SAINT RITA SCHOOL
FAMILY HANDBOOK
2011-2012
“...The Place to be where the Love of Christ Is Lived and Shared”

Mission Statement
St. Rita School is a Catholic parish elementary school that provides the opportunity for students to achieve academic excellence in a nurturing, faith-filled environment. We prepare our students to be responsible Christian citizens who can make sound, moral choices and think critically to meet the challenges of today’s rapidly changing society and those they will face in the future.

St. Rita School
1601 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, CT 06517

St. Rita School is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and by the State of Connecticut Board of Education
Catholic Schools
Education for a Lifetime

Purpose and Vision For Catholic School Education

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford welcome students of all faiths, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The fundamental purpose of Catholic schools is to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing and secure environment in which students encounter the living God, who in Jesus Christ, reveals His transforming love and truth;

- Partner with parents to support students in their learning and in their search for knowledge, meaning, and truth;

- Create a Catholic climate that contributes to the formation of students as active participants in the parish community;

- Foster a culture of educational excellence through critical thinking skills, innovative and rigorous curriculum standards, a global perspective, and an emphasis on moral education, community, and service;

- Promote life-long learning that advances the development of the whole person-mind, body, and soul; and

- Graduate students prepared to become productive, virtuous citizens and church leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world.
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**HANDBOOK**
**SAINT RITA SCHOOL**

*When applicable the policies of the Archdiocese are noted as (ADH: _____) in the Family Handbook.*

**PHILOSOPHY**

Saint Rita School is a community of students, parents, teachers and ministers of the Church. As a community, we strive to nurture Catholic Christian moral principles by providing a caring and positive environment. We believe that it is our responsibility to help students grow spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically, and to see that students’ gifts and talents are recognized and enhanced.

**PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES**

**Goal**  To nurture Catholic principles.

1. To encourage students to develop a personal relationship with Christ
2. To teach the basic elements of our faith every day
3. To encourage our students to respond to the needs of others through service
4. To prepare and celebrate Eucharistic liturgies and other opportunities for prayer highlighting the themes of the liturgical year
5. To encourage students to resolve conflict based on gospel principles
6. To guide students in their preparation for First Eucharist and First Penance and continue to support their reception of the sacraments
7. To provide an annual retreat for 8th Grade students

**Goal**  To recognize and encourage the growth of each child's talents and gifts.

1. To provide opportunities for students to participate in the performing arts
2. To provide opportunities for students to enhance the community’s prayer life through their participation in liturgies
3. To offer students the opportunity to participate in various contests and competitions so that their gifts will be recognized by the greater public
4. To provide opportunities for students to enhance their leadership abilities
5. To encourage students to participate in co-curricular activities such as sports, newspaper, yearbook, etc.

**Goal**  To create and promote opportunities for parents and parishioners to learn about and become actively involved in life after school.

1. To provide information to parents that will enhance and develop a partnership between home and school
2. To provide opportunities for parents and parishioners to take part in various school sponsored activities

**Goal**  To provide an academically challenging curriculum.

1. To periodically review and update textbooks
2. To provide computer access
3. To offer a comprehensive Music, Art and Physical Education program
4. To provide opportunities for students to use the library
5. To provide a band program for students in grades 4-8
6. To offer a World Language to students in grades 3 – 8
7. To offer Algebra I or Pre-Algebra to students in grade 8
HISTORY

To learn more about the history of St. Rita School see the website at: www.stritaschool.org

ROLE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

It is the responsibility and sacred charge of parents to provide children with a good Christian education so that they may become citizens of both earth and heaven. This education begins and continues each week with the expectation of family participation in the Eucharistic liturgy.

Because of the complex society in which we live, the success and responsibility of educating a child requires the sharing of ideas from both home and school. We encourage parents/guardians to take an active role in the education of their children through both Home and School Association activities and volunteering time and talent for the advancement and enrichment of the school community. Together we can encourage optimal growth.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

St. Rita School admits qualified students of any race, color, national and /or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities made available at the school. While St. Rita School does not discriminate against students with special needs, a full range of services is not always available to them. *(ADH: 5.101)

St. Rita hires qualified individuals of any race, color, national and/or ethnic origin. Those hired receive all the rights and privileges entitled to the employees of the school.

ADMISSION POLICY

Students are admitted to Saint Rita School on an annual basis. The administration of St. Rita School will determine who is qualified for admission and, if necessary, will also assign priorities for admission. An application deadline will be announced well in advance in the St. Rita Parish bulletin and in other local publications.

Prerequisites for admission are:

1. satisfactory performance on the placement test for the appropriate grade which is administered to all new students;
2. a satisfactory record from the previous school.

A family who makes application to St. Rita completes the necessary form and pays a non-refundable application fee. Upon acceptance, a non-refundable registration fee is required which is paid in one installment. Students who meet these requirements will be admitted as openings occur. If space is limited, the following priorities will be assigned to applications received before the deadline. Late applications will be considered only if space is available.

Priorities for admission to Kindergarten:

1. A student enrolled in the pre-kindergarten program, a child of a member of St. Rita Parish (as determined by the pastor), or a sibling of a student enrolled in St. Rita School.
2. A child of a member of another Catholic parish (as determined by his or her pastor).
3. Others

Priorities for admission to all other grades:

1. A child of a member of St. Rita Parish (as determined by the pastor) or a sibling of a student enrolled in St. Rita School.
2. A child of a member of another Catholic parish (as determined by his or her pastor).
3. Others

Continuance at St. Rita School for each successive year is based on overall successful achievement of the student and is the decision of the school administration made in the best interests of the individual student.
SPRITUAL LIFE

PRAYER
Prayer is vital to the St. Rita School Community. The school community begins and ends the day with prayer; and each class within the school day also begins with prayer. *(ADH: 4.109)*

SCHOOL LITURGIES
Well planned liturgical experiences in accordance with approved liturgical norms shall form an integral part of the religion curriculum of each grade throughout the school year. The celebration of the Eucharist will ordinarily take place on the first Friday of each month and on Holy Days of Obligation during the school year. *(ADH: 4.112)* Each grade level is responsible for planning at least one Liturgy during the school year. There are also other occasions for prayer as a community. These occasions usually focus on various liturgical seasons or when there is a special need for communal prayer.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS
Sacramental celebrations are parish celebrations and, as such, properly belong in the parish where the student and family worship each weekend. Students in Grade 2 prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist through daily classroom instruction. In addition, students are expected to participate in special workshop days and the programs of celebration. Parent meetings in preparation for these sacraments are an important part of this preparation, and all parents are expected to attend. Children who are not members of St. Rita Parish should have the permission of their own pastor to celebrate these sacraments at St. Rita Church. *(ADH: 4.113)*

Times are also provided throughout the year for communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, either for individual classes or for the families in school through the parish.

ACADEMIC LIFE

CURRICULUM
St. Rita School follows the recommended curriculum guidelines of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Hartford in all major subject areas* (ADH: 4.102). Grades 6-8 have a departmentalized program. A more limited departmental arrangement is in place for Grades 4 and 5 while primary grades are mostly self-contained.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY
Participation in any extracurricular activity at St. Rita School is a privilege, and students participating in the activity must be aware that they are representing St. Rita School. In order to be eligible for any extracurricular activity, a student must maintain an average grade of C-(70) or above in all subjects. A student who does not maintain this average or a student who does not represent him/herself in an acceptable manner may be suspended from participating in extracurricular activities or be placed on probation. The time of suspension/probation will be set by the administration.

Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. School play
2. Sports teams: Soccer, Baseball, Softball, Basketball, Cheerleading
3. Student Council
4. Yearbook
5. Newspaper

Parents will be informed of suspension from extracurricular activities via letter from the principal. Written notification will also be given to the moderators/coaches of the extracurricular activities. Students on suspension may not participate in meetings, club/team sponsored activities, practices, and games.

Students who are suspended from participating in extracurricular activities will be allowed to TRY OUT for an activity. Acceptance into an activity does not automatically indicate full participation in that activity.
COMPUTER/INTERNET POLICY (see last page of the handbook)

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
The expectation is that all eighth grade students will master their course of study. If an eighth grade student fails one or more subjects, a plan to guarantee mastery will be created and a diploma will be awarded only after the plan is successfully completed.

HOMEWORK
Homework shall be designed to serve a positive purpose, shall be assigned on a regular basis, and shall be closely integrated with class work * (ADH 4.105).
Homework supports independent learning and is closely integrated with class work. Homework is usually not more than thirty minutes for Grades 1-3 and usually not more than one hour for Grades 4 and 5. Students in Grades 6-8 are encouraged to take responsibility for their studies by completing daily assignments as well as anticipating long-range assignments.
Parents/Guardians are encouraged to support their child(ren) by providing adequate time for them to complete their homework assignments as well as to provide a suitable place for them to complete their homework. It is important, however that each student complete his/her own homework independently since it is often used to assess the student’s mastery of the material.

HONOR ROLL FOR GRADES 6-8
To recognize academic achievement, an honor roll program is established based on the following criteria:
Principal’s List: Overall average= A+ or A
First Honors: Overall average= A-
Second Honors: Overall average= B+
Merit: Overall average= B or B-
“Schools implementing an honor roll system must include the following subjects when determining honors status: religion, language arts, literature, history/social studies, math science/health, *world language.
*If taught fewer than three times a week, it need not be considered when determining honor status. (At St. Rita School Art, Music, Physical Ed will not be averaged in determining Honors status).
Any grade lower than a B- in a major academic area or lower than an S in a ‘special’ shall negate honor roll status. In the event that a student receives one C in an academic area, but A’s and B’s in all other academic areas, the status of honorable mention may be awarded. Behavior must be a consideration in determining honor roll status.” *(ADH 4.134)

St. Rita School will abide by the above as noted in the Archdiocesan Handbook. If a student does receive one C in an academic area and A’s and B’s in all other academic areas, the status of Merit will be awarded.

LIBRARY
Students have the privilege of borrowing books from the school library. Once in the possession of the student, it is the responsibility of the student to care for the book and to return it to the library in good condition. If books are lost or damaged, the student will be assessed for the book’s replacement cost.

NEWSLETTER
News and Notes is published weekly and is sent via email. Other pertinent information is sent home in the Tuesday envelope with every student in the school. The weekly envelope is to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school. A Calendar of Events may also be found on the school website @ (www.stritaschool.org).
PROGRESS REPORTS

Parents/Guardians of students in grades 6th – 8th may view their child’s grades and achievement online at any time during the school year. Progress reports will no longer be distributed to parents at mid-quarter. Each Middle School student will be assigned an ID and password.

Teachers also contact parents/guardians regarding their child’s progress more informally throughout the school year.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held during the first semester of the school year.

PROMOTION/RETENTION

Students are promoted once a year based on the student’s satisfactory completion of the grade requirements*(ADH: 5.302). This promotion indicates that they have mastered the curriculum for the given course of study. The failure to pass two or more subjects indicates that the student has not successfully completed the course of study. In this case, the student may be retained in his/her current grade level so that the curriculum can be mastered.

Teachers will be in frequent communication with parents regarding specific challenges to the student’s learning. A decision regarding retention will be made during the third marking period. The administration reserves the right to make the final decision regarding a student’s retention or promotion.

In some cases promotion will be given on the condition that a student attends summer school or engages a tutor and successfully masters a given curriculum area. Prior approval of either the summer school or tutor must be approved by the administration.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are distributed four times during the school year for grades 1-8, three times for kindergarten, and twice for Pre-K. The grading scale and frequency of distribution are established by the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Hartford * (ADH: 4.134).

The following grading scales are now in use:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades 1-3</th>
<th>Grades 4-8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E= Exceeds Grade Level Expectations</td>
<td>A+ 100- 98</td>
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<tr>
<td>G= Grade Level Expectations</td>
<td>A  97- 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M=Minimal Grade Level Expectations</td>
<td>A- 93- 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>N= Needs Improvement</td>
<td>B+ 89- 87</td>
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<tr>
<td>*O= Outstanding</td>
<td>B  86- 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*S= Satisfactory</td>
<td>B- 82- 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*U= Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>C+ 79- 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* for use in subject areas that meet less than three times a week.</td>
<td>C  76- 73</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C- 72- 70</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D  69- 65</td>
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<td>F Below 65, failing</td>
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For classes that meet once a week, an S for Satisfactory work or a U for Unsatisfactory work is given. There is not a specific grade given in Computer or in Health. Work done for these classes is incorporated into other class subjects.

SCHOOL RECORD

The official cumulative record of the Archdiocese of Hartford will be used at St. Rita School and kept on file in the school office. A duplicate record will be mailed to any school to which a student is transferred or promoted once a release form has been signed by the parent/guardian. All material in the student’s file shall be treated as confidential and shall be accessible only to the Principal, members of the professional staff, and the parents/guardians. *(ADH: 5.404). Release to any others will require written permission of the parent/guardian or a court subpoena. If a parent/guardian wishes to review his/her child(ren)’s cumulative file a request for review needs to be in writing to the school office at least 24 hours prior to the review.
STANDARDIZED TESTING
St. Rita School follows the standardized testing program established each year by the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Hartford *(ADH 4.135)*. Ordinarily the Iowa Test of Basic Skills is administered to Grades 3-7 in the spring. Grades 5 and 7 also take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CoGats). Normally it takes 4-6 weeks for the test results to be sent to the school. Parents are mailed the test results of their children. If parents/guardians wish to discuss their child’s test scores they are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher.

DAILY LIFE

ABSENCE
Excessive absence (40) or the equivalent of 40 days including tardies can be cause for a student to be retained. Students are to bring a written excuse explaining each absence. The note must be dated, and signed by the parent/guardian. Please indicate the day(s) of the absence. An absence of one half day causes a student to lose perfect attendance. Students ARRIVING AFTER 11:25 a.m. or LEAVING BEFORE 11:25 a.m. will be considered ABSENT for one half day.

Any student who is absent from school may not participate in any extracurricular activities on that particular day.

Students must make arrangements with his/her teacher(s) regarding the completion of assignments. In grades 5-8, it is the responsibility of the student to communicate with each of his/her teachers upon his/her return to school.

Parents may request work from teachers if a child is out of school for more than one day. Teachers must be given time to prepare the child’s work. If a parent/guardian will be picking up work for his/her child then it is necessary to check in at the office.

ASBESTOS
At the beginning of each school year in compliance with AHERA regulations, we are required to inform all those associated with St. Rita School of the Asbestos Inspection Report and Management Plan. A copy of the plan is available in the school office.*(ADH)

ATTENDANCE
Students are expected to attend school for 180 days according to Connecticut School Attendance Law and as reflected in the school calendar of the Archdiocese of Hartford. Parents **must** call the office (248-3114) by 9:00 a.m. to report a child’s/children’s absence. This call assures the school that students are safe. The school office will contact parents who do not report absences.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS
St. Rita School has both a before school and after school program on site.

BEFORE SCHOOL
The Before School Program begins at 7:00 A.M. (This includes days with a **delay** due to inclement weather). Children will enter school using the gym doors. A fee of $2.00 is paid to the supervisor each day. This fee will be charged to any student who arrives prior to 8:00 AM.

AFTER SCHOOL
Supervision in the After School program is provided from dismissal until, but no later than, 5:30 p.m. When families are late in picking up their child(ren) a late fee of $10.00 per 15-minute period after 5:30 p.m. will be charged. Parents are to complete the weekly sign-up sheet requesting After Care. This form is to be completed and returned to the school office with payment the week prior to the week services will be rendered. A parent must sign their child(ren) out when picking them up at the end of the day. The fee for the program is $11 per day per child or $20 per day per family. A 30.00 per student registration fee is required. The After
School Program is also available during half-days unless designated otherwise in the weekly Notes and Notes. There is **NO** After School program on half-days prior to holidays.

**THE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOUND IN THIS HANDBOOK APPLY TO THE BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM.**

**BICYCLES**

Students in Grades 5 – 8 are permitted to ride bicycles to school. They must walk their bicycles on school property, wear a helmet, and park and lock the bicycle in the designated bike rack. Anyone not following these rules will lose their bike riding privileges. St. Rita School is not responsible for damage to bikes on school property.

**BUSING**

Free transportation is provided for all students who live in Hamden more than one mile from the school. Bus regulations are compiled by the Town of Hamden and the Hamden Board of Education. The following rules apply to those students attending St. Rita School and riding on school buses furnished by the town:

1. The driver shall be in charge of the bus and report any misbehavior to the principal.
2. Students must not leave their seats until the bus has stopped. On entering or leaving the bus, no student shall injure or disturb other students.
3. No eating or drinking is allowed on the school bus at any time. The use of radios, tape recorders, CD players, or electronic games is not allowed on a school bus. The transport of such items on a school bus may be **allowed only if the student has been requested in writing by a teacher or school administrator to do so.**
4. Only persons authorized by the Central Office will be allowed to ride any school bus.
5. Students are not allowed to ride on any school bus other than the one assigned.
6. Those things which are not appropriate on school property are not appropriate on a school bus.
7. The privilege of riding the bus may be denied any student for inappropriate behavior. Such behavior is intolerable since it directly compromises the physical safety of our children.
8. Bus Incident Report
   a. a **first** Bus Incident Report will result in the student’s receiving a warning of suspension from riding the bus dependent upon the infraction;
   b. a **second** Bus Incident Report may result in suspension from riding the bus for a period of time;
   c. a **third** Bus Incident Report may result in suspension from riding the bus for the remainder of the school year.
9. Any change in a child’s normal transportation routine must be requested in writing by the parent/guardian and approved by the school administration.

**COMMUNICATION**

In keeping with the church’s principle of subsidiarity, problems should be resolved by seeking resolution with those who are involved with the conflict. Thus, if a difficulty arises between parent and teacher, the resolution must begin between those two parties. If the difficulty is not resolved, then the parent/guardian may contact the administrator to seek resolution. If matters remain unresolved, then the parent/guardian may contact the pastor to seek resolution.

To contact a teacher or administrator, the parent may; send in a written note to the teacher/administrator; call the office to speak with a teacher/administrator; leave a voice mail for the teacher/administrator or email the teacher’s school email address. Parents should refrain from calling teachers/administrators at home.
CRISIS PLAN/SAFE ENVIRONMENT

An established crisis plan that contains building wide safety guidelines in all areas is reviewed and updated each year. State Law requires that all schools conduct a monthly fire drill. *(ADH: 5.617)*

CELL PHONES, ELECTRONICS AND OTHER PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Users must adhere to local school policy regarding the use of electronic devices *(ADH: 5.509.)* Students are not permitted to use cell phones at any time in the school building during school hours. They will be confiscated if seen or heard. Handheld game consoles, mp3 players, Ipods, other music devices, trading cards, toys, etc. and any item that will detract from a learning situation are not allowed at school at any time. For safety reasons, key chains and toys may not be attached to student backpacks. Items in violation will be confiscated and can be claimed by a parent in the office. The school administration will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of these items in the school.

LOST AND FOUND

The school is not responsible for the loss of any clothing or other personal possessions. There is a lost-and-found container on the first floor where items may be retrieved. Parents are asked to mark all student belongings with the student’s name.

FIELD TRIPS

School sponsored field trips are a privilege, not a right. They are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals. Transportation for field trips is arranged via private carriers. According to Archdiocesan Policy *(ADH 4.125)*, overnight field trips are not allowed. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct. A written official permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. A completed permission slip received by fax is acceptable with parent/guardian signature. Verbal permission cannot be accepted. Students participating in the field trip must ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class. Cell phones may be carried on field trips but must not be used during the field trip without the permission of the teacher. Parents/Guardians who accompany a class on a field trip will be given chaperone Guidelines to follow while on the field trip. Any vehicle privately owned and driven by a school appointed Chaperone must abide by the ADH guidelines which specify: Driver must be at least 21 years old; the vehicle must be insured by the driver for the minimum limits required by the Archdiocese’s insurance company; students must wear seatbelts at all times.

HEALTH POLICIES

St. Rita School is served by personnel assigned by the Hamden Schools Health Service. If your child is ill, you must call the school office before 9:00 a.m. to report it so that the nurse is made aware of any illness that may be communicable. We ask that parents give immediate attention to any notice sent home by the school nurse.

A physical examination by a doctor and immunizations are required for students entering Kindergarten, Grade 7, or those students from out of state who will be attending St. Rita’s.

Each student’s health records will be maintained in the health office in accordance with state and local regulations. When a student graduates or transfers to another school, the records will be sent to the receiving school once a release of records form is received.

Connecticut State Law requires a written order from a licensed physician and written authorization from a parent/guardian for the school nurse or, in the absence of the nurse, the administrator or teacher, to administer any medication, both prescription and non-prescription.

No medications (including over the counter medications) will be given to any student without a written order from a physician and parent/guardian. No student may carry on their person a prescription or non-prescription drug.
With respect to food, students are not allowed to share food at any time in school.
All teachers and administrators are bound by law to inform the Department of Children and Families if abuse of any kind is suspected.

INCLEMENT WEATHER
St. Rita School follows the "No School" notification used by the Hamden Public Schools. If school is cancelled for Hamden Schools, school is cancelled for St. Rita School. We ask that you watch WTNH Channel 8 TV for these announcements. You may also check the WTNH website under the Weather link (www.wtnh.com). Please do not phone the convent, rectory, or school for this information.

LOST AND FOUND
Lost articles are placed in the lost and found bin found near the nurse’s office. Parents/Guardians are asked to clearly mark their child(ren)'s possessions. After a period of time, if articles are not claimed, they will be brought to a charitable organization.

LUNCH
Students have the option of bringing their lunch from home or purchasing hot lunch on a monthly basis. Forms for selecting days to purchase hot lunch must be in by a designated date. No late lunch forms will be accepted.
Milk may be purchased on a yearly basis.
Any beverage brought from home must be in unbreakable containers.
To lessen the risk of causing an allergic reaction in students with food allergies, students are asked not to share food with anyone.

MESSAGES AND DELIVERIES
All communications and deliveries for students and teachers must be made through the office. Messages for students and teachers will be delivered at times that do not disrupt classroom activities.
Students are permitted to use the school phone for emergencies only and must have permission from the office. No calls by students will be permitted for forgotten gym clothes, homework or projects.
No party invitations of any kind, in any grade, are to be given out in the classroom. They should be sent to family’s homes via US Mail.
Parents are asked to refrain from bringing in lunches from fast food restaurants for lunch time unless it is an exception for a child with severe food allergies.

NOTIFICATION OF EMERGENCY CLOSING
If it is necessary to close school due to unforeseen circumstances parents/guardians will be notified using the designated primary email address and/or primary cell phone numbers indicted by parents on their emergency cards. It is important that parents/guardians keep these numbers and email addresses current at all times. The school office must be notified immediately when a change occurs to email addresses or phone numbers. For school closings due to inclement weather, please reference WTNH or other local TV stations. When Hamden Public Schools cancel school, St. Rita School is closed unless notified via phone or email as noted above.

OPENING EXERCISES
All students and teachers, grades K-8, will assemble every morning at 8:30 in the schoolyard for the Pledge of Allegiance. In the event of bad weather, this will take place in the gym.

PARKING
MORNING: A morning drop-off area has been designated with a one-way entrance from Gillies Road and an exit onto Edgemere Road. A crossing guard is provided at the top of Gillies Road for the safety of the students. ALL ARE TO CROSS INTO THE SCHOOL GROUNDS WITH THE CROSSING GUARD.
DURING THE SCHOOL DAY: Family cars are not permitted beyond designated areas in the school lot from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. unless special permission has been granted from the principal because of a student’s incapacity.

DISMISSAL: At dismissal, family cars should be parked in the space provided in the church lot on the west side of Whitney Avenue. Parents should then walk to the school lot to meet their children. A chain is drawn across the entrance to the school lot on Gillies Road to prevent cars from entering the lot while dismissal is in progress. A crossing guard is at the corner of Whitney Avenue and Gillies Road to assist in crossing the students.

Encouraging your child/children to cross between cars or away from the crossing guard is encouraging him/them to be careless and to disregard authority.

Please note: No parking is allowed on Edgemere Road. Police will enforce this directive.

Pets
For reasons of safety, no pets are allowed on the school grounds unless authorized by the administration.

Photo/Video Release
Annually Parent(s)/Guardian(s) receive an Emergency card where they can indicate permission to post a picture of their child(ren) for use in various publications.

Release of Students from School
No student shall be released from school or leave the school grounds without the approval of the principal. A request for early dismissal must be in writing, and the student must be signed out in the main office. The person picking up the student is to wait in the office area. Early dismissal for extracurricular activities outside of school sponsored ones is discouraged. Exceptions can be made with permission.

Students will not be released into the custody of anyone other than a parent without a written authorization from the parent(s).

In the case of divorce, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide documentation if the non-custodial parent is to be denied access to his/her child.

Every effort should be made to arrange dental and medical appointments outside of school time.

In the case of an emergency, parents or guardians will be notified. For this reason, emergency addresses and phone numbers of persons to contact must be on file in the school office and with the nurse.

School Attire
Boys and girls in Grades K-8 wear uniforms from the first day of school to the last day.

Uniform Policies
All uniforms must be purchased at the Dennis Uniform Store.

Girls Grades K-5:
- Green plaid jumper
- White turtleneck or white peter-pan collar long or short-sleeve shirt
- Green cardigan sweater (optional)
- Navy or green tights or navy, green knee high socks or white crew socks
- Khaki pants (optional in the winter) worn with belt

Boys Grades K-5:
- Khaki pants with brown belt
- Green turtleneck with St. Rita logo
- Green knit long or short sleeved shirt with St. Rita logo
- Uniform green pullover or cardigan sweater (optional)
- Navy, green, or white crew socks
Boys Grades 6-8:
- Khaki pants with brown belt
- Green knit shirt with St. Rita logo (long or short sleeved)
- Uniform green pullover or cardigan sweater (OPTIONAL)
- Navy, green, or white crew socks

Girls Grades 6-8
- Uniform skort
- Uniform shirt with band bottom
- Uniform green pullover or cardigan sweater (OPTIONAL)
- Navy or green knee high socks or white crew socks
- Khaki pants (optional in the winter) worn with belt

St. Rita fleeces are acceptable for all grade levels.

NOTE—quarter socks are not permitted for boys or girls.

The length for the girls’ jumper, skort, and all shorts must be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee. Girls and boys wear a black, brown, or maroon penny loafer, tassel loafer, or oxford style shoe. Boat shoes, sandals, shoes with rawhide laces, chunk style, stack or platform shoes are not permitted. Heels may be no more than one inch. All shoes must have backs.

SUMMER UNIFORM
K-8 for everyone:
- Khaki shorts
- Green shirt with St. Rita logo
- Crew socks
- Gym sneakers or school shoes
- Brown belt

The summer uniform may be worn during the months of August, September, May, and June.

GYM UNIFORM
Gym uniforms with the St. Rita Crusader logo on them are purchased through Dennis Uniforms for the current year. Dennis Uniforms offer the new navy blue gym uniforms. Sneakers are to be worn at all times with socks. A Middle School optional warm-up suit is also offered at Dennis Uniforms. This is the only attire allowed for gym. Failure to wear the appropriate gym uniform will keep the student from participating in Physical Education class that day. This may affect the student’s grade.

OTHER PERSONAL ATTIRE AND APPEARANCE
Hair is to be clean and neatly cut. Boy’s hair should be above the shirt collar and trimmed around the ears. Hair styles and color should be appropriate for the school environment. Jewelry when worn must be simple and not distracting. Post-type, non-dangling earrings are the only ones permitted, one per ear, worn in the lobe. No choker-style necklaces are permitted. Boys are not to wear any type of earring in school. No other body piercing is allowed. No tattoos are allowed. Make-up is not to be worn in school.

On days when uniforms are not required, students will be given general guidelines for appropriate dress. Generally dress is to be modest at all times and neat in appearance. No inappropriate slogans or logos are permitted. If a student’s apparel is deemed inappropriate, a parent/guardian may be called to bring a replacement for the inappropriate apparel. Please note that there should be distinction between a dress up day and a free dress day.
SCHOOL SCHEDULE
Pre-Kindergarten:
3-year-olds, Tuesday and Thursday
A.M. session ......................... 9:00-11:30
P.M. session ......................... 12:30-3:00
4-year-olds, Monday, Wednesday, Friday
A.M. session ......................... 8:45-11:45
P.M. session ......................... 12:30-3:00
Kindergarten: Full day ..................... 8:30 a.m.-2:50 p.m.
Grades 1-8 ................................. 8:30 a.m.-2:50 p.m.

Supervision of students in grades K-8 begins at 8:10 a.m. and ends at 3:10 p.m.

School Office Hours are usually from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on half days before holidays: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 pm.

Early dismissal days: K-8 ................................. 8:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to insure that the student arrives on time for school. Students in Grades K-8 arriving after that time are considered tardy. Students arriving late must report to the office to receive a late pass which must be presented to the classroom teacher. Appropriate action will be taken for students who receive five or more late passes in the course of a marking period.

SERVICE LEARNING
Global and community service are encouraged at St. Rita School from the earliest age. Children have provided services to the community in various ways i.e. Provided sandwiches for Mid-Night Run, raised funds for Clear Water Initiative and Homes for Homeless, socks for Columbus House and collected hats for Don’s Hat for cancer patients.

STUDENTS IN THE BUILDING AFTER HOURS
Students are not permitted to return to their classrooms once they have been dismissed nor to come to school on weekends to get forgotten materials. Students in the school for after-school activities will not be permitted to return to their classrooms. Students are given ample time to prepare their books and materials at the end of the day to take home and homework assignments can be found online.

TEXTBOOKS
All hard cover textbooks are to be covered and kept covered throughout the school year. Book covers with adhesive backing should not be used. No marks should be made in the books. Any books damaged must be paid for by the student before a new book is issued. Textbooks will also be assessed for damage at the end of the school year and if necessary, payment for damages will be required.

VACATION TIMES
Vacations should be planned in accordance with the school calendar which is coordinated as much as possible with the Archdiocese of Hartford and the Town of Hamden. Children who are absent for vacations at times other than those listed on the school calendar will not receive assignments to be done while they are away. A suitable amount of time as determined by the classroom teacher will be given for the completion of work missed. Once the time is completed, work that is unfinished will be graded as an “F.” A student will be responsible for any tests taken by the class while he/she is away. Sufficient time will be given to prepare for the test(s).
VISITORS TO SCHOOL

Visitors are welcome in the school. All visitors are required to sign in and sign out in the office. When a parent/guardian wishes to visit a classroom, an appointment must be made through the principal in advance of the visit.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are welcome to help in many ways. All must sign in at the School Office upon arrival. A policy for Volunteers is currently being updated in compliance with Archdiocesan mandates. *(ADH: 1.215)*

DISCIPLINE

GENERAL BEHAVIOR

For many reasons, discipline is necessary in all walks of life. Education requires a certain amount of it in order for a student to achieve success in the various areas of learning. In the early years of his/her life, a child should grow to appreciate the value of self-control, perseverance, responsibility, and courtesy. Discipline, therefore, is an essential part of the learning process as well as a result of it. One of the primary goals of a Catholic education is to teach the student how to create a Christian community based on the values of Jesus himself. Each student at St. Rita School must continually grow in self‐respect and respect for others. At the same time, the student must develop a special appreciation for those who are in a position of authority and responsible for his/her well‐being. Thus, in order to foster good Christian behavior and study habits, appreciation for the environment and concern for the material goods of this earth, and to teach students to allow others the freedom to pursue this goal, rules and regulations are established. These set the direction for future decisions and the consequences which may result.

LUNCHROOM BEHAVIOR

Students in Grades K‐8 eat in the lunchroom where they are expected to use good manners and courtesy towards each other, teachers, the adult supervisors, and kitchen personnel. No student(s) will be released from the lunchroom unless the teacher(s) on lunch duty has come to take them outside or to their classrooms for recess or a teacher(s) meets the student(s) to take him/her for a special assignment or project, etc. or a teacher has signed a note asking for students to come to a classroom during lunchtime.

SCHOOLYARD BEHAVIOR

It is expected that all students use good judgment when playing games by avoiding rough behavior. The teacher or other adult on playground duty will be the final decision-maker as to what constitutes harmful or unnecessarily rough behavior in the schoolyard. All students are to respect the teacher or other adult on duty in the morning, at lunchtime, or on bus duty. Any disrespect will result in suspension from the schoolyard for an appropriate length of time. No baseballs or bats, tennis balls or hard balls may be used during recess time in the school yard.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

BULLYING

Bullying is prohibited in all Catholic schools of the Archdiocese *(ADH: 5.513)*. It will not be tolerated during the school day or during any school‐sponsored activities on or off the school grounds. Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ. This behavior is against the fundamental tenet of, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” and destroys respect for the dignity of the student, undermines the Christian atmosphere of the school, and deprives the student of a safe and caring learning environment. Bullying is defined as any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity or through the use of communication devices including the Internet. Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault, extortion, oral or written threats, (seriously, in jest, online), teasing, putdowns, name calling, threatening looks, gestures or actions, cruel rumors, false accusations, and social isolation.
SCOPES OF POLICY:

This bullying policy is to be applied Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Eight at school. Any teacher or staff member who observes or becomes aware of acts of bullying shall report this to a school administrator. Parents may also report suspected acts of bullying to any teacher, who shall report the same to a school administrator, or directly to the school Administrators. The administrator will enter reported incidents from parents, students, or those left anonymously into a "Bullying Logbook." All incidents reported shall be recorded in the bullying logbook and will include the name(s) of the victim(s), the individual(s) committing the bullying act(s), a description of the act(s) committed, and the date(s) of the incident. The "Bullying Logbook" will remain the property of the administration.

Any student who wishes to report an incident or incidents of bullying may do so through a teacher or through a school administrator. Students may also report any incidents of bullying anonymously to a teacher or a school administrator. These anonymous reports should be placed in a sealed envelope addressed to a school administrator and sent to the office in the office envelope. Anonymous reports received by teachers should also be put in a sealed envelope addressed to the principal with the teacher’s name on an inner envelope.

Once a suspected bullying incident has been reported, a school administrator shall investigate the circumstances of the incident to determine if bullying has occurred. The school administrator will review the logbook to also see if a pattern is emerging and will use that as a tool of investigation. Investigation of bullying incidents may also include interviews and conversations with students (including witnesses, the victims(s), and the student(s) doing the bullying), parents, faculty, and staff. Parents and family issues will also be taken in to consideration. Parents of the children involved will be made aware of the incidents.

Once the investigation is complete, a school administrator will determine the consequences for the individual(s) on a case by case basis. The consequences may range from community service through suspension and expulsion. The school administrator will, in his/her discretion, consider the nature, frequency and circumstances of the alleged offenses. In addition, the age and grade of the student will be considered. Parents of all children who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents of students against whom such acts are directed, will be notified.

Depending on the severity of the incident, or series of incidents, the administrator may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan, separating and supervising the students involved, providing staff support for students as necessary, reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate, and developing a supervision plan with parents.

Please note that harassment/bullying may take several forms:

Student to student
Adult to student
Adult to Adult
Any form of harassment *(ADH: 5.511) (verbal, physical, sexual) will not be tolerated. A further discussion of these issues is present in the policies of the Archdiocese of Hartford

DETENTIONS

Detentions may be given for the following infractions:

1. Excessive tardiness defined as five times or more within a grading period;
2. Incomplete or improper wearing of the school uniform;
3. Chewing gum;
4. Eating outside of the lunchroom during school hours;
5. Coming to class unprepared (no books, homework, pens/pencils, special materials, etc.);
6. Excessive talking during class;
7. Classroom disruption;
8. Improper behavior in bus lines or while boarding buses.
9. Disrespect: physical, verbal, or obscene language or gestures to faculty, staff, or peers.
10. Inappropriate behavior in the lunchroom and classroom.
11. Inappropriate bus behavior (reception of a bus referral).
A detention requires 30 minutes after school on the day designated by the teacher on the detention form. The form must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school the next day in order for the student to remain after school. If the form is not returned, another consequence will be applied.

**SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

The following behaviors are serious infractions which could result in suspension or expulsion from the school:

1. The use, sale, distribution, or possession of "controlled substances" such as alcohol, marijuana, or any other illegal substances at school or school-sponsored activities;
2. Smoking at school or at school events;
3. Behavior which is seriously immoral, profane, vulgar, or obscene;
4. Physical violence;
5. Stealing or vandalism;
6. Serious threat;
7. Bullying
8. Unauthorized absence or leaving the school premises or the classroom without permission;
9. Assault with or possession of a potentially lethal weapon or instrument;
10. Serious insubordination or defiance;
11. Use of the internet to demean, abuse or put into a negative light St. Rita School or any other group, organization or individual.
12. Outrageous or scandalous behavior at school or elsewhere which would reflect adversely on Catholic schools or the Catholic Church.
13. Cheating or plagiarism
14. Sale of any material on school grounds without proper authorization

*The above list is not to be considered exhaustive*

**Suspension** *(ADH: 5.207)* is a temporary removal of a student from his/her regular school program for a specified period of time. Suspension will be considered in cases of serious offense or after lesser disciplinary measures have been ineffective. **Grounds for suspension may occur on or off school property, while receiving or awaiting school transportation services, or at any school-sponsored activity.** Parents will be notified of the reason for and length of the suspension before it takes place. One suspension will last no longer than five school days. When appropriate, in-school suspension will be imposed in preference to exclusion from school. Students on suspension (in-school or out of school) will be responsible for all work taking place in the classroom each day; this includes daily quizzes, scheduled tests, and projects which may be due during the time of the suspension. It is not the responsibility of the school to provide for the instructional time lost during the time of suspension.

**Expulsion** is the removal of a student from the school program and the transfer to another school. A student may be expelled from school when he/she: has engaged in conduct which constitutes a serious violation of school policy; is seriously disruptive of the educational process, which endangers persons of property; or has engaged in repeated violations of school policies, rules and standards or conduct; and when other means of discipline have failed *(ADH: 5.208)*. Expulsion will be invoked when the student presents a danger to the moral and/or physical well-being of other students or is guilty of prolonged and open disregard for school authority. Expulsion will be considered only after all other measures have been tried and found to be unsuccessful. However, there may be situations which demand immediate removal of a student from the school. If the serious nature of the problem warrants it, expulsion may be the first punishment invoked against the student. A conference with parents/guardians will be held to discuss the seriousness of the student’s misbehavior and the decision for expulsion. Working with the teacher(s) and pastor, the principal will communicate the final decision to the parents/guardians. The Office of Catholic Schools will also be notified as soon as the process begins and before a final decision is made.

*It is to be noted that disciplinary action may be taken in conjunction with any event that is sponsored by the school or for behavior that reflects negatively on the school. This includes sports activities, band, etc.*
FINANCES

TUITION

The tuition rates for each school year for grades PK-8 are established by the School Board with the approval of the pastor. The rates are announced by the second semester of each school year and are effective for the following school year.

TUITION COLLECTION

Tuition payments are collected and managed by the Finance Office of the Parish/School through SMART Tuition Management. Parents are expected to meet the demands of their payment choice through SMART in a timely manner. Any family unable to meet tuition payments must notify the Finance Office immediately. Financial Assistance Applications are available through the Finance Office. The school will not forward any records for a student with an outstanding Tuition balance. The final report card will not be sent to students with an outstanding Tuition balance at the end of the year. A non-refundable deposit of $250 per child must be made in order to hold any seat for the child/children. This amount is deducted from the total tuition payment owed to the school. The deposit is paid at the time of re-registration, usually held in January. Tuition contracts which explain the tuition payment plans are given to each family.

PARISH SUBSIDY

Saint Rita Parish subsidizes Saint Rita School with an amount approved by the School Board and Parish Finance Council. Families from St. Rita Parish whose children attend St. Rita School are expected to be actively supporting members of the parish. They are expected to contribute to the regular offertory collection of St. Rita Parish. This must be done through the parish envelope system. This support is to the parish and is exclusive of donations made through the parish to other charitable causes (e.g. Mission Collection, Archbishop’s Annual Appeal, etc.). Parents are asked to consider the principle of justice, especially as it pertains to the amount each parish student is subsidized by St. Rita Parish. Families who fail to support the parish will be contacted.

Catholic parishes without schools, or with schools that have grades different from those at St. Rita School, are required by Archdiocesan regulations to subsidize St. Rita School for an amount set by the Archdiocese. Students whose families are registered members of a Catholic parish other than St. Rita will have this subsidy for each child’s tuition deducted upon receipt of payment. Parishes have the right to refuse payment of this subsidy if the family does not actively support the parish. Such families must accept responsibility for payment of this subsidy.

PARENT / GUARDIAN ORGANIZATIONS

SAINT RITA SCHOOL BOARD

Saint Rita School Board advises the administration of Saint Rita School in matters pertaining to the general well-being of Catholic education. It also assists in the determination of administrative and academic policies for the school.
The Board is composed of 11 members:
1. Pastor
2. Principal
3. Nine members appointed by the pastor and principal in consultation with the board.

SAINT RITA HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Home & School Association is the parent organization of the school. Its members are the parents or guardians of the students of St. Rita School in Grades Pre K-8. The purpose of the Home & School Association is to help parents and teachers acquire a profound appreciation for the ideals of Catholic Education, to promote clearer understanding of the mutual education responsibilities of the parents and teachers, and to help subsidize the school budget through fund-raising efforts. For further information you may check out the website at: www.stritahsa.org.
STUDENT/PARENT DIRECTORY

The Home & School Association annually prepares a Student/Parent Directory as a means of fostering communication among its members.

HOME & SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Saint Rita Home & School Association establishes an operating budget every year for its fund raising efforts. Included in this budget is an amount established through the operating budget of the school which is a subsidy to the school.

In 1981, the Home & School Association established a policy that each family is expected to support the school’s fund raising activities. A family assessment was established with an amount published each year by the School Board.

Any portion of a family’s assessment not satisfied through participation in the Home & School Association’s major fund raising events becomes the responsibility of that family. The total assessment must be paid in full by April 30th of each school year. If not paid in full by this date then the amount will be added to the following year’s tuition payments, a collection agency will be enlisted or records will not be completed if a transfer is requested.
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY ST. RITA SCHOOL

We believe that technology is a vital means to assist those who carry out the educational ministry of St. Rita School.

We are pleased to offer students of St. Rita School access to our computer network, including access to the Internet. Access to the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with Internet users throughout the world. Even though our system has safeguards, families should be warned that some material accessible through the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive to some people. While our intent is to make Internet available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, St. Rita School supports and respects each family's right to decide with or not to apply for access.

To gain access to the Internet, all students under the age of 18 must obtain parental permission. In addition, parents/guardians and students must BOTH sign and return the Parent/Guardian/Student Agreement and Signature verification form found on the last page of this handbook to the school office by the designated date stated on the form. If this handbook is being read electronically through the school website, this form is also located in a separate PDF file for convenient downloading and printing.

St. Rita School Internet Rules:
Students are responsible for good behavior on the school networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communication apply. Students may have e-mail access for curriculum-related activities and communications under their teacher's direct supervision using a classroom account. The network is provided for students mainly to conduct research. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parent permission is required. Access is a privilege and not a right. Access entails responsibility and individual users of St. Rita School's computer network are responsible for their actions. It is presumed that users will comply with school standards and will honor the agreements they have signed.

Network storage areas and any device that collects information may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and insure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on any server or computer would be private. During school, teachers will guide them toward appropriate materials. Outside of school, families, bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio, and other potentially offensive media.

USERS HAVE NO PRIVACY RIGHT TO ANY DATA RECEIVED OR DISSEMINATED ON THE NETWORK AND BY UTILIZING THESE ST. RITA SYSTEMS, THEY CONSENT TO ST. RITA SCHOOL’S RIGHT TO AUDIT ALL COMMUNICATIONS, FILES AND DOCUMENTS. IF A USER ACTS INAPPROPRIATELY THROUGH THE COMMUNICATIONS AND/OR STORAGE SYSTEMS, ST. RITA SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REPORT SUCH ACTIONS TO ANY OUTSIDE AUTHORITIES AND/OR TAKE APPROPRIATE INTERNAL DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

The Parent/Guardian/Student Agreement and Signature verification form covers ALL the policies included in this handbook as well as any policies held by the Archdiocese of Hartford. In the event a policy is revised, removed or added it will be published in the weekly Notes and Notes.

RIGHT TO AMEND
The Administration reserves the right to amend the contents of this Handbook for just cause.

Handbook revised September 2011 – all previous copies are considered obsolete
PARENT / GUARDIAN / STUDENT AGREEMENT
AND SIGNATURE VERIFICATION FORM

Please download/print/copy this form and return it to the school office.

We have read and agree to comply with the contents of the
This includes the Acceptable Use Policy.

Parent/Guardian Signature(s) :

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Student Signatures:

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

FAMILY NAME (please print):

____________________________________________________________________

Date: _____________________
Handbook form for 2011-2012