

CISTERCIAN

PREPARATORY SCHOOL



Volunteer Handbook

2025-2026

Cistercian Preparatory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of its admission and education policies, financial aid programs, athletic programs, and other activities.

Cistercian Preparatory School gratefully recognizes that the service of its employees on behalf of the students must often be augmented by the generosity of volunteers who contribute to the Mission of the School by their gift of time and effort. The following guidelines reference the professional and practical standards expected of employees but they are also intended to inform and guide volunteers in their work at or for the School, so that clear standards of safety can exist across the entire community.

MISSION AND COMMUNITY

Mission

Cistercian Preparatory School is rooted in the life and spirit of Catholic monasticism. It offers talented and motivated young men challenging programs within a supportive community, allowing them to develop their strengths and face their weaknesses in preparation for college and life beyond, all for the good of the whole person in service to God and neighbor.

Community and Educational Life

Cistercian Preparatory School is an apostolate of *Our Lady of Dallas Cistercian Abbey*. While the School has much in common with many fine academic institutions, Cistercian is distinguishable even from most Catholic schools by its monastic character. As an outgrowth of Catholic monasticism, the School believes that individual growth in virtue and skill is best acquired within the blessings and challenges of responding to community life as one offers personal gifts in service to God and others.

The monks vow to work and pray together, and through humble obedience, they hope to transform themselves, to become more like Christ through their “daily work.” For the monk, even the most mundane of tasks becomes a work for the good, done not for one’s own glory but, at the very least, for the support of his brothers in the monastery. In the ideal case, prayer and work each become the other. Daily work (teaching) becomes a prayer, and prayer in turn becomes a duty, and the line where either is distinguishable from the other becomes hard to discern. This does not mean that excellence in an academic area is traded for spirituality. Rather, the humble pursuit of academic excellence allows a particular discipline to become a source of truth and self-knowledge for both the individual and the community.

As a result of this monastic understanding of education, the particular virtues of humility and simplicity show up again and again as key values prized within the School community. For example, academic excellence is highly prized, but as a path to humble knowledge of truth and oneself. Also expressed both implicitly and explicitly in the working of the School is the desire for community and the relationship of daily work and stability to the formation of that community. Professional lay people in the School participate in the daily work of the monastery by agreeing to enter into their professions with similar goals: individual transformation while living in community through service. The School therefore strives to maintain a consistently positive environment which supports individual formation through rigorous programs but also challenges each person to understand the highest nature of success, that of developing talents so that they may be used to serve others. In the eyes of the School, neither individual nor team accomplishments can reach their highest value until they also serve as formative powers – working to transform both the individual and the community.

The health of the community and the health of the individual are then mutually dependent and mutually supportive. The School community exists to promote the growth and well-being of each individual member while each individual contributes his or her gifts and skills, at least in part, to strengthen the community. Each facet of the School's mission derives its full and proper meaning from this context. To this end, the School offers rigorous academic programming as well as a number of extra-curricular activities to encourage the well-rounded development and authentic flourishing of each individual. At the same time, the School community encourages community members to understand their efforts within a context beyond the eight-year curriculum so that the time spent in our community may enable them to develop their character and to acquire the skills necessary to more positively influence the world and the other communities to which they belong. Each goal, action, relationship, blessing, or challenge experienced within the School community obtains its proper direction and response in the light of an academic mission rooted in this Benedictine monastic tradition.

The “daily work” of student and teacher is therefore not only about learning, organization, and achievement but about undergoing a process which calls for personal transformation. The hope is that each task or event offered by the School provides the worker with both a better knowledge of self and also a stronger connection to the community. Those who work in the School are themselves called to grow as they lead and direct these tasks. Personal growth is therefore measured both in relation to and alongside brotherhood.

In conclusion, community forms the individual, while seeking individual formation together in humility and obedience forms community. The School believes the journey to self-knowledge is relational, that as students go through this academic process, together, surprising human transformation occurs. This Benedictine, this Cistercian character of the School makes it more than a great books canon, more than a curriculum of texts and tasks, more than a collection of great teachers and motivated, talented students. It is more than a set of experiences, even if powerful and shared in common. The curriculum and the shared experiences are important facets of our academic scaffold, but the heart of what happens at Cistercian Preparatory School is faith, faith that all of our attempts at “educating” and “forming” will bear fruit beyond things we understand at present.

By choosing to enter this community through volunteer work at Cistercian, volunteers agree to abide by the rules and policies of the School, and promote them among the students and each other, both as stated in this handbook and as officially announced elsewhere.

TO BE ENKINDLED AND TO ENLIGHTEN



The Emblem and the Coat of Arms of Cistercian Preparatory School is composed of symbols and words belonging to the spiritual heritage of the Hungarian Cistercians, founders of *Our Lady of Dallas Cistercian Abbey* and Cistercian Preparatory School.

The middle of the shield the seal contains a cross with the letters MORS in its four spokes, standing for Morimundus, the French abbey founded by Citeaux to which our mother abbey of Zirc traces its second foundation. Zirc was originally founded in 1182 by monks from Clairvaux (St. Bernard's abbey) when King Bela III of Hungary, turned to the holy abbot Petrus Monoculus of Clairvaux to send monks (and builders/architects) to establish a monastery on his lands. Zirc was destroyed by the Turks in 1550 and then later restored by the Prussian abbey of Heinrichau, which had been founded by Morimundus and therefore had MORS in its coat of arms.

In the center of the crest, a legendary bird illustrates vigilant watchfulness by standing on one foot and holding a rock with the other. These symbols express the Christian attitude toward life and death. They call us to constant readiness and alertness according to the teaching of Christ. "You must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Luke 12:40).

Besides the seal, the shield contains the French Lily (for the French origin of the Cistercian Order), the Lone Star of Texas (for the location of our monastery), and the Apostolic Cross given to the church in Hungary (for the location that founded ours).

The motto of the School, "Ardere et Lucere," is taken from a sermon of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the great twelfth-century Cistercian saint, abbot, theologian, and preacher. St. Bernard was the leader of the Western world for almost thirty years. In a sermon commemorating the feast of St. John the Baptist, St. Bernard writes: "Listen, brethren, to what the Lord says (John 5:35) about John the Baptist: 'He was a lamp, enkindled and shining.' For only to be enkindled (Ardere) is vain, only to shine (Lucere) is little, to be enkindled and to shine (Ardere et Lucere) is perfect."

This motto eminently applies to the field of education. As a candle is both enkindled and shines, so a man of learning should be enkindled with ideas, love, and enthusiasm in order to become a source of knowledge and inspiration for others. Knowledge and enthusiasm not shared is futile, outward brilliance without deep convictions is little, but to be aflame with ideas and to pass them on – to be enkindled and to enlighten – is perfection.

VALUES PROMOTED BY THE SCHOOL

By volunteering one becomes part of the Cistercian community and thus dedicates oneself to respect and promote the School's values and goals as they emanate from a rigorous academic mission rooted in monastic life. In striving towards its goals, the School is strengthened by the diversity of its students' individual talents and backgrounds.

In summary, Cistercian's values and goals include the following:

- The school draws its inspiration from the faith of the Church and, in particular, from the religious life of the monastery. As a Catholic school Cistercian embraces the doctrinal and moral teachings of the Roman Catholic faith.
- Following the tradition of Cistercian and Benedictine monasticism, the monks of the abbey live their vowed lives as a "school for the Lord's service," in which the service of God and of the Church is organically linked with the personal, intellectual, and spiritual growth of each individual.
- The Cistercian community is inclusive, supporting both its Catholic and non-Catholic members. It respects and holds in high esteem the cultural and ethnic diversity of its families and faculty, and sees itself enriched by this diversity.
- The School seeks to educate the whole person, and expects of its students a humble dedication and openness to continual growth in all areas – personal, intellectual, and spiritual.
- While learning is a highly individual process, it takes place in community and forms community. Learning is viewed as an opportunity for students to both better come to know themselves and to form a community through ties of knowledge, respect, solidarity, common work, and mutual love.
- In carrying out its task of education, the School seeks the active participation of the lay faculty and the parents. The School, for its part, strives to promote community at all levels – among students, faculty, and families.

Volunteer Training Requirements and Forms

First-time volunteers at Cistercian who will have “regular or unsupervised contact” with students must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Submit to a [criminal background check](#)
2. Submit an affidavit to attest that you have:
 - Watched the Dallas Diocese Safe Environment Videos
 - [Video 1 – “A Time to Protect God’s Children”](#) (28:30)
 - [Video 2 – “A Plan to Protect God’s Children”](#) (33:58)
 - Read this Cistercian Safe Environment Volunteer Handbook
3. Submit contact information for two personal references (non-immediate family).

All completed forms and references should be emailed directly to the Safe Environment Coordinator, Mr. Gerald Edwards, at gedwards@cistercian.org. Questions and concerns can be answered by him at 214-475-1494.

Previously-trained volunteers who will again have “regular or unsupervised contact” with students need to update their training on an annual basis. For the 2025-26 school year, one should:

1. Submit to a [criminal background check](#) (if the last one is over two years old).
2. Submit an [affidavit](#) to attest that you have:
 - Watched the Dallas Diocese Safe Environment Videos
 - [Video 1 – “A Time to Protect God’s Children”](#) (28:30)
 - [Video 2 – “A Plan to Protect God’s Children”](#) (33:58)
 - Re-read this Cistercian Safe Environment Volunteer Handbook.

All completed forms should be emailed directly to the Safe Environment Coordinator, Mr. Gerald Edwards, at gedwards@cistercian.org. Questions and concerns can be answered by him at 972-554-2330.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Community Health and Individual Safety

The health and safety of Cistercian students are the highest priority of the School. While there are many practical aspects (rules, regulations, security procedures and facilities, etc.) to maintaining a safe environment, the truest safeguard to the health (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) of the boys is the strength, health, and activity of the Cistercian community. While we often refer to the community of the students in a given Form, here we also intend to mean the community of parents within a given Form as well as the broader Cistercian community as a whole, including faculty, staff, parents, and alumni.

The Form Master System can be effective as a basic support structure but it is the dense network of care generated by the full community of teachers, coaches, students, parents, and staff that together truly looks after individual students. For example, the School Counselor works closely with the Headmaster and Form Masters, and is available to meet with students before school, after lunch, or at other possible free times during the school day. And the School Nurse interacts with multiple Form Masters, parents, and students on a daily basis and so, beyond medical expertise, also captures a broad view of the health of the community.

While the School always wants to maintain clear and consistent understanding of mission and priorities across the community, it views student health and safety as an area in which mission and community play a critical role. This is because the community network is capable of offering proper and timely support for students only when there is a consistent clarity of understanding of both mission and responsibility among its members, and because a warping of positive community values can create a situation which adversely affects the health of its members.

We strive so that the shared values and formative power within the School community ultimately develop out of an honest response to God, who calls each one of us to a life of virtue and holiness. However, our honest response to God's call for holiness and virtue is never perfect. Even in seeking a "good" we can slip into an unbalanced excess (e.g. we can slip into an extreme focus on grades, athletic success, social status, achievement for achievement's sake, etc.). Satisfying that excessive need will necessarily result elsewhere in a lack, weakening both the individual and the community. Such a warping of values can create undue pressures and anxieties that put students at risk.

Beyond the pressures created by a warping of positive values, there are the dangers created by the intensity of shared experience. It is tempting for young men to mistake shared activity for brotherhood, even if the activity (such as alcohol or drug use) is unhealthy. Since the very structure and cycle of our School Program both expects and engenders closeness among its members, the School community has a responsibility to see that this closeness is built on positive and healthy activity, lest the strength of community connection becomes a shared source of damage to its individuals.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Cistercian strives to create a safe environment for each student, protecting both his physical and emotional well-being. Child abuse is not tolerated. Child abuse means any form of intentional infliction of injury to the detriment of a child's physical, moral, or mental well-being.

The formal definitions of abuse and neglect are given below. The Texas Family Code (261.001) definitions state:

Abuse includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

1. Mental or emotional injury to a minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the minor's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
2. Causing or permitting the minor to be in a situation in which the minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the minor's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
3. Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the minor, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent or guardian that does not expose the minor to a substantial risk of harm;
4. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury that results in substantial harm to the minor;
5. Sexual conduct harmful to a minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare;
6. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a minor;
7. Compelling or encouraging the minor to engage in sexual conduct;
8. Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the minor if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the minor is obscene;
9. The current use by a person of a controlled substance in a manner or to the extent that the use results in physical, mental, or emotional injury to a minor; or,
10. Causing, expressly permitting, or encouraging a minor to use a controlled substance.
11. Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a sexual performance by a minor.

“Neglect” includes:

1. The leaving of a minor in a situation where the minor would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the minor, and the demonstration of an intent not to return by a parent or guardian of the minor;
2. The following acts or omissions by a person:
 - a. Placing the minor in or failing to remove a minor from a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the minor’s level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the minor;
 - b. Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a minor, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of the minor;
 - c. The failure to provide a minor with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the minor, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services had been offered and refused; or
 - d. Placing a minor in, or failing to remove the minor from, a situation in which the minor would be exposed to a substantial risk of sexual conduct harmful to the minor.
 - e. The failure by the person responsible for a minor’s care, custody, or welfare to permit the minor to return to the minor’s home without arranging for the necessary care for the minor after the minor has been absent from the home for any reason, including having been in residential placement or having run away.

Safe Environment Screening Policies

As part of creating a safe environment, Cistercian conducts criminal record checks on and requires training for all School employees. The School will also run criminal record checks and require training for all parents and volunteers who may have regular or unsupervised contact with Cistercian students at school-sponsored activities. For example, the School will routinely run criminal record checks on and require training of members of the Parents' Club Board and of all Form Mothers as well as of any volunteer who is working with Cistercian students in a school-sponsored or approved program, such as an on or off campus overnight outing or an athletic team organized from within the School community.

In some cases, it may be unclear whether a particular group or team qualifies as "School-sponsored" (perhaps because some members of a team attend schools besides Cistercian). Cistercian considers an event or team to be "school-sponsored" if the School can be considered a proximate cause for the group's existence or if the Cistercian community operated as the network within which the group originated. In such a case, the Headmaster or appropriate Division Head may require any and all parent leaders to go through the School's safe environment process.

In an effort to clarify those individuals for whom to run criminal record checks and require training, the faculty member, Parents' Club Board member or Form Mother who is in charge of organizing a particular event involving Cistercian students will create a list of volunteers who may be expected to have unsupervised or regular contact with students. The Safe Environment Coordinator will process the criminal record checks and enforce training requirements, as necessary. The results from all criminal record checks are kept strictly confidential.

As a matter of practice, volunteers will be scheduled to supervise two-deep. In the best-case scenario this means there are at least two adults present when supervising student activity. However, as long as there is more than one student present (i.e. an adult is not alone with a single student) then the situation meets the two-deep criterion. For example, at the end of an activity, a single supervisor should avoid being left alone with the last student to be picked up, by asking the second-to-last student to wait until the other student's ride arrives.

Clearly, faculty are not scheduled two-deep for the purposes of teaching or working with students, but employees strive to meet this expectation by avoiding being alone with students except in public spaces (with others in sight) or which have a level of public accountability (e.g. open doors and/or windows) and in cases of virtual tutoring, allowing parents and administrators access to online platforms as needed for accountability.

Behavioral Guidelines for Working with Youth

1. All faculty, staff, and volunteers will exercise vigilance in determining and in maintaining appropriate professional boundaries in dealing with students, and will observe the following guidelines (as well as those set forth later in this document regarding electronic communication) for dealing with students other than their immediate family (when appropriately applicable):
2. Do not speak to students in a manner that is derogatory or demeaning. This includes refraining from swearing or using foul language.
3. Do not provide students with alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, or anything that is prohibited by law.
4. Touching should be age-appropriate and based on the need of the student and not on the need of the adult. Avoid physical contact when alone with a student. If a student initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper.
5. Do not engage in the physical discipline of a student. Discipline problems should be handled in coordination with administrators and/or the parents of the student. Corporal punishment is never acceptable.
6. Do not be alone with a student in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate to an educational relationship.
7. Do not take an overnight trip alone with a student who is not a member of your immediate family.
8. Do not sleep in the same hotel room with a student. If adult supervisors stay in a dorm room or other sleeping room with a group of students, the two supervisors should sleep in their own beds using a roll-away or cot if necessary.
9. Topics of conversation, humor, vocabulary, recordings, films, games, or the use of computer software or any other form of personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents should not be employed with students. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never appropriate. School personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually explicit or morally inappropriate materials on School property or at School events, or in the presence of students. Such material includes, but is not limited to: magazines, videos, films, recordings, computer software, computer games, or printed materials.
10. Do not administer medication of any kind without written parent authorization.
11. If you recognize inappropriate personal or physical attraction developing between yourself and a student, maintain clear professional boundaries between yourself and the student, or refer the minor to another adult supervisor. Inform the Headmaster.
12. If one-on-one counseling of a student should be necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments. Schedule meetings at times and use locations that create accountability. Limit both the length and the number of sessions, and make appropriate referrals. Notify parents of the meetings.

13. Do not give students keys to School facilities.
14. Do not drive a school bus or mini-bus unless you have received prior authorization and have the appropriate license and/or certification.
15. Do not permit students to cross a road by themselves while they are in your custodial care.
16. Do not take photographs of students while they are unclothed or dressing (e.g., in a locker room or bathing facility).
17. If you observe anyone (adult or student) abusing a student, take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and to provide a safe environment for the student. Report the misconduct.
18. All electronic communication (via email, phone, text, or social networking site, etc.) should conform to the highest professional standards.
19. Have adequate number of screened and trained adults present at events. The number of screened and trained adults in supervision should increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.
20. Monitor facilities during church services and during all school or other activities.
21. Have students use a “buddy system” whenever they go on trips away from School property.
22. Teen aides may not supervise other students without screened and trained adults present.
23. “Supervision” is considered to extend to periods before and after an event, break or period, including when minors are waiting for transportation outside the approved school entrance.

Safety within Student Activities

Many student activities involve ancillary working environments which call for reminders to all concerned about the need for vigilance regarding student safety. There are the safety issues that come with construction and the use of tools – such as in a student council homecoming project, a community service work project, the building a robot, etc. There are the extra safety issues related to travel (in-town, overnight, or abroad) for events like quiz bowl competitions, math contests, mock trial, service trips, etc. And, beyond these areas of concern, there are established safe-environment requirements for two-deep supervision for student activities. From publications to drama productions, all activities carry the potential for multiple interactions between students of differing Form levels, between parent chaperones and students, between students and sponsors. It is incumbent on all concerned (sponsors, parent-chaperones, and students) to be vigilant about areas of required supervision, whether that is in the safe use of tools, of student interactions, in regards to two-deep expectations so that no adult is left alone with a single student, or even supervision in the protection of school facilities.

Water-Related Activities

Cistercian has a long-standing tradition of students gathering together for pool parties or water-related activities, such as the beginning and end-of-year Form Parties and as a finale to summer football practice sessions. However, for safety reasons, the School will not typically hold official Form events involving water activities at private homes. If a water-related event is to be held as a Form activity, then it should occur at a public or club pool with its own trained and certified lifeguards on duty.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation for School Events

The School will provide or arrange for the safe transportation of students to all school-sponsored events. Such events include athletic practices and games, class outings, both day and overnight extracurricular trips, and other officially approved activities. In the case of activities outside the normal program, the students involved in the activity will typically share the transportation costs. Private automobiles driven by staff, parents, or students may sometimes be the most efficient choice of transportation for either regular or extracurricular events. Such transportation is typically a voluntary service for the good of the boys and for the sake of the activity. The School will not allow students to be transported to or from any School event by a ridesharing service (Uber, Lyft, etc.) without the accompaniment of a parent.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Mobile phone use in School parking lots is prohibited unless in a parked car. Parents may drop students off in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon in front of school. Parents should wait for their sons in the parking lot in front of school, not in the hallways outside the classrooms. The School may reroute traffic patterns and pick-up or drop off locations as needed for safety. Buses drop off students at the front steps of the School but typically depart from upper parking lots in the back of the School.

Use of Private Automobiles for School-Sponsored Events

The following guidelines are to be observed when private automobiles are used to transport students to and from School-sponsored events:

1. The use of private automobiles for transportation to school-sponsored events must be approved by the Headmaster. Transportation of students in private vehicles must conform to state laws regarding the number of passengers and seat belts. In addition, passengers should follow any safety recommendations with regard to age or size of passengers near air bags.

2. In case of an accident, the personal liability insurance coverage of the driver of the automobile is considered by the School to be the primary insurance.
3. If parents are asked to transport students during a class outing or other event, the Form Master or sponsoring teacher should inform all the parents of the transportation arrangements in the memo sent to the parents about the outing. Parents driving should be informed of the School's transportation policy.
4. Students with driving privilege may choose to drive themselves from school to an event if they will be going home after the event, not returning to school, and if they have the permission of their coach, Form Master, or activity sponsor.
5. Students may not leave campus for a school-sponsored activity as passengers of another student without the written approval of both the rider's and the driver's parents. Only students in Forms VII and VIII will be given permission to drive other students to school-sponsored events.
6. If students leave from their homes for a school-sponsored event, they do not need written permission to drive or be driven by another student. For example, on a Saturday, a student might drive himself and other students from their homes to a cross-country meet. Similarly, a student might drive himself and others to swim practice before school and then afterwards on to school.

Extracurricular Outing and Trip Policy

While not essential aspects of a Cistercian education, many extracurricular opportunities for academics, athletics, and personal enrichment are natural outgrowths of the Cistercian curriculum. These opportunities may entail local travel, travel within the United States, or travel abroad. As students reach the proper levels of academic and personal maturity, a chance for them to travel abroad to study language, art, or history or even to perform community service can add new dimensions and excitement to the students' classroom education. Academic enrichment through extracurricular competition may similarly enhance classroom learning. Athletic camps during the off-season can be a source of improved skill and team unity.

The School does not necessarily provide regular opportunities for such activities. Rather, the Headmaster approves the initiative of the faculty, coaching staff, and Form Masters to organize an extracurricular outing for their students. The faculty, staff, and Form Masters may employ outside agencies to help arrange for the travel, accommodations, or activities during the trip. Even so, all outings and trips organized by Cistercian faculty and promoted within the Cistercian community are considered official Cistercian activities. Thus, while on these trips, students are bound by the same code of conduct and discipline as when on campus or at any official Cistercian function. The Cistercian faculty members charged with the organization and supervision of the students during a trip have the responsibility and authority to administer any and all appropriate disciplinary measures. Sponsors may add special rules applicable to a particular outing. Sponsors may set special conditions for participation in an outing or trip, such as a minimum academic or conduct grade, or other criteria. The School may withdraw students from participation in an outing or extracurricular trip before the event for serious

misconduct or for academic reasons. Moneys already paid may be forfeited. In serious cases arising during a trip the supervisors may elect to send a student home at his parents' expense.

Cistercian's basic assumption is that the parents entrust their sons to the School for the activities and events that are part of the regular school program during the nine months of the school year. As part of their contract, parents sign a general release allowing their sons to participate in extracurricular day and overnight outings that are part of the regular program, such as trips to a museum, class outings, and overnight outings for retreats or athletics, Quiz Bowl or math contests, etc. No special parental release is necessary for such events during the school year.

Parents have not signed a release for activities during the summer. When a teacher wishes to organize an outing or trip during the summer, he or she must seek the permission of the Headmaster, arrange for transportation, and inform the parents in an appropriate manner. Special releases must be obtained for extracurricular activities offered during the summer.

Firearms and Weapons

No weapon of any kind may be brought onto the School campus or to a School-sponsored event. This prohibition includes but is not limited to any firearm, whether operable or not, paintball guns, and realistic looking toy replica guns. It also includes any sort of knife (except for tools used on official School projects). An exception to this rule may be granted only by the Headmaster.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

General Policy Statement

While employees and volunteers are expected to model for the students the highest standards of behavior in the respect, use and care of **all** School facilities, *special care* should be given to the appropriate use of Technological Assets (computers and computer network, internet access, copiers, projectors, phone/voicemail/email systems, School mobile phones, School social media websites, etc.) because of the shared nature and expense of these Assets but *especially because of the personal and professional dangers associated with inappropriate use*. Employees and volunteers are responsible for the use of all Technological Assets in an effective, ethical and lawful manner.

Specific Prohibitions against Inappropriate Use

While these Technological Assets are intended for authorized, educational purposes and to assist employees in the performance of their duties, incidental and occasional personal use of Technological Assets is permitted. However, these Assets are not to be used in any way that may be immoral, illegal, unethical, disruptive, in violation of School policies and guidelines, invidious to others, or harmful to morale. School Assets are not to be used for conducting or promoting outside business, defaming the character of any individual or institution, causing embarrassment to the School or its constituents or divulging any personal information about children that would jeopardize their safety or well-being in any way. Items specifically prohibited include sexually explicit materials or those which contain threats of violence or defamatory comments that inappropriately address a person's age, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability or those which harass another person. Accessing, downloading, possessing or transmitting Child Pornography is absolutely prohibited. All employees are obligated by law to notify the authorities of a violation of the Child Pornography laws. The School will not tolerate employees or volunteers posting obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory, or otherwise potentially scandalous comments, links and/or images which reflect discredit or cause embarrassment to the School or its constituents. Any activity via Social Media or other Electronic Communication that contains any of the above and/or reflects negatively on the School or its constituents is prohibited.

Unless expressly authorized to do so, an employee or volunteer is prohibited from reproducing, copying, sending, transmitting, posting, or otherwise distributing proprietary information, data, or other information understood to be held in confidence by the School, its employees or its students. This specifically includes personal information regarding students or School personnel which an employee or volunteer learns in the course of their official work but have not received specific permission from the subject of the information to disclose using a specific online forum. For example, it is a violation of this policy to post to a School (or personal) media site information regarding the medical condition of a student, or of a student's family member, unless the family has specifically authorized sharing of the information on the site or through other media. This includes information sent out via School email accounts or texted via School mobile phones.

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from retrieving or reading any e-mail or voice mail not addressed or directed to them without proper authorization. Employees are responsible for complying with copyright law and applicable licenses that may apply to software, files, graphics, documents, messages, and other electronic material. Employees and volunteers may not download, store, copy or reproduce material protected under copyright law or make that material available to others for copying. Faculty members are asked not to install software on network computers or change a computer's configuration without the network administrator's prior approval. Employees and volunteers may not agree to a license or download any material for which a registration or user fee is charged without obtaining the express permission of the appropriate administrative superiors and Network Administrator. All problems with computers should be referred to the network administrator.

Personal Social Media Activity

The School recognizes that personnel and volunteers may create personal websites as mediums of self-expression and for connecting to friends and family. The School does not in general prohibit employees and volunteers from having or using social networking sites. When participating on social media, School personnel should use sound judgment and common sense. Employees and volunteers must recognize that anything published on a personal website is no different from making such information available in any public forum.

School personnel and volunteers should use discretion when posting about sensitive topics and events. Care should always be taken in accepting or adding ‘friends’ on personal social media accounts. School personnel should be sensitive to activity and engagement on social media, as many social media networks share “Likes”, comments, and other actions with friends and followers. It is particularly important to be honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if a mistake is made, to correct it quickly and publicly. The Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. School personnel should never post any information or rumors that they know to be false, especially regarding students, other School personnel, or the Abbey.

School personnel and volunteers should be sensitive to being clear about the intended audiences for social media conversations on personal social media accounts. Conversations containing personal views intended for a specific limited audience should not be misinterpreted as a representative viewpoint of a larger institution. To prevent this type of confusion, it is important to cultivate relationships online in a way that professional and personal boundaries are clear. School personnel and volunteers should avoid conducting outside businesses through personal social media accounts or websites in a way that implies sponsorship or endorsement of the business by the School. Personnel and volunteers should not use School trademarks or logos in any way that could reasonably suggest official School sponsorship or endorsement of an activity or posting unless they are specifically authorized to do so. Any information that causes or has the potential to cause embarrassment to the School or its constituents should be avoided.

Guidelines for Electronic Communication with Youth

As an aid in maintaining professional boundaries, employees and volunteers of Cistercian Prep School should use the following guidelines when communicating with youth via technological assets (Internet, Social Media, Mobile Phones, etc.), whether those technological assets are personal or professional:

1. The primary purpose of electronic communication with students shall be for providing information related to an official School activity or event and not for socializing or other personal interaction. School personnel should always be considerate of boundaries and ensure they are observed, particularly in communications with young people and with use of social media in a school setting.
2. As a general rule, neither personal nor official School social media accounts or mobile devices should be used to contact or to respond to individual students. If students contact particular adults engaged in an activity, the official School network account should be used to reply by sending a group message when the personal contact was for information relevant to all in the group. When the contact is such that a group response is not appropriate, the adult is to avoid using a personal, social media account or mobile device to respond, and in any case, should have a copy also sent to a School Administrator (Division Head, Department Head, Form Master, as appropriate). In those unusual cases where social media is used to respond, adults should maintain copies of all such messages.
3. Counseling of children through social media (social networks, email, texting, messaging, etc.) is not permitted. Beyond issues of counseling, general chatting or online conversation via email, texting, messaging apps, etc. is not permitted, whether with individuals or with groups of students. Academic discussions can also be problematic. For example, a student might use email or other social media to register a complaint about a classroom issue (e.g. the perceived difficulty of an assignment or exam, or the “unfairness” of a grading schema). Especially in such cases, the teacher is advised to limit the electronic response to a business-like message of receipt, in combination with an offer to discuss such issues in person. Such a response should copy an administrator.
4. Private channels and private communication create an environment that puts both children and adults at risk. Therefore, no private sites (e.g., private Facebook groups or invite-only YouTube channels) are acceptable as channels for communication between School personnel and youth who are connected in any way to School related activities. When using Social Networking sites, adults should not initiate “friend requests” with students, of any age. School personnel may accept “friend” requests from students, as appropriate for the official activity in which they are involved but, again, they may not use social media for conversations with individual students.
5. If Social Media is to be used as an official medium for news about an official Activity, parents must be notified in advance of the methods of communication which will be used, and must be granted access to such communications. Social Media/Networks may not be used to communicate with students in Middle School. School student email accounts may be used.
6. Use of Smartphone and tablet instant-messaging apps (Snapchat, WhatsApp, Kik, etc.) and “anonymous” apps (YikYak, Whisper, etc.) are forbidden for use as official communication tools due to the lack of accountability and lack of ability to retain records of communications on these apps. This policy also prohibits the use of any such apps for communications between any School personnel and any student connected to any School-related activity.
7. When children form their own Social Media groups, adults should not join these groups.
8. Acceptable hours for communication with students via electronic methods shall be between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Communication outside of the acceptable hours should be reserved for emergency situations or to communicate time sensitive information related to the official activity.
9. Employees are reminded of their duty to report (to the appropriate individuals) any information which regards the health and safety of a student.