

# St. Vincent De Paul Middle School Handbook 2016-2017

## MISSION

*St. Vincent de Paul School provides quality spiritual and academic experiences that are rooted in Catholic values.*

## SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

**Students at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School are:**

**Active Christians** who are able to:

- ❖ serve others
- ❖ respect for God, Church, others, self, and property
- ❖ know the beliefs and traditions of the Catholic Church
- ❖ participate in sacraments, liturgies, and prayer
- ❖ take responsibility for actions
- ❖ work with others to solve disagreements
- ❖ respect diversity
- ❖ communicate and reflect about personal faith

**Effective Communicators** who are able to:

- ❖ speak with confidence and poise
- ❖ read and understand well
- ❖ write clearly using correct grammar and mechanics
- ❖ listen and observe well
- ❖ show awareness of social norms and expectations
- ❖ work cooperatively
- ❖ discuss current global issues
- ❖ use technology responsibly

**Self-Evaluators** who are able to:

- ❖ plan, set, and strive toward appropriate goals
- ❖ use good study and organizational skills
- ❖ review work for quality and correctness
- ❖ show responsibility for their academic progress

## Code of Ethics

All students, faculty, staff, and families exhibit a Christian spirit by respecting self, others, and property, contributing to the learning environment, and following school and classroom procedures.

Welcome to middle school! The purpose of this handbook is to inform families and students of the policies and procedures of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Middle School. The middle school faculty appreciates constructive feedback regarding this school program.

### **HISTORY**

A pilot middle school program was initiated in three Catholic elementary schools in 1992 following the analysis of a survey distributed in 1989. Included in the survey were questions about creating a centrally located middle school separate from the elementary schools. St. Vincent's was the fourth school to officially adopt the middle school model of education as mandated by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Salt Lake.

### **RATIONALE**

Educators seek to provide schools that are joyful places where learning and learners are celebrated. Young people undergo more rapid and profound personal changes during the years between 10 and 15 than at any other period of their lives. The self-contained elementary structure of a single classroom teacher is not able to optimally address the intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, or emotional needs of these adolescents. Likewise, traditional junior high schools have been patterned after the high school structure, which is too complex and confusing for a young adolescent to face. Therefore, the middle school model was created as a transition period between elementary school and high school.

### **BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

St. Vincent's Middle School tries to create a warm, inviting atmosphere in its classrooms. A climate that is safe and caring promotes a sense of community and encourages learning. Human relationships are paramount and all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. Students and adults recognize and accept one another's differences; curiosity, creativity, and diversity are celebrated. To achieve this end, St. Vincent's Middle School teachers have posted the Schoolwide Learning Expectations and the St. Vincent's Code of Ethics in all of the middle school classrooms. All our middle school students and teachers are expected to abide by these tenets.

The warning system was designed to allow parents/guardians, teachers, and students to be readily aware of rule infractions and to provide a concrete way to assess students' conduct grades. There are two types of warning: Behavior and Responsibility. Behavior warnings are given for actions that disrupt, disrespect, or fail to meet the school's expectations or code of ethics. Responsibility warnings are assigned when a student is unprepared for class or in violation of the uniform policy.

Students begin each week with no warnings. Oftentimes, teachers give a verbal reminder when a rule is not being followed. However, when necessary, teachers will give a written warning by filling out a "Warning Form". At midterm and the end of each quarter the homeroom teacher tabulates the total number of warnings resulting in the student's citizenship grade. Fines, which are accompanied by a warning in most cases, must be paid or worked off within one week of the offense.

The weekly discipline steps are as follows:

- Warning 1:** The teacher identifies the inappropriate behavior with the student and marks the warning board.
- Warning 2:** The teacher identifies the inappropriate behavior with the student and marks the warning board.
- Warning 3:** The teacher identifies the inappropriate behavior with the student and marks the warning board. The homeroom teacher will contact a parent/guardian by phone or e-mail informing him/her of the three warnings.
- Warning 4:** The homeroom teacher will contact a parent/guardian by phone or e-mail informing him/her of the fourth warning.
- Warning 5:** The student, teacher, and the assistant principal will have a meeting and appropriate consequences will be given. The homeroom teacher will contact a parent/guardian by phone or e-mail informing him/her of the fifth warning and the meeting. If a student has previously received 5 or more warnings in a week, s/he will be placed on a citizenship contract. If a student receives 5 or more warnings in a week three or more times in a year, the student may be suspended. (A student who is suspended automatically receives a "Needs Improvement" for his/her citizenship grade.)
- Warning 6:** The teacher identifies the inappropriate behavior with the student and marks the warning board. The homeroom teacher will contact a parent/guardian by phone or e-mail informing him/her of the sixth warning.
- Warning 7:** The student, parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher, assistant principal and/or the principal will have a meeting and appropriate consequences will be given.
- Warning 8:** This indicates that no improvement, chronic or severe disruption or severe offenses have occurred. Student will receive a "Needs Improvement" on their report card for the quarter, and may be suspended or expelled. The student, parent(s)/guardian(s), homeroom teacher, assistant principal and/or principal will have a meeting and appropriate consequences will be given.

The administration and faculty believe in natural consequences. Part of those natural consequences often include some processing with an adult. The administration reserves the right to ask a student to process through their lunch period.

### **Citizenship Grades**

0-4 warnings = O (Outstanding)  
(Satisfactory)

5-8 warnings = S+

9-12 warnings = S

13-16 warnings = S-

17 or more warnings = N (Needs Improvement)

Severe offenses include but are not limited to: physical or psychological danger to self or others (intimidation, threats, etc.), use of profane words or gestures, out of control behaviors, using a tone or gesture of disrespect that is abusive (profanity, harassment, etc.), showing disrespect to adults or authority (insubordination, unwillingness to follow established rules, etc.), showing disrespect for property (vandalism, theft, etc.), demonstrating irresponsible behavior (being unreasonable, repeated violations, unwillingness to follow established rules, etc.), chronic dishonesty, other inappropriate behavior not described above. Bullying or harassment is considered a severe offense and will not be tolerated. At the administrators' discretion, the consequences given may skip directly to steps five through eight for more serious offenses. To protect the privacy of students, consequences will not be shared with other students or other students' parents/guardians.

## FINES

Fines must be paid or worked off within one week of the infraction. If this is not done, the student must stay after school for one hour on consecutive school days until the fine is worked off.

The following infractions are assessed a fine and a warning:

- **Gum Chewing \$20.00 fine and a warning:** Gum chewing is not allowed anywhere on Saint Vincent de Paul School property at any time.
- **Projectile Throwing \$10.00 fine and a warning:** For respect of property and safety reasons, throwing snowballs, food, rocks, or any projectile is not tolerated.
- **Writing on or Otherwise Defacing Furniture or Other Property \$10 Fine**
- **Uncovered Textbook \$5.00 fine:** Students are required to keep textbooks covered at all times.
- **Full replacement cost** of damaged or lost library books or school textbooks, must be paid by the student responsible for the books.
- **Chromebook damages, variable fines:** Students are expected to show respect for these academic tools. If a chromebook is damaged beyond reasonable repair, the cost to replace it is \$250. This includes, but is not limited to a broken screen, damaged /sound port, etc.... If the casing of a chromebook is damaged, cracked, etc... the cost for repair is \$25. If the hinge casing is broken or missing the fine is \$50.

## Responsibility Warnings

Responsibility warnings include wearing nail polish, not wearing a belt, forgetting to wear the correct Mass uniform, violating the hair policy, not wearing the correct socks, and others. (See the parent handbook for more details.) A student will give one hour of service to the school for every five responsibility warnings in a quarter. The student will have one week to complete the service hour.

## POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

St. Vincent's Middle School currently uses a point system where classes may earn a quarterly party for positive behavior if their class reaches their point goal. Students who receive an "O" in conduct will be recognized with a citizenship certificate at one of the weekly Masses. The middle school will have a quarterly party for those students who receive an "O," "S+" or "S" on their citizenship grade. Students who go one month without a warning will receive a free dress pass. Students who receive an "O" all four quarters of their eighth grade year will wear the white cord at graduation.

## POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication between home and school is critical to student success. If parents/guardians have a compliment or concern, please feel free to contact the teacher. Teachers will respond to you within 24 hours of any communication sent between Monday 8:00am through Friday 12:30pm. (Teachers are not expected to check their e-mail or phone messages over the weekend. Communication sent over the weekend will be responded to by the end of the day Monday.) The tone in which you contact the teacher has a direct impact on the student. If dissatisfaction is conveyed openly in front of students, it can exacerbate an already difficult situation. If parents/guardians have a serious concern, we recommend that they set up a face-to-face meeting with the teacher, or the administration and the teacher if they have already met with the teacher and the concern has not been solved. Less serious concerns such as logistical, procedural, or homework questions or may be conveyed via e-mail, phone, or note.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS**

Parents/guardians will be formally notified in writing about student progress eight times during the school year; progress reports will be sent home at midterm and report cards will be issued following each quarter. Check the school calendar for these dates. If a teacher is concerned about a student's performance, s/he will notify the parent/guardian by phone or meeting within a reasonable amount of time.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is designed to enrich and refine the material taught during the school day. Students are expected put forth their personal best on all assignments. When students do not complete their homework they fall behind in their academic success. To ensure that all students have an opportunity to be successful academically as well as to develop the life skill of responsibility, the middle school faculty will follow these procedures concerning late or unacceptable homework:

1. Assignments will be posted to Thinkwave.com. Within 24 hours of collection, all missing assignments will be posted with the code "M". However, teachers are not required to assign a grade, other than M, to a class or homework assignment for up to a week after collection.
2. All late assignments will receive a reduction of 10% per day up to a 50% maximum from the earned grade. If an assignment is more than two weeks late, no credit may be earned. (Due to the sequential nature of math, students have only 5 days in which to turn in math assignments for credit.) Late penalties do not accrue over the weekend, but teachers may charge the late penalty on days that the class does not meet.
3. If a student will not have a particular class one day and needs to turn in late work, s/he should turn the work into one of the secretaries who will put the work into the teacher's box.
4. A zero grade will be recorded for work not received.
5. Chronic inability to turn in homework, study for tests, or produce adequate work will result in the student being placed on an academic plan or contract.

Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to check grades on Thinkwave regularly. Teachers will record test and assignment scores within one week of the due date, two weeks for projects. Please contact Mrs. Sloan if you have a problem accessing your child's Thinkwave grades.

Students should complete about one and one half-hour of homework Monday through Thursday. Homework may be mental (studying) or written. According to the Administrative Policy #4100, regular homework assignments will not ordinarily be given on Fridays and during holiday breaks. Occasionally there may be an exception to this policy. Weekend work may be necessary to complete long term assignments such as reading books for book reports, editing compositions, memorizing poems or prayers, or gathering research. Good time management habits will decrease the amount of stress a student experiences in completing homework. Students are responsible for writing assignments down in their assignment notebooks.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

**Cheating on a Test or Quiz:** The student receives a 0% for the grade and is given 2 warnings. The student's parent/guardian is notified by the teacher.

**Plagiarizing** (For longer-term assignments such as research papers, book reports, etc.): The student receives a 0% for the assignment and is given 2 warnings. If the assignment is redone, the student may earn as high as a "C-." The student's parent/guardian is notified by the teacher. The consequences are the same regardless of how much of the assignment has been plagiarized.

**Copying Homework** (Daily assignments of lesser value): The student who copied the work and the student whose work was copied receive a 0% for the assignment and are given 1 warning. The students' parents/guardians are notified by the teacher.

A student who does any of the above actions more than once may be suspended. A student who plagiarizes more than once will not be given the opportunity to redo plagiarized assignments.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL RETENTION/PROMOTION**

Students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades at Saint Vincent de Paul School must demonstrate effort and performance appropriate to their individual abilities and academic levels in order to be eligible for promotion and/or graduation. A middle school student may be retained or not allowed to graduate if the administration and middle school teachers believe that s/he has not satisfied this requirement.

Any student who fails the same subject for both semesters in a given year may be required to complete a summer course in a related subject and/or complete work assigned by the middle school staff and administration before promotion to the next grade or graduation.

## **HIGH HONOR ROLL & HONOR ROLL**

Middle school students are recognized for their overall academic and behavioral achievement with our High Honor Roll and Honor Roll.

To make High Honor Roll, students must satisfy the following requirements:

- 3.5 grade point average in the six core subjects (math, religion, social studies, science, literature, and English)
- A "B" or above in all core and non-core subjects
- An "O" or "S+" citizenship grade

To make Honor Roll, students must satisfy the following requirements:

- 3.0 grade point average in the six core subjects
- A "B-" or above in all core and non-core subjects
- An "O" or "S+" citizenship grade

Students have the opportunity every quarter to earn a place on High Honor Roll or Honor Roll. So, if a student has one lower-performing quarter, s/he can still earn the honor the next quarter. Once students are on one of the honor rolls, they must maintain their high performance to stay on. Students who make High Honor Roll or Honor Roll each quarter during their eighth grade year will wear the gold cord at graduation.

## EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit is given at the discretion of the teachers. Students must complete all regular assignments in order to be eligible for extra credit. The teachers will inform parents/guardians of their extra credit policies in writing on Back to School Night. Oftentimes, students and/or parents/guardians contact teachers at a time when extra credit may not be available such as near the end of a quarter. Please familiarize yourself with the teachers' policies before asking for extra credit.

## TARDINESS

Middle school students may enter the school from the south doors at 8:10 to retrieve items from their lockers and prepare for their day. Students are marked tardy if they are not in their homerooms when the 8:20 bell rings. Teachers will send an e-mail after 3 and 4 tardies in one quarter. For every 5 tardies in a quarter, the student will give one hour of service to the school.

## ABSENCES

**Excused Absences:** On the day a student returns to school, **a written note or e-mail of explanation from the parent/guardian should be given to the teacher.** Illness and family emergencies are considered excused absences. All other absences are usually considered unexcused absences. Each classroom in the middle school has an organized, systematic method to assist students in getting their missed work assignments. Class lectures and discussions will not be redone by the teachers. Upon their return students need to check with their teachers for any handouts, worksheets, tests or quizzes to complete. For excused absences students will be allowed two days to complete and return assignments if they are absent one day. (i.e. The student is absent on a Tuesday, so the homework is due the following Thursday. The student is absent Friday, so the homework is due Monday.) For any other length of absence, a reasonable amount of time (as determined by each teacher) will be given to complete the work.

**Please Note:** It is the student's responsibility to retrieve and complete all necessary make-up work.

**Unexcused Absences:** Students should fill out a make-up work request form **prior to taking an unexcused absence.** It is left to the discretion of the teachers to provide work either before or after the absence occurs. The teachers will set a due date for all missed work. If the work is not returned on or before the due date, the student may receive a zero on all missed work. Teachers are not required to allow make-up work or provide make-up tests for unexcused absences, nor are they required to provide tutoring to catch a student up on missed class work or homework.

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**In order for students to participate in student council, they must meet the following criteria:**

- be in the sixth or seventh grade at the time of elections
- earn no grades below a C-
- maintain regular and punctual attendance
- maintain an **S or higher** in conduct
- abide by the requirements on the student leadership council sheet that all members signed

Please note: If a student council member's grades or conduct fall below the above requirements, they will be placed on probation. If there is no improvement, they will be replaced by an alternate chosen by the principal.

## **BOOKS**

In order to keep textbooks in good condition and cut down on unnecessary replacement costs, students are expected to keep their textbooks covered all year. Book covers are available for purchase at the school office. Book socks are unacceptable. Students will be given a verbal warning for an uncovered book. There will be a five dollar fine per day and a written warning on the behavior log for any book that is uncovered after the initial reminder. The only writing that should be on the book covers is the student's name, grade and subject. Also, students are asked to bring a free reading book with them to each class.

## **UNIFORMS**

Uniforms must be worn appropriately at all times. See the parent handbook for the uniform regulations. Failure to comply with the uniform standards will result in a warning mark on the daily citizenship log.

## **HOMEWORK LAB**

Homework Lab is held Monday through Thursdays from 3:20-3:50 PM. (A schedule is posted on the middle school information board.) The purpose of homework lab is to provide a place where students may complete their homework and ask a teacher for help if necessary. It is not intended to be free after-school care. The homework lab is a privilege, so students who are inactive, disruptive or otherwise violate the directions of the supervising teacher will not be allowed to return.

Students may be dismissed early from homework lab if the parent/guardian calls or sends a note or e-mail giving the student permission. Unless a student has parent/guardian permission to leave before 3:50, s/he will be dismissed at 3:50. Students not picked up by 4:00 will be escorted to Extended Day Program and parent/guardian will be charged the applicable fees.

## **EIGHTH GRADE GRADUATION ATTIRE**

Students should wear modest and appropriate attire for graduation. Baggy clothes, mini-skirts, and dresses or blouses showing midriffs and cleavage are not appropriate attire for graduation mass. Boys should wear a shirt and a tie with dress pants. Dresses, blouses, and shirts must have sleeves. Dress shoes are required, maximum heel length is two inches.

## **DANCE DRESS CODE**

Jackets, backpacks, inappropriate messages on clothing, hats, bandanas, bulky chains, skin tight clothing, and earrings on boys are not allowed. Modest attire must be worn. (i.e. Skirts must be an appropriate length, no more than 3 inches above the knee; midriffs must be covered; no backless, strapless, or sleeveless clothing; no spaghetti straps; no hoodies). Pants should be comfortable but not excessively baggy and must be worn at the waist. Shorts are allowed 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and must be no more than 3" above the knee. The administration of the host school will determine if a student is inappropriately dressed. If a student is inappropriately dressed the student will be sent home and the principal of the school will be notified.



## **CELL PHONES**

Cell phones must remain in students' lockers during school hours, always be in the off position, and may not be used inside the school building or other school/parish facilities at any time. Students may use cell phones outside on school grounds after school is finished. If a student violates the cell phone policy, the phone will be taken and given to the assistant principal. Only the student's parent/guardian may retrieve the cell phone. If the cell phone is taken a second time, only the student's parent/guardian may retrieve the cell phone and the student is no longer allowed to bring the cell phone to school. A third infraction could result in suspension. Inappropriate/illegal use of cell phones will be dealt with in the same manner as other serious discipline issues.

The cell phone rule also applies to off-campus school functions and diocesan functions. With regard to dances, students leave their phones in a designated spot, such as a coat room, before entering the dance area. Students may retrieve their phones when the dance is over.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

### Students will:

- set reasonable and attainable goals
- be responsible for recording all assignments in their planner
- turn assignments in on time
- come to class prepared
- check grades on Thinkwave weekly
- file papers and organize their portfolio
- follow class rules regarding behavior
- always be in the proper school uniform
- keep lockers neat and organized
- come to class on time
- communicate to teachers if they are having difficulty in class
- call a parent/guardian if homework is not completed on time
- keep textbooks covered at all times

### Teachers will:

- be prepared and teach quality lessons
- maintain and post assignments daily in the classroom
- record grades on Thinkwave within one week from turn in date (two weeks for projects)
- post classroom expectations and rules
- provide a place for students to file work
- maintain a monthly calendar for long term assignments
- provide parents/guardians and students with course outline and expectations
- provide midterm progress reports
- follow stated homework policy
- reply to parent communication within 24 hours (Monday 8:00am-Friday 12:30pm)
- maintain a neat and orderly classroom
- be respectful when correcting student behavior

### Families will:

- if Catholic, attend Mass with their children on weekends
- bring students to school on time
- ensure that students come to school in proper uniform
- help students balance outside activities and ensure that school is a priority
- show an active interest in your child's work and insist that they always do their best
- focus on improvement rather than only on letter grades
- provide a quiet study environment
- direct any concerns to the specific teacher
- check grades online regularly
- help students direct concerns to a teacher and discourage gossip or disrespectful conversations about administrators, teachers or students

St. Vincent's Middle School asks for your support. We encourage involvement and invite families to work toward finding solutions to issues that will undoubtedly arise throughout the year. Please know that we chose the teaching profession, and middle school ages in particular, because we love children, feel called to a ministry working with the young, and believe we have an understanding of the uniqueness of a middle school student. We will do our best to make this year a positive and successful experience for your son or daughter.

Sincerely,

Mr. Gary Green  
**Principal**

Mrs. Sarah Lambert  
**Assistant Principal**

Mrs. Giselle Airriess, Mrs. Monica Howa-Johnson, Ms. Alexandra Hustiu, Mr. Scott Larrabee, Mrs. Kari McMullin, Mrs. Terry Musci, Mrs. Christina Eischeid, Mr. Radu Noaghiu, Mrs. Alicia Sloan  
**Middle School Faculty**

**Please read and discuss this handbook with your middle school student(s), then sign and return this acknowledgement page by August 22, 2016.**

I have read and I understand the policies and practices of the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Middle School. I understand that the principal reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time during the school year and that parents/guardians and students will be given prompt notification of such changes. We agree to support and comply with these policies and practices.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number where student can reach you during the day

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date