

***SAINT MATTHEW'S
EPISCOPAL SCHOOL***



STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

2017 – 2018

Table of Contents

Page 3	Forward
Page 4	St. Matthew's Mission Statement, Annual Theme, Philosophy and Non- Discrimination Policy
Page 5	Admissions Requirements and School Values and Expectations
Page 6	Special Services and Registration Requirements
Page 7	Guardianship, Teacher Request, and Fees
Page 8	Tuition Fees, Tuition Delinquency and Early Withdrawal
Page 9	Late Registration, Hot Lunch Program, Fundraising, and Returned Checks
Page 10	Extended Day Eligibility, Fees, and Policies
Page 11	School Hours and Student Delivery and Pick –Up
Page 12	Delivery and Pick-Up continued, Attendance Policy, and Return from Absences
Page 13	Tardy Policy, Perfect Attendance and Excellent Attendance, Early Pick-Up Arrival Back to School, Health Check, Informing the Parents, and Ill Child
Page 14	Accidents, Insect Repellant, Sunscreen, Abuse and Neglect Reporting, Abuse and Neglect Education
Page 15	Immunizations, Medication Policy, Physical Education, and Background Checks and Mandatory Training
Page 16	Religious Instruction, Homework Expectations, Daily Time Spent on Homework
Page 17	Grading Procedures; Progress Reports/Report Cards, ITBS Testing, Classroom Expectations, and End-of-the-Year Awards
Page 18	Dress Code, Field Trips and Chaperones, and Behavior and Conduct
Page 19	Behavior and Conduct continued, Biting, Suspension, Bullying, and Expulsion
Page 20	Conferences, Chain-of-Command, Social Media Etiquette, and Visitors
Page 21	Gang-free Zone, Personal Possessions, Change of Address or Phone Number, Snacks, Lunches, Bake Sale, and Correspondences from the School
Page 22	Emergency Closing, School Parties, Birthdays, Child Care's Most Recent Licensing Report Posted Location, Contacting Texas DFPS, TDFPS website
Page 22	Acceptance Responsibility and Device Use Agreement Form
Page 23-26	Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
Page 27	Electronic Devices
Page 28	Acceptance Responsibility and Device Use Agreement Form
Page 29	St. Matthew's Episcopal School Covenant

FORWARD

We thank you for choosing Saint Matthew's Episcopal School. We, the faculty, staff, administration, school board, and church vestry of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and School are committed to making your experience with our school community as positive and productive as possible.

Saint Matthew's Episcopal School is a private, educational institution operated as a ministry of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. Its policies and procedures are determined by the St. Matthew's School Board and the St. Matthew's Church Vestry. The School Principal and the staff are responsible for implementing our school policies and guidelines.

Saint Matthew's Episcopal School

"Intellectual and Character Education Go Hand in Hand"

MISSION STATEMENT

"A community of Christians committed to academic excellence and spiritual growth for our children today"

Annual Theme

Our theme this year is *God is Here!* We have drawn this theme from the scripture: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13) We are often asked what sets us apart from other schools. Indeed, being a Christian community, inviting all to seek and know Jesus, is an integral part of what makes St. Matthew's Episcopal School so very special. Include a genuine and thorough academic program, and your children's potential is boundless. You will find *GOD IS HERE!*

PHILOSOPHY

All students deserve the encouragement and opportunity to gain the skills and values that will enable them to become responsible, caring, and trustworthy citizens.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Saint Matthew's Episcopal School accepts students of any gender, race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, or religious affiliation. Rights, privileges, programs, and activities are afforded to all students. The school does not discriminate in any of its admission or educational programs.

ADMISSIONS

AGE REQUIREMENTS

- Pre-Kindergarten 2 year old program- Child needs to be 2 years old as of September 1 of the year to be enrolled.
- Pre- Kindergarten 3 year old program – Child needs to be 3 years old as of September 1 of the year to be enrolled and be toilet trained.
- Pre- Kindergarten 4 year old program- Child needs to be 4 years old as of September 1 of the year to be enrolled.
- Kindergarten 5 year old program- Child needs to be 5 years old as of September 1 of the year to be enrolled.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT POLICY

All students enrolling at St. Matthew's Episcopal School for the first time and all returning students **must have a completed registration packet on file, a copy of their birth certificate, Social Security Number, TB test, and an updated immunization form. An extended day form must also be completed and on file for all students enrolling in the extended day program. All fees/tuition must be current at the time of registration. Returning students will not be eligible to enroll for the new school year if there are outstanding fees from the previous year. All students must reapply for admission annually. St. Matthew's Episcopal School will request school information from students transferring from another school.** All official school records are transferred through the schools.

There will be a six week probationary period for each new student. At the end of this six week period, a conference may be held with the parents, the teacher, and the principal if deemed necessary. If after review, the student or parents have not been able to adjust to the academic or social environment of our school, St. Matthew's School reserves the right to ask the parents to withdraw the student at that time.

Any student seeking admission to St. Matthew's, who for any reason was suspended or expelled from another school, may not be admitted.

St. Matthew's Episcopal School Values and Expectations

We are a Christian Community dedicated to instilling positive values for our children. These values impact the quality of the educational experience for each student. St. Matthew's Episcopal School depends on the parents and family members, who are at the forefront of the educational partnership, to instill these Christian Values and engage in behavior reflecting these values especially while on the school grounds. St. Matthew's Episcopal School reserves the right to have a parent or family member removed from the school grounds or from any school sponsored event should these values be compromised or not be represented: Respect, Professionalism, Honor, Compassion, Sincerity, Responsibility, Joy, Self-Control, Patience, Peace, Gentleness, and Kindness.

SPECIAL SERVICES

St. Matthew's Episcopal School is grateful for the opportunity to serve children in Pre K 3 – 6th grade. School programs, activities, and privileges are afforded to all students. Please be advised that it is our responsibility as a school community to inform parents of student needs and special services St. Matthew's Episcopal School may not be equipped to handle. Should a student's academic progress be in question, the principal will meet with the teacher and parent(s) to work together to reach a decision in the best interest of the child.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

English proficiency is required for admission into our Kindergarten – Sixth grade classes.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Any currently outstanding tuition, extended day fees, and any other fees must be paid in full prior to registration.

The following records/ forms for each student must be on file in the school office:

1. Copy of the birth certificate
2. Social Security Number
3. Records from the child's previous school (transfer students only)
4. Current immunization records signed by the doctor (Exemptions are not allowed)
5. All results of any educational/ psychological evaluations, whether done by the public school system or from the private sector.
6. Emergency information form.
7. Extended day enrollment form (if applicable)
8. FACTS (Fast Automatic Cash Transfer System) tuition payment preference form.

REGISTERING ONCE THE SCHOOL YEAR IS IN SESSION

Please provide St. Matthew's School with a written statement explaining the reason for your request to place your child in the school once the school year has already begun. As stated in the above registration requirements, your child's records from the previous school must be transferred directly from the school to St. Matthew's. Two references will be necessary from among the following: a previous teacher, counselor, principal or another adult that has been involved in your child's academic or extra curricular activities. A conference will be held with the principal prior to admission.

GUARDIANSHIP

In cases where the child does not live with both parents, proof of legal guardianship must be provided at the time of enrollment.

TEACHER REQUEST

Parents' request for a particular teacher may be considered by the Principal. Students are placed in classrooms based on teacher input, students' compatibility, class make up (boy/girl), and teacher/student ratio. These factors are taken into consideration in order to achieve balance and diversity in the classroom. The Principal will have the final authority regarding student placement.

PAYMENTS AND FEES

It is requested that payments made to the school be in the form of a check or money order. In the case that the parent prefers to make cash payment, it is the responsibility of the parent to submit the cash payment with the appropriate forms to the school office so that a receipt of payment can be promptly recorded. Nominal cash payments that are acceptable: AVO lunch payments, T-shirt orders, Bake Sale, field trip payments, not to exceed \$50 and must have the associated form included with the payment.

Credit card and debit card payments will include a 3 % convenience fee for purchases that total \$15 or greater.

Money Brought to School:

All money requested from teachers for school sponsored events should be submitted to the school secretary only. At no time should money be collected by or submitted to the classroom teacher. The school is not responsible for misplaced or stolen money.

REGISTRATION, CURRICULUM, AND TECHNOLOGY FEE

- The Registration, Curriculum, and Technology fees are due at the time of registration. These fee are non- refundable and non-transferable. All fees are per child.
- The technology fee aids with the maintenance and upkeep of the equipment, training for the staff, as well as the purchase of the latest programs and software suitable for the students.

TUITION FEES

Tuition, as set by the St. Matthew's School Board on an annual basis, is to be paid according to one of the listed payment plans. Each family's preferred manner of payment must be submitted each year at the time of registration. You may choose your method of payment from the options below.

- **Payment in Full:** Under this plan, the entire amount of tuition must be made directly to the School's office in the form of a check or money order by the first day of school.
- **FACTS Monthly Payments:**
- **FACTS** (Fast Automatic Cash Transfer System) is an automatic payment plan made through your checking or Savings account. You must complete a FACTS agreement form, upon registration, authorizing the automatic monthly payments on either the 5th or the 20th of each month.
- Under this plan, the entire amount of tuition is paid monthly over a 10 or 12 month period, or bi-annually, of the upcoming school year through the FACTS Tuition Management Plan.
 - 10 months is August – May
 - 12 months is June – May (for this plan to be possible, the student must be registered by May 15 of the current school year.)
 - Bi-annual payments due in July and in January
- FACTS charges a \$41.00 non-refundable enrollment fee per family.
- For more information on FACTS Tuition Management Company, visit their website at www.factsmgt.com. It is very important that parents understand the company's withdrawal procedures.

TUITION DELIQUENCY

Accounts for tuition that are delinquent for two months will result in the student being withdrawn from school. St. Matthew's Episcopal School will hold all student records until financial obligations are met.

EARLY WITHDRAWAL

The School Board may consider tuition reimbursement for payments made in advance after review of the circumstances and approval.

LATE REGISTRATION

Tuition for students registering after the first day of school shall be pro-rated over the number of school days they will be in attendance according to a formula established by the St. Matthew's School Board.

HOT LUNCH PROGRAM

St. Matthew's Episcopal School offers an optional hot lunch program. The school works in conjunction with Don Pepe's Restaurant in McAllen in providing this service. A menu and order form will be sent home each month so that parents will be able to select specific days their child will eat at school. It is essential to adhere to the ordering deadlines as St. Matthew's School and Don Pepe's must have the information with an adequate amount of time in order to provide your children with their meals.

FUND-RAISING

A significant portion of our operating income is generated from our fund-raising activities. For this reason, there is required participation in two annual St. Matthew's Church and School fundraisers. Parents will be responsible for selling tickets for *FIESTA*, which is held in the fall; and for selling tickets for *HOLY SMOKE BARBEQUE*, which is held in the spring. The minimum amount will be stated annually in the enrollment contracts. There are also sponsorship opportunities available for businesses and families. Any outstanding balances for required fund-raising will necessitate that St. Matthew's School hold all the student's records until financial obligations are met. We encourage and appreciate your volunteer time as well. Required fundraising fees may NOT be paid in cash and must be turned in directly to the office. Fundraising fees may be paid by the following methods: through FACTS, by (one) check or (one) money order preferably, or less desirably, by credit or debit card. Please make a notation in the check's or money order's memo box that denotes your child's name and grade level.

RETURNED CHECKS

There will be a \$25.00 fee for any returned check pertaining to any and all school business.

EXTENDED DAY FEES AND POLICIES

ELIGIBILITY

Extended day services are available to our St. Matthew’s students and children of our St. Matthew’s faculty and staff. Extended day services for students attending public school are also afforded to parents having a child, or children, currently enrolled at St. Matthew’s.

EXTENDED DAY ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Extended Day enrollment forms (including an up to date immunization record) are to be filled out and returned to the Director by the first day the student is to be enrolled in the program.

Extended Day is available for full school days until 5:30 P.M.

Extended day will not be available for school holidays and early dismissals.

EXTENDED DAY FEES

Students that are enrolled in the extended day program will pay the following monthly rates:

Pre- Kindergarten 2- Sixth grade	3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	\$100
Pre- Kindergarten 2- Sixth grade	3:30 –5:30 p.m.	\$150

Extended day payments may be paid through FACTS. The extended day drop-in rate is \$10.00 an hour. Charges for extended day are billed directly from the school office.

EXTENDED DAY LATE PICK-UP FEES

Extended day care ends at 5:30 p.m. A \$20.00 late pick-up fee will be charged for any child/ children not picked up by 5:35 p.m. An additional \$20.00 will be charged for each additional 30 minutes the children stay late in extended day. This late pick-up fee is assessed per family.

TIMELY PAYMENT OF EXTENDED DAY FEES

Any of the above mentioned fees relating to extended day are due by the 10th of each month. After the 20th of each month a \$20.00 late fee will be assessed.

SCHOOL HOURS

Supervisor on duty	7:00 A.M.
School Office Hours	7:00 A.M.- 4:30 P.M.
Faculty in the classrooms	7:45 A.M.
The school day begins	8:00 A.M.
Lunch (PK-2, PK-3, and PK-4)	11:00 A.M.
Lunch (Kindergarten- 6 th)	12:30 P.M.
Dismissal (PK-2, PK-3, and PK-4)	3:00 P.M. (North Parking Lot)
Dismissal (Kinder)	3:30 P.M. (North Parking Lot)
Dismissal (First - 6 th grade)	3:30 P.M. (South Parking Lot)

STUDENT DELIVERY AND PICK-UP

The delivery of students should always be done in the front of the building using the main parking lot facing Canton or the entrance facing Crestview. **WE URGE YOU TO PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY WHEN APPROACHING AND DEPARTING THE SCHOOL.** Please park in a designated parking space and turn your engine off when leaving your car unattended or when you anticipate taking a longer while to drop off your children.

Please do not hold conversations with teachers as they are loading students into cars. If you have a concern, please make arrangements to discuss the matter with the teacher during her/his conference period by calling the office.

Students in the Pre-K2, Pre-K3, and Pre-K4 program will be dismissed at 3:00 p.m. at the north exit of the school. PK2 students in our half day program are dismissed at noon. Full-Time PK2-PK4 students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be taken to the Extended Day classroom. Extended day fees will begin at 3:30 pm if the student remains in our care beyond 4:00 pm. A minimum charge of \$10.00 an hour will be assessed. Half-Day PK2 students not picked up by 12 noon, will have a minimum charge of \$10.00 an hour assessed.

Students in Kinder will be dismissed at 3:30 pm at the north exit of the school. Students not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will be taken to the Extended Day Classroom. Extended day

fees will begin at 3:30 pm if the student remains in our care beyond 4:00 pm. A minimum charge of \$10.00 an hour will be assessed.

Students in 1st – 6th grade will be dismissed at 3:30 pm at the south exit of the school. Students not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will be taken to the Extended Day classroom. . Extended day fees will begin at 3:30 pm if the student remains in our care beyond 4:00 pm. A minimum charge of \$10.00 an hour will be assessed.

School personnel shall exercise caution in allowing students to leave with someone other than persons listed by the parents on the registration form. **A CALL OR NOTE TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE MUST BE MADE PRIOR TO DISMISSAL** if a student is to be picked up by someone other than those listed on the registration form. The person picking up the student must be prepared to present an I.D. for clearance.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is expected. Students perform much better socially and academically when they attend school regularly. Our academic calendar provides multiple opportunities for families to rest and travel throughout the year. If a student will be out of school due to a planned trip, it is the responsibility of the student and parents to make plans with the teacher for the make-up work. **Absences should not exceed twelve days.** Absences beyond twelve days must be justified by doctor's excuses. A student's promotion to the next grade level could be in jeopardy if there are excessive absences.

- Expected absences- For example, scheduled appointments, out-of-town trips with the family, extra curricular activities (Religious, FFA, 4-H, Dance, Music, etc.). Parents need to notify the Principal and the teacher(s) of the pending absence 1 week in advance. It is the responsibility of the student and the parents to get the appropriate class assignments for the time that the absence will take place and to make sure that completed assignments are turned in on time.
- Unexpected absences- For example, illness of the student, illness of a family member, death in the family or other emergency situations. In the case of an unexpected absence, please notify the school office by 10:00 A.M. the day of the absence. Once the office has been notified, parents may pick up schoolwork from the office after 3:30 that afternoon. It is the responsibility of the student and the parents to get the appropriate class assignments for the time that the absence took place.

RETURN FROM ABSENCES

A note from the parent explaining the absence must be presented to the teacher on the first day back to school. This constitutes an excused absence. A doctor's excuse is required after two consecutive days of being absent. The student will be allowed one day for make-up work for each day that the child was absent. If the student is returning after having had a contagious illness, a doctor's release is needed upon the student's return.

TARDY POLICY

Students perform much better socially and academically when they attend school regularly. Our academic calendar provides multiple opportunities for families to rest and travel throughout the year. If a student will be out of school due to a planned trip, it is the responsibility of the student and parents to make plans with the teacher for the make-up work. Absences should not exceed twelve days. Absences beyond twelve days must be justified by doctor's excuses. A student's promotion to the next grade level could be in jeopardy if there are excessive absences.

Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. are counted as tardy. Students arriving after 10:00 a.m. are counted as absent.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE and EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE

The student must not have any absences in order to receive perfect attendance. The student is permitted up to 2 excused absences for the school year in order to receive excellence attendance. **Tardies disqualify the potential for either recognition.**

EARLY PICK-UP

For your child's attendance to count fully for the school day, please do not pick your child up before 12:30 p.m. if at all possible. When you arrive to pick your child up, go to the office and sign your child out.

ARRIVAL BACK TO SCHOOL

Parents need to sign their child in when returning to campus.

HEALTH CHECK AND INFORMING THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Each morning, the teacher will conduct a visual or physical assessment of a child to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including signs or symptoms of illness and injury, in response to changes in the child's behavior since the last date of attendance. You will be contacted by phone by the school office immediately if there is any sign of illness or injury.

If your child has a rash, sore throat, runny nose, fever, cough, or is vomiting, please keep him/her at home. These may be signs of a contagious disease. All children who develop a rash, sore throat, severe cough, fever, or vomiting during the school day will be sent home. Your child needs to be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. The school will notify you if your child becomes ill or injured at school. In case of illness or injury, you will be asked to come to school and pick up your child. If the school is unable to reach the parent, the person listed as an alternate will be contacted next. In cases where the school is unable to contact anyone and the situation merits emergency medical attention, the child will either be transported to the family doctor's office (if in Edinburg) or the hospital emergency room.

Contagious illnesses should be reported to the school office immediately in order to notify the staff and parents. It is imperative that you do not send your child to school if you suspect they have a contagious illness. When returning to school, a physician's release must be brought to the school office.

ACCIDENTS

First Aid will be administered to children who are injured during school hours. In case of apparent serious injury, we will follow the instructions provided on the student's emergency form. In the event that the parent cannot be reached, the school will determine the course of action, such as whether or not to take the child to the doctor (if in Edinburg) or the nearest hospital. Continuous attempts will be made by the office staff to notify the parent of the situation.

Insect Repellant and Sun Screen

Students should bring 2 spray cans of insect repellant, or enough boxes of insect repellant wipes to last the year (10% or less of DEET, or homeopathic option) and 2 containers of sunscreen (50 + SPF) from home. This will be part of the school supply list for each school year. Please ensure that each product's container is labeled with the student's name and the expiration date. Insect repellant will be applied on children before outdoor activities. The insect repellant will be applied in a well ventilated area. Sunscreen will be applied to the skin which is exposed during outdoor activities. Sunscreen does expire, so please be mindful of pending expiration dates. If outdoor activities are taking place under the covered pavilion, or under the shade trees, sunscreen will not be applied. If a parent objects to the application of a skin product on his/her child, he/she will need to indicate so on a waiver at the beginning of the school year.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

If at any point, you suspect a student at St. Matthew's Episcopal School is being neglected or abused, you must report it to the Abuse and Neglect Hotline. **The phone number is 1-800-252-5400.** Do not delegate this responsibility to another person. Do not delay. Once you have made the call, and completed your documentation, the proper authorities will investigate the situation fully.

ABUSE AND NEGELECT EDUCATION

At the onset of the school year, notifications and information pertaining to the prevention and reporting of abuse and neglect of children will be distributed to the parents. The principal will hold an orientation the evening of Back-to-School Night which is held the Thursday evening before the first day of school. Postings will be placed on bulletin boards in the main hallway and the PK classrooms. Abuse and neglect are preventable. Join us in being a strong community that advocates for the well-being of children.

IMMUNIZATIONS

All new and returning students must have a copy of their most recent and up-to-date Immunization (as recommended by the Academy of Pediatrics) records on file to be enrolled at St. Matthew's Episcopal School.

MEDICATION POLICY

- A medication consent form must be filled out and turned into the office when the need arises for your child to receive medication at school.
- Prescription medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, directions, and the physician's name.
- Medication will not be administered after it has expired.
- All nonprescription medication must be labeled with the child's name and date and will be administered to the child only after a medication consent form has been filled out.
- The office personnel will administer all prescription and nonprescription medication. Medication cannot be kept in the classroom or administered by the teacher.
- A student on Ritalin, or similar medication, must have their first dose an hour before school starts, and/or as prescribed by the attending physician.
- The principal must approve any exceptions to this policy.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The physical education program at St. Matthew's is an active program where children are expected to participate each day; therefore, all students are required to wear tennis shoes on a daily basis. If a child is not able to participate because of illness, a note from the parents requesting the child be excused from P.E. is needed. A doctor's excuse is needed for any long-term absence from P.E.

Background Checks and Mandatory Training

Background checks are conducted by the Diocese of West Texas for all teachers and staff. FBI and Finger printing background checks are conducted for all teachers and staff who work with the PK2 students. Teachers and staff must clear their background checks; there are no exceptions to this rule. Our teachers and staff are required to attend a mandatory training titled Safeguarding God's Children every five years. This training instructs individuals how to detect abuse and neglect and how to avoid situations that could be construed as situations of abuse or neglect.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

St. Matthew's School is a Christian school, a ministry of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, and a parish community of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. As the school's mission statement proclaims, "**A community of Christians committed to academic excellence and spiritual growth for our children today**". The combination of academics and study in harmony with spirituality and religion is achieved at St. Matthew's through daily chapel services and religious instruction. Chapel service takes place in the church Monday - Thursday. Chapel is generally led by the Parish Coordinator, the Principal, and occasionally a teacher. Teachers, students, parents, and family members are always welcome to join us for worship. Students sing hymns and songs, learn and read from the Bible, offer prayers for the community and those in need, say the Pledge of Allegiance, and engage in school service activities to reinforce the Christian values of loving God and our neighbor. Fridays afternoons, a New Religious instruction class will take place for first-sixth graders. At the close of the school day on Fridays, 3:10-3:30, a contemporary and upbeat Chapel experience will take place. Students' families are encouraged to attend with their children. Students will not be released early on Fridays with the exceptions of doctor's visits or family trips. The religious traditions and backgrounds of our students are always respected.

ACADEMICS

HOMEWORK

Homework is an opportunity for the student to master the skills necessary to achieve success. The homework that will be assigned relates directly to their classroom instruction. It is meant to reinforce the daily lessons. The amount of time allotted for homework will generally correlate to the grade level of the student. However, it is to the teacher's discretion to assign more or less homework based on the specific tasks or learning needs of the student. Reading and Math Facts should be a part of a student's daily study habits. Homework may be assigned daily.

Homework is expected to be turned in on time. Five points will be deducted from homework that is submitted after the start of class but before the end of the day; ten points will be deducted for each subsequent day it is late

TIME SPENT ON DAILY HOMEWORK

Kindergarten – 1 st grade:	30 minutes
2 nd grade:	30 – 45 minutes
3 rd grade:	45 minutes
4 th , 5 th , and 6 th grades:	60- 90 minutes

Grading Procedures and Retesting

Eight grades per subject should be recorded in the grade books for each six weeks grading period.

Teachers will not permit students to grade each other's work

Projects and/ or reports will be assigned to students with a minimum of two weekends allowed in order for the assignments to be well planned and thorough.

It is left to the teacher's professional opinion and discretion to offer a retest. Retests will only be administered for students who have failed a test and have the parent's signature on the test with the failing grade. The grade resulting from the retest is the grade that will be recorded in the gradebook. Only one retest will be permitted per failing test grade.

PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS

Kindergarten through Sixth: progress reports will be sent home after the first 3 weeks of school and then in the middle of the reporting periods at 3 week intervals.

Kindergarten through Sixth: report cards will be sent home each six- week's period. There are 6 six- weeks grading periods in the school year.

Pre- K3 and Pre- K4 program, report cards are sent home every 12 weeks.

ITBS TESTING

First through sixth grade students at St. Matthew's Episcopal School are administered a norm- referenced test in April. ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) is utilized as a tracking device in order to establish academic progress throughout the year. While this administration may indicate strengths and weaknesses in certain areas, it is only one form of a student's progress.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Each student should arrive to school daily with the necessary school supplies. Students should also be well rested each school day so they can be successful learners.

End-of-the-Year Awards

We will award our students with recognition based on academic excellence. We will hold awards assemblies at the end of the year to recognize academic success. An array of awards will be presented to students for their accomplishments.

DRESS CODE

- All students will wear their school uniform daily, and tennis shoes are required with the uniform, as students participate in a daily physical education class, and other forms of shoes may pose a threat to their safety.
- Shorts should be a modest length and skirts should have shorts worn underneath.
- Hairstyles (including excessive length for boys), highlighting, dying, and/or hair accessories which distract from the learning environment are not permitted. Hair must be neatly groomed.
- A call may be made to the parent at the discretion of the Principal if the student is not in compliance with the dress code.
- **Monday- Thursday:** Navy or red St. Matthew's Polo with khaki pants, capris, shorts, skirts, or skirts.
- **Fridays:** St. Matthew's spirit shirt: (The orange Armadillo shirt, *Fiesta, BBQ, Soccer, or Track and Field*) with blue jeans or blue jean shorts or blue jean skirts.
- **Library days:** orange armadillo Polo shirt with khaki bottoms.
- **Field Trips:** Monday through Thursday - Orange Armadillo Polo with khaki bottoms; Friday field trips will require the Orange Polo with blue jeans, blue jean shorts, or blue jean skirts.

FIELD TRIPS AND CHAPERONES

St. Matthew's students will have the opportunity to go on field trips that are designed for the education and enrichment of their class. You will be notified in advance about these outings. A permission slip will be sent home with the student pertaining to the details of the outing. **You must sign and return the permission slip to the school in order for your child to be able to attend the outing. If a permission slip is misplaced, a written note from the parent stating that the child has permission to attend the specific event can be sent to school. The written permission slip should be signed by the parent and an emergency phone number should be included as well.** If the signed permission slip is not returned by the date of the trip, the student will not be allowed to leave campus. No phone calls can be made to obtain permission. Verbal permission will not be accepted. We cannot allow any exceptions to this policy.

The teachers are in charge of all field trips. They will establish the itineraries for all trips with prior approval from the principal. Drivers must present proof of auto insurance to the front office prior to the field trip. Vehicles should travel in a group while adhering to all rules of the road. It is important to exchange cell phone numbers with the other chaperones traveling in the group. Each vehicle must have one seat and one seatbelt per child. No child is to sit in the front seat. We are grateful to the fact that our chaperones are caring for the students as if they were their own.

BEHAVIOR AND CONDUCT

St. Matthew's Episcopal School encourages and expects children to be responsible for their own behavior and to be considerate of the needs of the class. Good manners are stressed. In this way, self-discipline can be fostered as the child matures. Children will be taught by example through the use of fair and consistent rules. If necessary, discipline will be relevant to the behavior involved. In order to guarantee all the students the excellent educational climate they deserve, no student will be allowed to prevent a

teacher from teaching or a classmate from learning. Students will not be allowed to engage in behavior that is not in his/her best interest or the best interest of others. A brief, supervised “chill out” period, not to exceed three minutes, may be used when appropriate. Please ask your child’s teacher for a list of the classroom rules.

BITING

St. Matthew’s teachers will do their best to provide a stimulating and engaging environment for your child to discourage incidences of biting. There are occasions where students in the early childhood programs respond to situations by biting as they may not yet be able to express themselves by other means. If your child bites, or is bitten, you will be notified on the same day of the occurrence. The bite will be treated. An acceptable form of redirection for the biter will occur for following the incident. The incident will be documented as well. In the event that biting becomes routine for the child, it will be recommended that the parents speak with their child’s pediatrician to better understand the possible causes. If there is not a resolution to the biting, and all measures have been exhausted, St. Matthew’s reserves the right to ask the parents to withdraw their child.

SUSPENSION

Physical Contact that is aggressive in nature (shoving, punching, tripping, hitting) will result in an automatic suspension (1-3 days) for the students involved. The recipient of the aggressive behavior is instructed to not fight back and to report the encounter immediately to a teacher or adult in charge so as not to be suspended. A conference with the attending teacher(s), principal, and parents must take place before the student(s) may return to school. Civility over aggression must be our response and example

Students will be suspended for vandalism, bullying, hazing, fighting, and bringing weapons, fireworks, alcohol, tobacco or drugs to school. A parent meeting is to be held with the principal before a student is allowed to return to school.

BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another student and the behavior results in harm to the student or the student’s property, places a student in fear of physical harm or of damage to the student’s property, or is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

EXPULSION

A student may be expelled from school, if in the judgment of the principal, the student refuses to comply with school policies and his/her behavior is determined to be a serious risk to the school community.

CONFERENCES

If you have a concern or question regarding your child's experience at St. Matthew's, your first point of contact must be the child's teacher. You may ask the principal to join the conference. Conferences must be scheduled in advance. Courtesy and respect are the established guidelines for a successful outcome.

Conferences between students and teachers are also encouraged. A student who does not understand an assignment or is concerned about his/her academic progress should visit with the teacher immediately. Teachers are eager to help in any way possible. Your child's teacher is in the best position to understand the specific area that may be causing concern.

CHAIN-OF-COMMAND

It is your right as a parent to have your concerns addressed. Please follow the chain-of-command and call the School Secretary to schedule an appointment:

1. Talk to your child's teacher. If not satisfied,
2. Talk to the Principal. If not satisfied,
3. Talk to the Rector. (In the absence of the rector, talk to the Parish Coordinator)

If not satisfied,

4. Submit a typed document with your concerns 2 weeks prior to the next school board meeting to the school secretary. The document will be submitted to the the School Board President and will be reviewed by the school board at the next scheduled meeting. The school board will notify you with information pertinent to your concerns.

SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTE

Please follow the established protocol for handling situations that involve St. Matthew's Episcopal School. At no time is it constructive to take your concerns to social media. The most constructive way to solve a problem is to deal directly with the involved parties. St. Matthew's Episcopal School reserves the right to sever a relationship with parents who relay negatively perceived information using social media.

PARENTAL VISITS

Parents are always welcome at St. Matthew's. Parents may visit the school during hours of operation to observe their child, the school's program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment of the facilities and grounds without prior approval. **Please stop by the school office first** to check in with the office and to pick up a visitor's pass. We need to be aware of the visitors that are on campus.

GANG-FREE ZONE

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of St. Matthew's Episcopal School is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty. Parents will be informed of this law by writing at the evening of Back-to-School Night during Parent Orientation.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS and TOYS

All items of value should be left at home. Fidget spinners are not permitted on campus. If brought to school, they will be confiscated and disposed. Toys are not allowed on campus with the exception being show-and-tell items as instructed by the teacher. **Cell phones are not permitted at school.** The school is not responsible for damaged and/or lost items. Any items brought to school for the student, for example coats, jackets, show-and-tell items, lunchboxes or backpacks, need to be properly labeled with the student's name. Misplaced items will be placed in the lost and found basket in the staff workroom.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER

It is very important for the school to maintain current addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for all students. Home and work phone numbers should be updated ASAP whenever a change occurs. It is just as important to update emergency numbers listed for your children.

SNACKS AND LUNCH

Every student should bring a small nutritious snack for mid-morning. Students not participating in the school's lunch program, should bring a sack lunch, or have parents bring them lunch during their lunch periods. For the younger grades (PK2-Kindergarten), the teacher may request that you provide an afternoon snack for your child. Sodas and soft drinks are highly discouraged. Snacks and lunches will not be warmed up.

BAKE SALE

Most Friday afternoons a class will host a bake sale for the St. Matthew's PK3-Sixth grade students and the school community. Parents will be asked to contribute bake sale items for their child's class. Generally, each class sponsors a bake sale twice a year. The proceeds from each class's bake sale go toward field trip expenses and class projects. Parent volunteers are needed to help when their child's class sponsors a bake sale.

Items that are often sold: nachos, ice cream sundaes, corn-in-a-cup, fruit cups, baked goods and waters. Students are invited to bring \$3 each Friday to select an item and a drink which will support the sponsoring class's fundraising efforts.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE SCHOOL

We work diligently to keep our parents informed and up-to-date. Most of our communication will be by email. The school newsletter is emailed at the beginning of each week and serves as an important tool in keeping you abreast of school functions and deadlines. PRE- K2 will keep pertinent information posted on the classroom bulletin board as well. Please open your weekly newsletters via Constant Contact. Please read and respond promptly to notes coming from the school. Notes are placed in backpacks, lunch boxes, work folders, or in the mail. We realize that not all notices sent home—**GET Home**, so we urge you to help your child develop a feeling of responsibility for carrying notes to and from school.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

School will be closed on days when weather conditions make traveling extremely hazardous. Announcements regarding the closing of school will be made over local radio or television stations. **ST. MATTHEW'S SCHOOL WILL CLOSE ANY TIME THE EDINBURG PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT CLOSSES DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER.**

SCHOOL PARTIES

Parties celebrated during specific holidays whether at school or another location must first be approved by the principal. Parents may be asked by the teacher to contribute items relating to the party. **Piñatas are not allowed at any school-organized party.**

BIRTHDAYS

Birthday blessings are given during chapel. Parents wishing to have a birthday party in the student's room need to notify the teacher in advance. Invitations for parties away from school may be distributed at school **provided every student in the class is given one, or the party is for all boys or all girls.**

Child Care's Most Recent Licensing Report Posting

The most recent report from Child Care Licensing will always be posted on the bulletin board inside the PK2 classroom along with other pertinent information. Upon your request, a copy can be made available.

Contacting Child Care Licensing and Accessing the DFPS Website

Child Care Local Licensing's office can be reached by phone at 956-316-8544. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website is: dfps.state.tx.us. You can find many resources here along with access to the minimum standards for childcare licensing.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

E-Prep Team:

Laurie Cantu, School Principal (956) 330-0095

Tom Buchanan, Junior Warden (956) 360-4999

Grace Buchanan, Parish Coordinator (956) 566—0333

Hernan Jimenez, Custodian (956) 827-4484

Ralph Rodriguez, Teacher and Coach (956) 369-4476

Erin Kooiman, LVN and Teacher (956) 249-9592

FIRE: 911 Edinburg Fire Department: 383-7691

Fire Drills are held each month of the academic year. *Three brief buzzes are sounded over the intercom system.* Students rehearse the evacuation response and route with their teachers and peers in order to respond calmly and methodically in the event of a fire emergency. The goal is to exit the building and be lined up in the designated location within three minutes.

In the event that a smoke detector responds to a potential fire, the teachers and the students will follow one of two routes posted in the classroom; the primary route, and if not available due to an obstruction, the secondary route. Should both the primary and secondary exits be inaccessible, teachers will assist their students in exiting the classroom via the window. Routes are posted in each classroom.

The gathering place, regardless of weather conditions, will be the east side of the field closest to the fence line with the teachers and the students facing west. Teachers will conduct roll call. Should the building not be habitable following a fire emergency, the parish hall or church is the primary place for relocation. Should those buildings not be habitable, the secondary place of relocation is Robert Vela High School. The teachers and students will walk along the sidewalk to the high school and gather in their library.

Smoke Detectors 2 in the main hallway of the school building. One on the north end and one on the south end.

Fire Extinguisher Locations

3 hallway of the main school building

1 church hallway

1 parish hall kitchen

Fire extinguishers will be checked monthly by our designee, Erin Kooiman (PK2 teacher). The report will be documented and posted on the bulletin board in the PK2 classroom. Fire extinguishers will be inspected annually by a representative from Flame Out (Fire Extinguisher Maintenance Provider).

Medical Emergency: 911

First Aid Kits are located in each classroom and the school office.

First Aid and CPR certified staff:

Erin Kooiman, PK2 teacher and LVN- Room 3

Lindsay Skalitsky, PK teacher's aide- Room 4

Marisela Rangel, PK3 teacher- Room 5

Ralph Rodriguez, Coach and Science teacher- Pavilion and Outdoor field, a.m.; Room 6, p.m.

Severe Weather Drills and Response

Our local weather is monitored by KRGV mobile weather alerts. Edinburg CISD calls the school to make us aware of any pending severe weather.

Pending inclement weather for which we are afforded advanced notice, we will follow the Edinburg CISD's instructions on whether to post an inclement weather day, or not. Protocol for an inclement weather day, such as a hurricane, flooding, or freezing weather conditions, is for the principal to call the teachers and staff, and in return the teachers will notify their classes' parents by text, or phone call.

Severe Weather Drills will be held two times in the fall semester and two times in the spring semester. *A continuous siren is sounded over the intercom.* Students and teachers file into the hallway of the main cinder block building and shut the classroom door behind them. Students and teachers kneel down facing the inside wall and wait for further instruction. Students, teachers, and staff will practice getting into the "turtle position" leaning forward from the kneeling position with their hands covering the backs of their heads.

If a tornado or severe weather is imminent, the siren is sounded and students, teachers, and staff proceed into the hallway, closing the door behind them and getting into the safety positions that have been practiced during the drills. Students and staff will wait for further instructions from the principal or other E-Prep designee.

Lockdown Procedures: 911 Edinburg Police Department: 383-7411

Lockdown Drills will be performed twice in the fall semester and twice in the spring semester. The principal, or a designee of the E-Prep team will announce "**Lockdown, Lockdown**" over the intercom. For the drills, only Code Red Lockdowns will be practiced as the Code Yellow permits more communication via the intercom. The teacher is responsible for closing and locking the classroom door, covering the peek-a-boo window of the door with the pre-fitted cardboard, and turning off the lights. The students are to quietly maneuver to the predetermined area of the classroom, away from windows

and doors, and remain quiet and calm while the teacher completes her part. The teacher will remain with the students in the designated safe zone of the classroom.

Edinburg CISD communicates with our school in the event that our neighboring school has placed its campus in lockdown mode. With our school being in the vicinity, we follow their direction.

Code Yellow: There is a potential threat of an intruder making his/her way to our campus. Our students, staff, and teachers will remain in the building in which they are located at the time of the Code Yellow Lockdown Announcement. They will be able to move freely among the classrooms and the hallway of the main building.

Code Red: In the event that an intruder has infiltrated the locked perimeter of the school, or a person known to the school personnel has become aggressive and belligerent in nature, the school will automatically go into “Code Red” lockdown mode. The students, staff, and teachers will remain sheltered in place until the lockdown has been lifted.

The principal, or E-Prep designee, will lift the lockdown when deemed safe by announcing a predetermined code that has been shared with the teachers and staff.

Flu/ Measles/Whooping Cough/Chicken Pox/ Zika/ West Nile
Health Department: 383-6221

Students, teachers, and staff will be trained and reminded to practice strong hygiene habits, primarily handwashing for a required length of time with basic soap and water. Staff and teachers of the Early Childhood grades will properly sanitize items that are used by the children. Classroom teachers will clean the desk/table tops with Clorox cleaning wipes at the conclusion of each day. Students will be instructed on how to “cover their coughs” using the Batman procedure.

Each morning, teachers will conduct Health Checks of their students. Parents of students appearing to have an illness will be notified immediately. The potentially infected student will be isolated from the other students in the principal’s office. Students confirmed to have illnesses that are highly contagious to the school population will be kept at home under the care of their parent/guardian until they are released back to school. Parents of students whose children are kept in the same classroom as the infected child will be notified by the classroom teacher via a text message or a phone call. An email message will be delivered by the school to the parent community as well.

Upon receiving written or verbal communication of multiple students diagnosed with a highly contagious illness, St. Matthew’s Episcopal School will notify the Hidalgo County Health Department to alert them of the potential outbreak. Once again, St. Matthew’s Episcopal School will notify parents via email and the classroom teachers will notify the parents by a text message or a phone call.

Sheltering in Place KRGV News: 631-5555; KGBT News: 366-4444; KURV Public Radio: 992-8895; Hidalgo County Sheriff's Department: 383-8114; Edinburg Police Department: 383-7411

The principal, receives mobile updates from various media outlets, and the school office is kept informed by Edinburg CISD should a need for sheltering in place arise.

Students and staff needing to shelter in place in the event of a natural disaster or terroristic event will use the church as its primary shelter and the parish hall as its secondary shelter. The school principal and staff will remain on the campus in the designated shelter with all children until parents and guardians can be reached and the local authorities deem it safe to leave the shelter. There are water fountains and bathrooms in the church. The building is built with concrete cinder blocks and limited windows. Bottled waters will be stored in the storage room of the church in the event that the city's water is found to pose a health risk.

The principal, or other E-Prep team designee, will contact the local authorities and media outlets. Attendance and Grade Record books identifying the students per classroom will be with the teachers during a sheltering in place event. Parents' contact information will be stored in the Record books too. Parents will be notified by the teachers by phone or text.

Relocation in the Event of an Emergency KRGV News: 631-5555; KGBT News: 366-4444; KURV Public Radio: 992-8895; Hidalgo County Sheriff's Department: 383-8114; Edinburg Police Department: 383-7411

Attendance and Grade Record books identifying the students per classroom will be with the teachers during a relocation event. Parents' contact information will be stored in the Record books too. Teachers and staff will be relocated to Robert Vela High School in the event of needing immediate relocation. Designated adults will be responsible for walking with the children to the campus located on Canton Rd. Parents will be notified by the teachers by text message or phone call.

In the event that longer term relocation is needed, the school's four portable classrooms, the church building, and the parish hall can serve as a place for short-term to mid-term relocation.

Evacuation, Sheltering-in-Place, and Relocation

Students will always move with their teachers and the classroom aides as one grade level unit. The classroom teacher is responsible for coordinating the uniformity for lining the children up and moving as one unit. The teacher will use the grade and attendance record book to account for each child's presence as they are moving. The primary mode of movement will be by foot. Names of designated pick-up people will be kept in the classroom record book. Identification should also be provided by the person authorized to pick up the child to ensure children's safety.

Electronic Devices

I-WYLD (Innovation – With Your Learning Device) is the name of our device usage project. Through this project, students are permitted and highly encouraged to bring their electronic learning devices to their instructional classrooms specifically for the purpose of engaging in a more innovative learning environment.

The terms and conditions regarding the participation in this program are outlined in the Acceptance Responsibility and Device Use Agreement Form presented to each student and their parents at the beginning of the year.

It is imperative that all students in 1st – 6th grade have the Acceptance Responsibility and Device Use Agreement Form signed by their parents and submitted to their homeroom teacher. This form will be filed in the student's cumulative folder located in the school office. If a student does not return this form to his/her teacher with the appropriate signatures and this form is not on file for the student, the student will be prohibited from bringing his/her learning device to school.

Parents and students are expected to read the terms and conditions and adhere to the stipulations found in the Acceptance Responsibility and Device Use Agreement Form.

Should a student not adhere to the stipulations set forth regarding this program, the principal will review and investigate the situation further and ultimately make a decision pertinent to the student's academic program.

Innovation – With Your Learning Device

ACCEPTANCE RESPONSIBILITY AND DEVICE USE AGREEMENT FORM

Your signature(s) below indicate that you have voluntarily agreed to participate in this program and agree to abide by the terms and conditions listed below.

The terms and conditions are as follows:

1. Students may bring their i-pads (suggested), i-pad minis (suggested), or i-Pod Touches to school daily; other comparable devices are permitted, subject to the teacher’s approval.
2. Students may only bring their devices out when requested by the teacher.
3. Students must respectfully adhere to the teacher’s request to stow devices when deemed necessary by the teacher.
4. Students must not deviate from the learning objectives set forth by the teacher.
5. The device must be stowed in the student’s backpack at the end of the instructional day.
6. Students may not take photographs of other students during activities that warrant the need to use the camera.
7. Students may not record audio or video of any classroom activities without the consent or direction of the classroom teacher.
8. Students may not share pass codes.
9. Students may not share their devices with other students, with the exception of cooperative learning activities as directed by the teacher.
10. It is requested that the device must be charged at home.
11. Students may not use their device to send e-mails or text messages during the school day.
12. St. Matthew’s Episcopal School, board, administration, and staff are not responsible for any device, data lost, damage, or costs for replacement of the device if it is lost or stolen.

_____	_____	_____
Participant’s Name (Print)	Participant’s Signature	Grade Level
_____	_____	_____
Parent’s Name (Print)	Parent’s Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Homeroom Teacher’s Name (Print)	Homeroom Teacher’s Signature	Date

Device Type - _____ Make and Model - _____

Device Serial Number - _____

We’re “WYLD” about learning!

St. Matthew's Episcopal School Campus Covenant

St. Matthew's Episcopal School is *"A Christian Community committed to academic excellence and spiritual growth for our children today"*

As a community of students, educators, staff, and parents, we thank God it's today and commit ourselves to celebrate togetherness with the hope of making the world a better place through personal change; therefore, we covenant with God and one another to:

1. Trust God in all things each and everyday.
2. Give thanks to God in our prayers believing that God is good and gives us everything we need.
3. Do all things with a spirit of joyfulness as our guide.
4. Take responsibility for our actions and do our best in everything we do believing in our abilities.
5. Be leaders who are willing to serve and help others.
6. Be honest, trustworthy, and loyal.
7. Be kind.
8. Be patient.
9. Love others with zeal.
10. Respect others in the way we would have them respect us.