

# *PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK*



***The Academy of St. Francis of Assisi***  
400 Totowa Road  
Totowa, New Jersey 07512  
[WWW.ACADEMYOFSTRANCIS.ORG](http://WWW.ACADEMYOFSTRANCIS.ORG)



## *ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PRAYER*

*LORD, make me an instrument of Your peace*

*Where there is hatred, let me sow love*

*Where there is injury, pardon*

*Where there is doubt, faith*

*Where there is despair, hope*

*Where there is darkness, light*

*and where there is sadness, joy*

*O Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled*

*as to console,*

*to be understood as to understand*

*to be loved as to love*

*For it is in giving that we receive,*

*it is in pardoning that we are pardoned*

*and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Academy of St. Francis of Assisi is to prepare students to be literate, articulate, and computative life-long learners so that they may become productive citizens guided by Gospel values.

### SCHOOL HOURS

Kindergarten – Grade 8	8:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Pre-Kindergarten Instructional Day 3 & 4-year-old	8:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Before Care	7:00 AM – 7:45 AM
After Care	2:30 PM – 6:00 PM
Minimum Day Dismissal	12:00 PM

### CONTACT INFORMATION



E-mail address

Telephone Number	973-956-8824
After Care Telephone Number	973-942-8804
Fax Number	973-956-9430
SMART Tuition	1-888-868-8828
Web Site	<a href="http://www.academyofstfrancis.org">www.academyofstfrancis.org</a>
	<a href="mailto:office@academyofstfrancis.org">office@academyofstfrancis.org</a>

# REGISTRATION

## ADMISSION PREREQUISITES

### **Age Requirements:**

Pre-Kindergarten	3-Year Program – 3 by October 31 <sup>st</sup> 4-Year Program – 4 by October 31 <sup>st</sup>
Kindergarten	5 by October 31 <sup>st</sup>
Grade 1	6 by October 31 <sup>st</sup>

### **Requirements for Registration**

Baptismal Record

Report Card

Health Data

Standardized Test Scores

Transfer & Transcript (if child is coming from another school)

Registration Fee (non-refundable) The fee is set in January.

### **Immunization Requirements**

#### Pre-Kindergarten 3 & Pre-Kindergarten 4

- DTAP – Four (4) doses required
- Oral Polio – Three (3) doses required
- MMR – One (1) dose required
- Haemophilus B – One (1) dose required (12-59 months)
  - Two (2) doses if given earlier
- Varicella – One (1) dose required
- Pneumococcal – Two (2) doses if child attended day care as an infant
  - One (1) dose is child attended day care after the age of one



Every child must have a flu shot between September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### Kindergarten

All of the above plus:

- MMR
- DTAP
- Polio
- Hepatitis B (2 or 3 doses)

#### Grade 6 or after child's 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday

TDAP and Meningococcal

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

Regular attendance and punctuality are important. More than 3 days absence in each quarter, without serious reason, is considered poor attendance. Irregular attendance requires a parent/teacher conference. A student may be retained for excessive absences.

Legal absence in New Jersey is defined as a pupil's own illness, death in the immediate family, and observed religious holidays. No other absence is technically legal.

Parents must call between 7:30-8:30 AM if a student is to be absent. An absentee note is required the day a student returns to school. A doctor's note is required for absences lasting longer than 3 days.

Doctors' appointments are NOT considered excused absences. These appointments should be made after school hours. Every effort should be made to avoid vacations during the school year.

In cases other than legal absences, the student and parent are responsible for lost work. Arrangements should be made with the teacher for make-up work.

Tardiness creates distractions for the students as well as the classroom teacher. A student is marked late if s/he is not in school by 8:10 AM. A student who is late must obtain a late pass from the office. Habitual tardiness will require a parent/teacher conference.

### AFTER CARE/BEFORE CARE

Students will be admitted into the building at 7:00 AM for Before Care **through the side door closest to the Church**. A parent or guardian must sign in the student.

After Care begins immediately after school until 6:00 PM. Punctuality is expected. An additional fee of \$5.00 will appear on the monthly statement for each 15- minute interval after 6:00. A parent or guardian must sign out students. Students are expected to follow all school rules while attending Before/After Care. Students are picked up through the side door closest to the Church.

### CARE OF BOOKS/CLASSROOM

Students are responsible for the care of their books and desks. Desks may not be written on; stickers may not be placed on desks, lockers or books.

### CELL PHONES

Cell phones are **not** permitted in the classrooms during the school day, nor are they permitted in Before/After Care. A student may bring a cell phone to school to be used after school hours (not on school property). The cell phone must be kept in the off position. The principal reserves the right to confiscate cell phones to be returned to a parent or guardian.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Any change of address or telephone number, as well as changes in employment or emergency contact information must be promptly reported to the office.

### CHILD ABUSE

In accordance with the Title 9NJ Statutes (NJ9: 6-8.10 and NJS, 9:608.13) the Academy will report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the proper agency.

### CLUBS

Students in Grades 3-8 may join an after school club moderated by the teachers, with parental permission. Descriptions of the clubs offered will be published in the first marking period. Appropriate behavior is expected during Club sessions. Teachers reserve the right to deny a student access to a Club due to poor behavior.

### COMMUNICATION

It is important that parents and school personnel communicate frequently and effectively. The Academy has several means of keeping parents informed about school programs and policies as well as the progress of the students. The posts and links on our website contain essential information including *Class Pages* where parents can access their students' assignments and class announcements. The website should be checked often.

Formal conferences are scheduled after the first marking period. Parents should feel free to contact a teacher to make an appointment for a conference as the need arises.

Parents may contact a teacher via e-mail. E-mail addresses are posted on our website.

### DAILY MORNING PROCEDURE

Students in Grades 1-8 wait outside until the 7:55 AM bell rings. At this time, students line up with their teacher in their assigned area. A teacher is on duty beginning at 7:45 AM. Students who arrive before 7:45 must be signed in at Before Care. Students are expected to enter the school in an orderly fashion. Students are not permitted to run around, play ball, etc. while

waiting outside for the morning bell. During inclement weather, students go directly to the auditorium and wait for the bell in their assigned area.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students line up in the auditorium. Parents should walk the student into the building through the side door nearest the Church. The door will be unlocked at 7:00 AM.

### DAILY PRAYER

Prayer is an integral part of our daily procedures. Each day begins and ends with prayer. Parents are welcome to join in Morning Prayer in the auditorium.

### DAILY SCHEDULE

Grades Kindergarten to Grade Eight

Morning Session 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Lunch Period 12:00 PM – 12:40 PM

Afternoon Session 12:45 PM – 2:30 PM

Snack time is a ten-minute morning period for Grades PreK through 4.

### CODE OF DISCIPLINE

Use common sense and courtesy. Practice the *Golden Rule* at all times: Treat others, as you want to be treated. Ask yourself, “*What would Jesus do?*”

The purpose of discipline at The Academy of St. Francis of Assisi School is to encourage self-discipline. The Academy of St. Francis of Assisi strives to create an environment conducive to learning in which mutual rights and responsibilities of students are recognized and upheld. Rules are based on respect for one another, the safety of every student, and the goal of academic excellence. In order for each student to develop their potential for constructive Christian leadership, they must be assisted in their personal growth in the area of self-discipline. Included in this are organization of tasks, acceptance of individual responsibility and accountability for personal actions. Therefore the students of The Academy of St. Francis of Assisi will:

- Use appropriate/courteous language: oral, written or gestured
- Respect the belonging and works of others
- Observe classroom rules
- Respect adults and students in school or any related functions
- Dress appropriately, according to Catholic morals
- Respect property

### DISCIPLINE POLICY

A student who chooses to disrupt the good order of the school or to violate a policy or regulation will have to accept the consequences of those irresponsible choices. Accountability for uncooperative, disruptive or unsafe behavior may take any of the following forms: warnings, denial of privileges, detentions, in school or out of school suspensions or expulsions.

### DRUGS AND MEDICATION

Students may not have in their possession at school or at any school sponsored activity alcoholic beverages and/or illegal substances. The use of drugs or smoking may result in suspension or expulsion by school authorities. The school reserves the right to search the property of students under reasonable circumstances.

Students may not have in their possession medications of any type. All medications to be taken during school hours must be accompanied by written permission from the doctor. The medication is to be taken in the presence of the school nurse and/or designee.

### DUE PROCESS

It is very important that there be complete unity in authority between the teacher and the parent. It is the policy of this school to withhold judgment until all facts are known. The following guidelines can help solve problems that may arise:

- Get facts from the proper person (in most cases, the teacher)
- Discuss the problem with the proper person as soon as possible.
- Contact the principal, if necessary.

### ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT/GAMES

Electronic equipment and/or games are **not** permitted at school at any time, including Before/After Care. The school is not responsible for any lost items.

### EMERGENCY/SNOW CLOSING

If there is a school closing, or delayed opening, you will be notified via Instant Alert. Contact the school immediately with any changes in phone numbers.

### FIELD TRIPS

Field trips of an educational nature are an important part of a good school program. Teachers arrange class trips with approval by the principal. A written permission slip is required for each student to participate in a Field Trip. Parents wishing to serve as a chaperone on a trip must attend a Protecting God's Children Program and be fingerprinted through the VRO Program, as per Diocesan policy.

### FIRE/EVACUATION/LOCKDOWN DRILLS

Fire, evacuation and lockdown drills are conducted throughout the year. An Emergency Plan has been created in conjunction with local law enforcement and proper conduct, ways of exit and other regulation involved in safety are taught to students. Students are expected to take the drills seriously and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

### FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is a vital, necessary part of the parent commitment to our school. Each family is required to sign a Fundraising-Activity Contract and to fulfill their contractual obligation each year.

### GRADING SYSTEM

The Academy uses the software program, *PowerSchool*, for recording grades.

*Report Cards:* A report card is the school's official communication to the home. It gives the parents as accurate a picture as possible of the child's academic progress, as well as an evaluation of certain personal qualities. The report card is issued four times a year for Grades 1-8, twice a year for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten.

*Progress Reports:* Progress Reports are sent four times per year, mid-way through the marking period. This report allows a parent to know where and if improvement is needed prior to the Report Card.

The following grades are used with the Reports:

#### *Pre-Kindergarten*

- G Good Progress
- W Working on skills, needs time to develop
- NM Not measured at this time

#### *Kindergarten*

- M Mastery (Consistent, independent performance)
- G Good Progress
- W Working on skills, needs time to develop
- NM Not measured at this time

#### *Grade 1-3*

##### Subjects

- A – Excellent progress (100-93)
- B – Better than average progress (92-85)
- C – Average progress (84-75)
- D – Little or no progress (74-70)
- NP – No progress (69-below)

##### Development

- VG – Very Good
- G - Good
- S - Satisfactory
- I – Improvement needed

### *Grades 4-8*

<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Development</u>
A+ 100-97	VG - Very Good
A 96-93	G - Good
B+ 92-89	S - Satisfactory
B 88-85	I - Improvement needed
C+ 84-80	U - Unsatisfactory
C 79-75	
D 74-70	
F 69 and below	

### HOMEWORK

Homework is neither a reward nor a punishment: it is a necessity. Homework is assigned to supplement and reinforce class work. Homework is to be done neatly and completely.

Should a student be absent, arrangements should be made for homework assignments to be picked up by another student, sibling or by a parent or guardian at the end of the day. Students are expected to make up work missed due to an absence.

Assignments will not be given to students who will be absent due to a vacation prior to their departure. Students are expected to complete their work. It is the student's responsibility to find out what was missed during his/her absence. Assignments are posted on the *Class Pages* on the website.

### HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Home and School Association is an integral part of the school community. The elected Executive Board will hold several general meetings per year. Research shows that parental involvement is vital to a child's success in school. Parents are expected to attend the Home and School meetings.

### HONORS

Students in Grades 1-8 may earn academic awards.

- Medal of Excellence: an A+ in each major subject
- Principal's Honors: an A in each major subject
- High Honors: an A average in major subjects
- Honors: a B average in major subjects

A student will not be considered for honors if an S (Satisfactory) or an I (Improvement Needed) is registered in any area, including special subjects.



### *Outstanding Effort Award*

An Outstanding Effort Award will be presented each marking period to students who demonstrate exceptional effort in their schoolwork. The criteria for this award include active class participation, completed homework assignments and good classroom behavior.

### *Franciscan Student of the Month*

This award is presented to one student per grade each month. This is a non-academic award given to the student that best exemplifies the teaching and characteristics of St. Francis.

### *National Junior Honor Society*

Membership to the National Junior Honor Society is open to students in Grades 7 and 8 who meet the required standards in four areas of evaluation:

- Scholarship
- Leadership
- Service
- Character

Standards of selection are established by the National NJHS. A panel of teachers will serve as the selection committee.

### *Academic Integrity*

The Academy of St Francis of Assisi values academic honesty and integrity and expect its students to practice that value. All work turned in by the students, including homework, lab work, essays, exams, projects, tests and quizzes must reflect the student's true ability.

Teachers will report all suspected cases of cheating, plagiarism or dishonesty to the parents and principal. Students should expect to redo work and receive a lower grade or zero in any case of dishonesty.

### HOT MEALS PROGRAM

An optional Breakfast and Lunch Program is provided every day. All ordering and payment is done on a monthly basis.

Children in Grades PreK through 4 may bring in a healthy snack each day.

### HYGIENE

Personal hygiene and good grooming is an important part of a child's physical and social development. Parents should monitor frequent bathing, clean hair and nail care, use of deodorant, and good oral hygiene.

### LEAVING SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are not permitted to leave school property from the time s/he arrives in the morning until the appointed departure time in the afternoon without a written request by a parent or guardian and explicit permission from the principal or the principal's designee. A parent/guardian must go to the office to sign the student out of the building.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All grades participate in the Physical Education Program. If a student is unable to participate in the program, a note written by the parent/guardian or doctor is required. Students must be prepared for Gym. School Gym uniforms are worn on Gym day.

#### *Gym Uniforms:*

Boys & Girls: School gym shorts, white socks, T-Shirt with School Logo, sneakers and school sweat suit. Uniforms must be neat and complete.

### RETENTION

No student will be promoted to the next grade with three or more failures for the year on his/her report card. Parents will be notified by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> marking period if their child is in jeopardy of retention. A student may also be retained due to excessive absenteeism.

### TESTING

*Standardized Test:* Per diocesan policy, the Terra Nova standardized test is given to students in Grades 1-7. Grade 8 students take the Cooperative Admissions Exam (COOP). Students in Grades 4 and 7 take the Writing Assessment Test.

*Exams:* Exams are given to grades 4-8 in January and June. Final exams will be given to Grade 3. A Grade 8 student whose final grade is an A (93-100) is exempt from an exam in that specific subject area.

### INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Each year both student and parent sign the *Internet and Technology Resources Acceptable Use Policy* document. This policy applies to all school owned computers and other technological resources (audiovisual equipment, telecommunication devices, etc.) located on school grounds. This policy applies to all electronic databases, information and software as well as to physical equipment. The Internet system is established for a limited educational purpose: it has not been established as a public forum. The Academy of St. Francis of Assisi School has the right to regulate material accessed. The system may not be used for commercial purposes to offer, provide or purchase products or services. Access to the Internet is available through the school with permission of the principal or his/her designee and parents indicated by the signing of the *Internet Use Agreement*.



## SAFETY

The safety and protection of the student is of paramount importance. Toward this end, the following rules must be adhered to:

- Students may not be dropped off in the schoolyard prior to 7:45 AM.
- Children will not be released to other family members without parent permission.
- Emergency cards are required for each student with updated contact phone numbers.
- All traffic and parking rules must be followed.

## SCHOOL BULLETINS

An envelope system is currently in place to ensure the delivery of all school bulletins to the home each Tuesday. The oldest/only child in the school will receive the envelope. Please return the signed, empty envelope to school the following day. The bulletins contain school news and information about activities and upcoming events. Bulletins are also posted on the website.



Parents have an opportunity to see their child (ren)'s work each Tuesday in the Test Folder. Please sign and return the Test Folder the following day.

## SCHOOL NURSE

A school nurse is provided on a part-time basis. Students must have a nurse referral slip or permission from a teacher prior to visiting the nurse's office.

No student is to carry medication of any nature on his/her person to school at any time. If the child is in need of medication during school hours, it must be sent to the school nurse or principal in the original pharmacy labeled container with the properly signed paperwork completed by the doctor and signed by the parent.

## SCHOOL VISITATION

Parents and visitors are required to ring the bell for entry to the school. For the safety of our student, all visitors are required to check in with the office upon entry. Visitors are not permitted to go to the classrooms or the upper floor without a visitor's pass and an escort from the office.

## STATE AND FEDERAL SERVICES

The State of New Jersey provides funding aid for textbooks, nursing services, and transportation, which helps to defray costs.

### *Textbooks Chapter 79*

Parents are required to sign a textbook form each year.

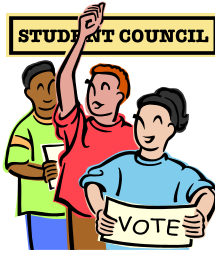
### *Special Services*

The State of New Jersey and the Federal Government provide funding for the following services:

- Corrective Speech
  - Students with articulation difficulties are eligible for corrective speech services. Testing for these services is done through Essex County Special Services. Referrals may be made after discussion with the classroom teacher and the principal.
- Chapter 192 Compensatory Education
  - Compensatory Education is a remedial program in reading and computation skills. Students who do not exceed a minimum level of proficiency, as per state guidelines, are eligible.
- Chapter 193: examination and classification of students
  - Additional help is available for students who are evaluated by a Child Study Team, comprised of a psychologist, social worker, and Learning Disabilities Teaching Consultant (LDT). Students are evaluated in the following areas:
    - Academic - the student seems to have persistent learning difficulties that interfere with acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for academic progress
    - Behavior - the student seems to have persistent social and/or emotional difficulties that interfere with his/her ability to relate satisfactorily with peers and/or adults.
    - Physical - the student seems to have a persistent physical disability.
    - Communication - the student whose native language is severely impaired to the extent that it seriously interferes with his/her ability to use oral language to communicate.
- Supplementary Instruction
  - Instruction is provided for a student classified by the Child Study Team. It is given in addition to the regular instructional program.
- Supportive Services for Acquiring Communication Proficiency in the English Language
  - These services offer students programs in English as a second language (ESL).

### STATIONERY

Notebooks, folders, etc., may be purchased in school. These items are sold at reasonable prices for your convenience. In order to preserve books, all students must cover their books.



### STUDENT COUNCIL

Grades 4-8 elect officers and class representatives to Student Council. They are students that represent the student body, conduct assemblies and are responsible for other activities planned in their meetings with their moderator and approved by the principal. The Student Council does not establish or enforce school policy. The officers elected are:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

### TELEPHONE USE

Students may use the office phone with permission - only in cases of emergency. Calling for forgotten items or homework is not permitted.

### TUITION

A regular income is necessary for the school to meet operational costs. Parents have an obligation to make accurate, timely tuition payments. We are ever sensitive to the needs of families and therefore offer options for tuition payments. Families' may choose a single payment plan due on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> prior to the beginning of the school year. A 3% discount is offered to families choosing this option.

SMART Tuition Management Company is the Diocesan tuition collection company. **All families not opting for the single payment must use SMART. Tuition is due to SMART Tuition Company as per the signed SMART Contract. Families registering late will divide payments for the remaining months left on the contract. If payments have not been made as billed for August and September, the delinquent tuition must be paid by September 10<sup>th</sup>. If any tuition account is not current by the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, educational services will be discontinued.**

Tuition payments are due within the month billed. A late fee will be posted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the month if tuition is unpaid. Also, a \$30.00 fee will be charged by SMART for the month of the delinquency for SMART to follow-up with phone calls and e-mails. **All tuition will be paid directly to SMART.** SMART accepts credit/debit card payments by mail, telephone and online in addition to money order or check payments by mail. **No payment will be accepted at the school for any reason.** All delinquent tuition payment will be paid to SMART, not the school. If tuition is delinquent, report cards may be held at the school. Arrangements may be made for payment.

If tuition is unpaid on the agreed date, the school will send a letter stating that tuition must be paid by the 30th of the month or educational services will be terminated. Arrangements may be made up until the date of discontinuation of services. There will be a one-week time period after discontinuation of services to pay the delinquent tuition in full and reinstate the student(s). After one week, the student(s) will be considered transferred and the account will be sent to collection.

If there are circumstances that have caused a delinquent tuition payment, please make an appointment with the Principal to discuss payment arrangements. Please do not wait until the discontinuation of services letter to contact the school. **Students will not be accepted for the next year until all prior year financial obligations are met.** If your account has been sent to collection due to nonpayment of tuition, school fees or fundraising, a \$20.00 collection fee will be added to the balance owed.

### UNIFORMS/DRESS CODE

Uniforms may be purchased at Co-Ed Uniform Company: 100 Broadway/Route 4, Elmwood Park, 201796-4220, [www.coeduniform.com](http://www.coeduniform.com)

Students must be in complete school uniforms each day. Shirts are to be tucked in. Boy's pants should not be worn below the waistline.

#### **BOYS**

Burgundy Long/Short sleeve knit shirt  
with school logo  
Khaki pants  
Brown rubber soled shoes

#### **GIRLS**

Burgundy Long/Short sleeve knit shirt  
with school logo  
Khaki skort or pants  
Khaki Skirt (Grades 5-8)  
Burgundy knee socks or tights  
Brown rubber soled shoes

- Only uniform sweaters are allowed.
- Grades 1-8 may alternate warm and cold weather uniforms depending on the weather.
- Grade 8 students may wear maroon fleece sweater with school logo.
- White ankle length athletic socks and sneakers may be worn only with shorts or skorts.
- Sneakers may not be worn with long pants.
- Jewelry and nail polish: In moderation.
- Girls are permitted one small post or one small hoop earring in each ear.
- Boys are not permitted to wear earrings.
- Make-Up: Girls in Grades 7 and 8 may wear make-up in moderation
- Hair: Boys' and Girls' hair should be neatly groomed.
  - Boys' hair should be conservatively cut at all times.
  - Natural hair color may not be altered in any way for either boys or girls.
  - Students may not have etching or designs cut into hair.
  - Mohawk haircuts are not permitted.

**Students must be in complete uniform on days when they will be attending Liturgy.**

*Casual Dress Days:*

Students may wear jeans, sneakers and plain T-shirts. Moderate make up allowed for grades 6-8 only. Children may have a Casual Dress Day on their birthday.

The administration is the final recourse and reserves the right to amend this Handbook when it is deemed appropriate and necessary.

Revised 2010