

# PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

## ST. AUGUSTINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL



**“The main purpose of your having come together  
is to live harmoniously,  
being of one mind and heart on the way to God.”**

*St. Augustine*

Hoja en blanco

**Dear Parents and Students,**

Centuries ago, Saint Augustine defined peace as “tranquilitas ordinis” or the tranquility of order. As a Catholic school, our desire is to create a peaceful and orderly environment where our students can pursue their main objective of intellectual, moral and spiritual growth. For this purpose, we have defined, in this Handbook, the values, rules and procedures that are to be followed at St. Augustine Preparatory School.

As a school we recognize that unforeseen incidents and circumstances might arise during each school year. Therefore, this handbook is not meant to be an exhaustive document. Instead, it is an expression of the general values, behavior expectations and procedures that will guide our functioning as a school community.

In defining these rules and disciplinary policies, we have two main objectives:

1. To present standards of behavior that will inspire our students to practice human and Christian virtues.
2. To create certain limits that will allow our students to express their individuality and personal freedom without disrupting the rights of others to a safe, orderly and productive learning environment.

At St. Augustine, we understand that true discipline is much more than simply following the rules. Catholic educational philosophy teaches us that all disciplinary measures must have as their final goal the formation and transformation of our students’ character or, better said in religious terms, their conversion.

I invite each and every one of you to read this handbook thoroughly and discuss it with your children. We consider the registration of a student at St. Augustine Preparatory School as the expressed agreement on the part of the student and the student’s parents to observe the rules, policies and procedures found in this handbook.

Finally, I humbly ask for your prayers so that God may grant me and our teachers the wisdom to apply the contents of this handbook in a manner that will benefit all the members of our school community.

Sincerely,

**Jose Oyanguren**  
Headmaster

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**STATEMENT OF VALUES**

I understand that God's plan for me  
as a student at St. Augustine Preparatory School  
is to educate my mind and heart so that  
I may think with clarity, act with integrity and love with generosity.

As a member of my school community, I promise my teachers and classmates  
that in my thoughts, words and actions  
I will follow the Golden Rule of Our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and treat others as I want to be treated.

I will be respectful, kind and caring to those around me.  
I will do my best to make my school a place where everyone feels  
accepted, appreciated and loved.  
I will do my work with honesty, responsibility and diligence.

If I fail to live up to these values,  
I will accept the consequences of my actions without complaint.  
And with the help of God's grace,  
I will strive to become a better person each day.

**MORNING PRAYER**

God, our Father, at the beginning of this day,  
We praise you and thank you  
For the wonders of your creation.

We ask you to bless us in our learning  
And our playing together.

Let everything we do be for your greater glory  
And the greater good of our brothers and sisters.

Teach us today and always to love truth  
And to love truly.

We ask this in the name of Jesus,  
Your Son and our true Teacher. Amen

St. Augustine, pray for us. St. Monica, pray for us.

**DISMISSAL PRAYER**

God, our Father, at the end of this school day,  
We thank you for all the blessings we have received.

We ask you to forgive us our failings and to grant us  
The grace to come back tomorrow, willing to be  
Better disciples of your son Jesus.

Guide and protect us during the rest of this day.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our true Teacher. Amen.

St. Augustine, pray for us. St. Monica, pray for us.

## **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

St. Augustine Preparatory School is a private, Catholic, co-educational, college preparatory school with English as the primary language of instruction.

### **SCHOOL MISSION**

Guided by the Gospel and inspired by the life and thought of St. Augustine of Hippo, our mission as an educational community is to seek together through faith and reason knowledge of ourselves, of the world and of God. We strive to engage our students in this mission by providing them with a challenging and well-integrated educational program that fosters their physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual development as they prepare for further academic pursuits and their future lives. The ideal St. Augustine graduate will be a young person who will think with clarity, act with integrity and love with generosity.

### **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

The restless love of truth, so central in the life of St. Augustine, is the foundation of our Augustinian education. We want our students to be intellectually curious, rigorous and independent thinkers unsatisfied with easy answers and willing to search continuously for a deeper understanding of themselves and of the world. For this purpose we provide our students with a rich, challenging and structured curriculum that will prepare them for future university studies, and more importantly, set them on the path for a life-long pursuit of truth, understanding and wisdom in their lives.

As a Catholic school, we understand our mission is to educate the whole person, taking into consideration all the aspects of a student's being: body, mind, heart and spirit. We believe students must be both challenged and nurtured to achieve the highest standards of excellence in all their endeavors. Therefore, we offer our students a variety of opportunities to develop all their God-given talents through participation in sports, the arts, community service and spiritual formation activities.

Likewise, the formation of our students' character is integral to our mission. Besides challenging our students to live according to universal human values such as honesty, respect and responsibility, we also invite them to listen to the call of the Gospel of Jesus and to let God's grace transform their lives so that beyond living a good human life, they may also aspire to lead a truly holy life.

### **SCHOOL BELIEFS**

We believe:

- Parents are the primary educators of their children. As professional educators, we simply assist parents in this God-given responsibility.
- In a well-structured academic curriculum that is rich in content, based on The Core Knowledge Sequence, which emphasizes knowledge that is solid, specific, sequenced and shared.
- In a liberal arts approach to education that challenges students to acquire breadth as well as depth of knowledge of both themselves as human beings and of the world in which they live.

- In educating the student as a whole person, made up of body, mind, heart and spirit.
- Students should be challenged to achieve a synthesis between reason and faith and faith and life as they go through the different stages of their education.
- A peaceful and orderly school environment is necessary for students to concentrate on their main objectives of intellectual, moral and spiritual growth.
- In character formation that encourages students to practice human and Christian virtues.
- In promoting in our students a spirit of service to the communities to which they belong: family, school, Church, society, world.
- In promoting in our Nicaraguan students a love for our country and a desire to work for its development.
- In fostering an international spirit in our students based on Catholic Social Doctrine, which sees the world as a family of nations that must work together for the common good.
- In teaching our students to understand our environment as God's creation which demands from us a commitment to a moral and ethical stewardship of all natural resources.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AUGUSTINIAN EDUCATION**

**Knowledge of the inner self (Interiority):** According to St. Augustine, the search for truth/meaning/wisdom must begin in a person's inner being: "Do not wander far and wide but return into yourself. Deep within the person there dwells the truth." ("Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi. In interiore homine habitat veritas.")

An Augustinian student should have a sense of identity and be in touch with that inner life which makes one capable of introspection, reflection, self-criticism and independent thinking.

**A restless search for Truth:** St. Augustine understood that the search for truth is a life-long pursuit. He believed that one must "search in ways to make discoveries, and discover in ways to keep on searching". As we look inside ourselves we begin to discover that we are a mystery to ourselves ("magna quaestio"), a mystery whose real meaning can be found only in God. "Lord, You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You".

An Augustinian student, therefore, must be someone who is intellectually curious ("restless") and who desires to grow constantly in knowledge, understanding and wisdom. The Augustinian student will not be satisfied by easy and superficial answers. Each will strive to think deeply and independently about the great questions of life which for St. Augustine were all summed up in a desire to know God and one's soul ("Deum et animam scire cupio").

**A Sense of Community (Learning with others and for others):** St. Augustine was deeply aware of the social/communal aspect of human beings. The search for truth and the journey of faith were for him both a personal as well as a communal experience: "In the school of the Master-Jesus- we are all fellow students."

An Augustinian education teaches students to value dialogue and team-work as necessary elements of the learning process; it teaches students to be tolerant of other people's ideas and beliefs while at the same time encourages them to express their own ideas and beliefs clearly and rationally.

Beyond establishing the importance of communal learning, an Augustinian education fosters in students a desire to contribute to the greater good and to serve the communities to which they belong i.e. family, school, Church, society and world. It instills in students principles of Christian solidarity that move students to look beyond their own self-interests and consider the interests of their fellow human beings.

## **SCHOOL'S RELIGIOUS IDENTITY**

St. Augustine is a Catholic school committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The school has chosen the great thinker and Doctor of the Church, St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), as its inspiration and patron saint for two reasons:

- 1) His life as both a thinker and saint expresses our school's desire to be a community where through faith and reason we seek together knowledge of ourselves, of the world and of God.
- 2) His own transformation from great sinner to great saint is a wonderful and inspiring testimony of the power of God's grace and a reminder of our own call to conversion and holiness.

## **ACCREDITATION AND MEMBERSHIPS**

St. Augustine is accredited by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education.

We are members of:

- AASCA, the Association of American Schools in Central America.
- The Tri-Association of American Schools in Mexico, Central America, Colombia and the Caribbean.
- AAIE, the Association for the Advancement of International Education.
- NAESP, the National Association of Elementary School Principals.
- "Schools: Partners for the Future" (PASCH), a worldwide project of the German government to promote learning of German and German culture.

## **ADMISSIONS**

All admissions decisions are taken with these general criteria in mind:

- A non-discrimination policy regarding applicants, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or ethnic background.
- The applicant's potential to benefit from the education offered at St. Augustine.
- The school's capacity to serve the educational needs of the applicant.

### **Admissions requirements include:**

- A completed application form with all the required records: birth certificate, baptismal certificate (when applicable), health record (including vaccination record), two passport size photos.
- A review of the applicant's grades from two previous academic years.
- For PK to 1st grade applicants: a hearing and eye examination.
- An academic evaluation by the teacher of the grade in which the student wishes to be enrolled. This may include both an oral and written evaluation.
- Attendance at the Admissions Orientation Meeting, or an interview with the applicant's parents.

As a Catholic school, St. Augustine requires all its students to take religion classes during all their years at school. Students are also required to participate in all school activities such as masses and retreats. Students with other religious affiliation or with no religious affiliation are admitted under the same requirements.

## **SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION**

St. Augustine is committed to providing parents with general school information by means of our school's website ("<http://www.csa.edu.ni>") where regularly information is posted about events and related issues. The school calendar and the Student-Parent Handbook can be found in the website. Information about emergency school closings is communicated via emails and posted on website.

## **PARENTS' ASSOCIATION**

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in St. Augustine's Parent's Association. Every year parents are invited to participate in the election of officers of this Association which oversees different types of activities such as the yearly Kermesse and many other events that enhance our school life. Our Parent's Association also serves as a channel of communication between parents and school administrators to express concerns as well as positive feedback.

## **II. ACADEMICS**

### **ENGLISH AS PRIMARY LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION**

English is the primary language of instruction. All courses are taught in English with the exception of Religion, Physical Education, Spanish and other modern language courses. Students are required to speak English in the classroom.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT (ELS)**

St. Augustine has an English language support teacher to help students who show deficiency in English skills. Students can be recommended for ELS by their English teachers. The ELS teacher may offer special assistance to students with deficiency regarding grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension and writing. A student may receive ELS until the student's regular English teacher feels that he or she has reached the required English level for the grade.

Newly admitted students from Spanish schools will also receive ELS unless teachers consider such assistance unnecessary.

### **CORE KNOWLEDGE SEQUENCE**

Our elementary and middle school curriculum is based on The Core Knowledge Sequence, a curricular guide designed by The Core Knowledge Foundation.

The Core Knowledge Sequence is grounded on the belief that knowledge is sequential, that is, that knowledge builds on itself. Given this fact, it is absolutely necessary to ensure that the student is initially well prepared. Therefore, it is necessary to know with clarity what it is that a student is expected to know at each education level. The main purpose of the Core Knowledge Sequence, then, is to provide parents, teachers, and students with a specific and sequential guide of the learning objectives for students in each grade.

The Core Knowledge Sequence is a curricular guide that emphasizes content, i.e. the concrete body of knowledge that the student is expected to master. The Core Knowledge Sequence does not impose any teaching method. At St. Augustine Preparatory School, teachers will employ a variety of teaching techniques and strategies, as well as a variety of assessment tools, in order to assure the most efficient transmission of the content laid out in the Sequence.

### **SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM**

Our secondary school is divided into our Middle School grades, 6th, 7th and 8th, and our High school grades: 9-12th. Our high school program is structured as a college preparatory curriculum.

**Our graduation requirements:**

<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Courses</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Years</b>
English	English	9	1
	British Tradition	10	1
	U.S. Literature	11	1
	World Literature	12	1
<b>Total Years Required</b>			<b>4</b>
Mathematics	Geometry	9	1
	Algebra II	10	1
	Pre-Calculus	11	1
	Calculus	12	1
	College Algebra	12	1
	Statistics	12	1
<b>Total Years Required</b>			<b>4</b>
Social Studies	World History I	9	1
	European History	10	1
	U.S. History	11	1
	Government		0.5
	Economics		0.5
	Sociology		0.5
<b>Total Years Required</b>			<b>4</b>
Spanish	Spanish	9	
	Spanish (Nic. Literature)	10	
	Spanish (Lat. Literature)	11	
	AP Spanish Literature	12	
<b>Total Years Required</b>			<b>4</b>
Science	Biology	9	1
	Chemistry	10	1
	Physics	11	1
	AP Biology		1
<b>Total Years Required</b>			<b>3</b>
Religion	Introduction to Catholicism		1
	New Testament		1
	Ethics and Morality		1
	Catholic History and Spirituality		1
<b>Total Years Required</b>			<b>4</b>
Philosophy	Introduction to Philosophy		0.5
<b>Total Years Required</b>			<b>0.5</b>
Technology	Computer Class		0.5
<b>Total Years Required</b>			<b>0.5</b>

**Other Graduation Requirements:**

Requirements for the Nicaraguan Bachillerato, Electives, and Community service hours.

**HONOR PROGRAMS/CLASSES AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSES.**

Students who have demonstrated high academic achievements will be able to enroll in honors programs/courses and Advanced Placement courses. The requirements for admissions into these special programs/classes will include academic and conduct grades and teacher recommendations. To enroll in an Honors Program/Class or AP class, a student should have a B+ (87 and above) in the previous course and a G (Good) in conduct for the previous grading period. Grades in Honors classes and AP courses will be weighted. A 0.5 point will be given in Honors programs/courses and a 1.00 point will be given to A.P. courses. Grades in the D range will not receive this extra weight.

Students enrolled in AP courses are expected to take the AP exams in May and are expected to pay for those exams at the beginning of the year.

**EXTRACURRICULAR SPORTS PROGRAM**

As part of our mission to educate the whole person i.e. body, mind, heart and spirit, our school offers a variety of opportunities for our students to practice sports. We have soccer and basketball teams in different categories, as well as a Track and Field team. We participate as a school in different sports tournaments as well as organizing our own sports events. To participate in the sports program, students must meet academic requirements i.e. no grade lower than a C; and no conduct grade lower than Satisfactory. Students in academic or behavior probation are not eligible to participate in the sports program.

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The school provides at all grade levels a variety of extra-curricular activities that include sports, music, dance, religious education, academic enrichment and community service. All of these activities help in carrying out St. Augustine's mission to offer a well-integrated educational experience. Through these activities, students have an opportunity to develop their special talents, learn about team work and develop a sense of civic responsibility and Christian solidarity. Student clubs must be approved by the Headmaster and have a faculty mentor.

Participation in these activities, once again, is conditioned on good academic performance i.e. no grade lower than a C; and satisfactory conduct grades. Students on academic or behavior probation are not allowed to participate in school-sponsored extra-curricular activities, unless they have a special dispensation by the area principal.

NOTE:

- To run for student government or offices in any of the school clubs, the same conditions apply.
- Student clubs must be approved by the headmaster and have a faculty advisor.

**ACADEMIC CALENDAR**

The school year consists of a minimum 180 teaching days from the beginning of August to the beginning of June. The year is divided into two semesters and four quarters.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

PK:	7:30 a.m. -- 12:00 p.m.
ELEMENTARY:	7:30 a.m. – 2: 05 p.m.
SECONDARY:	7:30 a.m.—2:10 p.m.

The school is responsible for students from 7:05 a.m. to 2: 30 p.m. Students who participate in extra-curricular activities must be picked up no later than 3:30 p.m. After this time, the school is not responsible for supervising these students.

**GRADING SYSTEM**

In Pre-Kinder and Kindergarten, student progress is shown on the report cards with the following letter grades:

**E: Excellent.** Consistently and independently demonstrates skills, knowledge and/or behavior.

**S: Satisfactory.** Demonstrates skills, knowledge and/or behavior inconsistently or only after given extra time and practice.

**NI: Needs more practice.** Skills, knowledge and/or behavior below grade level expectations. Student may benefit from more support.

Elementary grades receive a combination of letter and number grades, following this table:

Letter Grade	Number Grade	Description
A	90-100	Excellent
B	80-89	Good
C	70-79	Satisfactory
D	60-69	Deficient
F	0-59	Failing

Middle school and high school grades are calculated according to this table:

Letter Grade	Percent Grade	GPA Equivalent
A	93-100	4.00
A-	90-92	3.67
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	65-66	1.00
D-	60-64	0.67
F	0-59	0

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Besides an academic grade, students will receive a conduct grade that will evaluate behavior based on these criteria:

**E (Excellent):** will be given to a student who is always punctual, prepared for class, cooperative and actively engaged in class. The student should exemplify the school values of honesty, respect, responsibility and Christian love.

**G (Good):** will be given to a student who complies with school rules most of the time and commits only minor faults.

**S (Satisfactory):** will be given to a student who commits minor faults and whose misconduct is disruptive in the classroom.

**NI (Needs Improvement):** will be given to students who fail regularly to conduct themselves according to our school values e.g. the student is tardy, unprepared, uncooperative, disengaged in class, and regularly commits serious infractions.

**U (Unsatisfactory):** will be given to students whose conduct is disruptive of class; who do not respond well to teachers' disciplinary measures and who systematically reject the standards of conduct held by the school.

## **QUARTER EXAMS**

Beginning in 7th grade, students take quarter exams which are worth 25% of their quarter grades. High school students (9-12) with an average of 95 or above in a class may be exempt from taking the quarter exam in that class. This does not apply to Math and English courses. In order to be exempt from Quarter tests students must also have a conduct grade of Good or above in the class. In AP classes students may be exempted only in fourth quarter. There are no exemptions in courses that are taken for just a semester.

Absences during Quarter exams must be justified by a Doctor's excuse. If the reason for the absence is not medical, then parents must come to school to explain and justify the student's absence before the student is allowed to take the test. A new quarter exam will be prepared in this case.

The school does not approve of scheduling quarter exams early due to travel plans, but if it is absolutely necessary, the student will be allowed to take the test on the last day that he/she can attend school and with a penalty of 6 points off from the grade, which in most cases will result in a drop in a letter grade.

## **REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

Report Cards are issued at the end of each quarter. Parents must come to school to pick report cards up. Midway through each quarter, a Progress Report is issued to let parents know how their children are progressing in their schoolwork. These Progress Reports are sent home and must be returned signed by parents by the following day. Progress Reports of students with grades lower than C or Satisfactory must be picked up at school during a Parent-Teacher conference.

Report cards and/or transcripts or any other school-related documents are not issued to parents who have outstanding fees with the school. Students who have pending items with the school library will not receive report cards as well.

## **ONLINE GRADES (PARENTSWEB)**

Through the school website (ParentsWeb) parents and students have on-line access to information regarding grades, homework, teacher lesson plans, behavior reports and general information about school activities.

It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain their online grade book updated.

It is the parent's responsibility to periodically check information online.

## **ACADEMIC HONORS**

**Headmaster's List:** At the end of each quarter, students from grades 4-12 who have obtained A's in all their subjects and E's (Excellent) in their conduct grades, will be recognized in the Headmaster's List.

**Honor Roll:** Students who have obtained all A's and a maximum of two B's (no less than 85) in their classes and conduct grades of Excellent and Good, will be placed on the Honor Roll.

At the end of the school year, students from grades 4-12 may be promoted to the following grade with the following honors:

**Summa Cum Laude:** In high school, this honor is given to students with an accumulative average of 3.9 – 4.00 and conduct grades of Excellent or Good only. In elementary and middle school, this applies to students with A's in all their subjects and conduct grades of Excellent or Good only.

**Magna Cum Laude:** In high school, this honor is given to students with an accumulative average of 3.7 – 3.89 and conduct grades of Excellent or Good only. In elementary and middle school, this applies to students with all A's except one B (no less than 85) and conduct grades of Excellent or Good only.

**Cum Laude:** In high school, this honor is given to students with an accumulative average of 3.5 – 3.69 and conduct grades of Excellent or Good only. In elementary and middle school, this applies to students with all A's except for two B's (no less than 85) and conduct grades of Excellent or Good only.

**ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS:** At the end of the year, teachers will also recognize the academic achievements of the student holding the highest and second highest average in each subject matter.

## **END OF THE YEAR PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY**

At the PK and Kindergarten level, the promotion or retention of a student will be decided on academic criteria as well as social maturity.

Promotion to the next grade depends on the student's satisfactory completion of the required curriculum.

Failing grades (F) in three or more subjects will result in the student's failing the year. The school will evaluate the circumstances that led to the student's academic failure and if these involve unmanageable conduct problems, lack of parental involvement or a learning disability that the school is unable to cope with, the school may decide to deny enrollment for the next year. If the school decides that the student could benefit from repeating the year, the school will grant that student enrollment under Academic Probation Status.

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**END OF THE YEAR REMEDIAL WORK AND MAKE UP WORK**

Failing grades for a maximum of two courses will require remedial work (either summer school or private tutoring). The student may be required to take courses available locally or to study for a make-up test. Make-up tests will be administered only once. Promotion to the next grade level for a student will depend on the completion of remedial work to the school's satisfaction and passing the make-up exam. The grade for the class will be the minimum passing grade. The student who is promoted by way of make-up work will be placed on academic probation for the following year.

Students with final grades in the D range in core academic subjects may be required to do remedial work over the summer in order to be better prepared for the next academic year.

When a student fails a grade in Middle school, the school will study the case carefully to determine the causes of the student's poor academic performance and if the school decides that the student will not benefit from repeating the grade, the school may decide to deny enrollment.

**ACADEMIC PROBATION**

When a student receives two D's or lower in a grading period, that student may be placed on Academic Probation. A meeting is called to inform the parents of the school's decision. Together with the school's counselor, a plan of action is developed to help the student improve the academic performance. Concrete academic goals are set for the student in terms of the desired grades which must be obtained to lift the Academic Probation i.e. no grades lower than a C. Depending on the time in the school year when the student is placed on Probation, the school will decide how much time it can give that student to meet the new academic goals. At the end of this period, based on the student's performance, the school will decide if the student continues on Probation, is taken off Probation, or is denied enrollment.

**III. DISCIPLINE RULES AND POLICIES**

**ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

The most basic responsibility of a student is to attend class. Students and parents must take this responsibility seriously. Parents must teach respect for the school calendar and schedule by abstaining, whenever possible, from scheduling activities that will disrupt a student's school work such as medical, dental appointments, holiday trips etc.

There are two kinds of absences from school, excused and unexcused. Students with excused absences will have the opportunity to make up work and tests. Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to make up missed work. Parents must call to inform the school of a student's absence and send a note on the first day the student returns to school. The student must turn in the letter explaining his/her absence to the school receptionist. Once the area principal has seen the excuse, the student will get a slip indicating that the student has the right to make up missed work. A parent's note/letter, however, may be an explanation for a student's absence, but it is not automatically considered a justification for the absence.

It is the full responsibility of the student or the student's parents to find out about class assignments and tests missed due to the absence and to take the necessary steps to make up such work. The teacher and/or principal

will decide the appropriate time frame for making up missed work. If the student fails to comply with the new deadline, no credit for that assignment will be granted.

For anticipated absences, parents must write a letter explaining the reason for the absence.

A doctor's note is required in cases of prolonged absences i.e. longer than three days or for absences during a test/presentation/project/evaluation of any type.

Eighteen absences are equivalent to 10% of the academic year, and even when justified, may endanger a student's promotion to the next grade.

Absences due to extra-curricular activities representing the school must meet the following criteria:

- The student cannot have any grade lower than a C in the previous grading period including current grades, and no conduct grade less than Satisfactory.
- The student cannot be on any probationary status, i.e. academic or behavior probation.
- The work missed during the absence must be made up after the student returns to school. The student may not turn in work in advance or take tests in advance unless he/she has the Headmaster's approval.
- Excessive early dismissals will also be considered a serious disciplinary issue.
- Absences in a particular class may endanger the student's receiving credit for that class if these absences total 10%.
- Skip days are not authorized and will be considered unjustified absences.

Note:

If a student wishes to participate in an extra-curricular activity that is not sponsored by the school, the same requirements apply.

## **POLICY FOR MAKING UP MISSED ASSIGNMENTS**

Those students who are allowed to make up work must arrange with the teacher in question and/or principal for a deadline to turn in work or to take any pending exam. If the student fails to meet the new make-up deadline without a justifiable reason, then that student loses the right to make up that particular assignment or test.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

If a student needs to leave school before the regular dismissal time, a signed note is required from the student's parents. Also the early dismissal request must be signed by the area principal and be presented to the security staff at the gate in order for the student to be allowed to leave school premises. If the area principal is not available at the moment when the slip needs to be signed, then the slip can be signed by the school counselor, school nurse or the administrative director.

At the secondary level, attendance is taken in each individual class; therefore, excessive absences due to early dismissals will also be considered a disciplinary issue.

Eighteen absences in a year-long class or nine absences in a semester class will be considered grave and may cause the student to fail the particular class.

## **TARDINESS**

Students who arrive late at school will be sanctioned in the following manner:

Tardy three times: One Friday detention for 1 hour.

Tardy six times: Two Friday detentions.

Tardy nine times: One in school suspension.

Late arrivals are counted by quarter.

Tardiness to class will be sanctioned in the same manner.

## **UNIFORM DRESS CODE**

The purpose of a uniform dress code is to assure that an appropriate learning environment is created for our students. The school uniform is as follows:

For boys, straight-cut, dark blue uniform trousers with a black leather belt; a white oxford shirt (for elementary); white polo shirt (for MS and HS) with the school emblem on the left side; black, leather shoes, with white socks (no ankle socks). All these items must be in good condition and must be worn in their proper size (that is, pants cannot be too short, too tight, or low riding). Shirts must be tucked in at all times. Only white undershirts may be worn.

For girls, dark blue skirts, or pants; white oxford shirt (for elementary); white polo shirts (for MS and HS) with the school emblem on the left side; black, leather shoes, white socks (no ankle socks). Once again, all these items must be in good condition and must be worn in their proper size (that is pants and/or skirts cannot be too short, too tight, or low riding). Shirts must be tucked in at all times.

For pre-school (PK and Kinder) the uniform is the following:

White oxford shirt with the school emblem on the left pocket; for the boys, gray shorts; for the girls, gray skirts. Black leather shoes with white socks are required.

The P.E. uniform for boys and girls is as follows: school P.E. shorts; school P.E. T-shirt, appropriate sports shoes.

5th grade to 8th grade: boys and girls must wear sweatpants for P.E. instead of shorts.

9th grade- 12th grade: students may wear the P.E. uniform to school if they wear sweatpants; if students prefer to wear shorts for P.E. they must come to school wearing their regular uniform (including shoes) and change for P.E. class only.

**OTHER RULES CONCERNING PERSONAL GROOMING:**

Both boys and girls must have traditional hairstyles. No extravagant hairstyles are allowed; no hair dyeing. Boys must have short hair; girls with long hair must have it properly groomed.

When necessary, boys must be clean-shaven. Girls are not allowed to wear makeup including nail-polish. No jewelry is accepted other than a watch, a chain with a religious symbol and simple small earrings for girls.

School caps may be worn during P.E. or during any outdoor activity, including recess and lunch.

Given the constant changes in fashion, the school reserves the right to forbid any type of fashion or style that will go against the serious, academic environment we wish to maintain for our students.

Those students who fail to wear their uniform correctly or fail to follow the personal grooming rules will be sanctioned with detentions/suspensions according to the disciplinary system.

If after several sanctions the student continues to violate the uniform and personal grooming rules, entrance to class will be denied until there is full compliance with school rules.

**MINOR MISCONDUCT**

- Tardiness.
- Improper uniform and personal grooming problems.
- Disrupting class; breaking classroom rules.
- Eating or drinking in class or in other restricted areas such as the library, the chapel, school offices.
- Running in the halls.
- Littering; carelessness regarding personal possessions, for example, books, school supplies etc.

These actions will be considered “serious misconduct” if non-compliance continues.

**SERIOUS MISCONDUCT**

- Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. All students found guilty of such actions as cheating on tests, homework assignments, and projects, and those involved in plagiarism will be sanctioned. No student may assist another student in any of these activities and also will be sanctioned. Any action that diminishes the authenticity of the student’s work will be considered cheating.
- Skipping class; lying to get out of a class; when a student is not in class, it must be proven that another school official knew of the whereabouts of that student or such an absence from class will be considered to be skipping.
- Lying; falsifying any type of information in oral or written form.
- Disrespectful attitudes or actions to a teacher or staff member such as inappropriate words or gestures. Failure to obey a teacher or any school staff member. Failure to provide information required by a teacher or school staff member.
- Disrespectful attitudes or actions to another student, i.e. nicknames and teasing.

- Physical violence of any type e.g. fist fights, pushing and shoving. Physical violence, even when in self-defense, will be sanctioned.
- Verbal intimidation and threats. Bullying will not be tolerated in school. Bullying out of school if it should affect the other student's right to come to school feeling safe and secure will be sanctioned as well. This applies to cyber bullying.
- Public displays of affection.
- Negative attitudes towards schoolwork. Repetitive class disruption.
- Stealing; the actual taking or attempting to take any one else's property, even if it is done as a prank.
- Vandalism: partial or total damage done to another's property, including the school's (textbooks, library books, sports equipment, furniture, lab equipment, lockers, etc.). Destructive behavior displayed during end of the year celebrations falls under this policy. Besides normal disciplinary actions, the student who engages in vandalism will have to pay for the damage.
- Bringing forbidden items to school. Special seriousness will be given to any item that could be used in any way to harm other, or school property (e.g. matches, lighters, fireworks, knives, sharp objects, guns (of any kind-real or toy). Strictly forbidden items are: cigarettes or any form of tobacco, drugs of any kind (illegal and prescription), alcoholic beverages, pornographic materials, printed material that offends the common values of the school.
- Coming to school under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Disrespectful attitudes or actions during Mass or any other religious activity.
- Disrespectful attitudes or actions towards the national symbols or school symbols.

## **DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS: DETENTION, SUSPENSION, PROBATION, EXPULSION**

Detentions and suspensions are a generally accepted means to teach students the negative consequences of their misconduct.

At St. Augustine, teachers may assign a lunch detention for any occurrence of the minor misconduct.

After a student has received three repeated lunch detentions, then the student will be given a Friday detention. After receiving three Friday detentions, the student may then be suspended.

Note: During a detention period, i.e. lunch or Friday after-school, as well as during an in-school suspension, students may be asked to perform service activities such as cleaning up classrooms, picking up trash etc.

There may be times when the student's behavior calls for a more appropriate or creative manner of correction than the ones normally used at school, for example, writing reflection papers, doing community service or other activities within the parameters that protect the student's dignity. These alternative forms of correction will be discussed with and approved by the Headmaster.

## ***School Handbook***

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Although there is a cumulative aspect to our discipline program, it must be stated clearly that a serious misconduct can be sanctioned directly with an in-school suspension, a suspension at home or expulsion, even if the student did not have a previous disciplinary sanction.

Anything that falls under serious misconduct will be reported directly to the Headmaster's office and will be sanctioned appropriately.

The Headmaster can assign the following sanctions:

- Friday after school detention (1 hour)
- In-school suspension from one to three days. In this case, the student will receive a grade of 59 (F) for all the tests or assignments programmed for the days of suspension. Elementary students are allowed to make up work missed due to an in-school suspension.
- At home suspension from one to five days or longer if the situation calls for it. In this case, the student will receive a grade of 0 for all the tests or assignments programmed for the days of suspension.

If the "at home suspension" falls on a day or days where a major assessment was scheduled, this may be re-scheduled with the understanding that the student can receive a 59 as the highest grade.

### **ACADEMIC DETENTION**

Beginning in third grade, teachers may give students who fail to do their homework an academic lunch detention when they will have to complete all or most of the homework that was not done the previous day. After three academic detentions, there will be a parent-teacher conference.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

If a student is found guilty of cheating, the following measures will be taken.

First offense: The student will receive a 0 for the assignment/test/project/homework in question. The student will also receive a one hour Friday detention. Parents will be notified of the incident.

Second offense: The student will receive a 0 for the assignment/test/project/homework in question. Student will have two Friday detentions. There will be a conference with the student's parents.

Third offense: The student will be placed on Behavior Probation. Parents will be notified.

### **BEHAVIOR PROBATION**

A student may be placed on Behavior Probation for the following reasons:

- Receiving a grade of NI or U in one or more classes.
- Repeated sanctions: lunch, after- school detentions.
- A serious incident of misbehavior.

When a student is placed in Behavior Probation, the parents are called in and informed of the situation. Together

with the school's counselor a plan is elaborated to help the student improve his/her behavior. The student and parents are clearly informed of the school's expectations with regard to the changes that need to take place in the student's behavior as well as the time frames for such changes. Depending of the time when the student is placed in Behavior Probation, the school will decide how much time it can give the student to meet his/her new behavior goals. At the end of the Behavior Probation period, based on the student's discipline record and grades, the school will decide if the student is given more time, is taken off Probation, or is denied enrollment.

## **REQUEST FOR STUDENT'S WITHDRAWAL AND EXPULSION**

After a long process of evaluation involving teachers and parents, the school may come to the conclusion that:

- The student is not benefiting from continuing at St. Augustine's because of poor academic performance, and or
- The school cannot accommodate the special needs of the student.

In this case, the school will request the withdrawal of the student from St. Augustine.

When a student's conduct goes against the values of the school to such a degree that the student's permanence in school is considered to be personally detrimental or to the school community, the school will make decision to expel the student. The Headmaster will make this decision after a process of evaluation in which all parties i.e. teachers, students and parents will be given an opportunity to express their views.

## **SEARCHES**

If the school authorities have reasonable cause to believe that a student is in possession of any of the items forbidden on school campus, especially items that may place others in danger or be destructive to school property, the area Principal or Headmaster will authorize or conduct a search of that student including his/her belongings.

If a prohibited item is found, parents will be notified immediately and required to come to school to withdraw the student. Depending on the nature of the item, the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

## **LOCKERS**

Middle school and high school students are assigned a locker at the beginning of the year. This locker must have a lock at all times. Books and materials must be placed inside the locker, not on top of it. Students who fail to use their lockers properly will lose the locker privilege. The students must take good care of their lockers, that is, no denting or permanent decorations. The school reserves the right to search students' lockers at any time. Tampering with other's lockers will be considered serious misconduct.

## **CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phones are allowed in school, but students must keep their phones at all times either in their book bags or lockers. If a teacher sees a student with a cell phone, the teacher will confiscate the cell phone and take it to the office. The cell phone will be confiscated for three days.

Cell phones may be used ONLY during dismissal time. Students are not allowed to make or receive phone calls during the school day. The student is not allowed to chat during any time of the school day. If a student is a repeated offender, the right to bring a cell phone to school may be cancelled.

Cameras are strictly forbidden on school campus. The use of cell phones as cameras falls under this same policy.

## **NO SOLICITATION**

Students are not allowed to traffic in buying and selling items. Teachers are also strictly forbidden from such activity with students.

## **BEHAVIOR ON THE BUS**

There is a school staff member on each bus to make sure that students behave properly and safely. All of the school's disciplinary rules and procedures also apply on the bus. In addition, students must follow the Bus Rules and Guidelines Form which must be signed by students and parents.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY (the text in bold comes from a policy formulated by The Association for the Advancement of International Education--AAIE).**

**No student shall possess, use, transmit, or attempt to possess, use or transmit, or to be under the influence of any of the following substances on school premises, or off school premises during school sponsored or school – related functions or events:**

**Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by Nicaraguan or international law included but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine or barbiturate.**

**Any pharmaceutical without the knowledge and permission of parents;**

**Any abusive use of glue, aerosols, or any type of other chemical substance for inhalation; Any intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior altering drugs; any alcohol or alcoholic beverage.**

**The possession, use or transmittal of paraphernalia related to these prohibited substances is also prohibited, as well as the sale or attempted sale of what is represented to be any of the above-listed substances.**

**“Use” by definition occurs when a student has voluntarily introduced, by any means, into his or her body a prohibited substance recently enough that it is detectable by the student’s physical appearance, actions, breath, speech, or chemical analysis.**

Students who violate this policy will be given an immediate at-home suspension. The school will initiate the process of determining the student’s expulsion from school. If there is enough evidence that a student is coming to school under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the school will inform the parents and request a random alcohol/drug test at the parents’ expense. If the parents refuse to do this, the student will receive an immediate at-home suspension and the school will begin the process of determining the student’s expulsion from school.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Although the school cannot possibly monitor the wide scale use or misuse of technology by our students, especially off campus, the school will take seriously the cases reported by either students or parents regarding such issues as cyber bullying or other misuses of technology, since these may have a negative impact on a student’s right to feel safe and welcome at school. The same disciplinary sanctions will be used in these cases.

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## **ATHLETIC DISCIPLINE CODE**

Representing the school by being on our sports teams is a privilege that must be earned and respected by our athletes. Athletes can have no grade lower than a C in their classes and a minimum conduct grade of Satisfactory. If students fail to meet these requirements, they may be temporarily or permanently suspended from the team. If any team member is found guilty of serious misconduct, temporary or permanent suspension from the team may result.

The members of our sports teams must also comply with the rules and procedures laid out in Athletic Discipline Code.

## **OFF CAMPUS BEHAVIOR**

Although we firmly believe that the behavior of students off campus is the responsibility of the students and their parents, as a school that cares about our students' moral development, we are also concerned with how students behave once they leave school premises. We will take special consideration of any incident that happens off campus but may have a negative impact on a student's right to feel safe once back at school. Students must be aware that with or without the school uniform, they represent our school to the larger community. The school has the right and obligation to protect its reputation as an educational institution. When students engage in improper, illegal or immoral behavior, with or without the school uniform, the school may reserve the right to take appropriate disciplinary actions against all of those students.

# **IV. STUDENT SERVICES**

## **SCHOOL COUNSELOR**

Our School Counseling Program includes a broad range of services to help students capitalize on their strengths and reach their higher levels of development. The School Counselor provides direct attention to students, parents, and teachers through preventive services, developmental activities, and assistance in creating plans of action for students who give evidence of academic or emotional difficulties. Assisted by teachers and the school administration, the counselor regularly develops, schedules and evaluates the provisions of the counseling program.

Based on student needs and in order to address different issues, the School Counseling Program offers several types of services.

**Individual counseling:** The counseling program allows the School Counselor to assist students' educational and personal concerns on an individual basis. The individual counseling sessions are designed to help students make and follow appropriate plans of action to address their specific concerns.

**Group counseling:** Group counseling allows small groups of students to share ideas about specific issues such as conflict-resolution and peer-relationships. These sessions are led by the School Counselor and they help students share ideas and resolve their concerns through peer-support systems.

**Group guidance:** The group guidance sessions are led by teachers and/or the School Counselor. These instructional sessions help students better understand themselves and their development, by addressing topics like self-image, study-skills, health-habits, peer-relationships, etc.

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**Curriculum Guidance:** The School Counseling Program develops learning goals and instructional strategies to assist with students' personal, social and educational development. The School Counselor helps teachers incorporate these goals and strategies into daily instruction by providing them with resources and materials, and by participating in some class activities.

**Consultation:** In order to help students achieve their fullest potential, the counselor consults with teachers and parents to develop individualized plans of action for students with learning, emotional, or social difficulties. These plans focus on the needs of the individual student. The School Counseling Program also coordinates workshops for teachers to develop work-plans to address specific topics or issues that might arise during the school year, such as disruptive behavior or low-academic performance.

**Outside Support Services:** The School Counseling Program includes a wide range of services and activities that require the support of outside professionals. The School Counselor can coordinate external support services to refer students to other types of professional assistance they might need. The counselor also provides the necessary follow-up to determine if and how the student is benefiting from the suggested services.

### **COLLEGE COUNSELING**

The school supports students in their process of applying to different colleges and universities, both national and international. The school organizes visits from admissions representatives so that St. Augustine students learn about the admissions requirements from different institutions. Students take different standardized tests during their school years (Stanford 10 in elementary and middle school) and PSAT in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade in order to prepare them for the SAT.

### **CAMPUS MINISTRY**

Catholic priests collaborate with St. Augustine by celebrating the Eucharist daily and are available for other sacraments such as the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Religion teachers prepare students for their sacraments: First Communion in third grade; Confirmation in 9th grade. In elementary, a special prayer group for small children called "Friends of Jesus and Mary" is offered.

In secondary, there are organized "Prayer and Service" groups. These groups meet once a week during lunch to pray over the next Sunday gospel. Once a month, these groups engage in a community service activity. During the year, students have different opportunities to participate in spiritual retreats.

### **NURSE'S OFFICE (INFIRMARY)**

The school has a registered nurse on staff permanently. The school nurse will not administer any medicine to students without written authorization and instructions from parents.

In case of an illness or injury, the school nurse will call the parents, inform them of their child's situation, and may ask the parents to pick up the student at school. If the nurse cannot contact the student's parents, she will proceed to contact the Emergency Contact Person; if this fails and the situation calls for it, the school will arrange for transportation to the nearest hospital.

In order to maintain a healthy environment for our school community parents are requested not to send students to school when they have a contagious illness. Those students with contagious diseases will be sent home.

It is the parent's responsibility to submit up to date Health Form to the Nurse's office at the beginning of each year and to inform the nurse of any changes during the year.

## **V. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

### **CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

It is the school's responsibility to group students in the manner that will best assure academic success and good behavior. The previous year's teacher together with the area principal take great care in the elaboration of class lists, taking into consideration a number of issues such as balance between boys and girls, academic levels and discipline concerns. Parental requests for a specific teacher or class group will not be taken into consideration.

### **APPOINTMENTS (PARENTS' CONCERNS)**

A daily schedule of your child's teacher will be sent home in order to facilitate communication. Parents are encouraged to make appointments in order for the parent-teacher conferences to be more productive. The appointment may be made directly with the teacher or through the school office.

Parents should not try to meet with teachers in the halls or in the classroom at the beginning of the school day since this is a very important time for teachers to organize their day's schedule.

Parents should communicate any concern they may have first with their child's teacher. If the parents find that the teacher was not able to give an adequate response to their concerns, then we encourage them to ask for an appointment with either the school counselor or the appropriate principal.

### **TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

Parents must request official grades or transcripts with one week's notice. The cashier will inform parents of the cost for transcripts. Any document that a parent may need from the school e.g. letters for embassy, letters of recommendation etc. must be allowed one week's notice. No grades or transcripts will be issued for students whose tuition is not up to date.

### **PARENTS' MESSAGES AND VISITS**

Parents should come to the school office in order to leave messages or items for students. No interruption of class time will be tolerated.

For the safety of students, all adults who want to enter school premises must first stop by the office and request a pass.

### **PHONE CALLS**

Students will not be allowed to call home unless it is an emergency.

**DISMISSAL AND PICK UP**

Parents should pick up students punctually. The school is not responsible for supervising students once half an hour has passed after dismissal (including early dismissals), unless they are involved in extracurricular activities. Students participating in after-school activities must be picked up at 3:30 p.m. After this time, the school is not responsible for their supervision.

If parents wish to change a student's usual method of transportation home, they must send a written note or fax to the school office. **PHONE CALLS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** This is done to insure the safety of our students.

If parents must pick up their child before the official dismissal time, we ask that they please wait for the student to be sent to the school office. An early dismissal slip must be signed by a school administrator e.g. principals, counselors or the school nurse for the student to be allowed out of campus.

**BIRTHDAYS**

Students' birthdays may be acknowledged at the beginning of the day by singing "Happy Birthday" and by praying for that student during the Morning Prayer and Mass. A birthday cake may be brought to school and shared by the class only during lunchtime.

If parents wish to send invitations to their child's classmates for a birthday party, the teacher will distribute them, provided the whole class is invited.

**LOST AND FOUND**

Lost items will be placed in the Lost and Found Cabinet located in the school office. Parents are free to come and search for lost items. Items that are properly labeled with a student's name will be returned to the student as soon as possible. Please remind your children to label their belongings whenever possible. Those items that are not claimed will be donated at the end of each semester.

Although the school makes an effort to create a safe and honest environment, the school is not responsible for the loss of any item a student may bring to the school grounds. We discourage students bringing large amounts of money or any other expensive item.

A student should bring to school only what is necessary for school-work. Forbidden items will be confiscated and returned only to the parents.

**TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS**

It is each student's responsibility to take care of textbooks, library books and other school materials. The following rules apply:

If a student loses a textbook, the cost of replacing the book, plus shipping and handling will be charged to the student's account.

If a textbook is damaged to the extent that it can no longer be used, the student will be charged the cost of replacing the book, plus shipping and handling.

If a textbook has been damaged, but can still be used, the student will be fined a \$20 fee.

If a library book has been lost, the student will have to pay for its replacement. If the book's price cannot be determined, the student will be fined a \$20 fee.

Grades and student records will not be given to students who have pending fees due to lost or damaged books.

Borrowing privileges will be lost for students who have failed to return library books or failed to pay the appropriate fine.

## **TUITION AND FEE POLICIES**

All parents who have chosen to pay tuition in monthly installments must do so during the first five business days of the month. If tuition is not paid on time, there will be a 5% surcharge. If the student's tuition is still not paid after ten days, a 10% surcharge will be applied.

When a student withdraws from school during the school year, tuition for the remainder of the semester must be paid in full.

If a student's tuition is not up to date, grades will not be issued for that student. If this situation occurs during an exams period, the student may not take any tests.

If parents are one month late in paying tuition, the student may lose the right to attend classes.

Enrollment may be denied to any parent with a delinquent payment record.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

The school will conduct different emergency drills during the year to prepare teachers and students for the event of any misfortune such as an earthquake, fire or civil disturbance. Parents at home should instruct their children as to the appropriate behavior for unforeseen events i.e. stay calm and obey the instructions of the authorities.

At the time of any emergency, the safest policy is to keep calm and to concentrate on everyone's well-being. When there is an all-clear, parents must come to school to pick up their children. No phone messages or notes will be accepted in order to avoid misunderstanding during what would surely be a difficult and stressful situation.

To communicate information about emergency evacuations or necessary early dismissals, as well as school closings, the school will use emails as well as Parentsweb which is on our website. It is of the utmost importance for parents to ensure that the school has the correct, up-to-date contact information: home, work and cell phone as well as the e-mail address.

**FUTURE AMENDMENTS TO THE HANDBOOK**

St. Augustine Preparatory School reserves the right to make amendments to this handbook at anytime. All parents will be informed of these changes through our usual means of communication, i.e. memos, newsletters, school website.

**OFFICIAL VERSION**

If there are questions of interpretation regarding the contents of this handbook, for the purpose of clarification the school will consider the English version as the official document.