

Academic Policies

Academic Expectations

Our Lady of Mercy School expects students to perform to the best of their ability. Teachers are expected to evaluate student progress on a regular basis. Students will be given quizzes or tests regularly. After the test is graded, it will be sent home for the parent to review and sign. Parent signature indicates that the parent is aware of the student's progress. If a parent does not receive quizzes or tests to sign, the parent should contact the teacher.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the instructional program and reinforces learning. It serves as a means for clarifying and reviewing material learned in class, for providing motivation and opportunity for individual growth, and for creating experiences of in-depth study and supplementary reading.

The time allotments for homework (written and study) are as follows:

Grades PreK & K	approximately 15 minutes
Grades 1 & 2	approximately 30 minutes
Grades 3 & 4	approximately 45 minutes
Grades 5 & 6	approximately 90 minutes
Grades 7 & 8	approximately 120 minutes

Students are required to complete all homework and it is expected that parents or guardians sign the completed homework.

Grades and Grading

Report cards are distributed four times a year for Grades Pre-K to 8. The report card is a link between the school and the home.

Academic Achievement

The first part of the Archdiocesan Report Card is used to mark the student's achievement in academic subjects.

- The achievement mark is based upon the demonstration of mastery of material covered in class such as:
 1. Test/quizzes 60%
 2. Projects/portfolios 20%
 3. Class work/participation 10%
 4. Homework 10%

The final grade on the report card is an average of the four previous record card grades plus the midterm and final exams (grades 5-8). This grade will be recorded on the student's permanent record card.

- Numerical marks are recorded on report cards for Grades 1 - 8; checkmarks are an indication of progress on both the Pre-K and K Report Cards.
- Passing is any mark 70% or above .

Character Development

The conduct/effort mark is placed under Character Development as a “Conduct Grade”. This mark indicates that the student:

1. Follows class and school rules,
2. Shows care in the use of personal property
3. Treats teachers with respect
4. Treats other students with respect
5. Exercises self-control
6. Listens attentively
7. Uses technology appropriately.

Honor Roll

The criteria for inclusion in the Honor Roll are peculiar for each school. As an acknowledgment of achievement in academics, a suggested model would be:

Grades 1 –8	First Honors	A in every subject or 90% average with no grade less than 85%
	Second Honors	B in every subject or 85% average with no grade less than 80%
**Excessive, unexcused absence and tardiness (lateness) (more than 5) is cause to remove a student form the honor roll.		

Good conduct is a requirement to receive First or Second Honors.

Therefore, a student must receive an A (excellent) or B (good) in conduct to be eligible for honors. A student who does not receive an A or B in Conduct, will not receive First or Second Honors even though marks might warrant it.

Report Card Distribution

Report cards are distributed in November, January, March or April(depending on the placement of the Easter holidays), and June. Report cards will be withheld if financial obligations have not been met and fees are outstanding.

Report cards may not be given before the assigned date. In the event that a student will leave school prior to the last day in June and all financial obligations have been met, the student may give the teacher a self-addressed stamped envelope and the report card can be mailed the last day of school.

Promotion/Retention

Very few decisions we make about children are more important than recommendations to promote or to retain a student. Most students will be able to follow the school's regular program of sequential learning objectives. If the student successfully achieves the year's objectives, the student progresses to the next grade.

Testing, diagnosis, and actual performance, however, may indicate that some students cannot follow the school's complete course of study. Therefore, the decision to retain a student indicates that although the school has done everything to help the student achieve success, the student has not made satisfactory progress. **The decision of the principal is final regarding promotion and retention.**

Assessments

In addition to class and school exams your child will also take part in the Archdiocesan testing program which includes the Archdiocesan religion test, annual standardized tests, and New York State Education Department assessments. These tests measure academic growth over a period of time.

Standardized Tests

ITBS	Grades 1 to 8	October
CogAt	Grades 2, 4, 5, and 7	October

Archdiocesan Tests

Religion Test	Grades 3 to 8	June
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NY State Tests

English / Language Arts	Grades 4, 6 and 8	January
Math	Grades 4, 6 and 8	March
Science	Grades 4 and 8	May
Social Studies	Grade 5 Grade 8	November June

The faculty of Our Lady of Mercy School reviews these test results regularly for the purpose of promotion or retention in conjunction with classroom performance and grouping for reading and math.

Accidents

A student accident insurance fee is added to every child's book bill. In the event of an accident at school you may obtain a claim form from the office. Please note that the school accident insurance usually is secondary to the parent's own medical insurance coverage.

Admission Policies

Roman Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of New York base their educational purpose and all their activities on the Christian teaching of the essential equality of all persons as rooted in God's love.

Thus, with discrimination so repugnant to their nature and mission, Catholic Schools in this Archdiocese do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, and gender in administration of educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

This policy is subscribed to by all Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the Archdiocese of New York whether owned or operated by the Archdiocese, the parishes of the Archdiocese or religious communities with the Archdiocese.

The process for admission to Our Lady of Mercy School is: parents must complete the school application form and provide all required documents. Following an interview and evaluation of the materials, the parent will be notified about the status of the child.

Our Lady of Mercy School gives preference in admission first, to siblings of currently enrolled students; second, to Catholic students whose parents are active members of the parish; third, to Catholic students whose parents are active in another Catholic parish; fourth, to non-Catholic students.

After School Program

An after school program is available to parents. All children who are admitted to the after school program must have consistent good behavior. Disturbing other students who are doing homework, or reading, etc. will not be allowed and will result in dismissal from the after school program.

Announcements

Informational announcements are sent home in Friday Folders. Which include information from the office as well as tests etc. Parents must check these folders every weekend and return the folders with a signature each Monday.

Attendance

Excused Absence: A child is legally absent from school for the following reasons: sickness, sickness or death in the family, impassable roads or extreme weather; all other absences are unexcused. **Excessive absence is a reason for a child not to be promoted to the next grade unless under special circumstances (hospitalization for an extended period of time).**

Lateness: A child should come to school even though he/she may be late. All lateness is recorded and marked on the report card. Parents will be consulted about chronic lateness, and the child may be required to make up time missed.

When the child returns to school, a completed absence form must be given to the teacher. (See Appendix.) This form is distributed at the beginning of the school year and contains appropriate spaces for the child's name, date of absence, class, reason for absence, and the signature of a parent or guardian.

Doctor or dental appointments should be scheduled for after school or on Saturdays. Family vacations are not to be planned for those days when school is in session. The school provides families with an annual calendar to insure that does not happen. **If it is necessary for a child to be dismissed during the school day, the parent or adult chosen by the parent MUST come to the school for the child.** The school must be informed ahead of time about such occurrences.

When a child is absent, parents are required to phone the school by 9:00 A.M.. Absence notes are still required in addition to the phone call.

Birthday Parties

Birthday parties for Grades Pre K – 3 may be held monthly in each homeroom with the teacher's permission. Parents should notify the teacher in writing. Parents may bring small individual items such as cupcakes, brownies, etc.. Parents may not bring in favors or "goodie" bags for the students.

Books

All books must be properly covered. Contact paper is NOT to be used to cover any books obtained under N.Y.S. Textbook Loan. These books are stamped on the inside front cover. Each child is responsible for keeping his/her books in good condition. Books that are lost or defaced become the liability of the student and his/her parents. If a book is lost or defaced, the school will bill the parents for the cost.

1. ASSIGNED TEXTBOOKS...
 - a. the pupil's name be placed in the space provided in each book
 - b. the teacher make a record of the number of the book

- c. the teacher make a record of the condition of the book
- d. in September, each child will put a clean cover on each textbook received
- e. in June, all textbooks are collected, extra materials and covers are removed.
- f. all workbooks are collected in June
- g. **a bill will be sent home for any lost or damaged workbook or textbook**

2. SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKS: When books are handed out to the children for use during a specific period within the classroom, they will be immediately collected after they have been read. If the book is to remain with the children for any length of time, his/her name must appear in the book and the teacher should have a record of this.
3. LIBRARY BOOKS: Books may be borrowed as determined by the librarian. Books charged to the child so that he/she will have the experience of signing out a library book and abiding by due dates. If books are returned late, there will be a five cents fine per day per book, payable by the child. All lost library books must be paid for so that the school can purchase an additional copy. If the book is located after a new order is placed, the child will be allowed to keep the old book since he/she has paid for it.

BUS PASS/METROCARD

All students who reside more than ½ mile (10 city blocks) from school are entitled to apply for Metro Cards (applications available from the school secretary). Metro Cards are issued to students in September and February. The decision of eligibility for each student is determined by the Bureau of Pupil Transportation (BPT) and not by anyone at school. If the Metro Card is lost or stolen, please report it to the school office immediately so that it can be replaced.

Change of Address and Phone Number

The office and the classroom teacher must be informed immediately if there is a change of home address or telephone number for purposes of mailing and/or emergency. **It is a rule of the school that a parent or designated adult be available at all times to answer the phone. Chronic abuse of this rule will result in the child or children not being re-admitted for the next school year.**

Child Abuse Laws

Under NYS law, school officials are legally obliged to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the proper agency. In so reporting, no allegation is made against a parent or care giver. Rather, it is a judgment by the school that the child may be presenting signs of abuse or neglect.

If the teacher or school nurse suspects abuse or neglect, he or she must immediately confer with the principal to discuss the aspects of the abuse and to determine which person on the school staff will report the alleged abuse to the proper agency.

Child Custody

Custodial parents are entitled to receive original sets of report cards, school and special event notices, school calendars, etc.

Non-custodial parents are generally entitled to receive duplicate sets of report cards, school and special event notices, school calendars, etc.. Such parents may be asked to supply the teacher with self-addressed stamped envelopes for convenience and expediency.

Communication

Since as parents you are the child's first teachers, you are our partners in education. Therefore, regular communication with you is an essential part of your child's school experience. Scheduled parent conferences allow teachers and parents to discuss student achievement as well as to develop means to assist students in areas of difficulty.

A parent 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 insures privacy, never in a hallway or on the street. A parent who is refused such a meeting should notify the principal.

Adults are not permitted beyond the office and into the classroom area without the permission of the principal. This rule must be enforced for the safety of our students. Otherwise, we are unable to monitor who is entering and exiting the building.

Confidentiality

There is a professional and moral ethic that requires all persons to safeguard all information of a privileged nature.

It is imperative that such information be regarded as a sacred trust.

- If there is evidence of knowledge that could impact on the health or safety of any person, the teacher has the responsibility to share the information with the principal.
- Under Section 423 of the Child Protective Services Act, 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. (See section on Child Abuse.)

The rules that govern privileged information apply, as well, to any personal or academic information that is discovered through daily classroom instruction or other social interaction with students, parents or peers. Always the sense of the sacred should prevail.

Crisis Plan

Should a crisis require evacuation from Our Lady of Mercy School building, students will be brought to a safe place located at Our Lady of Refuge School, located at 196th Street and Briggs Avenue and parents can meet them there.

For further information concerning the crisis, parents can refer to the following:

Radio	On the Dial	On the Internet
WOR	710 AM	www.wor710.com
WCBS	880 AM	www.wcbs880.com
WINS	1010 AM	www.1010wins.com
WADO	1280 AM (Spanish)	
WPAT	93.1 FM (Spanish)	www.lamusica.com
WSKQ	97.9 FM (Spanish)	www.lamusica.com

Daily Schedule

The following schedule will be observed by Grades K - 8:

7:30AM	School doors open for breakfast program and ends at 7:45 AM
7:50 AM	Students are dismissed from the cafeteria to auditorium for prayer
8:00 AM	Students arriving after this time are marked tardy
2:30 p.m.	Pre-K & K dismissal everyday; Grades 1-8 on Fridays only
3:45 PM	Dismissal for Grades 1-8 Monday through Thursday

Before 7:30 AM and after 3:45 PM (2:30 for Pre-K students and 2:30 p.m. on Fridays for all students), Our Lady of Mercy School does not have staff available to watch out for problems on school grounds or to supervise children on school grounds. Students must not arrive on the school grounds prior to 7:30 A.M. and parents must arrange pickup at dismissal times. If a student is not picked up on time the child will be sent to the afterschool program and the daily rate will be charged. To avoid interruption during the school day, any messages, forgotten lunches, books and boots, etc., must be taken to the office. **No parent, unless they have a specific appointment with a teacher (outside of the classroom) will be permitted to a classroom while school is in session.** The school office will see to it that the child receives these items.

Discipline Code for Student Conduct

Parents choosing Catholic school for their children frequently cite our commitment to structure and discipline as a major reason for their investment in Catholic education. Our students are to conduct themselves at all times according to Christian principles and exhibit the values of their family, the Church, and our school community. Good classroom order and a tight school structure help to insure the safety of all children, facilitate the learning for all students, and promote self-control and self-respect in the individual child.

While most parents find our approach to discipline to be very favorable, there are instances when a child breaks a rule and must suffer the consequences of his or her action. It is then that a parent may attempt to debate the fairness of the school policy or make excuses for the child's misbehavior. The administration of this school does not engage in debates with parents about our rules and regulations, nor can it be supportive of parents who are interfering with a child's growth in accepting personal responsibility for his or her actions. By enrolling a child in this school the parent agrees to be supportive of the rules and regulations that we deem as critical in the spiritual, academic, and behavioral growth of the child.

Teachers discipline students directly for minor classroom disruptions, for not coming prepared to class, not being in the complete school uniform, for not completing assigned homework, for minor verbal disputes with other classmates, or other incidents which interfere in the teaching-learning process for the child and his or her classmates. Parents are notified of classroom problems by the teacher and are asked to help the teacher to insure that inappropriate behavior is modified.

Teachers are not permitted to use corporal punishment on any child. Perceived acts of corporal punishment should be reported to the principal of the school immediately by students or parents.

It happens that some classroom discipline issues are referred to the administration of this school. This would include chronic minor problems listed above or major problems such as, but not limited to, chronic lateness, the verbal abuse of the teacher by a child; signs of disrespect to a teacher or another adult on the staff; fighting; physical, sexual, or verbal harassment of a fellow student; violent behavior; stealing; vandalism; or the possession of a drug, alcohol, or a weapon. The administration handles such matters in a variety of ways depending on the severity of the incident.

The school employs a progressive discipline system for minor acts of misbehavior in order to encourage students to change inappropriate behavior so that sanctions do not increase in severity. For acts such as (principal inserts here) students are often given (principal inserts here conduct referral, detention, demerits, etc.) Repeated violation of these rules and regulations may result in suspension from school or the non-registration of the child for the next school year.

For more serious acts of misbehavior such as fighting, stealing, vandalism, swearing at or being disrespectful to an adult in the building, and harassment, the student is immediately suspended for a period of one to five days. In cases of vandalism, the

parent 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 before the child can return to school.

In cases in which a child engages in a fight which causes injury to another child or adult, the police will be summoned and, then, the parents will be notified. Likewise, the possession of drugs or alcohol by a child are reported to the police. The school reserves the right to expel such a child.

In cases in which a child brings a weapon to school, the police are summoned, and then the parents are called. The school reserves the right to expel a child for the possession of a weapon.

It is the expectation of this school that student behavior is exemplary both on and off school grounds. A student always represents his or her parents and the entire school community. Therefore, the school reserves the right to punish students for acts such as, but not necessarily limited to stealing, fighting, vandalism, harassment or any other type of threatening or inappropriate misconduct (personally, via the telephone or the Internet) and prohibited use of personal electronic devices including but not limited to cell phones, cameras, camera-phones, PDAs and the like. (See also -Telecommunications Policy) Such misconduct could result in any number of punishments including the possibility of 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 school, at any time will result most likely result in a child's expulsion. A child's conviction of a crime on or off of school grounds, within or beyond the vicinity of the school, will likely result in a child's expulsion.

Dress Code

Your school uniform confirms your attendance at Our Lady of Mercy School and is a symbol of unity within the school community. It minimizes distractions in the learning process. It is important that you take pride in your appearance by wearing your complete uniform always remembering that by wearing it inside and outside the classroom and the school you are representing the school and your behavior should be a credit to both yourself and the school community.

Girls Pre-K Boys and Girls: The Our Lady of Mercy Gym Uniform Only

All Girls: At all times girls must wear the Uniform Jumper or Skirt (as determined by grade level), a white short or long-sleeved Uniform blouse and the School Sweater. In addition only navy blue knee high socks or tights with black or blue oxford or loafer style shoe may be worn. Boots and sneakers and the like are not permitted at any time. The school sweater (with the Our Lady of Mercy School logo stiched on, is a mandatory part of the uniform. Please take a permanent marker and put your child's name on the inside tag. Students must have the school sweater with them at all times.

No jewelry is permitted except for a watch and one ring. Only small stud-like earrings are permitted. Only clear nail polish on “real” nails is permitted. No fake nails are allowed.

All Boys: Boys wear the appropriate grade level uniform (same pants, choice of a different shirt (see Flynn and O’Hara’s uniform sheet). **All boys in all grade levels except Pre-K and K must wear the Uniform Sweater that has the Our Lady of Mercy Logo on it** The older students wear the tan Uniform Pants, white dress short or long-sleeved and the plaid tie. Only black or blue oxford or loafer style shoes are permitted. Pants must fit, and not baggy. A regular belt that fits in the pant loops is appropriate.

Hair must fall no longer than the shirt collar. Fad styles are never permitted. Jewelry except for a watch is not permitted.

Gym Uniform: Navy blue school uniform shorts with the Our Lady of Mercy School name on the shorts, sweat pants and shirts. Only the official gym uniform can be worn. Students are allowed to wear sneakers on gym day.

Girls and Boys: The presence of anything that proclaims a current fad is not permitted.

Personal Appearance

A good personal hygiene routine should be followed daily: ears, neck, and fingernails should be given special attention. When appropriate, children should be instructed in the use of deodorant.

Uniforms should be neat and clean.

Hair should be clean and well groomed. The boys’ hair should not be below the shirt collar. Bangs should not be so long that they impede vision.

Parents will be notified if a child comes to school consistently in an unkempt manner. If no improvement is noticed within a reasonable amount of time, an appointment with the parents and with the guidance office will be made by school officials.

Drug and Alcohol Policies

In recognition of the seriousness of drug and alcohol problems to which the children are exposed, Our Lady of Mercy School will follow the policy as stated below:

- if a teacher suspects that a child is under the influence of either drugs or alcohol, the matter will be referred to the principal immediately
- the principal will verify teacher observation and will notify parents, the police may be called, and parents must pick up the child immediately
- should it be determined that the suspicion is accurate, parents will be expected to follow the recommendations of the school principal if the child is to continue in the school
- any student who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any drug, and appears at a school function in questionable condition will be barred from attending or participating in that ceremony, a party, dance, or school outing. Parents will be notified and appropriate action will be taken which may include suspension or expulsion from the school.

Electronic Devices

Any electronic device such as cell phones, beepers, hand-held and other personal electronic devices that may distract the students, other students, or the class as a whole during the course of the school day is prohibited. *We acknowledge that many students carry cell phones: however, these phones must be turned off during the school day and given to the teacher until the end of the school day...*Parents should not contact their child or receive phone calls from their cell phones during the school day. In the event of an emergency, parents are encouraged to call the school office.

Snow Emergency Closings/Delayed Openings

A list of radio and television stations that announce school closings will be sent home before the start of winter.

Expectations and Responsibilities for Students

Students attend Our Lady of Mercy School in order to develop fully their God-given talents and capabilities. To accomplish this, students are asked to:

- try to do their best work at all times.
- **treat all members of the school community (i.e., teachers, staff, priests, parents and students) with respect. This includes respecting the work of others by not cheating.**
- obey all school rules and regulations, including those forbidding the use of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or disruptive behavior.
- **develop personal standards of conduct that reflect Christian morals and behavior, and refrain from use of inappropriate language, verbal threats, and sexual behavior (including touching, gestures, writing, and dress).**
- speak in a well-modulated tone of voice.

- observe the school dress code, including standards on no-uniform days.
- help care for school property and keep the school free from damage and defacement.

Faculty Meetings

Generally Faculty meetings are scheduled some Fridays during the school year. Please check your monthly calendar.

All children will be dismissed at 11:30 AM on these days.

Field Trips

Field trips must serve an educational purpose and their value should be an integral part of the school's instructional program. They broaden the students' educational experiences. Field trips are privileges given to students; no student has a right to a field trip.

- Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.
- Field trips vary on each grade level.
- Field trips are permissible when advanced planning, location, and the experience insure a successful learning opportunity.
- Individual teachers in consultation with the administration reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
- A written official permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip. Verbal or faxed permission cannot be accepted. Permission slips are due in the office 48 hours before the day of the trip.

Financial Policies

- 1. TUITION Schedule: Please see the Appendix for the tuition and fee costs.**

The school's expectation at the time of registration is that all tuition and fees will be paid on time. Failure to do so serves to rupture the contract that we make with parents and **this will result in the suspension of a child for delinquent tuition and/or fees.**

Your participation in ongoing religious, educational, and voluntary programs of our school is vital to our school and to our children. We thank you for your cooperation and support you give to Our Lady of Mercy School.

2. FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

All families must pay the mandatory Fundraising Fee of \$250.00 which is due during the first week of school, unless it has not already been paid in advance. Additional fundraising activities, e.g. Prestige Christmas Sale, Scholastic Book Fair, are voluntary fundraisers for the school.

Fire Drills

Fire drills at regular intervals are required by the law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the fire signal is given, everyone obeys promptly and clears the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. Students are not permitted to talk during a fire drill and are to remain outside the building until a signal is given to return inside. Teachers will direct the students.

Guidance

A guidance program is a resource available to Our Lady of Mercy School students. Service may include counseling, psychological intervention and support for families experiencing change.

Guidelines for the Education of Non-Catholics

Parents must be made aware of the intentional Catholic witness in our schools. Our Lady of Mercy School as a Catholic school within the Archdiocese of New York has as its primary mission the formation of children in the Catholic faith.

All children will participate in total academic life of our school, including religious education. According to the norms of our Church, it is expected that non-Catholics participate as fully as they can in the liturgical and prayer life of the school.

The religious educators of our schools are committed to teaching the fullness of revelation as it is taught by the Roman Catholic Church and as the life and doctrine are set forth in the Religious Education Guidelines of the Archdiocese of New York. While our teachers value ecumenical education, and respect the traditions of other ecclesiastical communities, they always teach within the context of fidelity to the doctrine and traditions of our teaching church.

Harassment Policies

Harassment regulations need to be grounded in the belief that all persons have a right to be treated with dignity. All demeaning behavior is prohibited.

Our Lady of Mercy School provides a safe environment for all. Verbal, Internet, telephone, or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken seriously. **Students making such threats even in jest face appropriate disciplinary action including detention, suspension or expulsion. Harassment of any type is not tolerated.** The principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior are subject to detention, suspension, or expulsion and where appropriate, will be referred for counseling services and/or to the local authorities. If you believe that your child is being harassed, please notify the principal immediately.

HIV/AIDS Curriculum

The Archdiocese of New York and the NYS Education Department mandate that all schools are to give age-appropriate instruction on *HIV* and *AIDS* to all students in Grades K –12. The Archdiocesan schools use an HIV/AIDS Handbook developed and approved by the Catholic Bishops of the State of New York.

Schools under the authority of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of New York do not discriminate on the basis of HIV or AIDS. Students with HIV or AIDS shall not be excluded from school by reason of infection with HIV unless the following conditions are evident as determined by the student's physician and parents (or legal guardian), together with the school administrator and pastor. The conditions are:

- The student is not toilet-trained or is incontinent, or unable to control drooling.
- The student is unusually physically aggressive, with a documented history of biting or harming others.

Illness

If a child has a chronic illness such as asthma or a condition that warrants frequent use of the bathroom, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school and classroom teacher in writing in September so that we are aware of the condition.

Immunizations

New York State Immunization Requirements for School Entrance and Attendance

New York State (exclusive of New York City)

Pre-K, Nursery, Daycare	3 Diphtheria, 3 Polio, 1 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella, 3 Hib (or 1 Hib if administered \geq 15 months of age) and 3 Hepatitis B for children born on or after 01/01/95; DSS licensed daycare centers also require Tetanus and Pertussis vaccinations
K – 12 (born before 1985)	3 Diphtheria, 3 Polio, 1 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella
K – 12 (born on or after 01/01/85)	3 Diphtheria, 3 Polio, 2 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella and 3 Hepatitis B for children born on or after 01/01/93
College (born on or after 1/1/57)	2 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella

New York City

Pre-K, Nursery, Daycare	4 DTP, 3 Polio, 1 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella, 3 Hib (or 1 Hib if administered \geq 15 months of age) and 3 Hepatitis B for children born on or after 01/01/95
Kindergarten	4 DTP, 3 Polio, 2 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella, and 3 Hepatitis B for children born on or after 01/01/93
1 – 12 (born before 1985)	3 Diphtheria, 3 Polio, 1 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella
1 – 12 (born on or after 01/01/85)	3 Diphtheria, 3 Polio, 2 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella
College (born on or after 1/1/57)	2 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella

New York City Department of Health, Bureau of Immunization, 2 Lafayette Street, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10007 (212) 676-2273

New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Communicable Disease Control - Immunization Program, ESP, Corning Tower, Room 649, Albany, NY 12237 (518) 473-4437

Varicella Vaccine Required

Immunization against varicella (chickenpox) is now required by law. In 1999, Public Health Law Section 2164 was amended to require the following children to be immunized against varicella:

- all children born on or after January 1, 1998 and are entering kindergarten in September 2003
- children born on or after January 1, 2000 and are enrolled in any school.

The administration of varicella vaccine is not recommended for children under the age of one.

Information on varicella vaccine was not required to be entered on the immunization survey form until September 2001.

Lateness

Student lateness interrupts the learning process for your child and all other children in that classroom. Any student arriving at school after the published opening time is considered late. If late, the student may be admitted to class only with a late pass, obtainable in the main office. **Repeated lateness affects your child's ability to be on the honor roll and could impede your child's re-registration for the coming year.**

Liturgy

All students in Pre K to 8 will attend Mass on the first Friday of each month and at other times as indicated in the school calendar. Respectful participation of every child is required at school liturgies.

Lunchroom

Our Lady of Mercy School provides a hot lunch through the local Department or Board of Education In order to participate in a free or reduced lunch program, parents must complete a form that will be distributed in September. Criteria for eligibility is noted on the form.

If your child is not eligible for a free or reduced lunch program, and you wish your child to participate in the hot lunch program, you must send lunch money to the at the time you are billed marked with your child's name, your child's class, and the amount of money. The envelope must clearly state LUNCH MONEY.

- **Each child is assigned a seat in the lunchroom and is expected to remain in it until dismissed.**
- It is the responsibility of the individual child to keep the area clean.
- Respect and obedience are to be shown at all times to those who work in the lunchroom.
- **In good weather, the children go directly from lunchroom to the play street**

Medications

If a student needs any kind of medication during the school day, the medication is to be brought to the school nurse and kept there. A written statement from the parent or guardian requesting administration of the medication in school as ordered by the licensed prescriber is required. **Only the school nurse may administer medication.** Medication must be presented in a properly labeled container. Prescription medication must be in the original container. On the prescription medication the pharmacy label should display:

- student name
- name and phone number of the pharmacy
- licensed prescriber name
- date and number of refills
- name of the medication and dosage
- frequency of administration

Medication should not be transported daily to and from school. Parents should be advised to ask the pharmacist for two containers – one for home and one for school.

The school may receive a written request from a parent or physician to permit a student to carry his or her own medication. Under certain circumstances it may be necessary to do so. However, self-administration is never permitted. The student must report to the school nurse.

Money

Money that is brought to school for a specific purpose (class trip, book fair, milk money, etc.) must be put into an envelope with the child's name and grade and amount. Since snacks are sold on a daily basis students may choose to bring in small amounts of money (less than \$5) for such purchases. If a student does bring money to school the money should be kept on the student's person and not left in the school bag, coat pocket, lunch box, or desk. The school cannot be responsible for lost money.

Non-custodial Parent

Release of Copies of report cards, school notices, etc.

In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a school will provide a non-custodial parent with access to academic records and other school information regarding your child. If there is a court order specifying that this should not happen, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a copy of the court order.

Non-custodial parents are generally entitled to receive duplicate sets of report cards, school and special event notices, school calendars, etc. Such parents might be told to supply the teacher with self-addressed stamped envelopes for convenience and expediency.

Release of children

Non-custodial parents may pick up a child only if previous arrangements have been made.

Parents as Partners

Just as the parents look to the school to provide the facilities and the trained personnel that are essential to their child's proper development, so the school looks to the parents to assume active responsibilities that cannot be delegated to others.

No school can be wholly effective in teaching the values of religion and the virtues of honesty, respect for authority, consideration for the rights and property of others, and standards of personal morality and integrity unless these principles have been established, upheld, and valued in the home. If parents cooperate with the school, instill respect for the integrity of its teachers and administration, and actively support their authority in the home, this is likely to be reflected in the positive attitudes of their children.

Parents are asked to take an active role in their child's education by:

- assisting their child in his/her academic and moral development by carefully reviewing class work, test results, progress reports, and report cards; supervising home study; and reinforcing school policies.
- explaining and reviewing periodically the school behavior code with their child. Parents should discuss school disciplinary episodes in relation to the school behavior code.
- recognizing their child's talents and interests so they may be developed in cooperation with the classroom teachers.

- seeing that the dress code, including gym uniform, is enforced, and insisting that children dress according to Christian virtue.
- insisting on their child's regular school attendance and punctuality and on complying with attendance rules and procedures.
- making all tuition and fee payments on time, and participating in fund-raising activities.
- providing proper supervision at home, and not tolerating harassment, inappropriate or violent behavior, or viewing of such in videos, movies, song lyrics, and on the Internet.
- teaching their child respect for law, for authority, for the rights of others, and for public and private property. This includes showing respect for the work of others by not tolerating cheating in any circumstance.
- arranging for a time and place for their child to complete homework assignments.
- working with the school in a cooperative effort to carry out recommendations made in the best interest of their child, including those related to educational evaluations and counseling.
- attending all Parent-Teacher Conferences and Home-School Association meetings.
- by always interacting in a respectful manner when speaking with or about the administration, teachers and staff of the school. Verbal abuse or physical harassment may result in your child being required to withdraw from the school immediately or not being allowed to re-register for the following year.

The education of a student is a partnership between the parents and the school. Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

Philosophy and Goals

Our Lady of Mercy School endorses the call of the Catholic Bishops of the United States to express its educational ministry through the three objectives of personal spirituality, social justice, and a strong academic program in accord with Christian values. This commitment extends to building Christian community and to fostering Christian service to the whole human family.

Re-registration

At the time of re-registration parents will be notified if their child is being invited to return to the school in September or if the child is not being invited back.

Release of Students (during school day)

The school has a sign-out book located in the main office.

Occasions for the use of a sign-out book are:

- it is against the law to dismiss a child during school hours except into the direct custody of a parent, guardian, or an adult designated by the parent. If illness occurs the parent, guardian, or designated adult must **come to the school immediately following the phone call.**
- If the parent cannot be contacted, the secretary will contact the name listed on the child's emergency contact slip.
- Emergency slips are completed in September and must be updated as necessary.
- When a student is released to a parent or guardian, that adult must sign the book.
- for a prearranged appointment when the student is released, the parent, guardian, or approved adult must sign the book. **[Please note: only the principal may approve the release of a student for a prearranged appointment.]**

School's Right to Amend

Our Lady of Mercy School reserves the right to amend this handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent as necessary.

Security

To assure the security of the building and the safety of each child, Our Lady of Mercy School strongly enforces its policy of **requiring all visitors, even parents, to report to the office.**

To avoid interruption of the learning process, no one may enter a classroom as stated in an earlier section of this handbook.

Sex Offender Policy

This notice is to remind you of the importance of taking steps to keep your child safe when he or she is involved in outdoor activities, including traveling to and from school. The following are some safety tips that we hope you will share with your children:

- 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 school, they should be encouraged to return to the school 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 our school 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.

In addition, over the course of the school year, we may receive from the New York City Police Department notification under the New York State Sex Offender Registration Act that a registered sex offender has moved into the region where our school is located. Copies of all the notifications we receive will be kept accessible to parents in the Principal's office. You can also find information about registered sex offenders on the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services website, located at <http://www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us> -- or by calling 1-800-262-3257.

Finally, if our school is notified during the school year that a registered sex offender has moved within the vicinity of our school, further notice will be sent to you.

These procedures are part of our continuing effort to provide a safe environment for all children in this school.

Smoking

New York State Law prohibits smoking in a school building and on school property. Smoking is prohibited at all times in the Our Lady of Mercy School building, on its parking lot and playing fields. This prohibition applies to faculty, staff, parents, and all visitors to the school.

Special Learning Needs

Students with learning differences are children of God and members of the Church. Our Lady of Mercy School makes every effort to meet individual student needs. Sometimes, however, a student may have needs that do not permit him or her to benefit fully from the program. In those cases your child's teacher and/or principal may schedule a meeting with you to discuss having an evaluation of your child's learning needs. Such evaluations can be done through the local public school district, i.e., Committees on Special Education (CSE's), or privately. Once the results of the

evaluation are available the teacher and principal will meet with the parents to discuss the results of the evaluation and the recommendations.

Summer School

Since most summer schools offer reading, mathematics, and language arts, a student who has failed in one or more of these subjects **in three marking periods** of the report card will be required to take a remedial course during the summer. Summer school also may be recommended due to poor performance on standardized tests or in the classroom.

In May, a list of available summer schools in the archdiocese will be available upon request. Whenever the administration becomes aware of quality programs suited to the specific needs of a child, the principal or the assistant principal will notify the parent directly.

The summer school Report Card must be submitted to the office in September. Failure to attend summer school will result in retention. It is the parent'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.

Telecommunications Policy

Student Expectations in Use of the Internet

(please see below for complete policy requiring student's signature)

Use of School Grounds

Our Lady of Mercy School does not have staff available to supervise students present on the school grounds **before 7:30 AM and after 2:30PM. (See school times in the earlier section of this handbook)** Students must not arrive on the school grounds prior to 7:30 AM and parents must arrange to pick up at dismissal times.

Withdrawals and Transfers

A transfer request must be obtained from the school secretary. All books must be returned. All bills must be paid before records are transferred to another school.

Summary Statement

Once students have met the necessary admission requirements and have been accepted in Our Lady School, the school warmly welcomes these students for the coming school year and will strive to provide them with a solid Catholic spiritual and academic education in a supportive learning environment. Students and parents must always be mindful that attendance at Our Lady of Mercy School is by invitation. It is not a "right" because this is a private school. Admission to and continued enrollment in this school include responsibilities regarding conduct, both inside and outside the classroom and school, and students are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner as to be a credit both to themselves and to their school.

In order to protect its standards of scholarship, discipline and character, Our Lady of Mercy School reserves the right, and students and parents or guardians concede to the school the right to require the withdrawal of any student at any time, for any reason deemed sufficient in the sole discretion of the school and its administrators. By the student's attendance at the school, a student and his or her parents or guardians acknowledge the important obligations and restrictions contained in this handbook and agree to be bound by the terms of this handbook.

Students attending Our Lady of Mercy School relinquish certain rights they might otherwise be entitled to if they were attending a public school. For example, a student's freedom of speech is limited in many important respects here at our school. Speech, either written or oral, contrary to the Roman Catholic faith, the teachings of the church or the directives of the local Bishop or Ordinary is prohibited, as is any other speech which is contrary or disruptive to the philosophy and purposes of our school. Another

important right all students at Our Lady of Mercy School surrender involves searches and seizures. School administrators may search a student's person and belongings if there is a reasonable belief, in the sole opinion of the school administrator, that contraband, illegal substances or inappropriate objects are being concealed. Any unauthorized items found may be seized. Additionally, student desks and lockers, which are at all times under the joint control of the school and the student to whom the desk or locker has been assigned, may be searched by school administrators at any time, for any reason or for no reason at all. Students should have absolutely no expectation of privacy with regard to any item in their desks or lockers.

Another important right that a student and his or her parents or guardians give up when they decide to have a student attend this school is the right to sue the school, the parish or the Archdiocese of New York, and/or any individuals acting on behalf of the school, such as the school administrators, teachers, staff or any of their agents for any matter relating to academic or disciplinary decisions or other matters covered within this handbook. Each student and his or her parents or guardians, by their acceptance of enrollment at Our Lady of Mercy School agree to and accept the school's rule and policy that students, parents and guardians may not bring any civil action in any local, state or federal court or in any administrative agency or body to challenge any school decision on academic or disciplinary matters, including any decision relating to the rules, regulations, procedures or programs covered within this handbook. Students and parents or guardians agree that any challenge to any school academic or disciplinary action or relating to the rules, regulations, procedures or programs covered in this handbook may only be challenged or appealed within the hierarchy of the school, subject to the limitations contained in this handbook. This includes any decision relating to a student's enrollment at the school or termination of that enrollment.

While any student and his or her parents or guardians are of course free to consult with legal counsel regarding any school decision taken with respect to a student, the school emphasizes that students and parents or guardians are not permitted to have legal counsel present during any meetings with school administrators. School administrators are not obligated to meet with legal counsel at any time.

There are several grounds for disciplinary action or expulsion set forth in the "Discipline Codes" section of this handbook. It should be noted, however, that any listing of prohibited conduct is set forth by way of example only and to provide guidance to the student and his or her parents or guardians. It is not meant to be an exhaustive listing of improper conduct or resultant disciplinary action.

Telecommunications Policy

Student Expectations in Use of the Internet

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use or violation of any of the following standards will result in serious consequences and could result in expulsion from the school.

- 1. Use of the computer at school is limited to school related activities. Internet users are expected to behave responsibly in accessing and viewing information that is pertinent to the mission of the school.**
- 2. Vandalism and other infractions of school policy while using the Internet will result in immediate cancellation of privileges along with disciplinary action.**
- 3. After School/Home Access requires students to follow the same student expectations as stated in the “Discipline Code for Student Conduct” and “Harassment Policies” in the student handbook.**
4. Students must abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette both inside and outside school.
5. Students are responsible for their explorations on the Internet and are subject to the consequences of the school’s discipline policy.
6. Students must sign a contract indicating their understanding and acceptance of the school’s guidelines (see parent/student handbook).
7. Parents must give their permission for their child to use the Internet for educational purposes as an individual by signing the Contract Form once conditions are clearly understood. Parents also have the option of denying permission for their child to use the Internet independently at school

Standards of Behavior

- **Be courteous and respectful in your messages to others.**
- **Use appropriate language. Do not use vulgar, harassing, obscene, threatening, bullying, abusive, or sexually offensive language, or make any statements that are slanderous or disparaging of any students or adults.**
- **Never visit inappropriate or offensive websites.**
- **Never download materials from inappropriate or offensive websites.**
- **Never expose yourself in an inappropriate, vulgar, or sexually offensive manner on any website or via e-mail, either in pictures or videos.**
- **Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.**
- **Do not reveal your home address or phone number, or that of other students or staff.**
- **Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages related to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.**
- **Proofread your message before you send it.**
- **Never agree to get together with someone you “meet” on-line.**
- **Only public domain software (“shareware”) can be downloaded.**
- **Copyright laws must be respected. Do not make-unauthorized copies of software and do not give, lend, or sell copies of software to others.**
- **Do not use the Network/Internet for illegal activities.**

- **Software applications, games, or CD-ROMS from home may not be used on school equipment without proof of licensure and prior approval of appropriate school personnel.**
- **Do not reveal personal passwords, use or try to learn others' passwords. Do not copy, change, read or use another user's files without prior permission from that user. Do not attempt to gain unauthorized access to system programs for computer equipment.**
- **Do not post personal messages on bulletin boards or "list servers." Send personal messages directly to the person to whom you want to write.**
- **Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network for other users.**
- **Do not waste or take supplies such as paper, printer cartridges, and diskettes that are provided by the school.**
- **Talk softly and work in ways that will not disturb other users. Keep computer work areas clean and do not eat or drink in the computer lab.**
- **If students encounter material on a network/bulletin board that is not appropriate (vulgar jokes, statements of belief that some might consider immoral, etc.,) the student is responsible for not pursuing this material and reporting the matter to appropriate school personnel.**
- **The use of cell phones, camera phones or other digital media is prohibited during the school day. Cell phones, camera phones, or other personal electronic devices will be confiscated if students use them during the school day without permission. In addition, any student who uses a camera, camera phone or other personal electronic devices in school or in the classroom for any reason will be suspended. Further disciplinary measures including expulsion, will be considered depending on the nature of the camera, camera phone, or personal electronic device use.**
- **Technology Use outside normal academic hours and/or off school grounds (including but not limited to cell phones, e-mail, text messages, camera-phones, cameras, personal digital assistants (PDA's), chat lines, bulletin boards, etc., are subject to the same guidelines as previously cited in the "Discipline Code for Student Conduct," "Harassment Policies," and the "Summary Statement.**
- **The school reserves the right to seek financial restitution for any damage caused by a student or other user. The system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decision is final. The administration, faculty, and staff of the school may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific privileges. Violation of the rules and code of ethics described above will be dealt with seriously.**
- **Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. The use of school computers and networking resources for commercial activities is not permitted. Their use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.**

Student Name: _____ Grade _____
 Student Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX

Our Lady of Mercy School

Parent Signature Page

We have received a copy of the school handbook and have read it.

(Parent's signature)

(Parent's signature)

(Grade 2 and above Student's signature)

(Grade 2 and above Student's signature)

(Grade 2 and above Student's signature)

(Grade 2 and above Student's signature)

(Grade 2 and above Student's signature)

(Grade 2 and above Student's signature)

Signed Form Due September 14, 2011

A-1

Our Lady of Mercy School

Photo/Video Release Form for 2011-2012 School Year

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I hereby give permission for my son/daughter _____
to be photographed or videotaped at Our Lady of Mercy School. I realize that the
photo may be published in the newspaper, a magazine, or other publication. The video
may be used for educational or informational purposes regarding the programs or
curriculum at Our Lady of Mercy School.

Signed _____

Date _____

Return by September 14, 2011.

A-2

Technology Use/Telecommunications Policy Agreement for 2011-2012 School Year

for OUR LADY OF MERCY School

adapted from NCEA's From the Chalkboard to the Chatroom . . . 1997

User

I understand and agree to abide by the Telecommunications Policy/Student Expectations in the Use of the Internet agreement. I further understand that any violation of these regulations is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

User's name (please print): _____

User Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

As the parent of this student, I have read the technology use agreement. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. I am aware that it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold them responsible for materials acquired in use. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use of school's technology resources is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission for my child to use the school's technology resources and certify that I have reviewed this information with my child.

Parent's or guardian's name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

