



OUR LADY *of* MERCY

2016-2017 Handbook

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Accredited by

National Catholic Education Association (NCEA)

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State of Louisiana

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Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
(As part of the Diocese of Baton Rouge District Accreditation)

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Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at its schools. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

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Handbook Objectives

This handbook is designed to serve several important objectives:

- It serves as an official source of school policies and procedures.
- It provides parents of current students with information to assist and support the efforts and activities of their children.
- It provides parents of prospective students with information to guide them in the process of selecting a school for their children.

Disclaimers

- Although we have attempted to cover every phase of school life, we know there are some areas that may not be covered by this handbook. Therefore, any decisions regarding matters not specifically written in this handbook will be left to the discretion of the school administration.
- The Principal is the final recourse in all school matters and reserves the right to revise this handbook with the approval of the Pastor.
- As a parochial school in the diocese of Baton Rouge, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School adheres to all policies contained in the Administrative Manual of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
- After reading this handbook and reviewing it with your student, you will be asked to sign and return the “**Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form 2016-2017**” that will be sent home to you on the first day of school.
- Revisions made to the handbook will be posted on the school website.

Mission

Philosophy

At Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, we affirm that parents are the first educators of their children. Faculty, staff, and administration partner with parents to provide an authentic Catholic environment where each student is given the opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential by discovering and developing their God-given gifts. Our Lady of Mercy is an extension of the home and seeks to form the whole child, providing strong foundations of prayer, knowledge, and service to equip each child for Christian life in the 21st century.

In *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Church teaches that “the specific purpose of a Catholic education is the formation of boys and girls who will be good citizens of this world, loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the gospel, and who will also be citizens of the world to come, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints.” We believe that the ultimate goal of a Catholic school is to help each of its students get to heaven. In a nurturing community of faith, students at Our Lady of Mercy cultivate Christian virtues and are inspired to become the

men and women God calls them to be. The Catholic faith is the fabric of our school and is integrated into all aspects of student life. Through prayer, liturgy and the Sacraments, and Church teachings, students encounter Christ and develop a personal relationship with Him.

We believe that a solid intellectual foundation enables children to reach their potential and prepare for a lifetime of learning. Our Lady of Mercy challenges each child to strive for academic excellence beyond basic skills. Using differentiated instruction and educational technology, teachers engage each unique learner in the acquisition of knowledge and the cultivation of natural curiosity. As students become active participants in their learning, they develop skills of research and discovery and are equipped to successfully meet the challenges of further education.

We believe that faith is manifested in a life of service. At Our Lady of Mercy, students become aware of their place as citizens of the world, learning that their unique gifts are meant to be shared to build the Kingdom of God. Through service projects, extracurricular activities, athletics, and leadership opportunities, students learn to imitate Christ by serving others and contributing to the good of the community. Our faculty, staff and students strive to follow the example of Christ who washed the feet of His disciples, demonstrating that He came “not to be served, but to serve.”

Mission Statement

Our Lady of Mercy School provides Catholic foundations for a life of prayer, knowledge, and service.

Motto

Prayer-Knowledge-Service

History

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School has a long and rich history of partnership between the parish and school. The founding pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Church Fr. Louis E. Marionneux envisioned a school where the children of the parish could learn the values of the Church and family while getting an exceptional academic foundation for their further education. Decades later, the school’s mission statement sets out the simple yet profound vision that still inspires the Our Lady of Mercy community: “Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School provides foundations for a life of prayer, knowledge, and service.”

Under the guidance of Fr. Marionneux, the parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church proposed the building of a parochial elementary school. By early 1953, Our Lady of Mercy was ready to

break ground for the construction of the school, which would be the first permanent building of the parish.

While the first school building was under construction, temporary space was found for classrooms. Mrs. Hazel Blanchard was named principal, and school opened in September 1953 with 174 students in first through fourth grades. Our Lady of Mercy School attracted national attention as the only Catholic school to have an all-lay faculty. The next spring the permanent school was available, and the formal dedication of the school was held on May 2, 1954. Ground breaking for a new church/classroom building took place on November 21, 1955. The 15,500 square foot structure included a church/classroom with capacity for 1,100 worshippers and three classrooms on each side of the central church building. Long-range plans for the building called for it to be converted to a gym-auditorium when a permanent church was constructed. Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel dedicated the church/school on September 24, 1956.

As the Mercy parish family grew, the church/classroom could no longer accommodate Sunday Mass and the school's classes. Classrooms along each side of the church were joined to the church by windows which opened during Mass, allowing parishioners to sit in the classrooms rather than stand in the back of the church. The school held classes in temporary buildings and any space available on the church/school campus. However, these challenges did not dampen the enthusiasm of parents or enrollment in the school. Our Lady of Mercy parish and school continued to grow and thrive.

In late 1961, Our Lady of Mercy welcomed four Salesian Sisters from Cuba, known as the Daughters of Mercy, Help of Christians. Sister Theresa, Sister Elba, Sister Gloria and Sister Raphael resided in a house across the street from the main school building and assisted with religion classes and various duties in the school. These four sisters would be the forerunners of other Salesians who would serve Our Lady of Mercy School for the next 30 years.

After a decade of significant and lasting contributions to Catholic education, the principal Mrs. Blanchard resigned her position, and Sr. Philomena led the school as principal. On March 1, 1964, Fr. Andrew Frey was assigned to Our Lady of Mercy Church as its second pastor. Fr. Frey directed a series of improvements to the church and school to expand and upgrade all facilities, meeting the growth of the parish community. Updates to the school began with the transformation of Marquette Avenue, formerly a dirt road, to a blacktopped road with sidewalks and gutters.

Again in 1982 a major school improvement plan was begun to increase the capacity of the school. The newest building, the Early Childhood Center, held the lower grades beginning in fall of 1983.

Msgr. Frey retired after 25 years of dedicated service. He was followed by Fr. Michael Moroney, who began his time as pastor in June of 1987. Fr. Mike was a gifted administrator and an ambitious builder who helped initiate another master plan to address the growing needs of the school in 1992. Also at this time, the Salesian Sisters decided to concentrate their efforts in other areas of education after thirty years of faithful service to Our Lady of Mercy School. Ms. Donna Melancon was hired as the school's new principal and helped lead the school family through the

transition. Mrs. Carolyn Guidry became the next principal in 1995 and built on the strong foundation laid by her predecessors.

A parish-wide fund raising campaign began in 1994 to accomplish the plans proposed by Fr. Mike and the Building Committee. Improvements to the school included renovations to classrooms and administrative offices, new eighth grade classrooms, a library, computer lab, science lab, and cafeteria. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new construction were held on October 23, 1995. The doors of the school were opened with the new construction by the fall of 1996. The new buildings were officially dedicated on October 19, 1996. With the completion of this project, Our Lady of Mercy School was now prepared to face the challenges of the New Millennium.

In 2001, Fr. Miles Walsh became Mercy's fourth pastor and continued to faithfully support the early vision for the school. Mrs. Guidry retired as principal in May 2009, and Ms. Tina Villa served as principal for the following three years. Mr. Brian Moscona began his role as principal of Our Lady of Mercy in July of 2012. He has worked closely with the church and school community to plan several stages of renovations to school facilities, enhancing many aspects of the campus and uniting its aesthetic even more closely with that of the church.

With Fr. Walsh's new assignment in July 2013, Fr. Cleo Milano became the fifth pastor at Our Lady of Mercy. Fr. Milano and Mr. Moscona remain committed to the strong partnership built between the parish church and school. The One Mercy project, the development of a new parish logo uniting the church and school, was launched in December of 2013. In the spring of 2016, the parish launched the Traditions for Tomorrow capital campaign to build a new gym and additional classrooms for the ECC. Under the loving protection of our patroness Our Lady of Mercy, we share the school's history with pride and anticipate many years of spiritual and academic excellence.

Covenant

All parents enter into the following covenant when enrolling their children at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School. We encourage parents to renew these pledges yearly.

“Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School calls us to acknowledge that spiritual formation of our children is the primary responsibility of the parent. We understand that it is the stated mission of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School to provide the foundation for a life of prayer, knowledge and service. In order to achieve the ultimate harmony of these beliefs and embrace our role as the primary educators of our children, we make a conscious commitment to the following practices:

We pledge to instill in our children Christian values in imitation of Jesus. We will live out our faith through regular attendance in religious rites and practices and development of a substantive family prayer life.

We pledge support for our place of worship and its ministries through contributions of time, talent, and offering.

We pledge, through prayers and lifestyle, to uphold the philosophy and principles which govern Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School.”

Admission

Requirements

The following documents are required for admission to Our Lady of Mercy:

- Official State Birth Certificate
- Copy of student’s social security card
- Certificate of Baptism
- Immunization Records
 - The record must be signed by a physician.
 - All dates must be entered.
 - It is the parent’s responsibility to send updated records to the school as new immunizations are administered.
- A copy of any formal evaluation (educational and/or psychological) explaining identified exceptionality.
- Developmental screening (completed by Our Lady of Mercy).

Age requirements

- Pre-kindergarten: must be four years old on or before September 30 of the year entering school.
- Kindergarten: must be five years old on or before September 30 of the year entering school.
- First Grade: must be six years old on or before September 30 of the year entering school.

Note: a child must be fully potty trained prior to admission.

Registration

Re-registration for currently enrolled students is held during the third quarter of the current school year. Registration for new applicants will begin after the designated re-registration period. All registration information will be available on the school website.

Students may not be registered for the following school year if they have past due balances for tuition, extended day or cafeteria.

Criteria for Admission

The following criteria will be considered when reviewing applications for admission into Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School:

- Children currently attending Our Lady of Mercy promoted to a higher grade
- Children who are Catholic and are currently registered parishioners at Our Lady of Mercy Church Parish
- Children who have brothers or sisters currently attending Our Lady of Mercy
- Children of alumni
- Out-of-Parish Catholic children
- Children of other faith traditions

In determining admission, the administration will review the academic, discipline and attendance records of students transferring from another school. The administration must have a reasonable expectation of student success prior to an offer of admission. The pastor and school administration reserve the right to make final decisions on admissions.

Prior to admission, new students entering Grades 1 - 8 must provide an official report card from the previous school system in which they were enrolled. Report cards must provide evidence of promotion to the next grade level within that system. All new students will be screened in math, reading and English.

Statement of Diocesan Policy:

The schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and other activities generally made available to students at its schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions policies, educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Faith Formation

The Our Lady of Mercy School mission statement asserts: Our Lady of Mercy School provides Catholic foundations for a life of prayer, knowledge, and service.

As a parochial school in the Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge, Our Lady of Mercy School works closely with the pastor and the parish community to provide the spiritual, academic and social formation essential for an authentically Catholic education. The Holy See's documents insist that, in order to be worthy of its name, a Catholic school must be founded on Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. Christ is the Teacher in Catholic schools.

We seek to partner with parents, the primary educators of children, in fostering a school

community whose mission is centered on the students “fulfilling their destiny to become saints.” At Our Lady of Mercy, our primary objective is getting the students to heaven. We aim to provide an environment that helps each student become the woman or man God is calling them to be.

Prayer is the foundation of a life in Christ. Our teachers aim to model a life of prayer for fellow educators, our students, parents and the larger community. We are committed to integrating prayer into the rhythm and life of the school on a daily basis.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life, and we regularly celebrate this great Sacrament together as a school community.

Our school calendar and programs follow the liturgical year of the Church, with ample opportunities to deepen one’s spiritual life through annual grade-level retreats, First Friday Adoration, and praying of the rosary, Stations of the Cross, Divine Mercy Chaplet, etc.

Through the school’s life of prayer and commitment to the search for truth, we are keenly aware of our call to imitate Christ who came “not to be served, but to serve.” Students participate in service opportunities to develop a disposition of being others-centered.

Academic Formation

Assignments

Homework assignments are given as reinforcement and practice of material covered in the classroom. A moderate amount of meaningful homework and/or research projects will be given depending on students’ grade level. Time spent on study or project activity will vary by individual student.

Assignments During Absence

Students are responsible for all class assignments, homework, and tests covered during an absence. Students will have a reasonable amount of time to make-up work missed. Timelines for all make-up work must be coordinated with the student’s teacher(s) within two days of the student’s return. Absences due to planned family trips or other reasons known in advance must be indicated to the office and the teacher(s) with at least three school days advanced notice.

Conferences

Formal Parent-Teacher conference days are scheduled each semester for grades Pre-K-4. An individual conference may be requested by a parent or a teacher to discuss a student’s progress at any point during the school year for all grades.

Grades

Teachers are responsible for averaging grades each nine weeks or quarter. These grades are based on class work (oral and written), homework, tests, quizzes, reports and other projects.

Grading Scale

Grade	Percent
A	92.5 – 100
B	84.5 – 92.49
C	74.5 – 84.49
D	66.5 – 74.49
F	Below 66.5

Awards of Academic Excellence and Achievement

Awards for academic excellence and academic achievement will be given in Grades 3-8 for each nine weeks period using the following criteria:

Academic Excellence: All “A’s” on report card for that grading period.

Academic Achievement: All grades of either “A” or “B” on report card for that grading period

Mid-Term and Final Exams

Grade 5: ELA and Math

Grades 6-8: Literature/Writing, Math, Religion, Science and Social Studies

Final Grade Calculations

Classes with mid-term and final exams:

Each nine weeks grade comprises 20% of the final average, and each exam grade earns 10% of the final average.

Classes without mid-term and final exams:

Each nine weeks comprises 25% of the final average.

No 8th Grade student is exempt from mid-term exams. For final exams, any 8th grade student who has received an “A” on his/her report card throughout the year (including mid-term exam) is exempt from final exam in that subject.

Progress Reports

At the midpoint of each nine-week period, official progress reports are available on ParentPortal for Grades 2-8 and in paper report form for Grade 1. Grades are updated weekly on ParentPortal for Grades 2-8 throughout the school year.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year, once each nine weeks. Grades are based on class assignments (oral and written), homework, tests, quizzes, reports, and other projects. Report cards are emailed at the end of the first three nine-week grading periods, and the final report card is mailed home following the final day of school.

Retention

At the end of each academic year, teachers may recommend a student to the administration for retention. Students in Grades Pre-K–1 may be retained at the recommendation of the administration because of some deficiency in overall academic achievement or lack of maturity or social/emotional development. The following criteria will be taken into consideration when determining what is best for the student.

Kindergarten: Readiness for First Grade is based on checklists and narratives. Students receiving six or more “N’s” (Needs Improvement) in the Reading Readiness portion of their report card may be retained.

First Grade: Readiness for Second Grade is based on checklists and narratives. Students receiving six or more “N’s” (Needs Improvement) in the Reading or Mathematics portion of their report card may be retained.

Second - Third Grades: Students who earn a failing grade in any two subjects (English, Reading, Math, Religion) may be retained. To pass a subject for the year, students must earn an average of at least “D” for the year. Students may be retained if he or she earns an “F” for the fourth nine weeks.

Fourth - Eighth Grades: Students who earn a failing grade in any two subjects (English, Reading, Math, Religion, Social Studies, Science) may be retained. To pass a subject for the year, students must earn an average of at least “D” for the year. Students may be retained if he or she earns an “F” for the fourth nine weeks and an “F” on the final exam for those subjects that require final exams.

In the event that one subject is failed for the first time, the student must attend summer remediation for a minimum of 40 hours. Arrangements for summer remediation may be made through the main office. Any outside program must be approved by the administration prior to a student’s enrollment. Any student who has failed one or more subjects will be placed on academic probation for the following year, and student performance will be assessed throughout

the fall semester to determine continued enrollment. Students who fail Reading, English, or Math for two consecutive years may be retained.

Student Success Meetings

Student Success meetings may be held to address issues related to health, academics, behavior, or any other element of a student's experience at Our Lady of Mercy. Student Success meetings may be requested by teachers or parents. Student Success meetings are scheduled by an administrator or the school counselor. The objective of these meetings is to develop plans for student success at school.

Student Accommodations

A student with a current (less than three years old) educational or psychological educational evaluation indicating a learning struggle may be eligible for classroom or testing accommodations. The full evaluation report must be submitted to the school, and a student success team, consisting of the Assistant Principal for Academics, the School Counselor, the parent, and any other relevant parties invited by the parent, will meet to determine what accommodations will be provided by the school. The school may determine at any point to implement modifications or accommodations to facilitate student success.

Character Development and Formation

Church documents consistently support the dual goals of academic and faith formation for Catholic schools. Central to the Catholic school is its mission of holiness, of saint-making. In order to establish the foundation necessary for success in academic and faith formation, Our Lady of Mercy School aims to form in its students those particular virtues that will enable them to live a new life in Christ and help them to play their part in serving society and the Church.

Although many Catholic values are involved in character development, the Our Lady of Mercy School community emphasizes 5 guiding principles known to us as *The Way We Act at Mercy*. These guiding principles are intended to provide clear expectations of behavior while at the same time helping our students in the development of good decision-making skills. You will find these guiding principles located throughout our campus as a reminder to our students.

The Way We Act at Mercy:

1. Listen attentively
2. Follow directions
3. Be courteous and polite
4. Respect each other and ourselves
5. Dress responsibly

* *When someone reminds us to follow these we only respond with, "Yes, Ma'am," or "Yes, Sir."*

Individual grade level teacher teams will develop specific and developmentally-appropriate classroom management plans to support growth in each of these and any other areas they consider important to enhance students' character development.

Parents, as the primary educators of their children, and students themselves work in active and positive partnership with faculty and staff members in this vital part of students' overall growth and development.

When efforts at the individual classroom level require additional support, the school counselor, assistant principal(s) and/or principal may become involved to support a student's character development.

Faculty, staff and administration will determine appropriate consequences for student actions deemed inconsistent with positive character development. Open communication with parents is an essential component of helping students to modify any inappropriate behavior.

The Teacher's Role in Maintaining Discipline

Under Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School's philosophy of maintaining discipline, each faculty member is responsible for contributing to an orderly atmosphere conducive to learning throughout the school. The individual teacher is given the right and the responsibility to handle any behavior problems when and where they occur through a system of rewards and consequences.

Rewards

Students who demonstrate consistent observance of our five guiding principles may earn Blue Jay Bucks. Blue Jay Bucks are awarded by teachers, staff, and administration and may be redeemed at the Mercy store. It is the responsibility of the student to keep track of his/her Blue Jay Bucks. Lost or stolen Blue Jay Bucks will not be replaced.

Consequences

Students who neglect to observe of our five guiding principles will receive consequences. The tool used to help guide our teachers in administering consequences is called the ladder of referral. The purpose of the ladder of referral is to establish a consistent set of consequences across our campus. Consequences will follow behaviors and will move up the ladder with the teacher who assigned the behavior.

Teachers will follow our ladder of referral in addressing consequences for violations of our guiding principles. Teachers will record step 2 through 5 in PlusPortals. The teacher may determine when a student should move from step to step.

Ladder of Referral

Step 1 – Nonverbal and verbal redirection

Step 2 – Character Conversation

Step 3 – Phone or email contact with parent

Step 4 – After school Community Service

Step 5 – Teacher-initiated student success meeting

Students will be referred to an administrator or the Dean of Students for the following behaviors:

- Lying
- Withholding information
- Fighting
- Vulgarity
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Weapons
- Threats
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Theft
- Vandalism/Destruction of Property
- Technology Violation

Dress Code Violations

Teachers conduct daily uniform checks at morning assembly for students in grades 2-8. Any student not dressed according to the school's dress code will receive a dress code demerit. Every fourth dress code demerit will result in a detention. Dress code demerits are counted separate from behavioral demerits outlined in the above sections.

Items Prohibited on Campus*

Students are prohibited from bringing the following items to school or any school-related events:

- Weapons, ammunition or illegal objects
- Items resembling weapons or illegal objects
- Drawings depicting weapons or violence
- Tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs
- Medication of any kind (Parents may bring necessary medications to the front office to be administered by school nurse as needed; please see Medications section on p. 28)
- Cigarette lighters, matches or pepper spray
- Immoral literature
- Audio or video playing/recording devices
- Electronic games
- Gum

- Laser devices
- Toys and games (unless directed by teacher or administrator for educational purpose)

*This list is not intended to be exhaustive...good judgment should be exercised.

Principal's Award for Good Character

The school administration will determine when this award is given.

Suspensions

If a student receives a suspension it may result in the student not being allowed to participate in an upcoming extra-curricular or special event (i.e. athletic competition, field trip, etc.) as determined by the school administration.

Harassment

All persons have a right to be treated with dignity and respect. All demeaning behavior is prohibited. The school follows diocesan policy with regard to harassment (see the last section of this handbook).

Violence – Threatened and Acted

All threats of violence will be taken seriously. Administration will address this in an age-appropriate manner working to ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff. Students may receive consequences for threats or actions of a violent nature.

24/7/365

All students at Our Lady of Mercy School are students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside of school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school or inconsistent with the values of the school, may receive consequences by school administration.

Dress Code

Our Lady of Mercy School is a community of believers that form one body in Christ. The school uniform is a means of communicating our unity and oneness.

The faculty, staff and administration at Our Lady of Mercy seek to cultivate an environment in which students distinguish themselves based on personality, virtuous behavior, character, academic success and extracurricular activities rather than by their physical appearance.

The Our Lady of Mercy dress code presents an opportunity for faculty, staff and administration to educate students regarding the importance of presenting themselves well. Through the school

dress code students are taught lessons about being well groomed as well as dressing modestly and appropriately. When at school, students are going about the important business of learning and should dress accordingly.

Any part of a student's physical appearance that draws attention to the student (making the student stand out from the others) indicates that he or she is out of uniform. In order to communicate unity and oneness, students should be in uniform at all times when on campus, except on those occasions when alternate dress is permitted.

Note: The school administration decides all matters of dress and grooming.

Guiding Principle: "If the way you are dressed draws attention to you, then you're out of uniform."

2016-2017 Uniform Guidelines

All school uniforms should utilize the new "One Mercy" logo. Any uniform items with a logo prior to the "One Mercy" logo are not permitted. Moving forward all school uniforms purchased from our partner vendors will utilize a monogrammed/ embroidered logo with the image of the Blessed Mother above the words "Our Lady of Mercy." (see below)



The logo that simply reads "Mercy" will be used primarily for athletics and the navy blue school sweatshirts. However, it is acceptable to wear a polo with the heat press "Mercy" logo that was purchased during the 2014-2015 school year. Additionally, the embroidered logo with the image of the Blessed Mother to the left and "Our Lady of Mercy" to the right of the image is also permitted if purchased during the 2014-2015 school year. Moving forward these two logos will not be used on the school uniforms and will not be sold by vendors. (see below)

MERCY



Our Lady of Mercy school uniforms are available at Inka's, Lands' End, School Time and Young Fashions.

Pre-K, K and 1st GIRLS:

- Navy and white checked jumper with the new Mercy logo.
- An oxford blouse or a Peter Pan collar blouse may be worn underneath, if desired, but no shirt is required with the jumper.
- Pre-K girls may also wear the smock dress in the Mercy plaid.
- Shorts are required under jumpers and must not exceed the length of the jumper.
- Socks must be visible at all times and may be solid white, black or navy blue. (no logos or emblems permitted on socks)

Shoe Options:

- Athletic shoes that are white, black, blue, grey or a combination of these colors should be worn. No other colors may be visible. They can be canvas or leather. Shoes must remain securely fastened at all times. Light-up shoes, heelies (wheels) or toe shoes are not permitted.
- Tan or brown Sperry-style "boat shoes" may be worn with white, navy or black ankle socks any day of the week if preferred.
- Navy and white Keds or black and white saddle oxford shoes.

Pre-K, K and 1st BOYS:

- Light Blue Polo Shirts (short or long sleeve) with the new Mercy logo
- Solid navy pants or navy shorts (no cargo styles; pull up twill pants may be worn.)*

**No shorts on Fridays or special designated dress uniform days for Kindergarten and 1st Grade beginning the Friday after Labor Day.*

- 1st grade boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt if there are belt loops on the pants. Shirts must be tucked into the pants so that the belt is visible all around the waist. Emblems or logos are not allowed on belts.

Shoe Options:

- Athletic shoes that are white, black, blue, grey or a combination of these colors should be worn. No other colors may be visible. They can be canvas or leather. Shoes must remain securely fastened at all times. Light-up shoes, heelies (wheels) or toe shoes are not permitted.
- Tan or brown dress shoes or Sperry-style “boat shoes” may be worn any day of the week if preferred.
- Bone and navy saddle oxford shoes.

2nd - 5th grade GIRLS:

- White banded polo with new Mercy logo
- Navy and white checked skort or navy walking shorts
- A solid white tee shirt may be worn under the uniform shirt. (The tee shirt may not be longer than the blouse and the sleeve must be no longer than the shirt sleeve and must have no printing on it; White turtleneck shirts may be worn under the uniform.)
- Skort must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee.
- Skort must not be rolled at the waist.

Shoe Options:

- Athletic shoes that are white, black, blue, grey or a combination of these colors should be worn. No other colors may be visible. They can be canvas or leather. Shoes must remain securely fastened at all times. Light-up shoes, heelies (wheels) or toe shoes are not permitted.
- Tan or brown “sperry-style boat” shoes may be worn with white, navy or black ankle socks any day of the week if preferred.
- Black and White Saddle Oxford Shoes

2nd - 5th grade BOYS:

- Light Blue Polo Shirts (short or long sleeve) with the new Mercy logo
- Solid navy blue pants or navy blue shorts (no cargo styles)*

**No shorts on Fridays or special designated dress uniform days beginning the Friday after Labor Day.*

- Boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt. (no emblems or logos)
- Shirts must be tucked into the pants so that the belt is visible all around the waist.

Shoe Options:

- Athletic shoes that are white, black, blue, grey or a combination of these colors should be worn. No other colors may be visible. They can be canvas or leather. Shoes must remain securely fastened at all times. Light-up shoes, heelies (wheels) or toe shoes are not permitted.
- Tan or brown dress shoes or Sperry-style “boat shoes” may be worn any day of the week if preferred.
- Bone and navy saddle oxford shoes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

6th and 7th grade GIRLS:

Monday - Thursday:

- White banded polo with new Mercy logo
- Navy and white checked skort (Skort must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. Skort must not be rolled at the waist.) or navy walking shorts
- A solid white tee shirt may be worn under the uniform shirt. (The tee shirt may not be longer than the blouse and the sleeve must be no longer than the shirt sleeve and must have no printing on it; White turtleneck shirts may be worn under the uniform)
- Athletic shoes, Saddle Oxford Shoes or Sperry-style “boat shoes”

Shoe Options:

- Athletic shoes that are white, black, blue, grey or a combination of these colors should be worn. No other colors may be visible. They can be canvas or leather. Shoes must remain securely fastened at all times. Light-up shoes, heelies (wheels) or toe shoes are not permitted.
- Tan or brown “sperry-style boat” shoes may be worn with white, navy or black socks any day of the week if preferred.
- Black and White Saddle Oxfords

Friday: (DRESS UNIFORM)

- White button down oxford (long or short sleeved) with new Mercy logo
- Navy and white checked skort
- Athletic shoes, Sperry-style boat shoes or Saddle Oxford shoes (see above)

6th and 7th grade BOYS:

Monday - Thursday:

- Light Blue polo shirt with the new Mercy logo
- Solid navy blue pants (no cargo) or navy blue shorts.
- Boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt. (no emblems or logos)
- Athletic shoes, Sperry-style “boat shoes” or dress shoes

Shoe Options:

- Athletic shoes that are white, black, blue, grey or a combination of these colors should be worn. No other colors may be visible. They can be canvas or leather. Shoes must remain securely fastened at all times. Light-up shoes, heelies (wheels) or toe shoes are not permitted.
- Tan or brown Sperry-style “boat shoes” may be worn with white, navy or black socks any day of the week if preferred.
- Bone and navy saddle oxford shoes.

Friday: (DRESS UNIFORM)

- Light Blue Button Down Oxford with new Mercy logo (long or short sleeve)
- Striped necktie or bow tie (navy and light blue)
- Navy blue pants
- Boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt.
- Athletic shoes, Sperry-style “boat shoes” or Saddle Oxford shoes (see above)

8th grade GIRLS:

Monday - Thursday:

- White banded polo with new Mercy logo,
- Navy and white checked skort (Skort must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. Skort must not be rolled at the waist.) or navy walking shorts
- A solid white tee shirt may be worn under the uniform shirt. (The tee shirt may not be longer than the blouse and the sleeve must be no longer than the shirt sleeve and must have no printing on it; White turtleneck shirts may be worn under the uniform.)

Shoe Options:

- Athletic shoes that are white, black, blue, grey or a combination of these colors should be worn. No other colors may be visible. They can be canvas or leather. Shoes must remain securely fastened at all times. Light-up shoes, heelies (wheels) or toe shoes are not permitted.
- Tan or brown Sperry-style “boat shoes” may be worn with white, navy or black socks any day of the week if preferred.
- Black and White Saddle Oxfords

Friday: (DRESS UNIFORM)

- White button down oxford (long or short sleeved) with new Mercy logo
- Navy and white checked skort
- Navy blazer with new Mercy logo (supplied by OLOM).
- Tan or brown Sperry-style “boat shoes” or saddle oxfords must be worn with the dress uniform for 8th graders.

8th grade BOYS:

Monday - Thursday:

- Light Blue polo shirt with the new Mercy logo
- Solid navy blue pants (no cargo) or navy blue shorts
- Boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt. (no emblems or logos)

Shoe Options:

- Athletic shoes that are white, black, blue, grey or a combination of these colors should be worn. No other colors may be visible. They can be canvas or leather. Shoes must remain securely fastened at all times. Light-up shoes, heelies (wheels) or toe shoes are not permitted.
- Tan or brown Sperry-style “boat shoes” may be worn with white, navy or black socks any day of the week if preferred.
- Bone and navy saddle oxford shoes.

Friday: (DRESS UNIFORM)

- Light Blue Button Down Oxford with new Mercy logo (long or short sleeve)
- Striped necktie or bow tie (navy and light blue)
- Khaki pants
- Navy blue blazer with Mercy logo (supplied by OLOM).
- Tan or brown Sperry-style “boat shoes” or saddle oxfords must be worn with the dress uniform for 8th graders.
- Boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt. (no emblems or logos)

Guidelines Applicable to All Students

Girls Tights & Leggings:

- Solid white, black, or navy tights or leggings may be worn.
- If leggings are worn they should be ankle length and not capri length.

Girls Accessories:

- Headbands, ribbons and bows may be blue, white, black, or a combination of these colors.
- Other hair accessories should be used sparingly. Students will be required to remove hair accessories considered by school officials to be a distraction.

Girls Hair:

- Hair must be worn away from the eyes and must be neat and tidy at all times.
- No exaggerated hairstyles, including cosmetic colorings are allowed.

Boys Hair:

- Hair must not touch the collar of the uniform shirt, cover any part of the ear, and must not be longer than the top of the eyebrows.
- No exaggerated hairstyles, including cosmetic coloring are allowed.

Make-Up:

- Make-up, artificial fingernails, tips or colored nail polish are not allowed. Only clear nail polish is permitted.

Jewelry:

- Girls may wear one pair of small post earrings solid in color.
- No dangling, hoop, brightly colored or patterned earrings are permitted. Students will be required to remove any earrings considered by school officials to be a distraction.
- Boys are not allowed to wear earrings.
- Only one necklace, religious in nature, may be worn.
- Bracelets are not permitted.
- A modest watch is allowed. No beeping or alarms are permitted. No Apple watches or similar devices are permitted.
- Expensive jewelry is to be kept at home.

Socks:

- Socks may be solid white, black or navy blue.
- Socks must be visible at all times.
- No logos, emblems or writing except the Mercy logo are permitted.

Outerwear:

- Students may wear the navy blue MERCY sweatshirt purchased from school.
- Any other outerwear (sweaters, jackets, rain coats, or winter coats) must be navy blue, black or white, or a combination of these colors.

P.E. Uniforms:

- Students in grades 3Y-5 do not wear P.E. uniforms.
- Students taking P.E. as an elective in grades 6-8 wear the gray “Mercy” P.E. T-shirt and the navy blue mesh “Mercy” P.E. shorts (both items can be purchased through our uniform vendors). School approved socks and shoes should be work during P.E.

Alternate Dress Guidelines

In the event that the administration permits an alternate dress day, guidelines will be provided at that time.

School Procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is extremely important in ensuring a child's academic success. Absences for vacations may be considered unexcused.

Parents should contact the school via telephone or e-mail if a child will be absent. When a child is absent and the school has not been contacted, the school will call the parents to check on the student's status.

Louisiana's Compulsory Attendance Law requires students to be in attendance for a minimum of 52,800 minutes (the equivalent of 160 days of 330 minutes each). Unexcused absences or excessive tardiness or early check-outs resulting in attendance of fewer than the required minutes will result in student retention.

Perfect attendance awards are earned by students who attend every minute of instructional time during the school year.

Written excuses verifying illness must be received within three school days following the student's return to school.

Cafeteria

Students in grades Pre-K–8 are given the opportunity to participate in the cafeteria breakfast and lunch program provided by the Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge Office of Child Nutrition. Menus are posted on the website.

Parents of students with past due cafeteria balances will be contacted within sufficient time to provide payment. If payment is not provided in the allotted timeline, students may not be served lunch in the cafeteria.

Items listed below are not allowed in the school cafeteria, whether brought in by student or parent:

- Peanut butter or products containing peanuts (Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is a peanut-free zone.)
- Carbonated drinks
- Chips in a bag larger than one serving
- Candy

- Fast Food

Carpools/Dismissal

There are two morning and afternoon carpools.

- ECC – enter from Florida Blvd. south on Marquette Dr.
- Church – enter church parking lot behind adoration chapel from Government St.

In the morning, students will be dropped off at the carpool of the youngest sibling. In the afternoon, students will be picked up at each carpool according to the grade of the oldest sibling.

- ECC: grades Pre-K – 2
- Church: grades 3 – 8

Changes in your child's transportation must be communicated to the main office or ECC office by 2:15 p.m. each day.

Students not participating in the Extended Day Program or another supervised activity must be off campus grounds by 3:30 p.m. Students who are not picked up by 3:25 p.m. will be checked into the Extended Day Program. All applicable fees will then apply.

Checking Out

If a child must leave campus during the school day, written notification must be sent to the teacher, and the parent must come to the school office to check out the child from class.

Once at school, no child may leave without permission from the office. Children may not be checked out of school from the classrooms.

There are no checkouts after 2:30 p.m., except for emergencies. All changes in student dismissal instructions should be submitted by 2:15 p.m.

Students checking out before 11:00 a.m. and not returning will be counted as absent for the entire day. Students checking out before 1:30 p.m. and not returning will be counted as absent for half a day.

Communication

In keeping with church principles of subsidiarity, problems should be solved at the lowest level whenever possible. Thus, persons with concerns about a teacher should first attempt to address the concern with the teacher. If the problem has not been resolved in this manner, then the person should feel free to contact administration for support. E-mail serves as a great medium for initiating contact. However, face-to-face or telephone conversations are the best way to address issues that need resolution. When scheduling a meeting with an administrator it is requested that a subject of conversation or meeting objective be provided.

The blue Tuesday Tracker folders contain information on student performance and school activities. Each Tuesday, teachers will post assignments and current grades on their *Edline* pages. Teachers in grades Pre-K-1 may send information home in folders daily. The custodial parent receives this information unless other arrangements have been made. Most information, including, but not limited to, Mercy Memos, cafeteria menu, and calendar, is available on the school website. Families without Internet access should contact the school for paper copies.

The Administrator's Plus database software will be a primary medium of communication (via telephone and e-mail) for general and emergency information. Each family must keep contact information updated with the school office to ensure that school files are accurate.

Confidentiality

Teachers, administration and school staff will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health or safety is at stake. Parents will be promptly notified of concerns.

Counseling Opportunities and Expectations

The School Counseling Program at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School supports the total development of the student. The counseling program promotes a positive atmosphere throughout the school and is based on trust and respect for self and others. It seeks to foster a positive self-image in each student through the realization of his/her uniqueness and worth as an individual. It aims to provide each student with an understanding and acceptance of his/her strengths and limitations as well as the understanding and acceptance of responsibility of his/her choices and the resulting consequences. The school counselor collaborates with teachers and administrators to support student academic, social, and emotional needs.

The School Counseling Program provides the following services: classroom counseling lessons, individual or small group counseling (for academic, social, or emotional needs), teacher consultation, parent consultation, teacher in-service, referral to outside agencies (initiated after consultation with administration, parent, and teacher), and special programs based on the current needs of students.

The school counselor is available to address daily issues and support families through transitional or situational crisis. Referrals to outside counseling may be necessary for long-term counseling needs.

The counseling relationship is built on confidentiality with students, parents, and teachers. All students entering a counseling relationship are informed of the limits of confidentiality, including disclosing information to parents/guardians. Counselors may see a student for up to three times without parental/guardian notification or consent unless serious concern exists at which time the parent will be promptly notified. If a child is working with a mental health professional outside

of the school, the school counselor will request permission of parent(s)/guardian(s) to communicate with outside agencies as needed to benefit the well-being of the student.

When evaluation is required to assess special needs, the school counselor coordinates communication between the school and outside agencies. Parents should forward all evaluation forms needing to be completed by the school to the school counselor who will distribute them to the teachers. After these forms have been completed, the school counselor will forward them to the outside agency. The school requests that a copy of the final evaluation be sent to the administration office. Confidential records are kept for the school counselor in the school counselor office.

Custodial/Non-Custodial Information

Parents have the right to view information included in student records. The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment (Family Educational and Privacy Act). Therefore, non-custodial parent or legal guardians, upon written request, will be given access to information regarding the academic progress of their child(ren) unless there is a court order specifically stating that the non-custodial parent or legal guardian is denied access to such information. If there is a court order specifying that no information be provided, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. Upon receipt of a written request, copies will be provided within one week.

Deliveries for Students

Only items such as textbooks or other instructional items may be brought to school by parents. These items should be labeled with child's name and homeroom and given to the receptionist. Students will be called to the office during non-instructional times. No athletic equipment or apparel will be accepted.

Due Process/Appeals

Decisions made by the school administration may be appealed by contacting the Our Lady of Mercy School Board. The appeal will be heard by the "Appeals Committee" of the School Board and due process shall be maintained.

Emergency Drills and Plans

The school maintains crisis management plans for emergency situations that could arise during the school year. Faculty, staff and students are trained and practice regularly for such situations.

Emergency School Closing

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School will follow the same directive in regard to inclement weather as East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools. Therefore, please monitor announcements made on local radio and television stations.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important component of the educational experience at Our Lady of Mercy School. These off campus trips are a privilege given to students, and students may lose the privilege if they fail to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements.

Permission slips are utilized on all field trips and are available on the school website. Students who fail to submit a completed and signed permission form will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. Telephone calls will not be accepted in lieu of written permission. Parents may choose for a child to remain at school rather than attend a field trip.

All parents who seek to serve as chaperones for school field trips must obtain a background check and child protection certification from the Diocese of Baton Rouge Office of Child Protection. Parents may not accompany students on a field trip unless they have gone through this process. The use of tobacco products and the consumption of alcohol while serving as a chaperone on a school trip are violations of school and diocesan policy (please reference diocesan policy at the end of this handbook).

Food

Due to the number of severe food allergies among the student population, outside treats for large groups (classes or grade levels) are not permitted on campus. The school will provide cupcakes one day a month for all students in order to celebrate birthdays. During Mardi Gras, a schedule will be developed for bringing King Cakes. Any other specialty food items must get prior approval from administration and/or the school nurse.

Fundraising

Our Lady of Mercy embraces a stewardship model for fundraising. The school invites parents, grandparents, parishioners and other stakeholders to consider supporting our mission each year through three major activities: the Annual Fund, the Spring Auction, and the Mercy Fair. These three programs provide significant resources essential to the maintenance and growth of the school. Parents are encouraged to participate in and support the school through these three avenues of giving.

Health and Safety

Children with communicable diseases should remain at home for the usual period of time that those diseases are contagious. Children diagnosed with contagious illnesses or exhibiting symptoms such as, but not limited to, fever, vomiting and diarrhea must be symptom-free for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Students diagnosed by a physician with contagious illnesses (e.g., strep, staph, or pink eye) that require prescription medication are to be on appropriate prescription medications for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school.

If a student becomes ill at school, he/she should report to the school nurse. The parent will be contacted, and school nurse and parents will decide an appropriate course of action.

Lice

Parents are encouraged to check for lice and nits on a regular basis. The school has a nit-free policy concerning head lice. Parents are obligated to contact the school nurse and follow school protocol in the event their child contracts head lice. Children who have contracted head lice must be treated and be free of lice and nits and cleared by the school nurse before returning to the classroom. Upon returning a child to school, the parent must certify: 1) that the child has been successfully treated; 2) that the child is nit free, and 3) their agreement to repeat the treatment in 7 to 10 days (due to the life cycle for nits to hatch).

Lockers

Lockers are the property of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School and may be entered at any time by school officials.

Medications at School

Only parents may bring medication, in its pharmacy container, to school. Students are not permitted to have medication of any kind in their possession.

Parental and doctor's permissions must be submitted to the office in order for children at school to receive prescription and/or non-prescription medication that must be taken on a continuing, daily basis.

Messages

Except in emergencies, the office will not deliver messages to students nor are students allowed to use the telephone. If a student is ill or injured, a school official will notify the parent immediately.

Office Information Cards

Student information cards, sent home at the beginning of the school year, must be completed and returned. Serious health issues and any restrictions regarding who is allowed to pick up or check out child(ren) must be noted.

A copy of the custodial section of a divorce decree must be provided if the child is not to be released to the non-custodial parent. Persons listed on the cards are the only ones allowed to check the student out of school. Any deviation from what is originally listed must be submitted in writing to the office. A copy of any formal consent judgment must be provided to the school.

Please notify the school office promptly regarding changes in phone numbers and/or addresses.

Parent Organizations

The Mercy Home and School Volunteer Association (HSVA) serves as the primary means of volunteerism for the parents and grandparents in our school community. All parents are members of the HSVA and will be presented with opportunities to volunteer in service to the

school. Information about the HSVA can be found on the school website under the “parents” tab.

The Mercy Men’s Club serves as an opportunity for building community among the dads in the school family. All current and past Mercy fathers and grandfathers are members of the Mercy Men’s Club. The organization provides monthly events that serve as opportunities for fellowship. Information about the Mercy Men’s Club can be found on the school website under the “Parents” tab.

The Mercy School Board serves as an advisory council to the pastor and school administration. This group meets every other month to provide guidance and parent input. Information about the Mercy School Board, such as members’ contact information, meeting dates, minutes and agendas, can be found on the school website under the “Parents” tab.

Parent Partnership

Parents are entrusted by God with the responsibility to educate their children. It is a privilege for our school to partner with parents in the educational process. We are fully committed to working together to form a strong relationship to meet the needs of our students and their families.

If parent behavior seriously interferes with the teaching/learning process, negatively impacts the operations of the school, or has a detrimental effect on the community, Our Lady of Mercy may require parents to withdraw their children from the school.

Parent Service

Our Lady of Mercy invites parents to partner with the school through volunteerism. We rely heavily on the support of our parents to provide students with the best experiences possible. The Mercy Fair is an extremely important event in building community and generating resources for our school. All families are required to provide three hours of service during the weekend of the fair. This service is essential in making the annual parish fair a success, and it provides parents with an opportunity to model Christian service to their children.

Parking

Visitor Parking spaces are available on Marquette Avenue in front of the school. Other visitors are asked to park in the church parking lot. Please refrain from parking in the street, in any of the red marked zones on campus, or in the drive-thru in front of school.

Parties

Teachers and room parents plan class Christmas parties and end-of-year parties. Principal’s permission must be obtained for any other parties. Deliveries to students, including flowers and/or balloons, are not permitted. Birthday parties in the classroom are not permitted. The school will provide cupcakes once a month in the cafeteria to celebrate all birthdays that month.

Pictures

Our Lady of Mercy reserves the right to use students' pictures in school publications and on the school website. Enrollment of a student at Our Lady of Mercy constitutes the consent of the student's parents or guardians for the use of the student's picture in school publications, on the school's website and in school advertisements in print and broadcast outlets.

Security Cameras

Please be aware that security cameras have been installed throughout the Our Lady of Mercy campus to help ensure student and staff safety.

Tardiness

Students will be considered tardy at 7:50 if they are not in assembly or homeroom. Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must be signed in by an adult. Only doctor appointments, dental appointments, or previously approved reasons for tardiness will be excused. School administration will contact parents if the child is excessively tardy to discuss remedial action.

Technology

Students are not permitted to use recreational electronic equipment during school hours (including Extended Day) unless explicit permission has been given by a member of the faculty, staff or administration. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, cameras, CD or MP3 players, I-Pods, and electronic games.

Electronic readers, simply called "e-Readers," are digital devices that can store books, periodicals, magazines, and other electronic media. In striving to maintain technological relevance in education, we allow students to use these devices in accordance with our e-Reader Acceptable Use Policy (see page 35). This opportunity is a privilege that requires extra caution and responsibility both on the part of the students and their parents.

Textbooks

Students are responsible for the proper care of school books. Textbooks must be covered at all times. Textbooks should be free of pencil, ink or crayon marks. If a book is lost or damaged, it will be replaced at the parent's expense. Requests for replacement of textbooks should be made to the assistant principal for academics.

Visits to campus

No one is allowed to visit classrooms or the campus during the school day without special permission from the administration. Parents and visitors should check in at the school office when visiting campus.

Extended Day Program

Hours

7:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m.

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Registration

All information, including registration forms, is available on the school website.

Students must be registered at least 24 hours prior to beginning this program.

Students whose parents are habitually late for afternoon carpool will be enrolled in the Extended Day program.

Fees

Fees for Extended Day programs must be prepaid by the semester unless noted otherwise by the director. Students will not be allowed to participate in these programs until fees are paid.

Food

Breakfast is served in the cafeteria for an additional fee. Snacks served in the afternoon are part of Extended Day fees. Please refer to the Extended Day registration form for more information.

Discipline

Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior while at Extended Day. Expectations and consequences will be consistent with those followed during the school day.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities provide strong character building, leadership formation, and service opportunities. Information about specific clubs and sports is available on the school website.

All students participating in extracurricular activities represent Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School on and off campus, and the school's expectations for appropriate behavior apply.

A student must be present at least one-half of the school day in order to participate in an extracurricular activity on that day.

Parents assume liability when allowing students to participate in extracurricular activities that could result in injury by the nature of the activity: football, basketball, volleyball, cheerleading, etc. The school is covered by Catholic Mutual Insurance for accidents.

Extracurricular Eligibility Policy

Students must maintain an overall “C” average on subjects used to determine promotion (see Retention, page 13) to participate in extracurricular activities.

In consultation with parents and teachers, the administrators may determine that continued participation in an extracurricular activity may not be in the best interest of the student.

Please note: Students must meet eligibility requirements to participate in extracurriculars on the date tryouts begin in order to be eligible for that sport.

School Board’s Finance Policies

It is the desire of the Our Lady of Mercy School Board to create an environment which nurtures families’ appreciation of the value of our Catholic faith, of attending Mass on a regular basis and of supporting the parish with their time, talent, prayer, and offering. Toward that end, the School Board has defined the standard for granting an in-parish tuition rate to families who prioritize faithful participation in parish life.

Those families who are registered, active and contributing parishioners will receive the in-parish tuition rate for their Catholic children. These three criteria are defined as follows:

1. **Registered:** A family must be formally registered with Our Lady of Mercy Church and meet the guidelines for parish membership set forth by the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
2. **Active:** The standard for this criterion is regular Sunday Mass attendance and active participation in the life of the parish. Families are encouraged to become involved in one or more of the many ministries offered through the school and the church. The parish holds an annual "Stewardship of Ministries" campaign where each ministry is explained and an opportunity to enroll is provided. It is also recommended that each family develop a daily prayer life which incorporates prayers for the Mercy community.
3. **Contributing:** The parish provides a substantial amount of financial support to the school on an annual basis. Without this support, the tuition rates would be considerably higher and the programs offered would be greatly limited. Families who contribute regularly to the church are therefore contributing to the operation of Our Lady of Mercy School. A family who makes a financial commitment to the church, giving in a regular and consistent manner, weekly or monthly, with a minimum of \$5.00 a week, will be considered a contributing family. The

offertory envelopes provided by the church or other identifiable means should be used in order for the family to receive proper recognition for their gifts.

The family's tuition status will be based on their record of giving for the previous calendar year (January 1 - December 31). At the end of each calendar year, the pastor will receive a full offertory financial report on all registered school families. This report will detail how frequently and what amount each family has contributed to the church. After the pastor has reviewed this report and applies the criteria of this policy, the principal will be notified of those families who qualify for the in-parish tuition rate. In cases of extreme financial hardship, the pastor may provide a dispensation.

Re-enrollment/application fee

The re-enrollment fee for students currently enrolled is paid at the time of re-enrollment and is non-refundable. The application fee for new students is paid at the time of application and is non-refundable. If Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is unable to accept the student, the application fee will be refunded.

Payments

Due date will be published with the fee scale. There is a program with Gulf Coast Bank whereby the amount of tuition and fees can be borrowed and repaid in installments. A fee of \$200 will be assessed for any tuition loan that is charged back to the school. Tuition rate, in-parish or out-of-parish, is determined based on the Tuition policy. Tuition for non-Catholic students is a separate category.

Capital Improvement Fee

Due date will be published with the fee scale. This is a yearly, per family, assessment. This fee may be included in the tuition financing program of Gulf Coast Bank.

Annual Grade-Level Fee

Due date will be published with the fee scale. This fee may be included in the tuition financing program of Gulf Coast Bank.

Tuition Assistance

Request for tuition assistance for Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School families will be made on an application form which may be obtained from the school's business office. These forms shall be completed and returned to the school business office no later than April 15 of each year. Applications for tuition assistance are accepted year round as hardships can occur at any time. Since tuition assistance is provided from parish income, applications will be considered by a sub-committee appointed by the Pastor. Decisions on tuition assistance will be communicated by

letter to each applicant. Out-of-parish families requiring assistance should contact their pastors for information on this matter.

Board Resolution on Finances

In recognition of the fact that Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School must operate on a sound fiscal basis in addition to fulfilling its religious and educational functions and that all responsible parties should have full information on policies regarding collection of tuition and fees, be it resolved and published as policy:

1. Diocesan policy allows Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School to withhold the administration of exams and participation in graduation and/or graduation activities until all accounts are current.
2. That any accounts consistently late shall be reviewed on a quarterly basis and referred to the Administration for possible termination of school services.
3. Those families whose Tuition Loan Program accounts have been charged back multiple times shall be denied use of the tuition loan program. A copy of the procedures will be furnished upon request to the school's Business Manager.
4. That if a Tuition Loan is secured after June 1, the school will require a deposit equal to 20% of all tuition and yearly fees that are assessed.
5. That the Administration shall establish administrative procedures and take all such action necessary for the implementation of these policies with proper notification presented to all persons concerned.
6. That a fee of an amount to be set annually shall be charged for any check returned for reason of nonpayment. This fee shall be \$20.00. Following the third NSF check, payment must be made by cash or cashier's check only.
7. Those families with delinquent accounts at the time of re-enrollment for the next year will not be allowed to re-enroll until the account has been paid in full.
8. That any fees, tuition, fines, late charges, NSF charges or penalties due to Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School may be pursued to the maximum extent allowed by law.
9. Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School may withhold all records pertaining to a particular child/family until all monies owed to the school are paid in full.
10. That, when transferring out of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School tuition paid in advance will be refunded according to a prorated scale.

No fees (to include, but not limited to, book, class, capital improvement, grade-level, band and supply) are refundable. Families of students who are asked to leave the school for disciplinary reasons forfeit remaining tuition and fees.

Families agree to be personally liable for and pay for/reimburse the school for any damage caused by the student to school or church property or the personal property of a staff member, student, employee, or volunteer of the school. That the parents agree to pay the reasonable attorney's fees of the Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, and/or its agents or assignees, if any fees, tuition, fines, late charges, NSF charges, and/or penalties due to Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School are sued upon or placed in the hands of an attorney for collection, adjustment, settlement, compromising, or other action.

School and Diocesan Policies

Our Lady of Mercy Acceptable Use Policy

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School intends that all electronic equipment, property, Internet access, Internet service providers, hardware and/or software, be used for purposes consistent with the mission and educational goals of our school. In compliance with the *Children's Internet Protection Act*, Our Lady of Mercy has taken protective measures to block or filter internet access to materials that are not in accordance with those missions and goals. Nonetheless, those measures in no way diminish each user's responsibility to act ethically and to conform to school policy.

All students and parents are asked to read and agree to the Acceptable Use Policy. By signing the Acceptable Use Policy, the parents and student acknowledge that they understand the policy and agree completely to the terms and conditions contained therein. Any student who fails to conform to this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or dismissal.

Use of technology resources at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is a privilege. Regulations for the use of these resources shall include but not be limited to the following:

- Students shall not purposely access over the Internet visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic or harmful to minors.
- Students shall not attempt to gain unauthorized access or compromise any computer or network security or engage in any illegal activities on the Internet including willfully introducing a computer virus, worm, or other harmful program.
- Individual student email or other forms of direct communication is not permitted.
- The use of technology for unethical, immoral, criminal and/or illegal activities is not permitted.
- Students shall observe Copyright Laws and Fair Use Guidelines. Copying, modifying, distributing, displaying, or transmitting the work of another without permission or proper citation is prohibited.
- Students are prohibited from bringing software and or hardware from home to use on or with network computers without authorized permission.
- Students are not permitted to upload or download anything without authorized permission.
- Students are not permitted to change, rearrange, add or delete desktop and software settings on any Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School computer.

- Students are not permitted to change, relocate, modify, or delete the work of another person.
- Students are not permitted to share their passwords with another student.
- Students are not permitted to share their personal information over the internet, unless the communication has been authorized.
- Students are not permitted to use school resources to share or transmit any information on any website, bulletin board, chat-room, e-mail or any other messaging system without authorized permission.
- Students are not permitted at any time or place to share or transmit images or information in any format related to the school, employees, or students that are defamatory, scurrilous, pornographic, or which could be construed as threatening or impugning the character of another person.
- A student using the Internet is prohibited from uploading to or downloading from the Internet any nonacademic photographs, and the student is prohibited from disclosing or providing to any other person the address, phone number, or last name of any student, staff, teacher, or volunteer at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, including his/her own address, phone number and last name.

The administration reserves the right to use, at its discretion, any form of discipline with respect to any act or actions not specifically listed herein but which actions are determined by the administration to be illegal, immoral, unethical, criminal, a violation of any local, state or deferral law or regulation, and/or a violation of the goals, principles, or educational objectives or policies of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School or Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Our Lady of Mercy e-Reader Acceptable Use Policy

- e-Readers that are brought to school are to be used only for the reading of school approved material (books, etc.) and not for other purposes such as communication, entertainment, music, gaming, etc.
- All e-Readers that have cellular and network capabilities must be disabled (turned off) while the device is at school.
- e-Readers must be used at appropriate times in accordance with teacher instructions. It must not be a distraction for the student or other students nor should it be a source of any classroom disruption.
- The student is responsible for knowing how to properly and effectively use the e-Reader.
- Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is not responsible for any damage or loss associated with a student's e-Reader.
- Violation of the e-Reader policy may result in loss of e-Reader privileges or any other form of disciplinary action as determined by the administration.
- Materials on and the use of the e-Reader must be in full compliance with the Our Lady of Mercy School Acceptable Use Policy.
- The school reserves the right to review the contents of the reader if needed.

- The school reserves the right to deny use of certain devices that have e-Reading capabilities on a case-to-case basis.
- The school reserves the right to amend or rescind the e-Reader policy at any time.

Diocesan Bullying/Harassment/Hazing Policy

“To reflect Gospel values and to ensure a positive and safe learning climate, the schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge do not condone harassment, hazing, or bullying of any kind. All school community members are to treat everyone with dignity and respect. In that spirit, the prohibition against acts of harassment, hazing, and bullying applies to all Catholic school students, both on and off campus. It is recognized that harassment, hazing, or bullying can involve verbal, physical, written, or electronic communication whether by means currently in use or by any new electronic devices that may be developed in the future.” (4.9.2.7)

Reported incidents of bullying may result in an investigation by the school’s administration. Students who engage in bullying behavior may receive consequences that include suspension and/or expulsion.

Diocesan Child Protection Program

The Diocese of Baton Rouge Child Protection Program is designed to comply with canon, criminal, and civil law. All Diocesan schools must instruct the youth in their care and train personnel in programs of awareness and safety.

All school and Church employees and volunteers must be screened prior to being hired and/or working with students. They must also provide documentation of participation in an online training program that covers awareness and appropriate behaviors with minors.

The Diocesan Child Protection Program is a three step process which includes: fingerprinting, background check and online tutorial. Any fee associated with this process is the responsibility of the volunteer/employee.

Diocesan Substance Abuse Policy

Aware of the ever-present danger of the illegal use of chemicals/alcohol by students, the school strives to provide preventative education and a drug-free climate on campus, and at all school-related functions. The use of all chemicals, including alcohol, tobacco and tobacco products is prohibited. If a drug/alcohol treatment program and or drug testing is mandated, for reasonable cause, it is to be financed by the parent/guardian. This Diocesan Substance Abuse Policy must be included in each school’s handbook of policies and must be adhered to.

Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Our signatures below indicate that we have read the 2016-2017 Handbook and that we agree to abide by the spirit and letter of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School's policies and procedures.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Printed Name

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Printed Name

* Excerpted from "The Rights & Responsibilities of Catholic School Parents," published by the National Catholic Education Association, 2003:

"Catholic school students and parents, as well as the Catholic school and its employees, have rights conferred by contract law. In enrolling a child in a Catholic school, a parent agrees to follow the rules of that school. It is impossible to identify every situation that can arise in a handbook; thus wording [is used] such as 'other appropriate conduct' or 'conduct whether inside or outside of school that is detrimental to the reputation of the school...' Your child is a representative of the Catholic school twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and is responsible for acting in a way that brings credit to Church and school. You will be required to sign [this] form stating that you have read the handbook and agree to be governed by it. Your signature serves as evidence that you entered into [this] contract and that you understand the provisions of the contract."

“Little Saints” Three-Year-Old Program Addendum

Dress Code Policy

Little Saints three-year-old students are expected to follow the dress code specifications for Pre-K found on pages 15-17 in the School Handbook. In addition to the Mercy uniform for Pre-K, three-year-old students will also have the option of wearing a Mercy T-Shirt (purchased from uniform vendors) and predominantly solid navy athletic shorts.

Please make sure you send an extra school uniform for your child. Be sure to include an extra pair of underwear, socks, and shoes. Make sure all items are labeled.

Arrival/Dismissal

Students may begin arriving at 7:25 am. They are to report directly to their classroom. The school day begins promptly at 7:55 am. Currently there is no option for extended care in the mornings or afternoons for our three-year-old students. Transportation options include carpool, bus or walking. The classroom teacher or classroom aid will be on duty to help receive the students in the carpool line. If you currently have older children attending Our Lady of Mercy, then they may be dropped off with your three-year-old student. Afternoon Dismissal begins at 2:50 pm for the three-year-old students and ends at 3:25p.m. In the afternoon, students will be picked up at carpool according to the grade of the oldest sibling.

Lunch and Snack Policy

Each child must bring a lunch and snack from home. Please make sure your child’s lunchbox and snack are clearly labeled with their name. We are a peanut-free campus, so please be mindful when packing lunches to not include any peanut products. You may send in your snack weekly or monthly if that helps. We will store them in the classroom. Please be sure they are labeled with your student’s name. Please do not send in items that may need to be heated or refrigerated.

Bathroom Guidelines

Every child in the 3-year-old program must be fully potty-trained and out of diapers and pull-ups. Your child must be able to communicate with an adult that he or she has to go to the restroom. An occasional accident is understandable; however, if your child repeatedly has accidents removal from the program will be discussed.

Progress Reporting

Progress reports will be sent home every 9-week period. It will entail a checklist and narrative explaining how your student is performing in the classroom. In addition to progress reports, daily folders will go home providing information on your student’s behavior and work ethic for the day.

Volunteering in the Classroom

There will be plenty of classroom events for which parents may volunteer. The classroom teacher will notify parents of events where they may need an extra set of hands. The first month of school we ask that parents do not volunteer in the class so that the students are able to acclimate to the classroom rules and their teachers.