



# OUR LADY *of* MERCY

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## 2019-2020 Handbook

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### Accredited by

National Catholic Education Association (NCEA)



State of Louisiana



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



Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is an Equal Opportunity Employer



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.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Handbook Objectives	3
Mission	3
History	4
Covenant	6
Admission	7
Faith Formation	8
Academic Formation	9
Little Saints	13
Character Development and Formation	14
Uniform Guidelines	19
School Procedures	24
Extended Day Program	34
Extracurricular Activities	35
School Board's Finance Policies	36
School and Diocesan Policies	39
Handbook Acknowledgement Signature Page	44

# 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 2019-2020**” 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. Groundbreaking 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 fundraising 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, a 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 remained 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. Fr. Milano appointed Mr. Chris Porche principal in January 2017. 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 treasure.

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, the 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 advance notice.

### **Conferences**

Formal Parent-Teacher conference days are scheduled each semester for grades 3Y - 4th grade. 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 every 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

## Conduct Grade

Students in grades 3-8 will begin each quarter with a 100 point conduct grade. Points will be deducted as follows:

Infractions - 3 pts  
Detentions - 6 pts  
Suspensions - 9 pts

Dress code violations will not be included in the calculation of conduct grades.

Students that earn a grade of 80 points or below will be placed on probation from participating in school events. Terms of the probation will be determined by the school administration.

Probation activities will include, but are not limited to:

- Participation in Mass (readers, alter server, etc.)
- Athletics
- Clubs
- Representing Mercy as ambassadors or public entities
- School trips

In the event of extracurricular sign-ups during probation due to conduct, students will be allowed to register and try-out for the program, but will not be able to participate until the prescribed period is over.

## **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.

\*\*Conduct grades do not affect a students ability to earn these awards.

## **Mid-Term and Final Exams**

Grade 5: ELA and Math

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

## **Final Grade Calculations**

1. Classes administering midterm and final exams:
  - Each nine weeks grade comprises 20% of the final average, and each exam grade earns 10% of the final average.
2. Classes without midterm and final exams:
  - Every nine weeks comprises 25% of the final average.

## **Exemptions**

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 midterm exam) is exempt from the final exam in that subject.

## **Progress Reports**

At the midpoint of each nine-week period, official progress reports are available on Parent Portal for Grades 2-8 and in paper report form for Grade 1. Grades are updated weekly on Parent Portal 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 - 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) comprehensive educational or psychological educational evaluation, conducted by a Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist, or Medical Doctor indicating a learning struggle may be eligible for classroom or testing accommodations. An evaluation must contain: Intelligence Tests, Educational/Achievement Tests, Measures of Adaptive Behavior, and Educational Recommendations. The full evaluation report must be

submitted to the School Counselor. The Student Success Team, consisting of the Assistant Principal, the School Counselor, the parent, and any other relevant parties invited by the parent, will meet to determine what accommodations can be provided by the school. The school may determine at any point to implement modifications or accommodations to facilitate student success.

## **“Little Saints” Three-Year-Old Program**

### **Dress Code Policy**

Little Saints are expected to follow the dress code specifications found beginning on page 19 in the School Handbook. In addition to the Mercy uniform, 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. All items are to be labeled with first and last name as well as homeroom number.

### **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**

Children in the 3-year-old program must be fully potty-trained and out of diapers and pull-ups. For the purpose of clarity and setting expectations accidents will be handled as follows:

- Parents will be notified by the teacher when an accident has occurred. If this continues on a regular basis, the child will be required to stay home for at least one week or until potty training is complete.
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified by an administrator to pick up the child.

Tuition will not be prorated. A child who continues to have these problems may be asked to leave Our Lady of Mercy until the child is developmentally ready for the program.

# 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 five 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 an 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, a school counselor, dean of students, 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, every faculty member and staff member is responsible for contributing to an orderly atmosphere conducive to learning throughout the school. Every employee is given the right and is expected to handle behavior problems not consistent with our guiding principles when and where they occur through a system of rewards and consequences.

Students will be referred to an administrator or the dean of students for the following behaviors. This will result in consequences (detention, suspension, or expulsion).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Plagiarism</li><li>● Fighting</li><li>● Bullying</li><li>● Harassment</li><li>● Hazing</li><li>● Weapons</li><li>● Threats</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Drugs</li><li>● Alcohol</li><li>● Tobacco (Vape)</li><li>● Theft</li><li>● Vandalism/Destruction of Property</li><li>● Violation of Acceptable Use Policy</li><li>● Academic Dishonesty</li></ul>
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## 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
- Vape Devices
- Medication of any kind (Parents may bring necessary medications to the front office to be administered by the school nurse as needed; please see Medications section on p. 31)
- 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)
- Smart Watches

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

## **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 on Blue Jay Buck Dress Down Days. 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**

When students choose to not act according to our guiding principles, teachers have various tools at their disposal to correct the behavior. The following are examples of possible consequences which are administered as the teacher deems appropriate, according to the circumstances: verbal and nonverbal redirection, character conversations, removal from activity, change of seating assignments, logical consequences, student success meetings, counselor or dean of student involvement, infractions, detentions, etc.

**\*\*Disrespect towards a classmate or teacher will warrant an automatic detention.**

## **Lower School**

Parents of students in grades 3Y-2nd are made aware of discipline concerns through the child's daily folder. The teacher and parent should work together to correct the reported behavior.

## **Infractions**

Students in grades 3 - 8 may receive an infraction for behavior not meeting our five guiding principles. Infractions result in a deduction of 3-points from a student's conduct grade and are viewable in the [Parent Portal](#).

## **Detentions**

Parents will receive notification of the detention by the teacher who assigned the consequence. The dean of students will then contact a parent or guardian to notify them of the specific date. Students who miss detention will be required to add an additional day of detention. Excessive detentions may result in suspension and/or probation. Detentions will result in a deduction of 6-points from a student's conduct grade and are viewable in the [Parent Portal](#).

Detentions are held on Tuesdays or Thursdays after school from 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm. Students are to report to the upper school office immediately following announcements. Students not picked up at 4:30 pm will be checked into extended care.



## **Suspensions**

Matters of severe misconduct or excessive instances of less serious misconduct as determined by the dean of students or school administration may warrant a suspension. Suspensions place a student in jeopardy of dismissal from Our Lady of Mercy. Suspensions will result in a deduction of 9-points from a student's conduct grade and are viewable in the [Parent Portal](#).

If a student receives a suspension it will result in the student not being allowed to participate in upcoming extra-curricular or special events (i.e. athletic competition, field trips, etc.) as determined by the school administration. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and make up any missed assignments. Students who do not submit assignments upon their return will receive a grade of zero.

## **Probation**

A student may be placed on probation if deemed necessary by the school administration due to an individual incident of serious behavioral concerns, as a result of an accumulation of behavioral concerns, or conduct score of 80 or below. At the end of the probationary period, the student may either be removed from probation, have the probationary period extended, or be asked to leave Our Lady of Mercy.

## **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 the 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 and authorized by the school administration.

### **Dress Code Violations**

Teachers conduct daily uniform checks at morning assembly for students in grades 3-8. Any student not dressed according to the school's dress code will receive a uniform violation. A uniform violation is a warning. Every fourth uniform violation will result in a detention. Uniform violations and subsequent detentions are not calculated in the conduct grade.

Parents of students in our Lower School are notified of uniform violations via the daily folder. Violations should be corrected as soon as can be reasonably expected.

## 2019-2020 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. 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.” The logo that simply reads “Mercy” will be used primarily for athletics and the navy blue school sweatshirts.*

MERCY



**Our Lady of Mercy school uniforms are available at the following school approved vendors:**

- Inka's
- Lands' End
- School Time
- Young Fashions

**Please review the guidelines specific to your child. In addition, please review the section titled *Guidelines Applicable to All Students* on page 22.**

## Lower School Uniform Guidelines

### Lower School Girls

- Navy and white checked jumper with the One Mercy logo.
  - Shorts are required under the jumper and must not exceed the length of the jumper.
- An oxford blouse or a Peter Pan collar blouse may be worn underneath if desired.
  - A shirt is not required with the jumper.
  - 3Y & Pre-K girls may also wear the smock dress in the Mercy plaid.
- Personalized monogram and embroidery are not authorized.
- 3Y & PreK students must wear shoes with velcro

### Lower School Boys

- Light Blue Polo Shirts with the One Mercy logo.
  - Short or long sleeve.
- Solid navy pants or shorts
  - No cargo styles
  - No logos
  - 3Y - K may wear pull up twill pants
  - No shorts on Fridays or specially designated dress uniform days beginning Friday after Labor Day.
- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>-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 waistline is visible all around the waist.
  - Emblems or logos are not allowed on belts.
- Personalized monogram and embroidery is not authorized.
- 3Y & PreK students must wear shoes with velcro.

## Upper School Uniform Guidelines

### 3rd - 5th grade Girls

- White-banded polo with One Mercy logo
- Navy and white checked skort
  - Skort must be no shorter than 5 inches above the knee.
  - Skort must not be rolled at the waist.

### 3rd - 5th grade Boys

- Light blue polo shirts with the One Mercy logo
  - Short or long sleeve
- Solid navy blue pants or navy blue shorts
  - No cargo styles
  - No logos
  - No shorts on Fridays or specially designated dress uniform days beginning Friday after Labor Day.

- Boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt.
  - Emblems and/or logos are not permitted.
- Shirts must be tucked into the pants so that the belt is visible all around the waist.

## **Middle School Uniform Guidelines**

### Middle School Girls Daily Uniform

- White-banded polo with One Mercy logo
- Navy and white checked skort
  - Skort must be no shorter than 5 inches above the knee.
  - Skort must not be rolled at the waist.
- Tan or brown Sperry-Style “boat shoes” or athletic shoes

### 6/7th-Grade Dress Uniform Girls

- White button-down oxford with One Mercy logo
  - Long or short sleeved
- Navy and white checked skort
- Tan or brown Sperry-Style “boat shoes” or athletic shoes

### 8th-Grade Dress Uniform Girls

- White button-down oxford with One Mercy logo
  - Long or short sleeved
- Navy and white checked skort
  - Skort must be no shorter than 5 inches above the knee.
  - Skort must not be rolled at the waist.
- Navy blazer with One Mercy logo
  - Supplied by OLOM
- Tan or brown Sperry-style “boat shoes”

### Middle School Boys Daily Uniform

- Light blue polo shirt with the One Mercy logo
- Solid navy blue pants or shorts.
  - No cargo style
- Boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt.
  - No emblems or logos
- Tan or brown Sperry-Style “boat shoes” or athletic shoes

### 6/7th-Grade Dress Uniform Boys

- Light Blue Button Down Oxford with One Mercy logo
  - long or short sleeve
- Striped navy and light blue necktie or bow tie purchased from an approved vendor
- Navy blue dress pants
  - No cargo styles
- Boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt.
  - No emblems or logos

- Tan or brown Sperry-Style “boat shoes” or athletic shoes

#### 8th-Grade Dress Uniform Boys

- Light blue button down oxford with One Mercy logo
  - Long or short sleeve
- Striped navy and light blue necktie or bow tie purchased from an approved vendor.
- Tan Khaki pants.
  - No cargo styles
- Navy blue blazer with One Mercy Logo
  - Supplied by OLOM
- Tan or brown Sperry-style “boat shoes”
- Boys must wear a solid navy, black or brown belt.
  - no emblems or logos

#### **Guidelines Applicable to All Students**

##### Girls’ Tights & Leggings:

- Solid black, white or navy tights or leggings may be worn under the skort or jumper.
- If leggings are worn they should be ankle length
  - Capri length leggings are not authorized

##### 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.
- Cosmetic colorings are not allowed.
- No exaggerated hairstyles as determined by the school administration.

##### 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.
- Cosmetic colorings are not allowed.
- No exaggerated hairstyles as determined by the school administration.

##### Shoe Options:

- Athletic shoes
  - White, black, blue, grey or a combination of these colors.
  - No other colors may be visible.
- Shoes must remain securely fastened at all times.

- Shoes must have laces or velcro
- Slip-on shoes are not allowed
- Light-up shoes, hee-lies (wheels) or toe shoes are not permitted.

Undershirts:

- A solid white tee shirt may be worn under the uniform shirt.
  - Undergarments for girls should not be visible through uniform blouse.
  - The tee shirt may not be longer than the uniform shirt.
  - The sleeve must be no longer than the shirt sleeve.
  - Printing on the undershirt is not allowed.

Make-Up:

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

Watches:

- Hi-tech phone type watches and fitness bands may not be worn.
  - Includes smartwatches of any brand.
  - Watches may not have the capability of connecting to data or WIFI.

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.
- Expensive jewelry is to be kept at home.
- Rings are not allowed

Socks:

- Socks are to 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 navy Mercy sweatshirts with the approved Logo
- Sweatshirts, jackets, winter coats, scarves, gloves, and hats are to be solid navy blue or black only.
  - One Mercy logo purchased via school uniform vendors is the only logo allowed.
  - Athletic and extracurricular outerwear is not allowed.

### Cold Weather Guidelines

- Sweatpants purchased at approved Our Lady of Mercy vendors only may be worn from November 1st to February 28th, with the exception of Dress Uniform Days and special days as deemed by the school administration.

### 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 worn during P.E.

### Free Dress Guidelines

- Any athletic shoe and any sock
  - No open toe shoes.
  - Toe shoes are not allowed.
- Long pants or jeans that are neat in appearance and are not torn or ripped
  - Pajama pants are not allowed.
- Uniform bottoms (skort for girls and shorts/pants for boys)
- Shirts must have sleeves and appropriate writing

## School Procedures

### Attendance

Regular attendance at school is extremely important in ensuring a child’s academic success. The school day begins at 7:50 a.m. and concludes at 2:57 p.m. Experience has proven that students find it difficult to make up work which they have missed due to being absent from school.

Parents should contact the school via telephone or email 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.

**Of the 178 school days, students must be present a minimum of 160 days to be eligible to receive credit for courses taken. Exceptions can be made only with the approval of the principal. Exceptions can be made only in the event of extended personal illness as verified by a physician and/or other extenuating circumstances as approved by the East Baton Rouge Parish Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance. (State Department Bulletin #741) Absences that are not medical still count toward minimum days. Absences or excessive tardiness or early check-outs resulting in attendance of fewer than the required days will result in student retention.**



For attendance purposes 11:00 a.m. is the time for ½ days. If a student checks out prior to 11:00 a.m. and does not return to school student will be marked absent for the entire day. If the student checks out after 11:00 a.m. they will receive a ½ day absence.

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.

### **Bathroom Guidelines**

Children in lower school must be fully potty-trained and out of diapers and pull-ups. For the purpose of clarity and setting expectations accidents will be handled as follows:

- Parents will be notified by the teacher when an accident has occurred. If this continues on a regular basis, the child will be required to stay home for at least one week or until potty training is complete.
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified by an administrator to pick up the child.

Tuition will not be prorated. A child who continues to have these problems may be asked to leave Our Lady of Mercy until the child is developmentally ready for the program.

### **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 with 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:

- Fast Food
- 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

## **Dismissal**

Students not participating in the Extended Day Program or another supervised activity must be off campus grounds by 3:25 p.m.

## **Carpool**

There are three morning and two afternoon carpools. In the morning, families with students at both the upper and lower schools will be dropped off at the carpool of the youngest sibling. In the afternoon, students will be picked up according to the grade of the oldest sibling.

Afternoon carpool closes at 3:25 pm. Students who are not picked up by this time will be required to check in to the extended day program. All applicable fees will then apply.

### **Morning Carpool**

- Lower School – enter from Florida Blvd. heading south on Marquette Dr.
- Church – enter the church parking lot behind adoration chapel from Government St.
- Upper School Lobby– enter from Government north on Marquette Dr. **(Only for families with students in both Lower School and Upper School).**

### **Afternoon**

- Lower School: grades Pre-K – 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Church: grades 3 – 8

## **Walkers**

Parents who allow students to walk to or from school do so at their own risk. Students must use designated crosswalks and follow the direction of crossing guards and duty teachers. Parents of walkers may not park and meet their child on campus. It is the responsibility of parents to monitor weather. The office must be notified of changes by 2:15 pm.

## **Bus Riders**

Bus loading and unloading will happen at the gym. Students who disobey the directions of the adult supervisors will receive an infraction. Students who receive multiple bus related infractions may have their bus riding privileges suspended or expelled by the school administration.

**Changes in your child’s transportation must be communicated to the appropriate school office by 2:15 p.m. each day.**

## **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, students can only be checked out through the appropriate school office.

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

## **Communication**

In keeping with church principles of subsidiarity, problems should be solved at the lowest level whenever possible. Thus, parents/guardians with concerns 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 the 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 [Plus Portals](#) pages. Teachers in grades Pre-K-2 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 email) 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 Services**

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. The school counselor collaborates with parents, teachers, and administrators to support student academic, social-emotional, and career-readiness for all students.

School counselors at Our Lady of Mercy provide classroom counseling lessons, small group counseling, short-term individual counseling, and parent/teacher support. Counselors are available to address daily issues and to support families through a transitional or situational crisis. The school counselor may recommend and provide referrals for outside counseling if long-term counseling is necessary or if the presenting concern is rooted outside of the school context.

Parents/guardians can submit a counseling referral by emailing or calling their child's designated school counselor. Teachers may also submit counseling referrals for their students. With permission from their teacher, upper school students are allowed to visit Counseling Services to seek support and to schedule a session with the counselor. Sessions with lower school students are coordinated with the child's teacher.

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 parents/guardians to communicate with outside agencies as needed to benefit the well-being of the student. The counselor will consult with parents/guardians to determine what confidential information will be disclosed to teachers in order to promote the academic and social-emotional growth of their child.

The school counselor collaborates with administration and teachers to implement effective and appropriate classroom accommodations that promote academic growth. To learn if your child is eligible to receive classroom or testing accommodations, please refer to the Academic Formation section in this handbook to review the accommodations policy.

When a comprehensive evaluation is conducted to assess special needs, the school counselor coordinates communication between the school and outside agencies. Parents should forward all teacher-intake forms to the school counselor who will distribute them to the teachers. After these forms have been completed, the school counselor will forward them directly to the outside agency. The school requests that a copy of the final evaluation be sent to Counseling Services, where confidential records are kept by the school counselor. Parents may choose to provide a copy of the evaluation to teachers as well.

### **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, the 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 the 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. This process can take up to three weeks for approval, therefore parents wishing to attend their children's field trips should start the certification process at the beginning of the school year. 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 “peanut free” cupcakes one day a month for all students in order to celebrate birthdays. 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**

The Health Center is staffed by a full-time Registered Nurse. Important information about student’s allergies, chronic or serious medical conditions on ongoing medications should be reported to the School Nurse at the start of the school year. Changes in the student’s health status (such as: broken bones, concussion, newly diagnosed conditions, etc.) should be shared with the School Nurse.

An updated list of students, their allergies and emergency medications are sent to all faculty. At the start of each school year, all faculty and staff are encouraged to view a training video, “Recognizing and Treating Allergic Emergencies”, and to practice with EpiPen trainers.

Children with communicable diseases should remain at home for the period of time that those diseases are contagious. Children diagnosed with contagious illnesses or exhibiting symptoms such as, but not limited to, fever (100.5 or greater), 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, pink eye or flu) must present a physician’s note releasing the student to return to the classroom upon returning to school. If required by the physician, the student must have taken 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 Health Center. The School Nurse will contact the parent and they will collaborate on an appropriate course of action. If deemed necessary parents are to arrange pick-up of the child within an hour of the notification.

## **Lice**

Parents are encouraged to check for lice and nits on a regular basis, refer to LICE Education forms on the school website. 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, if the product warrants retreatment.

## **Medications at School**

In order for the necessary medication to be administered at school by the school nurse or designated school personnel, the following forms must be completed by the parent and physician: “School Medication Form” and “State of Louisiana Medication Order”. The forms can be downloaded from the school website or picked up from the school nurse. Medications, in their original containers, must be brought to school by an adult. Students should never have any medication in their possession (prescription or over the counter). If deemed medically necessary, students may carry emergency medication such as EpiPen or inhaler. Proper documentation on the State of Louisiana Order is required from the physician.

## **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.

## **Cell Phones**

Cell phones should be powered off and stowed while on campus. Devices may not be connected to school WiFi. Cell phone use is prohibited as outlined in the technology section of this handbook. Violation of this rule may result in the student receiving a detention and will result in confiscation of the device. The school reserves the right to examine the content of the confiscated device. When a student’s cell phone is confiscated, a parent must pick the phone up from the upper school office or from a member of school administration.

## **Lockers**

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

## **Lost and Found**

All items brought to school should be marked with the child's first and last name along with the current year's homeroom number. Properly marked items that are found will be returned to the student. Unmarked items that are found will be placed in the school lost and found locker located in the Upper School main hall. The locker will be periodically cleaned out with items being donated to either the used uniform sale or St. Vincent de Paul.

## **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 Hours**

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 experience possible. Each school family is required to work five hours, three must be involving the Mercy Fair. The Mercy Fair is an extremely important event in building community and generating resources for our school. 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 either the church or lower school parking lots. Please refrain from parking in the street, in any of the red marked zones on campus, or in the drive-thru in front of the 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 the 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. Every seventh tardy will be counted as a day absent. School administration will contact parents if the child is excessively tardy to discuss

remedial action. Any student receiving 21 or more days tardy may result in the student being dismissed from Our Lady of Mercy School.

### **Technology**

Students are not permitted to use recreational electronic equipment during school hours (including Extended Day, field trips, and on bus) 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, smart watches, 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 40). 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. – 7:25 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. Students may be suspended or expelled from the extended day program due to behavioral concerns.

# **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.**

## **Extracurricular Eligibility Policy**

Students must maintain an overall "C" average on subjects used to determine promotion (see Retention, page 12) to participate in extracurricular activities.

Students that earn a conduct grade of 80 or below will be placed on probation from participating in school events. Terms of the probation will be determined by the school administration.

In consultation with parents and teachers, the administrator 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**

A 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.

## **Annual Grade-Level Fee**

A 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 the 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 the 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 the following schedule:

When transferring out of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, tuition will be refunded according to a graduated scale as follows:

- May 1 to May 31 - 100%
- June 1 to August 31 - 75%
- September 1 to December 31 - 50%
- January 1 to March 31 - 25%
- April 1 May 31 - 0%

No fees (to include, but not limited to, books, class, maintenance, and supply) are refundable as of May 1st. Families of students who are asked to leave the school for disciplinary reasons forfeit remaining tuition and fees.

The application fee of \$275 per student is non-refundable. \$150 of the application fee will be refunded in the event Our Lady of Mercy is unable to offer admissions.

Re-enrollment fees are non-refundable.

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 students 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 programs.
- 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 the 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 non academic 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.

Each school shall establish a policy regarding the identification, reporting, investigation and disciplinary action taken for reported allegations of harassment, hazing, or bullying involving members of the school community. The school’s policy must be included in each school’s parent/student handbook.” (4.9.2.7)

### **Bullying**

Bullying behavior is purposeful with the intent to cause harm through means of physical, verbal, relational, social, emotional, and/or electronic communication. This behavior is patterned and pervasive, averaging two or more incidents per week over the course of two or more weeks. There is a power imbalance which may be either physical or social in nature.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is unwelcome offensive conduct, whether physical or verbal, that is directed toward another person or group of persons when the person exhibiting the behavior knew or should have known that it would cause the person or persons to whom it was directed to be fearful, anxious, or emotionally upset as a result of the behavior. Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with school performance whether the interference is direct or indirect, unwarranted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal school work or movement. Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Any of the above-stated forms of harassment that are of a sexual nature are

considered sexual harassment when they are unwelcome and create an environment or causes an atmosphere that affects a student's ability to take advantage of the school's programs.

### **Hazing**

Hazing is a form of harassment that involves intentional, knowing, or reckless acts that induce pain, embarrassment, humiliation, deprivation of rights, physical pain, or mental discomfort. It is directed against a student for the purposes of being initiated into, affiliated with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization, club, athletic team, or another group. Culpability includes hazing practices mandated or voluntarily entered into by any party.

### **Reporting**

Anyone wishing to report concerns of harassment, hazing, or bullying should contact a school counselor or administrator immediately.

### **Stopit App**

All families have free access to the Stopit app which is an anonymous reporting app that allows students or their parents to report concerns of student health and safety.

### **Violence – Threatened and Acted**

All threats of violence will be taken seriously. The 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.

### **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 2019-2020

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

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Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

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Printed Name

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Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

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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.”*