

THE dePAUL SCHOOL

Family & Student Handbook

2026–2027

Respect • Teach • Challenge • Inspire

Revised July 2026

Annmarie McEwan - Executive Director / Head of School

Melissa Zeman- Principal

Quick Reference

Keep this page handy for the information families use most often.

Main Office	727-796-7679
Attendance / General Email	admin@thedepaulschool.org
Website	www.thedepaulschool.org
Business Hours	7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Monday–Friday
Student Drop-Off	7:40–8:00 a.m.
Classes Begin	8:00 a.m.
Lower School Dismissal	2:50 p.m.
Middle School Dismissal	3:00 p.m.
After-School Care	Contact admin@thedepaulschool.org

Campus Locations

Middle School (Delta) / Business Office	2747 Sunset Point Road Clearwater, FL 33759
Lower School (Traditional)	2176 Marilyn Street Clearwater, FL 33759

Who to Contact

Academic questions or classroom concerns	Your child's teacher(s)
Attendance, dismissal, or general questions	Main office admin@thedepaulschool.org Text or call 727-796-7679
Billing or tuition questions	Business office Business@thedepaulschool.org
Student support or behavioral concerns	Teacher or school administration
Urgent health or safety concern	Main office admin@thedepaulschool.org Text or call 727-796-7679

Family Essentials at a Glance

The most important daily expectations for a successful school year.

- Arrive on time. Students should be in class and ready to learn by 8:00 a.m.
- Report each absence by 8:00 a.m. by emailing admin@thedepaulschool.org.
- Read school and FACTS communications regularly and keep contact information current.
- Label lunch boxes, water bottles, uniforms, jackets, and other belongings.
- Keep student cell phones and personal devices off and turned into the homeroom teacher during the school day unless authorized.
- Communicate concerns early and begin with the staff member closest to the situation.
- Support regular attendance, homework routines, and school expectations at home.
- Use respectful, solution-focused communication with students, families, and staff.
- Follow arrival and dismissal procedures to protect student safety and keep carline moving.
- Remember that families and school personnel are one team working toward each student's success.

Important: Policies may be revised when necessary to support student safety, legal compliance, or effective school operations. Families will be notified of substantive changes.

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1. Welcome to The dePaul School

We are honored that you have chosen to partner with us in your child's educational journey.

Since 1960, The dePaul School has been dedicated to helping students with dyslexia and related language-based learning differences discover their strengths, build confidence, and achieve academic and personal success. For more than six decades, our specialized instructional model has empowered students to become capable, confident learners prepared for success in school and in life.

At dePaul, we believe every child deserves an educational environment designed around how they learn best. Through evidence-based instruction, individualized support, and meaningful relationships, we help students unlock their potential while developing the confidence, resilience, and independence that extend far beyond the classroom.

We are grateful for the trust you place in us and look forward to partnering with your family as we help your child grow academically, socially, and personally.

Our Mission

The dePaul School is a specialized independent school dedicated to the education of children with dyslexia and related language-based learning differences, with the primary goal of enabling these students to achieve academic and personal success.

Our Vision

To be the premier independent school for students with dyslexia and language-based learning differences, recognized for transforming lives through exceptional education, innovation, and a community where every student is empowered to thrive.

Our Core Values

Respect
Teach
Challenge
Inspire

Our Culture

Every child is known.
Relationships come first.
We build confidence.
We are one team.

Who We Serve

The dePaul School serves students whose primary educational needs are related to dyslexia and other language-based learning differences.

Our students are bright, capable learners who benefit from structured literacy instruction, multisensory teaching methods, small class sizes, and individualized support. Many have experienced frustration in traditional educational settings before discovering that they simply learn differently—not less.

Because every learner's journey is unique, progress occurs at different rates. While we cannot guarantee specific outcomes or timelines, we are committed to helping every student make meaningful academic, social, and personal growth through evidence-based instruction tailored to their needs.

Our Educational Philosophy

At dePaul, we believe students learn best when they feel safe, respected, challenged, and supported.

Our instructional approach combines structured literacy, multisensory teaching, explicit instruction, and ongoing progress monitoring to help students develop strong academic foundations while building confidence and independence.

Equally important, we intentionally cultivate character. Respect, responsibility, perseverance, integrity, empathy, and self-advocacy are woven into daily life because these qualities are essential for success in school, relationships, and future careers.

We maintain high expectations while providing the support students need to meet them. We celebrate effort, growth, resilience, and progress as much as achievement.

The Home-School Partnership

Student success is the strongest when families and educators work together.

At dePaul, we view parents and caregivers as valued partners in each child's education. Open communication, mutual trust, and shared expectations create the consistency students need to flourish.

We ask every family to:

- Support dePaul's mission, values, and educational philosophy.
- Foster respect, responsibility, and kindness at home.
- Communicate openly with school personnel.
- Reinforce school expectations and policies.
- Partner with us in celebrating successes and addressing challenges.

The policies outlined in this handbook are designed to promote a safe, respectful, and productive learning community where every student can thrive.

Together, we help students build confidence, knowledge, and resilience to achieve lasting success.

2. About dePaul

School Governance

The dePaul School is a non-profit, private school governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board oversees policies and financial stability.

Programs

Lower School (Traditional): students in kindergarten-fourth grade. Students are taught in small class sizes allowing for differentiation and support. This program focuses on building a foundation in phonics, reading comprehension, writing, math, science and social studies. Our students will attend PE and recess daily, art twice a week, and ASL and drama once a week. Our teachers provide direct, multisensory instruction in a systematic sequence which allows our students with language-based learning differences to be successful.

Middle School (Delta): designed for fifth-eighth grade students who are ready for the challenge of a middle school curriculum but need additional support and a highly structured environment to be successful. Students in the Middle School Program have Structured Literacy, Math, Reading, Science, Social Studies, Writing, Technology, and PE daily. Art, ASL, and Drama classes are held once a week. Small class sizes allow for differentiation and support. All classes are structured, teacher-directed, appropriately paced, and designed for students who are not meeting their academic potential due to learning differences and / or attention deficits.

Summer School: provides direct, explicit instruction. Each student receives instruction in Orton-Gillingham based linguistics curriculum, as well as other subjects as appropriate for the enrolled students.

Tutoring: an opportunity for direct 1:1 support from a dePaul trained and vetted educator.

Admissions

The dePaul School is intentionally designed for students whose primary educational needs are related to dyslexia and other language-based learning differences. Our specialized instructional model is not intended to meet the needs of every learner. Admission decisions are based on whether dePaul is the appropriate educational fit for each student and whether the school can provide the services and support necessary for the student to thrive.

Applicants are typically asked to provide current educational, psychological, or diagnostic evaluations documenting dyslexia and/or language-based learning differences. When additional information is needed, dePaul may request additional evaluations, admissions assessments, or school records to gain a comprehensive understanding of the student's learning profile.

In some cases, students with a significant family history of dyslexia or language-based learning differences may be considered for admission following an evaluation by dePaul staff.

Our admissions process is designed to ensure that each student accepted into the program has a strong opportunity to succeed within dePaul's specialized educational environment and that the school can effectively meet the student's academic, social, and emotional needs.

The dePaul School admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The dePaul school does not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, or athletic and other school administered programs.

3. School Life

A consistent daily routine helps students feel safe, confident, and ready to learn. The information in this section outlines our daily procedures and expectations to ensure an organized, efficient, and positive experience for students and families.

We appreciate your partnership in following these procedures, as they help maximize instructional time and maintain a safe campus for everyone.

School Hours:

Activity	Time
Campus Opens	7:40 a.m.
Student Arrival	7:40–8:00 a.m.
Instruction Begins	8:00 a.m.
Lower School Dismissal	2:50 p.m.
Middle School Dismissal	3:00 p.m.
Business Office Hours	7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

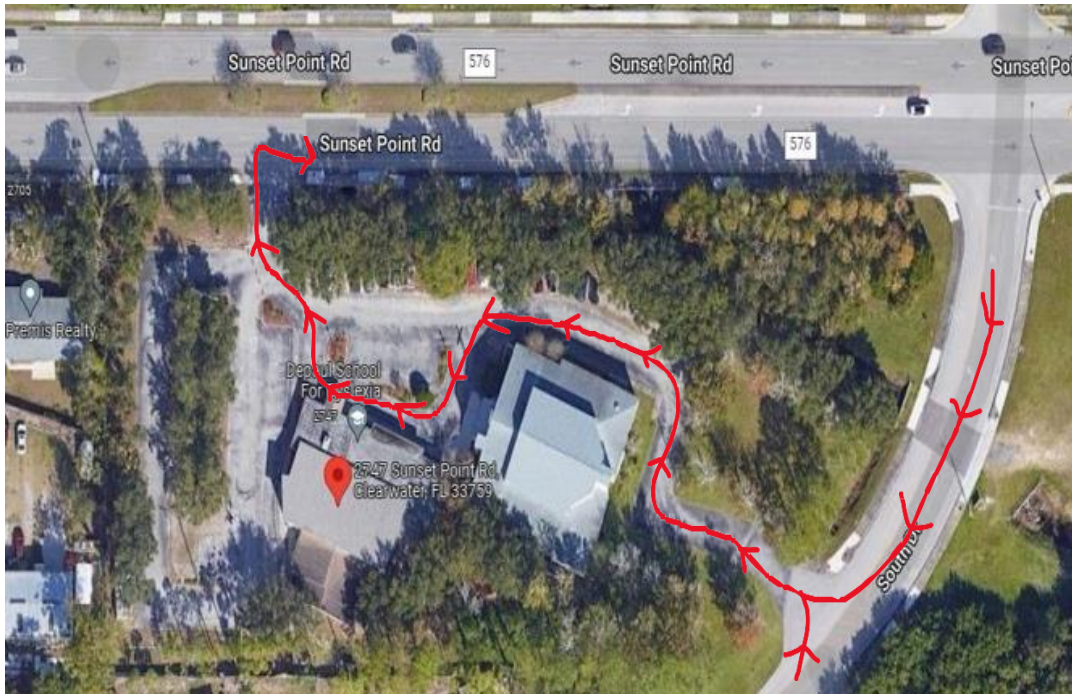
Students should arrive early enough to be in their classrooms and ready to learn by **8:00 a.m.**

Arrival:

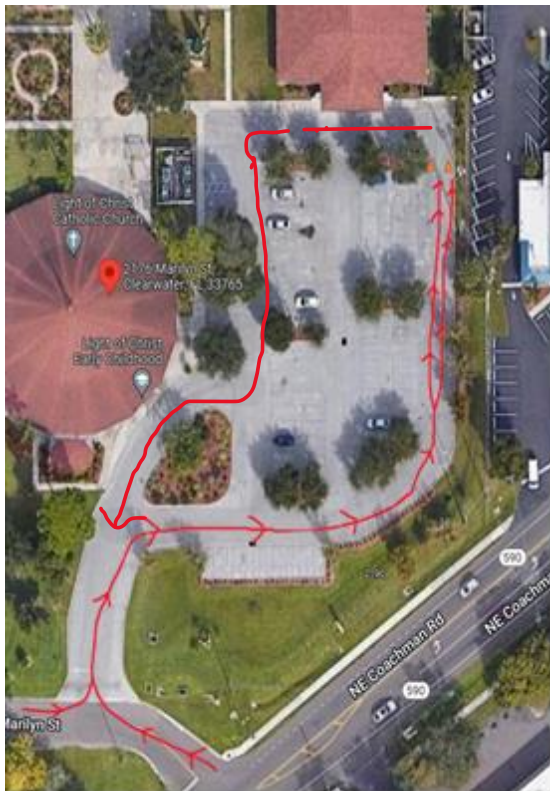
To ensure student safety and maintain efficient traffic flow, all families are expected to follow established arrival procedures.

- Arrival begins at **7:40 a.m.**
- Students should remain in their vehicle until greeted by a staff member.
- For safety reasons, drivers should remain in the designated carline and should not pass other vehicles.
- Please wait until your child has safely reached the sidewalk before pulling away.
- Students arriving after **8:00 a.m.** must be signed in through the front office by an adult.

Middle School (Delta 5th-8th Grade) Program on Sunset Point Rd:



Lower School (Traditional K-4th Grade) Program on Marilyn St:



Dismissal:

- Student safety is our highest priority during dismissal.
- Students are dismissed directly to authorized adults listed in FACTS.
- If someone other than an authorized contact will be picking up your child, please notify the office before dismissal.
- Students will only be released to individuals approved through FACTS unless other arrangements have been confirmed by the school.

Carline Procedures:

- Follow staff directions at all times.
- Remain in the designated pickup lane.
- Do not pass other vehicles.
- Have your pickup information ready if requested.
- Notify the office if you anticipate arriving late.
- Parents arriving after carline has closed should park and sign their child out through the front office.

Late Pickup:

Carline closes at

- 3:00 p.m. – Lower School
- 3:10 p.m. – Middle School
- Students not picked up by the close of carline will wait safely in the school office.

Late pickup fees are assessed as follows:

- \$5 after carline closes
- Additional \$5 for every five-minute increment thereafter

Carpools are welcome and appreciated.

Families are responsible for communicating transportation changes directly with one another. Whenever a student will be riding home with another family, the school must receive written permission from both families before dismissal.

Early Sign Out Procedure:

- If your child needs to leave school before the end of the day:
- Notify the school in advance whenever possible.
- An authorized adult must sign the student out through the front office.
- Students will only be released to approved contacts.

Attendance:

Due to the sequential and highly specialized nature of dePaul's instructional program, regular attendance is especially important. Missed instruction can be difficult to replicate outside of the classroom and may impact a student's academic progress.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to student success. Consistent participation in classroom instruction helps students build confidence, maintain academic progress, and fully benefit from dePaul's specialized instructional program.

The school recognizes that illnesses and unexpected circumstances occur. When attendance concerns arise, our priority is to partner with families to identify barriers and support regular attendance.

To maximize instructional time, families are encouraged to schedule vacations, appointments, and other planned absences during school breaks or outside of school hours whenever possible.

If your child will be absent, please notify the school by **8:00 a.m.** each day of the absence by emailing admin@thedepaulschool.org.

Instructional Hours: The dePaul School provides **1,082 net instructional hours** each school year for all grade levels.

Attendance requirements are established by **Florida law** (including Sections 1003.21, 1003.24, and 1003.27, Florida Statutes) and by the requirements of applicable state scholarship programs. As a participating school, dePaul is required to maintain attendance records and report excessive absences, tardiness, and early dismissals as required by law.

Students who are not present in their homeroom by **8:00 a.m.** will be recorded as tardy.

Under Florida law, students who accumulate more than five unexcused absences, tardies, or early dismissals within a calendar month, or more than ten within a 90-day period, may be subject to the procedures outlined in Florida Statutes.

Additionally, unless acceptable documentation is provided, a combination of absences (excused or unexcused), tardiness, and early dismissals totaling 30 hours (5 school days) within one marking period or 60 hours (10 school days) within two marking periods may constitute a pattern of nonattendance as defined by Florida Statute 1003.24(4).

Florida law requires parents and guardians of children between the ages of six and sixteen to ensure regular school attendance. If a student's attendance significantly interferes with academic progress and it is determined that the absences or tardiness are unauthorized, the school is required to follow the procedures established by Florida law.

Make-Up Work:

Students must reach out to teachers to gather any make up work. Teachers will help them successfully return to classroom instruction following an absence. For extended absences, teachers may provide assignments that can reasonably be completed at home based on the student's instructional needs. Students are expected to complete missed work within the timeframe established by their teacher.

Sick Child Policy:

Sick children must be picked up immediately when alerted by the school. We do not have a clinic to make your child comfortable as they wait to be picked up.

To protect the health of all students while they are in school, a student who is out sick must be free of the following symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school fever (without fever reducing medication), runny nose, excessive coughing, headache, unexplained rashes, nausea, vomiting, sore throat, chills, earache, red eyes, or diarrhea. If a student is not in school due to illness the school must be notified by phone or e-mail by 8 am.

Administration of Medication:

If a student takes medication during school hours, that medication must be brought to the office. A yellow card (over-the-counter medication) or blue card (prescription medication) must accompany the medication and be on file in the office. A separate card must be completed for every prescription medication. Medication cards may be obtained from the office. Whenever possible, administer medication at home before the student comes to school.

No prescription medication is given to a student unless the medication is in the original prescription bottle and a clinic card is populated and on file. All release forms must be dated and must show a starting and ending date for the administration of any medications, whether prescription or non-prescription. **MEDICATION MUST BE IN IT'S ORIGINAL CONTAINER.**

Students whose parents gave permission in FACTS to administer Tylenol to their child, will be given the dose suggested by the box by a staff member. A clinic card must also be populated and on file in the office.

Birthday Celebrations:

Student birthdays are recognized during lunchtime or at the end of the day. Students may distribute individual treats to classmates. Do not send in full cakes or treats that would have to be cut and portioned out by an adult. If your child has a celebration and wishes to invite fellow students, the invitations may not be distributed at school. Please contact students and parents directly.

Out-of-school Fundraising:

dePaul is a non-profit organization and partners with other non-profit organizations periodically as approved by administrators. We dissuade families from fundraising for non-dePaul related programs at school.

Lunch:

Students bring their own lunches. Please label all lunch boxes and containers with your child's name. If lunch requires eating utensils (fork, spoon etc.), make sure you include it. For safety reasons, no glass containers are allowed. Please pack a healthy lunch. No sugary dessert foods, such as cookies, cakes, candy, marshmallow treats, sugar coated cereal, etc. No sodas, caffeine, or high-energy drinks are allowed. Students may bring sports or fruit-flavored drinks, milk, fruit juice, water, or flavored water for lunch. For Recess, P.E. and daily use, only plain water is acceptable.

Recess/ Snack Time:

Students may bring a healthy snack and plain water. Please do not pack a snack that requires a utensil.

Physical Education (P.E.):

P.E. is taught every day. Students are expected to participate in all sports according to their ability and support their teams. A note from parents and/or physician is required for student to be excused from

P.E. All students must bring water to P.E. daily. Students will be allowed to take water breaks and fill up their water bottles as needed.

Middle School (Delta) students - plain solid colored t-shirts **must** be worn for P.E. daily.

Uniform Policy:

Our uniform supports a focused learning environment, promotes school pride, and minimizes distractions.

Uniforms can be obtained by accessing our school page at Metro School Uniforms.

<https://metroschooluniforms.com/collections/the-depaul-school-k-8-clearwater-fl>

For the 2026-27 school year we are transitioning to our new logo and school colors. These turquoise **dePaul logo** shirts may be worn and students will be able to wear the prior dePaul logo red or blue short or long-sleeved performance polo shirts with **dePaul logo**, khaki straight shorts, pants, and skorts. Bottoms must be mid-thigh length and do not need to have the dePaul logo. Students may layer long sleeved white, gray, or black shirts or leggings underneath their approved uniforms on cool weather days.

Sweatshirts and jackets without the dePaul logo are not permitted inside the school. When the weather requires a jacket, students are permitted to wear non-logo sweatshirts and jackets to and from school and while at recess. They are not permitted in the classrooms.

dePaul School spirit shirts may be worn with uniform bottoms on Fridays.

Middle school ONLY - Solid colored short sleeved t-shirts are required for physical education class each day.

Students must wear sneakers. No lights or wheels are allowed on sneakers. If the shoes have holes for laces, shoelaces must be in place and tied.

If students enter the school improperly dressed, (out of uniform, incomplete uniform, dirty or torn uniform, etc.), a uniform alert will be sent home via email or FACTS and a parent may be contacted to provide an appropriate uniform for the day.

Dress Code (dress down day/ tag day):

- All shirts and blouses must cover midriff, back, sides and all undergarments including bra straps at all times. All shirts, tops, and dresses shall have sleeves and cover the shoulders.
- Shorts, capris, skirts, divided skirts, dresses and culottes are allowed. They must be mid-thigh length or longer. Pants and shorts may not contain rips, shreds, holes, or any other distressed look.
- Pants or shorts must totally cover undergarments, including boxer shorts.
- All clothing shall be free of the following; profanity, violent images, sexually suggestive phrases or images, gang related symbols, alcohol, tobacco, drugs or advertisement for such products
- Sneakers must be worn always. Inappropriate footwear includes but is not limited to sneakers with wheels or lights, skate shoes, crocs, sandals.
- Form fitting leggings, leotard/spandex type shorts are *not allowed* to be worn as bottoms unless worn under a skirt or dress.
- See through or mesh fabric clothing may only be worn over clothing meeting requirements.
- Clothing must be appropriate size, with the waist of the garment worn at the student's waist and properly buttoned, zipped and/or fastened.
- Sunglasses may not be worn inside unless a parent provides a doctor's note.

- Bandanas or sweatbands are not allowed on school grounds
- Hats or other head coverings may be worn during outside P.E. activities, and outdoor field trips as needed. Head coverings may not be worn inside the school unless for religious purposes.
- Administration reserves the right to deem clothing or shoes unacceptable.

Hair must be worn so that it is neat and not a distraction to other students. Hair must be kept off the face during school hours. No extreme styles or dyes are allowed. Administration reserves the right to deem hairstyles unacceptable.

Cell phone & Smartwatch:

Please see the **Technology & Digital Citizenship** section for the complete policy regarding student electronic devices.

Visits:

Alumni - Our current students love seeing former classmates! Once your child graduates dePaul, they may visit during lunch time, or afterschool. Students who visit must sign into the office and everyone under 18 must be accompanied by an adult during their entire visit to dePaul. A dePaul employee must escort all visitors.

Family/ friends – No visitors are permitted to walk around the school without an employee escort unless approved by administration, the person has signed in and is level 2 certified by the state of Florida.

Items not Acceptable in School:

Items causing distractions and/or safety hazards are not permitted at school.

Extreme fads (coloring, haircuts, make-up), jewelry, and items causing distraction are not acceptable. Some items may be a safety hazard during recess and P.E. such as necklaces, dangling earrings, etc. Items that are dangerous to students or fellow students will be confiscated immediately. Repeated infractions will result in permanent removal of items. School administration reserves the right to determine what constitutes a distraction and/or safety hazard.

4. Academics

Supporting Learning at Home:

In the Lower School (Traditional) Program reading and math homework are assigned Monday through Thursday during the school year. The student is to complete math homework independently. Parental responsibility is to provide a consistent time and place for the student to complete their assigned work. If the student does not understand a problem, the child is to circle the problem and have the parent initial it to let us know the student attempted the work. If the student works the problem incorrectly, we ask that the parent does not correct it, as the teachers need to know in what areas the student is having difficulty. Parents may write a note or email to the teacher if the student is struggling with the assigned homework.

In the **Middle School** (Delta) Program homework is assigned according to subject and teacher. Students are responsible to complete and turn in their homework and assignments as required.

Repeated missed assignments will result in a call or e-mail from the teacher or request for a parent-teacher conference.

Measuring Student Growth:

Students will be given a beginning and end of year assessment to track their growth in reading and math. The first test is given within the first few weeks of school and the second is given in early May. The results of each test will be sent home for review. Teachers use the data collected from these tests along with other in-class assessments and observations to direct their instruction. They will also be given progress monitoring assessments to track individual skills in math and reading 3 times a year. The results of these tests will be shared with guardians and discussed during teacher conferences.

Report Cards can be viewed on FACTS. Parents will be notified by e-mail when Progress Report Cards are posted. Stay informed about your child's progress throughout the year by checking your students/FACTS account and communicating with teachers through e-mail and/or scheduled conferences. Parents and teachers can request conferences at any time throughout the year.

Partnering Through Conferences:

A minimum of 1 day a year is designated as parent/ teacher conference days. However, the staff is available for parent conferences throughout the school year. Parents may reach out to the teachers directly via email at any time.

Student Placement:

Academic class placement is based on the ability of students to perform in the various academic areas. Every effort is made to keep students in an age-appropriate group. During the year, a student may be moved to a different group on the recommendation of the teacher or assessments to ensure that the student's needs are met. Parents will be informed of any changes.

Student Support Services:

Our Guidance Counselor addresses student needs in the classroom, individually and through group sessions. The Guidance Counselor works collaboratively with students, parents and teachers to support the unique needs of each student.

Small group counseling focuses on prevention, presenting students with information and skills that they can use to address problems. The Counselor may also meet with students individually to provide extra support regarding the students' personal, social or educational development.

The Guidance Program is for students who are functioning well and those who are having problems. Students who have more serious needs are generally referred to outside professionals. The Guidance Counselor will assist caregivers with resources, community services, and/or referrals related to their child's needs.

The foundation of the relationship between guidance counselor and each school's administration is consultation, cooperation, collaboration and counseling. It is the professional responsibility of the counselor and the administrator to respect the privacy of those students with whom they form a relationship. The relationship by its nature requires an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. The main purpose of confidentiality in the school is to offer students a relationship in which they can share their concerns without fear of disclosure. Counselors and administration share responsibility in protecting the information received through confidential relationships with teachers and parents. This confidentiality must not be compromised except in the following situations:

- Student is a danger to self or others
- Parent and/or student request and sign a Release of Information to a third party including the sharing of information with any medical, mental health and or professional who is providing treatment (according to the stipulations outlined in the Release)
- A court order release of information
- A third party is present in the room
- Suspected child abuse, neglect or endangerment
- Services delivered in small groups and/or classroom format

In such cases, the counselor and administrator are responsible for informing the student of the disclosure, depending on the situation and/or the developmental level of the child. The counselor and administrator should work in confidence and collaboration to provide the child with a confidential setting when appropriate.

It is understood that any reference to guidance services excludes all clinical and/or psychotherapeutic services. It is the responsibility of the guidance counselor to generate, and have available, referral information for these specific services.

5. Communication & Family Partnership

General Communication:

Important school-related information is communicated to parents via broadcast e-mails, notes home, school-wide notification system (text message). It is important for parents to read all correspondence sent per e-mails, text messages or notes home from school to stay informed of any changes in the school calendar, upcoming special events, emergency notifications, volunteer opportunities, meetings, etc.

The dePaul School believes that students are most successful when families and school staff work together with mutual trust, respect, and open communication. We value strong partnerships with parents and guardians and encourage respectful dialogue as we work together to support each child's academic, social, and emotional growth. We ask that all interactions between parents, guardians, family members, volunteers, visitors, and school employees—whether in person, by phone, email, social media, or at school-sponsored events—reflect the same courtesy, professionalism, and respect we expect within our school community.

Questions, concerns, or disagreements are a natural part of any partnership. We encourage families to address concerns promptly through the appropriate school channels so that issues can be resolved collaboratively and in the best interest of the student. To maintain a safe, welcoming, and productive learning environment, the School expects all members of the community to communicate respectfully. Behavior that is threatening, intimidating, harassing, discriminatory, abusive, disruptive, or that interferes with the safety, well-being, or educational mission of the School will not be tolerated. When concerns arise regarding a parent's, guardian's, or family member's conduct, the School will generally seek to resolve the matter through communication and collaboration whenever appropriate. However, the School reserves the right to limit access to campus, participation in school activities, or communication methods, or to take other appropriate action when necessary to protect students, employees, or the school community. In circumstances where the School determines that a productive partnership with a family is no longer possible, or that a family's actions significantly interfere with the School's mission, operations, or ability to provide a safe and effective educational environment, the School reserves the right to deny enrollment, decline re-enrollment, or require a student's withdrawal. Such decisions are made at the sole discretion of the School and in accordance with the terms of the Enrollment Agreement. Tuition obligations will remain as outlined in the Enrollment Agreement.

The School also reserves the right to withdraw or rescind an offer of enrollment or re-enrollment when it determines that doing so is in the best interest of the student, the School, or the school community.

Family Situations/ Custody:

Parents should notify the Administration of any family situation that arises regarding students such as births, deaths, serious illness, hospitalization, etc. at the time of occurrence so the school can respond appropriately.

Teachers need to be aware of a student's home situation such as separation, divorce or custodial arrangements. Unless dePaul School is directed otherwise by court order or receives a written letter signed by both parents requesting a different procedure, each parent will have equal access to school records, information regarding school calendars, school activities, conferences, etc. Each parent will have equal rights to confer with teachers about the student. Each parent has the right to pick up the student at school either during a normal school day or other activities. Each parent has the right to consent to any emergency medical procedure that may become necessary.

In the case of separation or divorce, the school requests a copy of any/all court documents pertaining to custody arrangements.

Field trips:

For students to participate in Fieldtrips a completed Fieldtrip Travel Release Form for the student must be on file in FACTS. Students must have no behavior alerts or disciplinary reports to attend the field trip. Students violating directions and rules may not be able to participate in subsequent field trips.

We allow parent chaperones to attend field trips as needed. Parents must drive separately and meet the student bus at the field trip location. Parents must pay their own field trip entrance fee. Since our student-teacher ratios are low, parent chaperones are not always needed to supervise a group of students but can join the group. If supervision of groups is requested, Level 2 background checks (through dePaul with our VECHS number, not the same as PCS) will be required.

Parents may not drive their student separately or sign out their students from field trips to drive them home (unless preapproved). Student safety is of high priority and keeping accurate records of students on and off the bus is imperative.

We typically rent charter buses for field trips. However, in the rare event chaperone drivers are required they must complete a Field Trip Driver and Insurance Information Form, be level 2 security approved through the State of Florida and supply a copy of a current valid driver's license and automobile insurance. The driver must return with all of the children that were assigned to the driver. No children may attend a field trip unless they are a dePaul student and part of the group for whom the trip was arranged.

6. Student Health & Safety

Our commitment to Student Safety:

The dePaul Staff, Teachers and Board considers the responsibility for the welfare of students to be of paramount importance. Therefore, all employees, Board members, and volunteers of dePaul are directed to take whatever action may be necessary as required by Florida Statutes Chapter 39, and 827, and all statutes and laws of the State of Florida about all instances of suspected child abuse, molestation and child neglect.

Mandatory Reporting:

Abuse Hotline: 1-800-96ABUSE or www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/

A person who is required to report known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or prevents another person from doing so, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in ss775.082 or 775.083 F.S.

A person who does make a report of suspected abuse in good faith has immunity from civil and criminal liability pursuant of ss39.203 768.095 F.S.

The dePaul Staff was trained on the standards, duty to report and procedure for reporting alleged misconduct. Procedures for reporting child abuse, molestation and neglect and misconduct by instructional personnel and administrators are posted in the school lobby.

dePaul staff, teachers and volunteers had background checks and have been fingerprinted for the safety of the students.

Bullying Prevention:

The school policy is that all students, employees, and volunteers learn and work in an environment that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The Administration will not tolerate bullying or harassment. This policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with all applicable state and federal laws. Conduct that constitutes bullying, harassment, cyber stalking or discrimination, as defined herein, and in section 1006.147, F.S., is prohibited.

"Bullying" means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve but is not limited to:

- Teasing
- Social exclusion
- Threat
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Destruction of property.

"Harassment" means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee.

The definitions of "bullying" and "harassment" include:

1. Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.

2. Cyber stalking, which is defined as engaging in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or using electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose. See s.784.048 (1)(d), F.S.

Consequences and appropriate action for students, who commit acts of bullying, harassment, or cyber stalking, may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Consequences for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying, harassment or cyber stalking range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Harmful Substances:

Students, teachers, chaperones may not possess illegal drugs (including prescription drugs) or alcoholic beverages, use them or are under the influence of them on school property, at any school activity, before you arrive on school grounds, before you arrive at any school activity, or on field trips. Tuition is not refunded when students are expelled or asked to withdraw.

Self Harm Response:

All staff are mandated reporters who will share concerns of self-harm with an administrator or appropriate support staff. Our goal is to ensure the immediate safety of the child. dePaul will contact the parents to ensure the child is being monitored. dePaul may require documented counseling prior to return to school.

Weather Emergencies:

In the event of a hurricane or inclement weather, it is the policy of the dePaul School to follow the Pinellas County School Board's decision regarding the closing/opening of school.

Listen to your local radio stations and TV stations for weather reports and the announcement of the closing and reopening of Pinellas County Public Schools. We will also text you through our school-wide notification system when possible.

If our school needs to close for any reason and public schools are open, we will alert you through our school wide notification system by text message. It is very important that we have your accurate cell phone and emergency phone numbers for this purpose.

7. Student Behavior Support

Teaching Behavior as Intentionally as Academics:

At The dePaul School, we believe that positive behavior, self-regulation, and personal responsibility are skills that can be taught, practiced, and strengthened over time. Just as we provide explicit instruction in reading and language, we also provide explicit instruction in the social, emotional, and behavioral skills students need to be successful in school and beyond.

Our goal is always to understand the reason behind a student's behavior, teach appropriate replacement behaviors, and partner with families to help every child succeed. We recognize that many students with dyslexia and language-based learning differences may also experience frustration, anxiety, or difficulty with executive functioning. Our staff responds with patience, consistency, and evidence-based practices while maintaining high expectations for every student.

We strive to create a learning environment where students feel safe, respected, supported, and accountable.

Our Approach

When a student struggles to meet expectations, our response is designed to:

- Teach appropriate replacement behaviors.
- Preserve each student's dignity.
- Minimize disruption to learning.
- Maintain a safe environment for everyone.
- Partner with families to support long-term success.

Whenever appropriate, staff use proactive strategies such as redirection, movement breaks, choice-making, problem solving, positive reinforcement, and restorative conversations before more significant interventions become necessary.

The dePaul Behavior Support System

To provide consistent communication between students, teachers, administrators, and families, dePaul utilizes a color-card support system.

Card	Purpose
Blue	Student needs time to work independently with minimal assistance.
Yellow	Student needs emotional regulation support or a calming break before returning to learning.
Green	Student requires administrative assistance to resolve a behavioral concern.
White	Student requires medical attention beyond routine classroom care.

The color-card system is intended to provide timely support, not punishment. Staff determine the most appropriate intervention based on the student's needs and the circumstances.

Levels of Support:

Classroom Support

Most behavioral concerns are successfully addressed by the classroom teacher through supportive instructional strategies.

Examples may include:

- Redirection
- Reminders of expectations
- Providing choices
- Movement or sensory breaks
- Seating adjustments
- Independent work time

- Positive reinforcement
- Restorative conversations

These strategies allow students to quickly return to learning while continuing to build self-regulation skills.

Administrative Support

When classroom strategies have not been successful, or when behavior significantly disrupts learning, administrators may become involved.

Administrative responses may include:

- Problem-solving conferences
- Parent communication
- Temporary removal from class
- Reflection activities
- Behavior support plans
- Counseling recommendations
- Required make-up work

Families will be informed whenever significant administrative intervention occurs.

Serious Safety Concerns

Behaviors that threaten the physical or emotional safety of students or staff require immediate administrative intervention.

Depending on the circumstances, the school may:

- Contact parents immediately.
- Remove a student from the learning environment.
- Require a parent conference before returning.
- Develop an individualized behavior support plan.
- Recommend outside evaluation or counseling.
- Require documentation that a student is ready to return safely.
- Determine whether dePaul continues to be the appropriate educational placement.

Every situation is evaluated individually. The safety of students and staff remains our highest priority.

Partnering with Families

Behavior support is most successful when school and home work together.

Families can expect timely communication regarding significant behavioral concerns, opportunities to collaborate on solutions, and a consistent approach focused on helping students develop the skills needed for long-term success.

Our goal is not simply to respond to behavior—it is to teach students the skills they need to become confident, responsible, and respectful members of their school community.

Behavior That Cannot Be Permitted

To protect the safety and well-being of our community, certain behaviors require immediate administrative response and may result in suspension, required behavioral supports, or reconsideration of a student's placement.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Physical aggression
- Threats of violence or self-harm
- Bullying or harassment
- Possession of prohibited or dangerous items
- Significant property damage
- Repeated behavior that substantially interferes with the educational environment

School administration reserves the right to determine the appropriate response based on the severity, frequency, and circumstances of each situation.

8. Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Technology is an important part of teaching and learning at The dePaul School. Students use technology to access instructional materials, complete assignments, communicate with teachers, and develop the digital skills necessary for future success.

The use of school technology is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to use all technology responsibly, respectfully, safely, and in accordance with this handbook. Failure to do so may result in loss of technology privileges and/or disciplinary action.

School-Issued & Student-Owned Devices:

Lower School and Summer Program students use school-issued devices for instructional purposes. Middle School (Delta) students are required to bring a personal laptop or iPad each day for classroom use.

Whether using a school-issued or personal device, students are expected to:

- Use technology only for educational purposes during the school day.
- Follow teacher directions regarding technology use.
- Keep devices charged and ready for school each day.
- Treat all equipment with care.

School-owned devices remain the property of The dePaul School and may be inspected at any time. Personal devices may also be inspected upon concern for inappropriate behavior.

Internet Access & Content Filtering:

The dePaul School provides filtered internet access designed to support learning while reducing exposure to inappropriate online content.

While no filtering system is perfect, the school utilizes multiple layers of protection for school-issued devices and networks.

Parents remain responsible for supervising technology use outside of school and for implementing additional safeguards on personal devices when appropriate.

Students may not attempt to bypass internet filters, security settings, or network protections.

Digital Citizenship:

Students are expected to demonstrate good digital citizenship both on campus and while using school technology off campus.

Students are expected to:

- Be respectful and courteous in all digital communication.
- Protect their passwords and personal information.
- Respect the privacy of others.
- Report inappropriate online content or behavior to a teacher immediately.
- Follow copyright laws and properly credit the work of others.

Technology should always be used in ways that reflect dePaul's values of Respect, Teach, Challenge, and Inspire.

Privacy & Online Safety:

To protect the privacy and safety of our school community:

Students may not:

- Share personal information online.
- Photograph, video record, or audio record students or staff without administrative permission.
- Post images or recordings from school on social media without authorization.
- Access another student's account or device without permission.
- Attempt to gain unauthorized access to school systems or networks.

Any activity that threatens student safety or school security may result in immediate disciplinary action.

Social Media:

Students are expected to use social media responsibly.

Online behavior that substantially disrupts the school environment, targets members of the dePaul community, or violates school policies may result in school disciplinary action, even if the activity occurs off campus.

Students should never use social media to:

- Bully or harass others
- Share confidential school information
- Impersonate another individual
- Post inappropriate or offensive content involving members of the school community

Care of Technology:

Students are expected to care for all technology entrusted to them.

Families are financially responsible for damage to school-issued devices caused by negligence, misuse, or intentional damage.

Specifically:

- iPad screen repairs are the responsibility of the family.
- Devices requiring replacement due to damage must be replaced through dePaul.
- The School is not responsible for loss of or damage to personally owned devices brought to campus.

Cell Phones & Personal Electronics:

Cell phones, smartwatches, gaming devices, and other personal electronic devices may not be used during the school day unless specifically authorized by a teacher or administrator.

Unauthorized use of personal technology may result in confiscation of the device. Confiscated devices will be returned only to a parent or guardian.

Remote Learning:

If circumstances require remote instruction, students are expected to follow the same behavioral and academic expectations that apply during in-person learning.

Students participating in remote learning are expected to:

- Attend classes on time.

- Participate respectfully.
- Wear appropriate school attire as directed.
- Maintain an appropriate learning environment.
- Use school-approved digital platforms.
- Follow all school technology and behavior expectations.

Recording, photographing, screenshotting, or sharing remote learning sessions without written permission from school administration is prohibited.

Technology Violations:

Examples of technology misuse include, but are not limited to:

- Attempting to bypass internet filters or security systems
- Accessing inappropriate or prohibited content
- Cyberbullying or harassment
- Damaging technology equipment
- Using another person's account or password
- Downloading unauthorized software
- Violating copyright laws
- Recording others without permission
- Using technology in a manner that disrupts the educational environment

Consequences will vary depending on the nature and severity of the violation and may include:

- Temporary or permanent loss of technology privileges
- Parent notification
- Restitution for damaged equipment
- School disciplinary action
- Suspension or, in serious circumstances, reconsideration of continued enrollment

School administration reserves the right to determine the appropriate response based on the circumstances of each incident.

Delivery of Remote Learning:

If required, dePaul is prepared to institute remote learning. Student responsibilities and guidelines for remote learning are no different than our accepted and understood classroom teaching and learning protocols. dePaul School's Ethical Use of Technology Policy and Family Handbook remain applicable to all students.

The school uses Google Classroom, Google Meet, FACTS and other online platforms/tools deemed appropriate to conduct meaningful teaching and learning.

Remote learning platforms utilized by dePaul School are understood to be for school and educational use only. The use of these platforms for any other purpose without written consent by dePaul School is prohibited. Failure to comply with this directive may result in disciplinary action.

Acknowledgment of Remote Learning Policies and Procedures:

The dePaul School community understands and acknowledges remote learning is a continuation of daily teaching and learning, not only for our staff and students but also for their parents and guardians. It is critical to share that platform utilized by dePaul during remote learning involve the following:

When in a video conference, members of the meeting may be asked to turn on microphones and cameras. Participants (including their image, voice, and background/surroundings) are viewable to other members of the conference.

Participants in a video conference (or any other aspect of remote learning) are expected to conduct themselves as they would in school. Students should be wearing their uniform shirt. Similarly, backgrounds in a video recording or conference should be appropriate for sharing with the school community.

Participants' image, likeness, or voice may be recorded while utilizing Google Meet. In some cases, such as recordings of synchronous teacher-led lessons, these recordings will be made available for student review.

Without express and written permission from a school administrator, users may not record, screenshot, share, re-post, or otherwise capture or disseminate digital content created via any of these platforms. Only representatives of the school may capture or post such content.

9. Tuition, Enrollment & Financial Policies

Tuition and fees are established annually by The dePaul School Board of Trustees and are communicated to current and prospective families before each enrollment period.

Tuition supports the specialized instruction, small class sizes, and educational services that define the dePaul experience.

Enrollment & Re-enrollment:

Enrollment and annual re-enrollment are completed through the FACTS Enrollment Portal.

To reserve a student's place for the upcoming school year, families must:

- Complete the enrollment packet.
- Pay the non-refundable enrollment fee.
- Select a tuition payment plan through FACTS.
- Review and electronically sign the Enrollment Agreement by the published deadline.

Enrollment is not considered complete until all required steps have been finalized.

Tuition Responsibility:

Enrollment at The dePaul School represents a commitment for the full academic year.

Unless otherwise stated in the Enrollment Agreement, families are financially responsible for the full annual tuition and applicable fees regardless of whether a student withdraws, is dismissed, or otherwise does not complete the school year.

Questions regarding tuition obligations should be directed to the Business Office before enrollment is finalized.

Florida Scholarship Programs:

The dePaul School participates in Florida scholarship programs, including those administered through Step Up For Students.

Families wishing to have anticipated scholarship funds applied toward tuition should provide the Business Office with:

- The student's scholarship award number
- Scholarship program (such as FES-UA or FES-EO)
- Approved scholarship award amount

A screenshot of the scholarship award from the Step Up For Students portal is preferred.

Once enrollment and scholarship verification have been completed, dePaul may apply a good-faith credit to the student's FACTS account for the anticipated scholarship amount. Scholarship payments are applied to the student's account as funds are received from the scholarship organization.

Families remain responsible for any scholarship funds that are delayed, reduced, denied, or not received by the School for any reason.

Because scholarship programs require ongoing parent action, families are strongly encouraged to regularly monitor their Step Up For Students account and promptly complete any requested documentation or approvals.

In-House and Hardship Scholarships:

When financials allow, dePaul offers in-house and hardships scholarships. In house scholarships are processed through Facts and based on tax returns and financial need of the family. The dePaul hardship scholarship is intended to provide temporary assistance to families experiencing extraordinary financial circumstances that may not be reflected in traditional financial aid applications, such as recent job loss, significant medical expenses, caregiver responsibilities or other documented hardship. Hardship scholarship awards are limited and determined after consideration of all other sources of tuition assistance, including state scholarships, in-house scholarships, and other funding sources such as sponsorships or grants. Under no circumstance will the offer of dePaul in house aid and or hardship exceed the student's tuition and required fees. Any hardship scholarship will be reduced as necessary to ensure that total financial aid does not exceed these costs. Hardship and in-house scholarships have no cash value and will not result in a refund or payment to the guardian.

Tuition Payments:

All tuition, after-school care, tutoring, athletics, and other incidental charges are processed through the FACTS Financial system.

For consistency and accurate recordkeeping, dePaul does not accept cash or personal checks for tuition-related payments unless specifically approved by the Business Office.

Past-Due Account:

Families are expected to make payments according to their selected FACTS payment plan.

Payments received after the scheduled due date may be subject to:

- A \$30 late fee assessed by dePaul.
- Additional fees assessed by FACTS in accordance with the family's payment agreement.

If an account becomes significantly past due, the School may:

- Require the account to be brought current before the student may continue attending classes.
- Restrict participation in certain school activities when permitted by law or contract.
- Decline re-enrollment for future school years.
- Refer unpaid balances to a collection agency when necessary.

The School will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families before these actions become necessary.

Financial Communication:

Families are responsible for reviewing communications sent through FACTS, the Business Office, and Step Up For Students. Failure to respond to requests for documentation, payment information, or scholarship approvals may delay funding or increase the family's financial responsibility.

Questions regarding billing, tuition, or scholarship processing are always welcome.

Business Office

✉ business@thedepaulschool.org

Financial Policies:

The official Enrollment Agreement and Tuition Agreement govern all financial obligations between the family and The dePaul School. If any provision of this handbook differs from the signed Enrollment Agreement, the Enrollment Agreement will control.

By completing the enrollment process in FACTs, parents and students acknowledge that they have read and agree to comply with the policies contained in this handbook.