

HISTORY

St. Matthew School opened its doors in 1943 and has continuously provided a Catholic education to students for the past 66 years. Originally, the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary opened the school and participated in our students' education until 2000. They have left a lasting legacy of adherence to strong academics while children develop an understanding of their Catholic faith connecting this to their personal spirituality.

Through the years, St. Matthew has continued to work with children in the heart of downtown Phoenix providing an area of peace in the midst of troubled neighborhoods. Some remarkable teachers and students have passed through these classrooms. The goal then and now is to enable students through faith and academics to achieve whatever they dream of becoming. Their love of God and acquired success will remind them to give back to the communities in which they live.

PHILOSOPHY

“A true education aims at the formation of the human person with respect to his/her ultimate goal and simultaneously with respect to the good of those societies of which, as a man/woman, he/she is a member, and in those responsibilities, as an adult he/she will share.”

Christian Education #1

Document of Vatican II, 1965

Mission

St. Matthew School is a partnership with students, parents and community committed to developing academic excellence with the integration of Catholic values within a safe and nurturing environment.

Goals

Our overall goal is to deeply instill Christian values through daily spiritual development while teaching the value of service to our community. Students who attend St. Matthew will develop strong academic skills through instruction at their individual skill level. The safety of every child at St. Matthew is of utmost importance; all guidelines for a Safe Environment will be strictly adhered to during every school activity.

To foster an open line of communication between home, school, and community that will enhance the integral growth of the whole child

To develop personal and social responsibility through class, school activities, and serving each other as Christ did

To provide creative outlets in written expression, music, art, drama, and athletics that develop an appreciation for the diversity evident in God's creation.

School Wide Learning Expectations

At St. Matthew Catholic School, all students are expected to conduct all matters academic as well as social with the following school wide learning expectations in mind:

Our students will be known as

Active Catholics

Effective Communicators

Self-Directed Learners

Responsible Citizens

DIOCESE OF PHOENIX CODE OF CONDUCT

Diocesan Policy requires that anyone teaching or volunteering at St. Matthew school (or parish) participate in training programs for a Safe Environment for children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as training for the implementation of the Diocesan Policy on Sexual Misconduct. If any parent/guardian is interested in reviewing this policy, a copy is available from either the Principal or the Parish Administrator.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

In accordance with the policies of the Roman Catholic Church of Phoenix, St. Matthew School admits Catholic and non-Catholic students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights and privileges, programs, and activities made available to any of its students.

Additionally, in compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, or be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under the educational program or activity except permitted under said Title IX.

ADMISSION/WITHDRAWAL

Arizona statutes require that students are five (5) years of age by September 1st to be eligible for admission to Kindergarten.

Students will be admitted based on grades, standardized test scores, and teacher input. The school reserves the right to accept and place each child. In accordance with the policies of the Roman Catholic Church of Phoenix, Catholic and non-Catholic children are accepted at St. Matthew School. If the number of applicants exceeds the maximum class size, established by the Pastor, members of St. Matthew Parish and Catholic children from other parishes will receive priority.

For a child to be accepted in Grade One and above, evidence must be provided that he/she has successfully completed the previous grade.

No student will be admitted without the following documents:

- Official certificates of Birth and Baptism (if applicable)
- Current record of Immunization and Health
- Certificates of transfer from the school last attended
- Report card and standardized test scores
- Emergency information

If parents are planning to transfer their child(ren), they should notify the school office at the earliest date. All bills must be paid and a forwarding address given. No records will be sent to the receiving school until all debts are cleared.

Asbestos

In accordance with the Asbestos Hazardous Emergency Relief Act (AHERA) a Management Plan has been prepared and approved by the State Department of Environmental Quality. This management plan is available for review in the school office during regular school hours. If one desires a copy of the plan, it is available at the cost of \$25.00, which covers the cost of reproduction. See Parent/Staff letter Appendix A.

Cooperation

The administration and faculty of St. Matthew School are only delegates of the parents undertaking those phases of education that can be carried on more effectively in school. Therefore, the work of the home and school may be classified as one for the well-being of the child.

It is of utmost importance that parents or guardians cooperate closely with the school in this task. The fact that the child has been registered in St. Matthew School indicates that the rules and regulations have been examined and accepted by parents and guardians. It is expected that the judgment of the school authorities concerning the discipline of the students will be rightfully understood and supported by the parents or guardians as an effective means of home and school training.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING/

Religious training is of the utmost importance and forms an integral part of school life. All students attend daily religion classes, which provide the foundation of the dogma and doctrine necessary for a clear understanding of Catholic Christian living. The student body has opportunities for Reconciliation, Mass and Communion on a regular basis.

Every effort is made to lead the student to live his/her Christian commitment daily in all he/she does. Parents are asked to cooperate, especially through the example of their own Christian living, through example of their daily living and in their faithful observance of their Sunday obligation. Parents, it is of vital importance that we do not confuse the children. We must BOTH give the same message to them - that we know, love, and serve the Lord obeying all He has taught us about living and thanking Him for all the gifts He bestows on us each day.

RULES, DIRECTIVES, GENERAL INFORMATION/

School Hours

Regular and punctual attendance is expected and required. The School Office is open from 7:30 AM until 3:30 PM Monday through Thursday. The office closes on Friday at 1:30 PM.

Kindergarten - Eighth Grade

Monday – Thursday.....7:45 a.m. - 3:10 p.m.
Friday.....7:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Faculty Meetings

As a general rule, the faculty meetings are held each week Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m..

Visitors to Campus

ALL visitors to St. Matthew School must report to the School Office on arrival to campus. They must sign in and are required to wear a visitors' badge while on campus. Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's education, and you are welcome on campus at any time. We simply ask that you clear it with your child's teacher so as not to disrupt his/her lesson plan. Please wait until the end of the school day to take your child home. *Every* aspect of the school day is important especially the last part where students are required to collect their belongings, make sure they have their assignments, and help with the cleaning of the room. These are important life-long skills.

Arrival/Departure

Students should not be on the school grounds before 7:00 a.m. Students should be picked up no later than 3:30 p.m. (Monday through Thursday) and 1:15 p.m. (Friday).

For parents who drive their child(ren) to school:

Use the ENTRANCE and EXIT areas properly.

When dropping off or picking up in the afternoon, use the 21st Avenue entrance and please park in the lot. Children are required to use the school crosswalk and may cross when the teacher on duty determines it is safe for them to go if their parent or a responsible party parks their car in the parking lot. Kindergarten-Grade Four parents must pick up their child at the classroom. PLEASE USE THE ESTABLISHED CROSSWALK.

ATTENDANCE

We cannot stress enough that missing days affects a child's progress in school. On the first day of a child's absence from class, parents or guardians are to call the School Office before 9:00 a.m. Parents need to excuse their child for **every day that the child will be absent**. To report an absence, you may call anytime (602) 254-0611, and leave a message. If your child is ill, the school would like to know the specific ailment they are experiencing (ex: fever, cold, vomiting, rash, etc.). St Matthew School has adopted the Arizona State Guidelines regarding absenteeism and tardiness. If a student is absent more than 10% (18 days) of the school year of 180 days, that student may be retained and not promoted to the next grade. If a student is absent more than 10 days in a row with no notification from the parent or guardian, that student will be asked not to return to St. Matthew School. We appreciate your cooperation in this area

Students are responsible for all work missed during an absence. A child who has missed twenty-five or more days is subject to retention in his/her present grade.

Tardiness

Punctuality will be stressed in order to create a prayerful environment in the morning. It is our goal to have a quiet, reflective time for prayer in the morning with all of our students participating. We will begin to pray promptly at 7:50 a.m. each morning unless we have school mass. Students need a tardy pass if they are not on campus by 8:00 AM. Children are rarely responsible for being tardy. Parents, please make EVERY EFFORT to get your child to school on time daily.

Sometimes children have appointments in the morning, and once in a great while, extenuating, unforeseen circumstances arise that cause a child to be tardy. In these cases, the child will be excused. For all other reasons, the child will have an unexcused tardy. Three unexcused tardies will constitute an absence from school.

Early Dismissal

Parents: please notify the office in writing why the student is leaving and the anticipated time of early dismissal. This will assist us in having your child prepared to leave when you arrive. If you do not let the school know in advance, we will not be able to provide your child with work for the rest of the day. Request to leave the school grounds for any reason should be made only for exceptional or emergency-

type causes. If a student is to leave the school grounds during school hours, parents must sign the child out in the School Office. The teacher will be notified and the child will be sent to the office. Students WILL NOT BE DISMISSED FROM THE CLASSROOM.

The safety of every student is of the greatest importance to us. Students will not be dismissed to anyone not listed on the Emergency Information Card, unless such a request is made by the parent/guardian in writing.

HEALTH REGULATIONS

School health records MUST be kept up to date. Notify the School Office of immunizations which have been given to your child(ren). Call the Office concerning any communicable diseases that your child may have contracted.

Illness

Please DO NOT SEND CHILDREN TO SCHOOL IF THEY ARE SICK. The school has limited facilities to care for sick children. It takes much time and many arrangements to send a child home. In the interest of the sick child, parents are asked to respond as promptly as possible when a child must be sent home. When a child is sent home, the child must be signed out in the school office. Each parent must provide the office with a completed EMERGENCY SHEET, which will provide us with necessary information in the event of accident or illness.

Medication

St. Matthew School personnel/volunteers are not permitted to give medication of any kind (prescription or non-prescription) unless the student's parent/guardian authorizes, in writing, that the medication is needed. Any student requiring medication MUST follow the guidelines given by the school.

These guidelines are:

There must be a written order from the physician, stating the name of the medicine, the dosage, and the time it must be given.

There must be written permission from the parents to allow the school to administer the medicine on the appropriate form. (Appendix B)

The medicine must be delivered to the school office by the parent or guardian in the original prescription container, or if it is over the counter medication, in the original container with all warnings and directions intact. All medications will be administered in the school office, including cough drops. All medications, including inhalers, must be kept in the office.

A school form must be filled out before any medication will be given to a student.

Classroom Attire/Uniform

School uniforms have been a part of Catholic Schools since their inception. They serve multiple purposes in enhancing the environment for children. This continues to be evidenced in the public sector as many public school districts adopt uniform policies similar to their Catholic School counterparts. We ask parents to be our partners in enforcing our accepted uniform practices.

Each morning the teachers will check to see that each student is dressed according to our guidelines. If a child is out of uniform, they will be sent to the office. The child will be allowed to call their parents one time per year and request proper attire.

GIRLS

Kindergarten - Fifth Grades

Marymount plaid - knife pleat uniform jumper (grades K-4) or skirt (grades 4 & 5), with white uniform shirt or green uniform polo (skirt must touch the knee), khaki uniform shorts or skort with a forest green polo jersey knit shirt. No long pants may be worn except on “buck a jean” days.

Optional during cooler weather: Under plaid jumper, skirt or skort, khaki shorts, or skort, the girls may wear black, white, or navy blue leggings or tights. Long sleeved green polo jerseys and navy blue sweatshirts with the St. Matthew logo may be worn.

Sixth– Eighth Grades:

Marymount plaid - knife pleat uniform skirt (skirt must touch the knee), maroon uniform polo jersey knit shirts or white uniform blouse and tie. Skirts must touch the knee and physical education shorts must be worn under skirts at all times. Uniforms are designed to be comfortable. During the cooler months long sleeved shirts may be worn. Navy blue sweatshirts or hoodies with the St. Matthew logo or maroon sweatshirts with no images or writing may be worn in the classroom. Any other color jackets or sweatshirts must be removed when students are in class.

Optional during cooler weather: Black, navy or white tights or leggings may be worn under the skirts

BOYS

Kindergarten – Fifth Grades

Khaki uniform pants or shorts with a forest green polo shirt for Kindergarten through Second Grade. Shirt and ties for boys optional on M-Th.

Third through Fifth grade: **white collared business shirt (short sleeves O.K.) and a dark uniform green tie.** Dark green uniform polo shirts may be worn **Fridays only.** Maroon uniform polo shirts may be worn by Sixth through Eighth Grade students **Fridays only.**

No cargo pants or jeans may be worn. Waistbands of pants must be worn around the waist.

Sixth-Eighth-Grades

Khaki uniform **long pants only** with a **white collared business shirt (short sleeves O.K.) and a maroon uniform tie**. This uniform **MUST** be worn Monday-Thursday. Maroon uniform polo shirts may be worn on Fridays or on “buck-a-jean” days.

Optional during cooler weather: Fourth through Eighth grade boys must wear the long uniform pants. . Although there is an optional uniform for PE, it is recommended that students keep a pair of sport shoes at school to change into.

ALL STUDENTS

Student shirts must be tucked in at ALL times - NO exceptions. Rolling or turning a shirt under does not constitute being tucked in; skirt waistbands and belts must be visible. Brown or black belts must be worn in First through Eighth Grades. Kindergarten girls and boys are encouraged to wear elastic waist pants/skirts or skorts. Kindergarten students do not need belts.

NOTE: No hair coloring, no tattoos, no piercing (girls’ ear piercings, see jewelry) real or pretend are permitted at St. Matthew. Hair is to be neatly cut and combed. Boys’ hair must be neatly cut and may not touch their collar. Boys should have a simple haircut - ears, neck, and forehead must be clear, no fad/mod cuts or shaved heads. This applies all year round. Girls may use hair ties or clips to keep their hair out of their face. Girls may not wear nail polish (with the exception of clear or light pink) or any makeup during school hours. Hair spray is not permitted to be used on campus.

Jewelry: Girls and boys are allowed to wear the following items:

- ❧ One ring on each hand
- ❧ Bracelets: students may wear no more than three thin or one thick bracelet on each wrist.
- ❧ A necklace with a religious object may be worn
- ❧ Girls (only) may wear one pair of earrings which are either post or hoops (hoops may be no larger than 1” diameter)

Shoes: The uniform shoe for girls is black or brown leather **flat** dress shoes or lace up oxfords. No slides or sandals, or open-toed shoes are allowed.

The uniform shoe for boys is a black or brown lace up oxford style shoe

Sport shoes may be brought to school on P.E. days or kept at school (Monday, Wednesday and Friday)

Socks: Socks must be white, black, blue, forest green, or maroon. Girls may wear black, navy, white or flesh colored hose.

Jackets: Students may wear any jacket while outside. Inside the classrooms, students must wear school attire, which is navy blue sweatshirts or hoodies with the school logo. No exceptions are allowed.

This uniform policy is in effect from the time a student enters campus until he/she leaves campus.

Parents, please take some time each day to make sure your child is dressed in their proper uniform. If children are out of uniform at school, parents will be contacted and asked to bring the proper clothing for St. Matthew. Parents will need to sign that they will make sure their child complies with our uniform policy.

Uniform shirts, polo shirts, skirts, neckties and jumpers may be purchased from:

Collette’s Uniform Company
4745 N. Central Avenue
Phoenix 85012
602-264-2004 or www.euniformstore.com

Uniform sweatshirts and PE uniforms are purchased through the school office. Boys white business shirts are available at Walmart, Target, or any of the department stores. Please consider “recycling” outgrown uniforms with our school office.

CURRICULUM

The students of St. Matthew School are offered a well-rounded curriculum. In conjunction with Religion and all the major subjects, the students have regular classes in Library Science, Physical Education, and Technology.

HOMEWORK

Homework is a reinforcement of the concepts taught in class. It is not a punishment. The amount and type of homework varies by grade and by teacher – but it is always a constructive tool in the teaching/learning process. As always, St. Matthew’s philosophy is that Education is a partnership between the parents and the teacher, if your child consistently has difficulty completing assignments, please contact their teacher.

Testing

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is administered annually as a means of evaluating the students’ progress and ability in basic skills. Ordinarily, students are tested starting in the second grade. Results of these tests will be provided to the parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher Conferences.

In addition to the Iowa tests, the student body (grades 3-8) will be administered “benchmark tests” several times during the year to ensure that they are working at grade level in the various disciplines.

Pupil Progress and Accountability

Our books are loaned to students during the course of a year. We ask that students return them to us in the same condition in which they received the book. If your child damages or loses a book, parents will be required to pay for the loss or damages. Our textbooks and library books are new or in good condition; we want to keep them that way.

Teachers are to correct, grade, and return the work of the students in a timely fashion; however, parents are responsible to review the grades and work with the student. This should be done when both parent and student have sufficient time to spend on discussing the progress and determining any corrective measures which might be necessary.

Grading

Letter grades (A-B-C-D-F) are given for academic achievement in Grades 3-8 and letter grades E-S-N-U (Excellent, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement, Unsatisfactory) are given for Grades 1-2 including all grades in conduct and effort. Parents/guardians may request a conference with the teacher for clarification of a student’s grade. Kindergarten will receive an individual account of the progress made in specified areas determined by the Diocese.

Progress Reports

Formal progress reports are sent out halfway through each quarter. Parents are to sign the progress report and return it to the teacher the next day. These reports are to be taken seriously. If a student is

failing at the time of the progress reports, this is an indication that the child is having serious problems and is in danger of failing.

Report Cards

According to the Diocesan policy, report cards are given out quarterly beginning in the First Grade. Parent/Teacher Conferences are schedule at the end of the first and second Quarter. Report cards should be read by parents, discussed with students, signed, and returned to school the next day.

Promotion and Retention

Academic achievement is a top priority at St. Matthew School. Students will be expected to perform at their best. The following are the standards by which students will be promoted or retained at the end of the school year. Parents of children who are being considered for retention will be notified in January and a written plan will be in place to help the child.

Promotion

Kindergarten: Recognition of the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sound; recognition of numbers 1 - 31; ability to count to 31 with numerical meaning; sufficient self-control; social maturity.

Elementary Grades 1-2-3: To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain an overall passing grade for religion, language arts (including reading, phonics, and spelling), mathematics, social studies, science and all special area classes.

Elementary Grades 4-8: To be promoted from one grade level to the next a student shall attain an overall passing grade or above in all courses taken. In addition, students shall attain a passing average in each of the following subject areas: religion, language arts (including English, reading, spelling), mathematics, social studies, technology and science.

RETENTION

Retention of students will be considered on an individual basis taking all factors into account. Students who fail more than one subject in any marking period are considered at high risk of being retained. If a student fails to meet the promotion requirements, that student will be retained.

Kindergarten: Failure to recognize the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sound; failure to recognize numbers 1 -10; inability to count to 10 with numerical meaning; lack of adequate self-control; insufficient social maturity.

Elementary Grades 1-2-3: When a student fails one or two required subjects for the year but attains an overall passing average in language arts, mathematics, social studies and science, that student will be assigned to summer school/tutoring.

Elementary Grades 4-8: When a student fails one or two required subjects for the year but attains an overall passing average in all other courses taken, that student will be assigned to summer school/tutoring. The student may be retained if significant progress is not evident.

Summer School and Tutoring

Students who fail one subject with a final failing average must attend summer school or be tutored daily by a duly recognized tutor. Parents will be given guidelines regarding summer school opportunities.

DISCIPLINE

One of the non-academic areas in which the school cooperates with the parents/guardians is that of teaching students that they are responsible for their own actions and must accept the consequences of bad decisions. In order to facilitate this process, students will be made aware of the rules and regulations governing the school, the reasons, and the consequences for any actions which are not in compliance with the rules.

Parents are expected to uphold anyone in authority, as well as the policy itself. If this is not done, the child may become disrespectful to all adults, parents included. If conflict arises, discuss the problem privately with all those concerned so that the proper respectful attitudes may be fostered.

St. Matthew School abides by the Discipline With Purpose Program for teaching children the art and skill of self-discipline. The 15-step process is inclusive of the following

1. Listening
2. Following instructions
3. Proper questioning techniques
4. Sharing: time, space, people, and things
5. Interacting socially
6. Cooperating with others
7. Understanding rules
8. Figuring out how to accomplish tasks
9. Exhibiting leadership
10. Communicating effectively
11. Organizing: time, space, people, and things
12. Resolving mutual problems
13. Taking initiative in problem solving
14. Distinguishing fact from feeling
15. Sacrificing and Serving Others

EACH TEACHER has developed his/her own policies consistent with the general program, to enforce in his/her own classroom. He/She will make the students aware of these policies and the consequences of not following them.

Our agreed procedure for students in our classrooms who are not complying with the rules, which are posted, is as follows:

- ☞ A verbal reminder of expected behavior is given.
- ☞ If the student continues disrupting the learning environment, he/she will be asked to go to the reflection table to write or think about his/her behavior.
- ☞ If the child continues to interfere with learning, the classroom teacher will notify the parent in writing, orally, or by phone.
- ☞ Should there be a discipline problem, parents will be notified and asked to discuss this with the teacher (and/or the principal). We also ask you to discuss any other problems which you may have with your child at home which may have an effect on his/her behavior in school.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A. Each student has a right to:

1. Respect for his/her person
2. Respect to personal property
3. An environment conducive to learning

B. All students are expected to:

1. Respect authority
2. Obey all staff members and those who act in a supervisory capacity
3. Cooperate in all school matters
4. Respect each other

GUIDELINES

The following areas have been identified as concerns which deal with the safety and well being of all St. Matthew students, staff, and visitors. We ask that all persons physically on our school grounds abide by these guidelines and any others that may arise as various activities take place on our campus.

Basic Campus Rules

The following items are not permitted on campus:

- ☞ gum, sunflower seeds, candy, and other food items which cause problems in class or on the school grounds
- ☞ electronic devices including but not limited to radios, mp3 players, electronic games, etc. stink bombs, snap caps, matches, lighters, firecrackers, or any other prank items
- ☞ hair spray, aerosols, silly string, or any other substances in spray cans
- ☞ items displaying gang graffiti

There is “zero tolerance” for the following items. Any student with any of these in his or her possession will be immediately asked not to return to school. The police will be involved as appropriate.

Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products of any kind unless the doctor prescribes medication for a student. All medication must be turned in at the office and dispensed by the office manager or the Principal or her designate. All over the counter drugs must remain in the office for distribution as well.

Firearms, knives, or weapons of any kind

Any type of pornographic material

There is a “zero tolerance” policy for fighting of any kind.

2. Teachers will collect cell phones from the Junior High students at the beginning of the day and return them at end of day

Younger students who bring cell phones to school must keep them on “off” or “vibrate” in their back packs. Students are NOT permitted to talk on their cell phones or text during class or at other time during the day. Teachers also reserve the right to “hold”, PSPs, DS's, in a safe place until the end of the day, or to turn it over to the parent/guardian – depending on the situation.

3. Students are required to walk on sidewalks at all times. Most of our doors open outward, and our sidewalks are narrow. Playing on sidewalks and in the plaza is prohibited.

4. Students are to be in their assigned areas at all times. This includes playgrounds, restrooms, the cafeteria, and classrooms. Students must receive permission from the adult supervising them to leave an area. The staff is responsible for knowing where students are at all times.

5. Food is to be eaten in the cafeteria or under the direction of a staff member. Children should not have food on the playground with the exception of teacher-supervised snacks in the lower grades.

6. Students are asked to use any type of grooming items in the restrooms only. Combing hair, applying lotion, etc. are not appropriate for the classroom.
7. Students are not permitted to destroy or deface property even if it belongs to them. Acts of this nature are disrespectful to common property and demonstrate lack of respect for personal property. Use of appropriate language is an ongoing concern. Students are expected to speak respectfully and kindly to one another. Racist, sexual or vulgar language is *never permitted*. It is considered a form of “bullying” and will be taken very seriously by the Dean of Discipline and his committee.
8. Any type of personal fundraiser activity is not permitted on campus.
9. Students are not allowed to climb on fences.
10. Inappropriate use of computer technology will result in the loss of privileges.

The following are considered acts of disrespect:

- a. Physical abuse
- b. Verbal abuse
- c. Destruction of property
- d. Disruptive behavior
- e. Inappropriate physical contact

If any student violates these rules, he/she will be given consequences for his/her actions. Detention is given for minor infractions. In the event a child were to make a significantly serious decision which would result in harm to others or themselves, St. Matthew would involve the parents and possibly require the student to withdraw from school.

New Items for Handbooks 2010-2011

Off-Campus Activities.

At St. Matthew Catholic School, we expect our students to demonstrate responsible social behavior on and off campus and we expect them to conduct themselves as good citizens in our local communities in accordance with the law, our Code of Conduct, and Catholic teaching. While we can not police every violation that occurs off campus, and while St. Matthew Catholic School will not be held legally responsible or financially liable for the behavior of our students off campus, the school’s Code of Conduct will remain in effect at all times, when school is in session and when school is not in session, and students and student groups are expected to conduct themselves as representatives of the St. Matthew Catholic School community at all times, whether on or off campus, and whether they are in uniform or not.

Generally, our Code of Conduct prohibits misconduct on school premises, at school-sponsored events and activities off-campus, and at any location where a student is engaged in an official school activity or in any activity that is sponsored by St. Matthew Catholic School, chaperoned by St. Matthew Catholic School, officials, or in any way connected to St. Matthew Catholic School, (such as a field trip, athletic contest, club activity, dance, etc.). In addition to that, however, we reserve the right to review any occurrence of student behavior off-campus, even if that behavior does not occur in or is not related to a school activity, and we reserve the right to discipline that student, if the

behavior violates our Code of Conduct and if it directly impacts the school or has or may have a negative effect upon the school's reputation.

As such, any off-campus violation(s) by a St. Matthew Catholic School, student of a criminal law or the Code of Conduct that brings the school into disrepute, that adversely affects the school's educational mission, objectives, and/or interests of the St. Matthew Catholic School, community, or that seriously affects the ability of our school to continue its normal activities, will be subject to review and discipline.

St. Matthew Catholic School, students are subject to all city, state and federal laws and shall be accountable to our courts for any violations of such laws. If we become aware of a charge alleging that a St. Matthew Catholic School, student has violated, while on or off campus, a city, state or federal law, we may institute a school investigation into that conduct, and that student may be subject to disciplinary proceedings, without regard to the pendency of any civil or criminal litigation, and regardless of whether any criminal arrest or prosecution has taken place.

Upon receipt of a complaint alleging off-campus student misconduct, the Principal and/or Pastor will, in their sole discretion, review the allegations to determine the school's jurisdiction over such conduct and determine the appropriate course of action to take against that student.

Internet Activities.

For the protection of our students, teachers and officials, and for reasons related to school safety and school reputation, we expect our students to demonstrate responsible social behavior and to conduct themselves as good citizens when using the Internet, whether on or off campus. As a result, if we become aware that a St. Matthew Catholic School student has posted or displayed information on the Internet or on any social networking site or other website (such as MySpace, FaceBook, You Tube, etc) that involves inappropriate behavior including, but not limited to the use, possession, or distribution of drugs/alcohol, sexual behavior, harassment/hazing/bullying, illegal activities or promoting violence, we will investigate that activity, and that student may be subject to appropriate school disciplinary procedures, up to and including dismissal.

Students are also prohibited from posting any materials on the Internet, on any social networking site, or any other website, and are prohibited from sending information via electronic transmission that is associated or linked to St. Matthew Catholic School, its students, faculty or staff without prior written consent from school administration. This may include but is not limited to pictures and videos of St. Matthew Catholic School students, teachers or officials that are taken on campus or at St. Matthew Catholic School-sponsored events. Any violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate school disciplinary procedures, up to and including dismissal.

Counseling Section of Handbook

Confidentiality

With certain exceptions, any and all information regarding your child's and family's guidance at St. Matthew Catholic School is kept strictly confidential. Any information regarding sexual behavior or the use, possession or distribution of drugs/alcohol becomes known, information will be shared with parent/guardian of the student. Under certain circumstances, we may be required or allowed to reveal information obtained in

guidance sessions, on a need to know basis, without parent's prior consent. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed under the following circumstances: threats of suicide or serious physical harm to self or others; court order to release records or other information about your child's school guidance, including test results, evaluations, attendance and progress; referral to another professional, e.g., for the purpose of testing and evaluation, consultation with or supervision by another counseling professional; any behavior or situation where disclosure of information is required by applicable law (i.e. abuse, bullying, sexting, child pornography, use of illegal substance).

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Ordinarily, each Friday, a "Weekly Communication Folder" will go home with the eldest student in each family of the school. All information enclosed should be read by the parent(s)/guardian(s). The Friday Folder should be signed next to the date and returned to the school on MONDAY of every week. This weekly communication is essential for keeping parents informed about school events.

We strive to do our best as educators to keep parents informed. If parents wish to communicate with their child's teachers(s), we ask that you please use the following guidelines:

- ☞ Make an appointment with the teacher(s) immediately. Call the office and leave a message for the teacher to call you to make an appointment.
- ☞ If the area of concern requires further attention, then make an appointment to see the principal. The principal may call a meeting with you and the teacher to discuss the problem further and work together to resolve it.

TELEPHONE

Ordinarily teachers or students may not be called from their classes to receive telephone calls. In case of an emergency, a message may be left with the school secretary. Students are not permitted to use the telephone except in cases of emergency.

CONFERENCES

Communication between home and school is essential if the children are to make progress. For this purpose, parent/teacher conferences are scheduled after the first and second quarter. Other conferences may be arranged by the parents/guardians or teachers at other times during the year. Parents may not confer with a teacher during regular class hours or before classes when preparations are being made.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM

All children attending St. Matthew School will receive meals at no charge during the school year. Important: All families need to fill out an application. Students may not eat fast food in the cafeteria. Lunches brought from home need to reflect the nutritional guidelines enforced at St. Matthew School. Any non-nutritious food (chips, hot Cheetos, etc) or drink (sodas) will be confiscated and thrown away.

WELLNESS POLICY

St. Matthew School is committed to your child's ongoing good health and has in place a policy that ensures that a healthy environment is maintained at all times.

BIRTHDAYS

We ask parents who wish to celebrate their child's birthday at school to please adhere to the following guidelines. Any treats brought to school will be distributed between 2:45 and 3:05 at the teacher's discretion. Students cannot bring in food to be shared at lunchtime. This causes problems in the cafeteria for staff and students.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips have an educational and cultural value. Parents will be notified in writing when their child will be leaving school for a field trip. Transportation for field trips most often is by city transit or leased buses. If parents do not submit a proper permission form for each field trip, the child will not be allowed to participate. Telephone calls WILL NOT be accepted in lieu of the proper permission form. (Appendix C). Field trips are privileges to students. No student has an absolute right to a field trip. Students may be denied a field trip if they fail to meet behavior requirements.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

St. Matthew offers students opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities including but not limited to after school sports, Loyola, After Care, Student Council, and other outside activities that occur from time to time. Arizona Revised Statutes Title 15 clearly states that a student must be academically eligible to participate in activities outside the classroom.

The sponsor of the activity is responsible for checking eligibility periodically throughout the season or activity. If students become ineligible, they will be given a period of two weeks or longer if necessary, to regain their eligible status. Parents will be notified whenever a student is deemed ineligible. It is our goal to maintain high academic standards while offering a quality, well-rounded program to students.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Awards based on the following standards will be presented twice a year. All subjects, special area classes, and any electives are part of the consideration for academic achievement.

Scholastic Merit Award Grades 3-8

1. A grade of A in all subjects (4.0 grade point average)
2. No area of the report card shall have a U or N (Unsatisfactory or Needs Improvement)
3. Where grades are Pass or Fail, all grades must be passing

Principal's List Grades 3-8

1. Student may have grades of A or B but must have an average of 3.5
2. No grade may be lower than a B in any subject
3. No U's or N's
4. Students must be passing in Pass/Fail classes

Honor Roll Grades 3-8

1. Students may have grades of A, B, or C with an average of 3.0
2. No U's or N's
3. Students must be passing in all Pass/Fail classes

Perfect Attendance

Students having perfect attendance will be recognized each semester. Certificates will be given out at the end of the year for perfect attendance for the entire year. Students with any unexcused tardy will not be eligible for perfect attendance.

DONATIONS

Any books, computers, software, puzzles, games, toys, and classroom items that are in good condition will be gratefully accepted.

TAX CREDIT PROGRAM (CTODP)

In 1999, the Arizona State Legislature passed a bill allowing taxpayers to contribute up to \$500 per calendar year for individual income tax forms to private schools to be used to assist students with tuition. In 2001, the State Legislature increased the amount for couples filing joint income tax returns to \$625, but they increased the amount again to \$1,000.00 in 2006. Taxpayers receive a state income tax credit for the full amount, and the contribution can be used at the federal level as a tax deduction.

Anyone may contribute money; currently having children in school is not a requirement.

The Diocese of Phoenix has set up a fund for the reception of these contributions called the Catholic Tuition Organization for the Diocese of Phoenix (CTODP). For the past six years, this organization has received contributions at an estimated 10 million dollars. This has significantly impacted schools such as St. Matthew by assisting our students and their families with tuition. This year the Diocese is assisting many more students. The CTODP monies are available, based on need, to all students of Diocesan schools in grades Kindergarten through senior year in high school. When contributing, participants may designate a school where their money would be given to students.

The decision for the student and the amount of assistance is determined from an outside organization and is always based on need. Families are ranked from greatest need to most able to pay. The determination for tuition assistance is made each year in early May. Families are notified by June 30th.

If you would be interested in contributing to CTODP, forms are available in the office throughout the year. The deadline for making contributions for the current tax year is December 31, 2010. We appreciate your generosity in helping more than 90% of our students receive a Catholic education through tuition assistance. This would not be possible without the financial help through CTODP.

Checks can be mailed to our school or to the Diocese of Phoenix and should be made out to CTODP. In January, the Diocese sends you the necessary paperwork to make the tax deductions.

Mail to:

CTODP
340 E. Palm Lane
Phoenix, AZ 85004

St. Matthew School
2038 W. Van Buren
Phoenix, AZ 85009

TUITION

Please refer to the St. Matthew Financial Handbook .

AFTER CARE

After care is provided through partnerships through the Boys and Girls Club or the YMCA. Information will be available in the office after July 24 or at Parent Orientation

INSURANCE

Any student enrolled in a Diocese of Phoenix Preschool, Kindergarten, Elementary, or Secondary School, will be provided accident insurance worldwide while:

- ☒ on school grounds when school is in session
- ☒ taking part in a school sponsored and supervised activity
- ☒ attending school sponsored and supervised religious services or instruction

If a student suffers a covered “accidental injury”, he/she will be eligible for benefits by completing the proper claim documentation, which will be available in the school office. The program pays the first \$100 of claim expenses, and the excess over any other collectible medical insurance up to this policy’s limit.

SCHOOL VISITS

We encourage and welcome visits from parents and guardians to our school. Every parent or guardian wishing to visit must check with the teacher to determine the day and time, sign in at the school office, and receive a Visitor’s badge to wear while on campus. When signing in, parents/guardians will be asked to state the purpose of the visit.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

St. Matthew School abides by the provision of the Buckley Amendment (1975) with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, St. Matthew School will provide the non-custodial parent access to academic records and to other school-related information regarding his/her child. If there is a court order specifying that NO information be given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide St. Matthew with the official copy of the court order.

PARENTAL COMMITMENT

A hallmark of Catholic education is the involvement of parents in the school. Every study shows that one of the main reasons for the success enjoyed by Catholic schools is the commitment and investment of the parents.

We firmly believe that parental involvement will strengthen our school community. Thus, each family will be asked to give parent support hours in the service of the school and/or parish. Service hours will be applied as credit toward tuition at a rate of \$7.50 an hour. Prior to parents interacting with students in any capacity, the Diocese requires that all adults take the Safe Environment Class. Parents will be given a list of dates and times for classes in the weekly envelope.

ACCEPTABLE PARENTS SERVICE HOURS

Please note that not all Parish ministries fulfill Service Hours for the School. Below, please find a list of service hours that fulfill the requirement. If in doubt please contact the Principal or the Development Director.

Working at the school office

Working on fundraising events

Working on special projects at the School or Parish

Duty playground aide

Cafeteria aide

Crossing Guard

Chaperoning on Field Trips

Although the school prefers parents give their time, any fees received will provide the opportunity for additional programs and materials. In this way, every family is contributing to our school.

SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

In addition to service hours, every family is expected to contribute a minimum of \$100.00 per semester towards school fundraising efforts. Among the major fundraisers planned to support our school are the September Fiesta, the Walk-a-Thon, and various sales throughout the year. Any and all creative fundraising ideas are gratefully accepted by the Principal!

SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

The School Advisory Board adheres to the Diocesan School Policies and develops further policies as needed to operate the school and attain the goals of the school. They review and approve the annual budget and its funding as presented by the Principal and the Pastor. The Council derives its authority from Diocesan policy and is accountable to the Pastor, Principal, and Diocesan School Board.

HOME and SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

All parents are automatically members of the St. Matthew HSA. Therefore, there is no need to sign up. The mission of the HSA is to add to the life of the school by participating in a variety of committees and activities. Some of these committees include fundraising, social events, communication, etc. Our meetings will take place around central themes or events monthly.

FINALLY

The Pastor and Principal of St. Matthew School reserve the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be notified in the “Friday Folder” if changes are made.

- Do you have a problem?
- Do you have a concern?
- Do you have a question?
- Do you have a suggestion?
- Do you wish an appointment with the Principal or the Pastor?

If you answer YES to any of the above questions, please call the School Office (602) 254-0611 at any time.

We’re glad that you’re here! May your year be filled with personal growth, especially in ways that challenge the mind, build the community, and draw us closer to God.

STATEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENTS OF HANDBOOK

Please complete both of these forms for each child. Keep the top copy for your own records, and return the bottom copy to your child's teacher. Every classroom teacher must have this on file in his/her room.

By reading the handbook and signing this statement, we agree to work with the administration, staff, and faculty of St. Matthew School, and support the philosophy and decisions of the school community both at school and at home. We will, as a family, work to follow these guidelines to the best of our ability.

Parent/Guardian: _____ (Signature)

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Grade: _____

St. Matthew School
2038 W. Van Buren
Phoenix, AZ 85009
(602) 254-0611

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