/teacher conferences. At the end of the trial period, parents/guardians will be notified if an extension is necessary.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The responsibility for having necessary school supplies belongs to each family. A supply list is sent home in June and is available on the website.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks should be kept in the best possible condition, as they are on loan to the students. The student is expected to pay for the loss or damage done to any textbook.

TUTORING

Teachers may tutor a student for profit in a subject, if they are not responsible for teaching the student in that particular subject. Class time may not be used for any private lesson or practices.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

We are committed to the development of a Christian community wherein all members, adults and children, are encouraged and supported in their growth toward fullness in the person of Christ. In an effort to make this growth a reality, the faculty and staff are dedicated to building an atmosphere conducive to this Christian development. At times, this requires positive encouragement and building of self-esteem. At other times, it demands assisting an individual or group to re-direct energies toward growth.

Purpose of discipline at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy

1. To provide an environment of Christian community, wherein growth and development of the person is made possible, stimulated, and encouraged.
2. To provide an opportunity for the student to practice Christian ideals and attitudes.
3. To assist students in the development of self-discipline, courtesy, and respect.
4. To provide an atmosphere conducive to learning, wherein no one student or group of students deprives others of their right to learn.
5. To promote respect and care within the student for himself/herself, for others in the school, and for members of society.

Appropriate behavior is defined as following three basic rules:

1. We respect self and others.
2. We respect and care for school and personal property.
3. We observe playground boundaries, lunchroom, library, and school safety rules.

Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment in any form is prohibited at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. All school personnel exercise pastoral leader care in the discipline of a student and will follow carefully articulated discipline procedures.

Disciplinary Actions

When methods of positive reinforcement, motivation, and conferencing with students have not proved successful, or when seriously disruptive conduct has taken place, other actions may be necessary; some of which are defined below. Since building a Christian community demands that each individual be given the opportunity for personal growth, infringement of these rights will result in disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Policies

To be successful, it is imperative that all students follow school policy and guidelines. School rules governing conduct and discipline are to be interpreted to ensure an optimum learning atmosphere and create a climate in which each student has the maximum opportunity to learn.

The following are in addition to the rules covered in the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Handbook.

Basic school-wide rules:

1. Students are to comply with every faculty and staff directive at all times.
2. Students are to use an appropriate voice when speaking.
3. Students are to keep hands, feet, and other body parts to themselves.
4. Students are to speak respectfully to others (no profanity or name-calling).

DISCIPLINE REGULATIONS

The rules of a school, governing all conduct and discipline, are in-place to insure an optimum learning atmosphere in the classroom. “Optimum learning atmosphere” shall be defined as the climate in which each student has the maximum opportunity to learn. Conduct of students that interferes with that climate should be kept at an absolute minimum as determined by the classroom teacher. Students are to comply with rules established for the governing of the school.

The principal reserves the right to waive and/or deviate from any and all disciplinary regulations for just cause at their discretion.

A student who engages in conduct detrimental to the school’s reputation, whether on or off school grounds, can be subject to suspension or expulsion.

Time-Out or Processing

After classroom warnings have been given, the student will receive a time-out or processing in another classroom. Students are to enter the assigned classroom in silence, sit as directed, and complete the required processing form. Processing in each classroom may vary slightly. Parent signatures are required on all processing forms.

Failure to complete form in an appropriate manner or if the form is not returned, a lunch detention will result. Being processed twice in one week will also result in a lunch detention.

Behavioral Contracts

A student is placed on a behavioral contract when there is a persistent issue with conduct. The school administration will determine when a student is placed on a behavioral contract. A written contract is drawn up by the school and presented to the student and the student’s parents at a conference. The behavioral contract will state specific areas where growth is needed and will provide specific directions in terms of negative and positive reinforcement.

Detention

After School Detention

After school detention will be held from 3:10 PM – 3:40 PM for K-4th grade and 3:10 PM to 4:00 PM for 5th through 8th grade students. Students receiving after school detention are required to call home when the parent-signed detention slip is not returned. Teachers will escort students to the designated detention room. Students must fulfill their detention time before they can participate in an after-school club.

After school detention may result from, but is not limited to, the following:

- Gum chewing/spitting

- Inappropriate language
- Inappropriate Mass behavior
- Harassment
- Fighting (includes play fighting)
- Cell phone use (phone will be confiscated)
- Serious offenses (such as those requiring a referral to the principal's office)

Suspension

In-School Suspension

Multiple infractions for behavioral reasons in a trimester will result in an in-school suspension and the implementation of a behavior contract. The student will not be allowed to return to class until a conference is held with the parents, student, teacher(s), and principal. Extreme or serious behaviors can result in an immediate suspension. Persistent and serious offenders may be asked to withdraw from Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

Out-of-School Suspension

A student is expected to conduct himself/herself in a manner that is consistent with the Catholic faith. At the sole discretion of school leadership, a student may be placed on suspension for serious misconduct that is deemed to be detrimental to the school or the school's reputation on or off campus, during a school or parish sponsored activity, that happens off school grounds, or for continued misconduct after being placed on probation. A student may be suspended for a single serious offense, repeated infractions of the rules, or for the repeated disregard of the general good of the school.

A student may be removed from the school building for a period of time (generally not to exceed 10 school days) pending an investigation of the circumstances and a conference with the student, parents or guardian, teacher(s), and principal. A second suspension for the same or similar infractions may cause the student to be expelled. A psychological evaluation including a risk assessment of the student may be required as part of the documentation steps of a suspension, probation, or expulsion case.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the most drastic course of action for repeated or serious violations of school rules. Expulsion is a serious process and follows the steps outlined under suspension unless the seriousness of the circumstances necessitates immediate action. In cases of expulsions, parents and/or students have the right to request an appeal. The information for due process is available to those concerned in the Archdiocesan Policy Handbook. This handbook is kept on file for reference in the school office.

Due Process

The principal has the right, if necessary, to exclude a student from all school activities during the time of due process. If a student has been expelled from the school, the parents/guardians may request a hearing from the school. If a hearing is requested, the school must be notified within five school days after the parents/guardians have received notification of the student's required expulsion. If a reply is not received within this five-day period, the hearing is waived and the expulsion from Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is final.

If a hearing is requested, it is held within five school days of receiving such a request. The hearing

committee will consist of the pastoral leader or his designee, the principal, and a designated teacher. The final decision of the hearing committee will be submitted to the parents/guardians within five days of the hearing. The decision of the hearing committee is final.

HARRASSMENT/BULLYING

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, as part of the greater Catholic Archdiocese, is committed to a positive and productive community environment free of harassment and bullying. It is the explicit policy of Visitation to prohibit harassment, bullying, or intimidation whether committed by a student, staff member, volunteer, and/or parent. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy will promptly respond to allegations of harassment and bullying and take each allegation seriously. Visitation will review and investigate such matters in a professional and timely manner.

1. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is committed to an environment that is free of harassment and bullying whether intentional or not, while in school/parish buildings or on school/parish property, or when being transported to and from school-sponsored activities. In addition, online harassment via email or social media will not be tolerated.
2. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy prohibits retaliation against any student, staff member, volunteer, and/or parent who has testified, assisted, or participated in the investigation report. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or adverse pressure.

Conflict

Conflict is defined as a disagreement between two students or a group of students. The results of a conflict can often lead to an argument; however, conflicts are a natural, everyday occurrence between children. Through conflict, children learn to exercise self-control and establish boundaries.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as any intentional electronic, verbal, physical, visual, or written act including, but not limited to, one shown to be motivated by a person's perceived race, ethnicity, genetic information, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates, when the electronic, verbal, physical, visual, or written act:

- (A) Physically harms a student or damages the student's property;
- (B) has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
- (C) is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- (D) has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school and that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment.

Descriptive Terms

1. Verbal Harassment: Includes, but is not limited to, harassment involving derogatory comments, jokes or slurs; belligerent or threatening words between individuals; offensive, negative remarks.

2. Physical Harassment: Includes, but is not limited to, harassment involving unwanted deliberate touching, pinching, punching, kicking, bruising, or patting.
3. Visual Harassment: Includes, but is not limited to, harassment involving derogatory, demeaning or inflammatory pictures, posters, cartoons, written words, drawings, novelties, computer-generated images and memes, and both body and facial gestures.
4. Sexual Harassment: Means harassment that includes, but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact, sexually suggestive remarks, gestures or jokes, or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature if:
 - (A) Submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining an education or employment;
 - (B) Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's education or employment; or
 - (C) That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's educational or work performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.
5. Online Harassment: Includes, but is not limited to harassment involving emailing, texting, tweeting, or posting indecent and/or demeaning writings, cartoons, memes, or pictures via social media.

Uncivil or unkind behavior towards others that does not meet the above standards for harassment may still subject a student to disciplinary action.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. **The behavior is repeated over a period of time.**

There are three types of bullying:

1. Verbal bullying involves saying or writing mean things.
2. Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships.
3. Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes but not limited to devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, tweets, chat, and websites.

All allegations of harassment and bullying will be taken seriously and promptly investigated. Reports of harassment and bullying should be made immediately to faculty, staff, and/or the principal. Once an allegation of harassment and or bullying has been reported, the principal, under the discretion of the Pastoral leader, will adhere to Archdiocesan policy and follow through on the investigation of the allegation.

Uncivil or unkind behavior towards others that does not meet the above standards for bullying may still subject a student to disciplinary action.

Threats

Any threat by a student to inflict harm to self or others will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. Threats should be reported to the principal or lead teacher, who will decide if police support or notification is needed. The police will be notified about threats when it is deemed necessary. If a student has been threatened, the principal or lead teacher shall notify the student's parents/guardians promptly.

Any student who makes an intentional verbal or physical threat to cause a person's death, or who makes a threat about guns or explosive devices, will be suspended or expelled and the police will be notified.

Retaliation/False Allegations

Retaliation is prohibited and will result in appropriate discipline. It is a violation to threaten or harm someone for reporting harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or to threaten or harm someone who participates in an investigation of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. It is also a violation of school rules to knowingly report false allegations of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Individuals will not be disciplined for making a report in good faith, even if the report is found not to be substantiated. However, persons found to knowingly report or corroborate false allegations will be subject to appropriate discipline.

VIOLENT BEHAVIORS

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy strives to maintain a safe, respectful, Christian environment. Violence of any nature will not be tolerated. Violence can manifest itself in various ways. Major offenses may warrant an immediate conference and the implementation of suspension, required withdrawal, or expulsion. These actions may result from any serious or chronic conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school.

Aggressive or Reckless Behavior

Aggressive or reckless behavior which jeopardizes the health, safety, or welfare of the student, other students, the greater community, or staff members will be subject to disciplinary action.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

The use and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or drugs is prohibited by law to minors. In addition, the following regulations shall be applicable to students of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy while they are in school, on and off school grounds, or at school-sponsored events.

1. The selling, possession, distribution of and/or social media or other reference to alcoholic beverages, drug paraphernalia, controlled substances including marijuana, or any substance considered to be such, is a major violation. Students who knowingly do so will receive a long-term suspension or expulsion. Legal authorities may be notified. Controlled substances include, but are not limited to, narcotics, amphetamines, marijuana, hallucinogens, barbiturates, and prescription or non-prescription drugs of any nature whatsoever. In order to return to school students will be required to state where and how they obtained the drug or alcohol.
2. Students under the influence of any alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, including marijuana, or other illegal substances considered to be such will receive a long-term suspension or expulsion. Legal authorities may be notified. In order to return to school, students will be

required to state where and how they obtained the drug or alcohol and may be required to obtain a drug/alcohol assessment and follow any recommendations.

Any medication a student requires during the school day must be kept in the health room or school office (as discussed further below) and administered by school personnel, a parent, or a parent-designated adult consistent with written authorization from the licensed health care professional. Students will not be permitted to consume prescribed cannabis products on school grounds, school transportation, and/or at school activities.

Assault or Intentionally Causing Physical Injury

A student shall not intentionally cause or attempt to cause physical injury or intentionally behave in such a way as could injure another person. Any student involved in fighting, play fighting, or promoting fighting shall be subject to disciplinary action. A conference with the parents may be requested, and a student may be suspended or expelled for fighting. Fighting may constitute a crime and be reported to law enforcement.

Hitting, biting, or kicking another student, whether intentionally or during play, is not tolerated. Students who engage in this type of behavior will receive an in-school suspension. For severe cases, parents will be called, and the student must go home.

Criminal or Gang-Like Activity

Criminal or gang-like activity or membership in a criminal street gang is not permitted. Criminal street gang is defined as any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of one or more criminal acts. Criminal / gang-like activity shall not be tolerated on school/parish grounds or at any school/parish - sponsored activity. Students shall not wear/display explicit gang-like symbols or display gang-like symbols. Violation may result in expulsion, suspension, and/or other appropriate disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the principal.

Cheating

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy strongly stresses that doing one's best work is more important than the grade; however, if a student is cheating on a test, quiz or any assignment, or forges a signature on any test, note, or report, the person cheating will receive a failing grade on the test or assignment, and any person facilitating the cheating will also receive a failing grade on the test, quiz, or assignment. An additional behavioral consequence will also be administered to all parties that are involved in the cheating incident. Cheating in any form is clearly dishonest and unacceptable.

Such cheating may include:

1. leaving books or notebooks open during a test period, unless students are instructed by the teacher to do so
2. writing answers on desk tops, clothing, or on hands, legs, arms and other parts of the body
3. looking on another's test paper
4. copying another student's assignment and/or homework
5. talking with another student during a test period
6. writing down answers copied from others when tests are handed in

7. talking with students from previous class periods in order to get test information
8. using or attempting to retrieve digital information from a cell phone or similar device and then accessing such material during an exam, quiz or test
9. handing in a paper for credit which has already been graded in another class, without the approval of the teacher

Disturbances

It is against the rules to willfully create a disturbance on school premises during school hours or at school activities or meetings. It is also against the rules to repeatedly create a disruption of the learning environment in the classroom.

False Fire Alarms and Fire

Any student involved with activating a false fire alarm is subject to disciplinary action by both school and legal authorities. Under the law, false fire alarms are misdemeanors subject to a maximum fine of \$250.00.

Arson is a felony. Any student who sets a fire on school premises will be subject to discipline and referred to law enforcement for a potential charge of arson or reckless burning. Igniting matches, lighters, or other similar devices is prohibited. A student who engages in this behavior will be suspended or expelled.

Forgery

The forging of a signature of a parent, guardian, staff member, or another student on any letter, note, or report to the school or on any school document where a parent signature is required will result in a disciplinary action.

Gambling

Gambling on school/parish grounds is illegal and not allowed.

Hazing

Hazing in any form or of any type is not allowed at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy and can result in suspension or expulsion from school.

Insubordination

Any student who is insubordinate or defies the authority of any school personnel or parent volunteer is subject to disciplinary consequences.

Leaving School Grounds without Permission

Any Visitation Catholic STEM Academy student who leaves the school grounds without permission from the school will receive a suspension or expulsion for his or her actions.

Plagiarism

Students should not plagiarize (or use as their own, without citing the original creator) content, including words or images, from any source, including the Internet. Students should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.

Students who use plagiarized material will be subject to a reduction in grades and disciplinary consequences.

Profanity

Swearing, profanity, vulgarity, or obscenity by any person on school/parish grounds or during school-sponsored activities will not be tolerated. Students engaging in such conduct will be subject to discipline. Students are likewise not allowed to play videos, music, or other recordings that contain profanity, vulgarity, or obscenity.

Respect of Property

All students are expected to respect and care for all property of the school. Any student or students found damaging, defacing, or destroying school property will be required to pay for the damage or loss. Willful destruction or defacement of school property at any time is cause for suspension or expulsion. Student grades and transcripts will be withheld until all costs from damages have been paid.

Smoking

Cigarette smoking, e-cigarettes used for vaping, JUULing (jeweling), and other similar conduct by students will not be tolerated at any time on the school/parish premises or at school-sponsored activities or on school transportation. Students caught smoking will receive a suspension and or expulsion for their actions.

Theft

Any student involved in a theft may be suspended from a single class or from a full schedule of classes for a period of up to ten (10) school days with possible loss of credits for a trimester. The student will be required to replace or pay for the stolen item(s). Proper legal authorities may be contacted.

SEARCHING STUDENT'S BELONGINGS

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy has the right to search anything that a student brings onto the school campus. In addition, the school has the right to search backpacks and/or lockers at any time.

WEAPONS

It is unlawful for any person to carry onto school grounds or facilities a firearm or dangerous weapon as defined by RCW 9.41.250 and RCW 9.41.280. **Students carrying a knife, firearm, ammunition,**

and/or an explosive device onto school/parish premises, at school/parish sponsored activities, on school provided transportation, or in areas of facilities while being used for school purposes will result in expulsion. Police will be notified.

The law provides an allowance for licensed persons to possess firearms within 1000 feet of a school, and state law allows those licensed to carry a concealed pistol to possess a firearm on school grounds while picking up or dropping off a student. However, loaded firearms will not be allowed inside school facilities except for security and law enforcement personnel.

Any object used to intimidate, threaten, or causes bodily harm will be considered a weapon. If the principal determines that an object falls into the category of dangerous weapons that require expulsion, he or she shall promptly notify law enforcement and the student's parent or guardian regarding any allegation or indication of such a violation. Any knife used to threaten, intimidate or injure is treated as a dangerous weapon. Likewise, a facsimile of any weapon used to threaten, intimidate or coerce will be treated as a real weapon.

Any fireworks or explosive (including, but not limited to M-80s and other high-powered fireworks) will be considered dangerous weapons capable of causing grave bodily harm. Both the police and the fire marshal will be notified in the event a student is found to be in possession of such items.

Any weapon will be confiscated and disposed of in an appropriate manner as deemed by the administration. The administration will call the police first then parents or guardians will be called.

Weapon Procedures

1. Carrying or possessing a firearm on school premises is a gross misdemeanor and the student who uses or displays a weapon may be guilty of a felony assault. Police referral for criminal charges is required.
2. Emergency expulsion shall be immediately implemented for any student who brings a firearm onto school premises, school transportation, or in facilities being used exclusively for school purposes. The student should be prohibited from coming onto school property while the principal's investigation is ongoing. The police should be asked for a copy of the police report and, if available, the police report number should be noted in the Notice of Expulsion.
3. The principal shall carry out whatever school investigation is necessary, including taking statements from witnesses. As in any case of expulsion, the accused should have an opportunity to respond to the charges before the final disposition of the case is announced.
4. If the facts support the charges, the principal will send a formal Notice of Expulsion to the student and his/her family. Again, the student should be reminded that the "no trespassing" order is in effect.
5. In cases that result in expulsion, the student has the right of appeal. The process of appeal is outlined in the school handbook. During the appeal process, the accused must honor the "no trespassing" order.
6. As specified in the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, the principal may modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.
7. These procedures shall be construed in a manner consistent with the individuals with disabilities education act, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401 et seq.

DAILY SCHEDULE

School begins promptly at 8:15am each day and dismisses at 3:00pm. Children may arrive prior to 8:00am if they are participating in school activities or riding in a carpool with students who are participating in such activities. Children should not come to school before 8:00am unless checking into before school care. Children arriving before 8:00am or staying past 3:15pm and not participating in before or after-school programs will be sent to the Extended Care program, and parents will be billed accordingly. Students are not allowed to leave the grounds without being signed out by a parent or designee once they have arrived at school.

CALENDARS

The school year calendar is sent home through the summer mailing and is available on the school's website. Monthly school calendars will be sent home via email and are available in the school office. The monthly calendar is also posted on the school's website. The school calendar is subject to change, but not without sufficient notice. Should a change be made after the school calendar is distributed, families will be notified via email and through the school's website.

ATTENDANCE

Absences

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy hours are from 8:15 AM to 3:00 PM. Students must attend school regularly and be punctual. Absences are recorded by the homeroom teacher each day. When a student is absent from school, parents must verify the absence by phoning the school office at 253-474-6424 before 8:45 AM. If there is no contact from the parents, the school will call for verification. If parents cannot be reached, persons listed on the emergency form will be contacted.

If a student is absent more than 10 days in a trimester, a parent conference will occur and an attendance contract will be established. If a student is absent 30 days or more in a school year, this will be grounds for retention, which will be handled by the principal in consultation with the student's teacher(s). Individual circumstances for the reason of the absence will be taken into consideration.

Missing school for any reason is considered an absence. Students who miss school or a class because of any absence may be provided an opportunity to make-up work. Failure to make up assignments or tests may result in an adverse effect on grades.

Tardiness

The school day starts at 8:15 AM and a student is considered tardy if he/she is not in his/her classroom at 8:15 AM. All students arriving after 8:15 AM must stop in the office and receive a tardy slip to admit them into their classroom. Children should then proceed to the classroom and enter the classroom with as little disruption as possible. Frequent tardiness is disruptive to the teacher and students in the class and can adversely affect the education of the child who is tardy.

Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical and dental appointments for times outside of the school day. See the School Calendar to note in-service days, holidays, and early dismissal times. If a student does need to leave for an appointment, parents must go to the school office to sign the student out and return to sign the student back in. If a child is gone from school for more than three hours, it is considered a one-half day absence.

Vacations

Daily attendance is an integral part of the educational experience at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. The classroom interaction between students and teacher, as well as more formal instruction, is extremely important and cannot be readily replicated. Lengthy absences may interrupt student learning. Student absences for family vacations, travel, or other reasons are highly discouraged. The school calendar is published months in advance of the following school year. Please refer to the school calendar prior to planning family vacations, and arrange trips during school breaks. Students are responsible for all work assigned during their absence.

Inclement Weather

When inclement weather makes it necessary to close the school, please be aware that Visitation will be following Tacoma Public Schools for all delays and closure updates. Parents will receive notice via but not limited to phone calls, emails, KOMO and KING websites and local TV channels, Facebook, and Twitter. The school may also utilize text messages to families regarding closure alerts. Please check for text messages and listen to early broadcasts between the hours of 6:30 AM and 8:00 AM, always looking specifically for Tacoma Public Schools or Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. Please do not send students to school until it is confirmed that the school is open. **Extended Care will not be open on late start days.**

If the weather turns hazardous during the school day, parents will be notified and are expected to pick up their children as soon as possible. All missed instructional time lost due to inclement weather and school cancellation will be made up at the discretion of the principal.

UNIFORMS

Policy

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy maintains a strong tradition of school uniforms that reflect school pride, modesty, and appropriate regard for personal appearance. Every student is expected to be in uniform every day. Failure to cooperate with the uniform policy will result in uniform infractions; 3 uniform infractions will result in the loss of a non-uniform day.

Where to Purchase

New uniforms are available through the Dennis Uniform Store at <https://www.dennisuniform.com/> and the National Customer Service phone number is 800-854-6951. Used uniforms are available through the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy PTO.

Expectations

Parents are expected to help children keep the school uniform code. At Visitation Catholic STEM Academy we wear uniforms because:

1. They represent our Catholic school image and tradition.
2. They discourage differences brought about by various income levels, thus eliminating unnecessary peer pressure and allowing the attention of the students to be directed to learning.
3. They assure that the dress standards of the school emphasize neatness.
4. They promote an image of pride both at and away from school and help create a positive climate of discipline and responsibility.
5. They are less costly to families and more easily maintained.
6. They promote an attitude of moderation and modesty.

Student Uniform Rules:

1. Students will be in uniforms that fit properly and are neat and clean.
2. Students will be in uniforms that are in good repair.
3. Uniform shirts and blouses must be worn under the school sweater or vest and are to be tucked into their pants/skirts.
4. T-shirts worn under the uniform shirt or blouse must be plain white.
5. No sweatshirts, large shirts, sweaters, jackets (other than uniform logo wear) will be worn during school time.
6. All hats are to be taken off as students enter the building.
7. Students are not allowed to write on any part of their bodies, as this creates a distraction in the classroom.
8. All students shall have a uniform sweater or vest and will wear "full uniform" on designated days. Students always wear dress uniform for Mass days, picture days, and other special events. "Full uniform" means uniform sweater or vest, a button up shirt or blouse, ties for boys and girls, and jumpers/skirts for girls as part of the uniform.

Appearance

Makeup – Makeup is not permitted for any student in any grade. Students may wear clear nail polish only. Other nail polish colors, French Manicures, and designs on nails are not allowed. Artificial fingernails are not appropriate and not allowed.

Hair - Hair must be neat, clean, with no artificial colors, and well groomed. If a student comes to school with colored hair, they will be required to have it dyed back to their natural color within a time frame designated by the school. Hairstyles or colors that draw attention to the individual are not acceptable. Hair ornaments should complement the colors of the uniform and not be distracting. Hairstyles deemed distracting by the faculty and/or the administration are not appropriate. Boys and girls are to keep their hair out of their eyes. Mohawks are not allowed.

Guideline for boys: hair to the top of the collar, off the ears, and above the eyebrows. Boys with hair longer than their collar are required to tie it back neatly, in a bun or braid. Boys must be clean-shaven.

Belts - Boys in grades 5 – 8 must wear belts with pants at all times. Belts will coordinate with uniforms: black, blue, gray or brown in color.

Blouses – White long or short sleeved blouse with Peter Pan or sports collar; white knit turtleneck pullover; long or short sleeved button front white knit with collar. All blouses and shirts must be tucked into the waistband. **Button-up shirts are required on full dress uniform days.** No logos, trim or crests are permitted.

Coats – Coats/jackets are a requirement for all students between November and April. Coats may not be worn in the classroom. They are to be hung in the coat areas except during recess or P.E.

Jewelry – Should be simple, not distracting, dangling or overly large, or of a color or style that does not compliment the uniform. **Earring guideline: earrings should be the size of a dime or smaller.** Boys may not wear earrings. No jewelry should be worn which would impact the students' safety. Hair ornaments should be of colors that complement the uniform. **No** rubber band bracelets, rubber character bracelets, character silicone bracelets or character wristbands are allowed. Wristbands that promote a charity or health awareness are fine as long as they are appropriate and have approval from the student's teacher.

Jumpers and skirts – Girls in PK - 4 wear the Lloyd plaid jumper and girls in grades 5-8 wear the Lloyd plaid skirt, both to be worn within **2 inches** of the knee and purchased at the Dennis Uniform Company. Shorts should be worn under the jumper or skirt but may not be visible. **Leggings may not be worn with the uniform.** (Girls may wear tights during cold weather.)

Pants - All pants must be a uniform-style pant. Students in grades PK -- 8 wear plain navy blue, regular navy corduroy, or cotton twill long pants, available at the Dennis Uniform Store. Pants must not have contrasting stitching or adornments, and be ankle length, straight legged, and hemmed to shoe tops. Pants must be worn snugly around the waist and may not be baggy and oversized. No cargo-type pants are allowed.

Shirts – Students in PK – 8 wear short sleeved, button front, white knit-polo shirts with collars. All shirts must be tucked into the waistband. (NO LOGOS or crests permitted.)

Ties – Lloyd plaid tie for boys, Lloyd plaid tie crossover with pearl snap for girls. Ties for all students are required on school mass days and any full dress uniform day.

Shoes – Students must wear casual or tennis shoes. They should be colors that coordinate with the uniform: black, white, blue, navy blue, brown, or gray. No print, plaid or bright neon colors. All laces must be tied for safety purposes. Velcro laces are acceptable and preferred for young students who cannot tie their own shoes. No open-toed shoes of any kind, no sandals, slippers, glitter/sequins, slippery-soled party shoes or flip flops. **No boots of any kind are allowed to be worn with the uniform with the exception of rain boots for PK students.**

Shorts – Students may wear uniform navy blue walking length shorts in cotton twill (not knit or athletic style). They may be worn from the start of school through October 31st and from April 1st to the last day of school. Shorts must be worn within 2 inches of the knee.

Socks - All students are to wear socks at all times. They should be colors that coordinate with the uniform: black, white, navy or gray. Girls may wear knee-highs, anklets or coordinated tights during cold weather. All socks should be plain without adornments, logos, or lace. Tights in the above colors are allowed (no leggings) during the winter months.

Sweaters and Vests – Uniform sweaters or vests with embroidered Visitation Catholic STEM Academy logo are a part of the full uniform. All sweaters must fit appropriately and need to be kept in good repair and replaced when needed.

T-Shirt Tuesday – Every Tuesday students may wear Viking CYO T-shirts or sweatshirts 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 can be purchased through Dennis or on the school website. Spirit wear may only be worn on Tuesdays. . If a student chooses not to participate in T-shirt Tuesday, then they may always wear their uniform top.

Miscellaneous -

No facial piercing of any kind is allowed. No visible or body tattoos are allowed. Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) or Scouting uniforms may be worn to school on days of meetings.

Fee Dress Days

Occasionally the school will announce non-uniform days. It is the parents' responsibility to send their children in appropriate attire for school. Dress on these days must be neat, modest, and appropriate for school. Students may not wear cut-offs, tank tops/spaghetti straps, mini-skirts, spandex-type fashions, sweat clothes or yoga pants, or T-shirts with sayings or designs which advertise drugs, alcohol, or any other inappropriate subject matter or sexual innuendos. Shirts, sweatshirts, and dresses must cover the shoulders. No exposure of the mid-drift is allowed. Shorts must always be of walking length. Shorts may only be worn from the start of school through October 31st and from April 1st to the last day of school. No leggings or jeggings are allowed on non-uniform days. Jeans must be in good repair and may not be ripped, have holes, or any adornments on them. Uggs and low-heeled boots are only allowed on non-uniform days.

Students who wear their Visitation Catholic STEM Academy uniform to church (Whichever church the family attends) on the 1st Saturday or Sunday of the month may wear free dress the following Monday, usually the 1st Monday of the month. A note from the students' parent must accompany the student and be given to their teacher.

The first Tuesday of every month is a free-dress day for any student who brings a can of food for the Visitation Parish Food Bank.

Three uniform infractions mean a loss of a free-dress day.

Lost and Found

All clothing and personal items should be clearly marked with the child's name. Marked clothing is returnable. Lost and found inquiries are handled through the school office. Items not claimed are donated to charity at the end of each trimester.

EDUCATIONAL RECORDS

Educational records are the property of the school, are confidential and require a written release to be forwarded.

Education records are available to parents and others as provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. 1232g and the regulations of 34 C.F.R. Part 99.

Parents may request to examine the student's permanent record folder and/or test results by contacting the principal. Please make your written request at least 5 school days before information is desired. Student addresses, telephone numbers, and class lists are also considered to be confidential. Parents are asked to promptly inform the school of any change in address, phone number, marital status, etc. A copy of any court orders impacting parental rights or custody should be provided to the school. Requests from families not to have telephone numbers given out (printed in the Family Directory) will be honored. Parents are required to indicate on the emergency form if their phone number is unlisted.

Transfer of Student Records

If a parent is registering a child in another school, Visitation Catholic STEM Academy will release the student's records upon receipt of a "Request for Records Form" from the school where the student is

enrolled or intends to enroll. The records will be sent directly to the new school, not given to parents to deliver, and all debts/fines or unfulfilled contract obligations owed to the school by the parent, must be discharged before records are forwarded.

Types of Records

1. Health cards and records of immunizations are retained by the school. Original health records are forwarded to the student's next school.
2. Permanent record cards are retained at the school. A copy of this record is forwarded to the new school at the time of transfer.
3. Sacramental records are kept in the student's official file, and recorded at the parish office where sacraments were first received, to document the sacraments of Baptism and First Holy Communion.
4. Attendance records are kept for each student. Total days absent and tardy are transferred from daily attendance rosters to the permanent record card. Detailed attendance logs are kept on file at the school for seven years.
5. Transfer of records is made at the time of an authorized request by the receiving school. All records are mailed. All tuition and other fees must be paid in full prior to transfer.
6. Disciplinary records are kept in the principal's office while a student is enrolled at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy and then destroyed. Disciplinary records are not part of the permanent record unless the student has been suspended or expelled.
7. Emergency care information for each student is kept on file in the school office. Parents are asked to update this information each fall or when necessary, during the school year, in order to ensure the safety of their children.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request an amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask Visitation Catholic STEM Academy to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of the right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without

consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.

4. A school official is a person employed by Visitation Catholic STEM Academy as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, Visitation Catholic STEM Academy discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (NOTE: FERPA requires a school to make reasonable attempt to notify the student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)
5. The right to file a complaint with the US Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Visitation Catholic STEM Academy to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office US Department of Education 600 Independence Avenue, SW Washington DC 20202-4605

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Non-Custodial Parents

The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. Non-custodial parents have the right of access to information and to unofficial copies of records unless there is a court order to the contrary on file in the school office.

Divorced or Separated Parents

Our school exists to aide parents in the education of their children. As such, the focus and advocacy of the staff will always default to the benefit of the child. We will not position ourselves between parents in disagreements over custody rights and issues. In the absence of an official court document specifying the contrary, we will communicate and facilitate relationships with all legal guardians of each student. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide any pertinent documentation that would alter this procedure

Upon registration or change in status the parent must file a court-certified copy of the current parenting plan or residential schedule with the school office at the time of registration, or change in status. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known. The person who signs the tuition contract is the person who will be held financially responsible for all obligations. Any modifications to the tuition contract must be made in writing and have the approval of the principal.

PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell Phones

Students are not to bring cell phones to school. If there is a special circumstance whereby a student needs to have their cell phone at school, the phone must not be used on school grounds and be kept in the student's backpack turned off. If there is a legitimate reason to make a phone call home, students will be assisted by a faculty or staff member to call parents using a school phone. Students who abuse the cell phone rule will have their phones confiscated and returned at the discretion of the principal.

1. Any cell phone use, including text messaging, during the school day, including after school and at Extended Care is prohibited.
2. The use of cell phones and/or cameras to take pictures in restrooms, classrooms, playground, and other school/parish facilities at any time is prohibited.
3. Any cell phone use, including text messaging, or use of cameras during a test shall be considered and treated as cheating.
4. No harassment or threatening of individuals via cell phones is permitted.
5. Cell phones may not be used for playing games, accessing the Internet or email, gambling, or making purchases of any kind.
6. If a parent needs to contact a student during the school day, such communication shall be through the school's office.

Office Phone Use

The School Office is open from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The school telephone is available for business use only. Students may use the phone in the office for emergencies and with permission only. Arrangements for after-school activities and rides home should be made outside of school time.

Electronic Devices

The use of electronic communication devices during normal school hours is prohibited; these include but are not limited to Smart Watches, electronic games, I-pods, and other hand-held games or music devices.

The use of any technology-oriented device in school must have an educational focus and purpose. If a particular electronic communication device is to be used for educational purposes (i.e. iPad or Kindle), the school administration and/or teacher will provide parameters for its use. The school retains the right to confiscate these devices if they interfere with the learning environment. The use of camera features on any electronic or communication device to take unauthorized pictures and/or videos at any time is prohibited.

The use of any electronic communication device during a test shall be considered as, and treated as cheating.

COMMUNICATION

Consistent communication between the school and home is an important component of a positive educational environment and is highly valued at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. Correspondence from the school is delivered to families in several ways including but not limited to email, telephone, and notes home. Important information such as weekly school and classroom newsletters, yearly and monthly calendars, school and parish flyers, CYO forms, and other materials may be sent via email to every family weekly. In order to be well-informed of academic and community news, it is essential that each family take time to open and read the school emails and newsletters when they arrive.

With Principal

The principal is available to meet with parents as needed. Please either call or email the principal or the school office to make an appointment. In order for the principal to be fully prepared to visit with you, it is helpful to state the topic or concern when you call.

With Faculty

If a family has a question or concern regarding their child or would like to schedule a conference, they should contact the classroom teacher directly via his or her school email or by telephone. Parents are asked to refrain from engaging teachers in informal conferences in the classroom, hallway, carpool, etc., as it is unprofessional and teachers have assigned duties during these times and must remain attentive to their students and other responsibilities. When scheduled in advance, teachers are happy to meet with parents before or after school to discuss academic progress, discipline issues, or other matters.

Parents are reminded of their responsibility to support the authority of school personnel by refraining from gossip or negative commentary in the presence of their children, and to consult the faculty or staff at the school before forming a final opinion on an incident that occurred at school. Any situation involving a child and a particular teacher should be discussed with that teacher, as well as the child. Generally, when the parent, child, and teacher come together face to face and share all sides of the story, these matters can be resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of all parties.

Electronic

Whether occurring within or outside of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, when a student's use of electronic communication, including social networking, jeopardizes the safe environment of the school, is disruptive to the school environment, or is contrary to Gospel values, the student may be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences, including expulsion.

This policy applies to communications or images sent through e-mails, blogs, text messages, social media, or website postings, whether they occur through the school's equipment or connectivity resources or through private communication, which: (1) are of a sexual nature; (2) threaten, libel, slander, malign, disparage, bully, harass, or embarrass members of the school community; or (3) cause harm to the school community.

Directory

The Visitation Catholic STEM Academy directory is provided as a courtesy for the convenience of school families and includes each student's name, grade, family members' names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. Please notify the school office of any changes as soon as possible so all information is current. Parents who do not wish to have this information published must notify the school in writing no later than the third week of each school year. It is to be understood by families requesting this omission that they will still be contacted by phone or mail by school staff and volunteers authorized to do so. The directory is updated annually in late September and available to families by request only. The Visitation Catholic STEM Academy directory is intended solely for the use of Visitation families and employees to strengthen their mutual support and the education of Visitation students, and any other use of the information in this directory is strictly forbidden.

Emails

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy provides students with email accounts for the purpose of school-related communication. These accounts should be used with care. Students are not allowed to send personal information; they should not attempt to open files or follow links from unknown or un-trusted origin; they should use appropriate language; and they should communicate with other students and/or the teacher for educational purposes only.

Students are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful, courteous conduct online as offline. Email usage may be monitored and archived. Students are not allowed to use chat features or email each other during school hours.

Social Media

Engagement in social networking and online blogs or postings shall result in disciplinary actions, including expulsion, if the content of the student's blogs or postings includes defamatory comments regarding the school, a person's dignity, bullying, harassment, threats, or other inappropriate comments that are contradictory to Catholic teaching. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy students and their parents must adhere to and sign the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Student Computer and Internet Agreement.

HEALTH CARE

Health Area

A Health Aid area is located in the school office. Office Staff will check children's temperatures, treat minor injuries, conduct health screenings, and maintain any needed student health records. All medications will be kept in the office.

Medication

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy may provide for the administration of oral medication, topical medication, eye drops, ear drops, or nasal spray to students who are in the custody of the school at the time of administration (RCW 28 A 210.260); however, Visitation must have on file a written licensed health professional authorization form to administer medication. This form must be current and unexpired. Necessary medications are provided by the parent/guardian and kept in the school office. No medication is to be kept in the classroom. Medications will be dispensed only from the original

container provided by the pharmacy. Only a designated and trained staff member(s) will administer medication.

Students at Visitation Catholic STEM Academy are not permitted to have either prescription or non-prescription medication in their possession while at school. Emergency medications shall be kept in an appropriate, easily accessible location which allows for prompt response in case of an emergency. Medication that requires injections should only be administered after training by an R.N. or M.D, written, signed and current permission from parent or guardian, and identification of staff members who may administer the medication.

1. An emergency allergy self-injector (i.e. an EpiPen), may be allowed to accompany the student throughout the school day only after it has been determined to be necessary by the school administration on a case-by-case basis. An emergency allergy self-injector (i.e. an EpiPen) may only be administered after training by an appropriate medical professional, written, signed, current permission from parent or guardian, and identification of staff members who may administer the medication.
2. Students needing to use an inhaler may carry one on their person at all times once approved by school administration and documented in the student's medication file.

Sharing of medication in any way, including both prescription and non-prescription drugs, is prohibited.

Counseling and Referrals

School support counseling is available through various local agencies such as Catholic Community Services.

If serious concerns exist, parents will be promptly notified whenever the concerns arise. Teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's health or safety is at stake. If a situation warrants, school staff may suggest the help of one of third-party services to shed additional light on some need or concern. Since we do not yet have the resources for on-site assistance, it is important that such a recommendation be acted upon as soon as possible. Our staff pledges its best effort to help you educate your child. Even then, our efforts, combined with yours, may not be enough. An outside professional, in dialog with you and the teacher, will usually net speedy results. If you have any questions at all about your child's progress or emotional well-being, give us a call sooner than later. Contact your child's teacher or administrator.

Sometimes it is necessary for the school to make a report to Child Protective Services. State law requires notification to this agency (and/or law enforcement) within 48 hours of any professional school personnel having reasonable cause to believe that a student has suffered abuse or neglect. We reserve the right to not inform the parent about this referral, depending upon the situation. CPS makes the determination on the severity and follow-up, depending upon the information available at the time and any previous record of the case. If you desire more information as to the procedure for such referrals, please contact the School Office.

REPORTING SUSPECTED SEXUAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Church personnel who have reasonable cause to believe that a child or vulnerable adult has suffered abuse or neglect shall report such incident, or cause a report to be made, to the proper law

enforcement agency or to Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) at 1-866-END-HARM (1-866-363-4276) at the first opportunity, but no later than forty-eight hours after they decide reasonable cause exists. Anyone who has knowledge of sexual abuse or misconduct by a member of the clergy, Archdiocesan employee, or volunteer is also urged to call the Archdiocesan Abuse Helpline, at 1-800-446-7762, within, or no later than, 48 hours of learning of alleged abuse. If the alleged abuse involves a teacher or principal, the Office of Professional Practices in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at 360-725-6130 must be notified by the Catholic Schools Department.

“Reasonable cause” means a situation that would motivate a person of ordinary intelligence under the circumstances to believe, based on observations or conversations that a child has been or is being abused.

Immunizations

Prior to entry, attendance or transfer to a Catholic pre-school through high school in the Archdiocese of Seattle, students must present proof of having had the immunizations as required by Washington State law.

Every student enrolled in a Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Seattle shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Washington State Department of Health Services. The only exception to the foregoing requirements for students in our Catholic schools is a medical exemption signed by a licensed professional (M.D., N.D., D.O., ARNP, or PA. authorized to practice in the State of Washington, including the physicians license number.

EMERGENCIES AND CRISIS PROCEDURES

It is important to prepare for any crisis in the best way possible. After consulting with several schools, districts, OSPI, FEMA, and local fire/police departments, Visitation Catholic STEM Academy has formulated an on-going working comprehensive plan to help ensure the safety and protection of all adults and children in our care.

If school must be closed due to any emergency during the school day, families will receive notice via text messages, email, KOMO and KING Websites, KIRO radio station, and KOMO and KING TV channels. Students will not be dismissed to walk home unless the parent calls and requests they do so and assumes all responsibility for their safety. Students will be released from school if the principal determines that it would be unsafe for children to reenter the building. Children will only be released to parents, guardians, or those authorized by parents or guardians. Your help in providing and completing accurate information on the emergency forms is essential in ensuring immediate and successful response. If the phones are working, the school personnel will attempt to notify the parents of the school closure. Some school staff will remain at the school until all children have been picked up. If the entire student body must be moved from the school premises, a designated adult will remain on the premises with instructions for parents or designated guardians.

Emergency Form

The school must have an emergency form on file for EVERY student in the school. If any information changes during the year, the office should be notified immediately. It is very **IMPORTANT** that the school be able to easily and quickly reach at least one parent or specified responsible person during the school day. If you are going to be out of town, we ask that you advise us as to what procedures to follow and who to contact if there is an emergency with your child.

General Emergencies

If a child becomes ill during the day, the teacher will send that child to the office to be evaluated and/or arrange for a parent to pick him/her up. If the child will not be returning to the classroom, a messenger will send the student's book bag/coat and schoolwork to the office. Any other dismissals must be reported to the office. If the office initiates the action, the teacher will be notified of the reasons for dismissal.

All accidents at school are reported to the school office. Serious accident victims will not be moved until emergency personnel evaluate the student. The supervising adult will remain with the student while someone else goes to the office to seek help.

1. Student illnesses--Teachers are always on alert for signs of illness of a contagious nature. Such cases are reported to the school office staff or principal. If the child has been ill and returns to school, it is important that he/she return well enough to be able to participate in normal activities, go outside for recess, etc. Children with a fever should remain at home and be fever free without the use of fever reducers for at least 24 hours before returning to school. If an unexplained rash appears, students will be sent home and asked to receive a medical evaluation before returning to school.
2. First Aid--The principal and school office staff should be notified of any student who has received a head injury at school. Any signs of concerns will be reported immediately and parents will be contacted. Any student who is observed to, or is suspected of, suffering a significant blow to the head or collides hard with another person or object, may have sustained a concussion. Any student who is suspected of having a concussion either based on the disclosure by the student, observed or reported symptoms, will be removed from activities and observed until an evaluation can be completed by a medical provider.
3. Teachers/staff will call 911 when any serious accident occurs. The school keeps records of all calls made to 911.
4. Student accidents or injuries resulting in hospitalization, emergency, or doctor's care should be reported using an accident form sent to the Archdiocesan insurance provider, within 24 hours.
5. Medications--School policy does not allow any medicines to be given to students unless there is a written authorization form from a physician and the parents (see above).

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held monthly. Ordinarily, these are unannounced and occur at different times within the schedule. Each class has an emergency backpack and first aid kit that should travel with them during times of drills.

Earthquakes

1. Instructions on what to do during an earthquake:
 - a. Remain calm and think through the consequences of any action you take.
 - b. If indoors, watch for falling plaster, bricks, light fixtures, and other objects. Watch out for high bookcases, shelves, and other furniture that might slide or topple.
 - c. If in a **CLASSROOM** you should: Get under desks or tables. Face away from windows.
 - d. **DROP**-crouch on knees, close to ground. **COVER**-Place head close to knees. **HOLD**-Clasp hands firmly behind the neck. Close eyes tightly.
 - e. Remain in place until ordered to evacuate or until the "**ALL CLEAR**" signal is given.
 - f. If in **UPPER/LOWER HALL or ASSEMBLY** areas -- (Chairs and tables may be lacking and exterior walls and roofs could collapse.) You should normally exit such facilities as quickly as possible. You should move in an organized, supervised way to designated areas and follow subsequent directions.
 - g. If in a **STAIRWAY**, during an earthquake – Interior stairways are generally structurally stable; therefore, if you are on interior stairs, you should move to the interior wall, kneel, and take a protective position as described in (C).
 - h. If **OUTDOORS** – Move to designated areas, as far away as possible from buildings, poles, wires, and other elevated objects. It is advisable to lie down or crouch low to the ground. Stay there until "**ALL CLEAR**" signal is given. A teacher or other adult employee will take charge.
2. Specific considerations in the case of earthquakes/emergencies:
 - a. Teachers are expected to stay with their class and stay at school to assist in any way until the principal has given permission to leave the grounds.
 - b. Downed power lines or objects touched by the downed power line/wires should never be touched. **All WIRES SHOULD BE TREATED AS LIVE.**
 - c. If possible, any spilled medicines, drugs, chemicals and other potentially harmful material should be cleaned up immediately following appropriate safety guidelines.
 - d. Do not eat or drink anything from open containers near shattered glass. Liquids may be strained through a clean handkerchief or cloth if danger of glass contamination exists.
 - e. Parents should not telephone the school or attempt to enter the school building after an earthquake occurs. Parents should listen to the radio for information. Parents should understand that telephone calls could only hinder emergency relief. Parents will be notified of any injuries to students as soon as emergency needs have been met. Parents may go to designated areas such as the church hall, adjacent to the school grounds, to meet their children.
 - f. Do not spread rumors. They often do great harm following emergencies.
 - g. Keep the streets clear for passage of emergency vehicles if necessary.
 - h. Be prepared for additional earthquake shocks called "**AFTERSHOCKS.**" Although most of these are smaller than the main quake, some may be large enough to cause additional damage.
 - i. Respond to request for help from police, fire fighters, civil defense, and relief organizations, but do not go into damaged areas unless your help has been requested.
 - j. Cooperate fully with Public Safety officials.

Lockdown

Lockdown is defined as a way to secure students and staff within the facility due to some emergency. Staff and students will practice lockdown procedures routinely so they can be prepared in the event of an emergency. Lockdown procedures are not meant to scare the community but to empower all members to use safety precautions at all times.

SAFETY AT SCHOOL

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy is not responsible for accidents occurring on the grounds when school is not in session. Accidents occurring due to a student's failure to follow rules, during school hours, are not the responsibility of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

Carpool Safety

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.**

It is vital to the safety of our students that proper carpool procedures be followed at all times.

1. 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
 - b. Please do not drop your students off in any other area of the school site.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 student'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 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.

Bicycles/Skateboards/Scooters/Rollerblade Safety

For security and safety, we do not advise students to utilize these modes of transportation to school. If you feel it is necessary for your student to use any of these means to get to or from school, please contact the school office or principal.

Pedestrian Safety

Students walking home are to check out with their teacher before leaving the school grounds. Pedestrians must utilize the designated walking areas and cross at crosswalks.

Touching Safety

Protecting God's Children™ program by Virtus is provided and required by the Archdiocese of Seattle, and is a part of our ongoing effort to help create and maintain a safe environment for children and to protect all children from sexual abuse. The program is taught by the religion teachers for all students in kindergarten through 8th grade. It focuses on developmentally appropriate safety rules, boundaries, recognizing risky adult behavior, and internet safety. The students are taught lessons in October and in March. This is a mandated program from the Archdiocese; however, if you would choose to have your child opt out of the program, you must sign the *Touching Safety Opt Out Form*™, available from the classroom teacher.

Financial Safety

All forms of money sent to school for school purposes should be placed in a sealed envelope and clearly labeled with the student's name, grade, teacher, purpose, and amount. Children should not bring money to school unless necessary.

BEFORE-CARE AND AFTER-CARE

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy offers a before and after school program, referred to as Visitation Extended Care. This program is located in the school cafeteria.

The primary focus of Visitation Extended Care is to provide onsite quality supervised care for Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. This is not a program intended for enrichment or extensive activities, but a place where students can be safely supervised.

Students are supervised by the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Extended Care staff. Visitation Extended Care staff have CPR and First Aid training, Safe Environment training and adhere to yearly updates, and have passed background checks. Day-to-day management of the Visitation Catholic STEM Academy Extended Care is the responsibility of the Visitation Extended Care Director, who reports to the principal.

There is a separate charge for students attending the Visitation Extended Care program. Applications for Visitation Extended Care program are available in the school office.

Policies and Procedures

Extended Care is open in the morning from 6:30AM to 8:00AM and in the afternoon from 3:15PM to 6:00PM Monday through Friday.

- Parents must sign in their student in the morning session of Extended Care. At 8:00AM, the Extended Care staff will dismiss the students to the classrooms to begin the school day.
- Students not picked up from the school by 3:10PM will be walked to Visitation Extended Care and parents will be charged a drop-in fee beginning at 3:15PM. Students who attend Extended Care on a day they are not registered to attend will also be charged the drop-in fee.
- For the afternoon session, the Extended Day staff will sign in students. Parents must sign out their child when picking up for the afternoon session. **Students are not allowed to sign themselves out.** Please park and come through the side door of the building to Extended 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.**

After school students in Extended Care will go outside (weather permitting) for recess until the supervisors take them into the building. A study hall period is required for all students in 3rd – 8th grade. However, it is not our expectation that the Extended Care personnel supervise or require the students to do homework. A snack is provided to all students in Extended Care by 4:15PM.

Students are expected to treat each other and all Extended Care assistants with respect. This program is an extension of the school day and all expectations of behavior reflect school policies. If students do not exhibit respectful behavior, they may be removed from the program after a parent conference with the principal. The Extended Care Staff will use the detention forms to notify parents of concerns.

A copy of the student’s emergency form is kept on file at Extended Care. If you are sending someone new to pick up your student, please notify us either in writing that morning, or by a phone call directly to Extended Day. The phone number used exclusively for Extended Care during Extended Care hours is (253)473-6807.

Open Times

Mornings – 6:30AM to beginning of the school day

Afternoons – End of the school day to 6:00PM

Early Dismissal Days – Noon to 6:00PM

Extended Care is open early dismissal, conferences and various other days unless otherwise noted. Extended Care is not open on federal holidays.

Extended Day is **not open** before the announced school starting time on day with a late start due to inclement weather.

Fees

Drop-in Rate AM/PM per hour	\$6.00 per child
Each additional child (Drop-in Rate)	\$3.00 per child
Afternoon only Monthly Rate 3PM-6PM	\$240.00 per child
Morning and afternoon monthly rate	\$300.00 per child
Each additional child	\$50.00 per month
Late fees – \$1.00 per student per minute after 6PM	

Extended Care bills on a monthly basis. All bills are due within 5 days of receipt. If your bill is not paid by the end of the month, your student may not attend the program until your account is paid in full. If the accounts are not current, report cards and records may be withheld.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy offers a hot lunch program for all students whose families choose to purchase lunch. Our school lunches meet all of the nutritional standards required by both state and federal lunch programs. Hot lunch may be paid for on a weekly, monthly or quarterly schedule. Lunches may also be purchased on a day to day basis. Applications for reduced/free lunches are available through the school office.

This valuable school lunch program depends greatly on parent volunteers and is an easy and fun way for parents to earn required service hours, so please consider sharing your time and talent in this area. Students who do not purchase the school lunch, can bring a sack lunch to school. Our staff encourages parents and students to pack nutritious lunches that include a healthy variety of the recommended food groups but do not include soda or candy.

Lunch Room Rules:

- Come to the cafeteria for lunch quietly and respectfully.
- There is absolutely no running in the cafeteria.
- Use a normal conversation voice, no yelling or shouting is allowed.
- Do not throw food or objects.
- Clean up after yourself.

Failure to follow these rules will result in loss of recess or after school detention.

PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOR

Rules and Behavior

Below are the guidelines to be followed at recess times. These guidelines have been set up to provide proper supervision of the students and to ensure their safety. Violation of the guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

1. Inappropriate, vulgar, or profane language is not allowed on the playground.
2. Spitting is not allowed.
3. Keep hands and feet to yourself. (Play-fighting, fighting, rough games, and contact sports are not allowed.)
4. Respect for adults is to be demonstrated.
5. Report all injuries to the playground supervisors immediately.
6. Students may not throw rocks or any projectiles at any time.
7. Students must stay within the fenced playground at all times, unless special circumstances permit the use of Berntsen Park.
8. Students may bring their own equipment out to recess, provided it is marked with their name and no one is excluded from games with personal equipment. This does not include electronic devices, which are not allowed on the playground.

Playground Equipment

Recess equipment is available for all students and should be shared with all those who wish to use it.

All posted signs need to be honored. Students are to pick up and dispose any trash prior to leaving the playground.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS

Release of Students to Another Adult

If anyone other than a parent or guardian is sent to pick up students, Visitation Catholic STEM Academy requires either written permission signed by the parents, or a phone call from the parents to the school office informing the school of the change. Students will not be released to anyone they do not recognize nor to anyone not on the emergency form. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy will check identification of anyone who is not the child's parent and who is picking up a child from school.

Release of Students to Police

Police and other government officials are required to directly deal with the principal in requesting an interview with a student. Generally, no police officer should be given access to a child without parental permission unless, (a) there is an arrest warrant, (b) the parent is the subject of an investigation of abuse or neglect, or (c) there is an ongoing situation that poses an immediate danger of causing significant harm.

If a police officer is given access to a student and no parent/guardian is available, the child should be accompanied by the Principal or Principal delegate. That individual is not there to assist the police, but to ensure that the child is being treated appropriately by the police.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental cooperation is essential for the welfare of students. If, in the opinion of the administration, parent behavior seriously interferes with the teaching/learning process, the school may require parents to withdraw their children and sever their relationship with the school.

It is expected that parents will become actively involved in their child's progression through Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. It is our hope that this will include: assisting with daily assignments for practice/drill sessions over material, reinforcing the school homework policy, actively participating in PTO, attending fall and winter conferences, as well as conferring regularly with their child's teacher. Parents may find the following guide helpful in defining specific topics they wish to discuss with the child's teacher.

1. How is my child progressing academically and socially?
2. In what areas is he/she strong? Does he/she need help?
3. What can I do at home to help my child?
4. How can I help my child build good work habits?
5. How does my child get along with other children?
6. How does my child behave in school?
7. How can I help reinforce my child's positive attitudes toward school and staff?
8. How can I show an interest in my child's progress in school without making him/her feel pressured?
9. How can I help my child gain more self-reliance, self-confidence, and self-respect?

Visitors

All classroom visitors first must sign in and be cleared at the office. This enables the school to keep track of who is in the building and is a safety measure. Adults are asked to wear a volunteer badge from the office as immediate identification to staff and students that this person has a valid reason to be in the building

Parents are asked not to go to the classrooms to deliver things to the students. These items are to be left in the office and will be delivered to the students. Please respect our students' need for uninterrupted learning time.

All visitors will enter the building through the main door of the school. Side doors are always locked and students/staff are encouraged to keep these doors closed at all times and not to open them to anyone.

Room Parents

Each grade has a team of Room Parents whose role is to assist the teacher in whatever ways she/he can. Some specific ways in which the Room Parent helps the teacher may be:

- Calling parents to help the teacher as requested.
- Arranging for classroom parties with the teacher.
- Helping the students with reading/art at a scheduled time/day depending on grade level.

Parties

Students are welcome to bring birthday treats for each student in their class. Individual cupcakes, cookies, or other small goodies are best. Please do not bring in cakes or other types of treats that take more time and need utensils. Please do not bring in beverages with the birthday treats. Birthday treats are served at lunch time under the guidance of teacher/lunch duty. Adhere to any and all allergy concerns in the class.

Party invitations are not to be handed out at school or at carpool. Invitations to parties may be distributed at school with teacher's permission as long as there is an invitation for each student in the class. If not, please send your invitations by mail or email. The school office does not distribute invitations or thank you notes. We respect and understand the financial obligations of inviting every student; however, it can be hurtful when one or two children from a class are left out. If possible, do not pick up children from carpool for parties where the whole class is not included.

The principal, at least a week prior to the day of the occasion, must approve any party for a staff member. Classroom parties will be determined at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Only Visitation Catholic STEM Academy students are allowed at classroom parties.

PICTURES

Individual and class school pictures are taken in the fall. Pictures are distributed via the classroom. Information concerning prices and packages is sent home at least one week before picture taking day. No parent is required to pay for pictures unless they choose to order them.

ANIMALS AT SCHOOL

Parents must obtain prior approval from the student’s teacher and from the principal before they are allowed to bring visiting animals to Visitation Catholic STEM Academy. If there is an allergy issue in the classroom, the animal will not be allowed at school. Service animals will be reviewed by the principal who will make the final decision concerning accommodations.

DANCE POLICY

Visitation Catholic STEM Academy does not host middle school dances outside of school hours. Visitation students attending other Catholic school middle school dances must abide by the codes of conduct set forth by Visitation and the Catholic school hosting the dance. Students will be disciplined for any behaviors that are detrimental to themselves or to the reputation of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy.

HOMESCHOOLING

The Archdiocese of Seattle Office for Catholic Schools Department does not endorse home schooling programs.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All extracurricular activities sponsored by the school or parish such as band, choir, after-school clubs, scouting, CYO sports, etc. follow the policies developed by the school and parish for participation. Students not adhering to the policies may forfeit the privilege of participating in school/parish-sponsored activities. This includes, but is not exclusive of prompt payment of fees, maintaining academic and behavioral standards, and safety and supervision requirements.

SPECIAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION (CYO)

CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) is an athletic program sponsored by the Archdiocese of Seattle. Visitation Catholic STEM Academy students may participate in the CYO Program in accordance with norms governing the Archdiocesan CYO Outdoor Ministries and Athletics program.

The CYO’s mission statement is “to provide opportunities for youth to develop strong moral character, self-worth, interpersonal competence, and a commitment to caring for others and their community through activities of a social, educational, and recreational nature based on Christian principles that reinforce societal values.”

CYO’s vision is that “With gratitude to Christ, we focus our resources and support the ministries which strongly impact the greatest number of youth, young adults and families – thus engaging them on their journey to know God and participate in the Catholic Community.”

CYO Athletics is committed to the dignity and worth of each child it serves, regardless of physical talents, mental strength, or emotional health, and hopes that the same respect for life will become a part of his or her value system. A desired outcome is that each child knows that they are wanted and loved.

Boys and girls from ages 5 through 18 of any race or national origin participate in CYO Athletic programs. Sports may include soccer, cross country, basketball, volleyball, and track.

The CYO Athletics community is organized around the parish as its center of activities, as this is a natural environment that provides a resource of volunteers and financial support necessary for the implementation of activities for youth. It is this environment that also encourages family participation in activities, as well as serving as a base of operations for coordinated programs and service projects to the greater community upon which youth can have a positive influence.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The Parent Teacher Organization is responsible for maintaining good communication between the home and the school, for providing a vehicle through which parents can provide service to the school i.e. volunteering and fund-raising, and for offering a mechanism for parent education.

Meetings are generally held on the second Tuesday of the month September through May in the school building, or over ZOOM. The dates of the meetings shall be posted on the school's monthly calendar and on the website.

SCHOOL COMMISSION

The School Commission is a consultative board that works with the principal and pastoral leader, in accordance with Archdiocesan policy, to assist in planning, policy development, finance, facilities, development and public relations, and self-evaluation of School Commission goals. The Commission serves as a consultative board to the principal and the pastoral leader in the formulation of local policies affecting the parish school. All policies adopted by the School Commission are brought to the pastoral leader for approval. Terms are staggered to maintain stability of long-range goals and directions. The School Commission handbook published by the Archdiocese of Seattle is available in the school office for checkout upon request.

CONCERNS

If you have any questions regarding the policies, procedures, or operation of Visitation Catholic STEM Academy, please contact Principal Marc Nuno by phone (253-474-6424) or email at nunom@visitationschool.net.