

PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

Revised October 2009

BUTLER CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Sister John Ann Mulhern, Principal



BUTLER CATHOLIC SCHOOL

PARENT and STUDENT HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Letter from the Principal

Welcome to Butler Catholic School! Thank you for taking the time to read the information about our school. Your child is very important to us. In fact, our students are the reason why we exist. Everything we do is to help them fulfill their mission - to be the best reflection of Jesus that is possible. This encompasses the academics, spiritual, emotional, social and physical events of a child's life in school.

The information in this booklet is to help you understand expectations – those the school has of its students and parents, and those that parents can expect of the school. By working together in the spirit of the Gospel, each student will benefit from the best support team for success that there is – our Butler Catholic School family!

Sister John Ann

Mission

The mission of the Catholic School, and therefore of Butler Catholic School, is the proclamation of the message of Jesus, and the formation of an extended family community of faith and service. The mission is directed both within the school and outward toward the service of others.

The faculty and staff of Butler Catholic strive to provide an exemplary Christ-centered educational process through which the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church are transmitted to our students in a loving and caring atmosphere that will encourage a thirst for learning, a hunger for truth, and a commitment to live a life based upon the teachings they have received.

Butler Catholic School Prayer

*Glory and Praise to You, loving and forgiving God,
Who gives us all that we need and so much more!
We thank You for life with our loving families,
For our parishes, and for the people who make our Catholic School such a loving place to be.
Bless us and help our Butler Catholic Community to do our best today and every day.
Help us to love and serve You as we live the values Jesus taught us.
May the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in each of us,
Give us the strength to grow in our faith. AMEN*

Who Are We

Butler Catholic School is a PreK – 8th Grade regional school formed in 1969 by the merging of the schools of St. Michael, St. Paul and St. Peter Parishes. The school is housed in the St. Paul school building. St. Andrew and St. Fidelis parishes joined the merger in the late 1970's. Butler Catholic serves the area of seven school districts: Butler, South Butler, Mars, Moniteau, Karns City, Seneca Valley and Slippery Rock. All of them provide bus transportation to Butler Catholic.

Parish Information

<u>St. Andrew</u> 1660 N. Main Street Butler, PA 16001	Father James Salberg	724-287-7791
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<u>St. Fidelis</u> 125 Buttercup Road Butler, PA 16001	Father James Murphy	724-287-2690 saintfidelis@zoominternet.net www.saintfidelis.org
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<u>St. Michael</u> 432 Center Avenue Butler, PA 16001	Father James Dolan	724-282-4107 stmikearch1@zoominternet.net
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<u>St. Paul</u> 128 N. McKean St. Butler, PA 16001	Father Steven Neff	724-287-1759 office@stpaulbutler.org www.stpaulbutler.org
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<u>St. Peter</u> 127 Franklin Street Butler, PA 16001	Father James Dolan	724-287-2743 office@specialandloved.com www.specialandloved.com
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School Advisory Board

Members of this committee are appointed by each pastor. There are two members from each parish consisting of one parent member and one non school member. Their purpose is to advise the Principal in areas of Public Relations, Programs, Financing, Fundraising and Support Systems.

PARISH	PARENT MEMBER	NON SCHOOL MEMBER
St. Andrew	Dianne Bartony	John Cascino
St. Fidelis	Chris Swartwout	Bob Lowry
St. Michael	Julia Yannotty	
St. Paul	Kristen Singleton	
St. Peter	Lisa Book	Paul Neigh

ADMISSIONS

Butler Catholic School admits students of any religion, race, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded students at this school. It does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, national or ethnic origin or sex in the administration of hiring practices, educational policies, admission, and athletic and other school administered programs as required by the terms of Title IX of the Education Act of 1972. Butler Catholic follows the policies and guidelines of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh. A child needs to be 3, 4, or 5 years old by or on September 1 of the year entering school.

Family Meeting - The process begins with a conversation between the parents and the principal. At this meeting the expectations of both the parents and the school are discussed, questions and concerns are explained and answered, and the student's previous academic records are reviewed (if applicable). All family members are encouraged to attend and participate in this meeting.

Registration – A registration form is obtained at the Family Meeting. Parents must complete a registration form and submit it along with the following required documents for verification.

- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate (If Catholic)
- Envelope Number
- Health and Immunization Records
- In case of separation or divorce, a copy of the custody statement must be presented and kept on file.

Registration Fees – An annual registration fee is required for all Butler Catholic Families. The fee is non-refundable and must accompany a completed registration form. This fee can be ***waived*** if a current family sponsors a new family that enrolls in Butler Catholic.

- Pre-School - \$35 annual per family
- Kindergarten through Eighth Grade - \$100 annual per family

Shadow Visit – At the parents / guardians request a shadowing visit can be arranged. This experience matches your child with a current student who shows them around Butler Catholic during the course of a day. It gives you and your child a real feel for whether Butler Catholic is the place for them. To schedule a visit call the office at 724-285-4276 or email at bcsoffice@butlercatholic.org.

Transfer From Another School - A request for transfer of all records must be signed by the parents. The process is complete upon the receiving of school records. The placement of the student in the appropriate learning level is the school's responsibility.

Parent Resource Team – All new families that enroll in Butler Catholic have access to a member of this team to cover questions regarding the school. This team is available for support during the course of the new school year. The member list will be provided in the first school-to-home letter.

ATTENDANCE and DISMISSAL

ATTENDANCE

Students are required by Pennsylvania State Law to attend school for 180 days.

School Hours

Doors Open:	7:40 am	AM Kindergarten:	11:00 am
Late Bell:	7:55 am	Dismissal:	2:30 pm (walkers)
		Dismissal:	2:35 pm (busses)

Tardiness - Students not IN homeroom seats when the late bell rings are considered tardy. The only excused tardies are late buses and / or Doctor or Dental appointments. Continued tardiness will result in disciplinary action.

Absences - If your child will be absent from school, you must call the school office by 8:00 am on the day of the absence. This is for your child's own protection – to ensure that nothing has happened to him/her on the way to school. A written excuse is required when the student returns after being absent, no matter the length of, or the reason for the absence. This note must bear the parent's signature, date and reason for the absence. These are kept on file for a year. The only excused absences are illness of the child, death in the family, or a Doctor or Dental appointment. When a parent calls the office regarding their absent child, they may request homework be sent home with a sibling or it may be picked up by 3:15 pm or they may check <http://new.schoolnotes.com>. If you request to pick up homework, please follow through with picking up the requested homework. If you cannot pick up the homework by 3:15 pm, the homework will be placed on the benches outside of Sister John Ann's office. The door is open for our After School Care Program until 5:30 pm. Homework for absences must be completed within the number of days that they have missed school. For instance, if a student is absent three days, they have three days after they return to school to complete their homework and turn it in. However, if a test has been announced and the student was here for the preparation for the test but is absent on the day of the test, the student will take the test the day they return to school.

Vacations - Vacations are not considered excused absences. If it is necessary that one be taken, the student must keep a detailed daily journal of what he/she did or saw and turn it in to his/her homeroom teacher. All missed work will be completed within 5 days of the student's return to school. As in any absence, it is the responsibility of the STUDENT to collect the work he/she missed.

Before and After School Care - Students enrolled in Butler Catholic (4-yr Full-Day preschool thru 6th grade) may use this program. It is available on an "as needed" basis. Your child does not need to use it every day. Students may use it when there is a "snow delay" or "early dismissal". Before school care is available from 7:00 am – 8:45 am. After school care is available from 2:30 pm – 6:00 pm. Registration for this program is required. Billing for services will be on a monthly basis.

DISMISSAL

Early Dismissal - Any student requesting early dismissal must have a written explanation from his/her parent. The reason for the dismissal, the date and time of dismissal, and the adult responsible for getting the child must be stated. The request is turned in to the office, signed by the principal and kept on file for one year. Students will come to the office to be met by the adult at the designated time.

School Planned Half-Days - On school planned half days, ½ day Kindergarten students will stay an hour longer to meet bus schedules.

Change in normal dismissal procedure - If there is any change in your child's normal dismissal procedure a note must be sent in to the office. The note should indicate the date and change to be made to the student's normal routine and must be signed by the parents. If your child will be going home with a friend on another bus, but in the same district, a note indicating the student he/she will accompany home and their bus number must be included. A note from the parents of the student your child will accompany home is also required along with the date and bus number. Bus transportation between districts is prohibited.

Dismissal Process for Walkers & Pick Ups - Any student who will be walking or receiving a ride home is to be met at the steps on East Locust Street. The upper parking lot will be locked at 2:15pm and will not reopen until all students are loaded onto the buses and all the buses exit the lower parking lot. Please park along East Locust Street – NOT IN THE YELLOW ZONE – as this makes it difficult for the students to see the oncoming traffic. A crossing guard is assigned to this location to help the students cross the street safely.

Unexpected Early Dismissals - If there is an unexpected early dismissal, children will follow the guidelines you have completed on the "Unexpected Early Dismissal" card. This card will be included in your first day packet. The emergency "phone chain" will be implemented in this situation as well as announcements on WISR and WBUT radio and KDKA and WPXI TV.

COMMUNICATION

Communication - All school information, the Parent Newsletter, monthly calendar and menu are sent home with the youngest child in the family attending school. They will come home in the “Thursday” envelope. Parents may find out what is taking place in the classroom by visiting our website www.butlercatholic.org and click on the homeroom/student login. You will then be redirected to the site <http://new.schoolnotes.com>. Daily updates are provided by each teacher. Parents may also check academic grade status by logging onto www.rvsgradebook.com. A user ID and password will be provided to each student / family.

If a parent has a specific concern or a question for a faculty or staff member, a written note or phone call to have a personal conversation is always welcome and will be returned at their earliest convenience.

Emergency School Closings - During inclement weather, please listen to WISR and WBUT radio and/or KDKA and WPXI for information. Butler Catholic School follows the Butler Area School District’s decisions in these matters or about school closings or delay in opening.

Beginning this 2009-2010 school year, the automated school notification system will be in use, please DO NOT call the school. Usually if there is a delay or unexpected early dismissal, the before & after care program is available. However, if the district goes from a delay to a cancellation, then the before & after care program is cancelled. For those in other school districts, follow your home district directions.

NOTE: Through the automated school notification, each person that signs up will automatically receive school announcements regarding delays and closings.

CURRICULUM

Butler Catholic School follows the Pittsburgh Catholic Diocese Curriculum Guidelines and the Pennsylvania State Standards. The curriculum at Butler Catholic attempts to ensure that success is attained by all of our students. As a Catholic school, our program is permeated with a spirit of mutual respect and concern for each individual. At Butler Catholic we are concerned about the individual progress of each child. The size of our student body allows our teachers to individualize lesson plans around the strengths and challenges that our students face. Our goal is to take each student to the next level of learning.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Religious Education – The reason for the existence of Butler Catholic School is helping children to grow in knowledge of and practice in living out the Catholic Faith. Daily instructions in the tenets of our faith are a priority. Weekly class celebration of the Eucharist is central to why we are here doing what we do. All students are encouraged to develop a personal relationship with Jesus through prayer, study, scripture reading and spending time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The Priests of the merger parishes, and those priests whose parish families attend Butler Catholic, offer Mass and the sacrament of reconciliation. The first Friday of every month we celebrate with a Whole School Mass which is attended by all students of Butler Catholic. *Parents are always welcome to join the students in either their weekly or monthly Mass celebrations.*

Academic Grouping - Beginning in the fifth grade, students are grouped academically for reading and math. Students are monitored and evaluated closely. Placement is never written in stone.

Above and Beyond Program - Students in grades 1st through 4th who meet the criteria may participate in the “Above and Beyond Program”. This program offers students the opportunity to explore areas of learning not offered in the regular classroom. Students in 3rd and 4th grades meet twice a week for one hour sessions. Students in 1st and 2nd grades meet for 40 minutes. Students are expected to maintain all work in both the regular classroom as well as the Above and Beyond Program.

Homework Policy — The purpose of homework is to help the students make the instruction given in class their own. The form of the homework may be written, study, practice, research, completion of class work or reading. Parents’ assistance is often needed for successful homework—especially in reinforcing spelling words, math facts, and reviewing for tests. While students may need help in completing some part of their homework assignments, parents are to guide them—ask questions to them, e.g., “What if?”, “Why did you use this?”, “Look at your answer. Does it make sense?”—but NOT DO IT FOR THEM—“telling them what to write or actually doing it.”

Homework assignment time guidelines are:

- ✓ 15 minutes/day for Kindergarten
- ✓ 30 minutes/day for Grades 1-2
- ✓ 45 minutes/day for Grades 3-4
- ✓ 1 hour/day for Grades 5-6
- ✓ 1 ½ hours/day for Grades 7-8

For long-term projects, more time may be required. If your child is taking more time than outlined to do daily work, please inform his/her teacher of the difficulty. Usually for Grades K-4, there is NO SPECIFIC HOMEWORK over the weekend or vacation days.

CURRICULUM and METHODS

PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

Pre-School at Butler Catholic provides the transition from a home to a school atmosphere. At BCS the children experience learning play activities that encourage spirited, intellectual, social, and physical growth in a spirit of Gospel values. Class size is limited to fifteen. The 3 year old program is Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 – 11:30 AM, The 4 year old program is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; either 9:00-11:30 AM or 9:00-2:15 PM. This is a parental choice. Both programs begin near Labor Day and run to the last Thursday/Friday in May. Children must be 3 or 4 on or before September 1 of the year entering school.

Kindergarten at Butler Catholic School is an exciting experience. Our classrooms are exciting because we use props, games, role-play, and real life experiences to teach the kindergarten curriculum. Our classrooms are unique because they are tailored to the specific needs of each child. We do this by assessing each child in the beginning of the school year in the areas of academics and social skills. We also find out what interests each child has. By doing this, we are able to challenge each child to pursue academic growth through his/her interests, needs, and new concepts.

FIRST THROUGH FOURTH GRADE

1st Grade is the most important school year in a student's life. A strong foundation is stressed in reading, math, and religion. Basic skills are taught and work and study skills are developed. At Butler Catholic School, all of this is done in a caring, nurturing, and Catholic environment, which develops each student fully, to be the best he or she can be. Skills are reinforced with learning games and fun activities. Students are actively engaged in learning and creativity is nurtured. Students are rewarded for good behavior with a classroom incentive program. They are also encouraged and rewarded for attempting more challenging work.

2nd Grade curriculum is an integration of traditional teaching techniques, hands-on discoveries, student-centered activities and grade level interactions in a Catholic environment. The religion program in second grade centers on the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Our math program uses a "hands on approach". Language Arts is integrated into all subject areas. Thematic reading units contain current literature, plays, poetry and folk tales. Our reading program contains a strong phonetic base. Enrichment is available to all students in all subject areas. Challenging activities and projects are offered and students are encouraged to participate. The early years of the Butler Catholic School experience have various school, family, and religious community-centered activities. The students in second grade participate in the Living Stations as well as being prayer partners with the residents of the Arbors Senior Citizens Complex. An All Saints Day Celebration and play is part of the second grade experience.

3rd Grade is a very challenging year. Students are introduced to children's literature in reading for the first time. This encourages students to read chapter books on their own. The books are integrated into all subject areas. Writing is a daily part of the curriculum and is used thematically with the chapter books and the science and social studies units. Math is taught with a "hands on approach". Emphasis is placed on regrouping in addition and subtraction. Multiplication is introduced and facts are memorized. Enrichment activities are available to all students and are encouraged.

4th Grade has an emphasis on the importance of community service. On a monthly basis, the students create heart-felt projects for residents of nursing homes. Trade books are used to encourage reading about different genres. Vocabulary, spelling, and grammar are done on a daily basis to enhance reading comprehension. Manipulatives are used to introduce new concepts in math. Continued emphasis is placed on knowing math facts by games and time testing. Religion classes enable students to make the right choices and follow the Beatitudes. In doing this, students learn to handle negative peer pressure and make good moral choices.

The third and fourth grade students do seasonal projects for the Chicora Medical Center and Autumn Grove. These students are involved with visits and singing performances at these residences also. A culminating activity for these grades is the Portfolio Picnic which is a sharing of their school work with the parents a la picnic style.

Students in grades one through fourth also participate in weekly Masses. Each class prepares and does the readings at Mass.

FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

The fifth and sixth grade curricula at Butler Catholic are designed to foster a smooth transition as middle school students. Emphasis is placed on the "cross-curricular" concept in which activities in one enhance those of another.

RELIGION Classes are scripture-based with the use of the Bible as the text. Emphasis is placed on the importance of having a personal relationship with Jesus. Concentration and focus include individual responsibility for moral decision, ministry, and full participation in Liturgy and personal prayer life. Supplementary resources include Catholic web sites and Catholic periodicals. Cooperative learning experiences enhance the program. Prayer partners form bonds with the elderly of the community.

READING and ENGLISH Students are academically grouped for reading and math at this level. The reading program is challenging for our students. A combination of textbook selections and novels form the basis of the curriculum. Literary skills and vocabulary development are teacher generated, derived from novel content and multiple professional resources. Students are exposed to various genre of literature. Accelerated Reader is used as a supplemental program. A Character Dress Up Day is celebrated. Word recognition and comprehension are taught and monitored through Diocesan guidelines. Proper grammar, mechanics and ongoing development of writing skills, centered on five or six traits, are emphasized. Narrative, informational, and persuasive writing projects are incorporated within the language arts curriculum. Participation in the Diocesan English Festival has been an exciting event for the students. They have been very successful in the endeavor.

MATH Students are engaged in understanding and communicating in their math program. Higher level thinking skills are nurtured and developed. Goal setting and the quality process are emphasized. Curriculum areas include geometry, probability, fractions, measurement, graphing, and of course successful understanding and execution of basic computational skills.

SCIENCE The science curriculum relies heavily on the use of technology. Earth science includes weather web sites which are pulled to predict weather, to observe trends, and to gather data. In space science, NASA sites are used to follow the space program and to gather ideas to create our own Space Rover. Physical science includes the study of the atomic structure of matter and the resulting Periodic Table. Life science deals with anatomy and systems of the body.

SOCIAL STUDIES Curriculum topics at these levels include ancient history study of Greece and Rome. Virtual tours of these historic topics are experienced. Weekly current events at a national, state, or local level are presented and discussed.

The fifth grade students celebrate with a science / math picnic. They have prayer partners with parish members and enjoy a visit and celebration with them. The Drug Safety Program, D.A.R.E., is an important experience for the students also. The students in sixth grade participate in the WISR Spelling Bee. Very often class activities stem from books read and countries studied.

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

RELIGION at Butler Catholic School is composed of a triad of independent study, community service / liturgy, and technology. Faith related issues are incorporated in independent study as are the teaching of the Catholic Church in doctrine and morals. The upper level "My Faith Journey" catechetical program uses the Bible and the students create their own text throughout the year in portfolio style, as well. Students attend weekly Mass as a class and participate in many service projects throughout the year. Students are required to perform 40 hours of community service per year.

LITERATURE / ENGLISH in 7th and 8th grade is a literature based program of novels. Within the Literature class, students are also introduced to other literary genres such as poetry, mythology, and short story. Within both the Literature and English classes, students work from a standardized independent study vocabulary program. Fiction writing, critical writing, research, critical analysis, debate, public speaking, and dramatics are all part of the Literature class, whereas, grammar, punctuation and mechanics are stressed in the English class. Participation in the Diocesan English Festival presents additional challenging novels for discussion.

SOCIAL STUDIES in 7th grade focuses on American History from the early Americans through the Civil War, as well as Geography and Civics. In 8th grade, students study the period of Reconstruction to the present day. Both grade levels are introduced to and work with the following methods: Lecture / note taking, outlining, role play, presentation, political cartoons and group activities. Skits, songs, artwork, videos, games and computer driven activities round out the Social Studies Program.

MATH and PRE-ALGEBRA includes advanced placement in algebra and sixty minute daily math instruction time. First in Math and Jumping Levels are math programs which emphasize a variety of Math concepts through an internet game and an individualized math

program. Students use the chalk board and white erase boards in class to explain their work and enable the teacher to see their work. Challenging math problems / situations, graphing techniques and linear systems help students to create a Math picture for enrichment.

SCIENCE in the 7th grade is Life Sciences. Students study living organisms with microscopes and through lab experiments. They dissect preserved animals, both vertebrates and invertebrates. Basic lab techniques are introduced. The students examine the Linneaus method of classification of organisms and those currently used. In 8th grade, the focus is Physical Science. Examination of Newton's Laws of Motion as applied to daily experiences, building compound machines, hands on examination of light and its properties, studies of the atom and the basic structure of organic molecules are all investigated, researched and studied. Problem solving skills are developed within the course of study.

In the upper levels, the students have many activities to capture their attention. They can join the Liturgical Choir, be a part of the School Musical, or work on the Yearbook Committee. Competition opportunities appear through the Stock Market Game, the PA Junior Academy of Science (PJAS), First in Math, Challenge 24, and Forensics.

The eighth grade is a very special year and celebrates with many exciting events. These student leaders travel to the Fatima Shrine in New York for a religious celebration and then visit Niagara Falls. They participate in the Physics Day at Kennywood Park and create the Eighth Grade Legacy Mural. The Eighth Grade Graduate Studies (E.G.G.S.) program is a career shadowing and visual presentation experience. An awards Ceremony is a culminating activity as well as the annual graduation Mass and celebration.

ART, LANGUAGE, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, COMPUTER and LIBRARY

ART is taught in an atmosphere wherein young children are able to learn art skills in a personally meaningful way. Each child is encouraged to create their artwork, while using their own creative touch. The special use of color, lines, paints, pencils, shapes, designs, shadowing and symmetry are just some of the techniques taught.

LANGUAGES – Spanish is introduced to students in Kindergarten and they study it through 5th grade. Middle School students have an exploratory language curriculum which begins in 6th grade. At this time, students are introduced to French and Spanish for a semester. They progress from basic vocabulary to being able to construct simple sentences. They are assessed by means of a portfolio and an annual tape recording which show progress from year to year. In seventh grade, students choose between French, Spanish, and Latin for a two-year course. Students are able to test out of Level One Language in High School.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION is stressed as a lifelong goal which promotes healthy living. Various activities encourage the belief that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, competition, self-expression, and social expression.

COMPUTER prepares students at all grade levels to be accomplished in the realm of constantly evolving technology. Through a hands-on approach of weekly instructional classes that support the classroom teachers' integration of regular computer access in different subject areas, students apply skills that provide ways to foster communications, analysis, research and

understanding. There are two class size computer labs, a library research lab and computers in every classroom on a wireless network serviced by cable internet connection. From basic keyboarding skills to meeting national and state technology standards through the Real Journeys In Technology curriculum, students find our Catholic values permeate the content and process of this extremely relevant aspect of their education.

LIBRARY at Butler Catholic is on the bookshelves and is also on the computer! The school library is a pleasant, bright room that houses a wonderful collection of both fiction and non-fiction books. Displays throughout the library encourage readers to investigate books from the many sections in the library. The primary students have a carpeted listening center that is arranged to create an inviting atmosphere for reading. Children select books each week from the collection and a variety of new books that are being added to the shelves. A mini computer lab is adjacent to the library. There are currently seven computers in the room which will be used for research work.

ELECTIVE PROGRAMS

Students in grades seventh and eighth participate in a course of electives. These classes are extensions of the curriculum and are graded. They are semester long classes that students choose.

- Sample Courses Offered ** These are subject to change.
 - Robotics – The students work together to build robots with legos using the guidelines provided by Carnegie Mellon University. They write software programs and learn to problem solve. They have two competitions – one in the winter and one in the spring.
 - Stock Market – Students learn about how the stock market works. They buy and sell stocks to make a profit and compete against other area schools.
 - Performing Choir – Students perform at our school events and with the BCS Band. They also travel to perform at nursing homes and other locally sponsored events.
 - Tech Team – Students study technical issues that exist in today's world. Affectionately termed "The Geek Squad" – they monitor and troubleshoot the school's computers and work with digital photography at school events.
 - Forensics – This involves public speaking of prepared readings in six areas of literature.
 - Newspaper – The students cover school news and current events concerning the school. The paper is published quarterly.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Butler Catholic students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that are under the supervision of the school or Athletic Association. These activities are open to all students in various age groups.

Band – Available to students in grades 4th through 8th and takes place within the school day. A monthly fee is involved.

Students in Grades 4-8 have the opportunity to join the school band. Instrumental music lessons are given. We have 2 ***Band Concerts*** and a ***Spring Choral Concert***. Many students participate in the Honors Band as well as the Diocesan All-Star Band for which they must audition.

Athletics – Sports offered are seasonal. All sports teams follow the Diocesan Guidelines for Catholic School Athletic Programs.

In our school, our sports program is an integral part of the school experience. We have competitive teams in the sports of basketball, volleyball, and soccer. A ***Basketball Madness Night*** is held for parents and students to enjoy the athletic experience while the annual ***Sports Banquet*** is a time for sharing tributes and awards.

Volleyball	Fall	Girls only	5 th – 6 th grades 7 th – 8 th grades	Junior Varsity Varsity
Basketball	Fall / Winter	Boys & Girls	K – 2 nd grades 3 rd – 4 th grades 5 th – 6 th grades 7 th – 8 th grades	Saturdays in Jan & Feb for 1 hour Instructional, no score kept Junior Varsity Varsity
Soccer	Fall / Spring	Co-Ed	3 rd – 4 th grades 5 th – 6 th grades 7 th – 8 th grades	Developmental Junior Varsity Varsity

Drama – Students in grades 5th through 8th are offered the opportunity to develop acting skills through the school play. Younger students in grades K through 4th are included in minor roles.

Student Council – Available to students in grades 4th through 8th. Students in 7th and 8th grades are the elected officers. The general membership is comprised of elected homeroom representatives from grades 4th through 8th. Student council provides opportunities for the student body to engage in a variety of projects that promote the spirit of the Gospel Mission.

Scouts – Available to both girls and boys.

- Girl Scouts / Brownies – Open to all girls in first through eighth grades. Meetings are held after school in the cafeteria.
- Boy Scouts / Cub Scouts – This program is open to all boys at Butler Catholic and is sponsored by St. Paul Parish. They meet in the evenings.

Game Day – Available to all students Kindergarten through sixth grade. These game days are held once a month after school in the cafeteria. It is an opportunity for students to engage in playing games for fun.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The students at our school actively participate in various grade level as well as school-wide projects and events. Among the events in the primary levels are the Pizza Hut Book-It Project which includes Grades K-5 and the Scholastic Book Fair. Participation in First Friday Masses, Reconciliation, Altar Servers, Stations of the Cross, and weekly Chapel Masses are a part of the school life for all students. Interschool friendships develop through the Challenge of Champions.

The Butler Catholic School experience includes various class field trips, PTG sponsored assemblies, free jean and tennies passes, spirit day, skating parties, guest speakers, and class plays. Special celebrations for religious holidays as well as Dr. Seuss's birthday and the 100th day of school are part of the school life. Catholic Schools Week presents a great time of reflection and attention to our Catholicity. All of our activities bring the students together in small groups and large as well. Many are parent inclusive to strengthen the familial bond. Our religious, social, and physical activities are numerous and student-centered.

FACULTY, STAFF and TESTING

Faculty – All teachers at Butler Catholic School are qualified educational persons who have both Pennsylvania State Certification and Pittsburgh Catholic Diocesan Certification. They are committed to helping your child grow academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially by providing them with opportunities that challenge, encourage, stimulate and cultivate appropriate responses. Please contact the school office for the most recent teacher biographies.

Support Staff - In addition to the regular classroom teachers and special area teachers, students at Butler Catholic have access to the services of remedial teachers. These teachers, in collaboration with the classroom teachers, identify educational needs and design educational interventions and strategies to help a child succeed. Written parental consent will be obtained for those students who are recommended by the classroom teacher to participate in this program. Recommendations are based upon standardized test scores, classroom performance, and report card grades. An initial assessment will be done to determine students' skill levels. Progress assessment reports will be distributed along with school report cards.

- **Act 89 Services** – State funded Act 89 teachers are assigned by Mid-Western Intermediate Unit IV. Their services include assistance in Reading and Math, Speech and Language Development, the services of a school counselor, and Academic Testing Evaluation.
- **Title 1 Reading Services** – Remedial reading services are funded through the Federal Title 1 Program and allocated through the Butler Area School District.

Parent Teacher Conferences – Parent / Teacher conferences are held twice a year. Parents are required to attend the first of these conferences which is held in the fall; attendance at the second conference in the spring is by request of either teacher or parent. However, a parent can request a conference at any time during the school year. These conferences are invaluable aids to developing a closer relationship between the home and school. It provides parents and teachers the opportunity to pool their observations, plan the best possible education for the child, and then work together to assure its success.

Testing –

- **Dibels** – Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. There are short screenings given to those in Kindergarten through the 3rd grade 3 times a year.
- **Terra Nova** – This is a nationally standardized achievement test that is given to students in grades 2 through 8. This testing is usually conducted in March and will last over a period of two weeks. Students can prepare for this test by getting plenty of rest and having a good breakfast. Test results are sent home for the parents to review. Our students have consistently scored well above the national average on this test.
- **ACRE** – This is the Assessment of Catholic Religious Education testing and is given to students in grades 5 & 8. This testing is usually administered in the spring (April). This testing checks the students understanding of our Religion, its Liturgies and Doctrine.
- **Writing Assessment** – This is an opportunity for students in grades K through 8 to express their creativity in writing on a given topic. Their work is evaluated based on their following the designated rubric. The topics for this writing assignment come from the Diocese.

HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

HEALTH

Medication – Students who need to take any medication during the school hours must complete the prescribed form from the office and have the form signed by the doctor and parents / legal guardian. All medication must be in the original bottle with the dosage prescription on it and kept in the office. Students may NOT have any medication including aspirin, Tylenol, Midol, Pamprin, or any other over the counter drugs in their possession. All medication must be turned in to the office. Cough drops are kept and monitored by the homeroom teacher for grades K through 4.

Medical Issues / Allergies – The office needs to have record of any medical issues and / or allergies of a student including emergency contact information. These forms are available in the office and must be completed by the parent or guardian.

Immunizations – The following immunizations are required for attendance at any school in Pennsylvania. Proof of immunization is required prior to attendance in class.

- 4 doses of diphtheria / tetanus vaccine
- 3 doses of polio vaccine
- 2 doses of measles vaccine
- 1 dose of mumps vaccine
- 1 dose of rubella vaccine

To enter Kindergarten and grade 7, the following additional immunizations are required:

- 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine. (If 13 years of age or older, 2 doses of vaccine are required)

In grade 6, a tetanus booster is required.

If your child does not have health insurance or if the insurance does not cover immunizations, you can contact the Butler County State Health Center at (724) 287-1769. Clinics are on the third Thursday of every month. Please call for an appointment. They are located in the Monarch Building, 100 Brugh Avenue, Suite 201, Butler, PA 16001.

Physical Exams – Physical exams are required in grades K and 6th. Forms can be obtained by contacting the office. It is recommended that this exam be done by your private physician who is more familiar with your child's medical history.

Sports Physical Exams – A sports physical exam form is required to be completed either by your personal physician or the athletic association sponsored physician. For each student who wants to participate in our sports program. These forms can be obtained by contacting the BCS office.

Dental Exams – Grades K, 3rd & 7th - This exam can be done by your private dentist. The form for reporting the exam can be obtained by contacting the BCS office.

Health Screenings – Pennsylvania School Health Law requires the following screenings:

- **Hearing Screening** – Grades K-8. You can request a hearing screening at any time if you suspect that your child may have a problem.
- **Vision Screening** – Grades K-8. You can request a vision screening at any time if you suspect that your child may have a problem.
- **Growth Screening** – Grades K-8. Height and weight measurement is used to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI) for Age Percentile. The BMI for Age Percentile is used as a guideline to help assess whether an individual may be overweight or underweight. This information will be sent home to the parent / guardian of each student. BMI should be considered a screening tool only. The child's health care provider is the best person to evaluate whether or not the measurements are within a healthy range.
- **Scoliosis Screening** – Grades 6th & 7th. The purpose of this screening is to detect any abnormal curvature of the spine. In 6th grade the scoliosis screening is generally done as part of the physical exam.

HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

SAFETY

Weapons / Illegal Substances - Anything that can be construed as a weapon or illegal substance is prohibited in school. Students who bring any of these into the building or on school grounds risk serious consequences, including the possibility of expulsion.

Family Involvement - In our school it is vital to have parent-volunteers to support the many programs that are present. These programs include, but are not limited to, cafeteria helpers, play ground monitors, mystery readers, library aides, field trip chaperones, homeroom helpers, PTG, the Athletic Association and Fund Raising. These programs could not operate without volunteer services. The opportunity exists to sign up for these at orientation, by completing a volunteer request form that is sent home or by calling the office directly to get a contact name for your specific area of interest.

The minimum participation and service hours requirement is outlined in the school support contract. It is the policy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh that all parents who is (are) in any way considering serving as volunteers in any programs within our school complete the Clearance Process as outlined below. Anyone, including both paid and volunteer staff, on a parish, school or central administration level that has direct contact with minors is required to complete this process. This process has been established for the protection of our young people.

CLEARANCE PROCESS

- **Registration on Diocesan Database** – This is an online application that takes approximately 20 – 30 minutes to complete and will include a national criminal background check. Log on to the website for the Diocese of Pittsburgh at www.diopitt.org and follow the instructions for the Database Application.
- **Code of Pastoral Conduct** – This is a booklet that you must read and sign. A copy of your signed acknowledgement will be kept on file. This booklet is available from your parish or at www.diopitt.org.
- **Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance** - This form requires that a \$10 money order accompany the signed application form.
- **Protecting God's Children Training** – This is a required class that is offered by the Pittsburgh Diocese. Please check the Diocese website at www.diopitt.org for a complete schedule of locations and times.
- **FBI Clearance** - This applies to new families starting the 2009-2010 school year. The UPS Store in the K-Mart Plaza can process your applications.

Visitors – All visitors and volunteers to the school are required to sign in and out on the sheet provided in the front vestibule. A name tag **must** be filled out and worn while you are in the school. Once you are signed in and have your name tag on you will need to be "buzzed" in by the office staff. All doors will remain locked during the entire school day for the safety of the students.

Gates – For the safety of the children the upper and lower gates of the parking lots will be opened and closed at various times throughout the school day.

- **Upper Lot** – The gate on the upper lot will be closed in the morning between 7:30 and 8:15 am and then again between 2:20 and 2:45 pm.
- **Lower Lot** – The gate on the lower parking lot will be closed and locked after all the morning bus drop offs and will remain closed until 2:15 pm when the buses begin arriving for dismissal.

Discipline - Discipline has its foundation in the word discipleship. By our Baptism we have been called to be disciples of Jesus and therefore our actions and words must reflect the Gospel Message. All of us must strive to be the best possible respectful, responsible reflection of Jesus. However, realizing that we are human beings subject to making mistakes, we hold each other accountable for what we do or do not do. A detailed explanation of this policy will be sent home with the students on the first day of school.

Students in Kindergarten through third grade use variations of the “traffic light”. Each day everyone starts out on a green light. If the student needs to be moved to the red light a note goes home to the parents. Fourth grade receives notices to parents. Beginning the last quarter of the fourth grade, the students are introduced to the “check system”. Teachers send home the same explanation the students in Grade 5-8 receive in the fall. Students in fifth through eighth grade use the “check” system. This helps students grow in personal accountability for their actions. Continued unacceptable behavior will result in discussions with the administration, parents, teachers and student.

TUITION

Butler Catholic School
Tuition Schedule and Tuition Assistance Programs
School Year 2008 - 2009

Registration fees and tuition comprise 60% - 65% of the income for Butler Catholic School. Tuition assistance is available through the funds listed as well as a tuition credit program.

Catholic rates are lower due to the Parish subsidy. You may inquire about a Parish subsidy from your own Parish and possibly reduce your amount of tuition.

TUITION CREDIT: Your participation in the BC Bucks Program (gift cards) and Market Day (frozen foods) can reduce your tuition up to **\$600** per family! Butler Catholic School will split the profit made in each of these programs by a rate of 50% from July through April. These amounts will be accumulated throughout the school year and will be deducted from your final tuition payment in May. If your earned tuition credit is more than your May payment, the remaining credit will be applied against your April tuition payment.

Butler Catholic School
Tuition Schedule and Tuition Assistance Programs
School Year 2008 – 2009

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

You have an important financial decision to make for your family. You must decide how to finance your child's education at Butler Catholic School. The following is a brief summary of the tuition assistance programs available to you to help you afford this investment in your child. The Pastors and Principal at Butler Catholic School want to be a support to you in this process of financing your child's tuition. We want to make sure that you have investigated and understand every option available to you. If you have any questions, please contact the school at 724-285-4276.

Unless you clearly feel that you will not be eligible, you should apply for tuition assistance. Last year 95% of our families that applied received some level of tuition assistance for a total amount of \$36,000. We cannot give any rules of thumb of who should or should not apply based on income, since the award is dependent on a number of factors. For example, family income, number of dependents, tuition rates, the needs of other families applying, the amount of funds available to distribute and any extenuating circumstances.

In order to apply, please contact the school office to obtain a **Private School Aid Service (PSAS)** application, which requires tax return information. All information is kept strictly confidential. If you decide to apply and need help completing the application, please contact the school office.

Programs Available

- **Bishop's Education Fund (BEF)**: This grant program is for Catholic students in grades K-12 attending eligible schools and registered in eligible parishes.
- **K-12 Scholastic Opportunity Scholarship Program (SOS)**: This grant program is for any student in grades K-12 (Catholic or Non-Catholic) attending any eligible Catholic school in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.
- **Pre-School Scholastic Opportunity Scholarship Program (SOS)**: This grant program is for any Pre-Kindergarten student (Catholic or Non-Catholic) attending any eligible Catholic school in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.
- **Parish Angel Fund**: These funds are distributed by each individual parish. You must contact your Pastor to inquire about eligibility.

One last thought to leave you with regarding an education at Butler Catholic School. Things that we purchase for our children come and go, but the gifts of quality academics, stimulating faith formation, and high self-esteem they receive at Butler Catholic School last a lifetime. Thank you for giving your child that gift!

UNIFORM POLICY

Uniform Supplier - The uniform supplier for Butler Catholic School is the Robert Rose Uniform Company.

Rose Uniforms
2132 Moreland Road, Abington, PA 19001
800-527-4689

www.roseuniforms.com

Uniform Chart

* Items marked with an asterisk **MUST** be purchased thru Rose Uniform that come onsite in mid-July or via their website.

* Uniform resale dates are offered 1-2 times per year. Gently used uniforms are available to sell or purchase.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Boys</u>		<u>Girls</u>	
			<u>K-4th</u>	<u>5th-8th</u>	<u>K-4th</u>	<u>5th-8th</u>
Polo Shirt *	White Light Blue Red	Short Sleeve Long Sleeve School Logo	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blouse	White Light Blue	Short Sleeve Long Sleeve Rounded Collar			✓	✓
Banded Bottom Shirt *	White Navy	Short Sleeve Long Sleeve School Logo		✓		✓
Pants	Navy		✓	✓	✓	✓
Shorts * Aug-Oct 31 & May-EOS	Navy	Pleated Relaxed Fit	✓	✓		
Skort *	Navy				✓	✓
Skirt / Kilt *	Navy Plaid					✓
Jumper *	Navy Plaid				✓	
Sweater	Navy	Cardigan V-neck Pullover School Logo	✓	✓	✓	✓

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Ankle Socks or stockings are to be worn at all times – Peds are not permitted
- Tennis shoes are permitted
- Backless shoes or clogs are not permitted – Safety Issue
- All shoes must be securely and properly tied at all times
- Denim is not permitted – except when using a jeans/tennies pass
- Makeup is not permitted
- All shirts & blouses must be tucked in except for the banded bottom shirts
- Only the BCS logo is permitted on blouses, shirts and sweaters
- Jewelry may be worn if not a distraction
- Belts are to be worn in Grades 4-8 – both girls and boys
- Boys shorts may be worn from August thru October 31 and again from May 1 to the end of the school year
- School spirit sweatshirts & hoodies may be worn from Nov 01 thru Apr 30. Approved School Spirit wear only.

GYM UNIFORM

- Gym uniforms MUST be purchased through Butler Catholic School
- Kindergarten – students may dress for school wearing the appropriate gym uniform on their gym day.
- 1st thru 8th Grade – students must bring their gym uniform clothes to school and change for gym.

JEANS and TENNIES DAY PASS

HOW TO EARN

Students have the opportunity to earn Jeans and Tennies Passes in several ways:

- Eat Out Nights – There is a weekly Butler Catholic Night at a designated restaurant (see your monthly calendar for dates and restaurants). Students must bring their receipt to school the next day with their name and homeroom number written on the receipt. A jeans and tennies pass will be issued to all children in the family.
- PTG Meeting Attendance – If a parent or guardian attends a PTG meeting they will be asked to sign in under their child's homeroom. A jeans and tennies pass will be issued for all children in the family.
- Special Days – Occasionally Sister will designate a day as a "Free Jeans and Tennies" Day
- Student Council – Student Council will have a Jeans and Tennies Day (sometimes called a "Dress Down Day") where the students will have to pay a dollar, which will be donated to a charity, to be permitted to wear jeans and tennies.
- Market Day – Occasionally students will be able to earn a jeans and tennies pass by participating in a special event coordinated by the volunteers who operate the Market

Day Fundraiser. For example; during the pie sale – a jeans and tennies pass will be issued for every three pies that a family purchases or sells.

- Purchase – You may purchase a pack of 12 passes for \$10. Limit 3 packs per child with the first pack purchased by November 1st and the 3rd pack by March 1st. Jean passes expire at the end of the current school year.

RULES and REGULATIONS for JEANS & TENNIES DAYS

- Must turn in a Jeans and Tennies Pass on the day you wear jeans and tennies
- Blue Denim jeans are the only items allowable.
- Jeans must fit at the waist and be an appropriate length
- Blue denim capri jeans are allowable.
- No jean shorts.
- No ripped jeans
- No sweatpants, wind pants, or leggings.
- Jeans and tennies are NOT to be worn on Mass days
- Underclothing is NOT to be visible
- Skin is NOT to be visible (no midriff tops or low waist jeans allowing skin to show)
- School shirts are NOT required to be worn
- Appropriate tops or tee shirts are permitted
- No tank tops, camisoles, spaghetti straps or sleeveless shirt of any kind.
- Jeans may not be worn more than 2 times during a week.
- Passes are not transferable EXCEPT to siblings.
- School Spirit Wear order forms go home in the early fall. Students are permitted to wear school spirit wear during designated times of the year.

MISCELLANEOUS

Cell Phones – Recognizing the need for students to be in touch with parents, the existence of cell phones in school is a reality. All Butler Catholic students, regardless of age, who bring cell phones to school must have a signed parental consent form on file in the office. Upon arrival, the students will turn their phone in at the office and sign in. At dismissal they will sign them out and retrieve their phone. Disciplinary action will be taken for those who violate this policy.

Lunch Program - Butler Catholic School follows the guidelines established by the National School Lunch Program. Parents may apply for Free or Reduced Lunches by going online to www.compass.state.pa.us. **If you do not have access to a computer, please let the office know.** Students may purchase a lunch including milk or bring their lunch from home. A menu is sent home every month. Those who bring a packed lunch may purchase milk (skim, 2% white, 2% chocolate, strawberry, vanilla or whole milk). Due to the number of children in a lunch period, it is impossible to use a microwave or convection oven for the heating of packed lunches. Students in grades 5th thru 8th have the option of making their own salad from our salad bar and are permitted to purchase ice cream. Fourth graders may purchase ice cream on Fridays after Christmas.

Lunch tickets can be purchased for \$2 each. Checks can be made out to "Butler Catholic Cafeteria" and should be in an envelope marked "Lunch Tickets". Please include the student's name and homeroom number on the front of the envelope. If you have more than one child please list all of the students names and their homeroom numbers so that the lunch tickets can be distributed properly.

School Supplies - A list of supplies needed can be found on the Butler Catholic Website. Some items, such as the assignment books and some writing tablets are required to be purchased from the school. Students must carry their books in a book bag of some form. All textbooks are to be covered at all times.

GLOSSARY

CHALLENGE OF CHAMPIONS – An academic game format for students in grades four to eight sponsored by the Mid Western Intermediate Unit IV for all non-public school students. Any students in these grades at BCS may take part. It is usually held in November.

DRESS DOWN DAY – School uniforms need not be worn. Jeans, sweat pants, tee-shirts, sweat shirts may be worn to school. Clothing must be appropriate for a Catholic School student.

JEANS & TENNIS PASS – A coupon that allows the student to wear jeans, tee-shirts/sweat shirts to school on the day of his/her choice. These coupons may be obtained via purchase of book, submitting receipts on given eat-out nights or for attending certain events.

SPIRIT WEAR – Clothing with school logo on it – sweat shirts, hoodies, pants, tee-shirts are optional and can be offered for sale various times throughout the year.

Dear Parents of Butler Catholic School,

The Butler Catholic School administration and faculty are committed to teach and model Gospel values to encourage students to live their lives as a reflection of Christ. The philosophy of our school strives to recognize and respect the dignity of each person and to offer a positive, Christ-centered, safe learning environment.

Our goal is to make your child's educational experience both meaningful and productive. To accomplish that goal, every family must be informed of school policies and procedures. This handbook serves as the primary reference source for questions about the operation of Butler Catholic School.

We ask that you read the handbook thoroughly and keep it accessible. Of course, should you still have questions after referring to this handbook, the staff and I are available to assist you.

God Bless!

Sister John Ann

PLEASE PRINT, SIGN, DATE, AND RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE BY WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2009.

I have read, understand and will follow the guidelines as indicated in the Butler Catholic School handbook.

Mother/Guardian Name (Please Print)

Mother/Guardian Signature

Date

Father/Guardian Name (Please Print)

Father/Guardian Signature

Date