

# NEW FAMILY RESOURCE GUIDE

WELCOME TO ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

CELEBRATING  
**FAITH**

STRENGTHENING  
**FAMILY**

BUILDING  
**COMMUNITY**





## MEET OUR ADMINISTRATION



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**CATHEDRAL (L to R)**  
Fr. Miguel Gonzalez, Rector  
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# WELCOME

## TO THE SJCS PANTHER FAMILY

We are so blessed to have you as a member of our school family. Below are hints and tips we hope you find helpful as you become acquainted with your new community.

Please know we are here to help and we look forward to walking this journey alongside you!

We ask that you please take time to read and review the School Handbook with your child(ren).

- Visit [stjcs.com](http://stjcs.com)
- Click "Parent Portal" and log in.
- Select "Resource Documents"

Here you will find the School Handbook which covers a variety of essential topics.

Many families instantly feel more at ease after reading the School Handbook and familiarizing themselves with school procedures, policies, and rules.

All families are required to sign the School Handbook by August 31st.

## SNAPSHOT OF HELPFUL TOPICS

<b>COMMUNICATION .....</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>LUNCH .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SAFETY.....</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>AFTERSCHOOL .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PPA.....</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>PAID ENRICHMENT .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>UNIFORMS.....</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>ATHLETICS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CARPPOOL.....</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>SUMMER CAMP .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>MASS.....</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>STAY CONNECTED .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>PRESCHOOL .....</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>FAQ'S .....</b>	<b>10</b>

There are two main ways the school will share information and communicate with you: Sunday Weekly emails and via the Parent Portal.

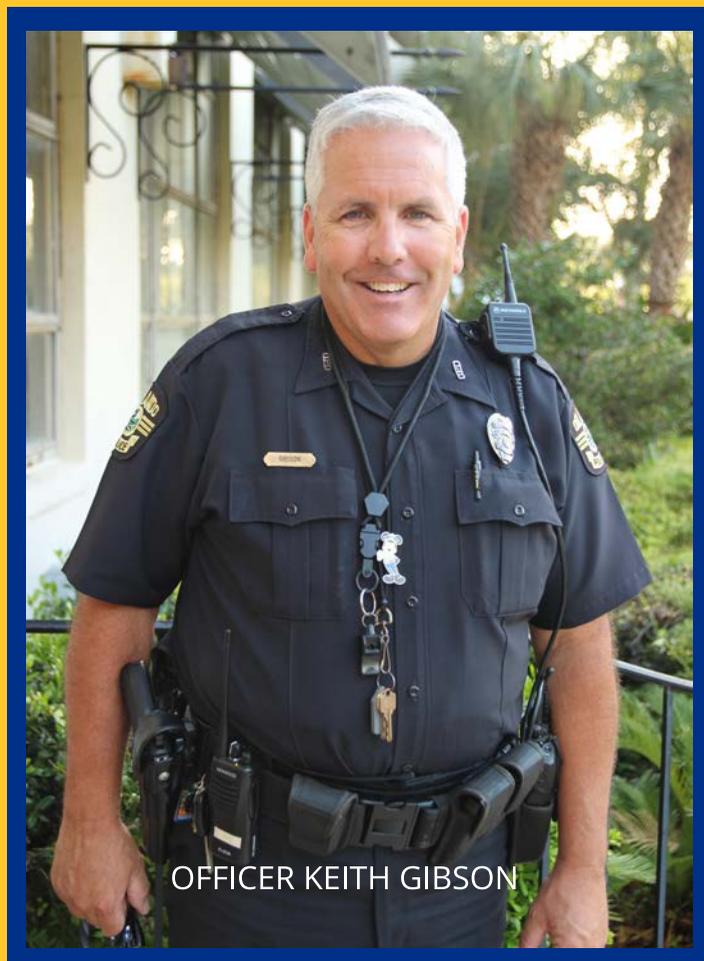
The "Sunday Weekly" is a great tool to view what's happening during the upcoming week on campus as well as to see announcements, reminders, and opportunities. These communications are sent via Constant Contact and it is important you let us know if you aren't receiving the emails as we don't want your family to miss out on all the great happenings at our school.

The Parent Portal serves as your information and data hub and includes the following:

- Homework
- School Calendar
- Grades and Report cards
- Important Links & Resource Documents to Reference
- Teachers' Weekly Newsletters, Blog Updates, Reminders and Announcements
- Family Directory
- Absences & Tardy Count



The Parent Portal is also where you will update and make any necessary changes to your family contact information, approved individuals to pick up your child, etc. It is critical that you ensure this tab is up-to-date in the event of an emergency situation, and to be certain you don't miss communications from the school.



OFFICER KEITH GIBSON

## SAFETY IS OUR #1 CONCERN

We do not take lightly the ministry and privilege of protecting your most prized, God-given possessions.

On your school tour, you saw all of our staff wearing namebadges and all volunteers/visitors wearing orange and pink lanyards, learned about our safety cameras, campus police officer, our buzzer system, and more.

In addition to those measures, we have 3 automated external defibrillator (AED) machines on campus and all of our teachers are CPR certified and trained to use the defibrillators.

We have a campus officer who is always present during drop-off and dismissal times.

## VOLUNTEERING FINGERPRINTING SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

Any parent who wishes to volunteer at the school (for example, lunchroom helper, coach, field trip chaperone, mystery reader, classroom volunteer, etc.) must be fingerprinted/background checked and cleared through the Diocese of Orlando.

The cost is approximately \$50.00. We strongly suggest making an appointment ASAP as it can take anywhere from 6-12 weeks for fingerprints and background checks to clear. You may not volunteer in any capacity until you have been cleared.

The Diocesan fingerprinting procedure has been computerized. You may begin the process by logging on to [www.orlandodiocese.org](http://www.orlandodiocese.org). When you go to the main page, you will see a dark orange tab at the top labeled "How do I..." – click here and then click on the link to "register for safe environment training and fingerprinting". You will need to complete two different processes.

First, register for an appointment to be fingerprinted (there are many options of places this can be done) and then separately you need to take an interactive safe environment course on your personal time via your computer and complete the corresponding quiz. Upon passing the quiz, please print it out and return to the St. James school front office attn.: Linda Puntel. \*\*When registering to be fingerprinted, you will need the following specific code designating you as a volunteer of St. James school: [FPSJSchoolVol](#).

**IMPORTANT TO NOTE:** This policy applies to all employees, parents, chaperones, and volunteers of St. James Cathedral School.

## VOLUNTEERING & COMMUNITY

PAGE 3

One of the best ways to meet families and make lifelong friends is to volunteer – to serve our school and honor the Lord by sharing your God-given talents.

Our Panther Promise is a philosophy that builds upon our parent and community involvement initiatives. Every St. James family is asked to commit to a minimum of 15 hours of volunteer work to fulfill their Panther Promise yearly.

We believe a family that volunteers together builds essential characteristics in their children through the stewardship of Jesus Christ. Various committees, events, field trips, and classroom activities are available to support your volunteer interests. Thank you in advance for sharing your time, talent and treasure. Every hour you contribute counts, it matters and it makes a difference.

## PANTHER PARENT ASSOCIATION

St. James Cathedral School is proud to have such an interactive Panther Parent Association (PPA). Many achievements coordinated by our Panther Parent Association have offset logistical and financial responsibilities that would otherwise be carried out by our school.

We have a variety of committees that compliment varying interests and offer different levels of time commitment including:

- Book Fair
- Box Tops for Education
- Catholic Identity/Decorating
- Dinner & Auction
- Field Day
- Fun Run
- Golf Tournament
- Grandparents Day
- Homeroom Representative
- Lunch Assistants
- Panther Partners
- Spirit Night
- Teacher & Staff Appreciation
- Yearbook

## BECOME A PPA PARTNER

The PPA's continued stewardship and contributions to St. James Cathedral School have a direct, positive impact on our students, school, parents, and community.

To get involved, please visit [www.stjcs.com/ppa](http://www.stjcs.com/ppa) and sign up for PPA where you can also indicate your areas of interest for volunteering.

## LOG YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS

As you fulfill your Panther Promise through volunteering, please log your volunteer hours online at [www.stjcs.com/ppa](http://www.stjcs.com/ppa).

# UNIFORM ORDERING & RECYCLING

All links to purchase approved School Uniforms and Spirit Gear may be found in our Panther Store on our school website.

**Risse Brothers Uniforms** is the official supplier of regular (non-PE) uniforms for Preschool through 8th grade. School uniforms may not be purchased from another source. Orders may be shipped for an additional fee. Please refer to the school handbook for uniform specifications. **Website: [www.rissebrothers.com](http://www.rissebrothers.com)**. Through our Uniform Recycle Center, the school offers recycled uniforms for FREE!

**PE Uniforms** (grades K-8) are sold and distributed by the school throughout the year on a rotational basis. PE apparel may be purchased via the Panther Store found on the school website.

**Spirit Gear** - Once per week on Fridays, students may wear an official Spirit Gear shirt (club or team shirts are not permitted) with PE shorts or regular school bottoms. Regular school shoes must be worn and uniform accessory rules still apply on Spirit Day. "Spirit Gear" includes shirts and other items that show our "panther pride" for all members of the family. This gear may be purchased via the Panther Store or at Meet the Teacher.

**How many uniforms should I purchase?** This decision is clearly based on one's laundering habits and routines, as well as budget. A good rule of thumb is 3 Standard Uniforms, 1 full PE set (number of PE classes per week varies by age; middle school students have PE classes 2 times per week), and 1 Spirit Gear set which all children have the option to wear on Fridays.

## APPROVED STUDENT ATTIRE



## MASS

Parents are always welcome at Mass each week on Wednesdays at 8:00am in the Assembly Hall. All school Masses and liturgical services can be found on the Parent Portal Calendar. Students in grades K-2 have a "Mass buddy", an older student with whom they are paired. Children sit with their "Mass buddy" at all services, as well as participate in special religious learning activities throughout the year. The following are frequently asked questions regarding Mass:

**Do I go with my child to their classroom in the morning before Mass?** No, you can go straight to the Assembly Hall. Please enter through the main doors facing the turf to receive your visitor pass.

**What if they have PE class on Mass days?**

All children in grades K-8 may wear their PE uniforms to school on Mass days.

*"COME to **LEARN**. LEAVE to **SERVE**."*

## CARPOOL

Detailed information and maps regarding carpool can be found in the School Handbook. Please note that at "Meet the Teacher" (the day prior to the first day of school) each family will receive a laminated carpool tag stating your child's last name to be displayed on your dashboard for carpool dismissal. If you do/did not receive this, please contact the front office.

It is helpful to note that if you have multiple children or are carpooling, the oldest child always goes to the youngest child's carpool pick-up location. A photo ID may be requested at the time for pickup and release of your child.

## MISSION STATEMENT

St. James Cathedral School is an educational ministry of St. James Cathedral Church. A Catholic school committed to outstanding academic and spiritual development of all students, St. James Cathedral School provides varied opportunities for students to discover and develop their unique God-given gifts in a safe and stimulating learning environment. The love and stewardship of Jesus is our inspiration. We come to learn. We leave to serve.



Below please find our "Top 10" Helpful Hints for Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 families.

- 1 ARRIVAL:** Parents must \*park and walk their child into school for drop-off through the preschool gates. Class begins promptly at 8:05am and students arriving after this time are tardy. If you arrive after the start of day, please enter through the front office. *Please note: early care is free of charge and available from 7-8:00am.*

**DISMISSAL:** For students registered for the *School Day* preschool option, parents or guardians age 18 and older are required to \*park and enter through the preschool gates. There are two options for students registered as *School Day* for pick-up; choice one is between 2:30pm - 2:40pm and the second is between 3:20pm - 3:30pm, respectively. If you miss the first window, you must wait for the second option, as the car line for grades K-8 begins to form at 2:45pm and cars cannot be parked in front of the preschool gates. These time frames will be strictly enforced for the safety of all students and families. If your family selected the *Full Day* preschool option (or you arrive after 3:30pm), please enter through the main school entrance.

**\*Appropriate parking areas/spots will be covered at Meet the Teacher and in the Preschool Handbook.**

- 2** Preschool children do not need a backpack. A special school bag and folder will be provided at Meet the Teacher in August. The bag and folder will travel to and from school each day.
- 3** Each child needs a complete change of uniform (underwear and socks, too!) sent in a Ziploc bag labeled with his/her name the first day of school. The bag will remain in your child's cubby and used as needed.
- 4** Each child will need a rest mat clearly labeled with your child's name. We require the "Mint Nap Mat" and ordering information is forthcoming. In addition to the mat, each child may bring in one small plush to sleep/rest with during nap time. On Fridays, all sleep items will go home so they can be washed and returned on Monday.
- 5** You may choose to send in a lunch for your child (in a labeled lunchbox) or purchase meals through our on-campus vendor. A monthly menu will be provided in advance and a weekly meal selection slip sent home on Fridays for the upcoming week. Each family is responsible for paying online through the vendor's website. Meals will be delivered to the classrooms labeled with student names.
- 6** Snack is provided daily by the families on a rotating basis with a basket or bag that will be provided by the classroom teacher. There is a specific allergy friendly snack list that must be followed; any snacks sent in that do not adhere to the list cannot be served.
- 7** We use an app called Brightwheel to allow you to sign your child in and out to us each day as well as to communicate with you. More details will be provided via email about accessing the app with additional support available at Meet the Teacher.
- 8** There are lots of opportunities to get involved such as mystery reader, class parties, field day, lunch helpers, and more. Additional information will be provided at Meet the Teacher. Please note: all volunteers must have cleared fingerprints on file.
- 9** If your child is going to be absent, or more than one hour tardy to school, please email/or send a message via the Brightwheel app to the teacher and the director.
- 10** All Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 students wear the same uniform each day that can be purchased at Risse Brothers. Children are to wear all white or all black sneakers with white ankle or crew socks ("no show" socks are not permitted).



## LUNCH

Daily hot lunch is provided for a fee for families who wish to participate. You can learn more about the program and cost, set-up a family debit account (students do not pay with cash), and find the monthly menus on our website.

## BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

**BEFORE SCHOOL** - Children may be dropped off at school in the cafeteria starting at 7:00am where they will be supervised free of charge until the first bell rings at 7:40am. A staff member or officer will be on the front school steps to greet children upon their arrival.

Once the bell rings, students will proceed to their homerooms. Kindergarten students and their siblings/carpool mates arriving from 7:30am on are to be dropped off at the Kindergarten drop/off pick-up gate on Hillman Street. Prior to 7:30 AM these students would proceed to the cafeteria like the rest of the student body.

**AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (ASP)** - Care is offered for all students (preschool – grade 8) Monday through Friday from dismissal until 6pm through our After School Program (ASP). The program offers full and part-time plans to meet the needs of our families. Students are grouped and supervised according to grade level in a safe environment. Children enjoy a provided snack, homework time, playtime inside and outside, as well as a variety of crafts, boardgames, and activities.

Our ASP is also open on select teacher workdays/no school days as well as some holidays. Please check the calendar on Parent Portal for specifics. For ASP program details or to register, visit [www.stjcs.com/afterschool](http://www.stjcs.com/afterschool).

## PAID ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

Fun & Learning extends beyond the school day for our students. A variety of enrichment and extra-curricular activities are available on campus for all learners by fingerprinted and approved vendors for an additional fee (regardless if the learner is enrolled in our ASP).

Class choices could include chess, dance, soccer, golf, robotics, art, rockets, runway fashion design, dinosaur explorer, Spy Kids Detective Club, and much more! Classes run for 6 - 8 weeks and offerings change in each of the 4 sessions throughout the year.

To see a list of the current Paid Enrichment offerings, please visit the "Student Life" tab on our website [stjcs.com](http://stjcs.com).



Our athletic offerings for Kindergarten through 8th grade students are administered by a Diocesan-wide league called Catholic Youth Sports (CYS). Information on specific sports seasons, game schedules, and registration details can be found by accessing the Student Life tab on our website. We have two athletic directors, one for the Pre-K4 -5th grade students and the other for middle school (grades 6th-8th) children.

### GRADE SCHOOL (PRE-K4 – 5TH)

Athletes in this division will focus on skills development and friendly competition. Children participate in one game per week which takes place during the weekend. Practices may be held only once per week after school hours. Sports offerings include: Fall Coed Soccer, Flag Football, Girls Lacrosse, Track, Spring Coed Soccer, Coed Basketball.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL (6th-8th)

Middle school athletes participate in competitive play against other Catholic Schools in the greater Orlando area (12 schools are divided into northern and southern regions). Students are encouraged to join PAC regardless of playing experience, but team commitment is expected. Games take place during the week and weekends. Practices are held on weekday afternoons. The SJCS family often refers to middle school sports as the Panther Athletic Club or PAC. Go Panthers! Sports offerings include Soccer, Track, Basketball, Volleyball, and Flag Football.



Many of our students play multiple sports to help broaden their social and athletic experiences.

**VOLUNTEERS** are needed to make this league a success. To be a volunteer team mom or dad or Coach, please email the Athletic Director at [athletic.director@stjcs.com](mailto:athletic.director@stjcs.com) for information.

To learn more about our sports programs, please visit "Student Life" on our school website.



## PLAN FOR AN EXCITING SUMMER WITH US!

Experience Summer Camp in a whole new way. Each week at Camp Blue, campers will experience new enrichment activities, exciting off-campus group excursions at the coolest kid's spots, and an enhanced sports clinic where campers can focus on building their athletic technique and skills.

Campers will share in new experiences that bring out their inner-self in a safe and comfortable environment. Whether your camper is interested in exploring new interests or developing new friendships, Camp Blue at St. James Cathedral School has something for everyone that help make memories that last a lifetime.

Programs are customized to each specific grade group for campers in Pre-K3 - 8th grade. For more information visit [stjcs.com/summerprograms](http://stjcs.com/summerprograms)

## STAYING CONNECTED BETWEEN NOW & START OF SCHOOL YEAR...

Please take time to preview the Summer Checklist and complete these items in advance.

Additionally, for families with children entering grades Pre-K3, Pre-K4, and Kindergarten, you will receive an invitation to a class play date to be held during the summer on campus. This is a great way to meet friends before the year starts and feel more comfortable on school grounds.

For families with a child(ren) entering grades 1-8, you will be contacted by a Panther Partner Family – a “veteran” St. James family who has a child in the same grade as yours -- and they will invite you to meet-up (maybe for ice-cream, pizza, at the park, etc.). This is completely optional.

At the meet-up, the “veteran” St. James parents can walk you through any questions you may have and your child will make a new friend and have a familiar face to look for on the first day of school!

Please note: class lists will be released at Meet the Teacher for Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 students, as well as grades first through eighth.

Kindergarten students will receive a post-card in the mail in early August from their respective homeroom teacher.

## OVER THE SUMMER CHECKLIST

Most documents referenced throughout this guide and below will be found on your Parent Portal, under Resource Documents. Additionally, information can be found on our school website at [stjcs.com](http://stjcs.com).

- Complete your fingerprint and background clearance as well as Safe Environment Training.
- Check the Parent Portal for Summer Reading Lists (grades 1-8).
- Check the Parent Portal for School Supply Lists (Pre-K through 8th) and purchase on your own or buy a supply pack via our Panther Store on the school website. You will receive an email in early June to remind you should you wish to participate in the pre-packaged supply program offered by the school.
- Purchase School Uniforms.
- Purchase PE Uniforms from our Panther store, via the Student Life Tab on our school website.
- Register for the After School Program (ASP) via the Student Life Tab on our school website.
- In late July, check out the updated Paid Enrichment offerings under the Student Life Tab on our school website.
- Join PPA and complete an interest inventory to make life-long friends and begin your Panther Promise journey (information found under Get Involved Tab on our website).
- Check out the Scrip program to learn about saving money on your tuition on the Parent Portal.
- Attend one or both of the summer play dates and casual orientations (for Pre-K3/Pre-K4 and Kindergarten families) or be on the look out for an email from a Panther Partner (for grades 1st-8th).

**For birthdays, what is an acceptable treat to send in for my child's class?** Birthdays are so special! A treat may be sent in so long as there is one for each member of your child's homeroom class. We ask that you send individual items that do not require cutting, such as cupcakes or doughnuts. Simply drop the item off at the front office with your child's name, homeroom, and grade clearly labeled. Your child will distribute their treat to classmates during lunch. *\*See the handbook for specifics on birthdays, invites, and allergies. Some grade levels have different policies. Your teacher will be in contact with you.*

**What if my child takes a daily medication or I want to have as-needed medication during a particular time period?** Medication must be in a labeled, un-opened bottle and accompanied by the Diocese of Orlando Parent/Guardian Medical Information and Consent form (found on the Parent Portal under Resource Documents). If a medicine is "as needed," this must be indicated. Parents hand deliver the medicine to the front office in a Ziplock bag labeled with the child's full name, grade, and homeroom teacher along with the appropriate forms.

**We were informed that there is a student with dietary allergies in my child's class (dairy, peanut, etc.).**

**Can I still send those items for my child's lunch? For example, may I send a peanut butter and jelly sandwich?**

Thank you for your concern for all our students. While we ask that certain grades adhere to a peanut and dairy free approved snack list (provided by your child's teacher), at lunch time students with allergies sit at a "safe table." Thus, if a classmate has a peanut allergy, for example, it is still okay for your child to bring a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, as the friend with an allergy will sit at the "safe table".

**In an emergency situation, how will the school communicate directives to the parents?** The school will contact parents and guardians in two ways: a mass email and a mass text. It is imperative that you have entered working email addresses, as well as cell phone numbers, and indicated the proper carrier under your Parent Portal account. Please keep contact information up-to-date at all times via the parent portal.

**What is the rain dismissal policy?** If it is raining only, we will have a normal dismissal so please pack your child an umbrella or raincoat to be kept in their backpack. If there is lightening (or has been a strike within a ten-mile radius in a given 30-minute period), we will delay carpool dismissal but parents may choose to walk-in and sign their child(ren) out from designated check-out spots. Please refer to the handbook for specifics. Reminder-older siblings always go to their youngest sibling's spot.

**What if I prefer to park and walk up to get my child at dismissal?** There are designated locations for parents who choose to walk up and get their children. Please refer to the School Handbook for carpool diagrams and appropriate parking.

**REMINDER** - As stated and explained in the school handbook, we ask that no students be signed out of school between 2:30pm and dismissal at 3:15pm for safety reasons. If you have a 4 o'clock appointment, for example, and wanted to get your child at 3pm, you must do so by 2:30pm.

**What if... my child is sick, I have to take my child out of school early or I have a change of carpool plans, who should I notify and how?** Please send an email to [front.office@stjcs.com](mailto:front.office@stjcs.com) and send a courtesy copy to your child's classroom/homeroom teacher with pertinent information. All teachers' email addresses can be found on your Parent Portal and on our website.

**What if I am late to carpool line, where do my children go?** At 3:30pm, any child who has not yet been picked up is taken to the cafeteria and is signed into our After School Program. He/she will be well taken care of by our staff. No registration charge is assessed until after the second occurrence. Drop-in fees will be assessed unless you are enrolled in ASP at which time your plan allowance will be used.

**Can you bring siblings with you when you volunteer?** We love our future Panthers, but for safety reasons, siblings are not allowed to accompany parents who are volunteering. Many families find it easy and rewarding to swap care so that each of them can enjoy spending time serving and volunteering at the school.

*Academic excellence and spiritual enrichment since 1928*



## *School Prayer*

Lord - make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O divine master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be  
understood as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it  
is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

~ ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI



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STAY CONNECTED

