



**VENANGO CATHOLIC JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL  
2022-2023 ACADEMIC YEAR  
STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK**

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# FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

## Mission Statement

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School is a college preparatory school committed to educating young men and women to be people of faith, scholarship, and service in an inclusive, family-oriented community. Faithful to the Roman Catholic tradition, we prepare students to be critical thinkers and to lead lives of integrity.

## Vision Statement

The Venango Region Catholic School community aspires to:

Provide a safe environment, enabling students and teachers to achieve at a high level.

Affirm the dignity of each student created in the image of God.

Teach the whole student in mind, body, and soul.

Promote a curriculum and philosophy of education reflecting academic excellence in the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Graduate students who are ready to succeed personally and professionally regardless of the path they choose.

Nurture a strongly Catholic school culture.

Welcome students and families of diverse religious and personal backgrounds.

Offer attractive facilities that encourage learning and teaching.

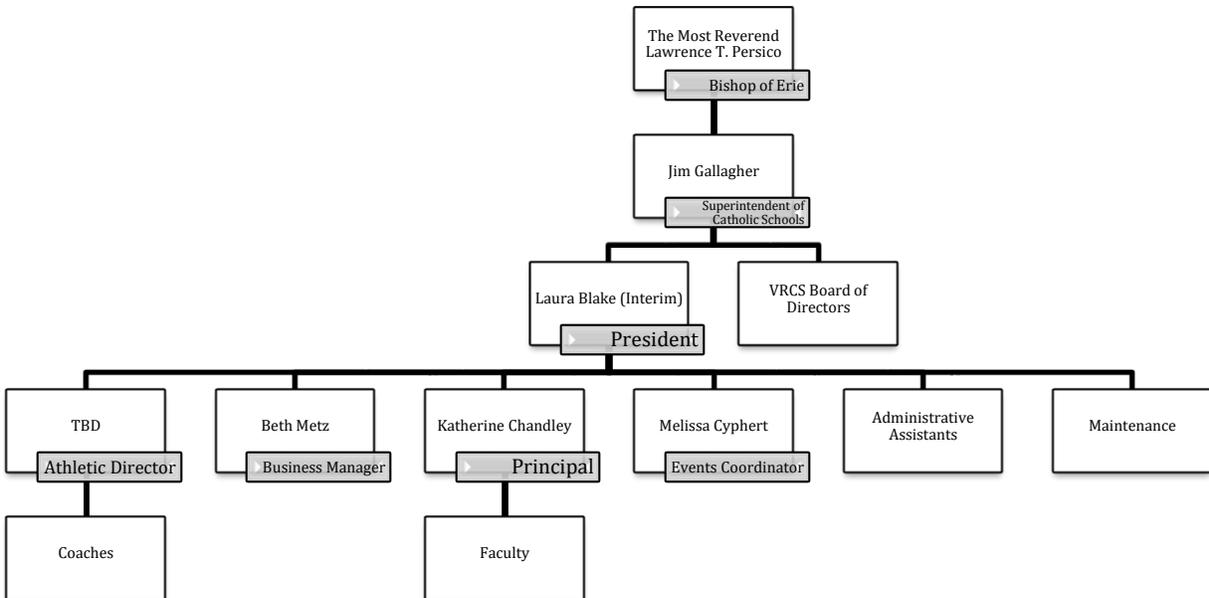
Cultivate strong relationships with all stakeholders to provide the prayerful and material support necessary to engage our students and sustain the mission of the school.

## Title IX

While reserving the right to make religious exceptions as provided by law and in accord with Catholic religious belief, the Catholic schools within the Diocese of Erie do not discriminate on the basis of sex. This includes being excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity on the basis of sex.

Additional Title IX information is available at <https://www.eriescd.org/schools/titleix.html>

## Organization



## Accreditation

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School is fully accredited by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Middle States Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges and is a member of the National Catholic Educational Association.

## STUDENT LIFE

### A Statement in Support of Life

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School strives to be faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church in instruction, philosophy and action. Church teaching about the fundamental dignity of every human person reaches students at a time when they most need to hear an authentic voice crying out in support of God's greatest gift: the gift of life from conception to natural death. Helping students to form their consciences in support of life is one of the most important parts of a Venango Catholic Education.

To that end, Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School reaffirms the fact that all life is sacred because it is a gift from God, whose love gives value to all living things. All persons are to treat life reverently, to promote the dignity of every person and to help every person reach his or her full potential. Abortion is a grave evil because it deprives the unborn child of its most fundamental right and because it causes deep harm to the mother and to those connected to the event. Students who have an abortion or participate in one in any material way must follow the direction of the school administration to seek appropriate counseling and aftercare. The school administration reserves the right to dismiss any student who chooses not to follow the course of care recommended by the school. The school will offer appropriate support to students affected who may not have been active participants.

Physical expression of human sexuality is a wonderful gift from God for people to enjoy responsibly within the context of a healthy marriage. One of the purposes of human sexuality is for man and woman to cooperate in the creative love of God through the gift of children. However, the circumstances surrounding pregnancy and childbirth can turn the joy of new life into sadness and tragedy. Students who have children have created extremely challenging circumstances for themselves and their new child.

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School commits itself to providing whatever support is necessary for the students involved to choose life, to continue their education and to provide adequately for the child. Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School expects to work with the students involved and their parents to ensure appropriate pre-natal care for the expecting mother and post-natal care for the students and the child after its birth. Should the families involved not provide adequate care, the school administration will work with students to establish a course of care in defense of life. The school administration reserves the right to dismiss any student who chooses not to follow the course of care recommended by the school.

### Athletics

#### Overview

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School is a member school of the Keystone Shortway Athletic Conference (KSAC) and a Class "A" member of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic

Association (PIAA). The school offers athletic programs to advance its mission to educate the whole person.

The school colors are black and gold and the mascot is the Viking.

### Goals

- To provide students with the best possible opportunities to develop their talents and abilities
- To encourage all students to participate in extra-curricular athletics
- To provide intense interscholastic competition
- To teach students good sportsmanship and the values of teamwork, self-discipline, self-determination and cooperation
- To provide athletic participation as a privilege, not a right

### Teams

#### Fall

- Boys and Girls Cross Country\*
- Football\*
- Football Cheerleading\*
- Boys and Girls Golf
- Boys and Girls Soccer\*
- Girls Tennis\*
- Girls Volleyball
- Bowling

#### Winter

- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball\*\*
- Basketball Cheerleading
- Competitive Spirit\*
- Swimming\*
- Wrestling\*

#### Spring

- Baseball\*
- Softball\*
- Boys Tennis\*
- Track and Field\*

NB: Those sports denoted by an asterisk (\*) are part of a cooperative arrangement with the Oil City Area School District and are hosted by Oil City. Those sports denoted by a double asterisk (\*\*) are part of a cooperative arrangement with the Cranberry Area School District and are hosted by Cranberry.

### Campus Ministry Program

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School exists to foster the spiritual growth of students, faculty and staff. The Campus Ministry team works to create community and encourage faith development through biweekly Mass, special liturgical events, an annual retreat day for each class, participation in diocesan and national programs and rallies, and ecumenical experiences. A priest is always available for spiritual guidance and the school offers communal celebration of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent as well as privately throughout the year.

### Dances (Grades 9-12)

- School dances may begin no earlier than 7:00 P.M. nor end later than 10:00 P.M.
- The student committee organizing the dance must ask a member of the faculty or administration to serve as the faculty moderator of the dance.
- In addition to the faculty moderator, the student committee must recruit enough chaperones so that six will be present at any given time.
- The student committee must report the names of the faculty moderator and chaperones to the principal one week prior to the dance.
- All school rules are in effect for all school dances, whether held on or off the school campus.
- No student will be admitted to the dance more than one hour after the beginning of the dance. No student will be permitted to leave more than 30 minutes prior to the end of the dance. Any student who leaves the dance will not be re-admitted.
- Students may not bring any food or drink into the dance.
- Students may bring guests from other schools, but must provide the appropriate permission form by the last school day prior to the dance.
- Students may bring VC alumni who graduated in the prior year as a courtesy to school alumni.
- Bags will be checked.
- Dress code for dances must be followed.
- Students and parents must sign a dance policy agreement before every dance.

### Driving to School

- Students driving themselves to school enjoy a privilege, not a right.
- Before students drive themselves to school, parents must send a "Driving Permission Form" to the main office.
- The student bears all consequences if the student's vehicle is unreliable.
- The school bears no responsibility arising when students transport each other to or from school. During school hours, all field trip permission forms will indicate whether students are allowed to drive themselves and whether they are allowed to transport or be transported by other students.

### Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

With the approval of the Bishop of Erie, students may serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion during school Masses. The president will consult the faculty and local priests before approving a student's application. Because serving as an extraordinary minister of Holy

Communion is both a high honor and important responsibility, only confirmed Catholics who exemplify the best of the Catholic life will be considered for service in this ministry.

### Field Trips

- Teachers will make use of the school permission form for all field trips.
- Students must return signed permission slips by the deadline set by the teacher. Students will not be permitted to call parents for permission in lieu of a written permission slip.
- Field trips are considered in-class activities and are required unless otherwise noted.
- Students who do not attend a field trip are not eligible for any extra-curricular activities that day unless previously excused.
- Students will wear regular or dress uniform for all field trips unless permission is granted by the school administration.

### College and Career Readiness

Though VCHS does not employ a full-time guidance counselor at this time, it is a priority of each staff member to help students navigate the transition to career or college. Under the direction of the principal, students receive the following supports:

- On-campus visits from various college admissions representatives.
- Distribution of information regarding future college visits or career fairs.
- Distribution of various scholarship opportunities.
- Processing of transcripts and letters of recommendations.

Students in their junior and senior year will be given opportunities to work with staff regarding college and career prep. Parents with questions regarding this process should contact the school principal.

### Internet and Computer Use

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School follows the Diocese of Erie's Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy. All students and parents are required to read this policy, sign the parental and student consent agreement and send it to school with their child.

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School is a 1:1 campus. Each student will be provided with a Chromebook for school use. Chromebook policy can be found on the school website at <https://www.venangocatholic.org/studentinfo>

### Library

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School subscribes to different database services including the Online Public Access Catalog and the POWER Library Series. Please consult with the English teachers about how to take advantage of these opportunities. Because there is no librarian currently serving at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School, students will work with their classroom teachers to remove library materials from the library or from the school. As a rule, students must sign materials out with a classroom teacher before taking any materials out of

the library. Students who take materials without permission or who lose materials will be responsible for providing replacements.

### Lockers

- Lockers are to be kept neat at all times, inside and out.
- All locker decorations will be in good taste as determined by the school administration. Decorations on the outside of the locker will be fastened with magnets; no tape will be permitted
- School must have locker combinations.
- Students are not to write on the inside or outside of the locker.
- Students are never to leave bags outside their lockers or in the hallways.
- Bags that do not fit in the lockers will be left in a storage area determined by the school administration; any bag left outside the appropriate storage area will be confiscated.
- The school administration reserves the right to make periodic locker checks and has the legal right to search bags and lockers without warrant.

### Backpacks/Bags

In order to keep our campus as safe as possible, Students are not permitted to carry backpacks, purses or bags (with the exception of their Chromebook case) with them throughout the school day. Between classes, students are given ample time to travel to their locker to retrieve and store class materials. Backpacks must be stored in the student's locker throughout the school day. Exceptions include medical necessity, with doctors note, and other appeals at the discretion of Administration. Lockers are available in the VC office for student use. The office must have a copy of the student's locker combination at all times.

### Lunch, The Cafeteria, and Food in Classrooms

- Students may purchase a lunch from the school each day, paying either by cash or by using lunch tickets available from the kitchen; students may also bring a lunch from home.
- Options include a daily hot entrée as well as various hot and cold *a la carte* items available for purchase.
- No food is to be delivered to the school during lunch.
- All students will remain in the cafeteria during the lunch period; teachers will not make use of the lunch period for makeup work.
- Students must follow posted cafeteria rules.
- Students may not bring backpacks to lunch.
- Students will be courteous by waiting in an orderly line and by keeping the cafeteria clean and free of trash.
- No food is to be outside the cafeteria during the school day; teachers may waive this rule for class snacks and meals and will consider moving the class to the cafeteria if food is part of the lesson.

- All beverages will be closed and in bags in the library, computer lab, and hallways. Students are free to consume water only in classrooms with teacher permission. A filtered water bottle filling station is located on the first floor for student use.

### Personal Electronic Devices

Experience shows that personal electronic devices (including but not limited to cellphones and portable devices) are typically distractions in the classroom. In addition, public safety officials report that such devices pose a legitimate threat to student safety in crisis situations. As such, all such devices are to be kept turned off and in the student's locker during the school day. Teachers who notice any such devices are to confiscate them and remit them to the main office.

Students with specialized e-readers may request permission from the study hall moderator to use the devices during a scheduled study hall. Permission will not be granted for general-purpose tablets with e-book capabilities (including but not limited to the iPad, the Kindle Fire, the Nook HD).

Students may not bring personal computers to school without the prior permission of the classroom teacher, who will only grant permission when necessary for an in-class presentation or project. All such devices will be kept in the teacher's classroom at all times during the school day.

No wearable technology such as iwatches or smartwatches are permitted. Fitbits are permitted as long as they are not connected to the student's cell phone or the internet. A student caught communicating on such device will be subject to confiscation and detention (cell phone policy).

### Service Learning Program

#### Rationale

The service learning program of Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School promotes a spirit of Christian service among our students and encourages them to use their gifts, talents, and time in the service of others. Our mission and philosophy statements echo Christ's challenge to service through the Gospel. Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School embraces the philosophy that service is not only what we do but also who we are. The school therefore requires all students to put their faith into action by being involved in a variety of service projects that benefit their church, their school, and their community. The school also encourages all students to exceed the minimum service requirements, both as individuals and as members of the student body.

#### Requirements

All Venango Catholic students will:

- Grades 9-12 complete 25 hours of qualified service annually
- Grade 7-8 complete 20 hours of qualified service annually
- Write a journal of their experiences each year describing the service rendered and how it benefited the recipient of the service and the student

- Submit verification of completed service hours within two weeks of the service dates, or within the first two weeks of school for service completed during the summer
- Return all service hour forms and the required journal to their theology teacher by the deadlines published in the school calendar

#### Disqualified Activities

- Work imposed as a punishment or by court order
- Unpaid work at an organization where the student has a paid job or active internship
- Service verified by a member of the student's family; such service may be accepted if verified by someone unrelated to the student
- Service without appropriate documentation or submitted after established deadlines
- Work for businesses or private individuals
- Work done during a school day except by the prior permission of administration
- Fundraising, except for Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School advancement functions
- Working in any way for the campaigns of candidates for political office
- Service rendered to organizations holding or advocating positions contrary to Catholic moral teaching

#### Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) provides various support services designed to meet a student's physical, spiritual, mental and social needs. The school activates SAP whenever any member of the school community notices a significant barrier to learning in the life of a student. Examples of barriers to learning include evidence of substance abuse, observations consistent with signs of abuse, sudden changes in behavior or achievement, and other factors. The SAP team at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School includes the administration, members of the faculty, and interested members of the community who have been trained to serve as members of the SAP team according to the norms of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Any interested member of the school community may refer a student to the SAP team.

Members of the SAP team do not diagnose, treat or offer counseling to students. If circumstances warrant, the SAP team may recommend a student and seek an assessment from a mental health professional with the consent of the parents. Parents and legal guardians have the right to be involved in every step of the SAP process and enjoy full access to their student's records under state and federal law.

#### Student Organizations

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School maintains memberships in the student organizations appearing below. For more information, please contact the faculty moderator of the organization.

#### National Honor Society (Grades 11-12)

Venango Catholic Sr. High School recognizes that the National Honor Society is at the forefront of organizations and societies that promote appropriate recognition of students who have a

record of outstanding achievement in the areas of scholarship, character, leadership and service. College admissions officers often regard National Honor Society membership as a valid indicator of future success in post-secondary education.

Membership is a privilege and not a right. Students who apply for membership are applying for *consideration* and admission is not assumed. At the beginning of the fall semester, students in grades 11 and 12 whose cumulative grade point average is 3.75 or higher will receive a "Candidacy Form." A faculty committee including five members will review these forms and all other information available when considering student applications. In addition to scholarship as measured by grade point average and course difficulty, the committee will examine the following:

Leadership – The student who exercises leadership:

- Is resourceful in proposing new problems, applying principles, and making suggestions
- Demonstrates leadership in promoting school activities
- Exercises influence on peers in upholding school ideals
- Contributes ideas that improve the civic life of the school
- Is able to delegate responsibility
- Exemplifies positive attitude
- Demonstrates academic initiative
- Inspires positive behaviors
- Successfully holds school offices or positions of responsibility, conducts business efficiently and effectively, and without prodding, demonstrates reliability and dependability
- Demonstrates leadership in the classroom, at work, and in school or community activities
- Is thoroughly dependable in any responsibility accepted

Service – The student who serves:

- Is willing to uphold scholarship and maintain a loyal attitude
- Participates in outside activities (ex. church youth group, parish ministry, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, volunteer services for the aged, poor, or disadvantaged, family duties, etc.)
- Offers dependable and well-organized assistance, is gladly available, and is willing to sacrifice to offer assistance
- Works well with others and is willing to take on difficult or inconspicuous responsibilities
- Cheerfully and enthusiastically renders any requested service to the school
- Is willing to represent the class or school in inter-class and inter-scholastic competition
- Does committee and staff work without complaint
- Shows courtesy by assisting visitors, teachers and students

Character – A student with character:

- Takes criticism willingly and accepts responsibility graciously
- Consistently exemplifies desirable qualities of behavior (cheerfulness, friendliness, poise, stability)

- Upholds principles of morality and ethics
- Cooperates by complying with school regulations concerning property, programs, office, halls, etc.
- Demonstrates the highest standards of honesty and reliability
- Shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others
- Observes instructions and rules, punctuality, and faithfulness both inside and outside the classroom
- Has powers of concentration and sustained attention as shown by perseverance and application to studies
- Manifests truthfulness in acknowledging obedience to rules, avoiding cheating in written work, and showing unwillingness to profit by the mistakes of others
- Actively helps to rid the school of bad influences or environment

#### Selection and Dismissal

The faculty committee under the direction of the National Honor Society chapter moderator reviews the applications of all students seeking admission to the National Honor Society. The administration does not participate in the nomination and selection process. The judgment of the selection committee is final and will not be reviewed.

National Honor Society members must maintain the standards for membership to retain their membership. The faculty moderator will issue written warnings to members who fall below the standards forming the basis for their selection. The administration and faculty will review the cases of any students who fail to meet the standards of the National Honor Society in the marking period after the written warning.

The administration and faculty reserve the right to remove students from the National Honor Society without written warning in cases of flagrant violation of school rules or civil law. Students who are dismissed from the National Honor Society must return their membership cards and pins immediately upon written notification of their dismissal. No student dismissed from the National Honor Society will be eligible for readmission.

#### Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils

The Student Council will serve as the voice of the student body at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School. By maintaining open communication with the school administration, the student council will provide feedback regarding school policies and procedures as a consultative body to the administration. Throughout the year, the Student Council will schedule, organize, direct and evaluate social events and community-building projects for the student body. The Student Council will operate according to its own by-laws, developed by the Student Council itself and ratified by the principal.

## **Suicide Awareness and Prevention\***

\*In conjunction with Policy 302.9 from the Diocese of Erie

### Church Teaching

“Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it...It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us...[Suicide] is gravely contrary to the just love of self. It likewise offends love of neighbor because it unjustly breaks the ties of solidarity with family, nation, and other human societies to which we continue to have obligations. Suicide is contrary to love for the living God...We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2280-83)

### Purpose

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School adopts this policy in acknowledgement of its commitment to maintaining a safe school environment; to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its students; to promote healthy development; and to safeguard against the threat or attempt of suicide among school-aged youth. The impact of students’ mental health on their academic performance and the effect of mental health issues and suicide on students and the entire school community are significant. Therefore, to ensure the safety and welfare of students, the school will work to educate school personnel and students on the actions and resources necessary to prevent suicide and promote mental well-being.

### Authority

This policy shall apply in any situation where a student is expressing suicidal thoughts or intentions of self-harm on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or on any school-owned or public vehicle providing transportation to or from the school or school-sponsored activity. This policy shall also apply following a student’s suicide threat or attempt that does not occur on school grounds or during a school-sponsored activity, but that is reported to any school personnel.

### Definitions

**At-Risk for Suicide** shall mean any youth with risk factors or warning signs that increase the likelihood of suicidal behavior.

**Behavioral Health** shall mean the emotion, behaviors and biology related to a person’s mental well-being, their ability to function in everyday life and their concept of self.

**Expressed Suicidal Thoughts or Intentions** shall mean a verbal or nonverbal communication that an individual intends to harm him/herself with the intention to die, but has not acted on the behavior.

**Prevention** refers to efforts that seek to reduce the factors that increase the risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors and increase the factors that help strengthen, support, and protect individuals from suicide.

**Protective Factors** shall refer to characteristics (biological, psychological, and social) that reduce risk and the likelihood of the individual developing a mental illness.

**Resilience** shall refer to an individual's innate ability to persevere in the face of adversity and reduce the risk of unhealthy outcomes.

**Risk Factors** shall mean the personal or environmental characteristics associated with suicide. People affected by one or more of these risk factors have a greater probability of suicidal behavior.

**School Connectedness** shall mean the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals.

**School Personnel** include, but may not be limited to, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, coaches, bus drivers, custodians, and cafeteria workers.

**Suicide** shall refer to death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.

**Suicidal Act or Suicide Attempt** shall mean a potentially self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person probably intended to kill him/herself; a suicidal act may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

**Warning Signs** are evidence-based indicators that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the very near future.

#### Awareness and Prevention

All school personnel, including, but not limited to, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, coaches, bus drivers, custodians, and cafeteria workers, shall receive information regarding the school's protocols for suicide awareness and prevention. Education will be provided for all school personnel about the importance of suicide prevention and recognition of suicide risk factors, as well as strategies to enhance protective factors, resilience, and school connectedness. Additionally, all school personnel will be educated about the warnings signs and risk factors for youth depression and suicide.

Students shall receive age-appropriate lessons in their classrooms through health education or other appropriate curricula on the importance of safe and healthy choices, as well as help seeking strategies for self and/or others. Lessons shall contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral and social skills development. Students shall be taught not to make promises of confidence when they are concerned about a peer or

significant other. These lessons may be taught by health and physical education teachers, community service providers, classroom teachers or student services staff. Students who are in need of intervention shall be referred in accordance with the school entity's referral procedures for screening and recommendations. Additionally, students in grades 6-12 are educated regarding the Safe2Say reporting program.

### Intervention

In compliance with state regulations and in support of the school's suicide prevention methods, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents or guardians, the administration or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or other persons is at risk.

Any school personnel who has identified a student with one or more risk factors, or warning signs, or who has an indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student for further assessment and intervention in accordance with the school's referral procedures.

The school shall create an emotional or mental health safety plan to support a student and the student's family if the student has been identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

For students with disabilities who are identified as being at-risk for suicide or who attempt suicide, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and diocesan policy.

Any school personnel who are made aware of any threat or witnesses any attempt towards self-harm that is written, drawn, spoken, or threatened shall immediately notify the administration. Any threat in any form shall be treated as real and dealt with immediately. No student should be left alone, nor confidences promised. In cases of life-threatening situations, a student's confidentiality will be waived. The school entity's crisis response procedures shall be implemented.

If an expressed suicide thought or intention is made known to any school personnel during an afterschool program and the administration or designee is not available, call the Venango County PIC Unit at (814) 432-9111, 1-800-SUICIDE, or 1-800-273-TALK for help. Thereafter, immediately inform the administration of the incident and actions taken.

### Procedures for Parental Involvement:

The parents or guardians of a student identified as being at risk of suicide must be immediately notified by the school and must be involved in consequent actions. If any mandated reporter suspects that a student's risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, that individual must comply with the reporting requirements of the Child Protective Services Law.

If the parent or guardian refuse to cooperate and there is any doubt regarding the child's safety, the school personnel who directly witnessed the expressed suicide thought or intention will pursue a 302 involuntary mental health assessment by calling the Venango County PIC Unit at (814) 432-9111 and ask for a delegate. The delegate will listen to concerns and advise on the

course of action. If a 302 involuntary mental health assessment is granted, the first-hand witness will need to be the petitioner, with support from the administration.

#### Response to Suicide or Suicide Attempt on Campus:

The first school personnel on the scene of a suicide or suicide attempt must follow the school entity's crisis response procedures, and shall immediately notify the administration.

The school will immediately notify the parents or guardians of the affected student(s).

#### Telephone Calls

- Students may not use any phone in the building outside the main office.
- Students may use the phones in the main office with the permission of the office manager.
- Parents who need to reach their children during the school day should call the main office.

#### Visitors

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School welcomes parents, alumni, prospective students and other honored guests at various times. To preserve the safety of the students and to prevent disruptions to the school routine:

- All speakers addressing students must be known to the school community prior to speaking and will not present any platform or position contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- All visitors to specific classes must have the prior permission of the classroom teacher, who will notify the principal. Guest speaker forms must be submitted to the principal for approval.
- All visitors will report to the main office immediately upon entering the building to sign in and receive a visitor pass.
- All visitors must have specific business with the school to remain on school property.

## STUDENT ABSENCE & TARDINESS

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School affirms that regular attendance at school is important to student development, readiness to learn, and social and academic progress. VCHS is committed to providing a school environment that enforces the compulsory attendance law through proactive cooperation among students, parents, administrators, teachers, district judges, juvenile probation, and the Office of Children and Youth. VCHS is responsible for monitoring and maintaining records of the attendance of students. We want every student to succeed in school. If a student is not here, they are missing valuable information and instruction.

### Lawful Excuses

Absences and tardiness are considered excused when a student is prevented from attendance for mental or physical illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, driver's license examinations, college visits, authorized school activities, and educational travel of five or fewer days.

For educational travel, parents must submit an Educational Travel Application for advanced permission from the principal for a student to miss school. Educational Travel Days (up to five full days per school year), count as part of the ten days absent without a doctor's excuse. All requests must be submitted two weeks prior to the student's absence and be preapproved by the principal. Failure to obtain preapproval for an absence for educational travel will result in an unlawful absence. Permission is given on a case-by-case basis. All missed assignments will be given upon the student's return to the school.

If a student needs to be away for more than five days for extenuating circumstances, it must be preapproved by the school principal.

In addition, lawful absences include student attendance at court hearings related to the student's involvement with the Office of Children and Youth or juvenile probation. It is the responsibility of VCHS to determine the validity of all excuses.

### Cumulative Lawful Absences

A maximum of ten days of cumulative lawful absences verified by written notification are permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten cumulative days require a written excuse from a physician.

### Unlawful absences

An absence for which the school has not received a written excuse from the parent/guardian and is not listed as a lawful excuse or has advance permission to be away for educational travel, is considered an unlawful excuse. If an excuse is not received within three days of the absence, the absence is permanently counted as unlawful.

## Truancy

A student is considered truant when he/she is absent for three or more days without a valid excuse. After three unexcused absences, the truant officer for Oil City Schools and Children and Youth Services will be contacted. The truant officer will issue fines if deemed necessary. The public school district is responsible for enforcing the Pennsylvania compulsory attendance laws.

- Students who accumulate three (3) unexcused days of absence or five (5) total absences in a semester will meet with the **Principal** to review the reasons for absence and to determine whether further intervention is necessary. For example, the school may require that all further absences will require a written doctor's excuse along with a written explanation for the absence from the parent for the student to be admitted to school.
- Students who accumulate eight (8) total absences in a semester or ten (10) total absences in a year will meet with their parents, the guidance counselor, and the principal to develop an individualized Truancy Elimination Plan, which may include further professional intervention. Parents must schedule this meeting with the **Principal** within three (3) days of the last absence for the child to be admitted to school.
- Students who accumulate 15 absences in a semester or 20 absences in a year who are not following the terms of the Truancy Elimination Plan will receive failing grades for all pending coursework. The student and parents will meet with administration to determine whether the student may continue enrollment at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School.

## Tardiness

Students are considered tardy if they are not **in the cafeteria by 8:00 a.m.** Tardy students must obtain a tardy slip from the office before going to their classrooms. Tardiness due to bus delays is not counted against the student; however, the student must report to the office prior to reporting to the classroom to let staff know of their arrival.

## Early Dismissal

Students who will leave school early must provide written permission to do so on the day in question. Students will sign out at the appropriate time and sign in if they return on the same day.

## Half-Day Absence

Students who arrive after 9:30 a.m. will be marked for a half day absence. Students who depart before 1:15 p.m. will be marked for a half day absence. In all incidents of late arrival or early dismissal please contact the school secretary to clarify any questions regarding attendance.

The above policy includes the entire school day and non-continuous absence. For example, a student who arrives 20 minutes late and has a scheduled early dismissal resulting in 60 additional minutes out of school on the same day will be charged with a half-day absence.

### Attendance and Athletic Eligibility

A student who is out of school for the equivalent of one-half period (20 min.) will be barred from extracurricular activities that day unless the student provides a written excuse signed by a health care provider or the absence is excused in advance by the school administration.

### Documentation

- Parents must call the school before 8:30 A.M. if a student is absent. If a student is absent and no parent calls before 8:30, a school representative will call the parents to verify the child's absence.
- Parents must provide written documentation for student absence on the student's first day of return to school, including the date(s) of absence and the reason. The phone call on a day of absence does not replace this documentation.
- Students who fail to produce adequate documentation on time will be charged with an unexcused absence and will be subject to the truancy policy.
- Please note that documentation of an absence is to verify that parents and guardians are aware of the student's absence, not to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

### Makeup Work While Absent

It is the responsibility of students who are absent from class for any reason to make arrangements with teachers to make up any lost work. Teachers may post assignments Google Classroom to allow students to keep up with missing work at home. Work may also be gathered in the front office for a parent to pick-up at their request. Please make such a request to the office before 8:30 a.m. However, we understand that priority should be given to recovery and students may wait until their return to obtain assignments. If a student is present when homework is assigned and absent when it is due, teachers will expect the students to have the work complete on their first day back to school. For assignments issued during the student absence, teachers will work with students to establish reasonable deadlines. The school guideline will be to extend the assignment due date by one day for each day the student was absent.

### Illness

- Students who become ill during the school day are to report to the main office.
- If a student is too ill to return to class, the school will contact the student's parents to arrange for early pickup. Students may not leave school until their parents give permission for them to leave. If someone other than the parent will take the student home, the parent must identify that person to the school.

- If a student goes home ill, the parents will provide documentation exactly as if the student has been absent.

### School Closings and Delays

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School follows the calendar of Oil City School District; therefore, in cases of inclement weather, we will follow the decisions made by Oil City School District's superintendent. If Oil City is closed or on a delay, then VCHS will also be closed or on a delay. If school is closed all school events and after school activities are also cancelled for the day.

VCHS draws students from many local school districts. If your home district is cancelled, students are not required to report to school. For example, if Clarion Area School District is cancelled due to inclement weather, students from that district are not required to report to school. This only applies to weather related closings and delays. For example, if school is cancelled in a home district due to a power outage, VRCS students are still expected to attend school at our campuses.

The decision may be made to postpone school for two hours rather than cancel school should there be reason to believe that conditions may improve. In the event of a two-hour delay, the following schedule will be utilized; the main doors of all schools will open at 9:30 a.m. Students should report as they normally do. All classes will begin at 10:05 a.m. The decision to close or delay will be (in most cases) made by 6:00 a.m. If the decision is made to postpone, the superintendents of the local school districts will reevaluate the decision and weather conditions to determine if school will remain open or be canceled.

Weather-related closing or delays will be announced through School Reach, our school broadcast system. Closings and delays will also be available through Forever Media radio stations, and social media. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor the media to determine the status of school closings and transportation schedules. If you do not have access to social media or radio, please make arrangements with a dependable family member who will call you when he or she is aware of the closing.

Please keep in mind that weather conditions may deteriorate during the course of the day, and the need may arise to dismiss students early. Should an early dismissal occur, students will be sent home via their normal method of transportation. Parents should develop a contingency plan for child care needs in the event of a school delay, closing, or early dismissal. If your contingency plan requires different means of transportation rather than the usual method, please inform the school when the need arises.

Remember, our main means of communicating inclement weather to you is through our school broadcast system School Reach. It is crucial that you have an emergency number in the system. Please notify the school if you have additional work, cell phone, or other numbers that need to be included.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES

### Academic Benchmarks

It is the policy of Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School that students earn a minimum number of credits to be promoted to the next grade level. These benchmarks help students realistically gauge their progress toward graduation.

- To have sophomore standing, a student must have at least seven (7) credits.
- To have junior standing, a student must have at least 14 credits.
- To have senior standing, a student must have at least 21 credits.

If a student does not complete enough credits to advance to the next grade level during the school year, the student must make arrangements with the school administration to complete remedial coursework. Should the school not be able to accommodate the remedial coursework in the regular schedule, the student must complete coursework through a public district summer school or online program before the next school year at the student's own expense to be readmitted to Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School.

### Academic Eligibility

The principal will prepare a list of students who may face probation or ineligibility due to poor academic achievement at 4:00 each Thursday.

### Probation

Any student who has a 'D' in two subjects or is failing one subject will be on academic probation for one week. During that week, the student will meet with the teacher(s) of the subject(s) concerned to determine a plan of action. Such a plan may include mandatory tutorial sessions as determined by the teacher. Academic probation begins on Monday (or the first school day) and lasts for one school week. Any student on academic probation for two consecutive weeks will become academically ineligible.

### Academic Ineligibility

Students who are academically ineligible will not be allowed to participate in any school activities outside the regular school day. Examples include but are not limited to athletic practices and contests, drama rehearsals or productions, and club projects and activities. Academic ineligibility begins on Monday (or the first school day) and lasts for one school week. The school will email notice of ineligibility to parents and present them to students on the last school day of the week.

### Immediate Ineligibility

Students who meet any of the following criteria on the Thursday check will become academically ineligible without the benefit of probation.

- Carrying a grade of 'D' in three or four subjects.
- Carrying a grade of 'D' in one subject and 'F' in another.
- Failing two or more classes.

## Advanced Placement

The Advanced Placement (“AP”) program is for students willing to apply their inquisitiveness, ability and persistence to a particular academic area. College credits and/or course waivers are available from most colleges and universities for students with sufficient scores on the end-of-course AP exam. These credits and waivers can offer significant financial advantages to students who succeed in AP coursework. Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School offers the following AP courses: Biology, Calculus (AB/BC) and English Literature and Composition. Students may enroll for AP classes with instructor permission only.

## Dual Enrollment Programs

Students with high-ranking GPAs may alternatively be eligible to participate in dual enrollment through Clarion University. Dual Enrollment provides students with an opportunity to take college courses and high school courses at the same time. Classes are taught through Clarion Online, Main Campus or Venango Campus in Oil City. Enrollment at Clarion University for this program must be initiated by the student. It is the responsibility of the student to acquire and submit all necessary documents for application.

### Requirement for Dual Enrollment (Fall and Spring Semesters):

- Students must be in their junior or senior year with a minimum GPA of 3.0 (university requirement).
- Classes must be PRE-APPROVED by Venango Catholic administration if being sought to replace a high school credit requirement. Each dual enrollment course will be awarded .5 credits. Therefore, in order to fulfill one academic credit, students must be prepared to enroll in a class in both the fall and spring semesters. Courses that are similar in nature to those offered at Venango Catholic cannot be used to replace a VC course.
- Juniors are not permitted to take a Dual Enrollment course to replace a math or science course (beginning 2023-2024 school year).
- Though students may be enrolled in the same Clarion class as their VC classmates, the academic integrity policy is still in effect (page 32). Unless working on a project that is specifically designed as group work, students are expected to work independently and to refrain from sharing answers or assignments.
- Students operate on professor policies for all course participation, grading, and final exams. Mid-term grades from Clarion will be used as the 1st and 3rd quarter grades. It is the responsibility of the student to provide a transcript upon administration’s request.
- Dual enrollment courses taken during the summer are not counted towards a student’s GPA and are not documented on the VCHS transcript.

## Early Graduation

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School will only award diplomas to students who have completed four calendar years of high school education. The school encourages students who complete graduation requirements early to pursue elective coursework in the building, online or through dual enrollment programs.

### Grade Calculation and Report Cards

Quarter grades are reported as percent averages of the student's performance on tests, quizzes, homework and other assessments assigned by the teacher.

In an effort to reduce environmental impact, the school will mail paper report cards at the end of each term. Mid-term grades will be available online through the school's online portal.

The following grading scales are currently in use:

| <b>Quality Points</b> | <b>Academic Courses (%)</b> | <b>Grade Equivalence</b> | <b>Honors/AP Courses (%)</b> | <b>Grade Equivalence</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.00                  | 93-100                      | A                        | 90-100                       | A                        |
| 3.75                  | 91-92                       | B1                       | 87-89                        | B1                       |
| 3.50                  | 89-90                       | B2                       | 85-86                        | B2                       |
| 3.25                  | 87-88                       | B3                       | 82-84                        | B3                       |
| 3.00                  | 85-86                       | B4                       | 80-81                        | B4                       |
| 2.75                  | 83-84                       | C1                       | 77-79                        | C1                       |
| 2.50                  | 80-82                       | C2                       | 75-76                        | C2                       |
| 2.25                  | 78-79                       | C3                       | 72-74                        | C3                       |
| 2.00                  | 77                          | C4                       | 70-71                        | C4                       |
| 1.75                  | 75-76                       | D1                       |                              |                          |
| 1.50                  | 73-74                       | D2                       |                              |                          |
| 1.25                  | 71-72                       | D3                       |                              |                          |
| 1.00                  | 70                          | D4                       |                              |                          |
| 0.00                  | <= 69%                      | F                        | <= 69%                       | F                        |

### Graduation Requirements

Students at Venango Catholic Sr. High School must complete the following academic requirements to graduate:

| <b>Subject Area</b>              | <b>Units Required</b> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Theology                         | 4                     |
| English                          | 4                     |
| Social Sciences                  | 4                     |
| Mathematics                      | 4                     |
| Science                          | 4                     |
| Foreign Language (same language) | 2                     |
| Health                           | 1                     |
| Physical Education               | 1                     |
| Fine Arts                        | 1                     |
| Electives                        | 5                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     | <b>29</b>             |

Students who lack two or fewer credits of graduation requirements may participate in commencement exercises. The student must complete the requirements through summer school or online coursework subject to the approval of school administration within one

calendar year of the student's expected date of graduation. The student will receive a diploma when the school receives a transcript showing the necessary completed coursework. Students must meet all outstanding obligations (tuition, fees, book and uniform returns, etc.) to receive diplomas and transcripts.

### Academic Honors

The Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School Principal's List includes students who earned an A in all of their classes.

The Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School Honor Roll includes students who earned A's and B's in all of their classes.

### Academic Support

Venango Catholic administration and staff strive to meet the individual learning needs of each student. Students in need of additional support in mathematics or language arts (reading) may be referred to Act 89 staff. With parent permission, students will receive individualized support as needed.

A meeting may also be established between the parents and administration to identify a list of academic accommodations for an individual student. These are "minor" adjustments to daily classroom instruction that may change how instruction is delivered without changing expectations and curriculum requirements. This is done on an as needed basis. If a student has a diagnosed disability (see Erie Diocese School Policy 301.2), a student may be offered Equitable Participation in the way of *intensive* list of academic accommodations. However, expectations and curriculum requirements will not change.

### Online Courses

Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School has partnered with Catholic Virtual to provide blended online courses to VC students. The Catholic Virtual's mission is to provide online and blended learning opportunities for students and teachers for Catholic high schools across the United States.

- On a course-by-course basis, Catholic Virtual classes are available as elective choices for sophomores, juniors, and seniors.
- Catholic Virtual courses are taught online, meaning students can schedule Catholic Virtual classes during any period of the day. Certain Catholic Virtual courses include scheduled meeting times that may occur outside of school hours (i.e. evenings and weekends).
- The Catholic Virtual schedule is determined by the Catholic Virtual teachers and administration. For that reason, Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School students are responsible for keeping current in Catholic Virtual classes even if Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School is on recess. This is particularly important for lengthy breaks such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.
- Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School teachers and administrators are available to help students enrolled in Catholic Virtual classes. However, Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High

School does not employ or supervise Catholic Virtual teachers. For that reason, students and parents with questions or concerns about Catholic Virtual courses need to address the Catholic Virtual teachers directly.

- The school will pay the registration fee for all students taking Catholic Virtual classes. However, in the event a student fails a Catholic Virtual class, the student is responsible for reimbursing the school for the cost of enrollment either through FACTS or by direct reimbursement. If a student elects to take a Catholic Virtual class in addition to the 29 required credits for graduation, it will be the responsibility of the family to cover the cost of the class.
- Some Catholic Virtual classes have an additional book fee to cover specific class-related materials. The student is responsible for these fees and will keep any materials purchased.
- Some Catholic Virtual classes are dual-enrollment courses through affiliated colleges and universities. Any cost differences between a regular Catholic Virtual class and a dual-enrollment Catholic Virtual class are the responsibility of the student.
- Students may take any class in the Catholic Virtual catalog subject to parental consent and the permission of the principal.
- During the grading period, all Catholic Virtual coursework will appear as “Catholic Virtual Coursework” for the purposes of daily attendance, weekly eligibility, and report cards for the first and third quarters. The average grade of all Catholic Virtual classes for a student will be used temporarily for these grades. Please note that these grades are not permanent grades of record.
- The final grade of record for each Catholic Virtual class will appear by course name on school transcripts. AP Catholic Virtual classes will be weighted as AP classes. All other Catholic Virtual classes will be weighted as regular classes. Letter grades and GPA will be determined using the school’s weighting system based on the final percentage grade issued by the Catholic Virtual.

### Naming the Valedictorian and Salutatorian

Overall GPA at the end of 15 quarters will determine class rank and the class valedictorian and salutatorian. Ties will be broken by end-of-course percentage averages, adding 3% to the final grades of all Honors and AP courses for the purposes of calculating final class rank only. The addition will not change the student’s permanent grades or appear on any transcripts.

### Repeated Courses

If a student fails or earns a “D” in a course and repeats the course in a subsequent year, both attempts will appear on the student’s transcript, with the failing grade remaining. Students may repeat courses as regularly scheduled or by independent study at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School, summer school at a local public school or online study.

## DRESS CODE

### Purpose

The purpose of the dress code at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School is to create uniformity in dress and neatness in appearance. The school uniform is distinctive to VRCS and creates pride among the students in themselves and their school. Adherence to a dress code also teaches the students to dress for work and life appropriately and habitually, a valuable skill for people entering the workforce.

### Boys' Uniforms

- School plaid and other uniform apparel is available at [www.shaheens.com/venango\\_region\\_catholic\\_school.html](http://www.shaheens.com/venango_region_catholic_school.html)
- Khaki dress pants – no cargo style or jean style rivets
- Khaki dress shorts – until Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> and after Easter break
- White, black, or yellow polo shirt – short or long sleeve
- White Oxford shirt – short or long sleeve
- Black cardigan/vest/zip fitted fleece
- Black sweatshirt with approved school image, no hooded sweatshirts
- Black or brown dress belt – no large buckle
- Black or brown dress socks – crew length – no low-cut sport socks
- Non-athletic dress shoe in a dark color – non-marking sole, no high cut boots. Canvas style loafers are not permitted. Students may wear a leather style boat style shoe (Sperry Topside) in dark colors.
- Dress Uniform: Khaki dress pants, white Oxford shirt, tie (no clip-on), black or brown belt
- All shirts must be tucked in – not rolled at the waist
- Hair must be neatly cut, clean, and well groomed – off the shirt collar and out of eyes – no faddish colors or styles. Long hair must be completely pulled back.
- Tattoos may not be displayed during the school day
- Boys must be clean shaven at all times.

### Girls' Uniforms

- School plaid and other uniform apparel is available at [www.shaheens.com/venango\\_region\\_catholic\\_school.html](http://www.shaheens.com/venango_region_catholic_school.html)
  - Khaki uniform skirt
  - School plaid uniform skirt
- All skirts must be hemmed no shorter than two inches above the knee. This includes when wearing opaque tights.
- Skirts should not be rolled at the waistband.

- Khaki dress pants (full waist, regular rise with straight or tapered legs) – no cargo style, jean style rivets, leggings
- Khaki Bermuda shorts – until Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> and after Easter break
- Black or brown dress belt – when wearing pants – no large buckle
- Black or yellow polo shirt – short or long sleeve
- White tailored blouse – short or long sleeve
- Black cardigan/vest/zip fitted fleece
- Black sweatshirt with approved school image, no hooded sweatshirts
- Black knee-high socks, tights, or pantyhose
- Non-athletic **dark colored** closed toe dress shoe – non-marking sole, no clogs, slides, sandals, moccasins, crocs, etc. **Canvas style loafers are not permitted. Students may wear a leather style boat style shoe (Sperry Topside) in dark colors.**
- Dress Uniform: Uniform skirt, tailored blouse, optional school plaid x-tie
- Hair accessories can only be school plaid, black, yellow or white – no costume accessories are permissible
- Hair must be clean and well-groomed and out of eyes – no faddish colors or styles
- Girls may wear up to three earrings in each ear. **No facial piercing are permitted (clear studs may be worn).**
- Tattoos may not be displayed during the school day

### General Uniform Information

- Dress uniforms shall be worn on days that the students attend Mass, Stations of the Cross, and other sacramental celebrations. Administration and teachers have the option to require the dress uniform when students are representing the school off-campus, giving in-class presentations, or when honored guests are visiting. Students will not wear shorts or crop-length pants. Students may wear the dress uniform in its entirety any day.
- The school crest is optional on all shirts.
- School plaid and other uniform apparel is available at [www.shaheens.com/venango\\_region\\_catholic\\_school.html](http://www.shaheens.com/venango_region_catholic_school.html)
- Strict adherence to the dress code is a requirement for all students at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School. **Inspections will be conducted daily during morning cafeteria and throughout the day. Students who are not in adherence and unable to remedy the situation will be referred to the Dean of Discipline. Students are expected to remain in dress code through the entire school day. If a student has been reported for a dress code violation and continues to be violation during subsequent class periods, they will continue to receive additional demerits.**
- All clothing will be clean, neat, in good repair, appropriately sized and appropriately modest.
- No student may wear facial or visible body piercings during the school day. Students may wear a clear plastic stud in lieu of other jewelry. Girls may wear up to three

earrings in each ear. Lobe (not gages) and helix piercings are the only acceptable locations on the ear. Boys may not wear earrings.

- Students may purchase Oxford shirts, pants, shorts and skirts from other vendors provided that the colors and styles match those provided by Shaheens.
- All items and styles deemed by the school administration to be contrary to the purpose of the dress code are excluded even if not explicitly mentioned in this policy.
- ***The school strongly urges students and parents to consult with the school administration prior to making uniform purchases if there is any question about the suitability of an item. The school will not be responsible if students purchase items excluded by the dress code.***
- While the teachers and administrators strive to enforce the dress code clearly and consistently, perceived lapses in consistent administration do not override or alter in any way the school's dress code.
- The judgment of the school administration is final in all matters regarding the dress code.

### Hair and Shaving

- Students will choose appropriate hairstyles for a professional setting. Those students that choose to dye their hair will choose naturally occurring hair colors.
- For boys, hair must be neatly cut in a traditional style. Hair must be above the collar in the back and may not fall in front of the eyebrows or below the middle of the ears. Sideburns may not extend below the middle of the ear.
- If a male student wishes to keep their hair long, they must be able to fully pull ALL hair back into a singular bun or ponytail on the back of the head. No loose strands are permitted and hair ties should be brown or black.
- Boys must be clean shaven upon entrance to the school building as no facial hair is permitted.

### Sweaters, Sweatshirts and Outer Layers

- Students have the option to wear various sweaters, sweatshirts and fleeces over the uniform. Various "Spirit Wear" items are also available for purchase.
- With the prior approval of the school administration, students may wear team warm-up jackets or hoodies with the uniform.
- No student may wear non-uniform sweaters or sweatshirts, including hooded sweatshirts of any kind.
- Students must either carry sweaters, sweatshirts, team warm-up jackets, or team hoodies or wear them properly. Students may not wear them tied around their waists.
- Students may not take their coats with them to class nor wear them in class.

### Uniform Shirts and Undershirts

- Students may layer plain black or white undershirts or turtleneck shirts under the uniform polo. No writing of any kind is to be visible through the uniform shirt.

- All shirts and blouses should be long enough to be tucked in and remain tucked in during the school day.

### Uniform Pants, Shorts, Skirts and Belts

- All students have the option of wearing khaki slacks in plain or pleated front with no external pockets (i.e. cargo pants) or visible rivets.
- Boys have the option to wear tan or light brown dress slacks that match the color of uniform khakis.
- All full-length slacks are to be full waist, regular rise with straight or tapered legs. Low rise waists and flare legs (i.e. “bell bottoms”) are excluded.
- All boys and those girls wearing slacks with belt loops must wear belts. Students may choose to wear leather or canvas belts. Leather belts must be brown, cordovan or black with a plain buckle. Canvas belts must be tan, brown, or black with a box-frame buckle.
- Girls have the option to wear a variety of skirts no shorter than two inches above the knee. Consult the Shaheens online catalog for styles.
- From the beginning of school until October 15 and from the end of the Easter holiday until the last day of school:
  - Boys and girls have the option to wear khaki or dress shorts of appropriately modest length.

### Socks, Tights and Shoes

- Boys will wear black or brown socks in either crew length or above-the-calf length, not anklets.
- Boys will wear casual or dress shoes made of leather or leather in appearance in brown, cordovan or black. Options include cap toes, penny loafers, Oxfords, plain toes, wing tips, monk straps and assorted other casual and dress styles including appropriately colored deck shoes.
- Shoes resembling work boots, athletic shoes or hiking shoes and boots are non-conforming as are any shoes that come over the ankle. This includes casual shoes made of leather treated similarly to the light tan or yellow leathers used in work boots.
- Boots may be worn to school in poor weather, but must be replaced with conforming dress shoes before the late bell.
- Girls will wear black crew-length socks, knee socks, tights or pantyhose.
- Girls will wear appropriate low-heel dress or casual shoes. All such shoes must be closed-toe and include a structured heel and sole. Options include leather flats, deck shoes, Oxfords, penny loafers and others.
- Moccasins, canvas shoes, slippers and athletic shoes are excluded.

### Dress Code for Non-Uniform Days

Several times throughout the year, opportunity will arise in which students do not have to wear their uniforms. The following guidelines must be followed during a non-uniform day to ensure appropriate dress during school activities:

- Students must wear clothing that fits appropriately and is not offensive to others.

- Shorts and skirts should be no shorter than two inches above the knee—this includes when wearing opaque tights.
- Revealing clothing is not permitted (i.e. tank top, bare midriffs, and halter-tops). Shoulder strap must be at least 3 fingers wide.
- Clothing with obscene or suggestive language, advertising tobacco or alcohol products is not permitted.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn.
- Pants must be worn at the waistline.
- Leggings are not to be worn as pants. If leggings are worn, a dress or long shirt must completely cover to fingertip length with arms extended.
- Skirts and pant legs must be shorter than floor length.
- Hats are not to be worn in the building.

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## Overview

The Code of Conduct helps the whole school community – students, teachers, parents and administrators to work together to maximize the use of instructional time by eliminating costly distractions. The Code helps students overcome unproductive behaviors that are detrimental to themselves as well as the school community. Administration reserves the right to elevate a consequence due to the severity of an action.

## General Policies

- Based on the level of infraction, administration has the final authority of demerits issued.
- Every time a student earns a demerit, the Dean of Discipline will provide written notice to the student and an emailed notice to the parents notifying them of the infraction.
- For every five demerits earned, the student will serve three hours of detention. The Dean of Discipline will issue the date and time of the detention. Students are expected to serve their assigned detention within one week of their offense. Date and time are not negotiable and students are not permitted to leave early.
- The Code of Conduct applies at all times during the school day and during all school-sanctioned activities, whether in school or away from campus. The Code of Conduct also applies at all times before, during, and after school when riding transportation provided by Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School.
- In Pennsylvania, local school districts are required to provide the same transportation services to nonpublic school students as to public school students within the district. This is a service the local districts provide directly to students and families living within their boundaries. Students who ride transportation provided by their local school districts are subject to the discipline policies and/or codes of conduct of their local school districts and/or transportation provider. Students are reminded that local districts may install recording devices in vehicles for the protection of the students and drivers. Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School will enforce the policies of the local district involved in any case of misconduct involving a Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School student using district-provided transportation.
- Unless otherwise noted, all demerits are expunged at the end of the academic year.
- The following are prohibited on any personal websites, blogs, or social networking sites. Consequences for violations will be issued in accordance with the school Code of Conduct.
  - Pictures, photos, or drawings of Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School's name or logo, including clothing.
  - Pictures, photos, or drawings of, or references to school employees or students.
  - Threats toward or disparaging remarks about the school, its employees, or its students.
  - Bullying, harassment, or any other behavior that is ill-mannered or disrespectful.

- None of these policies and guidelines shall interfere with the right of school authorities to act swiftly and decisively in dealing with situations believed to be detrimental to the welfare of the student, student population, or learning environment.

## Academic Integrity

### Overview

Academic integrity is a vital part of a student's education. Violations of academic integrity not only diminish the quality of instruction but also attack the moral character of the students involved as a sin against the Seventh Commandment. Because academic integrity is a serious ethical and moral issue, the faculty and administration of Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School will remain vigilant in its responsibility to teach students how to complete work honestly.

### General Policies

- Unless a teacher specifically states that an assessment is group work, students are to complete their work individually.
- Students will observe the distinction between asking peers for help and copying a peer's work. While the school encourages students to seek help from peers and teachers, it is important for students to ask for help, not for answers.
- Students will note the difference between research and non-research assignments. Consulting outside sources for non-research assignments is often academically dishonest.
- One of the most common issues of academic dishonesty is the failure to cite sources properly; Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School requires students to follow the MLA format for all writing and to cite sources used or consulted.
- Violations of academic integrity include assignment of demerits, detention, and suspension as detailed in the school's Code of Conduct.

### First Offense

- The student will receive no credit for the assignment.
- The student must redo the assignment in question.
- Automatic detention.
- 

### Second Offense

- The student will receive no credit for the assignment.
- The student must redo the assignment in question.
- The student will serve one day of in-school suspension.
- The student and parents will meet with the teacher in question and the Academic Dean to resolve any confusion regarding the policy and to develop a plan for academic integrity.

### Third Offense

- The student will receive no credit for the assignment.
- The student must redo the assignment in question.

- The student will serve three days of in-school suspension.
- The student and parents will meet with the Academic Dean and the principal to determine under what conditions the student may continue studies at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School. Continued enrollment is not presumed.

### Detention

- Each detention will have two assigned monitors. Each student will pay \$25 on the day of the detention to help offset the cost of the monitors. Payment is due on the day of detention; any student who fails to remit payment when due will owe an additional \$5. Please note that the detention fees over the course of the school year do not pay the cost of providing monitors; detention is not a fundraiser for the school or the monitors.
- **Detentions will be scheduled within the week of a student's offense.**
- While serving detention, students will perform light cleaning tasks.
- Students who miss scheduled detention will make up the missed detention and serve another. The Dean of Discipline will consider rescheduling detention only by direct contact with a parent of the student involved.

### In-School Suspension

- The school administration reserves the right to impose in-school suspension for different major offenses against the Code of Conduct, including violations of academic integrity.
- Students who serve in-school suspension will pay \$90 each day to cover the cost of the monitor.
- Students will wear their uniforms and do school work under the supervision of the monitor.
- Students will be ineligible for all extra-curricular activities during in-school suspension.

### Offenses Carrying One Demerit

- Disruptive behavior in or out of the classroom
- Failure to provide a written excuse upon returning to school after absence
- Obscenity or profanity
- Defiance or disrespect
- Horseplay
- Unexcused tardiness to class
- Violation of the school dress code during the school day
- Eating outside of the cafeteria; beverages in the computer lab, the library, or without teacher permission
- Failure to comply with any directive of a teacher, staff member or administrator
- Inappropriate public displays of affection
- Throwing snowballs or other objects on school property
- Failure to return the Family Envelope within three school days of its distribution

### Offenses Carrying Automatic Detention

- Disruptive behavior resulting in dismissal from the classroom

- Academic dishonesty, first offense (see “Academic Integrity”.)
- Leaving the school building during the school day without permission
- Intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying, first offense (see “Anti-Bullying Policy”.)
- Unexcused absence from class during the school day
- Chronic tardiness (beginning with the fourth and every additional incident of tardiness in a semester)
- Possession of personal electronic devices, first offense (see “Policy for Personal Electronic Devices”.)
- Violation of the Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy, first offense

### Offenses Carrying Automatic Suspension

Please note: should a student be found to have committed any of the following offenses, the school will contact the parents to retrieve the student immediately. The student will remain in out-of-school suspension until the student, parents, Dean of Discipline and principal meet to develop an action plan. Options include but are not limited to mandatory counseling, detention, in-school suspension, and dismissal from Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School.

- Intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying, second offense (see “Anti-Bullying Policy”.)
- Theft
- Vandalism on school property
- Fighting
- Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco or any controlled substance
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Violation of the Anti-Hazing Policy, first offense

### Offenses Carrying Automatic Dismissal

- Intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying, third offense
- Violation of the Anti-Hazing Policy, second offense
- Possession or use of weapons on school property
- Vandalism of the Chapel or intentional desecration of the Eucharist

### Detention for Accumulated Demerits

Students who accumulate five (5) and ten (10) demerits in a school year will serve a detention in addition to any detention(s) earned for infractions of the code of conduct.

### Discipline Review Panel (DRP)

Upon accumulating 15 demerits, the student will appear before the Discipline Review Panel (DRP), consisting of the Dean of Discipline, the principal, system president and additional adults at the discretion of the president. The responsibility of the DRP is to examine the causes of the student’s misconduct, to develop an action plan with the student and to monitor the student’s compliance with the action plan.

Should a student earn three (3) additional demerits after appearing before the DRP, the student and parents will meet with the Dean of Discipline and the principal to determine under what

conditions the student may continue studies at Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School. Continued enrollment is not presumed.

\* When the Code of Conduct is violated, based on the level of infraction administration has the final authority of demerits issued, detention, suspension, or expulsion.

### Policy for Personal Electronic Devices

#### First Offense

- Students may retrieve confiscated devices from the main office at the end of the school day
- Automatic detention

#### Second and Subsequent Offenses

- Automatic detention for each infraction.
- The Dean of Discipline will return confiscated devices after a conference with the student and parents
- The student will submit the offending device to the main office at the beginning of the school day and may retrieve it when leaving for the day. The student will do so for the remainder of the school year.
- Students will not be allowed to leave devices at home or in their cars instead of submitting the devices to the main office.

### Anti-Bullying Policy\*

\*In conjunction with the anti-bullying policy of the Erie Diocese, 302.2)

#### Definitions

Bullying (taken from the Diocese of Erie “Memorandum on the Transfer of Disciplinary Records and Bullying Policies” 2008-12-05)

An intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act, or a series of acts:

- Directed at another student or students
- Which occurs in a school setting
- That is severe, persistent or pervasive
- And that has the effect of doing any of the following
  - Substantially interfering with a student’s education
  - Creating a threatening environment
  - Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school

Cyberbullying (adapted from the Model Anti-Bullying Policy of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association) is the misuse of technology to embarrass, harass, tease, intimidate, threaten or terrorize any student, teacher or employee of the school by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory:

- E-mail messages, instant messages, text messages
- Digital pictures, images, or videos

- Any form of social media, including but not limited to website, blog posts, Facebook posts, or tweets.

#### School Setting

The school setting shall include but is not limited to the school building, on school property, in school vehicles, or any location whatsoever during any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school.

Cyberbullying often occurs outside the school setting; students are accountable for their use of electronic devices at all times and are subject to this policy as relates to cyberbullying even outside the school setting.

#### Bullying vs. Conflict

At first glance, it may be difficult to distinguish between bullying behavior and conflict behavior. This difficulty arises from the fact that many behaviors may indicate bullying but may also indicate an existing or escalating conflict between two students. Generally, behavior indicates bullying and not a conflict when:

- Unprovoked aggression is evident
- An imbalance of power exists between the parties involved
- A continuous or repeated pattern of behavior emerges

#### Roles in Bullying

The victim: the target of bullying behavior

The bully: the aggressor in a bullying situation

The supporter: participates in or encourages the bully

The bystander: witnesses bullying behavior but does not intervene on behalf of the victim

The defender: witnesses bullying behavior and attempts to intervene on behalf of the victim

#### Disciplinary Consequences

The safety of every member of the VCHS community is the first priority of all members. It is also important to note that the *victim's judgment* determines whether an incident constitutes bullying in conjunction with the school administration. Venango Catholic Jr./Sr. High School urges Christian charity and due prudence when saying or doing anything that might be unintentionally perceived as hostile.

Bullying and related acts are serious offenses against the school's Code of Conduct. Please refer to the Code of Conduct for specific consequences connected to bullying incidents.

#### Anti-Hazing Policy

This policy is modified from the policy of the Pennsylvania School Board Association in its June 2016 revision.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school and are prohibited at all times.

### Definitions

For purposes of this policy, **hazing** is defined as any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition of continued membership in, any organization. The term shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding;
2. Forced calisthenics;
3. Exposure to the elements;
4. Forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance;
5. Any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which is intended to or could result in humiliation, extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which would adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual; or
6. Any willful destruction or removal of public or private property.

For purposes of this policy, any activity, as described above, upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be “forced” activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding.

For purposes of this policy, student activity or organization is defined as any organization, team, club, society, or group operating under the sanction of or recognized as an organization by the school.

### Authority

- The school prohibits hazing in connection with any student activity or organization regardless of whether the conduct occurs on or off school property or outside of school hours.
- No student, parent or guardian, coach, sponsor, volunteer, or employee shall engage in, condone, or ignore any form of hazing.
- The school encourages students who have been subjected to hazing to report such incidents to the principal.

### Delegation of Responsibility

- Students, parents and guardians, coaches, sponsors, volunteers, and employees shall be alert to incidents of hazing and shall report such conduct to the principal.

- School administrators shall investigate promptly all complaints of hazing and administer appropriate discipline to any individual or student activity or organization found to be in violation of this policy.

#### Guidelines

- In addition to posting this policy on the school's website, the school shall annually inform students, parents and guardians, sponsors, volunteers, and employees that hazing is prohibited, by means of publication in handbooks and verbal instructions of by coaches and sponsors at the beginning of the season or program.
- This policy, along with other applicable school policies, procedures, and Codes of Conduct, shall be provided to all school athletic coaches and all sponsors and volunteers affiliated with a student activity or organization annually, prior to coaching an athletic activity or serving as a responsible adult supervising, advising, assisting or otherwise participating in a student activity or organization.

#### Complaint Procedure

1. When a student believes that he or she has been subject to hazing, the student shall promptly report the incident, orally or in writing, to the principal.
2. The principal shall conduct a timely, impartial, thorough, and comprehensive investigation of the alleged hazing.
3. The principal shall prepare a written report summarizing the investigation and recommending disposition of the complaint.
4. The school shall document the corrective action taken.

#### Consequences for Violations

- If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the school shall take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Conduct, including a police referral if necessary. Additionally, the student may be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor, up to and including removal from the activity.
- If the investigation results in a substantiated finding that a coach, sponsor, or volunteer affiliated with the student activity or organization engaged in, condoned or ignored any violation of this policy, he or she shall be disciplined in accordance with school policy and applicable laws and regulations. Discipline could include, but is not limited to, dismissal from the position as coach, sponsor, volunteer, or employee.
- If a student activity or organization authorizes hazing in blatant disregard of this policy or other applicable school rules, penalties may include rescission of permission for that organization to operate on school property or to otherwise operate under the sanction or recognition of the school.
- Any person who causes or participates in hazing may also be subject to criminal prosecution.

## CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCES

Should any concerns or grievances arise, please use the following table to determine the school contact person responsible for the area.

| Area                         | First Contact      | Second Contact     |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Academic Concerns            | Classroom Teacher  | Principal          |
| Athletic Concerns            | Coach              | Athletic Director  |
| Campus Ministry              | Theology Teacher   | Principal          |
| Discipline                   | Classroom Teacher  | Dean of Discipline |
| Dress Code                   | Dean of Discipline | Principal          |
| Extended Absence             | School Secretary   | Principal          |
| College and Career Readiness | Senior High Staff  | Principal          |
| Makeup Work                  | Classroom Teachers | Principal          |
| Report Cards                 | Principal          |                    |
| Transcripts                  | Principal          |                    |
| Tuition and Finance          | Business Manager   | President          |

If no resolution is reached after discussion with the above parties, please contact the president for a private appointment.

## REFERENCE

### Regular Bell Schedule

#### **Morning Prayer and Announcements**

**8:00 a.m. – 8:05 a.m.**

#### **Period 1**

8:05 a.m. - 8:50 a.m.

#### **Period 2**

8:53 a.m. - 9:38 a.m.

#### **Period 3**

9:41 a.m. - 10:26 a.m.

#### **Period 4**

10:29 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

#### **Period 5**

11:18 a.m. - 12:03 p.m.

#### **LUNCH**

12:06 p.m. - 12:36 p.m.

#### **Period 6**

12:39 p.m. - 1:24 p.m.

#### **Period 7**

1:27 p.m. - 2:12 p.m.

#### **Period 8**

2:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

#### **Dismissal**

## APPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Student Name                             | Parent/Guardian Name     |
| Contact Phone Number                     | Contact Email            |
| Date of First Day of Absence             | Date of Return to School |
| Location of Trip                         |                          |
| Reason for Travel                        |                          |
| Educational Opportunities and Objectives |                          |
| Parent/Guardian Signature                | Date                     |
| Parent/Guardian Signature                | Date                     |

Approved

Denied

|                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| Principal Notes     |      |
| Principal Signature | Date |



# VENANGO REGION CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## Student Handbook Acknowledgement

Hard copies of the handbooks will not be printed by the school this year. The handbooks are available under the parent section of the school website, <https://www.venangocatholic.org/parents/>

I \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) have read the:

- 2022-2023 St. Stephen School Student Handbook
- 2022-2023 Venango Catholic High School Student Handbook

We have read and understand the contents of the student handbook.

We agree to follow the policies outlined in the student handbook.

We understand that the school reserves the right to amend policies and procedures when necessary and that we will abide by changes. Any changes made to the student handbook will be distributed by the school.

I have reviewed the policies/procedures with my child/children:

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_