

Parents Guidebook

A RESOURCE FROM ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS TO
NEW PARENTS

PTG NEWCOMERS COMMITTEE

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PTG:

The Parent Teacher Guild that provides opportunities for parents to help the teachers and staff of St. Francis through volunteer efforts.

Christmas Program:

Students K-8 participate in a Christmas themed pageant. K-3rd grade may leave after their part is over during the break. After the break, the pageant will start back up with the remaining grades participating. 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.

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:

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.

Amazon:

Earn Dollars for our Fine Arts program by shopping online. Visit <http://stfrancisa2.org/finearts/> to learn more.

Box Tops Labels for Education:

Clip box top labels for education from a variety of products and help our school earn money (Ziplocs, Annie’s, Kleenex, Hefty and many more products). The School collects the box tops in Fall and Spring. We have classroom competitions and special treat for the class with the most box tops collected.

Golf Outing:

An event sponsored by the Office of Development as a tuition assistance fundraiser for the school. It is held at a local area golf course, usually in September.

Grandparents and Special Friend Day- Every year

A day for your child to share their school with their grandparents or a special friend (8:15-11:00). For 2018, it will be held on Friday, October 12th. 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 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 and Car Raffle:

The car raffle is another large fundraiser for St. Francis. Each family is asked to sell a certain number of tickets to win a car and/or money prizes. Winners are announced at the Ice Cream Social. The Ice Cream Social includes festival-like activities for kids and adults and is held on first Friday in 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.

Lunches:

A variety of lunch options are available for purchase, with a sign-up period and payment at the beginning of the school year. Most are sponsored by the Fine Arts Department or PTG. Lunch dates are listed on the school calendar.

Monday: Mandarin Monday

Tuesday: Taco Tuesday

Wednesday: Pizza Lunch

Thursday: Jimmy Johns Sub Lunch

Friday: Pasta Lunch

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. 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 - 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 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 organization 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. They are planned by the students and your child will love to see you during it! Mass is for K-8th graders. Most school Masses are on Fridays at 8:15a.m. School Masses are occasionally held at 9:15a.m.

All 5th graders will be trained to be altar servers.

6th-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 advanced 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 as a way to share information and ask simple questions of other parents. All current school parents and staff members are eligible to join the group. A number of PTG board members and Principal Julie Pritzel serve as moderators of the group.

Spirit Wear Day:

The students can wear their uniform or Mustangs, St. Francis, or SAINTS apparel. No other sweatshirts over these items are allowed. Students may dress down and wear jeans or athletic pants with their spirit wear. This occurs on Wednesdays, usually twice a month. Please see handbook for all guidelines. Dates are listed on the school calendar.

Toasty Tuesday:

Breakfast offerings for \$1.00 each served in the PAC on Tuesday mornings. This is a fundraising event for the Middle School Choir.

Virtus/Volunteering:

All volunteers must comply with the Diocese of Lansing requirements. These include completing a Virtus training session (online or in person), a criminal background check, signing the Volunteer Code of Conduct, and providing a copy of your driver license to the school office. All forms need to be returned to the office and permission to volunteer will be granted once reviewed. Please see 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 is comprised 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.

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-sleeve year-round. Also, you can layer St. Francis sweatshirts, sweaters, or fleeces over short sleeve shirts. Both Kindergarten rooms have been “nut-free” for the past few years. In older grades, there is often one nut-free room and one that is not.

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, you if 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 All Saints Day, children will dress up as a saint of their choice for Mass. Keep this in mind when shopping for Halloween costumes and that Halloween and All Saints Day are back-to-back.

In April, they will visit Ella Sharpe Museum in Jackson. Last year the 2nd grade students went on a bus. 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 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 10:00am 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.

There is a field trip to the State Capital in the spring. Last year a bus took the entire 3rd grade class. It worked out great! In the past parent chaperones have driven and it was a bit more challenging. This is the first year the students go to Winchell park for recess. It’s a bit of an adjustment for students and parents but after a few weeks everyone gets into a routine.

4th Grade:

Class economy: 4th graders have classroom jobs (cleaning, take care of pets, teacher's helpers. Etc.) and get paid. 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 (taking into consideration whether students want a large or small role). 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 Jackson area. 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.

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. They are on a block schedule. 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 is due. They have lockers in their classrooms which they share with another student. Lockers and partners are assigned by the teachers. They can decorate their lockers with easily removable items. 6th graders are invited to the Middle School Spring dance. Parent's act as chaperones.

7th and 8th grades:

The upstairs (home of Middle School) is HOT. The boys live in shorts until we make them wear pants. Short sleeve polo shirts are the norm. Some students layer with fleeces/hoodies. The girls wear athletic shorts under their skirts and rarely wear leggings. They need to bring a change of clothes for gym (see gym requirements) and separate pair of gym shoes to change into. Middle school uniforms are grandfathered into the old uniform style THIS year. Next year they all follow the new guidelines. Please re-read the policy to make sure your student complies. They do receive demerits for being out of uniform. Having a "shelf" in the locker is helpful. They can decorate their lockers with easily removable items, and clean out their lockers a few times a year as a group.

Invest in a hard case for their tablet. (Otterbox, lifebox, etc.). No matter how careful your child is, it will get dropped of a raised surface or dropped on the stairs. Fashion vs. Function, go for function.

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 invited to the Spring Dance too. There are guidelines regarding attire that are shared with the students far enough in advance, but modesty is the concern (dresses need to have wide straps or sleeves, cannot have cutouts/mesh areas, their back needs to be covered; gentlemen need to wear slacks that fit, not low on their hips, without distressing/holes). These guidelines are not all inclusive and follow the email directives.

Kindergarten and first grade "buddies" are paired up with 7th and 8th graders respectively. They are asked to model good behavior for their buddy at Mass, and help them participate in the liturgy as they are able. The children typically give SMALL gifts at the holiday and the end of the year to their buddy,

but this is not mandatory (colored pencils and decorative pads of paper, stickers, actions figures, etc.). Buddies change from K to 1st grade.

7th and 8th grade students are “sorted” into houses, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and work toward community service goals.

7th grade: has a sleep away trip in the fall. Sr. Rebecca (science, religion and homeroom) organizes it and there will be separate information coming. Parents act as chaperones and as drivers to/from site. The children have been expected to follow dress down/spirit wear dress code in the past (meaning long shorts or pants independent of the outdoor temps).

8th grade: The class makes a bus trip to Washington DC in the spring. Parent chaperones and teachers accompany them (separate information will come from the office: permission slips, forms, volunteer solicitations, packing slips, code of conduct, etc.). The use of personal technology devices is restricted and taking a camera instead of relying on a camera phone or tablet is a good option. They take spending money with them and spend quite a lot of money on food/snacks.

Confirmation prep occurs as a parish activity. 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. Confirmation Mass has occurred off site (UM-Hill Auditorium the last two years). There are dress codes guidelines so please ask religious education office for them prior to shopping for Easter/Graduation/Confirmation outfits, especially if you are hoping to get multiple wears out the same dressy outfit.

In the past, there has been a dance for the graduates immediately after Graduation Mass. The graduate typically want to stay for that instead of attending a celebratory dinner with extended family.

The 8th graders finish school 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.