

The Dreams Are Free School at Bishop Nevins Academy



Parent and Student Handbook

2009 – 2010 School Year

The Dreams Are Free School at Bishop Nevins Academy is a faith-friendly Catholic school designed to nurture the spiritual and academic growth of students with special learning needs.

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The Dreams Are Free School
at Bishop Nevins Academy
4380 Fruitville Road

Sarasota, Florida 34232
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Our Mission

The Dreams Are Free School at Bishop Nevins Academy is a faith-friendly Catholic school designed to nurture the spiritual and academic growth of students with special learning needs.

We serve children ages 6 – 14 (grades 1 – 8) of average or above average intelligence, who have specific learning disabilities including reading and language disorders, mathematics disorder, mild autism, ADHD, and Asperger Syndrome. We are not able to serve students with physical, behavioral or emotional exceptionalities.

As Catholic Christians, we believe in the dignity of all human beings as the sons and daughters of God. No student is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination during the application process, or while receiving services. We do not discriminate with regard to the employment or assignment of our staff.

Our Faculty and Staff

Administration

Dr. Judy Dickinson	Director
Dawn Gordon	Registrar
Debbie Hancock	Administrative Assistant

Teachers

Kelly McWilliams,	Elementary level
Melissa McGrath,	Elementary level
Katie Smith,	Elementary level
Kathy Lynn,	Middle level and Religion
Caroline Cornelius,	Middle level
Marylou Ferraro	Middle level Science, Social Studies and Art
Sandy Caliendo	ESE Resource
Ann Dowie	Computer
Rachel DeGarmo	PE

Therapists

Shannon Parsons	Occupational Therapy
Leslie Kahn	Speech Therapy
Carolyn Sousa	Music Therapy

Counselor

Holly Carro

Our Student's School Day

Monday through Friday

7:45 a.m. – 2:55 p.m.

*Please see our Calendar

Please Note:

Late students will miss part or all of our SPIRE reading intervention and remediation program, our first classes of the day.

**Students who arrive at their desks after 7:45 a.m. are considered "tardy".
(See section on Attendance and Absence)**

Our Admission Procedures

We utilize a common protocol for each and every student applying for admission to the Dreams Are Free School at Bishop Nevins Academy.

- Parents are first provided with an overview of the schools mission and services, as well as information regarding tuition, fees, and possible sources of financial aid. A tour of the school may be provided at that time.
- An information request and application form is required of the parent(s), which includes identifying the student's disability(s). At this point, the Director may determine the student's needs can not be served adequately by this school, and the parent(s) will be so informed.

We will only accept students for whom we can provide the specific academic and support services identified as appropriate and necessary by the student's formal academic and assessment records.

- In order for the admission process to continue, the parent(s) must provide for the Director's review:
 1. **Complete** copies of the student's current Individual Education Plan (IEP) or comparable plan of accommodations and interventions for non-ESE students, (e.g., a 504 plan).
 2. **Complete** copies of the most recent psychological and education evaluation(s).
 3. **Current** grade reports, standardized testing results (e.g., Stanford, Brigance, FCAT), and anecdotal records from the school last attended by the student.
- If the review results in a recommendation for the admission process to continue, an interview of the student and parent(s) by the Director is scheduled. Parents of a student not recommended for admission will have the specific reason(s) explained.
- The Director's interview of the student and parent(s) constitutes the final requirement of the admissions protocol. Approval of admission is determined at this time.

- **All students are admitted on a probationary basis.** Each student's performance and behavior are reviewed by the Director during the first thirty (30) days of school, with a recommendation for continued enrollment or dismissal. Such a review may occur at any time during the school year, at the Director's discretion.

Our Tuition and Payment Plans

When a student is approved for admission, the parent(s) must complete a contract committing to financial arrangements necessary to pay tuition and fees. A non-refundable \$225.00 registration fee is required at that time.

The tuition for the 2009 – 2010 school year is \$12,950.00, plus fees. Tuition is due on the first business day of each month of an eleven month plan, August through June. (Please note that any previous tuition owed must be paid in full before the current application will be processed.)

Tuition Assistance is available through a formal and independent application process, based on an evaluation of financial need. Families request assistance through "FACTS," the tuition management services company engaged by the diocese to objectively assess financial need. The FACTS process must be completed in order to receive any assistance. Families are encouraged to contact their pastors to request financial aid for their students.

Tuition may be paid in advance, or by credit card. Otherwise it will be paid monthly, by automatic debit from an account designated by the parent(s).

Should difficulty arise with the payment option selected, please notify our Registrar, Dawn Gordon immediately to set up an alternative plan for payment. Parents remain responsible for any unpaid balance. **Non-payment will result in the dismissal of the student.**

Our Commitment to Communication

We believe in the importance of regular communication with our parents. ***Please let us know of any change in address, telephone numbers or email, so we can always reach you.***

- New Families Night, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 11. Adults only, please.
- Back to School Night – Meet Your Child’s Teacher, Thursday, August 27, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Adults only, please.
- Wednesday Envelope
Important information from your students teachers and the Director, are inside. **Please read, sign and date envelope for return the next day.**
- Messages from the Director will be emailed to parent(s) every Wednesday. To request a hard copy please call the office.

- Report Cards are distributed the week following the end of each academic quarter.
- Mid-Quarter Reports are distributed during the fifth week of each nine-week quarter.
- Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for November 5. Staff and parents may request a conference as needed.
- Please address student-related, classroom concerns/questions to your student's teacher, first.
- Please address concerns related to school and diocesan policy and procedures to the Director. Admissions and tuition concerns are directed to the Registrar.

Our School Procedures and Policies

Accidents

Any accident occurring on the school grounds or during any school-sponsored activity or event must be reported immediately to the activity supervisor and to the administration. Students are to notify the teacher at the time of any injury. The teacher will immediately notify administration and complete an accident report, at that time. Parents are to be notified of minor scrapes, etc.; and are to be contacted immediately in the event of any serious injury, including head injuries, or the symptoms of any communicable diseases.

* See **Health Services** section

Testing

Students are assessed in reading and mathematics twice a year, at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the school year. Middle school students will be assessed this year using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Teachers assess student achievement regularly in all subjects. Assessment in OT and Speech continues throughout the year.

** Parents of students with IEPs who wish to take the FCAT must notify our administration in writing by September 15, 2009, in order to participate.

Attendance and Absence

Regular and timely attendance at school is an important life skill transferable to the workplace.

- Students are to arrive between 7:30 and 7:45 a.m., and report to their homerooms.
- Students arriving before 7:30, report to St. Martha's cafeteria. No exceptions. Early morning supervision begins at 7:00 a.m. in the cafeteria.
- Students arriving after 7:45 must report to our administrative office and will be marked tardy.
- Chronic tardiness disrupts education and is unacceptable. Students who are tardy, upset the daily routine of Morning Prayer, announcements and the preparation for their first

class. Students tardy more than 3 times in a quarter will serve an after school detention and their parent(s) will be required to pay a \$10.00 detention fee.

- The school day ends at 2:55 p.m. Teachers then escort their students through St. Anne's Hall, and supervise them at car line. At 3:10 p.m., students remaining will be returned to the Dreams Are Free office. Parents will be responsible for a late fee of \$5.00 per minute until student is picked up from the Dreams Are Free office.
- **Student Absence** - Please call the school to report the absence by 7:45 a.m. When your student returns, send an excuse note with the student's first and last name to the office.
- **Early Dismissal** - Please send a written request from the parent indicating the time and the date for the dismissal. The student will be escorted to the St. Martha's reception area, and the parent or guardian must come in to sign out the student.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are not allowed in the school. If it is necessary to send a cell phone with your student for use after school, they will be required to turn their phone in to the office upon entry. The student can pick up their phone on the way to dismissal. Cell phones that are not checked in will be taken from the student and the parent(s) will be notified.

Behavior

The Dreams Are Free School at Bishop Nevins Academy is a Roman Catholic educational community, and as such, its primary code of conduct is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Guided by Church teaching, we set high expectations for the behavior of staff and students alike, based on Gospel values. We recognize Catholic values often contrast with common cultural values and secular practices. Therefore, students learn about the Gospel and Catholic teachings in religion class during the day. This educational experience is not optional.

All staff members are subject to our Diocesan policies, procedures and (consequences with regard to disobeying these) standards for Catholic moral, ethical and professional behavior. Employment is considered a privilege-to-serve, and not a right or entitlement.

Staff members have responsibility for and are required to act in the best interest of each and every student. Student's safety and well-being are priorities; therefore student behavior is supervised and regulated by our faculty, staff and administration.

Student behavior is required to conform to Gospel values and Church teaching. However, as a school for students with special learning needs, consideration of the individual personality, developmental character and disabilities, and needs of each of our students as exceptional students, will guide all interventions and applications of consequences for student misbehavior.

Behavior and Consequences

All of our students have an inherent *right to learn*, and classmates' behaviors must not regularly disrupt or distract from the learning process. Therefore, students may earn consequences for their behaviors according to the following disciplinary procedures, to include being suspended or dismissed for chronic or serious misbehaviors.

Cafeteria Rules

1. Follow all school rules and the directions of faculty and staff
2. Sit in the assigned place at the table
3. Remain seated and raise hand to ask for permission to leave the table
4. Use appropriate table manners
5. Keep the table and floor area clean
6. When dismissed, clean off tray properly and return it to the kitchen

Playground/Recess Rules

1. Follow all school rules and the directions of faculty and staff
2. Remain in the assigned play area
3. No tackling, or actions that could harm others
4. No reckless running
5. Use playground equipment properly, as it was designed for
6. Do not climb up or run down slides

Basic School Rules and Disciplinary Consequences

Basic School Rules are divided into 3 categories or "Levels" according to the seriousness of the behavior. Level 3 Rules address the most serious misbehaviors.

The sequence of Consequences is to be followed, and the date, time, and type of contact (verbal, written, email) with the student's parent(s) documented.

LEVEL 1

Misbehaviors

- Tardy to school
- Dress code violations
- Choosing not to follow Cafeteria, Playground, or Classroom rules
- Choosing not to follow the directions of faculty and staff
- Bringing toys or other personal items without the teacher's permission

Consequences

1. Redirections, interventions and corrections involving warnings, supervised timeout, and work details of short duration, appropriate to the student's maturity and disability(s)
2. Phone call by teacher to the parent
3. Teacher – Parent – Student Conference (teacher documents content of discussion)
4. Conference with the Director for chronic, repeated minor misbehaviors

LEVEL 2

Misbehaviors

- Disrespect by word (verbal or written) gesture or facial expression
- Choosing to lie, cheat or steal
- Abusing, damaging or violating school or others property
- Profanity or vulgarity in voice, gesture, writing, picture or electronic media
- Choosing to kick, push, poke, shove or otherwise physically contact others
- Unsafe behavior that could lead to injury of self or others
- Physical displays of affection such as kissing or hugging
- Use of electronic devices such as cell phones, music players, cameras or games during school hours

Consequences

1. Phone call to parent by teacher (teacher documents)
2. Loss of one day's recess (teacher notifies administrative staff)
3. Loss of up to three day's recess (teacher notifies administrative staff)
4. Detention Notice sent home by teacher one day in advance of detention
5. After School Detention
6. Loss of an extra-curricular activity or field trip

LEVEL 3

Misbehaviors

- Possession, use, or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs
- Possession of pornographic, suggestive, or racist – "hate" literature, photographs or items
- Possession of any type of weapon, weapon replica, or potential weapons
- Behaviors including harassment (verbal, physical, sexual), intimidation, threats, threatening behavior; battery; fighting
- Any behavior perceived by administration to constitute a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of students, faculty, staff, parents, volunteers, and others

Consequences

1. Teacher immediately and personally notifies the Director.
2. Teacher documents the behavior using a Behavior Referral Form
3. The Director interviews the student, gathers information/evidence, and contacts the parent
4. The Director assigns Out of School Suspension
5. Expulsion and dismissal from the School by the Director

The Director has final consideration in reference to consequences of behavior.

Harassment

Based on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church, schools of the Diocese of Venice are committed to an educational environment free of any form of harassment. Harassment means behavior based in whole or in part on gender, race, religion,

national origin, ancestry, culture, disability, or any other characteristic protected under state, federal or local laws, which substantially interferes with the victim's school or academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or otherwise offensive school environment.

Harassment has multiple forms. It may include *but is not limited to* the following intentional behaviors:

- Physical (e.g., unwanted physical contact, standing in one's way or standing too closely, bumping or brushing into another person, grabbing, touching, hitting, and pinching)
- Verbal (e.g., insults, threats, rumors, comments about a person's appearance, suggestive remarks, and sexual jokes)
- Nonverbal (e.g., written notes, emails, or pictures or other depictions of the examples noted in "Verbal", above; staring at another, imitating or gesturing, and facial expressions)

Students or any adults employed or volunteering or otherwise present in our school who engage in harassment will be subject to appropriate consequences. See Student Behavior/Discipline.

Retaliation in any form against an employee or student who exercises the right to make a complaint under this section is strictly prohibited, and will itself be cause for consequences. Any student or adult who knowingly makes false charges against an employee or a student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse, embarrass or otherwise damage the reputation of the individual, shall be subject to consequences to include appropriate legal action.

Reporting Procedure

Anyone who believes he/she is a victim of harassment within the meaning of the sections above should immediately report it to the teacher or Director. Immediate reporting is essential to constructive and effective responses. The Director must be notified of any such reports. The Director is responsible to investigate and document the victims report. The investigation must be completed within 60 days unless additional time is warranted. A written report of the outcome will be kept on file in the schools administrative office.

Consequences

Appropriate actions may include but are not limited to: parent/student/teacher conference, counseling, awareness training, documented warning, student disciplinary consequences to include out of school suspension or expulsion.

Computer and Internet Permission Forms

The Diocesan Internet Use form provided at the time of registration is required in order for students to have access. Both the student and the parent must sign the completed form. Please note that violation of the Internet Policies may be grounds for expulsion/dismissal.

Counselor

A counselor has afternoon hours at our school, Tuesday through Thursday. Mrs. Carro serves St. Martha School during the morning hours of those days. She will provide our students with grade/age appropriate counseling and support, individual and group, when students are referred by our staff or parents. Older students can refer themselves.

Custody Issues

We abide by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with regard to the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide administration with an official and complete copy of the most current dissolution and custody agreements. In the absence of a court order or other official documentation, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to all academic records and school-related information of the child. Despite our request, this administration is not always informed of family situations and therefore recommends the non-custodial parent formalize a request for information using a notarized letter.

Dress Code

As a school of the Diocese of Venice, we share the expectations common to all parish schools pertaining to student appearance and behavior. Our students are required to dress appropriately, wearing clean, well-maintained school uniforms every day, and to comply with our dress code. Our formal dress code reduces distractions with regard to clothing styles and appearance.

General Requirements:

- Extreme hairstyles are not permitted. This includes colored or dyed hair (full, partial or streaked). Long sideburns, beards and mustaches are not permitted.
- Boys: hair must be clear of (above) the eyes, above the shirt collar, and not covering more than half the ear.
- Boys: No earrings or bracelets and no necklaces other than a cross or holy medal worn under the shirt. The School is not responsible for loss or injury if the cross or holy medal is pulled off during recess or PE, for example.
- Girls: One pair of small stud earrings and one ring per hand are allowed. No bracelets and no necklaces other than a cross or holy medal worn under the shirt. The School is not responsible for loss or injury if the cross or holy medal is pulled off during recess or PE, for example.
- Make-up (including lip-gloss), nail polish and tattoos are not permitted.
- No hats or other head coverings are allowed.
- Girls may wear a solid color headband, not wider than two inches.
- Shorts, pants and skorts are to be worn at the waist and secured appropriately.
- Undergarments must not be visible.
- Shorts or pants with cargo-style pockets are not to be worn.
- Socks are required, and must cover the ankles.
- In cold weather, Dreams Are Free sweatshirts can be worn in the classroom. No other hooded sweatshirts, or sweaters or jackets are permitted in the classroom.

Elementary Level Students

- Red or white polo shirt **with our school logo** purchased at Children's World Uniform Supply.
- Navy shorts, pants or skorts purchased at Children's World Uniform Supply.
- Purchase of a gray Dreams Are Free PE shirt and shorts to be worn on days PE is scheduled.
- Sneakers with socks above the ankle.

- Black or brown leather belt.

Middle Level Students

- Red or white polo shirt **with our school logo** purchased at Children's World Uniform Supply.
- Khaki shorts, pants or skorts purchased from Children's World Uniform Supply.
- Purchase of a gray Dreams Are Free PE shirt and shorts to be worn on days PE is scheduled.
- Sneakers with socks above the ankle.
- Black or brown leather belt.

8th Grade Only

- A black polo shirt **with our school logo** in addition to the red and white polo shirt **with our school logo** can be purchased from Children's World Uniform Supply and is acceptable for 8th grade students only.

Field Trips

Field trips of educational value, including recognition and reward activities, will be planned in advance and have the Director's approval prior to parent notification. A written permission form is required for each student and each field trip. The form will be sent home with the student. This form must be received by administration by the date on the form, or at least one full school-day prior to the trip; *otherwise the student will not be allowed to participate*. Students may be transported by school or commercial vehicle. In the event personal vehicles are to be used, the transporting parent must be an approved volunteer; present proof of adequate insurance and a valid driver's license. The parent of the student to be transported must provide written and signed acceptance of this arrangement to administration at least one full school-day prior to the trip.

Health Services

We do not have a "clinic" here at Dreams Are Free; however we do have access to St. Martha's school clinic and RN. Students that are ill cannot remain in our office for the day. Parents will be contacted to pick up their student.

The office staff is trained to dispense daily or situational medication, prescribed and over-the-counter. However we are required to use the following protocol:

- Prescription medication must be in the original container with the original label noting the student's name, the name of the medication and dosage
- On file in our school, the written and signed doctor's and parent's order, with date and student's name, prescribing medication *including* over the counter medication
- Over the counter medication must be in the original package/container

In the event of a situation determined by administration to constitute a health emergency, 911 will be called to provide professional medical care. Parents will be contacted.

Immunizations

Student immunization records must meet state requirements for students to attend school. The State of Florida Statute 232.032 and 402.305, and Florida Administrative Code Rules 3.011 and 65c-22.006 require all students entering and attending school to present a current Certificate of Exemption of Florida State Form 680, if they do not meet state requirements.

Safety

Critical Incident Response Procedures Procedures are reviewed annually and drills conducted monthly to prepare for such emergencies as fire, severe weather or life threatening situations.

Weather Emergencies If it should become necessary to close school, an announcement will be made using local radio and television stations. In most cases, our school will follow the opening and closing of Sarasota County Public Schools.

School Lunch Program

- **On Monday, August 24th the cafeteria will begin serving lunch**

Bishop Nevins Academy is participating in a new school lunch program this year. More information on the program will be provided as it becomes available.

Textbooks and Materials

Students are responsible for all school textbooks and materials. Parents are financially liable for the assessment charge in the event of loss or damage. The assessment charge for all lost or damaged textbooks, materials, or library/media resources will be the cost to replace the item plus shipping.

Transportation

The transport of students by personal vehicles other than those of family members requires written permission by the parent in advance of the transport, allowing time for administration to verify the request. The school assumes no liability for such choices.

Volunteers

In order to volunteer at the school or in the presence of students, the following forms available from administration must be completed per Diocesan directive and before any contact with students:

- Diocese of Venice Volunteer Application and Attestation of Good Moral Character
- Diocese of Venice Code of Conduct for Volunteers Working with Minors
- Completion of Diocese of Venice Safe Environment Training
- Background check and fingerprint card processed by the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office.

*** This handbook is subject to revision and review during the school year. Parents will be notified of changes.**

Parent and Student Handbook Contract 2009 – 2010

- My student and I have read and understand the Handbook.
- We agree to the expectations and rules contained within the Handbook.
- I understand that collaboration and communication between our home and the school are essential for the education of my student.
- I agree to attend the parent meetings and conferences described in the Handbook.
- **Please sign the Handbook Contract found on the following page and return it to the Dreams Are Free School at Bishop Nevins Academy.**
- **Liability and contractual obligations require that each student return a signed Handbook Contract before continuing attendance at school.**

+++ Please Sign and Return by August 4, 2009 +++

The Dreams Are Free School at Bishop Nevins Academy
Parent and Student Handbook Contract
2009 – 2010

- My student and I have read and understand the Handbook.
- We agree to the expectations and rules contained within the Handbook.
- I understand that collaboration and communication between our home and the school are essential for the education of my student.
- I agree to attend the parent meetings and conferences described in the Handbook.
- **Please sign this Handbook Contract and return it to the Dreams Are Free School at Bishop Nevins Academy, by Tuesday, August 4, 2009**
- **Liability and contractual obligations require that each student return a signed Handbook Contract before continuing attendance at school.**

Student's Name _____

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's Name _____

Relationship to Student _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____