



Parents Guidebook

A resource from St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School parents to new parents

PTG Newcomers committee

FACEBOOK GROUP: “SFA Parents and Staff”; JOIN NOW! And “SFA Mom to Mom”

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- Jog-a-thon 9/23 rain date 9/30
- Mother/Son- 9/10???
- Tailgate 9/9? and Game for Families:9/10
- SpiritWear

OCTOBER

- ETF Benefit- Mid- Month
- Halloween Parade and Carnival- Monday, Oct. 31, 2022

NOVEMBER

- Teacher’s Gift
- Parent Night Out- Adults only
- MS Dance- 7/8th Grade Parents
- Christmas Shop - Nov. 28- Dec. 2

DECEMBER

- Mom Ornament Exchange on a Thursday night
- Staff Christmas Luncheon

JANUARY

- Catholic Schools’ Week: 1/29/2023-2/4/2023

FEBRUARY

- Daddy Daughter Dance before Lent
- Valentines Day

MARCH

- Spring Break
- Lent

APRIL

- Lent
- Easter

MAY

- Parents Dominics Night
- May Muffins and Morning
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- End of Year Gift Request

JUNE

- Graduation 6/2/2023
- Ice Cream Social 6/8/2023

PTG:

The Parent Teacher Guild provides opportunities for parents to help the teachers and staff of St. Francis through volunteer efforts. Questions for PTG? Email ptg@stfrancisaa.org.

Christmas Program:

Students K-8 participate in a Christmas Lesson in Carols. You will want to arrive early to get a good seat. There is no saving of seats for this event!

Dress attire: Look for information in November.

Curriculum Night:

A night for **only the parents** to meet their child's teacher and ask questions about the upcoming school year and classroom activities. You will also sign up for Fall Teacher Conferences. Could be virtual in years ahead for convenience.

ETF:

The Educational Trust Fund event is one of the main fundraisers for St. Francis. Parents get to dress up (or down depending on the theme!) and attend a dinner, silent auction and live auction. Money raised goes to the Educational Trust Fund, which is invested similar to an endowment, with annual distributions made to support the school's budget.

Fundraising Opportunities:

1. Busch's My Way:

Shop at Busch's market and earn money for the school. You can register your Busch's My Way account online www.buschs.com.

2. Box Tops Labels for Education:

Help our school earn money by downloading the box tops app to scan your grocery receipts and digitally "clip" box top labels for education from a variety of products (Ziploc, Annie's, Kleenex, Hefty, and more).

Grandparents and Special Friend Day- TBD

A day for your child to share their school with their grandparents or a special friend (8:15-11:00). The day includes a variety of events including Mass, breakfast for the grandparents, classroom time and additional entertainment. You can stay to help your grandparent or special friend navigate the day. It is sometimes hard for kids who do not have anyone to participate in this event. Parking is tough on this day.

Halloween Carnival:

Students change into their costumes (nothing too scary) during school and then will parade around the outside of the school for the parents to see. Bring your camera! The carnival will then take place inside the school for the students only and parent helpers. Tickets can be purchased for your child to play the games.

Ice Cream Social:

The Ice Cream Social includes festival-like activities for kids and adults and is held on a Thursday in early June. There is food and ice cream. All in the community are welcome!

Lunch Duty:

Supervise a classroom during lunch and recess time to receive tuition credit. This is a great opportunity to spend an hour with your child's class and get to know the kids. You can volunteer to serve every week or every other week or as you can.

Lunches:

A variety of lunch options are available for purchase, with a sign-up period and payment at the beginning of the school year. Lunches are sponsored by the PTG. Lunch dates are listed on the school calendar. E.g., Jimmy John's, Domino's Pizza

Miles for Mustangs/Jog-A-Thon:

A fundraiser for the school where students collect pledges for their participation in the Jog-A-Thon. Money raised is directed toward a specific purpose i.e. new tablets, new math curriculum, etc. The students run and keep track of how many laps they do. This is held indoors or in the front parking lot. A great event that always needs plenty of helpers!

Parking Lot Flow:

At morning drop off, there are three lanes of traffic through the parking lot, going counterclockwise. You may drop off your child in the drop off lane or park and walk your child up to the school via the crossing guard. At afternoon pickup, you must park in a designated parking spot and pick up your child. There is **NO** pickup lane.

PowerSchool:

Your online school tool - the most convenient way to know what is happening daily in your child's classroom. You can check their homework, test scores and grades.

Rec and Ed Sports:

Many children begin playing organized sports through Ann Arbor's Recreation and Education (Rec & Ed) program. Rec & Ed offers a variety of youth team sports, though not all sports are offered at all age levels. A St. Francis team can be arranged if there are enough interested kids and a willing coach. Fall soccer is a popular option, and sign-ups are during July. If you are new to the school, ask the PTG Newcomer's Committee about how to get in touch with the coaches for your child's grade. If there are not enough kids in a particular sport to form a St. Francis team, your child can still play and ask to be put on a team with other St. Francis kids.

The YMCA and other area sports organizations offer some of the youth sports programming not offered through Rec & Ed such as basketball for kindergarten and first grade students.

School Mass:

You are encouraged to attend all the school Masses. Mass is for K-8th graders. Most school Masses are on Fridays at 9:15 am. School Masses are occasionally held at 9:15 am on other weekdays. 5th-8th Grade students will have the opportunity to complete Altar Server training and will be scheduled for school Masses after they have been trained. All the training dates will be announced in advance so families can schedule times as needed. The dates of training are also posted in the Parish Bulletins. All servers can also serve at weekend Mass and Holy Day of Obligation Masses.

SFA Parents and Staff Facebook Group:

There is a private Facebook group for St. Francis Parents and Staff that some parents find helpful to share information and ask simple questions of other parents. All current school parents and staff members are eligible to join the group. Several PTG board members and Principal Julie Pritzel serve as moderators of the group.

FACEBOOK GROUP: “**SFA Parents and Staff**” and “**SFA Mom to Mom**”

Spirit Wear Day:

The students can wear their uniform or St. Francis (SFA, Mustangs) apparel. No other sweatshirts over these items are allowed. Students may wear jeans or athletic pants with their spirit wear. This occurs most Wednesdays. Please see the Uniform Policy for all guidelines.

Virtus/Volunteering:

All volunteers must comply with the Diocese of Lansing requirements. These include completing a Virtus training session, a criminal background check, the Volunteer Code of Conduct, etc. All forms need to be returned to the office to Mrs. Amy Smith and permission to volunteer will be granted once reviewed. Please see the handbook for more detailed information. Forms are available in the school office or on the school website <http://www.stfrancisa2.com/school/>.

Uniform Closet:

Located in the main hall across from the school office. It consists of gently used uniforms that are free to take. Spirit wear items are available as well. Donations of gently used uniforms are always appreciated.

Winter Gear: (K-6th grades)

Please send snow gear in reusable bags (snow pants, hats, waterproof gloves, etc.) every day during the winter. The kids will wear these during recess during the winter, sometimes even if it is just muddy outside. Label everything!

Class Tips

Kindergarten:

When buying uniforms, you may want to purchase only short-sleeve shirts first and wait to see if your child will want long-sleeve shirts. The school is warm during the winter, so many children are comfortable in short sleeves year-round. Also, you can layer St. Francis sweatshirts, sweaters, or fleeces over short sleeve shirts. Please label your sweatshirts!

1st Grade:

One of the most fun (and sometimes challenging) projects your child will have is to build a diorama for an animal with its habitat and write a simple report on that animal. Most kids build their diorama in a large shoe box. Be sure to keep an extra shoebox or two handy for this spring project. Also, if you see an excellent shoe-box sized model of your child's favorite animal then it might be a good idea to store that away until the project comes around.

2nd Grade:

Students will write a one-page report on a Saint of their choice. On a Mass Day around All Saints, children will dress up as a saint of their choice for that Mass. Keep this in mind when shopping for Halloween costumes and that Halloween and All Saints Day are around the same time.

In April, they will visit Ella Sharpe Museum in Jackson. They will experience the day of a pioneer. They will dress in costume as pioneers (girls in dresses and bonnets and boys in shorts, knickers, hats, and suspenders). They will also bring lunches in a pail or bucket and eat what the pioneers would have eaten. More detailed instructions will follow from teachers prior to the field trip.

First Reconciliation and First Communion prep occurs as a parish activity. There are mandatory parent/student meetings throughout the year starting in October (there is usually a choice of a Wednesday night or Sunday afternoon meeting). Please rely on the Religious Education Office for calendar dates, further description and detailed instructions for First Reconciliation, First Communion Mass times as well as dress code guidelines. There are several choices for First Communion Mass. Many school families prefer to sign up for the Saturday 10:00 a.m. Mass. All the dates and times are advertised early.

3rd Grade:

Students are assigned book reports throughout the school year. The one that is most challenging and requires the most time is the Science report. Teachers send a guideline with due dates when references and rough drafts are due. Sticking to the due dates will help so the work doesn't pile up at the end. The other reports are an autobiography of someone of their choice, write a brochure of a place setting described in a book and show and tell.

Students receive a homework planner which requires a daily parent signature.

4th Grade:

Class economy: 4th graders have classroom jobs (cleaning, teacher's helpers etc.) and get "paid". Classroom money is used for school supplies, fines (for behavior and late work) and treats.

4th Grade Play: Auditions are usually in Jan/Feb. Teachers choose the roles. All kids have at least one line. Play is in mid-May. All parents are expected to volunteer on a committee: props, costumes, make-up, or afterglow.

5th Grade:

In May students will stay two nights at YMCA Storer Camp in the Jackson area. For 2023, this is yet to be finalized. Parents serve as chaperones and drivers to/from the site. There will be a parent meeting and detailed information from teachers in the Spring. This is a wonderful experience for the students.

Middle School

6th Grade:

This year is a soft introduction to Middle School. 6th graders are on the same floor as 7th and 8th graders, they do not share classes with the Middle Schoolers. Their homework is more challenging. This year is about independence and preparing them for Middle School. Students will be responsible for knowing when their assignments and homework are due. They each have a locker in their classroom or in the hallway. Lockers are assigned by the teachers. They can decorate the inside of their lockers with easily removable items. 6th graders are usually invited to the Middle School Spring dance. Parents act as chaperones.

6th grade students are expected to provide their own laptop for school use each day. Invest in a hard case for your student's laptop. No matter how careful your child is, it will get dropped off a raised surface or dropped on the stairs. Fashion vs. Function, go for function. The charging cord should travel with the device and labeling both device and charging cord helps to get them back to their owner.

7th and 8th grades:

Each 7th/8th grade student is assigned a locker in the hallway. Because students do not stay in the same classroom all day, they do not have a designated desk in the classroom; all books and personal belongings are expected to be kept in the locker. Having a shelf in the locker is helpful. Locks are optional and provided by the school or the student. They can decorate their lockers with easily removable items and clean out their lockers a few times a year as a group.

Middle School students are expected to provide their own laptop for school use each day. Invest in a hard case for your student's laptop. No matter how careful your child is, it will get dropped off a raised surface or dropped on the stairs. Fashion vs. Function, go for function. The charging cord should travel with the device and labeling both device and charging cord helps to get them back to their owner.

Throughout the year, middle school has about four social events (dances, hayrides, etc.). A few are dressy, a few are casual, and the 6th grade is usually invited to the Spring Dance. There are guidelines regarding attire that are shared with the students far enough in advance.

7th and 8th grade students are "sorted" into houses, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and participate in a house competition each quarter.

7th/8th grade students participate in a day-long leadership retreat to Howell Nature Center in early-mid September. There are team-building activities as well as a spiritual retreat time.

Confirmation (8th grade) occurs as a parish activity. Much of the spiritual preparation and lessons are completed as part of the school's religion classes. However, on the parish side there are mandatory parent/student meetings throughout the year, and a Fall retreat weekend. Please rely on the Religious Education Office for calendar dates and further description of sacramental preparation requirements. There are dress codes guidelines so please ask the religious education office for them prior to shopping for Easter/Graduation/Confirmation outfits, especially if you are hoping to get multiple wears out of the same dressy outfit.

The 8th graders finish school about 2 weeks before the younger grades. They have made a class trip to Cedar Point (buses, teacher chaperones) after being released from academic days. Tickets purchased in advance, but children are responsible for meals/snacks on their own.