

**Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy**

**Parent-Student Handbook  
2021-2022**

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**Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_



Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,

Welcome to Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy and the 2021-2022 school year! We are pleased to provide you and your children with a team of professionals dedicated to the highest standard of Catholic education and care of your child(ren).

As parents/guardians of children enrolled in the Academy, you also serve as a partner in education. As partners, parents, faculty and staff will work together to ensure the academic, social, spiritual, and emotional growth of your children while they attend the Academy. I trust that you are up to the task, and I welcome working with you to ensure the success of your child and all the students at the Academy!

In order to provide the best quality of education and safety, we ask that all parents/guardians and students adhere to the Academy's policies. This Parent-Student Handbook contains the Academy's policies and is intended to provide you with a guide. Please take the time to review this Handbook in its entirety. I hope the Handbook will answer questions you may have regarding the policies of the Academy, although you may always reach out to me or the Board of Trustees if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

This Handbook will be distributed as a hard copy upon request. It will remain accessible to you on the school website.

At the end of this Handbook are various documents for you to review and sign, as well as an Acknowledgement of Receipt of this Handbook. Please sign and return all these documents by Monday, September 13th.

Thank you for your support and I look forward to working with you as we provide the utmost quality Catholic education to your children in a secure, safe and nurturing environment.

Sincerely,

Ms. McCann  
*Principal*

## *Our Philosophy*

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy seeks to provide a quality Catholic education for our children. We educate the whole child through programs encompassing the spiritual, intellectual, social, psychological and physical development of our students.

Through our religious education program, we strive to develop a well-rounded Christian personality, which will be reflected by respect toward self and others as exemplified by Jesus in the Gospels.

In cooperation with families, the staff works to assist the child in developing a system of values by which to judge the use of knowledge and skills. The rules and disciplines that are incorporated are necessary for the preservation of an atmosphere best adapted to learning. In this way, students will learn to be responsible and accountable.

## *Our Mission*

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy is committed to academic excellence that is rooted in the Catholic faith, affirmed by the teachings of Jesus Christ, and centered on our service to God, family, and community.

*“Education cannot be neutral. It is either positive or negative; either it enriches or it impoverishes; either it enables a person to grow or it lessens, even corrupts him. The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful. And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients. This is why there are so many subjects — because development is the results of different elements that act together and stimulate intelligence, knowledge, the emotions, the body, and so on.”*

*“If something is true, it is good and beautiful; if it is beautiful; it is good and true; if it is good, it is true and it is beautiful. And together, these elements enable us to grow and help us to love life, even when we are not well, even in the midst of many problems. True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life.”*

-Pope Francis



CATHOLIC ACADEMY

## **Parental Expectation of Adherence to School Policy**

Discipline in the schools should reflect the spirit of *Vatican Council II*, as expressed in *the documents on Christian Education and Religious Liberty*. Therefore, discipline should be geared to assist a child develop in the understanding of self as being made in the image of God.

...Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth (cf. *Spe Salve*, 4). This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet him are drawn by the very power of God to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church...Dear friends, I wish to conclude by focusing our attention specifically on the paramount importance of your own professionalism and witness within our Catholic universities and schools. First, let me thank you for your dedication and generosity. I know from my own days as a professor, and have heard from your Bishops and officials of the Congregation for Catholic Education, that the reputation of Catholic institutes of learning in this country is largely due to yourselves and your predecessors. Your selfless contributions – from outstanding research to the dedication of those working in inner-city schools – serve your country and the Church. For this I express my profound gratitude. Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, April 17, 2008

Evidence of discipline exists in a school community when the students, teachers, administration, and parents/legal guardians work cooperatively to educate the whole child: spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

## **Purpose of this Handbook**

This Parent-Student Handbook (“Handbook”) is designed to provide important information regarding rules, policies and procedures relating to the operation and safety at our Academy. The Handbook summarizes policies and contains general guidelines and information. To the extent that anything in this Handbook conflicts with applicable law, the applicable law governs. Further, this Handbook may be changed from time to time during the academic year. An up-to-date version can be found on the school website, and parents/guardians are expected to regularly check that version to be aware of any changes. If you have any questions on this Handbook or otherwise, please contact the Principal.

Parents/guardians are required to sign a form stating that they have read the rules and regulations outlined in this Handbook and that they agree to abide by those rules, and to ensure that their children abide by the rules. Students in grades 6-8 must also sign this form. Failure to sign the form will not prevent the Academy from enforcing its policies, but could result in disciplinary action being taken and/or the prevention of the student from enrolling in the school. This form can be found at the end of this Handbook.

In this Handbook, the term “parent” refers not only to a child’s natural or adopted parent, but to a student’s non-parent legal guardian or to any person or agency authorized to act in place of a parent.

Finally, in light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues, the Academy reserves the right to address and take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this Handbook. And, in light of the unique and essential religious

mission of the Academy, the Academy may take actions in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the Academy, the Diocese of Brooklyn, or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the Academy to perform its religious mission or to effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the Academy and the community of Faith.

### **Administration**

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy is governed by a Board of Trustees and subject to the policies and regulations of the Diocese of Brooklyn.

### **Academy Calendar**

New York State Law currently requires a school calendar to provide 177 days of instruction with 3 professional days and cites the following holidays when schools may not be in session:

Columbus Day	Second Monday in October
Veterans Day	Eleventh Day in November
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Christmas Day	Twenty-fifth day in December
New Year's Day	First Day in January
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Third Monday in January
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Juneteenth	Nineteenth day in June

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception ( December 8 ) , which is the feast of the patroness of the Diocese of Brooklyn, the Academy will be closed. Academies may also choose to observe other Holy Days. All advanced school closings will be indicated in the school calendar.

The Academic calendar can be found on the Academy's website. To the extent any changes are made, the website will be updated.

### **Admissions**

Roman Catholic schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn base their educational purpose and all their activities on the Christian teaching of the essential quality of all persons as rooted in God's love. Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy proudly accepts students of all races, religions, and countries of origin. There is a yearly registration fee of \$300 per family, along with a supply/technology fee .

New Registrants must provide the following:

- Birth Certificate
- Immunization Record
- Baptismal Certificate (if Catholic)
- Report Card (if entering Grades 1 through 8)

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy is open to qualified students. Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex or national origin.

## Transfers and Withdrawals

If a parent/guardian wishes to transfer his or her child(ren) out of the Academy, a transfer request form must be obtained from **Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy**. Before records are transferred to another school, all bills must be paid in full and all books must be returned.

When a student transfers from one school to another, or enters high school, the new school may request a copy of the permanent record and health card from the former school. The Academy may disclose a student's cumulative record (*i.e.* permanent record, attendance record, test results) to another school with a legitimate educational interest if a written request is made and when a parent/guardian has given written permission for the release of the child's records. Parent/guardian signature is required for release of a student's confidential file, which includes special education records, psychological reports, disciplinary records, and reports by a school counselor.

At the discretion of the Principal, and in accordance with applicable law, the Academy has the right not to certify a student's graduation or provide transcripts of the student's academic record to third parties such as other schools, colleges, or employers, or to issue a diploma to the student, if there has been a breach of a material condition of the educational contract, such as failure to meet financial obligations, infractions against the school's code of conduct, anti-bullying policy or violations of the policies of the Academy and those set forth in this Handbook.

The Academy reserves the right to request that a parent/guardian withdraw his or her child from the school.

## Alcohol, Drugs, and Weapons Policy

The New York City Tobacco Products Regulations Act of 1994 curtails exposure to tobacco use on school grounds. For the purpose of this legislation "school grounds" means the "buildings, grounds or facilities, or any part thereof, owned or occupied by public or private institutions for the primary purpose of providing educational instructions to students at or below the twelfth grade level." Tobacco use is not permitted on school grounds at any time. A "tobacco product" is any substance which contains tobacco including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, and chewing tobacco. New York City regulations are far more stringent than the regulations promulgated by New York State. However, schools subject to the rules of this municipality, as are the schools of the Diocese of Brooklyn, must follow the local laws. Thus, smoking is prohibited on ALL SCHOOL PREMISES AT ANY TIME.

For the safety of our students, alcohol is also prohibited from being consumed on school premises at any time.

Drugs and drug abuse is a major threat to the health, education and welfare of students. The use and/or possession of drugs or alcohol on school property or during school activities is strictly forbidden. Smoking or possession of cigarettes/e-cigarettes/vaping devices/etc. on school property or during school activities is forbidden. If students are suspected of any of the above, parents/guardians will be notified. Appropriate disciplinary consequences will be imposed if there is a violation of this policy. Bringing to school, or being under the influence of, alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs is grounds for immediate dismissal from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy, as is bringing to school a weapon of any kind.

Students must conduct themselves, at all times, in a courteous manner in accord with Catholic principles. To that end, and also in the interest of safety of the students and protection of the Academy's property, the following items are NOT allowed at any time but not limited to the following:

1. White-out or any type of permanent marker

2. Spray cans, smoke bombs, stink bombs, powders/choking agents or chemicals or any kind.
3. Gum
4. Alcohol or drugs of any kind, and matches or lighters, and drug paraphernalia
5. Laser pointers, knives/box cutters, scissors, or any type of weapon
6. Any type of toy weapon
7. Nail files
8. Energy drinks and caffeine
9. Extreme jewelry, more than two wristbands or bracelets, dangling earrings, or hoop earrings larger than the size of a dime
10. Makeup of any kind, including lipstick and nail polish and acrylic nails
11. Tattoos, Body piercings , Facial piercings

The presence of any of these items can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. The presence of alcohol, drugs, or weapons is a criminal offense and the police will be notified.

Our school is committed to the prevention of alcohol, drug and tobacco use. We have employed the use of a counselor from the Program for the Development of Human Potential (PDHP) that is funded through the New York State Division of Substance Abuse Services and sponsored by the Office of the Superintendent.

### **Attendance and Lateness Policy**

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy has developed our attendance policy in accordance with New York State Education Law Section 3205, implemented on July 1, 2020. This comprehensive attendance policy will help to uphold the philosophy and mission statement of our school/academy, as stated in our handbook.

Education Law of the State of New York mandates school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 16, but the responsibility for compliance rests with the parents/legal guardians. The school is required to keep an accurate record of daily attendance, absence and tardiness in the register of attendance in a manner approved by the Commissioner of Education.

- When a child has been absent, a written excuse is required from his or her parents/legal guardians. If a student is absent without an excuse, or if the school has reason to suspect the validity of the excuse, the principal will investigate the situation.
- When a student has been absent for five days without a satisfactory explanation, a report will be made to the attendance officer of the local public school district.
- Continuing illegal absences, totaling five or more days, will also be reported to the attendance officer at the local public school district office.
- Although each case is different, it should be noted that at 40 truancy days, retention is a strong possibility and principals will contact the local district office to alert the truancy officer.

Regular attendance is essential for success in school. Please report all absences by calling the academy office (718-793-2086) in the morning. **A written note giving the reason for the absence must be given to the child's teacher on the day he/she returns to school. If a note is not received within three days, the absence will be recorded as unexcused/illegal.** Please note that according to New York State Education Law, a vacation is considered to be an unexcused/illegal absence.

According to NYC Department of Health regulations, students may not return to school until they are free of fever and/or vomiting for 24 hours.

All appointments for doctors, dentists, etc. should be scheduled for after 3:00 p.m. Requests for early dismissal must be sent in writing. An adult must come to the school to pick up the student, and that adult must sign the student out. The note should indicate the name of the person (if other than the parent) who will be coming for the student. A student who is absent without the knowledge and consent of the parent/guardian is considered truant.

**Parents who wish to pick up absent work may notify the office in the morning by 10AM in order to provide ample time for the teacher to gather the work for the day to be picked up by dismissal time.**

### **Homework due to Vacations/Planned Absences**

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility. Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignments will be given in anticipation of the vacation.

### **Lateness**

School begins at 8:00 a.m. every morning for students in Kindergarten through Grade 8. Lateness is recorded on a child's permanent record card. All students must be online at that time.

If a student arrives after that time, he/she must report to the office for a late pass before going to class. In Grades 5-8 any unexcused lateness will result in a detention.

### **Birthdays**

Students in **Nursery through Grade 4** may celebrate birthdays in school with individually wrapped cupcakes and/or ice cream in the classroom and/or lunchroom. **Party favors, gifts of any type and invitations are not to be distributed through the school unless the entire class is invited.** Please notify your child's teacher at least one week in advance if you plan on bringing in any treats. Videotaping or taking photos of the students is also not permitted.

In **Grades 5 through 8**, all students may dress down on their birthday. If the birthday falls over the weekend or over vacation, the child may dress down on the day that school reopens.

### **Bullying/Harassment Policy and Discipline**

The Diocesan Bullying/Harassment Policy is as follows:

#### *Purpose:*

The school communities within the Brooklyn Diocese believe in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person. We believe that all students, school employees and volunteers have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All members of the school community, in turn, have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. Research shows that students who learn in a safe and supportive environment succeed academically. Students have a right to learn in an environment free of any harassment that substantially interferes with their education.

*Definition:*

Bullying, bias-based harassment /intimidation are intentional, repeated, hurtful acts (physical, verbal, written) committed by one or more persons towards another person or persons. It usually involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power which can be physical, emotional or verbal.

If not addressed, bullying can lead to the creation of a hostile, offensive or intimidating school environment and can affect a student's educational opportunities.

The behaviors include but are not limited to:

- **Physical:** physical violence, stalking, threats, aggressive or menacing gestures, exclusion from peer groups which is intended to humiliate or isolate the target (relational bullying),
- **Verbal:** taunts, teasing, derogatory language, derogatory jokes, name calling, slurs, spreading rumors,
- **Written:** written or graphic material including graffiti containing comments or stereotypes that are electronically written and transmitted via internet, social messaging sites, blogs, instant messaging, text messages, cell phone, webcams. This would also include forwarding such messages if received. This generally constitutes cyberbullying.

**Reporting Procedures:**

- The targeted student, parent/guardian of a student or other students in the school (bystanders), or any school staff who believe that bullying has occurred should report the incident to the principal.
- The principal needs to conduct an investigation by interviewing all parties separately.
- The parents of all involved students should be notified.
- If it is determined that bullying has occurred the child who bullied is to be subject to consequences per the school's disciplinary code.
- Parents should be advised to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if the situation warrants such a report.
- Referral to counseling should be made for all parties if deemed necessary.
- The principal must follow up to see that the offending conduct has stopped.
- All students should be notified that retaliation against anyone who makes a report will not be tolerated and those that retaliate will be subject to disciplinary actions.

The Diocesan CyberBullying/Harassment Policy is as follows:

1. **Purpose:**

One of the main duties of the Academies and Parish Schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn is to provide a safe environment for our students. With the current state of technology, internet use and digital communications, this extends beyond the bounds of the physical building. Students now have 24x7 access to each other through computers, smartphones and tablet devices which can provide both an enriching experience for learning and an unfortunate opportunity for mischief. The Diocese of Brooklyn, in an attempt to harness the good and discourage and protect from the bad, has developed the following policy and guidelines to govern cyber-bullying.

2. **Scope of Use:**

This policy applies to the use of technology both inside and outside of the Academy/Parish School. When personal outside use of a technology violates this policy in whole or in part, these actions may be subject to disciplinary measures found within.

### **3. Definitions of Cyber-Bullying:**

The following are types of cyber-bullying that can occur. This is not a comprehensive list of every action that can be deemed cyber-bullying, and items may be removed or added without prior notice. This listing is adapted from the New York State Department of Justice Definition of Cyber-Bullying.

1. **Flaming** – The act of posting electronic messages that are deliberately hostile, insulting, mean, angry or vulgar to one or more persons either privately or publicly to an online group
2. **Denigration** – Occurs when a person sends or publishes cruel rumors, gossip or untrue statements about a person to intentionally damage the victim's reputation or friendships.
3. **Bash Boards** – Online bulletin boards or forums where people post anything they choose. Generally, postings are mean, hateful and malicious.
4. **Impersonation** – The act of posing as or pretending to be another person. This can either be through a malicious attack resulting in the takeover of an existing account (hacked/stolen credentials) or through the creation of a fake account in someone else's name. Considerable damage can be done through this time of attack to the victim's reputation and relationships.
5. **Outing** – Occurs when confidential, private or embarrassing information is posted or shared publicly. Can include the forwarding of email messages, text messages or photos meant to be private to an unintended third party recipient(s).
6. **Trickery** – The act of tricking someone into divulging personal, embarrassing or private information either publicly or to a person who then uses that information for malicious intents. Information gained can be used to blackmail, post publicly online or for person gains depending upon the information.
7. **Exclusion** – An indirect method of cyber-bullying in which someone is intentionally excluded from an online group, community or activity.
8. **Harassment** – The act of sending repeated insulting, hurtful, rude or vulgar message
9. **Happy Slapping** – a real world attack which is recorded and then posted online. Often referred to as a practical joke by the attackers, hence the term “happy slapping”
10. **Text Wars or Attacks** – When several people gang up on a victim sending the target repeated emails and text messages resulting in emotional and possibly financial damage for data and messaging costs
11. **Online Polls** – potentially harmful or demeaning, they can contain malicious questions such as “Who is the ugliest person in 8<sup>th</sup> grade?” or “Who do you love to hate?”
12. **Sending Malicious Code** – When intentionally perpetrated with malicious intent, can be used for spying, tracking, stalking, or to harm devices or the victim themselves
13. **Images and Videos** - Due to the prevalence and accessibility of camera cell phones, photographs and videos of unsuspecting victims, taken in bathrooms, locker rooms or other compromising situations, are being distributed electronically. Some images are emailed to other people, while others are published on video sites such as *YouTube*.
14. **Griefing** – Chronically causing grief to other members of an online community or intentionally disrupting the immersion of another in their game play
15. **Trolling** – Lurking or “trolling” message boards and forums for the purpose of defaming, “flaming”, annoying, embarrassing or otherwise being hostile to users through public posts. The victim may or may not be known to the “troll” and “trolls” are often able to act anonymously.

#### **4. Responsibilities of the Academy/Parish School:**

In accordance with New York State Law on Cyberbullying, inappropriate, defamatory, or content found to be injurious to an Academy/Parish School community member may result in disciplinary action, even if done outside of Academy/Parish School premises or using devices not owned or controlled by the Academy/Parish School. All instances of such behavior must be reported immediately to the administration, who will investigate the matter and enforce the consequences deemed appropriate.

The Academy/Parish School responsibilities, include but are not limited to :

- Monitoring of communications of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communication.
- Preventing unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- Utilizing measures restricting minors' access to materials harmful to them
- Educating students on cyber-bullying to encourage them to identify bullying behavior, avoid exhibiting the behavior and keep themselves from being the victim of bullying behavior.
- Providing guidance and counsel students on both sides of the conflict.

Academy/Parish School administrators, faculty and staff are responsible to ensure activities involving students do not harbor or promote cyber-bullying in any way. Inadvertent exclusion or inappropriate comments that go unseen can quickly become a serious situation. What may seem like a harmless joke in class or online could begin a cycle of bullying, or be a sign of something much larger that has been going on.

#### **5. Responsibility of Students:**

As a member of the Diocese of Brooklyn community, students are expected to act in accordance with the tenants of the Catholic Church. This includes conducting yourself in an appropriate manner in the digital realm and treating others and yourself with respect, kindness and understanding. It is imperative for each student to ensure that this is protected for both themselves and other members of their Academy/Parish School community. The following are guidelines to help students protect themselves and others and recognize situations and how to handle them.

##### **Protecting Yourself from Cyber-Bullying and Cyber-Attacks**

- Do not share personal information over the internet that could be used to facilitate an attack
- Never share account credentials with anyone other than your parents or guardians
- If you are being harassed by someone, report the user to the appropriate administrator (such as Facebook or Twitter), tell your parent/guardian immediately and do your best to take screenshots or print the offensive material to document the incident
- If the person is a member of your Academy/Parish School community, also inform the school of the incident providing any documentation that you can
- Block users who engage in bullying behavior from contacting you
- Set social media accounts such that posts need approval before they can be seen publicly on your page (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- Do not engage others who are looking to “bait” you into an altercation. This is often a tactic to lure victims into revealing information that is then used for the attack
- Avoid aggressive behavior that could provoke others to retaliate

## **Protecting Others from Cyber-Bullying**

- Do not participate in any of the behaviors outlined in the definition above
- When communicating digitally, be mindful to show respect and understanding
- Refrain from using derogatory, defaming, embarrassing or vulgar language when communicating
- Report any aggressive behavior observed to the appropriate administrator, and your parent or guardian
- If it involves members of the Academy/Parish School community, inform the school as well with any documentation you can provide
- Discourage others who may be thinking, planning or talking after the fact about cyber-bullying or attacks they have/will engage(d) in

## **Identifying Cyber-Bullying**

It is important to understand that not all undesirable interactions on the internet are cyber-bullying. By definition, bullying is a recurring behavior. Repeated attacks through email, forum posts, instant or text messages or the like constitute cyber-bullying. A single incident, while not condoned or accepted, is not necessarily cyber-bullying. The instant transfer and duplicative nature of digital mediums expands the threat of cyber-bullying and must be considered in its identification. If an act deemed to be inappropriate is conducted even once, but is then shared and transmitted repeatedly over a digital medium, that act crosses into a case of cyberbullying even if it was the first/only occurrence and must be handled as such.

### **6. Policy Violations:**

Violation of this policy in whole or in part may result in any or all of the following and will be issued at the discretion of the school/academy principal:

- Loss of use/privileges of school/academy technology.
- Disciplinary action including, but not limited to, detention, suspension, expulsion, and /or legal action by the school/academy, civil authorities, and/or other involved parties.
- Compensation for damages, both physical and punitive, incurred due to actions in violation of this policy

### **Infractions (Grades 5-8)**

**Infractions may be given for any of the following and may be subject to in-house suspension, at-home suspension, or expulsion based upon the severity of the incident:**

- Any Uniform Violations
- Academic Violations\*
  - Lack of attention/sleeping during class
  - Not doing classwork
  - Talking during class
  - Unprepared for class (materials needed to foster proper education, such as and not limited to; homework needed for class, classwork, supplies, etc)
  - Improper care of textbooks
  - Neglecting to sign out for the bathroom/water fountain
  - Failure to return a detention slip signed

**\*Five Academic Infractions will result in a 30 minute after school detention.**

- Behavior Violations \*
  - Disruptive behavior (Persistent fooling around/out of seat, causing negative attention to oneself, etc...)
  - Chewing gum/eating in class
  - Disrespect/rudeness/impertinence will result in an **automatic detention**
  - Running in the stairs/halls
  - Talking in the halls/stairs
  - Cell phone use (without permission, in halls during A.M. and P.M. lineup)
  - Improper use of Chromebook/iPad
  - Aggressive/violent behavior
  - Cyberbullying
  - Gossip
  - Talking during a fire drill/lockdown
  - Defacing school property
  - Removal of face mask
  - Violating social distancing guidelines

**Refusal to wear a face mask will result in a student being sent home**

**\*Three Behavioral Infractions will result in an After School Detention**

**Infraction Notification and Detentions**

Teachers will :

Notify the parents of the infractions when the detention slip goes home.

- This documentation will be received through email.
- It must be signed or receipt of acknowledgment given back to the teachers.
- It will state the infractions given.
- There will be a key attached as to the codes of infractions and their meanings.
- This will help parents understand the reason for the infraction
- Academic Infractions will deduct points from a student's classwork grade.

Detention is held, with CDC Guidelines in place, on Wednesdays from :

2:00- 2:30 P.M. (Academic infractions)

2:00- 3:00 P.M. (Behavioral infractions)

Teachers will not notify a parent everytime an infraction is given. Each student will clearly know if they have received an infraction on a given day. When asking your child about their day is a good time to inquire if they have received any infractions.

**School Discipline**

The Academy may need to involve disciplinary measures from time to time. The purpose of disciplinary

measures are to provide structure to students and for them to learn self-discipline, which strengthens and promotes the values incorporated in our Catholic faith. Disciplinary measures should have as an end the development of the human person who respects oneself, other persons, and those in authority.

At no time will corporal punishment be used against a child. Any perceived acts of corporal punishment or reports from a child of corporal punishment should be reported to the Principal immediately by the student and/or the parent/guardian.

By enrolling your child in the Academy, the parent/guardian agrees to be supportive of the rules and regulations that the Academy deems as critical in the spiritual, academic and behavioral growth of the child.

Teachers are the primary disciplinarians within the classroom and among students. Teachers will discipline students for minor classroom disruptions, such as not completing homework, minor verbal disputes with other students, or not being in the complete uniform. To the extent a teacher finds it necessary, parents/guardians will be notified of classroom problems. As partners in education, parents/guardians should work with the teacher to ensure that inappropriate behavior is changed.

At times, however, teachers will refer classroom discipline issues to the administration of the Academy. This is likely to include chronic minor problems listed above, or major problems, including chronic lateness, verbal abuse of a teacher, signs of disrespect to a teacher or another adult on the staff, fighting, vandalism, stealing, physical, sexual, or verbal harassment or bullying of a fellow student, violent behavior, smoking, or the possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, cigarettes, lighters, matches, stink or smoke bombs, chemicals/irritants, alcohol, dangerous items or a weapon. The administration will handle such matters in a variety of ways depending on the severity of the incident, up to and including suspension, police notification, and expulsion.

For serious acts of misbehavior, such as, but not limited to, fighting, stealing, vandalism and harassment, the student may immediately be suspended for a period of one to five days. In cases of vandalism, the parent/guardian must pay the full cost of the repair or replacement of the item before the child may return to school. In cases of theft, the item is either returned in good condition or the cost of replacement is borne by the parent/guardian before the child can return to school.

In cases where a child engages in a fight which causes injury to another child or adult, the police may be summoned and, then, the parents/guardians will be notified. Likewise, the possession of drugs or alcohol by a child may be reported to the police. The Academy reserves the right to expel the child due to such an offense.

In cases in which a child brings a weapon to school, the police will always be called, and then the parents/guardians are called. The Academy reserves the right to expel the child due to such an offense.

Individual-directed threats of violence or harm communicated directly or indirectly by any means, as well as building-directed threats of violence or harm communicated directly or indirectly by any means (e.g., shooting, bomb threats), or to harm students, employees, or visitors are taken seriously. Upon knowledge of the threats, the Principal will notify the Office of the Superintendent and call the parents. The administration will determine the course of action to be taken up to and including calling law enforcement, requiring a mental health referral, and/or expulsion.

It is the expectation of the Academy that student behavior is exemplary both on and off school grounds. A student always represents the entire school community. Therefore, the Academy reserves the right to discipline students for acts such as, but not limited to: stealing, fighting, vandalism, bullying or any other type of threatening or inappropriate misconduct (personally, via telephone, or the internet). Such misconduct could result in punishments including suspension and/or expulsion.

Lastly, a child's arrest for a crime on or off of school grounds, within or beyond the vicinity of the Academy, at

any time could result in the child's suspension or expulsion. A child's conviction of a crime on or off of school grounds, within or beyond the vicinity of the Academy, will likely result in a child's expulsion.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy has high standards of behavior as well as high academic standards. Students are held responsible for their words and actions. Detention will take place every Wednesday from 2:00-3:00 pm for students who break school rules.

Students learn to be responsible, make positive choices, and demonstrate respect for their peers, teachers, and themselves. The students learn in an environment that models mutual respect, friendship, and cooperation. Some expectations are:

- Demonstrating respect and consideration for teachers and peers.
- Abiding by the policies of the Academy.
- Wearing the school uniform with pride.
- Respecting Academy and Parish property; keeping the Academy free of graffiti and litter.
- Demonstrating responsibility by completing all homework and classwork
- Arriving to the Academy on time

The suspension of a student from school is a serious matter that requires a meeting with the student's parents/guardians and the principal. Any serious violation of school regulations including, but not limited to: disrespect, violence, fighting, theft, foul language, endangering others, vandalism, or repeated academic failure, may result in suspension. The purpose of the meeting with the principal will detail the reason for the suspension and the corrective measures which must result in discernible improvement in the student's conduct. Repeated suspensions or failure to meet school standards may result in the expulsion of the offending student.

The principal will make the final determination on expulsion of students. Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy reserves the right to expel any student who in the judgment of the administration has committed a serious offense involving drugs, violence, alcohol, theft, violation of the technology policy, weapons possession, abuse of a teacher/student, vandalism, failure to meet academic standards, or commits any combination of acts judged serious enough by the administration.

### **Bus Service**

Bus passes are subject to the guidelines of the New York City Transportation Bureau. All requests for bus service must be made in writing.

While students are being transported to and from OLMCA, it is expected that they will uphold the behavior expectations of the Academy/ Parish school as well as rules set forth by the bus driver or bus company. Students who continuously disregard bus procedures and rules are at risk of losing their access to bus transportation.

Each bus company must hold an evacuation drill at least once a year. Students are expected to follow all instructions as given by the bus driver or other adult facilitating the drill.

Only a licensed public carrier that is fully insured should be used to transport students. Teachers or administrators should not transport students in their personal vehicles. Parents/ legal guardians must provide authorization for their child to be transported by someone else. This includes transportation for dismissal as well as extracurricular activities.

## **Catholic Identity**

### ***Catholic Identity***

The mission of Catholic Education is to form children in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the Catholic Church, while providing a comprehensive academic education that will help them reach their full human potential and contribute to the common good of our nation and the world. Ultimately, the mission of all Catholic education is to lead those entrusted to its care to find salvation in Jesus Christ.

In *Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (#11) Saint John Paul II wrote that Catholic schools are "...the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. Catholic schools are at once places of evangelization, of complete formation, of enculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds."

Diocesan academies and schools strive to emulate the words of Saint John Paul II by:

- creating an evangelizing community, where people come to have a better and deeper understanding of Christ and His Church;
- recognizing the importance of multicultural, multi-faceted, academically sound educational programs that meet the needs of the poor and the rich, the Catholic and the non-Catholic, the wise and the not so learned;
- welcoming members to the school community regardless of culture, race, or religion and celebrating the diversity that exists within our communities, churches, and schools;
- creating an environment that encourages young people to grow, not separated from others, but as part of a larger community, as part of the family of God; and
- not only promoting and encouraging academically sound individuals, but rejoicing with children who are spiritually, theologically, and liturgically enlivened and fulfilled

### ***Adherence to Catholic Doctrine***

The Academy is a Roman Catholic school located in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn ("Diocese of Brooklyn"), and is committed to providing quality Catholic education for both Catholic children and those of other faiths who share our commitment to Gospel values and academic excellence. Our goals include teaching Christ's truth and fostering the formation of the Academy's students by conveying the values rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a religious organization of the Roman Catholic faith, the Academy, at all times, adheres to the doctrines, customs, tenets and teachings of the Roman Catholic church, and the curriculum guidelines in religion from the Diocese of Brooklyn. All students and parents, including those who are Non-Catholic, must accept and adhere to the standards, values, and religious tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. *All* parents/guardians are expected to support the Academy's mission and commitment to Christian principles.

### ***Inclusion of All Other Faiths***

The presence of students from other faiths provides a wonderful diversity, and the Academy welcomes students and parents/guardians of other faiths. However, as a Catholic school located within the Diocese of Brooklyn, the Academy is focused on the formation of children in the Catholic faith. Parents/guardians must accept the intentional Catholic values and tenets that are the underpinning of our Academy. All students, including Non-Catholic students, are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of the Academy, including, but not limited to, liturgies, religious functions, and religious classes. It is also expected that Non-Catholic students and parents/guardians participate as fully as they can in the liturgical and prayer life of the Academy. The teachers and administration at the Academy are also committed to teaching the fullness of revelation as it is taught by the Roman Catholic Church and the Diocese of Brooklyn. While our teachers,

administration, and staff value the presence of students from other faiths and respect other faiths, they always teach and model within the context of the doctrines and tenets of the Roman Catholic Church.

Christ is the reason for our school. The Religion curriculum follows Diocesan guidelines and standards. Students in Nursery and Grades K-8 will receive daily religion lessons that educate them to informed and active Catholics. Students will be made aware of Christian values in their daily lives. Religion is part of all that we see, teach and do at the Academy, and is a crucial component of students' academic learning. The Academy adheres to the current Diocese of Brooklyn curriculum guidelines in religion. Non-Catholic students are expected to fully participate in all religious education and formation programs, including, but not limited to, religion class, liturgies, and religious functions.

Students in Grades Kindergarten through 8 will attend a monthly school mass every First Friday. Grades Kindergarten through 8 will go to Mass with their class either on a Tuesday or Thursday at least once a month. Family members are always encouraged to attend.

### **Cell Phone and Electronic Device Policy**

Students are not permitted to use a cell phone and/or the office phone unless permission is given by the principal or school secretary. Student use of the phone is for emergencies only. Students in all grades will have their cell phones and any other electronic devices collected each morning, stored in a locked closet, and returned at the end of the day.

Students are never permitted to use their cell phones in the school building. It must be turned off as they enter the school building. Students may not take pictures with their cell phones on school property. No other electronic devices (iPods, iPads, PDAs, gaming systems, etc.) may be used in the school building. If a parent/guardian needs to reach a student, he or she must call the Main Office. Similarly, if a student seeks to call his or her parent, the student must make the request to the Main Office.

Any child found using a cell phone or electronic device will have it collected by the principal, member of the faculty, or staff member. For the first offense, it will be returned to the child at the end of the *following* school day. For the second offense, it will be returned to the child *one full week* after it is collected. For the third offense, it will be returned on the last day of school.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy assumes no responsibility for lost, damaged, or stolen electronics that were not given to the teacher in accordance with school policy. It is strongly advised that students do not bring valuables into the school building including electronic devices such as tablets, phones, etc.

The Academy is not responsible for valuables that are lost or damaged. It is strongly advised that students do not bring valuables into the school building including electronic devices such as tablets, phones, etc.

### **Communication between Academy and Home**

Regular communication between the Academy and parents/guardians is a crucial component of your child's school experience. Scheduled parent teacher conferences allow teachers and parents/guardians to discuss student achievement as well as to develop means to assist students in areas of difficulty.

A parent/guardian may request a meeting with a teacher at any time by simply sending a note to the teacher in question and the teacher will arrange for this meeting outside class time at a mutually convenient time. The meeting should take place in the classroom or someplace that ensures privacy, and never in a hallway, on the street, or another public place. A parent/guardian who is refused such a meeting should notify the Principal. If a

parent/guardian seeks to meet with the Principal, he or she must contact the main office to set up an appointment.

Additionally, the Academy may communicate with the parent/guardian in many ways, including:

- **Email, SMS, phone messages and posts through the FACTS Family Portal**
- **School Website and Social Media** The Academy website can be found here: [olmercyca.org/](http://olmercyca.org/) This website does not require a login and is accessible to the public. Various announcements may be made on the school website, such as emergency school closing, snow days, and other important information. The website will also contain various resources, such as the academic calendar.
- **Information Sent Home With the Children:** Occasionally, teachers or administration at the Academy will send hard copy information home with your children. Please check your child's backpack *daily* to check for any information sent home by the Academy.

Information from the Academy is sent home regularly. Parents are asked to return all required notices promptly. In addition, the academy uses *FACTS*, a Student Management and an email broadcast system to keep parents informed of school closures and upcoming events. Teachers have 24 hours to respond to an email or letter during office hours of 8:00am-3:00pm.

For the safety and security of all students and staff, all visitors, including parents, must come to the school office upon entering the building and get a visitor's pass. The permission of the Principal is necessary before parents and other visitors proceed beyond the office.

Parents are offered the opportunity to conference with teachers twice a year at report card conferences. In addition, teachers are available by appointment whenever the need arises. Teachers are to be given adequate notice for scheduling a conference, which may never take place during a teacher's class time. Teachers and/or the principal may also request conferences with parents. Parents are asked to respond to these requests when they are made.

Parents are to be exemplary models of behavior for their children. Therefore, it is expected that the parents will support the school policies and rules.

**FACTS is the dominant platform of teacher/parent communication and should be checked on a regular daily basis for any missing assignments.**

### **Drop-off and Dismissal Procedures**

**PARENT NOTE FOR ALL GRADES: PARENTS CANNOT WALK STUDENTS INTO THE BUILDING.**

### **Drop-Off *Nursery and 3K***

All Nursery and 3K students must enter the building wearing their masks .

All Nursery and 3K classes must enter through the Convent doors at 8 AM.

All Nursery and 3K students must sanitize their hands upon entering the building.

Nursery AM classes meet on Mondays through Fridays from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

Nursery Full Day and 3K classes meet on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM. These classes meet on Wednesdays from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

All Nursery and 3K students arriving after 8:15 AM must use the Main Entrance and check in with Ms. Hinkson.

### **Dismissal *Nursery and 3K***

All Nursery and 3K students must continue to wear their masks during dismissal .

Nursery and 3K students will be dismissed from the Convent Entrance starting at 2:30 PM.

NOTE : Wednesday dismissal is 2:00 PM for *Ms. Debbie's Nursery class only*.

Parents must wait in their car or observe social distancing and not congregate anywhere on school and church property.

Students and parents must immediately vacate the school and church premises, i.e., no playing, loitering, talking or congregating.

### **Drop-Off *PreK for All Instructional and PreK for All Religion Group***

All Pre K for All classes must enter the building wearing masks.

Pre-K for All classes meet on Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 AM -2:50PM.

Pre-K Religion Group students must use the Church side entrance , the side door closest to the church, and start entering the building at 7:50 AM.

Pre-K for All Instructional students in Mrs. Keenan's and Mrs. Edwards' classes will be dropped off at the Main Entrance at 8:30AM. Mrs. Keenan will be on the left side of the entrance and Ms. Edwards on the right side of the entrance.

Pre-K for All Instructional students in Mrs. Orlov's and Ms. Alyssa's classes will be dropped off at Church side entrance at 8:30AM. Mrs. Orlov's side will be the left side of the entrance closer to Juno Street and Ms. Alyssa's side will be the right side entrance closer to the church steps.

Pre-K for All Instructional students may enter the building at 8:30 AM.

All PreK for All students must sanitize their hands upon entering the building.

All PreK for All students entering after 8:45 AM must use the Main Entrance and check in with Ms. Hinkson.

### **Dismissal *PreKfor All***

Ms. Orlov's class will dismiss from the church side door at 2:35 PM.

Ms. Alyssa's class will dismiss from the church side door at 2:35 PM.

Ms. Edward's class will dismiss from the Main Entrance at 2:35 PM.

Ms. Keenan's class will dismiss from the Main Entrance at 2:35 PM.

All Prek for All students must continue to wear their masks during dismissal.

NOTE: Earlier Wednesday dismissal is not applicable for PreKfor All.

Parents must wait in their car or observe social distancing and not congregate anywhere on school and church property.

Students and parents must immediately vacate the school and church premises, i.e., no playing, loitering, talking or congregating.

### **Drop-Off *Kindergarten and First Grade***

Kindergarten and First Grade students must enter the building wearing masks.

Kindergarten and First Grade students must enter through the Main Entrance.

School Doors open at 7:45 AM.

Older siblings should come at a later time. For example, if a family has a first grader and a third grader, they should come from 8:00AM -8:10AM.

All Kindergarten and First Grade students must sanitize their hands upon entering the building.

All Kindergarten and First Grade students arriving after 8:10AM must check in with Ms. Hinkson.

### **Dismissal *Kindergarten***

Kindergarten will dismiss at 2:45PM from the Courtyard.

Students in the Extended Care Program will be brought to the Parish Hall by a teacher /aide.

All Kindergarten students must continue to wear their masks during dismissal

NOTE: Wednesday dismissal is 2PM.

Parents must wait in their car or observe social distancing and not congregate anywhere on school and church property.

Students and parents must immediately vacate the school and church premises, i.e., no playing, loitering, talking or congregating.

### **Dismissal *First Grade***

Grade 1 will dismiss at 2:45PM from the Main Entrance.

Students in the Extended Care Program will be brought to the Parish Hall by a teacher /aide. .

All Grade 1 students must continue to wear their masks during dismissal.

NOTE: Wednesday dismissal is 2PM.

Parents must wait in their car or observe social distancing and not congregate anywhere on school and church property.

Students and parents must immediately vacate the school and church premises,i.e.,no playing,loitering,talking or congregating.

### **Drop-Off *Second and Third Grade***

Students in Grades 2 and 3 may be dropped off between 8:00AM -810AM at the Main Entrance.

Older siblings should come at a later time . For example, if a family has a first grader and a third grader, they should come from 8:00AM -8:10AM.

Students must exit their cars wearing a mask and entering the building.

Students must sanitize their hands upon entering the building.

All Grades 2 and 3 students arriving after 8:10AM must check in with Ms. Hinkson.

### **Dismissal *Second and Third Grade***

Grades 2 and 3 will dismiss at 2:55PM from the Main Entrance.

Students in the Extended Care Program will be brought to the Parish Hall by a teacher/aide.

All Grade 2 and 3 students must continue to wear their masks during dismissal.

Parents must wait in their car or observe social distancing and not congregate anywhere on school and church property.

Students and parents must immediately vacate the school and church premises,i.e.,no playing,loitering,talking or congregating.

### **Drop-Off *Fourth and Fifth Grade***

Students in Grades 4 and 5 may be dropped off between 8:00AM -810AM at the Courtyard Entrance.

Special subject teachers /office staff/classroom aides are stationed at the entrance.

Students must exit their cars wearing a mask and entering the building .

Students must sanitize their hands upon entering the building.

Any student arriving after 8:10AM must check in with Ms. Hinkson for a late pass.

### **Dismissal *Fourth and Fifth Grade***

Grades 4 and 5 will dismiss at 2:50PM from the Church side entrance and be brought to Juno Street for dismissal. Parents are encouraged to park on Juno Street for picking up middle school students.

Students in the Extended Care Program will be brought to the Parish Hall.

All Grade 4 and 5 students must continue to wear their masks during dismissal.

Parents must wait in their car or observe social distancing and not congregate anywhere on school and church property.

Students and parents must immediately vacate the school and church premises, i.e.,no playing,loitering,talking or congregating.

### **Drop-Off *Grades 6, 7 and 8***

Students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 may be dropped off between 8:00AM -810AM at the Courtyard Entrance.

Special subject teachers /office staff/classroom aides are stationed at the entrance.

Students must exit their cars wearing a mask and entering the building.

Students must sanitize their hands upon entering the building.

Any student arriving after 8:10AM must check in with Ms. Hinkson for a late pass.

### **Dismissal *Grades 6,7 and 8***

Grades 6,7 and 8 will dismiss at 2:55PM from the Church side entrance and be brought to Juno Street for dismissal. Parents are encouraged to park on Juno Street for picking up middle school students.

Students in the Extended Care Program will be brought to the Parish Hall.

All Grade 6, 7 and 8 students must continue to wear their masks during dismissal.

Parents must wait in their car or observe social distancing and not congregate anywhere on school and church property.

Students and parents must immediately vacate the school and church premises, i.e.,no playing,loitering,talking or congregating.

### ***Parental Request for Early Dismissal for Students in All Grades***

A note must be submitted to the school office when a child is released early and must specify to whom the child may be released to. A parent or guardian signs the child out of the main entrance. Any designee of the parent must show picture identification when picking up the student.

### ***Students Walking Home***

Students who proceed home on their own, either by walking, bicycle, or otherwise, must do so as safely and directly as possible and submit written authorization signed by the parent/guardian to the Academy. They must obey all traffic and trespassing laws, and cross at designated crosswalks. Students in Grades Kindergarten through Fourth Grade will not be permitted to travel home from the Academy without a parent, guardian or other authorized adult or another pre-arranged travel accommodation (such as a school bus). In the case of a

younger student traveling home with an older student, such as an older sibling, the Academy must receive written authorization from a parent/guardian. The Academy reserves the right to not release the student(s) to travel home on their own, either by walking or otherwise, if it deems that is not in the best interest of the students.

### **Extended Day Program**

An Early Drop-Off and an After-School program are important services offered by the school. Qualified personnel supervise these programs. The fees and time schedules are available from the office. Payments are due at the end of each week.

### **Field Trips**

Written permission must be obtained from parents/legal guardians of students who wish to go on scheduled trips. Information to the parents/legal guardians will include the date, purpose and destination of the trip, the expense, the means of transportation, and probable time of return.

Adults who wish to chaperone must complete Virtus training and background checks prior to accompanying students. Please see the section on Volunteering, Chaperoning & VIRTUS training for further information about this process.

Field trips are considered an extension of the school day and the code of conduct and anti-bullying policy will apply. All disciplinary rules pertaining to students equally apply to students during school field trips. Students who engage in poor behavior on field trips may be required to be escorted by a parent/guardian for future field trips or may lose the privilege of attending field trips. Individual teachers in consultation with the Principal reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance, violation of the code of conduct or poor behavior, or violation of school policy.

All medications given on field trips must comply with the Administering Medication policy. For a student with prescription medication and/or medical necessary related treatments, a trained individual needs to be present on a field trip. This can include a parent/guardian, a designated family member to ensure care in the case of an emergency, or the school nurse *if* the nurse is attending the field trip. Given the needs of the Academy, the Academy cannot guarantee that the nurse will attend the trip. If a trained individual of the Academy cannot attend the field trip, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide a trained individual to accompany the student on the field trip. Any adult accompanying the student must complete Virtus training and background checks prior to accompanying the student.

The Academy reserves the right to cancel school-sponsored field trips at any time and for any reason, including inclement weather and safety risks.

**Depending on the return time of the class trip, hot lunch may not be served to students and therefore he/she is expected to bring in a bagged lunch (no glass bottles) on the day of the trip.**

### **Financial Policies**

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy offers parents a private school education for their children at an affordable cost. The tuition and fees are reviewed annually and adjusted as necessitated by the budget. The operation expenses of the academy are met by the tuition, fees and fund raising.

It is expected that all parents will support the academy's fundraising events throughout the year. There is

mandatory participation in the candy sale in January (one carton per student) and pay a fee of \$200.00 for lunchroom supervision. All families are asked to participate in the Home Academy Association.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy has partnered with FACTS Management Company to facilitate our tuition payment program and financial aid assessment. FACTS offers greater efficiency and financial stability for the academy while providing convenience to families. FACTS allows parents to make secure automated payments for tuition directly from your checking or saving account.

All families must create an account and enroll with FACTS. Your enrollment/registration is not complete until your payment plan with FACTS Management has been established.

Tuition is paid over ten months from August through May.

No child may begin class on the first day of the new school year if there is any balance from the previous year. Students leaving Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy for any reason will have all transfer records withheld if any money is owed to the school. In arrears tuition will result in the withholding of report cards.

### **Grading**

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy follows the current marking code of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Brooklyn Diocese:

<b><u>ACADEMIC CODE</u></b>	<b><u>PROGRESS CODE</u></b>
<b>A+ 97-100</b>	<b>1 Does Not Meet Standard</b>
<b>A 93- 96</b>	<b>2 Approaching Standard</b>
<b>B+ 89-92</b>	<b>3 Meets Standard</b>
<b>B 85-88</b>	<b>4 Meets Standard with Distinction</b>
<b>C+ 81-84</b>	<b>X Not Assessed this Trimester</b>
<b>C 77-80</b>	
<b>D+ 74-76</b>	
<b>D 70-73</b>	
<b>F Below 70</b>	

Students are graded using a variety of measurement tools including: Class work, homework, independent work/projects, cooperative learning projects, tests, and student portfolios.

Report Cards are distributed at Parent-Teacher Conferences in December and March. They are given to students in June. Progress reports are issued approximately one month before report cards. They must be signed and returned to the teacher within three days.

### ***Recommendation for Next Grade Level***

The Academy takes the decision whether to promote or retain a student extremely seriously. Sometimes, however, testing, diagnosis and actual performance may indicate that a student cannot follow the school's complete course of study. In accordance with NYS Education Law regarding the Assessment and Performance of a student who is being considered for retention at the same grade level, teachers will discuss the possibility with the Principal. Although the teacher consults with the Principal, the final decision for retaining a student

rests with the Principal. Certain criteria the Principal and teachers may take into account as they consider a recommendation for retention includes that the student has failed to pass major subjects on each grade level and/or has not demonstrated acceptable progress toward mastery of standards, including failure to complete assignments, or repeated low scores in several areas on a report card.

A student who receives a final failing grade in religion will NOT be promoted.

If a student completes all requirements for promotion or graduation, and there has been no recommendation or approval to retain the student, a parent/guardian or family cannot self-select that the student be retained.

### ***Graduation***

At the discretion of the Principal, the Academy has the right not to certify a student's graduation or to issue a diploma to the student, if there has been a breach of a material condition of the educational contract, such as failure to meet financial obligations, infractions against the school's code of conduct, anti-bullying policy or violations of the policies of the Academy and those set forth in this Handbook.

### ***Summer School***

In accordance with NYS Education Guidelines a student who has received a failing grade in reading, mathematics, and language arts in three marking periods of the report card will be required to attend mandatory summer school in the low performing content areas. Summer school may also be recommended due to poor performance on standardized tests or in the classroom. Excessive absences during the school year may result in the child being required to attend summer school. The final determination as to whether a student must attend summer school rests with the Principal.

The summer school report card must be submitted to the Principal before September 1. Failure to attend summer school when required will result in retention at the same grade level or discharge of the student. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide documentation that summer school has been successfully completed. In cases in which tutoring is allowed for the remediation, it must be undertaken by a qualified teacher and approved in advance by the Principal.

### **Homework**

Homework is a mandatory aspect of the school curriculum. Homework is an essential part of the Academy's instructional program, as it reinforces learning and provides students with opportunities to practice what they were taught in class. Homework can come in many forms, including, but not limited to, projects, reports, and independent reading. Students are required to complete all homework, including when a student is absent.

**Parent, guardian, or other adult assistance with homework is key to a student's academic success!**

It is the student's responsibility to complete regular and make-up homework assignments. If a student is absent, a homework "buddy" will assist in the gathering of assignments and books. Parents should sign their children's homework assignments to indicate that they are aware that their child has done their homework.

Returning tests and graded assignments with a parent signature is part of a child's homework grade, and is required in Grades 1 through 8.

Homework assignments are posted daily in Google classroom– [www.olmercyca.org](http://www.olmercyca.org) . Parents should check FACTS daily for updates on missing assignments/homework. Teachers are not required to accept homework assignments after their due date, with the exception of excused absences. Any late assignments accepted are at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

**Students will not be permitted to return to their classroom after 3PM to retrieve any belongings.**

ALL students, depending on grade level, are expected to be read to or read independently for 20 minutes per evening.

Please keep in mind that each child works at a different pace and the time frame for completing homework for one student may be different than that for another.

Homework must be done at home and may not be done at school with the exception of students who attend the After School program.

**Homework for Grades 5-8:** Late assignments will only be accepted **two school calendar days** after the assignment is due. If the student is absent he/she will be given the opportunity to make up for the missed work. A grace period will be given for any extenuating circumstances due to an absence. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with their teachers for any missing work after being absent.

### **School Supplies**

All assigned books must be properly covered. Contact paper is NOT to be used to cover any books obtained under the New York State textbook loan. Books that are not part of this loan and are soft-covered should be covered in contact paper. Each child is responsible for keeping his or her books in good condition. Books that are lost or defaced become the liability of the student and his or her parents. Students are responsible for providing supplemental materials listed on the yearly supply list for use in the classroom.

### **Honor Roll**

Students in Grades 3 through 8 who consistently excel in all areas will be eligible for the Honor Roll each trimester.

The criteria for the Honor Roll is as follows:

**Principal's List:** 97% average in major subjects with no grade below 93% in major subjects, no failures in minor subjects, conduct must be satisfactory or better, no more than five latenesses.

**First Honors:** 95% average in major subjects with no grade below 90% in major subjects, no failures in minor subjects, conduct must be satisfactory or better, no more than five latenesses.

**Second Honors:** 90% average in major subjects, no grade below 85% in major subjects, no failures in minor subjects, conduct must be satisfactory or better, no more than five latenesses.

**Honorable Mention:** 85% average in major subjects, no grade below 80% in major subjects, no failures in minor subjects, conduct must be satisfactory or better, no more than five latenesses.

### **IESP Procedures & the Evaluation Process**

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy can accommodate many specifications found in an IESP. For us to do so, the parent must provide a copy of the IESP and meet with the Principal to determine if and how the child's

needs will be met.

Services currently provided on site include: Speech Therapy, SETSS, and Counseling. An evaluation may be requested at any time and may be initiated by the parent, the teacher, or the administration.

### **Inclement Weather**

If it is necessary to close the academy, an announcement will be made via telephone broadcast (*FACTS*). The announcement may also be a general one announcing that all of the schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn are closed on television and radio. You may also check the school website: [www.olmercyca.org](http://www.olmercyca.org) for information. **Please do not call the academy and/or the rectory.**

### **Insurance**

The mandatory supply/technology fees purchase insurance for all students at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy. They are covered during the school day and during school activities through this enrollment program.

### **Lunchroom Regulations**

Lunch boxes and food/drink containers should be labeled. Glass bottles or glass containers are not allowed. Please do not send in any food that needs to be heated. Outside food (McDonalds, Subway, etc.) is not permitted. Students are expected to be respectful and courteous to each staff member supervising a lunch period and to each other.

### **Medical Policies**

#### ***Medical Requirements***

The New York City Department of Health requires that all new students entering Nursery through Grade 12 show proof of having received a complete medical evaluation. Children who transfer from one school to another in New York City are not considered new students. These requirements may change from year to year.

New York State Law states that all students in Grades Nursery through 12 must be immunized as directed by the New York State and New York City Departments of Health. New students may enter school provisionally with documentation of **an initial series of immunizations**. Once admitted provisionally, a student has a certain amount of time to continue and complete the medical requirements. Students who fail to complete the necessary requirements within the appropriate time frame **must be excluded from school**. Parents must provide records of immunization to be kept on file at the Academy. Any exemptions to the immunization requirements must be approved by the Academy with documentation being kept in the student's health records. Only medical exemptions are permitted per New York State Law. **Religious exemptions are no longer permissible.**

For Nursery, Pre-k, and PKA/3K Programs--Between July 1 and December 31 of each year, all children between the ages of 6 months and 59 months and attending a group child care or school-based child care program must receive one dose of influenza vaccine.

## *Health Services*

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy has a full-time nurse on staff to assist students with medical needs.

### *Illness and Medical Conditions*

The following provides an overview of various medical conditions and illnesses, the Academy's policy on how it handles such illnesses and conditions, and parent/guardian requirements. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but rather explanatory. In the case of any other illness or medical condition, or if there are any questions, please contact the Principal. **The policies in this section may be altered or superseded by policies in light of COVID-19 concerns.**

**Parents are reminded of the NYC Department of Health Core Practices for reducing illness in school:**

- **Keep your child home if they are sick**
- **Practice good Hand Hygiene (wash hands )**
- **Practice good Respiratory Hygiene (cover coughs and sneezes)**

Accident or Injury: We will follow the same procedure described for illness. All of the children are enrolled in the school insurance plan issued by American Home Assurance Company. It provides coverage during school hours or during any school affiliated activity. If a student is seriously injured, the parent/guardian will be notified by the Academy as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the student.

If an accident results in a medical condition/injury, the Academy is authorized to render reasonable first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion and judgment of the Academy, minimize the severity of the student or injured person's condition. The Academy may secure a professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion and judgment of the Academy, appears to be reasonably warranted. The Academy, its staff, and the Academy officials shall be held harmless from any liability, costs or expenses associated with any treatment of first aid provided (including, but not limited to the cost of transportation), and such costs or expenses shall be the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

Allergies: Parents/guardians must notify the Academy of any documented allergies that a student may have.

Asthma: Parents/guardians are required to notify the Academy of the medical needs and protocols of any student who has asthma or a related condition.

Clearance to Return: In certain instances, the Academy may require medical clearance for the child to return to the Academy. If requested, the medical clearance note must specifically state that the child may return to the Academy and resume all activities including gym and playground. Clearance notes will likely be required for severe illness, including hospitalizations and ER visits, surgical procedures, head injuries, cardiac/respiratory concerns, fractures, sprains, or significant changes in a child's health state which may impact physical activities.

Contagious Illness: To the extent a child has a contagious illness, please notify the Academy as soon as possible so that we may alert others who came in contact with your child. We also may be required to notify the Department of Health. A student with a contagious illness should not arrive for school. This applies even if the parent/guardian has not received confirmation that the child's illness is contagious, but the child is exhibiting signs of a possible communicable disease, such as a suspicious skin rash, suspicious open wounds, redness of the eyes with intense itching/burning and a thick drainage, painful, reddened sore throat, and a constant cough accompanied by other symptoms. Students with a contagious illness should remain home from school until a

doctor advises that he or she is no longer contagious and can resume normal activities.

Diarrhea/Vomiting: Students who are exhibiting vomiting and/or diarrhea should not arrive for school. Rather, they should stay home until they are free from symptoms for at least 24 hours.

Epinephrine: Severe allergic reactions leading to anaphylaxis are a life-threatening and time sensitive medical emergency. Therefore, and in accordance with New York State and City Departments of Health recommendations, Academies will work with local health providers to receive training on the administration of epinephrine. For more information, see the administering epinephrine policy below.

If a child is at risk of anaphylaxis, the parent/guardian **MUST** notify the school and inform it of the risk. Additionally, the parent/guardian must: 1) inform the Academy whether the student can self-administer epinephrine ; 2) supply the Academy with two epinephrine devices in its original packaging; and 3) replace the devices when it expires, has been used, or shows any other signs of defect, such as discoloration.

Illness in School: If your child becomes ill while in school, we will attempt to make the contacts indicated on your Emergency Contact Card. It is necessary for the child to be signed out by the adult who will be taking him/her home. No child will be allowed to go home alone during the school day.

Fever: If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or over, he or she must stay home. Your child may not return to school until they are fever free *without* Tylenol, Motrin or Advil for at least 24 hours.

Lice: To the extent a student contracts head lice, he or she must stay home from school until the parent/guardian has treated the condition in accordance with the New York City Department of Health Regulations. This is to protect the health and safety of all students and staff given the high likelihood that others can also contract head lice. In any cases where a student is infected, a letter will be sent out to the entire class. The student's name will not be revealed. If a parent/guardian becomes aware of a lice infection at home, do not send your child to school. Please inform the school via telephone. The Academy does not pay for lice treatment regardless of where exposure may have occurred.

Mobility: As a matter of safety, and in accordance with all applicable laws, the Academy may not be able to accommodate in-person learning for a child who is immobile, such as a child who is utilizing crutches or in a cast. The Academy will endeavor to provide a reasonable accommodation whenever possible, but must ensure the safety of the student and all other students and be in accord with fire safety laws. Distance learning may be provided as an alternative solution.

### ***Administering Medication***

School nurses may administer over-the-counter and prescription drugs to students with written consent and medical authorization from a parent or legal guardian. School nurses may administer prescription medication that has been prescribed by a physician but must be provided with:

- Medical authorization from the parent or legal guardian consenting to administering the medication;and
- A medical plan developed by the child's parents and health care provider detailing the proper administration of the medication, details regarding the child's medical concerns, and other pertinent details.

**The Academy reserves the right to call 911 in any case of a medical emergency.**

Prescription medicine must be brought to the nurse's office with a note from the parent/guardian and instructions from the doctor. **Medication of any type (prescription or over-the-counter) is not allowed in the classroom for safety reasons.**

### ***Administering Epinephrine***

Parents or guardians will supply their own epinephrine auto-injector and must provide written consent and medical authorization for its use. The Academy must have an up-to-date medical statement on file for each child in care. For a child with identified allergies or with special health care needs, the Academy must have a copy of an individual health care plan developed by the child's parents and health care provider. Parents must make program staff aware of the individual health care plan on their child's first day at the program.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of the student who is at risk of anaphylaxis:

- to notify the school that the child/student is at risk of anaphylaxis and is in need of the presence of epinephrine on school premises;
- to indicate to the school if the child/student is capable of self-administration of the epinephrine device;
- to supply the school with the epinephrine device\* in its original packaging as received from the pharmacist; and
- to replace the epinephrine device when it expires, discolors or has been used.

\*It is recommended that two epinephrine devices be supplied, the second functioning as a back-up in case of malfunction or if an extra dose is necessary in accordance with medical documentation.

### ***Administering Epinephrine on Field Trips***

In the event of a school trip or school event conducted outside of the school premises, it is the responsibility of the parent (or a designated person who appears on the child's emergency contact list) to attend with the child/student for the purpose of epinephrine administration, if necessary.

### ***City & State Health Services***

The Education Law of New York State mandates that students attending nonpublic schools receive the same health services provided to students attending public schools.

### ***Accommodations***

Students requiring medical accommodations throughout the school day (including physical education, dietary conditions, physical limitations and medical interventions) must submit a statement from his or her licensed medical provider stating the need for such accommodation each academic year. The Academy will attempt to provide the accommodation in accordance with all applicable laws, and will inform the parent/guardian if it is unable to do so. If the Academy is unable to do so, it may withdraw the child's enrollment in accordance with law.

### ***Emergency Services in the Event of a Serious Injury***

In the event of a serious injury, the Academy may call 911 and an ambulance may take the child to the hospital. The ambulance staff will determine the hospital based upon the severity of the emergency. A staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance and the parent/guardian will be notified to meet the child at the hospital. The Academy, its staff, and the Academy officials shall be held harmless from any liability, costs or expenses associated with any emergency services and such costs or expenses shall be the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents/guardians.

### ***Limitations of Physical Activity***

Students at the Academy will be enrolled in physical education classes. To the extent a student has a physical disability or issue which may impair his or her ability to engage in the class, or which may make the class

unsafe, the parents/guardians must notify the Academy at the beginning of the school year or as soon as the issue arises. A written doctor's recommendation may be required. Further, a student will be required to attend the physical education class for the instructional component and observation, and to complete an alternative assignment or to complete missed activities when physically able to participate.

### ***Counseling Services***

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy offers counseling services through PDHP.

### **Wellness Policy**

The Academy meets minimum federal and state standards for goals of physical education, nutrition and healthy environments in schools.

Please provide the school office, nurse, and teacher with up-to-date medical information. It is necessary for us to know if your child has any medical conditions such as heart problems, epilepsy, asthma, or allergies. Upon the first day of school, your child will be required to have a medical form completed by their pediatrician. This form will also require up-to-date immunization information.

### **Media and Photography**

Throughout the academic year, the Academy may take pictures or videos and release personal information about students for promotional purposes. This might include:

- where a special event or program at the Academy is covered by a newspaper or television station, resulting in student interviews and pictures;
- award-winning students who may have their names and photos published in a local newspaper; or
- if the Academy posts pictures of school activities on webpages and social media.

Parents/guardians have the right to exclude their children from videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography or participation involving printed materials or on the internet. If a parent/guardian chooses to exclude their child, the parent/guardian must provide written notification to the Main Office. .

Parents/guardians who do not object must fill out the "Media Authorization Release Form" ,attached at the end of this Handbook. Please be advised that, if a parent/guardian does not fill out this form, the child may be excluded from certain group photographs or otherwise taken in connection with the school day or other Academy functions.

### **Non-Custodial Parent and the Buckley Amendment:**

In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and to other school related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

### **Custody, Guardianship Orders**

Parents must provide accurate custodial information to be kept on file at the academy or parish school. Non-custodial parents do have rights. The law protects non-custodial parents and maintains that parents do not cease to be parents when they no longer have custody of their children. The Diocese of Brooklyn abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a

court order to the contrary, a school or parish academy will provide the non-custodial parents with access to academic records and other school information regarding his or her child. *If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a court certified copy of the court order.*

### **Parent Portal: FACTS**

The FACTS Family Portal will be your one-stop destination to view student academic information, school announcements, school calendar and your FACTS payment plan and incidental billing information. You will conveniently be able to access all this information in one centralized location, eliminating the need for multiple log-ins. Once the FACTS Family Portal is set up your child(rens) school will notify you with some simple instructions on creating log-in credentials. Once you create your user profile, you will be able to access the FACTS Family Portal from any device, including your smartphone whether it is an Apple or Android device.

### ***Communications with Teachers***

Students benefit tremendously when an open line of communication exists between families and teachers. It is recommended that parents/ legal guardians communicate any concerns regarding their child. Parents/ legal guardians as well as teachers should always use FACTS, school communication platforms (i.e. Google classroom), or a note sent directly to the teacher/ family. If needed, the parent/ legal guardian or teacher can schedule a follow-up meeting to address any further issue. It is also recommended that a parent communicate with a teacher regarding their concerns prior to involving the administration. Initiating an open communication with the teacher first continues a positive relationship between families and teachers.

Parents and teachers should not use personal social media accounts or personal cell phones (texting) as a means of communication in regards to school related concerns.

### **Parental Obligations**

Home is the first place where a child learns love and respect for God and neighbor. Parents/legal guardians, in choosing a Catholic school to continue the education begun at home, have responsibilities as well as opportunities to share in the continuance of their children's education.

Parental involvement consists of parents/legal guardians and staff meeting together because of common interest in the child. It is expressed in many ways such as sharing student supervision in the lunchroom or playground or serving as library or teacher aide. In some instances, parents/legal guardians may be asked to assist in advocacy in all areas that would benefit the schools, including programs that request government assistance, in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent. The involvement of the total family is also a means of communicating the academy's and parish school's performance to the total parish community.

Parental support for the education of their children is of the utmost importance. Parents and legal guardians are also expected to uphold the behavioral expectations set forth for students and staff within the academy or parish school community. Failure of parents to act in a manner compatible with the values of the academy or parish school may result in student dismissal.

Every academy or parish school is encouraged to establish a Home School Association. Its purpose is the educational enrichment of parents/legal guardians and teachers. The goal of the Home School Association is to foster a clearer understanding of the mutual responsibilities of parents/legal guardians and teachers regarding

the education of the students.

An added responsibility of the Home School Association will be to assist in the fundraising efforts of the academy or parish school. In the school, this is done in coordination with the administration. In an academy, it is done in coordination with the Board of Trustees of the academy. No organization may hold title to accounts nor have access to funds raised for the academy or parish school. All financial transactions must be approved by the pastor/academy Board of Trustees .

### **Report Cards**

Students must achieve a level of academic proficiency and social/emotional development in order to be promoted to the next grade. Any student who is in danger of being retained will receive notice with the March report card. Grade 8 students who fail to meet academic requirements will have their diplomas withheld. Parents in Grades 1-8 may check FACTS for regular updates of their child's grades. Students may be required to attend summer school if they do not meet the requirements for promotion.

We have three formal parent/teacher conferences:

- September (Orientation meeting)
- December (1<sup>st</sup> Trimester Report Card Conference)
- March (2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester Report Card Conference)

Children in Grades 1 through 8 will receive progress reports at the midpoint of the first, second, and third trimesters. Please consult the school calendar for distribution dates, and return the signed report on the following school day.

### **Safety and Crisis Management**

#### ***Commitment to Safety***

Safety of the students is the Academy's number one concern and we maintain a high standard of safety. This requires that the Academy complete periodic drills and exercises and that all members of the community are trained in our safety standards. In order to maintain a safe environment, the Academy requires cooperation across the board including the administration, teachers, staff, and, of course, parents. We must ensure safety is practiced in hallways, when passing during class, while on staircases, when using restrooms, during recess and physical education, during after school programs and extracurricular activities, when outside the school building, during arrival and departure, and in connection with parent parking.

#### ***Emergency Drills***

Per New York State laws, academies are required to conduct twelve emergency drills over the course of the school year. Four of these drills must be lockdown drills. Students are expected to follow all directives provided to them by school teachers and staff. Failure to comply or act appropriately during emergency drills will result in disciplinary action.

#### ***School Closings***

The Diocese of Brooklyn will base their closings on the New York City Public School System. If the New York City school system is closed due to inclement weather, the schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn are closed. Local academies may also make decisions to close their individual schools based on inclement weather or other

hazardous conditions (infrastructure issues, flooding, property damage, etc.). Parents will be notified as soon as possible. In the event of a closure during the school day, proper provisions will be made for students to return home or to be cared for in other premises until usual dismissal time.

### ***Crisis/Emergency Information***

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy has implemented a “crisis plan” in case of a lockdown emergency. All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep your children safe. Lockdown procedures will be practiced at least once per trimester. In the event of such an emergency, circumstances permitting, the building will be evacuated and students will be moved to one of three secure designated locations:

1. Our Lady of Mercy Parish Hall
2. PS144
3. Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Catholic Academy

### ***Reporting Concerns Regarding School Safety***

Students, parents/guardians and staff must report all dangerous and potentially dangerous situations and/or events directly to an administrator at the Academy.

### ***Visitors***

All visitors must be admitted to the building by school staff. Visitors should proceed to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor designation (lanyard, sticker, etc.) if available. Visitors to the school are asked to remain in the office until they have confirmed their destination within the school. For the safety of staff and students, visitors should not walk about the school but should travel to their intended destination within the school. Prior to leaving the school, visitors should return to the main office, sign out, and leave through the main doors. Visitors should not exit through side doors to ensure that building security is maintained.

During COVID-19, we ask all parents and legal guardians to visit the Academy only when necessary as well as to keep any visits as brief as possible.

### ***Video Surveillance/Photographs***

Academies within the Diocese of Brooklyn are authorized to use video camera surveillance on Academy property to monitor the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to the property, and to safeguard facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be placed in locations as deemed appropriate by the designated school administrators.

Violations of Diocesan policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or laws that images, video and audio capture through surveillance may be used as evidence that may subject students, staff, and visitors to appropriate disciplinary and legal action, including, but not limited to, disclosure to law enforcement.

Data from video surveillance is typically retained for a year. Data related to a known incident which involves injury to students, staff or members of the public or property, or which involves any potential violation of the law or Diocesan policies will be kept with reports of the incident until the incident has been appropriately resolved.

The Academy recognizes that parents/guardians will often want to document their student’s life at the Academy, including by taking pictures or video recordings. The Academy asks parents/guardians to exercise caution, however, and be mindful of not taking pictures of other children without the express consent of those children’s parents/guardians. Parents/guardians and students are not permitted to take pictures or video recordings on

school grounds without express consent of the Principal.

## **Safe Environment**

### ***Safe Environment Protocol & VIRTUS training***

All teachers, staff and volunteers must complete VIRTUS training and a background screening which is administered by the Diocese of Brooklyn.

There are additional steps parents/guardians can take to keep their children safe, which we recommend parents/guardians consistently and regularly review with their children. This includes:

- Students should never go home with strangers.
- Students should never talk to strangers.
- Students should never take things from strangers.
- If students are approached by strangers and are still near the Academy, they should be encouraged to return to the Academy and immediately inform a staff member.
- Young students should be escorted to and from school.
- Older children should be encouraged to walk/travel to school in groups whenever possible.

The teachers at the Academy will also remind students of the importance of not responding to strangers and actions each child should take if approached by a stranger, including reporting it to responsible adults.

### ***Child Lures Prevention Program***

The Child Lures/Teen Lures Prevention programs are presented to the children and youth who attend each Academy. This program is tailored to different age groups and covers topics such as staying healthy and safe, kindness and respect, trusted adults, my body belongs to me, child luring, choosing grown-ups to help, children are special, and abuse is never a child's fault (topics will vary based on age level appropriateness). For older students, topics include sexual assault, harassment, dating violence, bullying/cyberbullying, sexting, identity theft, online luring, suicide and human trafficking with the goal of facilitating authentic conversations to bring awareness to the topics.

Each program provides teachers with the resources to facilitate appropriate conversations. Parents/legal guardians will also be provided with a link to access parent guides digitally to continue the conversations within their homes.

### ***Child Abuse Laws***

Under NYS law, teachers are all **mandated reporters** and are legally required to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect to the proper agency. The teacher will make a judgment that the child may be presenting signs of abuse or neglect. If the mandated reporter makes such a judgment and suspects abuse or neglect, in addition to reporting to the proper agency, the reporter must also notify the Principal.

### ***Confidentiality***

There is a professional, legal and moral ethic that requires all persons to safeguard all student information of a privileged nature. However, if a teacher learns of something that could impact the health or safety of a student or any person, the teacher has the responsibility to share the information with the Principal. Further, school officials are required to report when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in

their professional or official capacity is an abused or maltreated child.

### ***Sexual Harassment***

The Academy is committed to providing for its students an atmosphere and school zone free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is a direct violation of the Catholic faith as it signifies a lack of respect for other persons.

Any student who believes that he or she is being sexually harassed, or a parent/guardian who was informed by their child that the child was sexually harassed shall immediately report this information to teacher and to the Principal. A student/parent who is uncomfortable reporting the alleged harassment to a teacher or Principal may report it directly to the Office of the Superintendent. Any information shall be treated as confidential, to the extent permitted by law. All claims of sexual harassment will be investigated in an appropriate manner under the supervision of the Office of the Superintendent. No student will be subject to any retaliation or disciplinary action on the part of the Academy for reports of sexual harassment made in good faith.

No student is to sexually harass another member of the school community. Any student who engages in sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

### ***Child Reporting Abuse to Parents***

If a student reports any form of abuse at the Academy to his or her parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must notify the Principal. Any information shall be treated as confidential, to the extent permitted by law. This will permit the Principal to investigate the situation and will ensure that the alleged abuse or harassment does not occur to other students. If a parent/guardian is uncomfortable going to the Principal, he or she may go directly to the Office of the Superintendent.

### **School and Parish Grounds**

Unless students are formally registered for Before- or After-school programs, including Academy extracurricular activities, the school does not have staff available to supervise students present on the school grounds outside the general school hours.

**The school and Church grounds are not playgrounds.** No ball playing, bicycles or scooters are permitted at any time on or around the property of the school, convent or rectory. Students will not be permitted to play in the following areas:

- The grassy areas on Kessel Street and Juno near the school, church, rectory, and convent..
- The steps, entrances and walkways/sidewalks on or adjacent to the school, rectory or convent.

**Please do not block the driveways of our neighbors or double-park your car .** This creates a hazardous situation for our students and everyone involved.

Students and families who do not observe the above are violating loitering and trespassing regulations.

### **School Property**

Students will be held responsible for the proper care of all books, supplies, devices, accessories or equipment furnished to them by the Academy. Students who damage, lose, or deface Academy property shall be required to pay for the damage or loss.

Desks, lockers, and any other area on Academy property where students store items are Academy property and

subject to searches by school authorities to protect the safety of all.

## **Student Records**

### ***Change of Address/Phone Number***

For student safety, it is imperative that parents/ legal guardians alert the academy or parish school to any changes in address or phone number. Parents/ legal guardians must also provide the academy or parish school with an adequate number of emergency contacts (with up to date information).

### ***Educational Records Requests***

In the event of a student transferring to a different academy, parish school, or public school, the school will provide student records to the school of transfer. Requests can be made in writing by the parent/ legal guardian or by the school that the student will be transferring to. The school office is responsible for sending student records directly to the school of transfer. If records are not provided in a timely fashion, parents or legal guardians may contact the Office of the Superintendent to receive further assistance in this matter.

### ***Authorization to Release Records***

Academies and parish schools may not release the records of students without the written consent of the parents/legal guardians to any individual, agency or organization other than the following:

- Other academy or parish school officials who have legitimate educational interests.
- Officials of other academies or parish schools in which the student intends to enroll.
- Officials of the courts with lawfully issued judicial process, i.e., subpoena, court order, etc.
- Please note health records are the property of the Department of Health.

### **Review of a Child's Official Records**

Parents/legal guardians have the right to inspect any and all material which is part of their child's permanent record. Academies and parish schools require parents/legal guardians to provide a written request prior to when they wish to examine their child's permanent record. At the time of inspection, the academy or parish school administrator, or qualified delegate, will be present.

## **Supervision of the Play Street**

Teachers supervise the students during lunch recess. During lunch recess, students may not reenter the building without the teacher's permission. Students are to remain in the center of the play street – away from the grass and corners for safety reasons.

## **Technology**

The use of the computers is for educational endeavors only. All students are expected to use the technology appropriately and sign the acceptable use policy. Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, Instagram®, Facebook®, Snapchat®, Whats App®, etc., may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.

## *Acceptable Use Policy Agreement of the Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy*

Here at Our Lady of Mercy, the students have access to the Internet. Our goal is to provide a safe and educational environment for your child to use the internet and computer technology at school. We provide convenient, supervised access to search engines on all our internet terminals.

To prevent any abuse of internet activities, and the school's technology equipment, each student in grades 3 to 8 and their parents/guardians are required to read and return signed our "Acceptable Use Policy Agreement" attached to this handbook. No student will be allowed access to our school's computers without this form being signed and returned to school.

### *RULES OF CONDUCT*

- Computers will not be used for anything other than teacher directed use. The installation, downloading, or modification of any software by students without permission is prohibited.
- Students will respect copyright laws and licensing agreements, there will be no plagiarism.
- Students will not make any attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted files or networks, including other student's saved work.
- If a student comes across any material that is, or they feel is objectionable or questionable the student will advise a teacher immediately.
- Students will not visit chat rooms or instant message anyone, unless supervised for educational purposes.
- Checking web based e-mail and social network accounts without permission is prohibited.
- Sending e-mails or instant messages (IM's) that are offensive and/or threatening in any manner will result in disciplinary action.
- No student will give out any personal information about themselves or any member of the school over the Internet.
- Vandalism of computer hardware, software or other school property is not tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.
- Taking pictures or videos during the school day by students is prohibited without the permission of the teacher and/or school administration.

### **Zoom Meeting Etiquette**

#### **Before You Zoom**

- Appropriate behavior is expected at all times. OLMCA school handbook rules still apply during Zoom classes.
- Log into your classroom from a distraction-free, quiet environment.
- Ensure that your device is fully charged and you have access to a working charger.
- Ensure that your workspace is a table or desk. Have all of your necessary supplies ready to start the day.
- All students should be dressed in their school uniform tops.
- Check your background lighting.
- Be sure to take care of your personal needs (hygiene, eating, talking to others in your home, etc.) prior to entering a Zoom classroom.

#### **While You Zoom**

- Use gallery view.
- Pay attention to the speaker.

- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Consider using a headset with an external mic for best hearing and speaking capabilities.
- Cameras must be on at all times.
- If you would like to answer a question, use the “Raise Hand” feature. Then unmute yourself after you are called on by the teacher.
- When you are talking, look into the camera and speak loudly and clearly. Only one student should talk at a time.
- When you are speaking, let others know that you are finished by saying something like, “That’s all,” or “I’m done,” or “Thank you,” so that everyone knows you are finished speaking.
- Use the chat feature to ask questions or raise your hand. The chat box is public and the record of the chat is kept and archived.
- Wait for your teacher to call on you.
- No eating while at a Zoom meeting.
- No cell phones are permitted.
- No toys or pets should be brought to a Zoom meeting as it will cause a distraction.

### **Additional Zoom Considerations**

- Students are required to log into Google Classroom at 8:15AM for Homeroom. Zoom Links will be posted on Google Classroom. Parents are required to send an absence note in an email. The email should include the date of absence and the reason. Absence notes are legal documents that must be kept on file by the Academy. Absence Email should be sent to the homeroom teacher and Ms. Hinkson.
- Attendance will be taken throughout the day. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class and at the end of each class.
- Students are required to utilize the video component of the Zoom class when instructed to do so by the teacher. This means students MUST have their cameras on showing their faces and be wearing their school uniform top during the lessons.
- Students must have their first and last name displayed during the Zoom Call.
- OLMCA parents are prohibited from participating during class lessons; this time is devoted to the students.
- Any communication with the teacher must be done through email Please allow 24 hours for a response.

## **Tuition**

### ***Tuition and other fee schedules***

The academy or parish school will collect tuition and fees over a ten month period. This ten month period will typically extend from August to May. Tuition collection will begin prior to the start of the school year.

Academies and parish schools reserve the right to place severely delinquent accounts in the hands of a collection agency or its attorneys for collection. It is not our desire that any family should incur unnecessary legal fees or suffer further embarrassment or inconvenience in this regard. Again, we encourage prompt communication with the academy in an effort to avoid litigation.

In order to withdraw a student, the parent must submit written notice to the principal in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the academy to prepare necessary information and settle accounts. No student records will be forwarded to another academy or school until all accounts have been settled.

Following the terms of the enrollment contract, refunds will be made only in accordance with the stated guidelines and/or at the discretion of the administration. The refund must be requested prior to the start of the period for which payment would be made.

### ***Resources for Tuition Assistance***

Catholic education is meant to be available to every Catholic family. Every family desiring a Catholic education for their child(ren) will participate to the extent capable in the cost of providing that education.

Each family in need of tuition assistance must complete a scholarship application through Futures in Education, which may currently be found at: [www.futuresineducation.org/scholarships](http://www.futuresineducation.org/scholarships) . The one exception is families returning to the Teddy Forstmann program coordinated by Children's Scholarship Fund.

If the family requests additional assistance beyond the awarded amount, the request will be forwarded to the Tuition Assistance Committee. The review will be completed as early as possible.

### ***Tuition Assistance Committee***

The Tuition Assistance Committee is an essential advisory body to the pastor/board chair and principal. It has a two-fold purpose :

1. The Committee will have the responsibility of direct involvement in the monitoring and collection of tuition arrears from the families of its respective school or academy.
2. The Committee will be empowered to recommend when needed a partial deferment of tuition for families that have demonstrated true financial need or face unforeseen extraordinary circumstances. Such a deferment will establish a fair and just tuition rate that will allow students to remain enrolled when even scholarship assistance is not enough. This discernment must be guided by an approved process that is fair, transparent and reasonable. Any recommendation made by the Tuition Assistance Committee must be approved by the respective pastor of a parochial school and the Board of Trustees for an academy.

Should there be a concern regarding the tuition assistance process or if an appeal for discernment is requested, parents/guardians should present their concerns in writing. In the case of a Catholic academy, the letter should be addressed to the chairperson of the Board of Directors. The response from the pastor or chairperson would be final.

### ***FACTS***

FACTS is a tuition management company designed to make tuition collection simpler for families as well as academies and parish schools. There will be one FACTS record per family, and each student must be listed separately. This provides valuable detail about the charges and discounts each student is receiving. In turn, this provides the academy better reporting. A major benefit of FACTS is the ability to process automatic drafts of the payer's bank account or credit card. There is a 2.85% convenience fee on credit card transactions. FACTS does offer an invoicing option as well. With this option, FACTS will send an invoice to the payer (via email or postal mail) 20 calendar days prior to the payment due date. The payer must then initiate payment either by using a credit card or bank account online, over the phone, or by mailing a check directly to FACTS. Families

are encouraged to pay via automatic draft. FACTS also allows for flexible payment options. Common options are monthly payments, three trimester payments, and a payment in full.

### ***Tuition Delinquency***

- By standard practice, FACTS will send payment reminders prior to any due date, returned payment notices in the case of a failed payment, and will make automated phone calls to delinquent payers. Payers who fail to communicate with the academy and resolve the delinquency through a payment schedule approved by the academy will result in suspension of services for the student.
- Students will not be permitted to attend class at the start of the trimester should any balance be past due.
- No student will be permitted to begin an academic year unless all registration and other required fees are current. Registration and other required fees are paid through FACTS Tuition Management at enrollment. Enrollment for students whose families are not current in the registration or other required fees by June 30 may be cancelled at the discretion of the academy. In no event will students be permitted to attend class at the commencement of the academic year unless the delinquency is paid in full.
- In order to participate in graduation activities, all debts for eighth grade students must be cleared by the first Monday of May. Eighth grade transcripts will not be released to the high schools if the financial obligations have not been met.
- All fees must be paid in full before records or progress reports will be processed. It is the sole discretion of the academy to withhold trimester exams, report cards, transcripts, records, and diplomas until all financial obligations are satisfied in full.

### **Uniform**

The Academy believes that clothes do not define a person. The wearing of a uniform allows everyone to be seen for who they are, not by what they have. The purpose of a uniform is a means of consistency in student dress, while keeping costs to a minimum. It also reduces the problem of competitive dressing. Students, unless otherwise notified by Administration, will wear the school uniform.

All students are expected to keep themselves well-groomed and neatly dressed at all times. A clean and healthy appearance is important. Any form of dress which is considered by the Administrations to be contrary to good hygiene or which is distracting or disruptive in appearance and detrimental to the purpose or conduct of the school will not be permitted. All clothing must be clean, neatly pressed, and in good repair. No ripped, torn, or defaced item may be worn.

All students are expected to keep themselves well-groomed and neatly dressed at all times. A clean and healthy appearance is important. Any form of dress or hair style which is considered by the Administrations to be contrary to good hygiene or which is distracting or disruptive in appearance and detrimental to the purpose or conduct of the school will not be permitted. All clothing must be clean, neatly pressed, and in good repair. No ripped, torn, or defaced item may be worn.

***All Uniforms are supplied by Flynn & O'Hara Uniform Company. Purchases can be made in-person at the store location in Atlas Park or online using school code "NY359".***

### **Nursery, Pre-K and Kindergarten Uniform Policy**

The following tops and bottoms may be mixed and matched:

Tops: White Short-Sleeved “Golf” Shirt, Light Blue Tee shirt, White Turtleneck, Navy Blue Sweatshirt

Bottoms: Navy Blue Gym Shorts, Navy Blue Walking Shorts, Navy Blue Skort, Navy Blue Sweatpants

Footwear: Navy or White Crew or Knee-Hi Socks, Shoes with a Velcro Closure

### **Grades 1 through 4 Uniform Policy**

**NOTE : The Uniform Policy must be followed and will be strictly enforced throughout the year.**

***Grades 1-4 Summer Uniform for Boys*** (Worn May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>)

- White Knit Short-Sleeved “Golf” Shirt
- Navy Walking Shorts
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers or School Shoes

***Grades 1-4 Summer Uniform for Girls*** (Worn May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>)

- White Short Sleeve Polo Shirt
- Navy Skort
- Navy Walking Shorts
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers or School Shoes

***Grades 1-4 Gym Uniform for Boys and Girls*** (Must be worn on Gym Days)

- Light Blue Gym T-Shirt
- Navy Micromesh Gym Shorts
- Navy Blue Sweatshirt (In Cold Weather)
- Navy Blue Sweatpants (In Cold Weather)
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers

***Grades 1-4 Standard/Winter Uniform for Boys:***

**\*ALL BOYS IN GRADES 1-4 MUST OWN ONE (1) WHITE BUTTON DOWN SHIRT AND ONE (1) SCHOOL TIE FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.**

- Navy Pants
- Shirts: White Button Down Collar (Long or Short Sleeves), White Polo with school logo (Long or short sleeve),
- White Turtleneck with school logo
- Plaid Tie (To be Worn With Button Down Shirt Only)
- Navy or White Crew Socks
- Belt
- Sweaters (all with school logo): Navy V-Neck Cardigan, Navy V-Neck Pullover Sweater, Navy V-Neck Sweater Vest, Navy Polar Fleece
- Shoes: Uniform shoes are stocked by Flynn & O’Hara or Da Bar Too Shoe Store

### ***Grades 1-4 Standard/Winter Uniform for Girls:***

ALL GIRLS IN GRADES 1-8 MUST OWN ONE (1) COLLAR BLOUSE FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS. SKIRTS MAY NOT BE WORN MORE THAN TWO INCHES ABOVE THE KNEE.

- Grades 1-4: Black Watch Plaid Belted Tunic Jumper
- Blouses: White Polo Shirt (long or short sleeve) with school logo, White
  - Turtleneck with school logo. Grades 1-4: Peter Pan Collar Blouse (long or short sleeve)
- Navy Dress Slacks
- White or Navy Crew Socks or Knee-Hi Socks
- White or Navy Tights
- Sweaters (all with school logo): Navy V-Neck Cardigan (Grades 1-4), Navy V-Neck
- Shoes: Uniform shoes are stocked by Flynn & O'Hara or Da Bar Too Shoe Store)

### ***Grades 5 through 8 Uniform Policy***

**NOTE : The Uniform Policy must be followed and will be strictly enforced throughout the year.**

#### ***Grade 5-8 Summer Uniform for Boys (Worn May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>)***

- White Knit Short-Sleeved "Golf" Shirt
- Belt with Navy Walking Shorts (Knee-Length)
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers or School Shoes. NOTE: Light up shoes and sneakers are prohibited.

**\* All Uniform shirts must be tucked in at all times. \***

#### ***Grade 5-8 Summer Uniform for Girls (Worn May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>)***

- White Short Sleeve Polo Shirt
- Navy Skort (Knee-Length)
- Navy Walking Shorts (Knee-Length)
- White Crew Socks or navy knee high stockings
- School Approved Sneakers or School Shoes. NOTE: Light up shoes and sneakers are prohibited.

#### ***Grade 5-8 Gym Uniform for Boys and Girls (Must be worn on Gym Days)***

- Light Blue Gym T-Shirt
- Navy Micromesh Gym Shorts (Knee-Length)
- Navy Blue Sweatshirt (In Cold Weather)
- Navy Blue Sweatpants (In Cold Weather)
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers (No Light Up)
- Warm-up Suit

**Grade 5-8 Standard/Winter Boys: (October 16<sup>th</sup>- April 30<sup>th</sup>)**

***All boys in grades 5-8 must wear a white button down shirt and school tie:***

- Belt with Navy Pants
- Shirts: White Button Down Collar (Long or Short Sleeves) with Plaid Tie or White Turtleneck with school logo
- Navy, Black, or White Crew Socks
- Sweaters (all with school logo): Navy V-Neck Cardigan, Navy V-Neck Pullover
- Sweater, Navy V-Neck Sweater Vest, Navy Polar Fleece
- Shoes: Uniform shoes are stocked by Flynn & O'Hara or Da Bar Too Shoe Store. NOTE: Light up shoes and sneakers are prohibited.

**\* All Uniform shirts must be tucked in at all times. \***

**Grade 5-8 Standard/Winter Girls: (October 16<sup>th</sup>- April 30<sup>th</sup>)**

***All girls in Grades 5-8 must wear one of the following uniform options:***

- A white (non-Peter Pan ) collar blouse, school vest, and tie with a Black Watch Plaid Wrap Around Kilt (Knee Length). Navy Opaque Stockings or Navy/White Knee Highs
- White Turtleneck with school logo with a Black Watch Plaid Wrap Around Kilt (Knee Length). Navy Opaque Stockings or Navy/White Knee Highs
- A white (non-Peter Pan ) collar blouse, school vest, and tie with Navy Dress Slacks. White or Navy Crew Socks
- White Turtleneck with school logo with Navy Dress Slacks. White or Navy Crew Socks

**\*Please keep in mind that all skirts must allow for growth throughout the year.\***

**\* All Uniform shirts must be tucked in at all times. \***

- Sweaters (all with school logo): Navy V-Neck Sweater Vest or Navy Polar Fleece
- Shoes: Uniform shoes (with a strap or shoe laces) are to be purchased from Flynn & O'Hara or Da Bar Too Shoe Store in Maspeth. NOTE: Light up shoes and sneakers are prohibited.

**Grades 5-8 Acceptable Jewelry**

- Small Simple Earrings (plain studs or dime -sized hoops only)
- One chain tucked inside blouse/shirt
- One Class Ring
- One Watch

**\*No Bracelets or Sweatbands are to be worn\***

**Grades 5-8 Make-up: The following is NOT permitted:**

- Facial Makeup (eyeliner, mascara, eyeshadow, etc.)
- Nail Polish/Fake Nails
- Colored or Bleached Hair

Makeup, lip gloss, nail tips, colored nail polish, rings (other than class ring),bracelets, and anything of similar nature are not allowed. The same policy is in effect on Dress Down and Gym days.

Clear nail polish is permitted

## **Dress Down Guidelines**

There may be occasions in which students are allowed to wear non-uniform attire. Students are reminded to dress with modesty. Students should adhere to the following attire:

Students may wear:

- Jeans
- Sneakers
- Short socks
- Shorts no shorter than two inches above the knee
- Skirts no shorter than two inches above the knee
- Skorts no shorter than two inches above the knee
- Sweatshirts
- Sweatsuits
- Dresses no shorter than two inches above the knee
- Slacks

Students may **NOT** wear:

- Inappropriate length skirt, short, or dress-, i.e., nothing shorter than 3 inches above the knees
- Leggings or jeggings
- Crop tops (if you raise your hand, your stomach should not be showing)
- Flip-flop sandals
- Open back shoes
- Tank tops (spaghetti straps)
- T-shirts with inappropriate writing
- Peep Shoulder/Off the Shoulder shirts/sweatshirts
- Sneakers that convert to roller skates
- Any shorts shorter than two inches above the knee (example, biker shorts)
- Pajama pants
- No jeans with holes
- Make-up, nail polish, jewelry
- Low-cut blouses/tops (Mid-drift should be covered at all times)
- Clothing that is extremely tight or form fitting (Ex -short tight shirt or bodysuit)
- Hats

Nothing in this policy is meant to prevent a student from attending school with an ethnic hairstyle in connection with his or her race, heritage, or national origin, including, but not limited to, braids, locs, or twists.

**All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Teachers and Principal.**

## **Volunteers**

Parent volunteers are highly encouraged. To volunteer at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy and to attend field trips, parents must complete free VIRTUS training. You can find a listing at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) under the Diocese of Brooklyn organization. Please bring a copy of your certificate to school.

Parent volunteers and chaperones are an integral part of the school community. All parents/ legal guardians/ other adults, must complete VIRTUS training, sign a Code of Conduct, and complete a background check.

The VIRTUS program for adults is a three-hour live awareness session that instructs adults of the Church that to protect children you must have continuous awareness and vigilance. This awareness session helps trainees understand signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse, and five empowerment steps to prevent child sexual abuse.

The Code of Conduct is a document that acknowledges the importance of legal, professional and responsible conduct of all who work with children and young people. All clergy, employees and volunteers are required to read the Code of Conduct and to sign a Statement of Acknowledgement Form. The Code of Conduct is distributed at all VIRTUS sessions.

All employees and volunteers are also required to have a criminal background screening completed before they start their employment or service. These forms are also distributed at all VIRTUS sessions. As of May 2010, all background screenings (employees and volunteers) will be done through the Safe Environment Office. The searches are done through LexisNexis (volunteers) or HireRight (employees). All information is kept confidential and if a positive result is returned, the pastor/administrator will be notified and appropriate steps will be taken. Background searches will be rerun every 3 years for employees and 5 years for volunteers

### **Wall of Fame (Grades 1 through 8)**

In order to earn a Wall of Fame dress down ticket and ice cream, students must be prepared for class and have:

- No Missing Homework
- No Infractions
- No Uniform Violations
- No Unexcused Absences
- No Unexcused Lateness

Students on the Wall of Fame will get a special Celebration Day when they will be allowed to dress down and will receive ice cream. They will also be photographed and their picture placed on the Wall of Fame bulletin board.

**The Policies in this Handbook May be Amended at Any Time by the Principal**

**OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC ACADEMY**  
**HANDBOOK AGREEMENT (2021-2022)**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Parent-Student Handbook and all subsequent forms (“Handbook”).

I have read and understood the contents of this Handbook, and will act in accord with these policies and procedures. I have explained the contents of this Handbook to my child. I agree that I am responsible for my child’s adherence to the policies in this Handbook.

I understand that this Handbook supersedes any other previously issued handbook and personnel manual and that all previous versions are hereby revoked.

I understand that the Academy reserves the right to add, amend, modify, or discontinue any of the policies and procedures as set forth in the Handbook at any time, with or without notice.

Policies relating to the COVID-19 virus, where applicable, will be provided as part of a supplement to this Handbook.

Student’s Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Signature (Gr. 1-8) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Signature (All Grades) \_\_\_\_\_

**OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC ACADEMY**  
**MEDIA AUTHORIZATION RELEASE FORM**

**OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC ACADEMY**  
**ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY AGREEMENT**