



*Guided by our Roman Catholic faith, Saint Patrick School prepares the whole child, spiritually, intellectually, socially, and culturally. Our mission is to help our students
TO KNOW GOD, TO LOVE GOD, TO SERVE ALL*

Parent F.A.Q.'s

This *Parent F.A.Q.'s* is a working document created with the intention of answering frequently asked questions that may fall outside of the [Student and Family Handbook](#). Please, never hesitate to contact our school administration to answer your questions.

Are there any significant expenses, beyond tuition, to plan for?

Band is required for all students beginning in 5th-grade. Parents will have the option to rent or buy an instrument for the 5th-8th grade school years.

Students are required to have a Chromebook for middle school (6th through 8th grades). The Chromebook will be used for school work and will travel to and from school with the student. The school principal will provide the option to buy the Chromebook for the student and charge the family account to pay monthly with tuition.

The school principal will work to accommodate any family who communicates financial hardship.

Does St Pats have a bus?

While St. Patrick School did have its own bus at one time, it was costly to maintain and insure. Since relatively few families opted to use the bus and busing fees did not cover the expense, this service was discontinued more than a decade ago, and the bus was sold in 2015.



However, free busing is available to all students living within the Lowell Area Schools district. Please call the bus garage (616-987-2540) to register for the bus and find out drop-off/pick-up locations.

Is hot lunch available?

St. Patrick School discontinued its hot lunch program more than a decade ago. As with the school bus route, a relatively small number of students purchased hot lunches, and it was decided school resources could be put to better use elsewhere rather than subsidizing a lunch program.

Since then, a hot lunch program has been explored many times, and it remains a possibility in the future. To make a hot lunch program a part of St. Patrick School, we need a willing person to start and run the program. It would also be necessary to ensure the program is financially viable.

In the meantime, we do have “Pizza Fridays” each week. All proceeds go to our athletic department and 8th-grade graduation funds.

Why are uniforms required?

[DRESS CODE PAGE](#)

Uniforms have long been a part of Catholic schooling tradition, and many public schools have also adopted school uniform policies in recent years.

There is some evidence to suggest that uniforms can reduce behavioral issues in the classroom and may be associated with increased academic achievement, but we find there are also convenient reasons to require student uniforms. Specifically, uniforms:

- Eliminate the need for teachers and staff to make judgment calls about what clothing is appropriate.
- Streamline mornings for students and families.
- Save families money on clothing costs.



We hear from many families that uniforms make it easy to get ready in the morning since there is no need to decide what to wear. Additionally, uniforms can reduce the amount of clothing that needs to be purchased each year since items can be easily passed down to siblings.

What athletic options are available through school?

[Athletics Page](#)

Athletic options at St. Pats are through our membership in the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council (GRACEAC). Through this league, two types of sports teams are offered: School-based and Catholic United. School-based sports are hosted at individual schools and coached by volunteers. Catholic United teams combine all the Catholic schools in our league and create at least one (sometimes more) team to compete in outside leagues or amongst ourselves, depending on the sport and number of participants. If one school does not have enough athletes to make a team, it can merge with a nearby school within the league to create a combined team.

The school year is split into four seasons: Fall, Winter 1, Winter 2, and Spring. In Fall, we offer Boys football (flag grades 3-4, tackle grades 5-8), Girls sideline cheer (grade 3-8), girls volleyball (5-8), and cross country(5-8). Winter 1 is Boys basketball (3-8) and girls competitive cheer(5-8). Winter 2 is girls basketball (3-8) and ski (6-8). Spring offers track (5-8), tennis (6-8), and girls and boys lacrosse (3-8).

What after-school activities are available through St Pats

After-school and extracurricular activities at St. Patrick School have generally included the following:

- Athletics through GRACEAC
- Open gym
- Middle school youth group
- FFA
- Science Olympiad



- Girls on the Run
- American Heritage Girls
- Boy Scouts

If you are interested in organizing a different club or after-school activity, please contact the school office with your suggestion.

When can my student start with a musical instrument?

Band is part of the daily curriculum at St. Patrick School for all students in grades 5-8 (5th-6th is three days/week).

Prior to starting 5th-grade band, students try various instruments and are “fitted” to the one that best suits their aptitude. This process is overseen by our band instructor. He will help your child choose the best instrument and guide you through the renting/purchasing process.

Meanwhile, students in grades K-4 participate in a music program focused on vocal performance and foundational skills such as rhythm, pitch, and melody. Fourth-grade students also have the opportunity to play the recorder.

What activities are available through Catholic Central/West Catholic?

St. Patrick School partners with both Catholic Central and West Catholic, and our students have the opportunity to participate in various activities at both schools. These include the following:

- Class visits during the school year
- Shadow visits for individual students
- Sports camps during the school year and summer
- Fine arts camps
- Sporting and community events throughout the year

We have also hosted visits from the schools’ bands and choirs at various times over the years.



All activities involving our partner schools are communicated through our weekly newsletter, The Shamrock.

What does PTO do?

PTO organizes events for the school.

- Welcome Picnic
- Trunk or Treat
- Pie Sale
- Breakfast with St Nicholas
- Field Day
- VIP Day
- Carnival
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Food for teachers during conferences

The group provides welcome signs for new students. It provides funding for field trips, teacher supplies, eighth-grade graduation gift, and hospitality for school visitors.

They meet on the first Wednesday of the month in the staff lounge at 6:30 pm.

What does the school board do?

The School Board consists of individuals who are either parents, alumni/parents of alums, leaders within the community, or parishioners who collectively meet bi-monthly to support decisions surrounding the school's strategic planning, formulation, and evaluation of various policies, as well as alignment regarding overall financial operations.

For more details, please visit the [School Board Webpage](#).

Can I attend a school board/finance council meeting?



These meetings are typically closed to the public, but anyone who wishes to have an in-person discussion with the board may request to attend. Please contact the school or parish office with your request to be placed on the agenda.

What does the finance council do?

The parish finance council works closely with our pastor, Fr. Tom Cavera, to ensure that the parish and school remain financially healthy. Their responsibilities include the following:

- Approving annual budgets
- Reviewing special expenditure requests
- Overseeing capital improvements
- Setting annual tuition rates
- Allocating funds for financial aid

Are there scholarships available?

Both St. Patrick School and the Diocese of Grand Rapids offer financial aid to eligible families. Parents must complete a financial aid application annually to be considered for financial assistance.

If your family experiences a change in circumstances during the school year, please speak to our principal, Scott Czarnopys. Part of our mission at St. Patrick School is to make Catholic education available and affordable for families in our community.

Why am I required to volunteer?

St. Patrick School is a private, non-profit, religious organization and does not receive any government or public funding. Instead, we depend on funding from tuition, a parish subsidy, fundraising, and donations.

To keep tuition affordable and assist those experiencing financial hardship, we have a service requirement that is intended to support community building and fundraising efforts. During the summer, families are asked to make two service commitments for the upcoming year. We provide diverse options for this commitment to accommodate our families' various schedules



and talents. Those who prefer not to complete a service commitment can choose to pay a fee and waive the requirement.

Beyond the mandatory service requirements, there may be other opportunities to volunteer throughout the year. Volunteering is not mandatory but is certainly encouraged.