



PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024

St. Gregory the Great School

250 St. Gregory Court
Williamsville, NY 14221

Phone: 716-688-5323

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<http://www.stgregschool.org>

Dear St. Gregory the Great School Families,

Welcome to St. Gregory the Great School and Parish! In choosing St. Gregory the Great School, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education.

The Parent/Student Handbook outlines the procedures and references our school policies for the 2023-2024 school year found on our website under [School Policies](#). Due to COVID-19 we have had to revise many procedures to meet new requirements and guidelines from Erie County, NYS, and the Department of Health. As changes occur regarding any of these protocols and procedures, we will keep you updated via the school website and email.

Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the procedures and policies of St. Gregory the Great School during the 2021-2022 school year.

The faculty and staff look forward to working with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, will carry it through to completion.

God Bless,

Mr. Lockett
Interim Principal

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Gregory the Great Catholic School, a ministry of St. Gregory the Great Roman Catholic Parish, invites students to discipleship through a quality education in harmony with the Gospel values and teachings of Jesus Christ.

VISION STATEMENT

To become a premier Catholic elementary school community that provides children with the academic, physical and spiritual foundations for a successful and meaningful life in the 21st century. By developing a dynamic and inclusive school community, we will work together – parish clergy, school administration, teachers, parents, students, parishioners and community members – to prepare students for high school and beyond; develop in students a strong moral compass; teach students how to have healthy, positive and life-long relationships with God, themselves and others; and provide students with an abundance of opportunities to discover and nurture their talents and their responsibilities to the greater world – all in order to help them become the best version of themselves.

INTRODUCTION

St. Gregory the Great School is a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 Catholic Elementary and Middle School under the Diocese of Buffalo Office of Education.

The curriculum stresses academic achievement within a Christian community where the child feels that he/she is loved and respected by his/her peers as well as the teacher. Vatican II texts are used so that our theology is in compliance with the bishops of the world. United with each other in meaningful liturgy and prayer, the students can further come to an understanding of the Christian life. At St. Gregory the Great School, we are attempting to “teach as Jesus did.” The Diocesan curriculum guidelines, consistent with the State of New York guidelines, are followed in teaching of all secular subject areas. The curriculum is marked by current content and fresh approaches to methodology. There is an emphasis on problem solving as we are a STREAM school. We offer a plethora of programs which promote 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking skills. We are fortunate to have counseling services, enrichment, and academic intervention services for students who may need support in reading or math.

The goal of St. Gregory the Great School is to educate the whole child within a Catholic atmosphere. We strive to instill within our students values of integrity and spirituality to help them become aware of their responsibilities to themselves, their community and God. The school, working cooperatively with the home, strives to promote the development of self-control in compliance with Catholic values and morals. Each of us has a specific role and responsibility as we work together to provide a Christian atmosphere conducive to learning.

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SECTION 1: ACADEMICS

CURRICULUM

“Our curriculum is perfectly aligned to meet and exceed New York State standards, assuring a premier academic experience with Catholic values for your child. Our Diocesan commitment to academic excellence is reflected in our STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Math) Education Program which provides the framework for best practices in teaching and learning. STREAM emphasizes the progression of interdisciplinary studies in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, while incorporating the creativity and expression of the Arts and our faith as integral components of a 21st century Catholic education. We encourage you to review the Diocesan curriculum in detail.” (Diocese of Buffalo).

English/Language Arts

We believe in a balanced approach to teaching literacy. A balanced literacy program focuses on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Our literacy instruction includes read alouds, phonics instruction, grammar, explicit vocabulary instruction, word study, shared reading, shared writing, guided reading, independent reading and writing.

Fine Arts

- Music
 - The music curriculum at St. Gregory the Great School allows our students to express themselves while exercising both their mind and body through creative expression. Our music program is closely aligned with STREAM principles. Music is Art! It combines all of the above and allows us to create emotions and to express and share those emotions. Our students play at school and parish Masses, give concerts, and perform at nursing homes and senior citizen events as well as recitals and competitions.
- Art
 - Our art program offers the objective of giving the students a visual language as well as a means for greater self-expression. Various art techniques and concepts are used to create artwork that emphasizes creativity, emotion, decision making and problem solving. Lessons are developed and provided to show that art is useful and necessary.
- Band
 - Paul Effman Music offers students in grades 4-8 band instruments. They also offer violin in grades 1-8. Our students participate in group lessons offered throughout the school day and some sessions after school. We are proud that our band participates in various concerts throughout the year.

- Music Ministry for School Masses
 - New for the 2023-2024 school year, students have an opportunity to participate in music ministry by grade level for grades 4 through 8. Ideally, there will be an ensemble for each grade level and a single grade will minister each week in a rotation.
 - Practice for singers and instrumentalists would be on Wednesdays after school in the church.
 - Grade-based ensembles would minister at school Masses.
 - The ensembles may be combined to make one larger ensemble for the Catholic Schools Week Opening Mass at 9:30 AM on the Sunday prior.

Mathematics

The careers and jobs of tomorrow will require thinkers who can problem solve, communicate, collaborate, and make decisions based on evidence provided from multiple sources. Mathematics instruction has transformed from procedural knowledge to conceptual understanding of how math works.

To better prepare our students for the needs of society and the future workforce we have adopted a conceptual based approach to teaching math. We start with concrete learning through the use of manipulatives to pictorial learning through the use of models to abstract thinking through the use of the standard algorithms.

Physical Education

The physical education program focuses on the development of skills in activities that will help students maintain fitness throughout their life. Students will understand the benefits that regular exercise can provide for a person's mental, physical, and social health. In addition, the physical education program integrates character education and social responsibility education as it relates to group activity.

Religion

Catholic doctrine and tradition, Bible Study, Social Justice, and preparation for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are core elements of our Catholic Identity. Reconciliation is offered for Grades 3-8 during Lent and Advent.

- Daily prayer (the Angelus and Act of Contrition) is said together to open and close the day.
- Liturgical services are held every Thursday at the 1:00 PM Mass and on Holy Days of Obligation.
- Stations of the Cross are said every Friday during Lent.
- Feast days are celebrated throughout the school year.

- Sacramental Preparation is provided through collaboration with the school and Family Faith Formation. Parents have the primary responsibility for preparing the students through home instruction for students, First Penance and First Communion.

Service Projects

The purpose of the stewardship program for students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 is to provide students with the opportunity to make a difference in our Church and surrounding communities through various service and support programs. Each grade will participate in a service project. A parent coordinator will be assigned to each class and oversee the organization and participation for each project. All grades have been assigned a specific area of stewardship emphasis. **Grades K through 2** will be organizing events directed toward helping other children. Projects in **grades 3 through 5** will emphasize the sick and elderly of our community, and the **6th through 8th grades** will participate in projects directed toward the hungry and homeless.

Science

We offer an inquiry-based approach to science instruction with many hands-on learning experiences integrated into the program. We utilize a few different curricular materials such as Amplify Science (6-8) Mystery Science (K-5), and BOCES kits (K-5).

We offer a Regents Earth Science class in 8th grade. We utilize a rubric approach to place students into this advanced course.

Social Studies

Students in grades Kindergarten to Grade 8 participate in the Social Studies curriculum based on the NYS standards. We implement an ELA integrated social studies curriculum from PNW BOCES. The resource focuses on critical thinking, social studies practices, skills, and using documents to learn about history.

Technology

Word Processing, Database, Spreadsheets, Web Page Design, Effective Use of Social Media, Photo Shot, Coding, and Typing skills are taught in the Computer class.

Please see the Acceptable Use Policy, Online Learning Code of Conduct and Google Suite permission forms and policies on the website in the Parents section under School Policies.

World Languages

Students at the end of 4th grade choose either Latin or Spanish. The students may receive Latin or Spanish instruction in grades 5-8.

Enhancement of Curriculum

Teachers are expected and strongly encouraged to enhance the classroom curriculum by employing a variety of teaching methodologies and learning strategies. Enhancements of the curriculum are included with the knowledge and approval of the principal and indicated both in the lesson plans for the week, and in the long-range plan for the year's curriculum. At times in the year a movie may be shown as an incentive or community building activity for students. We also show movies during lunch on Fridays.

The School recognizes that while certain feature films/videos have educational value when used in the proper context, not all films are appropriate for use in all classrooms. Any film shown will be age appropriate.

Movies/videos

- Regardless of rating, teachers must use their professional and prudent judgment in showing videos in their entirety or in part.
- The film must be previewed.
- Careful lesson planning around the use of the film is essential.
- It is recommended that movies viewed by students have a "G" rating.
 - Films with a rating of G may be shown without a permission slip.
- When the curriculum justifies the showing of a film rated "PG" or "PG 13," prior consent of administration and of the parents must be received.
 - PG films may be shown in grades (PK-4) with parental permission.
 - PG films may be shown in grades (5-8) without a permission slip.
 - PG-13 films may only be shown in grades (7-8) with parental permission.
- If a permission slip is necessary, the parental permission slip must contain a brief summary of the film/video, the reason why it is rated a certain way, and why the film is being shown in the classroom.
- A film rated "R" may not be shown at any grade level.

The administration will monitor the implementation of these guidelines. If the teacher has any doubt about any of the content of a proposed film/video, the administration will be consulted and will have the final authority to make the decisions regarding the appropriateness of showing said film/video.

STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Academic Probation

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on Academic Probation. Students on academic probation will be placed on a two-week improvement plan. At the end of the two-week period, the student's academic progress will be assessed.

To be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity, the student must maintain an overall average of 80% or above. If a student has any form of detention the student is academically ineligible for athletics that day. If students are tardy 5 or more times they are considered academically ineligible for that trimester.

Awards

Students receive special awards at 8th grade graduation. Please see the 8th grade handbook for more specific information.

Grading

Please see the grading policy on the website in the Parents section under School Policies.

Homework

Please see the homework policy on the website in the Parents section under School Policies.

Honor Roll

Students in grades 4-8 have the opportunity to attain honor roll based on their final average for each trimester. Please see the ranges below.

First Honors: 94.00 -105.00

Second Honors: 88.00-93.99

Promotion/Retention

Advancement to the next grade in St. Gregory the Great School is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level.

Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as a requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade.

Report Cards/Progress Reports

Each student receives a report card three times a year. Progress reports are issued after six weeks of school, and midway between the second and final report cards.

SECTION 2: ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

Admissions

Please see the admissions policy on the website in the Parents section under School Policies.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

St. Gregory the Great School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

Transfer of students to another school

Notice of withdrawal of a student should be made by the parent in writing to the Assistant Principal of Advancement in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare the necessary information and settle accounts. No student records will be forwarded to another school until Parish Office accounts have been settled. Part of the exit process may include an exit survey and an exit interview with administration.

Tuition

Please see the tuition policy on the website in the *Parents* section under School Policies.

[Tuition and Tuition Assistance – Admissions](#)

Please note that tuition payment obligations set forth herein remain in full force and effect, should St. Gregory the Great School's in-person instruction operations be impeded or temporarily or fully stopped during the 2021-2022 school year, such as on account of acts of God such as fires, adverse weather events, or a pandemic such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In such an event, the School will continue to provide an instructional program that uses alternative methods (including but not limited to online learning and instruction and alternative school settings), and will continue to employ its faculty and staff to ensure that instruction continues.

Tuition Assistance Programs

Please see the website for applications for the following programs:

[Tuition and Tuition Assistance – Admissions](#)

1. Parish Tuition Assistance
2. BISON Scholarship Fund
3. Angel Wings Scholarship
4. The St. Thomas More Guild Scholarship

SECTION 3: ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

ARRIVAL

Bus Riders

- PickUp Patrol will be used for health screening questions daily.
- Students will be sent to the cafeteria as buses arrive and are sent to their classrooms at 7:20 AM.

Car Riders

- PickUp Patrol will be used for health screening questions daily.
- Arrival begins at 7:20 AM for car riders.
- Please pull into the driveway by the middle school.
- Please pull all the way forward, as far as possible, in the arrival line up to the Parish Office.
- Have students ready with backpacks and lunches as you pull up.
- If you are going to assist a child in a car seat, please do so as quickly as possible and inform staff that you are doing so.
- Please do not pull around other cars after your child exits the vehicle.
- Students in grades K-4 enter door #1.
- Students in grades 5-8 enter door #8.
- Please move with the car line to exit the parking lot safely.
- For PK4 and EK students dropping off between 7:30 AM and 7:55 AM, please park your car in the parking lot and then you may walk your child to your child's classroom door. Please wait for the teacher to welcome your child and complete the necessary protocols.

PickUp Patrol

To assist us with the mandated health screening questions and with dismissal plans we use an app called PickUp Patrol.

- Once registered with the app you will create a dismissal default plan for each child.
- Any changes to the default dismissal plan must be submitted in the app by 11:00 AM each day. The app will not accept changes to your child's dismissal plan after 11:00 AM.
- The dismissal team is instructed to follow what the app says for dismissal for each student. We cannot accept a phone call to change a dismissal plan. If there is a true emergency, we may accept a phone call accompanied by an email for any unplanned dismissal changes.
- Please submit the health screening questions for each child via [PickUp Patrol](#) app daily prior to 6:45 AM.

DISMISSAL

Bus Riders

- Homeroom teachers will use the PickUp Patrol app to dismiss students from their classrooms.
- Once the dismissal team dismisses all bus riders using PickUp Patrol, homeroom teachers will dismiss all bus riders to their buses.
- The dismissal team will be there to assist and supervise.

Car Riders

- Car riders' dismissal begins after the buses leave the parking lot.
- Cars will be directed by the dismissal team to enter the 2 loops.
- The first loop is in front of the main entrance for families who have multiple children to pick up by entrance #1.
- For students in grades 5-8, please enter the driveway by the middle school.
- PK4 and EK dismiss after all 5-8 students have been dismissed starting at 2:20 PM.
- As cars pull into either loop the dismissal team will check you in using the PickUp Patrol App. Please place your family sign in the window so staff can check you in.
- Once checked in students will be dismissed from their homerooms and directed to your car.
- Please stay in the car.
- Once your child (ren) are safely buckled in the car you may exit the loop and pull around the cars if in the main loop by door #1.

Bicycle and Walkers

Students who ride their bikes or are walkers will be dismissed after bus riders and car riders have been dismissed. They report to the bike rack when dismissed by the teacher. A helmet is required by law for any students riding a bike to and from school. Any student who rides a bike or walks home needs this indicated in the PickUp Patrol. It states the day(s) permission is given to walk home. Roller blades, skateboards, and scooters are not permitted.

Early dismissal

The Health Office will contact you if your child becomes ill during the day. Parents need to sign in at the table in the front foyer, take their temperature and answer the 5 screening questions upon entry in the building. After those steps are completed the parent may report to the health office to sign out his or her child in the Health Office.

- A student is not allowed to leave the school during school hours for any reason without the knowledge and consent of the teacher.

- Parents, please use the PickUp Patrol App to indicate an early dismissal for an appointment.
- The authorized person must complete the building entry procedures of signing in, answer the screening questions and then may sign out the child at the front office window.
- Early dismissals must leave before 1:45 PM so as not to interfere with the buses.
- All dismissal changes need to be made in PickUp Patrol by 11:00 AM.

Parking

Parking is permitted in the school parking lot between the school and church. PLEASE do not enter the traffic circle during arrival and departure times of the buses (7:00 - 8:00 AM and 1:15 - 2:15 PM). The Amherst Police will issue a ticket for parking violations, including the handicap zone.

SECTION 4: ATHLETICS

Athletics are an important part of our school community. Through physical education and extracurricular sports, we strive to provide our students with an opportunity to enjoy each other and the joy that comes from physical activity and self-improvement. Toward those ends, athletics at St. Gregory the Great is broadly inclusive of our student population, and emphasizes the pleasure derived from participation. Students will be encouraged to perform their best, succeed, and help each other perform better, but never at the expense of the pleasure that should be derived from the joy of the game itself. In this environment, students will be given opportunities to practice leadership and teamwork while they are encouraged and challenged to perform their very best.

We offer fall, winter and spring sports. Please see the school website or ENews for more detailed information about our sports program.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer to coach. All volunteer coaches need to complete the volunteer application process which includes VIRTUS training. The Athletics Board hosts an annual walkathon event as its biggest fundraiser to support school sports and the physical education program. The event is one of the most memorable traditions of the SGS community!

SECTION 5: ATTENDANCE

Please see the attendance policy on the website in the parents section under School Policies.

Health Office: (716) 688-5462

Medical Appointments

Students who have a scheduled medical appointment during school hours require submission in PickUp Patrol. Parents are required to sign out their child within the classroom. If a child returns

to school during the same day, he/she must be signed back into the school office. Students who are away from school for an appointment for 3 hours or more will be counted as absent 1/2 day.

Reporting an absence or late arrival

When a student is absent from school, a parent should use the PickUp Patrol, change the default plan and describe the reason for absence. Parents may also call or email the health office by 8:00 AM each day of absence if they forget to use the PickUp Patrol app. Please give the student's name, homeroom, and reason for the absence. Also the app may be used for Late Arrivals utilizing that section of PickUp Patrol. Give the reason and approximate time of arrival. If no notification by 8:00 AM, a parent will be contacted.

If no excuse is received, parents need to send a written excuse within 3 days of the absence. On the note, please include the student's name, date(s) of absence and reason for absence. If an excuse is not received within 3 days, an illegal absence will be recorded in the student's permanent record. Absent excuses are kept on file for one year in compliance with New York State law.

Return to school

Due to the ever changing ECDOH policies, please see current protocols on the school website.

Request for homework

If a child is absent for more than one day, parents can request homework through the health office when calling in an absence on the second day of the absence. Parents may pick up the needed books, etc. at the school office after school. Siblings will not take the extra books on the bus.

Students who are absent due to illness have one day for each day absent to make up missed assignments, quizzes or tests. For example, a student who is absent due to illness for 3 days will have 3 days to make up the assignments, etc.

Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignments will be given in anticipation of the vacation.

Excessive absences, in excess of 30 days of school, without a parent meeting to discuss with school administration, can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year.

School Student Hours

- Students must be in the homeroom by 7:40 AM.
- Normal dismissal for students is at 2:00 PM.

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Schedule

St. Gregory the Great School uses a rotating schedule called an “A, B, C, D, E, F day.” The special schedule is based on this rotating cycle.

Tardiness

A student who arrives in the homeroom after 7:40 AM is tardy and must sign in at the Health Office. The health office will send home a pink tardy slip to be returned to school the next day. Excused tardiness will be limited to medical or dental appointments/emergencies.

An unexcused tardy by more than 30 minutes will count as a 1/2 day absence. In a marking period, after a student is tardy 3 times for unexcused reasons, the school office will contact the parents to discuss the situation. If a student is tardy 5 times within any marking period for unexcused reasons, he/she will be sent to the office and an after school detention will be assigned by the Assistant Principal of Student Life. Also, that student will not be allowed to participate in after-school activities and/or sports for the remainder of the marking period.

If a student is tardy 10 times for unexcused reasons:

- He/she will receive a one-day in-school suspension.
- If a student is tardy 5 additional times for unexcused reasons after serving an in-school suspension as described above, he/she will receive another in-school suspension and his/her parents will be required to meet with the School Administration to discuss possible further actions by the School.

SECTION 6: BUILDING SAFETY

Authorized Persons

A student may be released only to custodial parents, a guardian, or an authorized representative. A non-custodial parent may not take a student during class hours without the consent of the other parent. Under no circumstances will a student be released to an unidentified person. A form for each student must be in the office indicating the names of persons who are authorized representatives.

Divorced or separated parents must file a court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree with the principal's office. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements without the appropriate legal paperwork.

Buckley Amendment

St. Gregory the Great School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) in regard to privacy of student records and the rights of noncustodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the

courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof.

The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address. Be advised that if a teacher is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.)

Building Safety Plan

Please see the building safety plan on the website in the Parents section under School Policies.

Emergency Drills

State law requires that 8 fire drills and 4 lockdown drills be completed yearly. During emergency drills, students, staff, parents, and visitors should follow these regulations:

1. Follow the directions of the closest staff member during an emergency drill.
2. Follow building procedures practiced throughout the school year.
3. During lockdown drills no one may enter the building.

Snow days and School Closings

If school closes due to snow, etc., the letter day on the monthly calendar remains the same. When schools are closed due to inclement weather, local television stations (Channels 2, 4, 7 and Spectrum News) will be notified as well as the following radio stations: WBEN-AM (930); WKSE-FM (98.5) and WNED-AM (970). The fastest way to get news about a snow day is by subscribing to our webpage and our school Broadcasts text messages, and following the school on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Visitors

All persons access the school building through the front entrance. Each visitor will be asked their name and purpose for the visit.

1. Visitors, including parents, must sign in at the front office window and answer the required screening questions.
2. Visitors receive a name tag.
3. Parents (visitors) need prior permission to enter classrooms, hallways, or student lockers.
4. Parents are not allowed in the hallways during dismissal.
5. For your child's safety, school doors are locked during the day. (Parents and/or visitors may NOT enter through the church entrance, the kindergarten doors, the middle school door, the maintenance door, or the elementary wing door.) Faculty, staff and students may not open doors for visitors.

6. Parents who volunteer to serve lunch or who volunteer in another capacity in the school may not drop into a classroom to see their child during the day. This is an interruption to the teacher and to the educational process.

SECTION 7: BULLYING

Please see the bullying policy on the website in the Parents section under School Policies.

SECTION 8: CODE OF CONDUCT

Please see the code of conduct on the website in the Parents section under School Policies.

SECTION 9: COUNSELING PROGRAM

St. Gregory the Great School has two full-time Guidance Counselors on staff to serve the needs of students and parents through class and individual consultation. There is one counselor for the K-4 students and one for the 5-8 students. The counselors are responsible for teaching the SAFE environment classes, assisting with career development, organization and many other support systems for students.

SECTION 10: COMMUNICATION

Positive communication between parents and teachers helps improve academic performance as demonstrated by academic achievement. Effective communication is essential for building school-family partnerships. Our expectation is to utilize many different platforms to communicate with parents. To foster positive relationships it is necessary to use email for school operation and other questions. For major concerns the most effective communication is through phone calls and in person meetings as tone cannot be expressed in email and can harm the relationship. Demonstrating respect by all stakeholders is a core value of our school.

Communication Platforms

- **School Web page:** This platform is for the school to communicate information about the school and upcoming events.
- **PickUp Patrol App:** Used for dismissal plans, absences and for our daily health screening questions to enter the building.
- **Google Classroom:** This platform is for teachers to share academic classroom content and feedback with the student (parent).
- **Google Meet:** This is a safe way to video conference with students and parents.
- **Google Chat:** Students in grades 4-8 will be able to communicate with teachers using this feature for help with assignments and able to ask fellow peers for help facilitated by a teacher.

Student Directory

Once the HSA dues are paid, within the first month of the school year, each family receives a Student Directory listing students' and parents' names, addresses, home telephone numbers,

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and e-mail addresses. **Under the laws of FERPA**, parents may choose to exclude any personal contact information from the Student Directory.

The Student Directory should be used to acquaint parents with the names of their children(s) classmates and parents. These directories should not be **used** or **sold** for other purposes.

Home-School Communication

In order to ensure that all communication from school reaches home in a timely manner, St. Gregory the Great School sends a Monday Message and E news on Thursdays weekly.

Our goal is to promote positive relationships between parents and staff. In order to have your concerns or questions addressed in a timely manner please follow this flowchart:

1. Contact the classroom or subject area teacher.
2. Contact one of the school counselors for assistance.
3. For behavioral concerns please contact the Assistant Principal of your grade level.
4. For health questions please contact the nurse.
5. For tuition questions please contact the Assistant Principal of Advancement.
6. For Parish concerns or questions please contact the Parish Office.
7. For other concerns or questions please see the administrative table for each administrator's role and responsibilities.
8. For school related concerns not resolved please contact the Principal.

School Office Communication

Monday-Friday: 7:00-3:00 PM

These hours are for parent contact through Google Meet, phone calls, or email with administration, counselors or office staff. The administrators will be needed in the halls and classrooms and their best availability will be before or after school. We will be limiting in person meetings and may use Google Meet as a platform in the fall and may adjust as the year progresses. If a parent contacts office staff after 3:00 PM please expect a response the following business day.

Teacher Communication

Monday-Friday: 7:15-2:30 PM

These hours are for parent contact through Google Meet, phone calls, or gmail when the teacher is not instructing. Teachers are unable to receive phone calls during instruction and will contact parents before school, during planning periods or after school. We will be limiting in-person meetings in the fall and may adjust as the year progresses. If a parent contacts staff after 2:30 PM please expect a response the following business day.

SECTION 11: COVID

Please see the 3 COVID plans on the website in the Parents section under COVID.

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SECTION 12: DRESS CODE

Please see the dress code policy on the website in the Parents section under School Policies.

SECTION 13: FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the school year each grade schedules field trips designed to supplement the curriculum or introduce students to the resources of the community.

- Parents receive notices of field trips in advance of the scheduled date along with a field trip permission form.
- A parent must sign and return the school's official permission slip to participate on a field trip.
- No verbal permissions will be given for field trip participation.
- Each student dresses in the proper uniform for field trips unless permission for dress down is authorized through the administration.
- After the field trip, students return to the classroom for normal dismissal.
- The school is not responsible for any lost items during these activities.
- Room Parents may be asked to volunteer as chaperones.

Field trip guidelines

1. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
2. Parents may request their child not to participate in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend a field trip will remain home with the parent and will be marked absent for the day.
3. Cell phones are not allowed on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.
4. Parents who are not "official" chaperones may not drive their car to a field trip destination with the plan of accompanying the class on the field trip. Our risk management insurance company insures the "official" chaperones and participation by unofficial chaperones jeopardizes the protection for our students and all other "official" adults on the trip.
5. Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring preschool or school-age siblings on the field trip.
6. All chaperones must be 25 years of age or older.

SECTION 14: HEALTH SERVICES

For grades K-8 the nurse is responsible for the maintenance of health records, parental contact concerning health problems, first aid, dispensing medication in accordance with NYS law and routine health screenings. This includes:

P: 716.688.5323

F: 716.688.6629

Updated: 03/14/23

250 St. Gregory Court

Williamsville, NY 14221

frontoffice@stgregsschool.org

stgregsschool.org

1. Vision and Hearing Screening: Grades K, 1, 3, 5 & 7 and ALL new entrants. If your child does not pass the vision or hearing screening for the first time, a repeat screening will take place again within two weeks. If your child does not pass the second screening, written notification will be sent home advising you to follow up with an eye doctor.
2. Scoliosis Screening: Girls grades 5 & 7 for those students who do not have a current physical on file. Scoliosis screening takes place in the month of May each year in the health office.

Immunizations

All students enrolled at St. Gregory the Great School must have current immunizations. The only exception to the policy is in the event that a student has a medical exemption from a physician due to an illness or condition that would compromise his/her life by being immunized.

Documentation of this must be presented prior to the first day of the school year and renewed annually by a physician. All newly enrolled students must have immunization records on file in the Health Office prior to the start of the school year.

Medication

The New York State Department of Education has established a procedure for administering medication in school. Please be aware of the following requirements if your child needs medication: "All medications, including non-prescription drugs, given in school, shall be prescribed by a licensed prescriber on an individual basis as determined by the child's health status." Forms are available in the Health Office, if needed.

1. The school nurse must have a written request from the child's physician that indicates the name, frequency, dosage, route, and side effects of the medication. In addition, the condition being treated is to be outlined by the physician and length of time the medication is to be administered. This includes over-the-counter drugs as well.
2. The nurse must have a written request from the parent and physician to administer any medication. A verbal or telephone request from the parent or physician is not acceptable.
3. Prescription medication must be in the container prepared by the pharmacist. The label must include the name and strength of the medication. The pharmacy label does not constitute a written order and cannot be used in lieu of a written order from a licensed prescriber. When having prescriptions filled, ask the pharmacist for two containers: one for school and one to remain at home.
4. Over-the-counter medication must be in the original manufacturer's container/package with the student's name affixed to the container and kept in the health office. Items such as throat lozenges and cough drops must also be kept in the Health Office. Medication delivered in baggies or plain containers will not be accepted.

5. All medications must be delivered directly to the nurse by the parent. No medication may be sent to school with a child. Medication is not permitted to be carried on a bus unless the child is deemed self-carry by the physician.
6. Medication orders must be renewed annually or when there is a change in medication or dosage. Medication permission forms are available in the health office.

These strict procedures are established to protect every student. Medications sent to school not meeting these requirements will be kept in the health office and will not be administered. Any unused medication not picked up by the end of the year will be disposed of.

SECTION 15: LUNCH PROGRAM

Hot Lunch

We utilize Personal Touch Services for our lunch program. The lunch program offers basic meals which fulfill nutritional requirements for \$3.00. Snacks and ala carte items will need to be purchased via MySchoolBucks.

IMPORTANT UPDATE:

USDA continues free lunches for all students for the 2021-2022 school year!

Offered Daily with All School Lunches:

- Fresh NYS Apples from LynOaken Farms
- Fresh or Prepared Fruit (Must take 1/2 cup of Fruit or Veggies, may take 1 cup)
- Vegetables (Must take 1/2 cup of Fruit or Veggies, may take 1 cup)
- NYS Milk from Upstate Farms Served daily: Skim, 1%, or Fat Free Chocolate Milk

We serve the following Items Daily:

- [Main Entree selection from lunch menu](#)
- Hot dog with bun
- Julienne Salad with Flatbread
- Yogurt Parfait with Flatbread
- PB&J or PB

MySchoolBucks

- We have a cashless system via [MySchoolBucks](#).
- We will no longer be accepting cash or checks payments at school.
- [MySchoolBucks](#) will be used to purchase a snack, milk, and a la carte.

Cafeteria Guidelines

- For safety reasons, we do not allow glass containers in the lunchroom.
- For the safety of students with allergies, students may not trade food.

- Pop and food from commercial establishments are not allowed.
- The monthly menu is published in the newsletter and found on our school website under lunch service.
- No fast food such as McDonald's, Subway, etc. is allowed to be brought into the cafeteria
- Each homeroom takes a lunch count before 8:00 AM.

SECTION 16: PARENTS AS PARTNERS

As partners in the educational process at St. Gregory the Great School, we ask parents to set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Gets to bed early on school nights
- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
- Is dressed according to the school dress code
- Completes assignments on time
- Has lunch money

Our vision is to create a loving and positive learning environment. We wish to empower parents to engage in our school community:

- To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student.
- To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy.
- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers.
- To meet all financial obligations to the school.
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health.
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly.
- To read school emails and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education.
- To support the religious and educational goals of the school.
- To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example.
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.
- To refrain from posting negative comments about students, teachers, or the administration on social media.

Parent's Role in Education

We, at St. Gregory the Great School, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life---physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of St. Gregory the Great School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child

to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life. Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life. Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at St. Gregory the Great School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 8), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential.

It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make an investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships. Talking negatively about a child's teacher or administration at home will only create an attitude of distrust toward the teacher, the school, the administration, and the parent.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, boundaries and limits provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. Parents are encouraged to let their child experience a logical consequence for an inappropriate action or behavior. This responsibility also extends to times of absence. Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

Home School Association (HSA)

St. Gregory the Great School Home School Association works to support and enhance the educational ministry of the school. Fundraising, parent education, and building community are the goals of this organization. HSA meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

Room Parents

Each year room parents are selected to help foster a welcoming, faith filled and joyful school environment. The room parent assists the teacher and administration in helping to develop an inclusive and faith filled class community for all students and parents. Please contact the school office for more information.

Birthday Observations

Birthday treats may be brought to school on a student's birthday or 1/2 birthday. Please send in packaged snacks. No homemade treats are allowed due to allergies and for safety concerns. Please provide any necessary paper products clearly marked with the student's name and homeroom. Do not send in balloons, gift bags, toys, flowers, etc. Check with the homeroom teacher for food allergies and a list of acceptable treats.

SECTION 17: SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

The Family Faith Formation Office and the school work collaboratively together to prepare parents and their children for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

Reconciliation

Preparation for reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation is in grade 2. Since parents are the primary educators of their children, preparation is at home with the help of parent workshops and textbooks. The religion curriculum for grade 2 also focuses on preparation for the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Eucharist

Preparation for reception of the sacrament of the Eucharist is in grade 3. Again, parents have the primary responsibility of preparing their children with home instruction and sharing. Parents have the help of parent workshops. The religion curriculum in grade 3 focuses on the Eucharist.

SECTION 18: STUDENT PROPERTY

Lockers/Cubby

Each student is assigned a locker or cubby in which to store clothing and textbooks. In order to maintain a quiet atmosphere for class, students are allowed to go to their lockers only at specified times.

The school reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time. Student schedules and pencil holders facilitate learning and may be posted on the interior of a student's locker door.

Lost/Found

Any items left in the school building or on the school grounds should be given to the school receptionist to be placed in the Lost and Found box located in the gymnasium. Items placed in the Lost and Found remain there for 10 days. After 10 days, items are donated to charity.

SECTION 19: STUDENT RECORDS

St. Gregory the Great School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the U.S. Mail. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a 5 school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the St. Gregory the Great School Office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents. No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the School Office in writing of any change of address, custody, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, email addresses and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete and up to date.

SECTION 20: TECHNOLOGY

Please see the Acceptable Use policy on the website in the Parents section under School Policies.

SECTION 21: TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are furnished by the local school districts and are on loan to students. If a book is lost, damaged, or misused, the student pays for the book. Students who lose a library book, textbook or workbook must pay the replacement cost of the book plus shipping in order to receive a new copy.

SECTION 22: TRANSPORTATION

Bus guidelines

1. Be at the bus stop five minutes before the scheduled arrival time; it will not wait for latecomers.
2. Adjustments in times, stops, routes, etc. may be made during the year. The drivers will announce adjustments.
3. Students in grades K-4 living on a court less than 1/10th mile long or less than 1/10th mile from its entrance (2/10th mile for grades 5-12), the bus stop will be located at the

entrance to the court. Other bus stops are located at the nearest driveway to a corner or fire hydrant. A child not at a designated stop will not be picked up.

4. While waiting at the bus stop, there is no horseplay, pushing or shoving; board in single file.
5. When crossing in front of the bus, walk far enough away from the bus so that you can see the driver's face. Only the driver should signal students to cross. Never return to the bus for dropped or forgotten items.
6. Take a seat and remain seated at all times until you reach your stop.
7. Never place your head, hands, or arms out of a window.
8. Smoking, eating, drinking, shouting, use of bad language and fighting are prohibited.
9. Balloons, live animals, glass containers, plants, hockey sticks, lacrosse sticks or baseball bats may not be brought aboard the bus. Hockey skates may be brought aboard only if the runners are covered. Musical instruments are allowed only if the instrument can be held on the student's lap.
10. Help keep the bus clean by not throwing papers or other trash on the floor or seats. Do not make any marks on seats, sides or windows of the bus.
11. Permission for a change in bus or stop may only be obtained from the Transportation Department. Emergency situations will be handled through the building principal's office.
12. Common courtesy toward the driver and other students is expected. The driver has full authority in the operation of the bus and discipline of the passengers. Drivers are due the same respect as teachers.

SECTION 23: VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers MUST have participated in the Protecting God's Children Workshop (VIRTUS). They must also sign the Diocesan Code of Conduct, located on the Diocese of Buffalo website [Protecting God's Children](#) for volunteers.

- Each homeroom has two or three room parents who help coordinate class parties, supervise field trips, and help the classroom teacher with various functions.
- Parents who volunteer to monitor the lunchroom receive a monitoring schedule. These monitors help in the cafeteria for all lunches.
- All volunteers must sign in at the School Office, receive a name tag, and be current with VIRTUS.

Schools are encouraged to recruit qualified volunteers to assist in the operation of the school. They are not to be used in place of licensed personnel. Current background checks and completion of annual updates of VIRTUS are mandatory for all school volunteers. VIRTUS workshops can be located by accessing the Diocese of Buffalo's website, [Protecting God's Children](#).

People who regularly (3-4 times per year) work with children in the School are required to complete monthly bulletins and yearly online training. The curriculum addresses recognizing, preventing, and reporting child abuse. For more information on VIRTUS please visit the Diocese of Buffalo website. Failure to comply with the training compliance will suspend your ability to volunteer in the School.

RIGHT TO AMEND

St. Gregory the Great School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via Thursday eNews.

Parent and Student Signature Page

I have read the 2023/2024 Parent/Student Handbook and agree to follow the school procedures and policies as stated. I have read the handbook and policies with my child/children. My child/children agree to follow the school procedures and policies in this handbook.

Family Name _____

Parent signature _____ Date _____

Parent signature _____ Date _____

Student signature _____ Date _____

Student signature _____ Date _____

Student signature _____ Date _____

Student signature _____ Date _____