

**St. Matthew Catholic School, San Antonio, Texas
2017-2018 Student- Parent Handbook**

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ADMISSIONS, STUDENT RECORDS, WITHDRAWALS

St. Matthew Catholic School admits students of any race or national origin to programs and activities with all rights and privileges. Equal opportunity and access is provided to students without regard to race, national origin or gender. Preference, however, will be given to students of the Catholic faith. All students will be required to attend Mass, receive instruction in Catholic Catechism and become involved in school and community service activities.

In those cases in which physical space makes it necessary to restrict the intake of students at St. Matthew Catholic School, priority must be given to students of Catholic parents registered in St. Matthew Catholic Church that meet the entrance requirements and have demonstrated support of Catholic education in the past.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Parents who seek a Catholic education for their child enter into a contractual agreement. This agreement is established between the parent/student and St. Matthew Catholic School and in accordance with the rules of the school governing all areas of the student's development. As part of the contractual agreement, there are explicit (expressed) and implicit (implied) expectations placed on both the parent/student and St. Matthew Catholic School.

Explicit rules and regulations are included in this parent/student handbook and various school communications.

- A student should be four years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted into the Pre-Kindergarten program.
- A student should be five years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted to Kindergarten. In the process of admitting students to Kindergarten, preference will be given to families who are parishioners, regardless of whether or not their child attended the Pre-Kindergarten program. Participation in the Pre-Kindergarten program does not ensure acceptance into Kindergarten.
- A student should be six years of age on or before September 1 to be admitted into the first grade. Exception may be made in the case of a student who has completed Kindergarten in a different state where the entering age is lower provided there is also a written statement from the Kindergarten teacher that the student is ready for first grade.

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- The student must be toilet trained before entering school. No diapers or pull-ups may be worn by students at school. If the student has a toilet accident, their guardian will be required to pick him/her up from school. If the student has more than one accident, the teacher, administration and the school nurse will evaluate the child to determine their specific needs.

In addition to the age requirements, the documents or information listed below must be on file with the school office for each registered student:

- Official State Birth Certificate
- Baptismal certificate
- Health Record
 - Immunization data
 - Illness record
- Previous Report Card
- Standardized Test Results
- (If applicable) All special education or psychological test results
- (If applicable) Court Ordered documents divorce decrees, custody documentation or guardianship paperwork that reflect access to the student, the student's academic information, or visitation by either parent or guardian

Prospective students and parents will be interviewed. Readiness testing will be administered for Pre-K and Kindergarten. Grade level testing will be given for First through Eighth Grade. Admission and placement is the decision of the administration and based on testing, interviewing, observation, and other assessments.

Archdiocesan Policy 4405B Delinquent Tuition and Fees Payment Agreement, describes the steps to be taken by the party responsible for tuition and the school, when tuition and fees are delinquent. The Parent/Guardian must sign a statement indicating that the responsible party has received, read and agrees to the terms and conditions of this Archdiocesan Policy.

Enrollment is not complete until this, and all, required documents are received, reviewed and found to be in order by the school.

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ENROLLMENT PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Each student entering St. Matthew School for an initial enrollment is on probationary status for at least one semester. Students are removed from probationary status after proving they can meet our academic and behavioral standards. At the principal's discretion, any student may be placed on probation, removed from probation or have their probationary period extended at any time. Failure to meet the academic and/or behavioral standards, after having been placed on probation, may result in dismissal from St. Matthew Catholic School.

PRIORITY OF ADMISSIONS

1. Currently enrolled students
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. Contributing/active parishioners on waiting list
4. Non-Contributing/inactive parishioners on waiting list
5. Non-parishioners after waiting lists are exhausted.

Students may be admitted at the Pastor's discretion. For further clarification of In-Parish Tuition Discounts, please refer to the section titled Tuition Policy.

CLASS SIZE

Currently the school capacity is two (2) classes for Pre-Kindergarten and three (3) classes for Kindergarten through Eighth. School policy allows a maximum of 22 students in each Pre-Kinder class and 26 students in each homeroom class for Kindergarten through Eighth.

CLASS ROOM ASSIGNMENTS

The administrative staff is solely responsible for student assignments to a teacher or classroom. Changes during the school year are undertaken for educational reasons only, as deemed necessary by the administration.

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RE-ENROLLMENT

Re-enrollment at St. Matthew School occurs on a year-to-year basis during the spring semester. At the time of re-registration, children who are currently enrolled at St. Matthew are given priority over other applicants.

At the discretion of the pastor or administration, a student may be denied re-enrollment. Such circumstances for denial include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A family's unwillingness to meet its financial obligation to the school. ALL financial obligations including tuition, fees, and cafeteria charges must be up-to-date at the time of re-registration.
- A student's demonstrated failure or unwillingness to live up to the academic standards that are an integral part of the St. Matthew curriculum.
- A student's unwillingness or lack of cooperation in abiding by the St. Matthew Cardinal rules of conduct.
- A parent's inability or unwillingness to work cooperatively and respectfully with the school, its administration and its staff in resolving problems which may arise between home and school.

Failure to return re-enrollment documents and deposits by the specified date could result in forfeiture of a child's spot on the class roster for the next school year.

Students who have been withdrawn from the roster will be required to follow the Enrollment Process as described in this handbook.

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF WITHDRAWAL

When the school has received official notification of withdrawal from the parent/guardian (verbal, in writing electronically or through a letter) the student's slot for the next school year will be forfeited. The official Enrollment Process as described in this handbook must be followed to gain re-admission to St. Matthew and will be dependent on the waiting list for the particular grade level(s).

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The policy of the Archdiocese (Policy 3307) is that schools will, if able, provide students with special needs with an opportunity for an education. However, if students with special needs apply to a school that is not capable of offering the necessary programs, services and facilities, they will be referred to other schools and programs that have the ability to effectively serve their needs.

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TRANSFER POLICIES

Acceptance of students from Kindergarten through 7th grade is dependent on a satisfactory report from their previous school and the availability of space in the required grade level. Other factors considered include:

- Family registration as parishioners
- Academic progress
- Conduct and effort ratings as documented on report cards
- Standardized test scores
- For students transferring from a school within the Archdiocese, financial obligations at the transferring school must be current.

Eligible transfer students will have a personal interview with the principal and/or vice-principal. Students in grades K-7 will be tested. Out-of-state students will follow the entry-level age requirements of the Archdiocese. If accepted, official transcripts from the previous school must be submitted to the school office in order to complete the transfer enrollment process.

All transfer students that are offered admission to St. Matthew Catholic School Middle School are accepted on a probationary contract for one semester. Terms of this contract include participation in the spiritual life of St. Matthew as evidenced by success in religion class, participation in school liturgies and school and individual service activities; passing grades of at least 70% in each subject; and, observance of the Cardinal Rules as evidenced by an S or above in conduct and commitment to regular attendance.

Students in the elementary grades may also be placed on a probationary contract. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

TRANSFERS WITHIN THE ARCHDIOCESE

The transfer of a student from one Catholic school to another within the Archdiocese can occur only after consultation between the principals of the two schools involved and allowing for the fulfillment of all the above requirements.

STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Permanent record cards and health records will be released to a receiving school when that school applies directly by mail to the sending school. If the student is transferring to a Catholic school within the Archdiocese, the original permanent record card and health records shall be transferred. If the student is transferring to a school that is not a part of the Archdiocese, a copy of the student's permanent record card and the original health records shall be transferred. These records will be released without an onsite parent's signature, since it is assumed that the receiving school has that signature on file. All special education or psychological test results, which are to be released to a receiving school, must include a parent's signed release of that information.

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STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM PUBLIC AND OTHER NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Placement of students transferring from public and other state approved non-public schools is the decision of the administration based on testing, observation and other assessments. This decision is made if it is deemed in the best interest of the student and the placement is agreeable to both parents and the principal.

STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM HOME SCHOOLING AND NON-ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

St. Matthew Catholic School Administration will review transfer requests from students who transfer from non-accredited schools or home schooling. Copies of the following certificates must be presented at the time of registration for a student in grades 2-8:

- Official State Birth certificate
- Baptismal certificate (Catholics only)
- Immunization records
- Official cumulative record or transcript of previous grade

STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM FOREIGN SCHOOLS

Placement of students transferring from foreign schools shall be determined by the administration of the school in which they are enrolling. Credits earned by students in schools located in foreign countries, once verified, will be accepted.

DUAL ENROLLMENT WITH NON-ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

St. Matthew Catholic School will not enter into a dual enrollment arrangement with non-accredited schools for any portion of the day. This position maintains our commitment to operate an accredited school.

TRANSFER REQUESTS FOR 8TH GRADE

St. Matthew School does not routinely accept transfer students into the 8th grade. At the discretion of the administration, exceptions may be granted for transfer students from outside of the city or state who are transferring from Catholic schools or who are siblings of incoming PreK – 7th grade students. If accepted, official transcripts from the previous school must be submitted to the school office and all requirements previously listed for admission to St. Matthew Catholic School must be satisfied.

REQUESTS FOR RE-ADMISSION TO ST. MATTHEW

Students who have left St. Matthew Catholic School and who wish to return are subject to the acceptance policies stated above. Prior attendance does not guarantee acceptance, special privileges or priority for waiting lists, nor does it override commitments made to other families.

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WITHDRAWAL OF A STUDENT

The parent/guardian of a student should notify the school office of the student's withdrawal. Contacting the school office 24 hours prior to withdrawal is required.

When the school has received official notification of withdrawal from the parent/guardian (verbal, in writing electronically or through a letter) the student's slot for the next school year will be forfeited. The official Enrollment Process as described in this handbook must be followed to gain re-admission to St. Matthew and will be dependent on the waiting list for the particular grade level(s).

STUDENT PERMANENT RECORD

A permanent record is maintained for each student. The student's official file contains the following items: academic transcripts, academic testing, health records and emergency information. Only copies of the contents of the official and original health record will be forwarded to a new school. The school retains the permanent records when the student transfers or graduates.

ACCESS TO RECORDS - NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT (*ARCHDIOCESE POLICY 3203)

In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.