

South Hills Catholic Academy



Student Handbook
2023-2024

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Introduction

With the permission of the Most Reverend David A. Zubik, Bishop of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Independent Catholic Academy Foundation founded South Hills Catholic Academy on May 13, 2020.

Both the Foundation and Academy are set up as 501(c)(3) entities.

The Foundation Board is comprised of 5-6 individuals whose role is to safeguard the Academy's mission and identity, and ensure its financial viability.

However, governance of the policies, practices and finances of the Academy is overseen by its Board of Directors, a group of 9-15 individuals to provide strategic direction, operating compliance, expert counsel and financial support.

The day-to-day management and administration of the academy is entrusted to the Principal and her staff. The Principal holds a seat on the Foundation Board as well as the Academy's Board of Directors

Corpus Mens Anima

First and foremost, South Hills Catholic Academy is a Catholic school whose purpose is to lead its students to God by way of the truths they learn in the classroom. The children entrusted to our care pray often throughout the school day, practice the traditions and devotions of Roman Catholicism, and are taught the value and necessity of Christian service to others.

The goal of SHCA is to deliver excellence in Traditional Catholic education for 21st century learners. It is our mission to focus on the total development of each child....body, mind, and soul (corpus, mens, anima). That spirit of education is in our hearts, and it's played out in our school every day. Every student is valued, learning is celebrated, faith is strengthened. We provide the challenging, advanced education that our children need, with Jesus Christ at the center of all we teach.

SHCA offers a unique educational and spiritual formation opportunity for the students in the South Hills of Pittsburgh. The Academy is founded on three key pillars that make it distinctive:

- Ensuring that a Catholic education is accessible to all children in the southern region of Pittsburgh, especially the growing immigrant population and those of modest means.
- Preparing students for higher education through a classical curriculum built on the foundation of a traditional education.
- Providing a rich spiritual formation with a vibrant sacramental and devotional life at the center of the school mission.

Mission Statement

The mission of the South Hills Catholic Academy (SHCA) is to assist parents in the Christian spiritual, moral and intellectual formation of their children by ensuring the total development of each child – body, mind, and soul.

Charter

Adhering to the premise that all knowledge comes from God and can only be understood and lived fully in reference to Him, we endeavor to integrate traditional classroom instruction with a vibrant Catholic sacramental and devotional life by...

Offering SHCA students an intensive traditional curriculum covering all the major areas of the liberal arts and natural sciences, in an academic program that is both rigorous and challenging;
Fostering in SHCA students a fuller understanding of, and deep appreciation for, the Catholic Faith in a manner completely loyal to the teaching authority of the Roman Catholic Church;
Promoting a safe and disciplined educational culture for children from diverse ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds – one that fosters authentic Christian friendship and service, and joyfully embraces the uniqueness of each child.

We firmly believe that in today's complex world, other than an individual's own family, there is no institution in our society where the challenges that confront young children can be more effectively addressed than by a Catholic School such as SHCA, where our first purpose is to remind our students that they are both loved and lovable in Jesus Christ, and that only in Him will they discover themselves and their calling in life.

Non-Discrimination

South Hills Catholic Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

All students are expected to treat each member of our community with Christian dignity and to respect each person's racial, cultural, ethnic, and religious heritage. Any student who degrades, harasses, or insults another with racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious slurs, intimidation, gestures, language, or comments is not practicing the kindness of a true Christian and will face consequences. Such consequences may include, yet not be limited to, detention or suspension.

The South Hills Catholic Academy Covenant

Excellence in education is only possible through a strong partnership between the family and school. South Hills Catholic Academy families and staff are committed to the South Hills Catholic Academy Covenant to ensure a successful partnership, leading to the total development of each child- body, mind, and soul.

The Family will...

- model virtue for their children, supporting and encouraging them as they grow closer to Christ.
- hold children accountable for their actions and behavior, both at home and at school.
- support the mission and vision of South Hills Catholic Academy, refraining from passing judgment and engaging in gossip about other students, families, or members of the school community.
- attend events whenever possible. This includes opportunities to conference with teachers, extracurricular and sporting events, and fundraisers.
- give feedback in a productive manner, always being respectful and first attempting to resolve conflict directly with the parties involved.
- fulfill the Sunday obligation by taking their children to Mass each week, especially for students who are old enough to receive Holy Communion.
- ensure all financial obligations are met promptly.

The School will...

- provide a safe environment for students. Teachers and administrators will swiftly respond to any threats or rumors that put students at risk as individuals or as a school community both on campus and online.
- ensure that a Catholic education is accessible to all children in the southern region of Pittsburgh, especially the growing immigrant population and those of modest means.
- prepare students for higher education through a curriculum built on the foundation of a Traditional education.
- provide a rich spiritual formation with a vibrant sacramental and devotional life at the center of the school mission.
- regularly communicate with families about events, academic progress, and disciplinary actions. This is done via Flocknote, Powerschool, email, phone, and notes home.
- model virtue and integrity for students, supporting and encouraging them as they grow closer to Christ.
- never teach anything contrary to the Roman Catholic Church's teachings.
- treat children with charity, love, and respect, recognizing that they are made in the image and likeness of God.

Parent Volunteer Group

Parents interested in volunteering or getting more involved at South Hills Catholic Academy are invited to join the Parent Volunteer Group. Information about the PVG can be found on the school website.

We are an organization comprised of parent volunteers who develop and run many activities that greatly benefit our students and school. WE NEED YOU!

Your participation and support is necessary and much appreciated. We can positively make a difference in the day-to-day activities with our students, parents and teachers. There are many volunteer opportunities to fit the busy lives of today's families and everyone's contributions are valued. We want South Hills Catholic Academy to be a family centered place and invite you to get involved to make your child's experience here a happy and memorable one.

How To Get Involved

If you would like to be involved with the Parent Volunteer Group (PVG), please contact Principal Harmony Stewart at hstewart@shcacademy.com or at 412-631-3131.

Admission and Registration

South Hills Catholic Academy admits students of any race or nationality or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all students formally accepted into the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race or nationality or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admission policies, athletic or other school administered programs. Children who are not Catholic are expected to participate in religion classes and to attend all religious functions of the school/church.

Children wishing to enter our four-year old preschool program must be four years of age by September 1. Students entering kindergarten may be required to take a readiness test and must be five years of age by September 1. Official certificates of birth and baptism (if applicable) are required at the time of registration.

Those registering for grades 1-8 must fulfill the age and/or grade requirement for the desired grade level. A registration form must be completed for each student.

South Hills Catholic Academy (SHCA) also requires a non-refundable registration fee of \$100 per family be paid in order for your student(s) to be enrolled. This amount will be deducted from the first tuition payment.

The forms listed below are also required for registration:

- Catholic School Parents Memorandum of Understanding
- Records Release Form (if applicable)
- Home Language Survey
- Publicity Authorization Form
- Guardian Angels Program (if applicable)
- Tuition: Kindergarten-8th Grade

South Hills Catholic Academy is a scholarship school where every child receives some form of scholarship or financial aid to offset the cost of the education. Integral to our mission is the promise that no student will be turned away from the Academy due to financial circumstances. We do ask that families make a tuition contribution on a monthly basis to help pay for the education. The contribution is on a sliding scale, depending on the needs of the individual family. Each family will meet with the Head of School and scholarship committee to agree upon tuition payments for their children based on the specific circumstances of the family. Tuition at South Hills Catholic Academy includes all curriculum fees, technology fees and before and after school care for those who need it. To assist with the fundraising goals of the school, each family is also required to raise \$500 by participating in the Family Share fundraising program.

Tuition: Preschool

Full Day Preschool Program Tuition Cost \$5,000*

Half Day Preschool Program Tuition Cost \$2,500*

*To assist with the fundraising goals of the school, each family of a preschool student is also required to raise \$500 (full day) or \$250 (half-day) by participating in the Family Share fundraising program.

Daily Practices and Policies

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is a major factor in determining academic success. Students who are absent for more than thirty days during the academic year may be denied academic promotion. The new law defines “truancy” as “three (3) or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year by a child subject to [the] compulsory school attendance [law]. The new law defines “habitual truancy” as “six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to [the] compulsory school attendance [law].” If habitual truancy occurs it is the responsibility of the institution to contact Children and Youth Services.

Absence

Absences from school are defined as either Excused or Unexcused according to guidelines from the Pennsylvania School Code. Excused absences include illness, quarantine, impassable roads, recognized religious holidays, and urgent reasons, such as a death in the family or a court appearance. The state guidelines also permit an Excused Absence for Educational Trips if a request is sent to the school prior to the dates of the trip. (Trips to Disney are not considered educational trips.) If no prior notice is received, the absence is classified as Unexcused.

Parents should call the school office before 9:00 a.m. on the first day that a child is absent from school. Give the child's name, homeroom teacher, and reason for absence. Upon returning to school from an absence, a student must submit a written excuse to his/her homeroom teacher as required by state law. If this excuse is not submitted within three days following the absence, the absence will be classified as Unexcused.

A written excuse should be given to the teacher/principal for the following reasons:

- Following an absence
- Excused from gym class
- Permission for out of school appointments (child is expected to return when possible)
- Attending funerals
- Vacation
- Change of plans in leaving school (bus, car-rider)
- Early Dismissal

According to the Pennsylvania School Code, Section 1332, "The absence of any pupil who remains out of school with or without his parent's permission, and is not absent because of illness or for other urgent reasons, as defined in the School Code, shall be unexcused."

Illness

Please refrain from sending children to school if they are displaying signs of illness. It is recommended that a child stay home from school until 24 hours after their temperature returns to normal. If a child has a fever (temperature of 100 degrees or higher), rash, diarrhea, vomiting, evidence of strep throat, or lice, he or she will be sent home. Please inform the school if your child becomes sick with a contagious illness. Families will be notified if their children have been exposed to communicable diseases. See attached policy regarding COVID-19 procedures.

Tardiness

Students who arrive at school after 8:20 am must report to the main office to obtain a late slip in order to be admitted to class. Tardiness will be excused if a bus is late or if a parent has driven the student and signs him or her into the office upon arrival. Students in the Upper School (grades 4-8) are expected to arrive on time to their classes throughout the day or present a note from another teacher to be excused. The school lunch order is placed at 9:00 am each day, so students arriving after 9:00 am should bring their lunch from home. Arrival after 11:00 am is considered a half-day absence.

Extended Absence

Parents and guardians of students who acquire excessive absences may be required to provide documentation from a physician indicating that the absences are relating to an existing medical condition. Absences in excess of twenty (20) days in a school year will be reviewed by the principal and the involved teacher(s) to determine whether the extent of the work made up is of quality and quantity to warrant a passing grade or whether an incomplete grade is indicated. Such determination shall be made solely on the basis of the adequacy of academic achievement.

When students are absent due to illness, trips, etc., they must make up any work they missed in a reasonable amount of time. Teachers are not obliged to provide assignments prior to a trip.

Participation in Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

Students are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities if they have been absent from school.

Early Dismissals

Appointments should be arranged outside the school day whenever possible. However, if a child must leave school during the day, he or she must have a note for the principal's approval. The note should indicate the reason for dismissal, the time of departure, and an estimated time of return. The parent or guardian must meet the child in the main office to sign him or her out and must sign him or her back in when they return. Early dismissals after 2:30 will not be granted. In the event of a school wide Early Dismissal, students will be dismissed at 11:00am.

A Note on Late Drop Off of Lunches and Other Supplies

The school office is not able to receive lunches, instruments, gym uniforms, etc. If your child has forgotten his or her lunch box they will order a school lunch in homeroom.

ARRIVAL

Students may enter the school beginning at 8:00 am. (See Guardian Angels Program for students needing before school care). Students who are driven to school will enter through the Benedict Hall entrance in the lower parking lot. Parents may park and walk their children to the door but may not enter the building. Parents may also utilize our drop off car lane but are not permitted to exit their vehicle at any time. Students have the opportunity to purchase a “grab and go” breakfast in Benedict Hall before going to their homerooms. South Hills Catholic Academy is not responsible for children left outside before 8:00am.

DISMISSAL

Students will be dismissed from school at 2:55 pm. (See Guardian Angels Program for students needing after school care). Students who ride a bus home will exit the building in an orderly fashion, walking quietly in line and waiting until directed to their bus by the teacher on bus duty each day. Students who are being picked up by a parent or guardian will walk with their teacher to the Benedict Hall entrance. Students will only be released to authorized adults who may be required to show a valid form of ID. Parents picking up their children at the end of the day (especially parents of young children) should exit the vehicle and wait near the doors on the sidewalk. Please refrain from crowding the doors so children can be dismissed safely.

Any change to your child’s normal routine should be noted in writing to your child’s homeroom teacher. Please keep these changes to a minimum to avoid confusion for your child.

Parents and guardians should not communicate last minute dismissal changes via email with teachers. If you have an emergency that warrants a last minute dismissal change please call the office to ensure your child’s teacher receives the message.

GUARDIAN ANGELS PROGRAM (GAP)

South Hills Catholic Academy offers a Guardian Angels Program for before and after school care to our K-8 students, to help parents bridge the "GAP" between home and school. Morning GAP begins at 7:15 a.m. (NO EARLIER). Morning GAP students will enter through the Benedict Hall doors and students must be signed in by an adult. GAP doors close promptly at 7:45 a.m. and students will not be admitted into the school building for any reason between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m. Afternoon GAP runs from 3:00 pm until 5:00 pm. Afternoon GAP students will be dismissed from Benedict Hall. The afternoon program will only operate on full days of school.

There is no charge for our morning or afternoon GAP unless parents abuse our 5:00 p.m. pick-up time. Starting at 5:00 p.m., parents/guardians will be charged \$5.00 for every 5 minutes until the student(s) are signed out of the GAP program. If children are left in our GAP program past 5:15 and we are unable to contact a parent or guardian, the Mt. Lebanon Police will be contacted. Students can be made ineligible for GAP based on behavior and/or consistent late pick ups.

EMERGENCIES

Parents are required to provide multiple contacts in case of emergency. It is imperative that the school be able to reach you to inform you of illness or an emergency situation. It is also important to list the names of others who can be contacted should you be unavailable. Please keep your contact information updated by notifying the office.

School Closing/Delays

If inclement weather or some other emergency requires that the school be delayed or closed, you will be sent an alert via Flocknote. Closing and delays will also be announced on KDKA, WTAE, and WPXI. Because of the number of public districts represented in our school, it is important that you look for an announcement that identifies South Hills Catholic Academy. In the event of a South Hills Catholic Academy two hour delay, all children should report to school at 10:10 a.m.; there is no morning care when there is a delay. Half Day Preschool will begin at 12:20 and end at 3:00. Please note that some public districts do not provide busing outside the normal times, children from those districts will be picked up at normal times and will be admitted into the building to wait for the scheduled start. If the announced delay does not specifically mention South Hills Catholic Academy, but does name one of the public districts that service our school, only those children who are regularly bused should follow the announcement. Children who ride the buses of other districts who are not delayed or who walk or are driven should arrive at the normal time.

Please note: Because attendance registers are legal indicators of a child's present at the times we are in session, children who arrive late or are absent because of busing when school is in session will be marked Excused Tardy or Excused Absence.

Drills

Students regularly participate in emergency drills such as fire drills, lockdown drills, weather emergency drills, etc. In order to ensure their safety, students are expected to remain silent and alert to instructions from their teachers. Detailed exit instructions are posted in each room.

MEDICATION AND INJURIES

Students should take prescribed medication at home whenever possible. If necessary, the Head of School or Secretary may administer prescribed medication if a written request is made. All medication must be brought to school in its original container with proper labeling of medication name, dosage, directions, and pharmacy identification. Medication must be left in the office. Unlabeled medication will not be given to students.

Students are not permitted to utilize non-prescribed medical equipment in the school building. This includes but is not limited to; slings, crutches, ace bandages, wheelchairs etc. Please provide a doctor's note if your child will be arriving at school with one of these devices. Arrangements for accommodations should be made with the principal in advance in the case of any severe injury.

School personnel are not permitted to dispense non-prescribed/over-the-counter medications without written permission from a parent or legal guardian. This includes Tylenol, Advil, cough drops, etc. If cough drops are necessary, the student must provide a note signed by a parent or legal guardian for the office.

Injuries will be treated by the school nurse or other qualified staff and volunteers if the nurse is not present. The school will call for emergency services if necessary, but state law requires the presence of a parent or guardian before medical treatment is given. It is essential that the school be able to reach a parent or guardian at all times. Correct and up to date contact information must be on file in the office at all times.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives full rights to each parent, unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state statute or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes these rights. Such an order is to be on file in the school and those persons responsible for the child(ren) are to be informed of the circumstances. Every effort is made to keep the non-custodial parent apprised of the progress of the child(ren) through reports, report cards and parent/teacher conferences.

GRADING

There are four grading periods each year for formal report cards. The grading periods are listed on the Academic Calendar. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers throughout the year when questions or concerns arise regarding their children's academic performance.

Lower School Grading Scale

E - Excellent

The student is achieving near perfection on all assignments and complete mastery of grade-level skills.

G - Good

The student is exhibiting normal understanding of grade-level skills.

N - Needs Improvement

The student needs support to demonstrate grade-level skills.

Upper School Grading Scale

A=93-100

Demonstrates a thorough understanding of basic skills and concepts and is working at developing advanced skills and concepts.

B=85-92

Demonstrates an understanding of the basic skills and concepts and is able to exemplify these skills and concepts in detail.

C=77-84

Demonstrates an understanding of the basic skills and concepts.

D=70-76

Demonstrates an incomplete understanding of the basic skills and concepts with possible misconceptions.

E=Below 70

Demonstrates an inadequate understanding of basic skills and concepts.

Honor Roll

Students in the Upper School (grades 4-8) will be recognized at the end of each grading period if they achieve the following honors:

- Summa Cum Laude (4.0)
- Magna Cum Laude (3.83 or higher)
- Cum Laude (3.67 or higher)

The Academy recognizes students with a Quality Point Average of 3.67 or higher in the core subjects (Religion, English Language Arts, Latin, English, History, Science) and acceptable grades (C or higher) in all other subjects. Students must also have maintained the standards of expected behavior.

Study and Homework

Homework is assigned to enrich school experiences, provide practice and review, develop good study habits, and teach responsibility. Parents should make every effort to ensure assignments are completed by providing support but never by completing the assignment for the student. Parents can help their children by providing a quiet space, free from distractions to complete homework assignments. Support from parents and guardians is essential to student success. Study and homework expectations vary between grade levels and teachers.

Students who are absent from school for any reason are expected to make up any work missed in a reasonable amount of time. It should be noted that teachers are not obliged to provide work in advance of a planned absence.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is of the utmost importance. Offenses against academic honesty are injustices against others and yourself. Teachers provide explicit instruction and guidance in regard to academic honesty and integrity at the appropriate level for their students.

It is expected that students complete and submit assignments that are a reflection of their own understanding of the concepts taught or studied. Some students may require the assistance of adult or peer tutors, parents, guardians, or other resources. However, any assignment submitted must be

a true reflection of the student's own work, vocabulary, and understanding. Teachers have the right and responsibility to question the legitimacy of homework, research papers, reports, etc. Homework that is copied from another student, completed by family members or friends, downloaded from the Internet, or is otherwise clearly beyond the student's own academic ability, is subject to question by the teacher. A student who engages in such instances of illegitimate or plagiarized work is subject to disciplinary action and will be required to resubmit legitimate work. Consequences for offenses against academic honesty include but are not limited to: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, losing privileges to extracurricular activities, receiving a failing grade for the marking period, or detention.

Students in the Upper School (grades 4-8) are required to sign the SHCA Scholar's Pledge at the beginning of each school year.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

Any questions concerning your child should be directed to the teacher. Positive communication between teacher and parent is vital to our educational program. Parents are asked not to call teachers at their homes or text their personal phone numbers. Parents should call the school office and the teacher will be notified to contact you. Teachers' school email addresses and websites can be accessed through the school website at shcacademy.com. Teachers may also choose to communicate via their Edublog.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Dress Code

Appropriate dress helps students foster a positive attitude about themselves and about school and learning. The uniform dress code is followed by all students in Kindergarten through 8th grade.

Uniform

GIRLS: Girls in grades K through 3 wear the uniform plaid jumper or plaid skort with a white polo purchased from the uniform store on Mass days. On non-Mass days, in addition to the jumper, girls also have the option of wearing the plaid skort with the white, navy or dark green uniform polo with school logo, or khaki pants/uniform shorts with a white, navy or dark green uniform polo with school logo. Girls in grades 4 through 8 wear the plaid skort or skirt* (*closeout item, while supplies last) with the white, navy or dark green uniform polo with school logo. Khaki pants/uniform shorts may also be worn with the logo polo. All girls in grades 4 through 8 must also have white logoed polo for Mass days and for other special events.

BOYS: All boys are required to wear khaki pants/uniform shorts and either a white, navy or dark green polo with the school logo. Boys must also have a white short or long sleeve dress shirt with school logo and solid navy tie to wear for Mass and other special events. Shirts should be tucked in and worn with a brown or black belt. Ties should be appropriate in length.

ALL STUDENTS: All uniform shirts must be logoed and purchased at Pro3 Services. All clothing should be in good condition (laundered, appropriately hemmed, wrinkle-free, and without holes). In cold temperatures, students may wear one of the navy school logo sweater options available at the uniform store. These items may not be worn to Mass. It is highly recommended that children's names be written or sewn into sweater tags. Both boys and girls are to wear black, brown or navy shoes. Tennis shoes are not permitted for Mass. Heels are never permitted. Tennis shoes may be worn when students are not attending Mass. All tennis shoes must contain black, white, navy or gray color schemes. Neon and other bright colors are not permitted. Shoes must not cover the ankle. High top, 3/4 top, and boots are not permitted. Girls must wear white or navy blue knee socks or navy blue or white tights with skirts, shorts and jumpers. Leggings are not permitted. Boys and girls must wear navy, black or white socks with their uniform pants. No-show sport socks are not permitted. Uniform shorts are permitted to be worn August through October and April through the end of the school year. Belts must also be worn with shorts. Extensions of these dates are at the discretion of the principal. Please pay special attention to the length of skirts and shorts. They should be no shorter than two inches above the knees and the waistbands should not be altered.

JEWELRY: Small religious medals or crosses may be worn by all students. Girls may wear one pair of earrings that fit on a dime and also rest on the earlobe only. Boys may not wear earrings to school should they have their ears pierced. All other body piercings are not permitted. Bracelets are not permitted. Watches are not permitted.

MAKE-UP AND NAIL POLISH: Make-up may not be worn. Only clear nail polish is acceptable. Students will be asked to remove their nail polish in the office if it is worn to school. False nails are not permitted even if they are of natural color.

HAIRSTYLE: Hairstyles for both girls and boys must conform to good grooming standards and be its natural color. NO graphic or cut out designs are permitted in either boy or girl hairstyles. Hair for our young men should be clean, neatly combed, and of a moderate length so that it does not cover the ears, be in the eyes, or fall below the shirt collar. "Mohawk" cuts are not permitted. "Money Pieces" are not permitted. Any hairstyle that becomes a distraction to students and interferes with learning and appropriate behavior will not be permitted per the Principal's discretion. Girls may wear a small headband or bow of a color that corresponds with our school uniform. Hair 'scrunchies' or hair bands may not be worn on student wrists.

BACKPACKS: Solid color or simple pattern only. No characters. Keychains, pop it fidget toys and other backpack decor is not permitted.

MASKS: Masks may be worn at the discretion of parents and guardians. Masks must be solid colored, paper masks (blue, black, white, etc.). Cloth masks and gaiters may not be worn.

WATER BOTTLES: Students may bring a water bottle filled with water to school to refill during the day. Only water is permitted during the school day. Parents may not fill the water bottle with juice, soda, tea, etc. Water bottles must securely close and not leak. No straw cups or straw containers are allowed. Students may not decorate their water bottle with stickers that do not support the mission/vision of the school.

Mass Uniform

Students in grades K-8 attend Mass twice a week. Students are expected to wear Mass uniforms for all school Masses on Fridays. See above.

Gym Uniform

Students may wear SHCA gym sweatpants or gym shorts, T-shirts, and tennis shoes. Children will not be permitted to participate without gym clothes. Gym uniforms can be purchased at Pro3 services. Gym uniforms will not be worn to school on gym days. Students in grades 4-8 will need to purchase a gym uniform from Pro3 or an approved SHCA Saints Spirit wear shirt. Students in grades K-3 will not change for gym and will wear their regular school uniform for gym classes.

Recess

In winter students may wear appropriate attire such as mittens/gloves, scarves, hats etc. However, unnecessary accessories such as baseball caps may not be worn in other seasons.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Philosophy of Discipline

South Hills Catholic Academy administration and faculty are committed to teach and model gospel values to encourage students to live their lives as a reflection of Christ. The philosophy of the school strives to recognize and respect the dignity of each person and to offer a positive, Christ-centered, safe learning environment based on the social teachings of the Church. Discipline is considered an element of moral guidance, not a form of punishment.

Every teacher and staff member shares the responsibility to model appropriate behavior and to support the structures necessary for learning self-discipline. Students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their actions, develop self-control, and accept responsibility and consequences for inappropriate behavior.

A Christ-centered school environment recognizes and fosters the uniqueness and dignity of each individual, nurtures respect in all relationships involving the school and parish community, and develops a sense of rights, responsibilities, and commitment to the entire school community.

The following seven principles are the basis of Catholic social teachings and are the principles that guide us in all of our interactions:

- We believe in the life and dignity of the human person. Each person is sacred.
- We believe we are called to family, community, and participation. It is our duty to support each other by our actions.
- We believe that we have rights and responsibilities. Every person has the fundamental right to life and responsibility to and for one another.
- We believe that we have an obligation to the poor and vulnerable. We are called to put the rights of others before our own.
- We believe that we are called to care for God's creation. We are all stewards of the earth.
- We believe that solidarity is our call. We are one family regardless of our differences.
- We believe that workers have rights and that work has dignity. Work is a form of participating in God's creation.

All of our students will be expected to honor the Scholar's Pledge found on the next page.

Scholar's Pledge, South Hills Catholic Academy

Based on the Scholar's Pledge of St. Jerome Academy, Hyattsville, MD

I pledge to seek the truth
and to love all that is good and beautiful.

I will strive to achieve clarity of thought,
nobility of character and purity of heart.

I will pursue my education with diligence,
humility and sincerity, embracing excellence
and renouncing mediocrity.

I will treat my teachers and peers
with the utmost dignity and respect.

I will honor myself and my family
by giving my best effort daily.

I will honor God by developing the gifts He has given me
to the best of my ability.

Above all I will aspire to the wisdom
of a life lived in faith, hope, and charity
fulfilling my destiny as a child of God.

Classrooms

Students are expected to show respect for themselves and others while in the classroom. Teachers discuss expectations for individual classrooms with students in the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the year. Whenever possible, teachers manage behavior and consequences in their own classrooms.

Technology

At South Hills Catholic Academy, we focus first on our primary role, which is to provide a challenging, traditional Catholic education. Technology is available to complement instruction when appropriate.

Students are expected to use technology in a safe and responsible way, in and outside of school. Parents and guardians are encouraged to monitor their children's technology to avoid inappropriate use and situations where messages and posts may be hurtful to others. Any posts or messages that are defamatory to South Hills Catholic Academy or the Academy's students, staff, or administrators will result in disciplinary action up to and including prosecution under the law.

Cell Phones

No child is permitted to use the school telephone, including staff cell phones, without permission from the principal and/or office. Forgotten homework, books, lunch, gym clothes, or changes in afternoon plans are not sufficient cause to call home. In all cases, the office will make the phone call home, if deemed necessary.

Only in emergency cases will phone messages be delivered to students. Parents/guardians should not phone the school office with requests to deliver non-emergency messages to students during the school day. Classes will not be interrupted for these messages. Students are not permitted to use the school office phone for personal calls.

If you deem it necessary that your child carry a cell phone, it must be kept in their backpack and turned off.

Food Policy

Because of the number of different food allergies, students are never permitted to share food. This includes bringing birthday or holiday treats.

Students who bring common allergens in their lunches (i.e. peanut butter) will be seated in a separate area of the cafeteria at lunch time. Students may choose a friend to bring with them so they are not eating alone. Students in grades Preschool through First have "snack" in their classrooms each morning. All students are also permitted to bring a snack to afternoon GAP. Parents should provide the snack from home and it should never contain nuts as this is a safety concern for students and teachers with allergies.

School Bus

The student transportation policies and procedures of the local educational agencies responsible for busing students are applicable to all students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior while en route on the bus. Every bus follows the guidelines that are within our own discipline code. If the bus driver/company recommends that a student be removed from the bus, the principal will support it. This will result in the student losing bus privileges. The student/parent/guardian will then be responsible to make other arrangements for transportation.

Students are expected to remain in their seats on the bus at all times. This ensures their safety and the safety of others. If improper conduct occurs, the driver prepares a report which is sent to school and then home to alert the principal, parents/guardians to the problem. If the behavior persists, the bus company has the right to ask the school district to suspend the student's privilege of riding the bus, temporarily or permanently.

Lockers

Lockers are the property of South Hills Catholic Academy. Students may be permitted to store items inside lockers. Use of lockers is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to keep lockers neat and clean, especially if they are sharing storage space with other students. Lockers are not allowed to be decorated. Students are not permitted to bring locks from home. Students should not enter a locker that is not assigned to him or herself. South Hills Catholic Academy is not responsible for any items lost or stolen from lockers or desks in the classrooms. The Academy reserves the right to conduct locker searches at any time to ensure cleanliness and safety. Discovery of inappropriate or illegal items in a school locker may lead to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Lost Items

Lost items will be returned to the office for student or parent pick up. Items left beyond one week will not be kept in the office and will be disposed of.

Respect for Property

Students are expected to respect the property of others and the property of South Hills Catholic Academy. Damage or theft of property is a serious offense and may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. If possible personal property should be kept at home. South Hills Catholic Academy is not responsible for any personal property damaged, lost, or stolen while on school property. Any items found on the premises that seem to belong to another person should be turned over to the school office.

Consequences

Please be aware that any disrespect, destructive act, or inappropriate behavior will be dealt with accordingly. If an individual student does not meet his/her personal responsibility for good conduct, the school may discipline the student.

The severity or repetitive nature of non-compliance to the above expectations will determine the appropriate consequences. To remediate unacceptable behavior, the following actions may be taken:

1. Teacher/student conference to develop a plan for remediation
2. Notifications to parents
3. Administrative referral
4. School service required
5. Loss of recess
6. Denial of participation in school activities, including but not limited to athletics
7. School probation
8. Suspension
9. Expulsion

The following behaviors will result in immediate administrative referrals and can result in referrals to law enforcement or other government agencies: violations of weapons policy, violations of the drug/alcohol policy, any purposeful action that results in bodily harm to another.

Suspension/Expulsion

Suspension

A student may be temporarily suspended by the principal for a serious infraction of school regulations or for repeated offenses. Suspension may vary in length from one to ten days. No prior notice is needed. The principal shall meet with the parents and the parents will receive a written Notice of Suspension. The Notice of Suspension is kept on file in the principal's office and a copy is given to the parents. This document will explain why the student was suspended and will contain an agreement between the student/parents and the principal describing the student's future cooperation in a program designed to resolve actions that caused the suspension. Suspensions should be held outside of school. The parents will meet during this period with the principal and teachers to define expectations upon the student's return.

Expulsion

An expulsion is a severe punishment and will only be applied in very serious circumstances. Every attempt should be made during earlier offenses, if any, to provide guidance and counseling to the students and parents under the direction of the principal.

An expulsion may be necessary for persistent and willful disregard of school rules and regulations. The following examples are illustrative but not exhaustive:

- Chronic undesirable conduct detrimental to the physical and/or moral well-being or self or other students
- Continued malicious disobedience or disrespect for school authority
- Continued refusal by parents and/or students to comply with school policies

An expulsion may also be necessary for a single serious incident or event or situation involving disregard for or a clear violation of a school rule or regulation. The following examples are illustrative but not exhaustive:

- Selling or using drugs or alcohol
- Violation of the weapons policy
- Physical abuse of other students or staff
- Indecent behavior
- Arson
- Theft

GENDER POLICY

South Hills Catholic Academy recognizes that all children, because they are made in the image and likeness of God, deserve to be treated with charity, love and respect. We strive to provide a safe educational environment that fosters academic success as well as physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. The teachings of the Church are followed, including those teachings related to gender, in a Christ-centered atmosphere that promotes Gospel values.

Administrators will maintain student permanent records and other legal records and documents using the student's legal name and gender. Students are to use bathrooms according to their God-given gender. Where possible, arrangements are to be made for a private bathroom to address special needs. In all other circumstances students are expected to comply according to their God-given gender.

RESOLVING QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

As part of South Hills Catholic Academy's commitment to fostering a deep understanding of the Catholic faith, faculty, staff, students, parents, and administrators are all expected to resolve conflict with virtue and respect for others. Questions and concerns should first be discussed directly with the parties involved, and not discussed with others. If previous attempts at resolution have not been successful, then they may be presented to higher authorities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

All calls can be directed to the school office by calling 412-631-3131.

Head of School: Harmony Stewart, hstewart@shcacademy.com

Dean of Students: Bradley Davis, bdavis@shcacademy.com

Office Administrator: Megan Christ, mchrist@shcacademy.com

Business Manager: Mary Kosko, mkosko@shcacademy.com

Athletic Director: Rich Unger, runger@shcacademy.com

ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Athletics

WE ARE THE SAINTS!

The South Hills Catholic Academy Athletic Association (SHCAAA) aids the Head of School/Principal in providing an athletic program for the students at the school.

Visit the SHCAAA website at www.shcacademyaa.com/ to register your child for athletics and for all information related to SHCA athletics. SHCA offers the following sports:

Fall Sports - September to November (practices start in August)

- Girls Volleyball, Grades 4 to 8*
- Cross Country, Grades 3 to 8*
- Little Runners (Fall), Grades Pre to 2
- Football, September, Grades 3 to 8*
- Soccer (Fall), Grades 3 to 8*
- Developmental Soccer (Fall), Grades 1 to 2*
- Little Kickers (Fall), Grades Pre to K

Winter Sports - October to March (practices start in October)

- Boys Basketball, Grades 3 to 8*
- Girls Basketball, Grades 3 to 8*
- Little Dribblers, Grades K to 2
- Cheerleading, Grades 4 to 8*
- Spirit Squad, Grades K to 3
-

Spring Sports - March to May (practices start in February / March)

- Boys Volleyball, Grades 5 to 8*
- Volleyball Coed, Grades 3 to 4*
- Track, Grades 3 to 8*
- Little Runners (Spring), Grades Pre to 2
- Soccer (Spring), Grades 3 to 8*
- Developmental Soccer (Spring), Grades 1 to 2*
- Little Kickers (Spring), Grades Pre to K

* Participates in a Diocese of Pittsburgh sanctioned sports league.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer as coaches for the teams. If there are not enough players for a team, or if no coaches volunteer, the student athletes may participate on a team at a nearby Diocesan school.

Each student athlete must pay an activities fee or take part in fundraising activities to offset the costs of running the athletic program.

Extracurricular Activities

Many special friendships can be formed and hidden talents and abilities can be explored through the social interactions that take place outside of the classroom! South Hills Catholic Academy (SHCA) offers a wide variety of extracurricular opportunities that will appeal to students of all levels with many interests and gifts. SHCA extracurricular opportunities may include the following (in addition to others, depending on student interest and availability of moderators):

Altar Servers

Lectors

Band

Schola Cantorum

School Musical

Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS)

Forensics



SOUTH HILLS CATHOLIC ACADEMY

2023-2024 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

5 First Day of School

SEPTEMBER 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

FEBRUARY 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

19 No School- Presidents Day

9 No School- Columbus Day

OCTOBER 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

MARCH 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

27- April 1 Easter Break

20-24 Fall Break

NOVEMBER 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

APRIL 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

1- No School Easter Monday

25- Jan 5 Christmas Break

DECEMBER 2023						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

MAY 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

27- Memorial Day

31- Last Day of School

1-5 Christmas Break

15 No School MLK

JANUARY 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

Acknowledgement of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the policies and procedures detailed in South Hills Catholic Academy Student Handbook.

Employee Signature

Date