

2026-2027

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School

Handbook



OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Our Mission

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School is a Christ-centered learning community that fosters academic excellence, positive moral development, and community service. We encourage students to reach their full potential in a creative and nurturing environment that promotes Gospel values.

Our Vision

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School community will provide an environment in which God's children become self-directed, life-long learners. Students will become contributing members of society empowered by a personal value system based upon the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY IS A DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Vision: Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Birmingham provide an excellent educational experience in the Catholic tradition enabling all students to develop their God-given talents.

Mission: The mission of the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic School System is to educate our students to seek God in Truth and for loving service by teaching the message of the Gospel, forming a community of faith, providing the whole child with a Catholic and Christ-centered environment, and inspiring all to reach their full academic and spiritual potential.



DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM IN ALABAMA
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Faith for a Brighter Future

Our Lady of the Valley School Handbook 2026-2027

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Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School. The faculty, staff, and I are excited to work with you throughout the 2026-2027 school year. We hope this will be an exciting and rewarding year for you.

The information in this handbook will help you throughout the year. It outlines diocesan and school policies including spiritual growth, grading, attendance, and discipline. Please read through it carefully. These policies are designed to ensure the safety of all students and to foster a positive, Catholic learning environment.

May this be a year of spiritual and academic growth for each of you and for our OLV family.

Sincerely,

Mr. Andy Rothery
Principal

SCHOOL ADDRESS

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School
5510 Double Oak Lane
Birmingham, Alabama 35242

Telephone: (205) 991-5963

FAX: (205) 995-1251

Office e-mail: olv@olvsch.com

Web Site: www.olvbirmingham.com

**Our Pastor is
Father Thomas Kelly.
We are so blessed and
happy to have him as the
leader and shepherd of
our church and school
family!**

OFFICE HOURS

7:30 A.M. - 3:30P.M.
(Office closes at 2:30P.M. on Fridays)
Extended Day Care - 7:00 - 7:40A.M.
Dismissal - 6:00 P.M.
School Days Only

SCHOOL SPIRIT

School Colors: Blue and Grey
School Mascot: Eagle
School Song: "On Eagle's Wings"

ABOUT OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School in Birmingham, Alabama is a pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade Catholic Elementary and Middle School under the direction of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama. Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School opened in August of 1984 with 206 students. Grades 3K through five are self-contained. Grades six through eight are departmentalized.

The curriculum stresses academic achievement within a Christian community where the child feels that he/she is loved and respected by his/her peers as well as the teacher. Vatican II texts are used so that our theology is in compliance with the bishops of the world. United with each other in meaningful liturgy and prayer, the students can further come to an understanding of the Christian life. At Our Lady of the Valley, we are attempting to "teach as Jesus did."

The Diocesan curriculum guidelines, consistent with the State of Alabama guidelines, are followed for the teaching of all secular subject areas. The curriculum is marked by current content and fresh approaches to methodology. There is emphasis on principles rather than fact, on learning through problem solving rather than by precept. We strive to offer a program which makes use of many sources of reading material, a wide variety of audio-visual and technology tools and a multi-text approach to the content areas.

USE OF SCHOOL

Permission for the use of the school building and/or grounds is secured from the principal or the pastor. It must be scheduled in advance and posted on the calendar in the school office and on the school Web Site.

SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Phone extensions and e-mail addresses

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM:

Principal:	Mr. Andy Rothery ext.-232; arothery@olvsch.com
Office Manager:	Mrs. Danielle Lazenby dlazenby@olvsch.com
Bookkeeper:	Mrs. Carol Cahill ext.-233; ccahill@olvsch.com

TEACHING STAFF:

PK3—	Mrs. Kelly Kindle kkindle@olvsch.com
PK4—	Mrs. Jennifer Genereux jgenereux@olvsch.com
Kindergarten:	Ms. Jeanie Dennis dkinolv@olvsch.com
First Grade:	Mrs. Emory Spurlock espurlock@olvsch.com
Second Grade:	Mrs. Janice Peters jpeters@olvsch.com
Third Grade:	Mrs. Becky Williamson bwilliamson@olvsch.com
Fourth Grade:	Mrs. Elizabeth Avant eavant@olvsch.com
Interventionist:	Mrs. Katie Symonds ksymonds@olvsch.com

Fifth Grade:	Mrs. Lorrie Steele s5thgradeolv@olvsch.com
Middle School Math:	Ms. Madison Tarifa mtarifa@olvsch.com
Middle School Science:	Mrs. Ann Stevens astevens@olvsch.com
5 th -8 th Religion & 7 th and 8 th Literature:	Mrs. Jennifer Negrón jnegron@olvsch.com
Middle School ELA & Music:	Ms. Allie Picou apicou@olvsch.com
Physical Education:	Mrs. Wendy Hassinger whassinger@olvsch.com
Art:	Mrs. Hannah Dempsey hdempsey@olvsch.com
5 th -8 th Social Studies/ Computer	Mr. Jarrid Thelen jthelen@olvsch.com
Tech Support:	Mrs. Josephine Pilleteri jpilleteri@olvsch.com
Librarian:	Mrs. Jennifer Elliott jelliott@olvsch.com or library@olvsch.com
Spanish:	Mrs. Amy Bach abach@olvsch.com
Counselor:	Mrs. Megan Hepler mhepler@olvsch.com
Extended Day Care Director:	Mrs. Nancy Murphy nmurphy@olvsch.com

Right to Amend

The school reserves the right to change policies and procedures as outlined in the **School Handbook**. Parents will be notified of any changes by e-mail, through the Tuesday Take-Home folders, and/or the newsletter.

Mission Statement

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School is a Christ-centered learning community that fosters academic excellence, positive moral development, and community service. We encourage students to reach their full potential in a creative and nurturing environment that promotes Gospel values.

Original: January 1998

Reviewed: Annually (August 2026)

Revised: February 2013

To achieve this mission, the faculty and staff provide a strong academic program in an atmosphere which is directed toward intellectual, personal, social, physical and spiritual development. The faculty strives to provide a success-oriented curriculum in which students can develop to their highest potential. Building self-esteem and self-confidence are integral parts of this philosophy. Together with family, church and community, the school offers a thorough Catholic education that enables students to become mature, responsible and productive members of society.

DEDICATED TO A VISION

Vision Statement

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School Community will provide an environment in which God's children become self-directed, life-long learners. Students will become contributing members of society empowered by a personal value system based upon the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

OUR SCHOOL BELIEVES:

- Promoting faith in God through Catholic values creates an atmosphere that encourages students to develop positive moral relationships and respect for themselves and others.
- A structured and safe environment provides a positive atmosphere that promotes student learning.
- Parents are the primary educators of children and school-family partnerships are essential for the total development of a child.
- The education of a child is a shared responsibility among the student, family, school, church, and community.
- Promoting an acceptance of diversity and individuality encourages students to become moral

and independent thinkers.

- Teaching a curriculum that includes problem solving, critical thinking, and cooperative learning, while fostering moral development, prepares students to become productive members of society.
- Focusing on shared mission, vision, goals, and actions improves student performance.
- School leaders engage in best practices that support the ongoing improvement of teaching and student achievement.
- A learning environment with high expectations infused with the Gospel message of Jesus inspires students to reach their potential.
- Students have the opportunity to learn and succeed when provided with a strong academic program that recognizes the spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs of each child.
- The total development of a child includes activities that promote physical, social, and emotional well being.
- Exposure to the arts contributes to the development of a well-rounded individual.
- A variety of extracurricular activities enables students to explore their interests and abilities.
- Students learn best when they are engaged in the learning process and provided with instructional methods and activities that accommodate various learning styles.
- Motivation to learn is influenced by a student's emotional state, beliefs, interests, and goals when supported by teacher advocates.
- A successful student sets learning goals and monitors progress in achieving them.
- A variety of assessments offer students the opportunity to demonstrate their achievements.
- A successful student links new information with existing knowledge in a meaningful way.
- Use of technology allows students to research, collaborate, create, present, and network in meaningful ways.
- Collaboration with students and adults enriches education.
- Participation in service to family, parish, and community allows students to live their faith and develop an awareness of their responsibility for justice and equality.

Original: December 1997

Reviewed: August 2026

Revised: August 2022

PHILOSOPHY

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School endorses the call of the Catholic Bishops of the United States to express its educational ministry through the objectives of personal spirituality, social justice, and a strong academic program in accord with the Curriculum Guide for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Birmingham.

1. To develop the total Christian personality by instilling in the students a respect for life and reverence for Christian living.
2. To develop within the school a strong religious education program based on Catholic theology, scripture, liturgical experience, and service so that each

- child will grow and develop in the Christian way of life.
3. To facilitate the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of each child through a variety of instructional methods such as small and large group instruction, departmental classes, and other tools for basic knowledge and formation.
 4. To aid students in evaluation of their own capabilities and vocational possibilities.

It is the belief of the faculty that every human being has a right to pursue knowledge corresponding with his/her dignity and God-given ability, regardless of background or sex. In the early years, education is often of the utmost importance because through education and guidance the children of today become the Catholic citizens of tomorrow.

ESSENTIALS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

The findings of various studies of school effectiveness differ somewhat, but there are always common elements that exist. Our Lady of the Valley makes a conscious effort to work toward the following elements:

- High expectations for all
- Clear achievable goals
- Enforcement of positive behavioral expectations
- Effective instruction and classroom management
- Careful monitoring of student progress
- Emphasis that school is a place for learning

Catholic schools expand the effective schooling research several steps further. “The Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of youth to the same degree as any other school. What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the gospel spirit of freedom and love. It tries to guide the adolescents in such a way that personality development goes hand in hand with the development of the ‘new’ creature that each one has become through Baptism. It tries to relate all of human culture to the good news of salvation so that the light of faith will illuminate everything that the students will gradually come to learn about the world, about life, and about the human person.”

(Taken from *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal*.)

ACCREDITATION

Our Lady of the Valley is fully accredited through the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama by Cognia, formerly known as AdvancED.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum followed by Our Lady of the Valley School meets the requirements of the Diocese of Birmingham, the Alabama State Department of Education, and Cognia. The academic needs of each student are not only fulfilled with the required courses, but also supplemented with the enrichment programs including art, music, Spanish, computer, counseling, library, and theatre.

The teaching of Catholic doctrine is an integral part of the curriculum. The spiritual life of the student is and must be a paramount concern to our pastor, principal, faculty, and school parents. The program is designed not only to present a well-organized exploration of subject matter but also to bring each student to a personal experience of faith and a deeper knowledge and love of Jesus Christ as He is revealed to us through the Bible and the people around us. We accomplish this through daily prayer, adoration, weekly liturgies, prayer services, opportunities for the sacrament of Reconciliation, and special observances of the church year. Since parents are the primary teacher of their children, the effort of students should be supported at home by family prayer and Sunday worship. Without these things, the spiritual life of the student is diminished.

GENERAL POLICIES

CHILD ABUSE LAWS

Our Lady of the Valley School abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

TITLE IX

Our Lady of the Valley School adheres to the tenets of Title IX: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

OFFICIAL ADMISSION POLICY

General

The State of Alabama and Our Lady of the Valley School require that a child must meet the following requirements for admission:

- 3K (Pre-Kindergarten) – 3 years of age on or before September 1st.
- 4K (Pre-Kindergarten) - 4 years of age on or before September 1st.
- 5K (Kindergarten) - 5 years of age on or before September 1st.

Parents must furnish a certified birth certificate, baptismal certificate and a health/immunization record when applying for admission. A registration fee must be submitted with the completed

application. This fee is non-refundable and cannot be applied to any other financial obligation. New registration forms must be submitted each year.

All students who have applied for admission are evaluated on the basis of past performance, including academic standing and social behavior. Achievement tests and recommendations will also be considered when applying for admission.

All admission acceptances are made on a probationary basis. Should an admission acceptance not be an appropriate fit, for either academic, behavior, social, or other reasons, the school reserves the right to revoke the admission acceptance. Admission is considered finalized upon completion of 45 school days.

As outlined in the Mission Statement, it is the intent of Our Lady of the Valley School to educate the children of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic community. Further, it is our hope that one day your student(s) will successfully graduate from the 8th grade and continue their Catholic education at a higher level.

Procedure

Insofar as OLV School is a Catholic institution, new students will be considered for admission in the following order:

1. Children of OLV School employees
2. Children who have siblings already enrolled in OLV School.
3. Children of OLV and St. Mark's registered parishioners in good standing
4. Children of Catholic families from the Birmingham area
5. Children of any denomination from the Birmingham area

WAITING LIST FOR REMAINING OPENINGS

This begins the first day back at school in January. This date is published in the school newsletter, the parish bulletin, and the OLV Web site. It is imperative that you call or come in on the published date, even if the student has a sibling in Our Lady of the Valley School. Names will be accepted (either call the office or come in) between 8:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M. on the published waiting list date. The order in which the names are received between 8:00 A.M. -3:00 P.M. on the waiting list date will have no bearing on the filling of classes. There is no benefit to coming early to register.

3-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION:

This date is published in the school newsletter, the parish bulletin, and the OLV Web site. It is imperative that you come in on the published date, even if the student has a sibling in Our Lady of the Valley School. Applications for registration will be accepted between 8:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M. on the published registration date. The order in which the applications for registration are received between 8:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M. on the registration date will have no bearing on the filling of classes. THERE IS NO BENEFIT TO COMING EARLY TO REGISTER.

FOR THE WAITING LIST/3-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION:

After 3:00 P.M. all candidates will be grouped by the Priority Levels above. Students will be assigned to requested classes by Priority Levels. Within a Priority Level, if demand exceeds availability, the available class positions will be filled by lottery. (If a lottery is necessary, the lottery will only apply to the applicants in that Priority Level.)

Grades 1 and Up Admission Guidelines

The following guidelines pertain to new students applying for admission to grades 1 and up. A child's transcripts from former schools will be used to evaluate the following areas.

Academic Performance

A child must have a standardized score at or above the 50th percentile. A child must have maintained an overall grade point average (GPA) of C or better. A child must not have received a final failing grade of *F* in any subject. Students will be administered a placement test in math and ELA/reading.

Conduct

A minimum conduct grade of *S* (Satisfactory) must have been maintained. Recommendations from principals of previously attended schools may also be required.

Attendance

A history of an acceptable level of attendance must be evident.

Every child who applies for admission to OLV School will be considered individually. The school administration is authorized to make discretionary exceptions to these guidelines in favor of fostering values of social justice and personal spiritual development.

TUITION PAYMENT

Tuition must be paid in accordance with your family's FACTs tuition agreement. Transcripts and report cards will be withheld for any family whose account is not current by the last day of school. Continued admission will be placed on hold for any family whose account is past due.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

1. Our Lady of the Valley Church and School are committed to Catholic Education.
2. Our Lady of the Valley seeks to offer tuition assistance when necessary for children to attend Our Lady of the Valley School.
3. Any family needed assistance must ask for that assistance.
4. Families will first be evaluated for eligibility from Scholarship for Kids or C2.
 - A. Monies for this program are provided by Scholarship for Kids or C2.
5. Families must also apply for assistance through the FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment.
 - A. Monies for this program are provided by OLV Church.
6. All families will pay at least part of the tuition expense.

Procedure to Apply for Financial Assistance

Those families who are behind on their tuition payment for whatever reason or who know that they are not going to be able to pay their next tuition payment should make an appointment with the principal to review the situation and discuss options.

The name of the family will be kept confidential, with only the pastor and principal knowing the delinquent tuition account.

At the meeting with the principal, the family will be informed of the FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment Process. Upon completion of the FACTS process, the family will be notified of the amount of monthly tuition they will pay.

The process is as follows:

1. An application for the FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment must be completed.
2. The application may be processed on-line or in writing.
3. Applicant must pay the processing fee.
4. All forms requested by FACTS must be sent to FACTS directly.
5. FACTS will generate a report to the principal.
6. The principal and pastor will meet to discuss the report and determine the amount of monthly tuition to be paid.
7. Applicant will be notified in writing by the principal and pastor the results of the application.

All families must reapply for financial assistance each school year.

CHOOSE Act

As is required by law, any funds left in the Educational Savings Account (“ESA”) at the end of the academic year, i.e., June 30, will be returned to The CHOOSE Act Fund (the “Fund”). If a participating student leaves the school, any unused monies will likewise be returned to the Fund. No money provided through the CHOOSE Act program may be returned or refunded to the student, his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). Parent(s) or guardian(s) are responsible for any costs associated with an Educational Savings Provider invoice over and above the ESA balance.

RaiseRight Program

The school participates in a gift card fundraising program that benefits both the family and the school. Participation is voluntary. Gift cards can be purchased through the school office for over 100 vendors both locally and nationally. The purpose of this program is to raise needed revenues for the school from a third source of income. The hope is that families will purchase and use the RaiseRight certificates to raise money for the school without having to raise tuition further or create another fee for the families. The RaiseRight program works as follows:

- You will get dollar-for-dollar in value for your RaiseRight certificates at all participating merchants. The merchants give back a portion of your purchase to the school. There are

a wide variety of businesses to choose from, ranging from grocery store chains and gasoline stations to department and specialty stores.

Diocesan Finance Policy

Tuition, fees, and assessments are contracted financial obligations entered into by the parents or guardians upon the registration of their students. When a student registers at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School, we hold a place for that student. We commit resources, plan staffing, and design programs based on the number of registered students, and thus the school depends on the timely payment of ALL financial obligations for each student. **These obligations continue even if the school building is required to close under circumstances such as we experienced in the spring of 2020.**

At any time if a family discovers that they may incur a delinquency with regard to tuition and other fees, the family must contact the Financial Office and/or the Principal immediately. Past due accounts may be assessed a service charge.

FEES

Registration

A registration fee is collected from newly registered students at the time of acceptance into the school. A registration fee is collected from current students in January to secure admission for the upcoming school year. **The registration fees are non-refundable.** All financial obligations must be paid in order to register for the following year.

The policy below has been added during the summer of 2020, at the direction of the Diocesan office.

Unpaid Financial Obligations

If the terms of the tuition agreement are not met and any other incurred fees are delinquent, and no specific arrangements are made for payment the following will be withheld or denied until all financial obligations have been satisfied.

- registration for the following school year
- report cards & diplomas
- access to Renweb
- semester/final exams and AP exams
- participation in athletics and extracurricular activities

It is the expectation of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School to have all tuition and fees paid in full no later than the last day of school in May.

Additional Fees

Field trips will be billed through FACTS after the beginning of the school year. Parents will be notified of costs in advance.

Financial Payment Policies

Returned checks will be assessed for a \$10.00 Returned Check Fee. After two returned checks all payments must be made by money order or cashier's check. Post-dated checks will not be accepted, and the Late Fee for tuition is \$25.00.

Parent/Student Obligations

Prior to distribution of report cards, taking exams, participating in graduation, registration, releasing of records, etc. all obligations must be cleared. Obligations include tuition, SCRIP, after school care, lunch, library fines and books, book or property damage, athletic uniforms or any other obligations the student/parent have incurred.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER

It is essential that the school office have at all times the correct address and telephone number for all families in the school. In the event that you should move or change your telephone number, including the number where you can be reached in an emergency, please notify the school office immediately. Parents and legal guardians may also make updates directly through RenWeb.

SCHOOL DIRECTORY

The school directory will be made available through RenWeb. All families (including students' and parents' names, addresses, home phone number, parent cell phone number, and family e-mail address) will be accessible if permission is given to the school.

The Student Directory should be used to acquaint parents with the names of their children's classmates and parents, and it will also be helpful for communicating with classmates; i.e. birthday invitations, etc. This information must not be **used** or **sold** for other purposes.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

When it becomes necessary for a student to withdraw from school, the parent or guardian should notify the office and complete a withdrawal form. On the student's last day of school, withdrawal clearance will be issued to the student by the principal. In addition, all obligations must be cleared before records are released.

PERMANENT RECORDS

A permanent record will be maintained for each student. The student's official file will contain academic transcripts; academic testing; and emergency information. Only these records in the permanent record will be retained by the school when a student transfers or graduates.

RELEASE OF RECORDS / TRANSFER OF RECORDS

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records and academic confidentiality. Therefore:

- Children of teachers may not grade the work of students enrolled at Our Lady of the Valley School.
- Graded student work may not be displayed in the halls.
- A student should never be asked to state his/her grade aloud.
- Parent volunteers may not grade student work.

All material in the student's file shall be treated as confidential and shall be accessible only to the principal, members of the professional staff, the legal guardian, the parents and to the student after his/her eighteenth birthday. Students may not grade the work of other students.

When a parent or legal guardian requests that an individual, who normally would have the legal right to the possession of the student's records, not be allowed the possession of the student's records, then it is the legal responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to furnish the principal legal documentation preventing the release of these records to that individual.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a five school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School Office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

Permanent Record Cards and Health Records will be released to a receiving school when that school applies directly by mail to Our Lady of the Valley. A copy of the student's permanent record card and the original health records shall be transferred. Records will be released only when all outstanding financial obligations owed to Our Lady of the Valley by the parents are cleared. Examples of these obligations include, but are not limited to: outstanding tuition and fees, library fines, as well as unreturned school property. (See PARENT/STUDENT OBLIGATIONS).

ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

MINIMUM ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at school is a state law. There shall be a minimum attendance requirement for

grading purposes. If a student is in attendance for less than 160 days in a year, the student's attendance record will be reviewed and the student will be in jeopardy of repeating the school year unless each and every class that is missed is made up in an acceptable alternative educational manner.

CHECK-OUT POLICY

If a student is checked out of school:

Before 11:30 a.m. - it is counted as a full day's absence

After 11:30 - it is counted as 1/2 day's absence

A student checked out any fraction of a day to exceed 30 minutes (or arriving 30 minutes or more tardy) will be noted, at a minimum, as a half day absent (beginning, middle or end of the day). Any student missing more than 4 hours of the school day will be considered absent.

If you check a student out and then check him back in again, the amount of time charged depends on the amount of time the student is not in school.

ATTENDANCE

Daily Attendance: In order that the child may grow in skills and good habits, it is important that attendance at school be regular. Parents are urged not to have their children out of school except for illness or grave emergencies.

Any student absent more than 20 days will repeat the grade unless extenuating circumstances exist and special consideration is given by the principal.

Arrival: Students may report to classrooms as early as 7:40. A warning bell will ring at 7:55 a.m. The tardy bell rings at 8:00 a.m. This means that if a student is not in their seat in the classroom when the 8:00 a.m. bell rings, he or she will be counted tardy. **If a student is absent, the absences will be verified by a notification via e-mail through the Ren/Web system after 8:15. This policy is for the protection of our students. Please note that these e-mails are generated automatically and based on attendance taken at 8 a.m. sharp.**

Dismissal: Daily classes are dismissed at 3:00 p.m., with the exception of Fridays. Friday classes are dismissed at 2:00 p.m. The teachers participate in a weekly planning session from 2:30 to 3:30 P.M.

Please do not bring children to school to go to their homerooms or Mass before 7:40 a.m. Children arriving before that time will go to the morning Extended Day Care Program.

After 3:20 p.m. your child will go to the afternoon Extended Day Care Program (see p. 25). Therefore, we need your cooperation in arranging for proper and timely transportation of your children, including after school programs. You must make arrangements to pick up your children at the announced end of an after-school activity. Unattended children will be sent to the

afternoon Extended Day Care Program to ensure adequate supervision. Children cannot wait for you without authorized adult supervision, and please do not instruct them to do so.

Check In/Out: Students who must leave school before the regular dismissal time must be checked out in the office by a parent or person designated by the parent in RENWEB and kept on file in the office. Identification may be requested. Checking students out after 2:30 p.m. (1:30 p.m. on Friday; 11:30 a.m. on early dismissal days) is highly discouraged as it is very disruptive and causes traffic problems at that time of day.

Parents should go to the office, not the classroom, to check a student in or out. Please sign the Check In or Check Out book. All students must have a written excuse for all absences and tardies.

EXCUSED ABSENCE OR TARDY

A student who has been absent or tardy must bring to the teacher or office a written signed statement by a parent or legal guardian of the student as to the reason for such absence and tardy. After twelve days of absence, a doctor's excuse must be presented. Please remember that attendance records are legal documents and must be accurate. Therefore, all absences and tardies must be recorded regardless of the reason.

A student may be excused for:

A. Excusable absences include:

1. Illness (**Please Note: No student should return to school within 24 hours of having nausea, vomiting symptoms or running a fever**).

2. Serious illness or death in the immediate family.

3. Emergency medical or dental attention.

4. Court appearance.

5. Pupil absent from school with permission of the principal and consent of parent.

All permission absences must be requested in advance. A letter should be sent to the principal stating the reasons for the absence. This letter should be received in advance of requested absence. Such excuses will only be granted in emergency situations. Please place this request in an envelope with the principal's name on the outside.

A. Unexcusable absences include the following:

1. Truancy

2. Missing a ride

3. Pleasure trips or vacation

4. Shopping, hunting, fishing, attendance at games, birthdays, or other celebrations

Tardiness: Students are required to be in class by 8:00A.M. **Tardy students must be signed in at the office by an adult.** Consistent unexcused tardies may result in detention or other disciplinary action.

Continued tardiness will necessitate a conference with the teacher, parents, principal and child to develop a plan to remedy the situation, which may result in a silent lunch among other possible measures.

Any student who has been absent twelve days will be asked to furnish a written doctor's excuse for all subsequent absences. A readmission notice from the doctor may also be required.

Students will be allowed reasonable time to make up work and/or tests due to an excused absence (one day per day of school missed with a maximum of five school days). However, if an assignment, a long-term project or test was assigned prior to the student's absence the assignment will be due on the first day the student returns to school. Asking for make-up work is the student's responsibility. Any student who has not completed the make-up work during the allotted time will receive zeroes for those assignments.

MAKE-UP WORK

An excused absence will allow a student to make-up work missed in each class. It is the student's responsibility to talk to each teacher upon return to school. Make-up work should take approximately the same time as the time missed from class. If more time is needed, this may be requested. Failure to obtain make-up work is no excuse for not doing work missed. A student who is absent may seek additional help from a teacher.

Class work may be requested for a student who is absent from school over 2 days. A student too sick to come to school needs rest and does not need to be doing school work. Class work and tests cannot be made up for unexcused absences. Each teacher will provide a specific make-up policy for his/her class.

When a student is absent the parent can request homework to be prepared for pick-up. If the homework is requested by 10:00 a.m., the work can be picked up after school of the same day. If no work has been sent down to the office, students should call a classmate to verify assignments.

TRANSPORTATION, SAFETY, AND CARPOOL GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been designed first, to ensure the safety of our students and second, to provide the best traffic flow when dropping off and picking up students.

Carpool Rules and Guidelines

1. **ABSOLUTELY** no use of cell phones or any other communication devices (i.e., iPads®, iPhones®, etc.) in the carpool line (This includes texting, checking and sending e-mail, etc.). Also, reading or other activities that distract from driving and safety **MUST NOT** be engaged in. Full attention should be on dropping off and picking up students.
2. Children are to exit vehicles on the right side only (enter on right side when picked up). Do not let children out on the left side. **Parents/drivers must stay in the car.** Children should be ready to exit the vehicle with book bags in possession (please do not place book bags in

the trunk or store other items that would make it necessary for the driver to exit the vehicle or slow down the line).

3. Students are not allowed to walk to other locations of the parking lot.
4. Parents/drivers are not allowed to park in the carpool line.
5. No double lines are allowed at the point of pick up unless specifically instructed to do so by the teachers in charge. Multiple lines at points of entry for afternoon carpool **are** used. Please follow the merging guidelines as directed by the adults in charge.
6. Supervised carpool begins at 7:40 a.m. before school. In the afternoons, dismissal is at 3 p.m. (2 p.m. on Fridays; 12 Noon on early dismissal days). Carpool will begin by 3:05 p.m. (2:05 on Fridays; 12:05 on early dismissal days). Carpool will continue until 3:20 p.m. (2:20 on Fridays; 12:20 on early dismissal days). When carpool ends, students will be checked in to Extended Day Care (This is not an option of the student or parent—students may not wait outside by themselves). The 1:00 pre-school dismissal is not affected by this schedule.
7. Each family will be issued three identical placards so that they would be available when multiple drivers are involved. If additional placards are needed, please contact the Office.
8. It is imperative that the placard issued (please do not make homemade ones) be placed prominently on the dashboard. Please keep the placard on the dash until after the student (s) are picked up. Even after a name is "called," the placard needs to remain as the name may need to be repeated and so those assisting at the pick-up point can easily identify vehicles.
9. Parents in cars pulling up for morning care must not park in the carpool line. They need to park in the area by the dumpster and walk their children in the building.
10. Vehicles that are a distraction or hazard (limousines, large transport trucks, etc.) are prohibited from going through the carpool line.

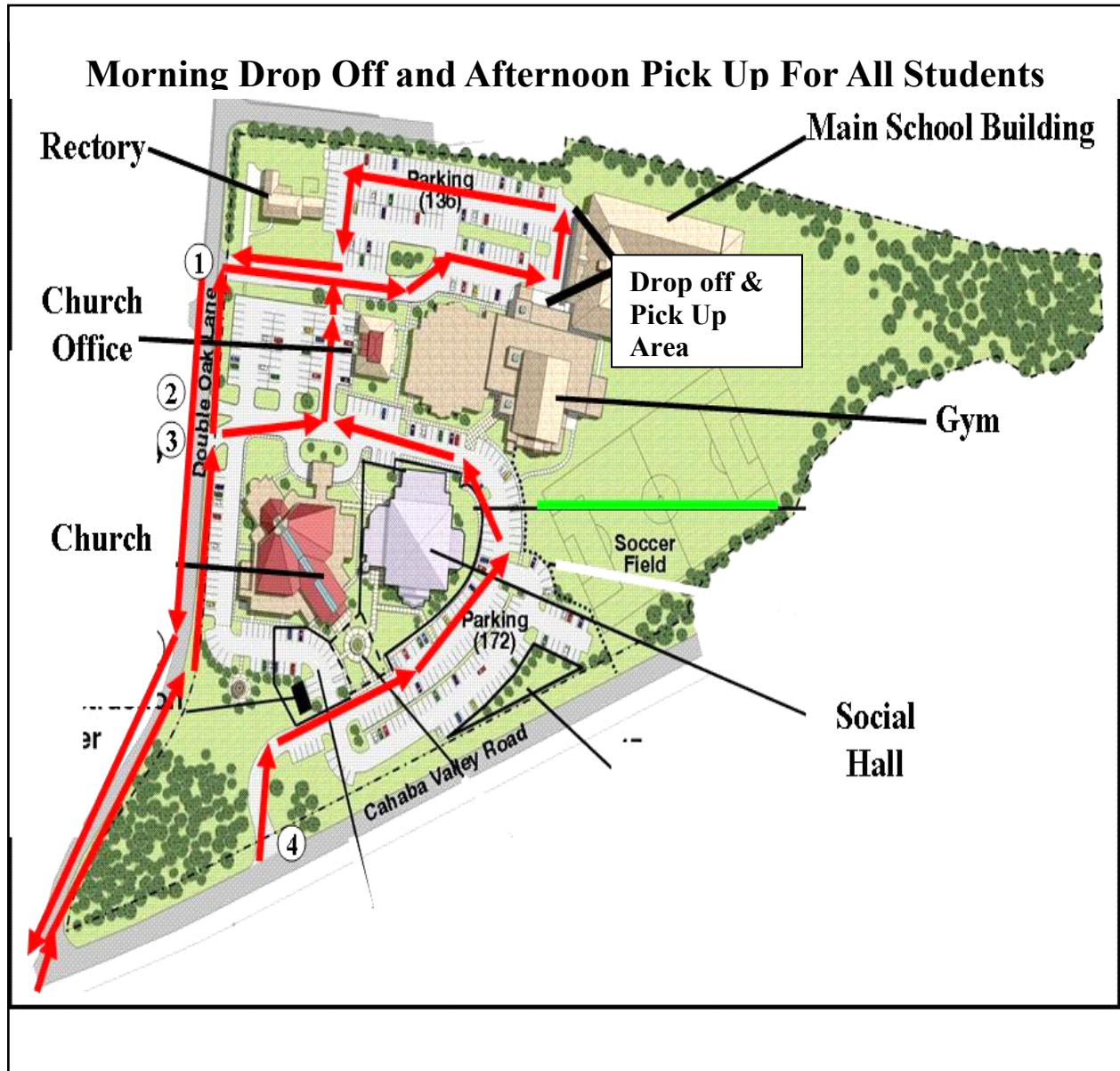
Morning Procedure

1. **All students will follow the same carpool drop-off procedures in the mornings.** All vehicles enter and exit through Entrance 1 (see map-p.20) off of Double Oak Lane near the rectory (Father's house) or Entrance 4 off of Highway 119. If you enter the property at Entrance 4, you may only enter coming from Caldwell Mill Road. A left turn is not permitted in front of the main entrance to the church. Please pull as far to the end of the sidewalk area as possible to allow vehicles waiting behind an opportunity to get into the sidewalk/pick-up area. Students may be dropped off anywhere starting from the end of the sidewalk area in front of the school to the overhang in front of the gym.

Afternoon Procedure

1. **All students** will dismiss through the same carpool map and procedure as the morning drop off. **(REV 2025)** Parents/drivers who are picking up students should enter and exit through Entrance 1, picking up students in front of the main building of the school. If Entrance 1 is overflowing, use Entrance 2 and double up in the Church Office parking lot as guided until you merge with the main line in from Entrance 1—please alternate—be courteous. Please pull as far to the end of the sidewalk area as possible to allow vehicles waiting behind an opportunity to get into the sidewalk/pick-up area (Note at the very beginning for carpool, the first cars will double up for the first several cars—after that, normal single line in front of the school applies). Please exit through Entrance 1.

2. Never enter the property by making a left hand turn in front of the church through Entrance 4 off of Highway 119 (see map-p.20). Never exit through Entrance 4 as it will be blocked.
3. Please help us ensure we are good neighbors, and do not extend the line on Double Oak Lane, blocking passage for our neighbors. Use the Church office parking area for overflow.



Special Carpool Rules for Students

Please discuss the importance of the following situation with your student (s):

1. ALL students must report to carpool, even if an after-school activity is involved. For example, if the student is to go to play rehearsal, Science Olympiad, detention, children's choir, etc., he or she must report to carpool first. The students will be dismissed from carpool to that

particular activity to the adult in charge. Students are not to wait for a ride by themselves—they must either leave in a designated carpool area and carpool time, be in Extended Day Care until picked up, or stay with the after-school activity they are attending until dismissed where adequate adult supervision is present. Simply waiting for a friend or sibling at an after-school activity is generally not allowed unless special arrangements have been made with the adult in charge of the activity. These students should report to After School Care.

2. Students are not permitted to re-enter their classrooms or the school building until carpool is over. Once students report to carpool, they must remain in carpool until picked up, dismissed for an activity, or dismissed to Extended Day Care at the conclusion of carpool. Students must never take it upon themselves to move to other classrooms or unassigned stations to wait in carpool.
3. Parents may enter ONLY with a confirmed appointment with a teacher or staff member. This is to ensure the safety of our students and helps us account for where they are.
4. Please communicate with your student (s) clearly about what they are to do after school. Please keep up with the after-school commitments they have as this will avoid a lot of confusion during carpool.
5. Cell phones may not be used during carpool, Extended Day Care, or any after school activities

General Traffic Rules and Courtesies

1. Please use your turn signal well in advance, leaving it on so that the directing officer may clearly see your intentions
2. No cell phones or other distractions.
3. Allow plenty of distance between you and the car in front of you so that you may maneuver in a reaction or emergency situation.
4. Watch and follow the direction of the directing officer at all times.
5. Be courteous when merging and do not block accesses.
6. Be respectful to those in charge including officers, parent volunteers, and especially student Guardian Angels.

RELIGIOUS INFORMATION MASS SCHEDULE

All students attend Friday Mass and Holy Days. Classes will begin walking to the church on these days by 8:05 a.m. Mass begins at 8:15 A.M. Please arrive before Mass begins. If for some reason you are late, please enter the church quietly and sit with your class. **Parents must take children directly to the church if you are late. Students may not wait in the classroom or school building.**

Please be respectful during mass when taking pictures for special occasions. Parents and friends should remain seated and refrain from taking any photographs during the Consecration.

EXTENDED DAY CARE PROGRAM

The Extended Care Program (ECP) is an extra service of Our Lady of the Valley School. It is provided to meet the needs of working parents. It will be held in the Extension Care Room and is open to all OLV school students in grades k3-8. The program is totally self-supporting and operating funds are acquired solely from income generated by the program. The ECP provides a safe environment for children of working parents. The children will be given a snack each afternoon and will also have time for outdoor and indoor recreation. Students are expected to follow the same behavior expectations as during the school day. Students unable to conform will not be permitted to attend ECP. Participation in ECP is a privilege and not a right.

Morning ECP Monday-Friday begins at 7:00 a.m. and concludes at 7:40 a.m. when children are dismissed to their classrooms. Afternoon ECP begins at 3:20 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 2:20 p.m. on Fridays, and 12:20 p.m. on half days. Any child on school property, either for extended care or who is waiting for parents, will be placed in the program at times listed above. Afternoon ECP ends promptly at 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Morning and Afternoon ECP is held in the Extended Care Room where the children will be checked in by an ECP worker.

Parents are responsible for payment of all ECP fees. Monthly charges will be added to your FACTS account and payment will be pulled on the 15th of each month. Outstanding balances will be subject to a service charge of \$5.00 per week for each week overdue. Parents who are late picking up their child(ren) from Afternoon ECP will be charged an additional fee of \$1.00 per minute for every minute after 6:00 p.m. Repeated failure to pick up your child on time constitutes neglect and will result in your child not being able to attend ECP. Failure to pay all ECP fees will be subject in losing ECP privileges.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students will use the gym or the playground during P.E. periods. Good sportsmanship and fair play should be part of every child's training. Therefore, unnecessary roughness and loudness are not proper during the supervised play periods.

Student in Grade 5 - 8 must wear P.E. uniforms. All students in Grades K - 8 are required to wear gym shoes for P.E.

Physical Education Excuses

In order for any student to be excused from physical education activities, he/she must have a written note from his/her parent or guardian. If the excuse is for more than three days, he/she must have a statement from a medical doctor specifying the need and the approximate length of the recuperative period. Even though students are excused from physical activity, they will be required to dress out and participate whenever possible.

VOLUNTEER WORKERS

Volunteers are encouraged and welcome. Please sign-in before going to your assigned area. You must also wear a volunteer badge. Workers are needed to help in the library and some classrooms. Please contact the librarian or classroom teacher if interested. **All volunteers must complete and be up-to-date with the Diocesan Youth Protection/Child Safety Class and have a background check.**

VISITORS

All visitors **MUST** report to the administrative office upon arrival. Visitors in the classroom are normally not permitted and all teachers will be asked to direct any visitors and/or parents to the office. No child brought by a visitor may be unsupervised at any time while on campus. Chaperones for field trips should wait in the foyer. No other persons of school age will be allowed to visit the school or converse with students during school hours. This applies to the campus as well as the buildings.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Our Lady of the Valley School students are expected to conduct themselves in the classroom so as to contribute to an environment where students are able to learn. This means that the student should do the following:

- Bring all supplies to class – paper, pencils, pens, assignments, or any other equipment needed for a particular class.
- Be prepared for work.
- Be seated and ready to begin work.
- Be courteous to the teacher, classmates, and visitors.

Teachers have individual classroom procedures, which are signed by parents and the students. Students will be led in prayer in the classroom at the beginning and end of the day and at the beginning of each class (6th through 8th grades).

LIBRARY

A. Hours

1. The library is open to patrons every school day during regular school hours, and 30 minutes before and after school.
2. Teachers may send small groups of students to the library for a specific time period for a specific purpose at any time there is not a scheduled class. Additional library time for classes may be scheduled by teachers at times when regularly scheduled classes are not present.

B. Check-Out Procedures

1. Books are checked out as follows:
 - K5-1st grade: 1 book per week; 2nd grade: 2 books per week
 - 3rd grade: 3 books per week; 4th grade: 4 books per week
 - 5th grade and up: unlimited checkouts (within reason approved by librarian) per week.Books may be renewed for the same time period. The student must bring the book to the library for it to be renewed.
2. Books may be checked out for a two-week period. Books may be renewed for the same time period unless there are holds placed on that particular title. Books do not have to be present to be renewed.
3. Fines will not be charged for overdue titles. However, a student who has not returned overdue books will not be allowed to check out any more books until the overdue books are returned.

4. Titles marked specifically for middle school readers may only be checked out to students in grades 6-8 unless special permission is granted by a parent/guardian or the school librarian.

C. Damaged Books

1. All damaged books are returned to the library for repair and brought to the attention of the librarian.
2. No one other than the librarian should attempt to repair a book.
3. The cost of a book which has been damaged beyond repair will be paid for or replaced with an exact copy by the student. This must be done before any more books may be checked out of the library.

D. Lost Books

1. Students who lose a book are required to pay for the lost book, plus a \$5.00 processing fee, before any other books may be checked out of the library. The student may also choose to replace the lost book with an exact copy of the lost title. (i.e. Library Bound copies must be replaced with copies that are library bound.)
2. All lost and damaged books must be paid for before the end of the school year.
3. Mid-term and final report cards will be held until unreturned books are either paid for, replaced or returned.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

As partners in the educational process at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School, we ask parents:

- To support the religious and educational goals of the school;
- To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example;
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school;
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.
- To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences;
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health;
- To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
- Gets to bed early on school nights;
- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day;
- Is dressed according to the school dress code;
- Completes assignments on time; and
- Has lunch money or nutritional sack lunch every day.
- To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education;
- To meet all financial obligations to the school;
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly;
- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers;
- To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy;
- To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student;

HOMEWORK

The amount of homework you may expect your child to do each evening is specified below. The number of minutes should be considered the average amount of time to allocate for homework.

Grades 1 and 2: 20 - 40 minutes

Grade 3 and 4: 40 - 60 minutes

Grades 5: 60 - 80 minutes

Grades 6, 7, and 8: 90 - 120 minutes

If both the student and his/her parents determine that homework is regularly requiring more time than has been indicated, please contact the teacher or teachers involved to determine why such a situation exists. If and when this situation occurs, parents are asked to note on the top of the homework the amount of time spent studying, and to sign the homework paper.

As has been indicated above, your child can expect to have homework. Parents are therefore strongly encouraged to review their child's homework every evening to reinforce the concept of homework as a valuable activity.

One further note is especially appropriate regarding homework: It seems that many students have a very narrow concept of homework, limiting their understanding to specific written assignments. Thus, many children tell their parents that they have no homework, when in reality they have been instructed to study for a test, read assigned pages, or memorize poetry, etc.

Parents who wish to pick up work for a sick child must notify the office before 10:00 a.m. for after school pickup.

Homework faxed or e-mailed to the school will not be accepted unless special permission has been granted by the administration.

Homework Guidelines

PROVIDE A STUDY AREA

The specific room chosen for homework makes little difference. The atmosphere in that room, however, is important. The child should have an area that has good lighting, proper seating and sufficient space to place materials. Distractions such as radio, TV or other children should be kept away. Reference materials are helpful.

PROVIDE A SPECIFIC TIME PERIOD

Provide your child with a specific time period each day for homework. You may want to establish firm rules against using the phone, watching television, listening to music or participating in certain activities until homework is done.

THINK POSITIVELY

Homework assists your child's progress in learning. Don't pressure your child just for grades. Try to get him/her to see the value of the knowledge he/she is trying to acquire. Don't tell your child he/she doesn't have to complete work, and don't do the work yourself. Give assistance as needed, but remember that the homework is your child's responsibility.

CALL THE TEACHER

If your child is having difficulty with homework, a call to the teacher at school will often clarify or solve the problem. Try not to complain to your child about the homework. This may cause him/her to lose confidence in the teacher or lose interest in school work. If your child seems to have too much homework, check with the teacher.

WATCH FOR SIGNS

If your child is having difficulty completing homework, check his/her study habits. Moving lips when reading, writing slowly or unclearly and using poor study skills are signs your child may have problems that reduce his/her ability to get homework done. Help him/her work on these areas. Your child could be having personal problems unrelated to the school work. If so, help him/her deal with these distractions.

SUPERVISE HOMEWORK

Make sure your child has enough time, understands directions and works carefully. Your supervision and discipline will gradually help him/her develop his/her own discipline toward homework. Remember, while students may need supervision and guidance, assignments should represent the student's work and abilities.

HELP GET THE HOMEWORK HABIT

When your child doesn't bring work home, find out if he/she is completing it in school, forgetting it, or failing to bring it home. Get your child into the habit of doing homework.

But if you find your child actually has little or no homework to do – relax. Learning is not how much time a child puts in at home or how many homework papers he/she completes, but the understanding he/she develops from what he/she does do.

GUIDE FOR STUDENT WORK

1. All work must be neat, legible and properly headed.
2. All work handed in must be in ink EXCEPT math (Upper grades only).
3. Torn out paper, crossed out work is unacceptable.
4. Correct parts of speech in all oral and written work must be used.
5. Spelling must be correct in all lessons.
6. All work must be turned in on time.

Students are graded on homework, daily assignments, projects, research, composition, workbooks, quizzes, tests and exams.

TESTING

1. Grades K-1: MAP Reading Fluency administered three times a year.
2. Grades 2-8: MAP testing, administered three times a year.
3. Grades 2-8: ARK Test of religious knowledge administered annually in the spring.
4. Classroom tests: Periodic classroom tests are used to assess subject mastery. The purpose of these tests is to provide a measure of progress toward objectives and positive feedback and to allow the teacher to gauge the success of instructional goals. Middle school students (Grades 6-8) may be given a **maximum of three major tests per day**.
5. Mid-Term and Final Exams will be given in Grades 6 - 8. Middle school students will be involved in Mid-Term and Final exams to assess cumulative knowledge of subject matter taught during each semester. Exams will help students be more fully prepared for the assessment challenges and expectations of high school.

TEXTBOOKS

Workbooks and consumable texts are purchased each year, and are included in the school fees. Textbooks are the property of the school, and must be returned. Damaged, lost, or destroyed books must be replaced by the family. Textbooks must be covered with cloth book covers. Workbooks should be covered in clear contact paper.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Limitation of Use

The Acceptable Use Policy applies to all technology resources including, but not limited to: personal laptop computers, school computers, cell phones, mobile devices, video and audio equipment, iPads®, copy machines and information storage devices.

The school may limit the following: the amount of network bandwidth allowed by users, access to certain types of websites by users of computers, a specific number of printed pages, the number of non-school-provided devices accessing the network.

OLV controls access to controversial materials and instructs students in the proper use of the internet, electronic mail, and software. The school is not responsible for material acquired by hacking, disabling, or circumventing the security put in place by the school.

All school technology systems, information stored on them and work performed are governed by these school policies and are subject to school supervision and inspection whether they reside on school owned computers, mobile devices, or computers/mobile devices brought on campus by

students. OLV reserves the right to monitor, access, retrieve, read and disclose all messages, information and files created sent, posted from, stored on computers or mobile devices brought onto campus or stored on its systems (including connections made from sites visited to law enforcement officials or others without prior notice.

Acceptable Use

Students are to report any misuse of the network to a teacher or administrator. Misuse is the intentional accessing of an Internet site deemed inappropriate by the administration, illegally accessing (hacking) the school's systems, downloading and uploading copyright protected music, videos, or images or the posting or transmission of any message(s) sent, posted, or received that indicates or suggests harassment, racism, sexism and inappropriate language or symbols. Transmission of any material in violation of school policy or any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited.

Netiquette

- Be polite. The use of inappropriate language, symbols, and images reflects negatively upon yourself, your family, and the school.
- Do not send or post information which disparages the reputation of OLV, its faculty, staff, employee, or student.
- Do not email, IM, post to websites or blogs or text message inappropriate graphics, images, pictures, or video of employees of OLV or fellow students.
- Do not video, record, or take images of others (including teachers) without permission.

Copyright

- Students are expected to follow copyright laws and are to properly cite the use of intellectual property created by others.
- Plagiarism will result in disciplinary action.
- The use of file sharing sites or software, not provided by the school is prohibited.
- Posting/updating of copyrighted material is strictly prohibited.

Security

- If a student identifies a security problem on the Internet, he or she must notify a teacher immediately.
- Students may not use another individual's account at any time. Attempts to log onto the Internet as anyone else will result in cancellation of Internet privileges.
- Any students identified as a security risk will be denied access to the Internet.

Privacy

- Students should not post his/her home address or personal phone number or that of any member of the school or to anyone on the Internet.

- Students should assume that none of their data is private or confidential. Any data or communication is subject to review by network or school administration.
- Personal and school email, social networking sites, and other data located on school owned devices are subject to search. DO NOT put personal email or social networking apps on the school owned iPads. To do so opens these up to school personnel.

Vandalism/Hacking

- Vandalism or hacking will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, network, or agency that is connected to the Internet. Examples: destruction of hardware, software and peripherals, and the uploading or downloading of games and viruses.

Digital cameras and mobile devices

- Students may not take or transmit images that violate the Acceptable Use Policy.
- Taking picture, videos, or recordings of teachers or students without their knowledge is a violation.
- The transmission, display, and sharing of inappropriate images is subject to disciplinary and legal action.

Gaming

- Gaming, which uses school bandwidth, is prohibited on campus. This includes downloaded games and apps, and Internet-based games unless directed by a teacher to use for educational purposes.

STUDENT-OWNED DEVICES

At times students may be allowed to bring personal computers onto campus for educational purposes. This will be at the request of a teacher and must be approved by the principal.

In order to be connected to the school network, the student must bring the computer to a technology support administrator. Devices without appropriate virus protection software will not be allowed to connect to the school network.

The school will not be responsible for the security, troubleshooting or repairing student-owned computers. The technology support administrator will not install printers, software or provide peripheral devices for student owned computers. Students and their parents accept full responsibility for the loss or damage to the computers or mobile devices.

SCHOOL-OWNED DEVICES

Students using school-owned devices are required to comply with the policies set forth in this document.

VIOLATIONS OF ACCEPTABLE USE

Any user who violates the Acceptable Use Policy or local, state, or federal law, faces the loss of technology privileges, may receive disciplinary action, and may face legal prosecution.

DIOCESAN POLICY ON INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION

The name, reputation, and personal safety of each student, faculty, and staff member as well as the good name of each school in the Diocese of Birmingham as an institution of the Catholic Church, is vitally important. Two specific aspects are:

1. Internet activities (such as blogs, social media, group texts, chat rooms, etc.) that a student may independently choose to participate in can make the student vulnerable to predators. We strongly advise our students to be very careful about the personal identification information they share via the Internet. We also advise parents to monitor these sites to be sure their child remains safe. Should information and/or information concerning a student demeaning him/herself, the school will notify the parents and it will be the parents' responsibility to take action.
2. In order to protect each student as well as employees and the institution itself, each student enrolled in a Diocese of Birmingham Catholic School is expected to treat the good name and reputation of each of the above with dignity and respect. The same is expected of each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in our schools. Public defamation of any student, employee, or Catholic school by a student or parent/guardian is serious whether this be done orally, in writing, via email or on the web and whether it is done on a school computer or not and on school time or not. Therefore, any student or parent found to be participating in any defamatory activity will be subject to disciplinary/responsive action by the school. This could include dismissal of the student whether the action is by the student or his/her parent /guardian.

Networking and Virtual Reality Sites

Parents are strongly advised to monitor student activity in the engagement and participation of online blogs and networking sites such as, but not limited to Facebook®, Twitter®, Instagram®, Snapchat®, Yik Yak®, Tic Toc®, Xanga®, etc. for identity protection and safety. **The school reserves the right to take disciplinary action if the content of the student's or parent's posts include defamatory comments or media regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish.** Virtual Reality Sites such as, but not limited to, www.there.com® and www.secondlife.com® pose a development and moral risk to the life of the student. Parents are cautioned to be aware of the online sites visited by their children, knowing that often predators are not living in a neighborhood but within a home via a computer.

Photograph Release and Authorization

Diocesan policy: "Schools must have a signed *Release and Authorization* form for any media interviews as well as for the use of video tapes, photographs or similar items used publicly. It is

recommended that individuals in photographs are not identified by name. This pertains to bulletin boards, websites, etc.” **Further, it is against school policy for photographs or videos taken at school (such as class parties, assemblies, etc.) or at sanctioned outside events (such as field trips) to be posted on personal Networking Sites such as, but not limited to Facebook®, Twitter®, TikTok®, Instagram®, Snapchat®, etc.**

GRADING SYSTEM

The following is the Diocesan Policy concerning grading and is adhered to by OLV.

Grading is a method of communicating student learning and shall be based on the philosophy that students and not subjects are being taught. Any diversion from these guidelines is to be requested in writing from the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

It is the principal’s responsibility to acquaint the faculty with the Diocesan and local grading policies and to supervise the implementation of these policies periodically, particularly during grading periods.

Exams

Students in grades seven and eight will take semester exams. Sixth graders may take exams if they are grouped with seventh and eighth graders in the building/unit. Exams will be given in math, science, English, reading/literature, social studies and religion. Giving exams in any of the remaining subjects is a local decision.

Principals are to review with their teachers the construction/selection of exams. Teachers need to focus on the application of learning rather than the memorization and recall of information alone. Student test anxiety needs to be kept to a minimum with every effort made to foster a positive attitude and approach to exams.

Grading

Kindergarten and Grade One:

Grading for Kindergarten and Grade One will be a checklist developed for all schools in the Diocese. Some flexibility of items will be available at the local level. The coding system for each skill will be:

S Satisfactory

I Improving

NI Needs Improvement

U Unsatisfactory

Grades 2 through 8:

Grading at these levels will be letter grades with a scale given on the report card. Neither plus nor minus will be used. Percents will be listed on the interim progress reports. Percents or letter grades may be used on assignments, quizzes, and exams. The following subjects will be graded

with letters: Religion, Reading/Literature, English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education. Performing Arts (which covers music, speech, theatre, and debate), Art, and Technology, and Spanish receive a grade of “S” (Satisfactory), “NI” (Needs Improvement), “I” (Improving), or “U” (Unsatisfactory). Health receives a letter grade when it is taught as a separate subject rather than as a part of science or physical education. Foreign language receives a letter grade when it is taught as a full class rather than as an enrichment area. Library does not receive letter grades since they involve tools to be integrated into all areas of the curriculum. In addition, any of these specialty classes may receive a rubric or checklist of skills mastered/not mastered.

The grading scale will be as follows:

- A 93-100**
- B 84-92**
- C 74-83**
- D 65-73**
- F 64 and below**

Criteria for quarter grades are to be decided at the local level, that is, how much importance is given to quizzes, tests, class participation/preparation.

Semester grades for students in grades 2-6 are computed by averaging the first and second quarter grades.

When semester exams are given (grades seven and eight and sometimes grade six) the semester grade is computed as follows:

- First Quarter = 2/5 (40%) of Semester Grade
 - Second Quarter = 2/5 (40%) of Semester Grade
 - Semester Exam = 1/5 (20%) of Semester grade
- When averaging grades, an F can be no lower than a 60.

Comments made on report cards should focus on academic strengths or weaknesses. Suggestions for improvement should be given for weaknesses.

Effort and Conduct

It is our basic assumption that effort and conduct are to be acceptable. All students are to work hard and are to behave. Therefore, these areas will be reported as **S (Satisfactory)**, **NI (Needs Improvement)** or **U (Unsatisfactory)**. U is to be given for serious misbehavior in consultation with the principal. A U should never be a surprise to the parent. Comments may be made for specific cases. Where classes are basically self-contained, only one effort/conduct grade will be given. Exceptions can be accommodated through comments. In the middle school areas, there will be an option for each teacher to give effort and conduct grades.

Promotion and Retention

In order to retain a student in grades 2 through 8, the actual grades on the report card must

indicate failure. If a student receives an “F” in either reading or math, he/she must attend summer school or be tutored by a certified teacher over the summer in order to be promoted. In addition, a student fails for the year if she/he has a yearly average of “F” in two or more of the following areas: reading/literature, English, math, science or social studies. For primary children not receiving letter grades, the decision as to what constitutes failure is to be made at the local level with discussion between the teacher and principal.

Each student’s status should be clearly indicated on the final report card. Retention will be discussed among teacher(s), parents, and principal. A consensus will try to be reached. When there is a disagreement, the decision of the principal is final.

Conditional promotion may be an option for grades seven and eight provided they have no more than two F’s and can successfully pass the failed courses over the summer. The final decision on this is to be the principal’s and will be made on a case-by-case basis.

PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS

Progress reports are sent home midway in the grading period (see calendar). Grades are reported numerically in academic subjects. Students receive Progress Reports, not only in academic subjects, but also in conduct, as needed. Report Cards are sent home at the end of each quarter (see calendar).

TUTORING

Outside tutoring may be recommended for certain students during the school year to maintain satisfactory performance.

PARENT/ TEACHER CONFERENCES – APPOINTMENTS – CONCERNS

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled after the first (mandatory) nine week grading period. Parents will be asked to sign up for an appointment time and are asked to limit the conference to the time allotted. Additional conferences can be scheduled throughout the year as needed. Faculty members are required to be on campus after school every day (except on faculty meeting days) until 3:30 p.m. for conference purposes. Parents may schedule appointments with teachers during this time by e-mail.

Please refrain from calling or texting administration, faculty, and staff at home. Please note: Social settings (i.e.; church, restaurants, stores, athletic events, etc.) are not appropriate places to discuss school business or concerns. Your cooperation, understanding, and respect of their personal time are very much appreciated.

An academic or disciplinary situation involving a faculty member and student which causes parent concern should first be handled by asking the student to go back to the teacher for an explanation. If this procedure does not eliminate the parent concern, then the parent should

make an appointment to discuss the situation with the faculty member. Only after these steps have been taken, should the parent/teacher concern be brought to the attention of the principal. A copy of the grievance policy is included in this handbook (see p.47).

LOCKERS

Lockers are provided for students in grades 3 - 8. Students are expected to care for their lockers properly. Students may purchase shelves for their lockers. Only magnets may be used to hang items in lockers (NO tape or plastic tac allowed). All student materials including jackets must be kept in their lockers. Locker decorations should be minimal and not excessive.

The administration reserves the right to inspect lockers or any other items (those at school or brought to school) at any time. Misuse or damage to lockers will result in the loss of locker privileges.

LOST AND FOUND

To ensure that your child's lost items are promptly returned, please LABEL all supplies, personal articles, coats, hats, sweaters, lunch boxes, etc. Please ask your child to check Lost and Found immediately if any items are lost. Items not claimed will be sent to a charitable organization, or will be donated to the PTO's used uniform closet and sales.

LUNCH / MILK PROGRAMS

Students may bring a lunch or purchase hot lunches available daily through We Lunch It. Lunches may be ordered and paid for through the company's website. Milk and ice cream cards may be purchased. Make checks for milk and ice cream payable to "OLV Milk" or "OLV", respectively. Should a student forget to bring a lunch or order a hot lunch, a lunchable and snack item will be provided. A \$5.00 charge will be added the family's FACTS tuition account. Milk is available every day.

DRESS CODE

Wearing of the school uniform is compulsory for all children attending grades K through 8 of Our Lady of the Valley School. Parents assume the responsibility for having their children dressed in accordance with the adopted regulations. Should a uniform not be complete, an explanation must be given in writing to the homeroom teacher. If a child violates the code, he/she will receive a warning/infraction. At any time, homeroom teachers may give random checks that may result in warnings/violations.

Boys — Grades K-8

Pants: navy, pleated or unpleated (must be uniform pants – **no** Dockers, Duckhead, Etc.) Available through Southern School Uniforms.

Faded and/or baggy pants are not acceptable. Pants must fit at the waist and not be worn at the hip or below.

Belts must be worn and visible (solid black, navy, or brown).

Shorts: navy walking shorts (available through Southern School Uniforms)

Faded and/or baggy shorts are not acceptable. Shorts must fit at the waist and not be worn at the hip or below.

Belts must be worn and visible (black, navy, or brown).

Shirts: **white permanent press, oxford cloth, button-down, long or short sleeved, available from Southern School Uniforms with logo**

White, light blue, or grey golf knit shirt or performance-type material, long or short sleeved, available from Southern School Uniforms with logo

Plain, white, short-sleeve undershirts may be worn under the uniform shirt (no turtlenecks).

Socks: Plain navy dress sock, navy or white crew sock

Socks must be crew length. No ankle or sport socks (ankle or anklet).

Girls — Grades K-4

Jumpers: plaid (must be purchased through Southern School Uniforms)

Navy shorts must be worn under jumpers but may not hang below the hem. Available through Southern School Uniforms.

Pants: navy, pleated or unpleated (must be uniform pants – **no** Dockers, Duckhead, Etc.)

Available through Southern School Uniforms.

Faded and/or baggy pants are not acceptable. Pants must fit at the waist and not be worn at the hip or below.

Belts must be worn and visible (black, navy, or brown).

Shorts: navy walking shorts (available through Southern School Uniforms)

Faded and/or baggy shorts are not acceptable. Shorts must fit at the waist and not be worn at the hip or below.

Belts must be worn and visible (black, navy, or brown).

Skorts: plaid **only** (available through Southern School Uniforms)

Length must be no shorter than 2" above the knee and no longer than 1" below the knee.

Blouses: white permanent press, oxford cloth, button-down, long or short sleeved, available from Southern School Uniforms with logo.

White, light blue, or grey golf knit shirt or performance-type material, long or short sleeved, available from Southern School Uniforms with logo.

White, round collar blouse (no lace or ruffles) must be worn with the jumper only and does not require a logo.

Plain, white, short-sleeve undershirts may be worn under the uniform shirt (no turtlenecks).

Socks: Plain, navy or white crew, knee high, or tights. Socks must be crew length or higher. No ankle or sport socks (ankle or anklet). No leggings allowed.

Girls – Grades 5-8

Skirt: plaid (available through Southern School Uniforms)

Length of skirt must be at the knee.

Pants: navy, pleated or unpleated (must be uniform pants – **no** Dockers, Duckhead, Etc.)

Available from Southern School Uniforms.

Faded and/or baggy pants are not acceptable. Pants must fit at the waist and not be worn at the hip or below.

Belts must be worn and visible (black, navy, or brown).

Shorts: navy walking shorts (available through Southern School Uniforms)

Faded and/or baggy shorts are not acceptable. Shorts must fit at the waist and not be worn at the hip or below.

Belts must be worn and visible (black, navy, or brown).

Blouses: white permanent press, oxford cloth, button-down, long or short sleeved, available from Southern School Uniforms with logo

White, light blue, or grey golf knit shirt, long or short sleeved, available from Southern School Uniforms with logo

No round collar blouses may be worn.

Plain, white, short-sleeve undershirts may be worn under the uniform shirt (no turtlenecks).

Socks: Plain, navy or white crew, knee high, or tights

Socks must be crew length or higher.

No sports socks (ankle or anklet).

No leggings allowed.

Shoes and Shoe Laces

Tennis Shoes

Solid white, gray, navy, or black

Trim may be white, gray, navy or black (or any combination of these colors).

No roller skate tennis shoes allowed.

No patterns or images allowed on tennis shoes.

Other Options

Dark loafers or oxfords

Leather or suede dress shoes in black, navy, or brown

No heels or pumps allowed.

No crocs, clogs, or flip-flops allowed.

Shoe Laces

Laces must be solid and match the color of the shoe.

OUTERWEAR

Sweaters/Sweatshirts-Grades K-8, Boys and Girls

Navy sweaters – long sleeved, v-neck cardigan, v-neck vest, or v-neck pullover, available through Southern School Uniforms with logo. (Pre-logo uniform navy sweaters are acceptable for the life of the sweater).

Gray “OLV Eagles” sweatshirt (sold by the school in the Fall).

Navy crewneck sweatshirts, available from Southern School Uniforms with logo
Gray crewneck sweatshirts, available through school with OLV emblem (no longer sold, but may be worn).

No other sweat clothes may be worn with the exception of P.E.

Outer Jackets – Grades K – 8, Boys and Girls

Navy fleece quarter zip jackets purchased from Southern School Uniforms with logo may be worn in classroom and church. The full zip, navy jacket from Southern School Uniforms may be worn in the classroom. All other jackets may only be worn to and from school.

P.E. Uniforms – Grades 5 – 8

Shorts: Navy, cotton or nylon mesh, purchased from Southern School Uniforms with OLV logo. No rolled up or altered shorts. All shorts must be mid-thigh or longer.

Shirts: Gray, purchased from Southern School Uniforms with OLV logo.

Sweats: Solid navy sweat pants and sweatshirts may be worn for cold weather. OLV hooded navy sweatshirt may be worn for P.E only. No other colors.

Book Bags

Rolling book bags are allowed. No key chains or similar hanging decorations are allowed on book bags. This includes, but is not limited to, toys, cards, stuffed animals, jewelry, and flashlights.

GENERAL INFORMATION-DRESS CODE

- **Logoed items from Dennis (oval shaped) will be permitted during a three-year phase-out period as we move exclusively to Southern School Uniforms. The last year these items will be permitted is the 2027-2028 school year. (REV 2025)**
- Please put names on every item of clothing.
- Shirts and blouses must be tucked in at all times.
- Blouses and shirts must be CLEAN and NEAT.
- Students may not wear nail polish (kindergarten through 5th grade), washable tattoos or jewelry. Acrylic nails are not allowed. Girls may wear small pierced earrings – no hoops or dangle, no multiple earrings (one per ear). Boys may not wear earrings.
- **Neither nail polish nor press on nails are permitted for any student.**
- The 7th and 8th grade girls may wear VERY LIGHT make-up. Watches are not considered jewelry.
- Activity monitors (i.e. “Fitbit”) may be worn provides that it be black, navy blue, or grey. **Devices which allow for cell phone communication, texting, or other social media are not permitted. This does include the Apple Watch. ®** No memory or special cause bracelets, pins, ribbons, etc. except on specified days.
- Modest hair ornaments must match uniform colors (solid white, navy, red, hunter green or plaid). Matching hair accessories may be purchased from Southern School Uniforms.

Hairstyles must be conservative and kept out of eyes. Boys' hair must not be touching the collar and off the ears and the eyebrows. Hair for all must be a natural color.

- Religious medals are allowed with a conservative chain only – no beaded necklaces.
- Other forms of dress accessories that tend to be faddish in nature are unacceptable.
- Consider wearing best uniforms on field trips away from school grounds.

For information about New or Used uniforms – School Office: 991-5963

JEANS DAYS

Periodically, students are allowed to dress “out-of-uniform” during Jeans Days. Students contribute a nominal amount of money to a designated cause to have this privilege. Dress for the day must be tasteful (if a parent questions whether clothing is “tasteful,” then it probably is not). Jeans or conservative pants are allowed (for clarification, Capri pants for girls are considered “conservative”). Leggings may be worn by girls underneath uniform-length, skirts, shorts, or dresses. **Jeggings are not acceptable.** Shorts are restricted to uniform shorts or other button-up shorts which conform to uniform length only. **Non-uniform shoes may be worn, but MUST have a closed toe and a closed heel.** Athletic wear is not acceptable (i.e. sweatpants, athletic shorts, etc.) Students are still expected to wear tennis shoes for P. E. at all grade levels, on “out-of-uniform” days. Flip flops are not appropriate attire for these days, nor are they safe for P.E. or recess. If a student violates this policy, parents will be notified and discipline will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

WATER BOTTLES

Metal water bottles are not allowed. Water bottles must be translucent enough to make it easily recognizable that the liquid contained is water. Other beverages in water bottles are not permitted.

NEWSLETTERS AND TAKE-HOME FOLDERS

The school publishes a newsletter once a month. It may be accessed via the school Web Site (click on “Newsletter”). Our newsletter will be sent home via email to parents. Dates and reminders are included as well as other items of interest. Newsletter items need to be submitted by Thursday afternoon before the Friday morning that the newsletter is typed. In addition, other important information from teachers and the school will be sent home in the Tuesday take home folders.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND MEDICATION

FIRST AID

A student who gets sick at school should report to the office. A parent or guardian will be notified to come for the student, if necessary.

Teachers need to be informed in writing if a student has a health condition, such as diabetes, epilepsy, food allergies etc. (see Health Card).

Medication will not be dispensed at school unless there are special circumstances approved by the principal. Students may not keep medicine with them. A “School Medication Authorization Form” is required for any medications used on campus for chronic conditions.

HEALTH FORM (IMMUNIZATION FORM)

An Alabama Immunization Form is required to be on file for each student. This form may be obtained from your doctor or from any health department. Students coming from out of state cannot register without this.

HEALTH RECORDS

It is imperative that we have health information on each student (as requested on the back of the indemnity form filled out at the beginning of the school year). Information on allergies or health problems and phone numbers where parents and/or emergency contacts can be reached is important.

Immunization

The Catholic Church does not prohibit the use of any vaccine, and generally encourages the use of safe and effective vaccines as a way of safeguarding personal and public health and out of concern for the common good. The Diocese of Birmingham understands though that there are children who may be medically ineligible to receive certain vaccines, and there may be moral objections to vaccines derived from cell lines of aborted children (*i.e.*, vaccines which contain these cell lines). We seek to balance, as best as possible, these doctrinal, moral, and medical concerns so that we can provide healthy environments for all students, faculty and staff in our parish and diocesan Catholic schools and early learning programs.

Code of Alabama, 1975, §16-30-4 outlines that boards of education and the governing authority of each private school shall require each pupil who is otherwise entitled to admittance to kindergarten or first grade, whichever is applicable, or any other entrance into an Alabama public or private school, to present a certification of immunization or testing for the prevention of those communicable diseases designated by the State Health Officer, except as indicated by a licensed medical professional or by obtaining religious exemption based on objection in writing to specific tenets or practices of his or her faith.

As such, any child enrolling in or re-entering a school serving prekindergarten through 12th grades or an early learning program serving infant through K4 in the Diocese of Birmingham must provide an appropriate Certificate of Immunization on a form approved by the Alabama Department of Public Health. *A student without an appropriate Certificate of Immunization may not be enrolled in the school or early learning program, unless a medical or religious exemption*

have been obtained in accordance with requirements set by the Diocese of Birmingham.

Medical Exemption

For children enrolling in a Diocese of Birmingham school or early learning program with medical contraindication to any of the required vaccinations for school admittance, a Certificate of Medical Exemption, obtained from a licensed medical professional or the County Health Department must be provided. In addition, the Diocese of Birmingham will accept a letter provided by a physician who is licensed to practice medicine, surgery, or osteopathy that indicated an accepted medical contraindication to vaccination or an allergy to any of the ingredients used to formulate the vaccine, as consistent with the labeling of the vaccine as regulated by the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Any vaccination(s) required for school or program admittance not medically contraindicated must be obtained. Diocesan procedures for medical exemption may be obtained from the principal of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School.

Diocesan procedures for religious exemption may be obtained from the principal of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School.

Religious Exemption

Students in schools or early learning programs in the Diocese of Birmingham may receive a religious exemption from vaccination under certain circumstances. Religious exemptions will be granted through diocesan procedure and are limited to those objections that are in adherence with the tenets of the Catholic faith as identified and accepted by the Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama. Specifically, exemptions may be granted to students whose parents demonstrate a sincere, conscientious objection to vaccines derived from descendent cell lines of aborted fetuses. Certificates of Religious Exemption issued by State or County Health Departments are not accepted.

This limited religious exemption only covers those vaccinations derived from descendent cell lines of aborted fetuses. All other vaccinations required for school or early learning program admittance must be obtained. A Certificate of Immunization showing the vaccinations received must be on file with the school or early learning program to be admitted.

Diocesan procedures for religious exemption may be obtained from the principal of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School.

EMERGENCY CLOSING DUE TO WEATHER

WEATHER

If severe weather or any other issue causes the school to close, dismiss early, or to delay opening, we will use our rapid alert notification system within the RenWeb school system. OLV provides

parents, students, faculty, and staff members with the most advanced rapid communication solution available for schools. We believe that this system will greatly improve the timeliness and quality of our emergency communications and provide us with a convenient and affordable tool for more effectively communicating non-emergency reminders and notices as well. **It is imperative that we have current phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Please notify the office of changes.**

In the event of severe weather, check RenWeb alerts first. Not all Diocese of Birmingham Catholic schools close for all events. Your first mode of communication will be through RenWeb. However, TV stations that say “Diocese of Birmingham Catholic Schools” will include OLV, even if we are not mentioned by name.

With RenWeb, our school is able to reach literally thousands of parents, faculty members, and other emergency contacts within minutes of a closing or early dismissal decision being made. This enables us to make the best choices regarding our school operations based on the most accurate and timely information available to not only help ensure the safety and welfare of your children, but also help reduce and eliminate incidents of unnecessary closings-which are inconvenient and costly for schools and parents alike.

When the school closes early due to inclement weather, after school care also closes. School will close only if the safety of families and staff could possibly be at risk. All after school activities including play practice, sports, or Science Olympiad are also canceled.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Safety is important. In order to be prepared for a fire, tornado, lock downs or other such emergency, drills are held regularly at school. The drills are to give students practice in using precautions that should help them avoid possible injuries. There is to be no talking during any evacuation procedure and all students should remain in their assigned area throughout the drills.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

As the primary educators of their children, parents/guardians freely make the choice of a Catholic education for their sons/daughters. Registration at Our Lady of the Valley School is an agreement by the parent/guardian to accept and abide by rules and regulations of the institution and to support its philosophy of education.

A cooperative relationship between Our Lady of the Valley School personnel and a parent/guardian is essential for the overall education of a student. It is critical that a cooperative relationship be maintained through constructive dialogue with the parent/guardian.

If a parent/guardian refuses to abide by the rules and regulations of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School or by word or action is unsupportive of its goals or otherwise fails to meet his/her obligations under school or Diocesan policies, the administrator may require the parent/guardian to withdraw his/her child from Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School.

The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property. Additionally, parents/guardians will be held to the same standards of respect as students in regards to their interactions with administrators, teachers, and students.

PTO

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School PTO works to support and enhance the educational ministry of the school. Fund-raising, parent education, and building community are goals of this organization. Parents are encouraged to volunteer.

UNWRITTEN REGULATIONS

This policy booklet is limited in content. Emphasis has been placed on those things which are deemed most pertinent and beneficial to the students, parents, and personnel of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School at the present time.

Right to Amend: The school reserves the right to change policies and procedures as outlined in the School Handbook. Parents will be notified of any changes by e-mail, through the Tuesday Take-Home folders, and/or the newsletter.

It would be impossible to anticipate all problems which may arise in the future. Yet each year a few distracting “fads” and circumstances show up on our school grounds. Anything that distracts from or disrupts the spirit, education, philosophy, or dignity of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School will be held to be unacceptable even though not explicitly set forth in these policies. Such situations will be dealt with in accordance with the principles implicit in our existing policies.

Let us continue to encourage, support, and affirm one another as we endeavor to heed God's call to bring about his Kingdom on Earth. Together let us grow in our praise of the incarnate word!

COMMUNICATION

TELEPHONE

The school phone should be reserved for calls that are of the utmost importance, as over 300 people depend on the phone for emergencies and business needs of the day. Neither students nor teachers will be called to the telephone during class hours except in an emergency. Important messages will be taken by the office and relayed to the person concerned.

Telephone Policy

1. Use of the phone in the school office is determined by teacher permission. Only students with notes from teachers will be permitted to use the phone. All other phones are restricted.

2. Students may call home for a forgotten lunch. A teacher note is required. A student **may not** call home for forgotten homework, gym clothes, etc. unless directed by a teacher.
3. Students **are highly discouraged** to bring or use cell phones (or other communication devices such as iPads®, iPhones®, etc.) while on campus. See p. 56 “Unacceptable Electronic Devices at School.”

Sales or Distribution on School Grounds

The selling of goods, services, or distribution of information on school grounds shall not be permitted unless related to the School, Parish, Diocese, Catholic high schools or other educational purposes as approved by the principal.

Protection of Parent Address, Phone and Email Information

The School Advisory Council recognizes that parents have entrusted the school with personal information including addresses, phone numbers and email addresses for use related to school activities. This information shall be provided to faculty and staff and room parents for purposes related to the school only. Communication shall not be used for solicitation or dissemination of information, except for purposes related to the school and as approved by the principal. Email and written communication for dissemination to parents shall be approved in advance by the principal.

Without the principal’s prior consent, any information sent to school parents shall not be deemed as expressing a policy or opinion of the school, or as endorsing an event. Such activities shall not be deemed as a school sanctioned events.

ELECTRONIC AND AUTOMATED COMMUNICATION

Many teachers routinely e-mail classroom newsletters and communication. In addition, in emergency and special situations when time is of the essence, parents or parents of affected groups will be contacted via RenWeb (see page 44 for details under “Emergency Closing Due to Weather”).

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Complaints of students and parents should always go through proper channels. Discussing a problem with others who are not involved does not help to eliminate the problem; on the contrary, it may only create more discontent and animosity between the parties who are actually involved. Any problems about school can and should be solved by communicating with one another in a Christian manner. The following are procedures for dealing with complaints in a fair and mature way.

1. Begin by holding a conference with the teacher.
2. If satisfactory adjustments or explanations are not made, hold a conference with the principal.
3. If satisfactory adjustments or explanations are not made, hold a conference with the pastor.

Final decisions shall not be reached in the presence of the grieved party, but only after a closed session to discuss the matter privately. All ordinary standards of due process will be followed in the exercise of these procedures.

Again, let us always communicate with one another in a Christian manner. Remember that our mission is not only to teach as Jesus did, but to love one another as He did.

COUNSELING SERVICE

Our Lady of the Valley School is part of the Diocese of Birmingham. As a part of this system, we benefit from the services offered by the Catholic School Office in Birmingham under the direction of Margaret Dubose, Superintendent of Catholic Schools. Not only does this office serve as an information center for our schools, but also as a resource for information and for problem solving which arises in the educational program.

Our Lady of the Valley School does have a guidance counselor on staff. Some guidance services offered are assistance with educational planning, interpretation of test scores, occupational and career information, study help, help with home, school, and/or social concerns, or any other questions the student may feel he/she would like to discuss with the counselor.

Responsibility-Centered Discipline Policy

It is the philosophy of OLV to systematically create a culture of student self-responsibility. Our goal, school-wide, is to reduce time spent disciplining and to increase time spent teaching. Recognizing that all students, as individuals, come to school with different levels of social skills, OLV is committed to partnering with parents in fostering an authoritative, rather than authoritarian, atmosphere at school.

In order to achieve this goal, faculty members will embrace several positive behavior intervention strategies that have as their basis strengthening the relationships between teachers and students. Classroom expectations will be clearly and explicitly taught in the beginning of the year, with re-teaching throughout the year on an as-needed basis. When a student fails to meet a particular expectation, he or she will be verbally reminded of the classroom expectation.

Please do not allow students to bring toys or other distractions to school, including Fidget Spinners, unless requested by teachers.

Grades K-4

K-4th Grade Minor Violations

- Disruption of the learning environment or educational process
- Failure to obey classroom or lunchroom rules (including library, computer, and other specialty classes)
- Violation of uniform policy
- Inappropriate behavior in church
- Chewing gum or eating candy
- Possession of nuisance items (including Fidget Spinners)

Running, pushing, shoving, yelling, or horse play
Public display of affection
Selling items not designated by school
Harassment, name calling, or disrespect to other students
Tardiness (4th tardy per class per quarter = first offense)
Writing on desks/in textbooks
Being in hall during class without a pass
Failure to have items signed by parents
Use of cell phone or electronic device not used in approved classroom activity
Any other conduct that is inconsistent with the philosophy of Our Lady of the Valley
Catholic School

K-4th Grade Major Violations

Fighting
Possession or distribution of pornographic material
Possession or use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or drug paraphernalia
Possession of any type of weapon or dangerous item
Making threats or behaving in a threatening manner toward others
Consequences for these major violations will be Out of School Suspension. Repeated offenses may result in expulsion.

5th-8th Grade Minor Violations:

Disruption of the learning environment or educational process
Failure to obey classroom or lunchroom rules (including library, computer, and other specialty classes)
Violation of uniform policy
Inappropriate behavior in church
Chewing gum or eating candy
Possession of nuisance items (including Fidget Spinners)
Running, pushing, shoving, yelling, or horse play
Public display of affection
Selling items not designated by school
Harassment, name calling, or disrespect to other students
Tardiness (4th tardy per class per quarter = first offense)
Writing on desks/in textbooks
Being in hall during class without a pass
Failure to have items signed by parents
Use of cell phone or electronic device not used in approved classroom activity
Any other conduct that is inconsistent with the philosophy of Our Lady of the Valley
Catholic School

Consequences for Minor Violations

Teachers will issue infractions for minor violations in grades 3-8. Infractions must be taken home by the student, signed by the parent and returned to the homeroom teacher the next day. In

addition to the infraction being sent home, the following consequence will be issued for each infraction as follows:

- Warning

- Phone call or email to parent by homeroom teacher.

- Referral to administration, parent notification by administration

- After school detention (Thursdays, 3:30 – 4:30)

- Detention and loss of participation in next PE challenge

Infractions are cumulative for the quarter. Infractions will start over each quarter.

Detention – detentions will be held after school on Thursdays from 3:30 – 4:30. Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, ball games, etc. Failure to attend detention will result in two detentions being assigned. Students will be required to remain silent during detention and will be given work such as reading, writing, picking up trash, cleaning or other appropriate actions. Students not picked up at 4:30 will be sent to after school care where charges will apply.

5th-8th Grade Major Violations

- Disrespect to teachers or authority

- Bringing discredit to OLV school, employees, or church- on or off campus, or on-line

- Copying or cheating (This includes **inappropriate (REV 2026)** use of AI generators)

- Leaving school grounds without permission

- Gambling

- Vandalism

- Inappropriate language/cursing on or off campus or online, as it pertains to the school

- Theft or destruction of others' possessions

- Repeated harassment, name calling, or disrespect to other students

- *Fighting

- *Possession or distribution of pornographic material

- *Possession or use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, vaping, or drug paraphernalia

- *Possession of any type of weapon or dangerous item (automatic expulsion or out-of-school suspension of at least one year as outlined in diocesan policy)

- *Making threats or behaving in a threatening manner toward others

For Major Violations: Any violation above marked with an asterisk (*) will result in a minimum level 3 consequence

- 1-Detention

- 2-In- or Out-of-School Suspension (at least one day)

- 3-In- or Out-of-School Suspension (at least 3 days)

- Consideration of expulsion

Students placed in out-of-school suspension receive no credit for missed daily assignments.

Long-term projects may be turned in on the original due date. Major exams may be made up on the day the student returns to class. Students in suspension may not be on campus or participate in any extracurricular activities until the suspension is completed.

SUSPENSION

For more serious offenses or chronic violations of the discipline code at any time, suspension may be utilized. Suspension is the temporary removal of a student from his/her regular program. The length of the suspension will be determined by the school. Suspension must be served outside of school. Assignments must be completed, but will not be credited during home suspension. Parents will be notified prior to their child's suspension. Students who are serving home suspension are not allowed on campus. Students that are on suspension will not be allowed to participate in any school extracurricular activities until the suspension period has passed.

EXPULSION

Expulsion is the removal of a student from the school. Expulsion is the result of a very serious infraction of the diocesan/school handbook. Expulsion could also be utilized when a student has been suspended previously and has shown no indication of improvement. Once a student is expelled, he/she may not be readmitted at any time. Students who are expelled are not allowed on campus.

If a parent voluntarily withdraws a student from school due to disciplinary reasons, the student will not be readmitted at a later time.

Our Lady of the Valley School BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

The following is the Diocesan School Board policy on bullying:

“The Diocese of Birmingham is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment in its schools. Bullying, which involves an imbalance of power or strength, is repeated aggressive behavior that may include physical, verbal, racial, sexual, or emotional intimidation. This includes cyber bullying, which is defined as destroying or smearing a person's reputation through the use of Internet connected devices. Any and all witnessed or reported incidents will be addressed. Students involved in bullying or harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action as outlined by the local school's handbook or policy statement.”

Definitions

Verbal bullying/harassment: includes, but is not limited to, the following, whether in oral or written form:

- ◆ derogatory comments, jokes, slurs, off-color language, or innuendoes;
- ◆ belligerent or threatening words communicated to another student or employee;

- ◆ name-calling, sarcasm and put-downs, mocking, belittling, hurtful teasing, taunting.

Visual bullying/harassment: includes derogatory, demeaning, or inflammatory posters or locker signs, cartoons, written words, drawings, video or photographic images, novelties, or gestures (including subtle gestures such as aggressive stares, eye rolling, sighs, frowns, sneers, snickers, and/or hostile body language).

Physical bullying/harassment: includes unwanted physical touching or contact (such as shoving, pushing, bumping, hitting or slapping, tripping, poking, kicking, scratching) assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movement, or any intimidating interference with normal movement or work; it may also include damaging or destroying another's belongings or property; it also includes physical acts that are demeaning and humiliating but not bodily harmful.

Social/relational bullying/harassment: is defined as the systemic diminishment of another's sense of self and/or damaging the social status, relationships, or reputation of another through ignoring, isolating, excluding, or shunning;

- ◆ a pattern of behavior in which a student or a group of students picks on another student or treats him/her in such a way that makes her feel uncomfortable or alienated;
- ◆ spreading false and/or malicious rumors;
- ◆ gossiping or revealing personal information;
- ◆ embarrassing or publicly humiliating another

Cyber bullying/harassment: includes, but is not limited to, offending, harassing or threatening others through technological means, including email, instant messages, web pages, blogs, video and digital photo images, and/or text messages; it is considered inappropriate speech when it involves

- obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful messages;
- posting information that could cause damage, danger, or disruption of the educational process;
- making a personal attack, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks
- knowingly or recklessly posting false or defamatory information about a person;
- using technological communication to intimidate, bully, harass, or embarrass others in any area included in this policy.

Please note: Students' home and personal use of technology can have an impact on the school and on other students. If a student's personal expression involving technology—such as a threatening message to another student or a violent web site—creates a likelihood of disruption of the educational process, the student may face school discipline as well as criminal penalties. The courts have ruled, in fact, that the school has not only an ethical obligation but also a legal obligation to take action in these kinds of situations.

Sexual harassment/bullying: Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when

- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's school or work performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment.
- sexual harassment/bullying may also include spreading sexual rumors or making sexually suggestive or sexually abusive remarks.

Retaliation: includes intimidation, coercion, discrimination, or retaliation in any form against an individual who reports or threatens to report harassment, or who testifies, assists, or participates in any manner in an investigation.

Complaint/Reporting/Follow-up Procedures

A student who feels that he/she is a victim of bullying/harassment is encouraged to confront the offender and clearly state that the behavior or conduct is offensive and needs to stop. Doing nothing, saying nothing, or trying to ignore the behavior of someone who is bullying or harassing is almost never interpreted by the perpetrator as a sign that the student wants her/him to stop.

If the bullying/harassment continues, or if the student is not comfortable confronting the perpetrator, she/he has a responsibility to report the bullying/harassment as soon as possible to a faculty, staff member or counselor. Those who receive such reports act on them immediately. If the report involves a faculty or staff member, the matter will be referred directly to the principal. The counselor, assistant principal, or the principal will investigate the complaint/report.

Any student who is not directly being bullied/harassed, but is an observer or third party, who is offended by the behavior witnessed, should bring the situation to the attention of a faculty or staff member, or counselor so the actions being witnessed can be investigated and possible corrective action taken. It should be noted here that in a community where compassion inspires and integrity matters, students who are bystanders or witnesses have a responsibility to demonstrate compassionate support for the targeted student and to report dangerous behaviors and/or situations to appropriate school personnel.

Reports of bullying harassment will be documented in writing by the teacher and when necessary, the counselor, assistant principal, or the principal and will include details of the incident(s), names of the individuals involved, and names of any witnesses.

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School follows a “zero indifference” approach, which requires all staff to respond to all instances of bullying, or harassment of which they are aware. The administration will take every report of bullying/harassment seriously. All reports of harassment will be investigated by the teacher, counselor, assistant principal, or the principal promptly and in an impartial and in as confidential a manner as possible.

If the school determines that bullying/harassment has occurred, effective remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances involved. Any student determined by the administration to be responsible for bullying/harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Any employee determined by the administration to be responsible for unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

If a student or the parents feel that a report of bullying/harassment has not been addressed properly or resolved to their satisfaction, they may bring the matter to the direct attention of the principal.

BULLYING BEHAVIORS CHART*					
MILD	MODERATE				SEVERE
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION					
▪ Pushing ▪ Shoving ▪ Spitting	▪ Kicking ▪ Hitting	▪ Defacing property ▪ Stealing	▪ Physical acts that are demeaning and humiliating, but not bodily harmful (e.g., depanting) ▪ Locking in a closed or confined space	▪ Physical violence against family or friends	▪ Threatening with a weapon ▪ Inflicting bodily harm
SOCIAL ALIENATION (In-person and online)					
▪ Gossiping ▪ Embarrassing	▪ Setting up to look foolish	▪ Ethnic slurs ▪ Setting up to take the blame	▪ Publicly humiliating (e.g. revealing personal information) ▪ Excluding from group ▪ Social rejection	▪ Maliciously excluding ▪ Manipulating social order to achieve rejection ▪ Malicious rumor-mongering	▪ Threatening with total isolation by peer group
VERBAL AGGRESSION (In-person and online)					
▪ Mocking ▪ Name calling ▪ Dirty looks ▪ Taunting	▪ Teasing about clothing or possessions	▪ Teasing about appearance	▪ Intimidating phone calls	▪ Verbal threats of aggression against property or possessions	▪ Verbal threats of violence or inflicting bodily harm
INTIMIDATION (In-person and online)					
▪ Threatening to reveal personal information ▪ Graffiti ▪ Publicly challenging to do something	▪ Defacing property or clothing ▪ Playing a dirty trick	▪ Taking possessions (e.g., lunch, clothing, books or materials)	▪ Extortion	▪ Threats of using coercion against family or friends	▪ Coercion ▪ Threatening with a weapon
HARASSMENT DUE TO DIFFERENCE (REAL OR PERCEIVED)					
▪ Joke telling with racial, ethnic, homosexual, physically challenged, etc. targets	▪ Exclusion due to perceived difference or group/class membership	▪ Racial, ethnic, cultural, sexual, etc. slurs, put downs	▪ Verbal accusations, insults ▪ Public humiliation	▪ Destroying or defacing property due to difference or other group/class membership	▪ Physical or verbal attacks due to group/class membership
SEXUAL HARASSMENT (In-person and online)					

▪ Sexual or “dirty jokes” ▪ Conversations that are too personal	▪ Howling, catcalls, whistles ▪ Leers and stares	▪ “Wedgies” (pulling underwear up at the waist) ▪ Repeatedly asking someone out when he or she isn’t interested	▪ Spreading sexual rumors ▪ Pressure for sexual activity ▪ De-panting ▪ Bra snapping	▪ Cornering, blocking, standing too close, following too close	▪ Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault ▪ Rape
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DIOCESAN SUSPENSION AND APPEALS PROCESS POLICY

The following is the Diocesan School Board policy on suspension and appeals:

“It is the expectation of the Diocesan Catholic Schools that students will behave according to, the policies, rules, and regulations of the schools in which they are enrolled. When the rules are violated, the school will impose reasonable disciplinary measures within the established authority of the school so that students are treated with fairness and firmness.

The classroom teacher is the primary disciplinarian in the classroom. When it is deemed necessary for the classroom teacher to take extraordinary disciplinary action, the behavior of the student and the recommended action will be reviewed by the person (s) responsible for student discipline and knowledge of school policy and implications. This person will probably be the Dean of Students, assistant principal or the Principal.

After a thorough investigation is conducted, and it is determined that more severe action is appropriate, such as suspension and/or expulsion, the following procedures will apply:

(A) Suspension:

When it becomes necessary to suspend a student because of a disciplinary problem or violation of school regulations, the appropriate school authority will notify the student and the student’s parent or legal guardian immediately by telephone and in writing by registered mail no later than (3) school days after the incident. The Principal is the appropriate authority when communicating a suspension to the parent or legal guardian. An appeal of the decision must be made by the parent or legal guardian to the principal no later than (3) school days after notification. The final decision to suspend will be determined by the Principal.

(B) Expulsion

For serious disciplinary reasons and/or violations of major school regulations a student may be expelled from school after the principal has meet with the student and the student’s parent or legal guardian. If the Principal decides that an expulsion is warranted, a written notice of expulsion will be sent to the parent or legal guardian by registered mail no later than (3) days after meeting with the student’s parent or legal guardian.

Expulsions may be appealed to the Principal in writing by the student’s parent or legal guardian no later than five (5) school days after the disciplinary meeting with the student and parent or

legal guardian (or one week if school is not in session). If there is cause for further review, a written appeal should be submitted to the Principal that clearly states the grounds for the appeal and all the pertinent information.

The Principal will immediately forward the appeal letter to a Disciplinary Review Committee. The committee will consider the application of school policy as indicated in the School Handbook and will determine if due process was followed.

Sufficient grounds for an appeal are limited to the following criteria: (1) an issue of procedure, i.e., school officials inappropriately followed procedures explained in the applicable Student handbook, (2) an issue of policy, i.e., school officials did not follow policy as explained in the applicable Student Handbook, or (3) substantial new information has come forward after the censure was administered.

If the Disciplinary Review committee determines that there are not sufficient grounds for an appeal, the parent and/or legal guardian will be notified by registered mail of this decision no later than five (5) days after receipt of the appeal letter by the Principal.

If the Disciplinary Review Committee determines there are sufficient grounds for an appeal, the parent and/or legal guardian will receive written notification of this decision no later than five (5) school days after receipt of the appeal letter by the principal. Included in the letter will be the notification of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing. The disciplinary review Committee will conduct the hearing no later than ten (10) school days after notification of the existence of proper grounds for appeal.

CONSIDERATION

The Principal will receive the recommendation of the Discipline Review Committee and will communicate the recommendation to the parent or legal guardian by registered mail. The decision of the Discipline Review Committee is final.

Records are kept of all proceedings.

ACADEMIC NOTICES

A student who is consistently behind in homework or who has failed to complete a major project will receive an Academic Notice. When a student receives an academic notice, it must be returned to the school the next day signed by the parent with the work completed. If the notice is not signed and/or the work not completed, it may result in an academic detention. Students with repeated academic notices may be removed from field trips or other special activities.

EXTRAORDINARY EXCLUSION

When students enter Our Lady of the Valley School, they understand and agree that the school reserves the right to exclude them at any time if their conduct, attitude or academic standing is regarded by the school administration as unacceptable. It is understood and agreed that Our

Lady of the Valley School, or any of the administrative officers or faculty, shall not be liable in any way whatsoever for such exclusion.

DRUG ABUSE, ALCOHOL, SMOKING, VAPING

The following is the Diocesan School Board policy on drug, alcohol, and tobacco use:

“It is strictly forbidden for any student to use, possess, or distribute alcohol, tobacco and drugs on school premises, in a school-owned vehicle, or during any school-sponsored trip or activity. This includes, but is not limited to, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, opiates, inhalants, mind-altering substances, drug paraphernalia, or controlled substances as defined by federal and state law for which the student has no prescription from a duly recognized medical authority or use of another person’s prescription. Students found using or possessing alcohol, tobacco or drugs on their persons, in their personal effects or in their vehicles shall be subject to disciplinary action as outlined by the school’s policies and regulations.”

UNACCEPTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT SCHOOL

Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be in the off position in the student’s locker. They are to remain off from the arrival at school until picked up after school. Devices are not permitted during carpool. If they are used, seen, or heard during school hours, they will be confiscated.

Items taken away from students will be returned to the student at the end of the school day for their first violation. Subsequent violations will require the parent(s)/guardian(s) to pick up the device from the office or teacher. Repeated violations will result in lost phone privilege for the year. The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property.

In addition, students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos, text messages, or other materials, on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion. In certain cases, law enforcement must be contacted by the school.

Routine checks will be made to ensure that students are following Diocesan and school policy. If an emergency arises, students will be allowed to use the office phone. Students are discouraged from bringing cell phones to school. If a parent finds it an absolute necessity for a student to bring a cell phone to school, the phone **MUST** be in the locker and **TURNE**D OFF. Cell phones must be unseen and unheard. They are not allowed in the classroom unless permission by the teacher is granted as it relates to the lesson or classroom activity. **Cell phones or any other communication devices (i.e., iPads®, iPhones®, Apple Watch® etc.) may not be used during carpool, Extended Day Care, or any after school activities (unless**

authorized by the teacher for a related activity). Students violating this rule will be given consequences as described in “Responsibility-Centered Discipline Policy” on pages 48-50.

LUNCH AREA CONDUCT

Students are urged to keep the lunch area as clean as possible. In order to accomplish this, the following rules must be followed.

- Students are to put all used disposable articles in the containers provided.
- Students are not to misuse any lunchroom facilities, including equipment, chairs, and tables.
- Food or drink is never to be taken out of the lunchroom.
- Students who spill food or drink in the lunchroom are expected to clean up.
- Be orderly, courteous, and respectful in serving lines.
- Students may not, under any circumstances, use each other’s milk cards or ice cream cards.
- Carbonated drinks, coffee, or energy drinks may not be brought to school.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Altar Servers - Students may become servers in grade 4.
2. Annual Staff - Membership will be selected from 6th through 8th graders requesting Yearbook Exploratory Class.
3. Band—OLV has an optional Band Program for students in eighth grade. The fee may be paid on a 10-month basis, due when tuition is due. Band meets two times a week in during afternoon classes.
4. Children’s Church Choir-Students in grades 1 through 8 are invited to participate in this activity that meets Wednesday afternoons.
5. Dramatic Arts: Musical performances are held throughout the year. Participation is usually for grades 1 through 8, depending on the production. Students audition for parts and rehearsal schedules are announced.
6. Guardian Angels - 5th-7th grade students selected by the faculty to serve as safety patrol before and after school. Qualities for selection include leadership, cooperation, and dependability. A detention will warrant a one-week suspension from Guardian Angels. Guardian Angels are not authorized to direct traffic but are to assist the children in getting in their cars safely. Parents and children should remember that Guardian Angels are not adults, but student volunteers trying to do a conscientious job. Please help by following their directions.
7. Science Olympiad-Students are selected in Grades 5 through 8 to compete against schools at the middle and high school level, in regional, state, and national competitions. The award-winning teams have had a history of success for several years. The team traditionally meets on Wednesday afternoons.

8. Student Council - A very active organization which undertakes many projects and activities in the course of the year. It meets on Wednesdays from 7:30 A.M. to 7:50 A.M. Officers include: President (8th grade), Vice-President (7th grade), Secretary (7th grade), Treasurer (8th grade), Historian (6th grade), Chaplain (6th grade), and a representative from each class, grade 4 through 8.

The following qualifications are required of students for their names to be submitted for Student Council at the beginning of the year:

- Must have satisfactory conduct from previous year.
- 2.5 GPA from previous year.
- Able to accept responsibility.
- Evidence of leadership ability.
- Respected by others and respectful of others.
- Ability to communicate and work with others.
- Generous with time, including outside of school hours.
- If an officer receives a detention, the student will be on probation from Student Council for three weeks. The student may not attend meetings or participate in any other Student Council activity during this period. A second detention will result in automatic expulsion from the Student Council office.

9. Sports Program

- a. OLV competes in Track and Field in the annual Field Day at John Carroll Catholic High School.
- b. Girls in grades Kindergarten through eight may participate in cheerleading.
- c. OLV Church sponsors basketball, volleyball, soccer, and cheerleading. Check the church bulletins for registration information.
- d. John Carroll Catholic High School sponsors middle school teams in football, basketball, volleyball, cross-country, track and field, baseball, softball, dance, golf, tennis, bowling, wrestling, soccer, and cheerleading.

Requirements/Standards

- 2.0 GPA per 9 weeks.
- Anyone absent from school or leaving school because of illness, may not participate in practices or games on that same day.
- A student who is suspended from school may not participate in practices or games during the period of suspension.

BIRTHDAYS AND PARTY INVITATIONS

Cupcakes or cookies for the entire class may be sent to school or brought to the office in recognition of your child's birthday. **(No flowers, balloons, gifts, etc.)**

"Happy Birthday" may be sung, but no further celebration is permitted. Please send a note in advance informing the teachers of your plans and the date. Invitations to parties may not be

handed out at school. While it may not be possible to invite the entire class, excluding one or two students is not in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding mercy and social justice.

GIFTS

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture only creates hurt feelings among other students.

PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS

The following special occasions are approved this academic year for parties or celebrations. Keep in mind that different grades are approved for specific activities, and not all grades have an approved party/celebration for each event. Teachers at each grade level will share with you what the approved practices are with for each event: **Blessed Mother's Birthday, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter.** When planning refreshments for these events, moderation is encouraged.

Diocesan Policy– Social Media Parent Agreement

As a parent or guardian, I recognize that the use of the Internet comes with a corresponding responsibility to use it wisely both for myself and my child. I also recognize that sending my child to a Catholic school is a privilege that comes with the corresponding duty to act in a Christian way towards others. I therefore pledge to refrain from using the internet in any way that might disparage the school's administrators or its teachers. If I have a problem with school personnel, I will take my complaints directly to the school's administration and not broadcast vile, hateful or disparaging remarks is an indication of my intent to withdraw my child or children from the school and the principal has my permission to act accordingly.

FIELD TRIPS

Students have the opportunity to participate in various field trips throughout the year. Field trips will be related to an aspect of the curriculum and age appropriate. Only students currently enrolled in the class participating in the field trip will be allowed to attend. School disciplinary rules apply on all field trips.

Transportation by bonded or public conveyance will be arranged by the school secretary. Chaperones for the field trip are the teacher and aide. If additional chaperones are needed, the teacher/principal will select the chaperones. The parent must complete the Diocesan Child Safety Class and have a background check done by the school to be considered as a chaperone.

A child must have a signed and dated Field Trip Permission Form and Indemnity Form before he/she leaves the school grounds. Failure to present this form to the classroom teacher will cause the student to miss the field trip and to remain at school until the class returns.

All field trips must be scheduled and approved by the principal. It is required that out-of-town trips be approved by the Superintendent.

In certain instances, students will not attend the trip. Students choosing not to attend a field trip must attend school as usual. Arrangements will be made with another classroom teacher. The principal may deny a student the privilege of attending the field trip due to behavior or any factor that would hinder the trip for the majority. Other guidelines are listed below:

1. Field trips are re-evaluated each year to determine the trips compatibility with curricular goals.
2. A field trip is a privilege and not a right.
3. There are no “traditional” field trips. Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip has become a school tradition.
4. All grades do not always have the same number of field trips.
5. Field trips are permissible for all grades when advanced planning, location, and the experience ensure a successful learning opportunity.
6. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
7. A written **Field Trip Permission Form along with an Indemnity Form**, signed and dated by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission **cannot** be accepted. Permission slips and Indemnity Forms are due in the office forty-eight hours after receipt of the permission slip.
8. **Field trip Permission Forms and Indemnity Forms** are available from the homeroom teachers, the office, or the faculty chaperone in charge. This is the only format that may be used to allow a student to leave school during school hours. Call the school for information needed to complete the form. **Note:** a fax does not take the place of an original signature.
9. A **telephone call cannot** be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.
10. All monies collected for the field trip are **non-refundable**.
11. **Cell phones are not allowed** on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.
12. **Parents who are not “official” chaperones may not drive their car to a field trip destination with the plan of accompanying the class on the field trip. Our risk management insurance company insures the “official” chaperones and participation by unofficial chaperones jeopardizes the protection for our students and all other “official” adults on the trip. (Emphasis 2023)**
13. Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring pre-school or school-age siblings on the field trip.
14. All chaperones must be 25 years of age or older.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School Artificial Intelligence Policy (NEW 2026)

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School recognizes the growing prevalence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its applications. When used judiciously, AI can streamline, support, and enhance our work. OLV strives to teach our students responsible AI use, and to that end has developed the following AI usage guidelines to be implemented for the 2026-2027 school year. These guidelines were formulated in conjunction with input from the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama's "Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Catholic Schools."

- AI is not a tool that students in preschool through fourth grade will use at this time.
- Students in grades 5-8 will have access to TrekAI, which is the only approved AI platform that will be permitted for use by students.
- Teachers will instruct students as to which of the following levels of AI usage will be acceptable for assignments. The tiers of usage are described on the following page.
- When AI is used for assignments, students will write on the assignment how AI was used.
- Improper use of AI tools is academic dishonesty, and consequences will align with previously established school policies. This includes both academic and technology usage.

<i>No AI Use</i>	<i>No AI can be used for this activity. This is all your own, independent work</i>
<i>AI Prep</i>	<i>AI tools can be used to organize your ideas or formulate a template. Your final work should be based on your own words and ideas.</i>
<i>AI Helper</i>	<i>Use AI tools to help draft outlines, brainstorm ideas, or edit your work. Don't submit something that's done by AI alone.</i>
<i>All AI</i>	<i>AI can help you create any part of your work! Create great prompts and find creative ways to use the AI tools.</i>
<i>Novel AI</i>	<i>Use AI to find a new problem, solve a found problem, or develop improvement of an existing solution. Where can AI take you?</i>

Important Forms to Be Returned to Homeroom Teacher

Computer-Internet Acceptable Conduct and Use Agreement

Our Lady of the Valley educates 21st century learners through 21st century teaching. Our objective is to fully prepare students to use the resources available in appropriate, constructive, productive, and intelligent ways. We provide students with numerous technology resources. This agreement, along with the student handbook, instructs students on appropriate use and prohibited activities when using technology resources. Students are expected to follow the guidelines stated below and use appropriate digital citizenship.

In accepting this agreement, students acknowledge the following rules and conditions:

As an OLV student, I understand that my school network is owned by the school and my work is not private. OLV has the right to access my information at any time.

Government Laws:

I will use computers in conformity with the laws of the United States and the State of Alabama. Violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

Criminal Acts – These include, but are not limited to, “hacking” or attempting to access computer systems without authorization, harassing email, cyber stalking, vandalism, and/or unauthorized tampering with computer systems.

Libel Laws – Publicly defaming people through the published material on the internet, email, etc.

Copyright Violations – Copying, selling or distributing copyrighted materials without the written permission of the author, engaging plagiarism.

Netiquette and Responsible Use:

I will be polite and use appropriate language in all my digital communications.

I will use all digital communication responsibly. I will not send or post hate or harassing mail nor engage in cyber bullying.

I understand that passwords are private. I will not allow anyone to use my password or try to use that of others.

I understand that what I do on social networking websites should not reflect negatively on my fellow students, teachers, or OLV School. I will be held responsible for how I represent myself and my school on the Internet.

I understand that pretending to be someone else on-line is forbidden.

I will not try to bypass security settings or Internet filters.

I understand that vandalism is prohibited.

I understand the Internet is a source for information that is both true and false and the school is not responsible for inaccurate information obtained from the Internet.

I will use the technology at OLV for educational purposes only.

I will follow the rules of the school when publishing schoolwork online.

I will honor my school's procedures for the storage of information. I realize that after prior notice has been given to me, files may be deleted from the system to protect the integrity of the network or because of space limitations on the computer's hard drive.

I will not reveal my personal information, home address, or personal phone number or those of students, teachers, or other staff members.

The use of the computer is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of these privileges.

Consequences for violation of this agreement:

I understand and will abide by the above Acceptable Use Agreement. Should I commit a violation, I understand that consequences of my actions could include suspension of computer privileges, school disciplinary action, and/or referral to law enforcement.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Acceptable Conduct and Use Agreement. I am aware that technology access is provided for educational purposes. I recognize that it is impossible for OLV to restrict access to all controversial materials, and I will not hold the school responsible for materials acquired on the school network. I also understand that children's computer activities at home should be supervised because they can affect the school environment. I give permission for my child to use technology resources at OLV.

I give permission for my child to use technology resources at Our Lady of the Valley School.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Schools must have a signed *Release and Authorization* form for any media interviews as well as for the use of any video tapes, photographs or similar items used publicly. It is recommended that individuals in photographs are not identified by name. This pertains to bulletin boards, websites, etc.

Name: _____ Homeroom: _____

Release and Authorization

I understand that by signing this *Release and Authorization* I hereby grant authority to

_____ for the use of any video tapes,
(school)
photographs, or similar items in which my child/children might appear, or statements made by
them, in the production, display or sale of public service or promotional announcements as well
as in corporate sponsored activities approved by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of
Birmingham in Alabama. I also hereby release _____
(school)
from any claims that may be made by me based upon _____ use of this
(frequency)
material.

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

SCHOOL/PARENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

As the primary educators of their children, parents/guardians freely make the choice of a Catholic education for their sons/daughters. Registration at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School is an agreement by the parent/guardian to accept and abide by the rules and regulations of the institution and to support its philosophy of education.

A cooperative relationship between Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School personnel and a parent/guardian is essential for the overall education of a student. It is critical that a cooperative relationship be maintained through constructive dialogue with the parent/guardian.

If a parent/guardian refuses to abide by the rules and regulations of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School, or by word or action is not supportive of its goals, or otherwise fails to meet his/her obligations under school or Diocesan policies, the administrator may require the parent/guardian to withdraw his/her child or children from Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School.

Additionally, parents/guardians will be held to the same standards of respect as students are in regards to their interactions with administrators, teachers, staff, and students.

It is understood that this agreement is continuing in nature and shall be in effect for the duration of my child(ren)'s enrollment at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School.

We each agree to abide by the above stated provisions, which are in compliance with the policy of the Catholic Diocese of Birmingham and Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School.

Right to Amend: The school reserves the right to change policies and procedures as outlined in the School Handbook. Parents will be notified of any changes by e-mail, through the Tuesday Take-Home folders, and/or the newsletter.

We the undersigned, state that we have read and agree to be governed by the School Handbook and the "School/Parent Partnership Agreement" stated above for Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School for the 2026-2027 school year. We understand fully the regulations contained therein and recognize the right of the school to establish rules and provide for their enforcement.

***This form MUST be signed and returned to school by Tuesday, August 18, 2026.**

Family Name: _____

Child(ren):	_____	Grade:	_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____
	_____		_____

Parent/Guardian Signature (at least one parent signature is required):

_____	Date: _____
_____	Date: _____

Appendix One---Required Diocesan Policies

Asbestos Management Plan:

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School does not have asbestos containing materials in its facilities. However, in order to be in compliance with AHERA, Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School has an up to date Asbestos Management Plan. Review of the plan is available upon request, and the principal is trained on this plan.

1001 Mission & Vision: Catholic Schools

The mission of the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic Schools is to educate our students to seek God in Truth and for loving service by teaching the message of the Gospel, forming a community of faith, providing the whole child with a Catholic and Christ-centered environment, and inspiring all to reach their full academic and spiritual potential.

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama provide an excellent educational experience in the Catholic tradition enabling all students to develop their God-given talents.

- We lead students to recognize the wonder of God in all things and to inspire them to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ with joy.
- We send them into the world to actively share their faith with others.
- We develop disciples with substantial knowledge and skills, a genuine thirst for the truth, and a sincere desire to love and serve the Lord and others.

4002 Age Requirements

To enroll in a Diocese of Birmingham Catholic school, students must be:

- Preschool: 3 years of age (PreK3) or 4 (PreK4) on or before September 1 of that school year
- Kindergarten: 5 years of age on or before September 1 of that school year
- 1st Grade: 6 years of age on or before September 1 of that school year

In addition, students desiring to enter First Grade in a Diocese of Birmingham school who have not completed kindergarten and will be 6 years of age on or before December 31 must successfully complete a first-grade readiness assessment, as selected by the school.

4101 Transfer of Records

After a student graduates or transfers to another school, the cumulative record shall be retained permanently at the school according to the retention of records guidelines provided by the Catholic Schools Office and the Diocesan Office of Archives.

Families are expected to have met all outstanding financial obligations to the school before official records will be sent to the receiving school.

Outstanding financial obligations will be communicated to the receiving school when a student is transferring from one Diocese of Birmingham school to another.

4102 Photo & Video as Student Record

Photos or videos maintained by the school can be considered part of the student's educational record in certain circumstances. When the school uses the photo or video for official purposes, such as disciplinary action, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student directly related to the photo/video may, upon request, inspect and review the photo or video in the presence of school administration. Copies of the photo or video will not be released directly to the parent or guardian.

4201 Catholic Faith & Moral Standards

As a condition of initial and continued enrollment as a student in a Diocese of Birmingham Catholic school, a student's conduct (both in and outside of school and in-person or online) must be consistent with Catholic faith and morals. Conduct which is inconsistent with Catholic faith and morals, which is a threat to the health, safety, reputation and welfare of other students or personnel and/or which causes scandal, impairs or threatens to impair the reputation of the Church or its schools, is grounds for disciplinary sanctions up to and including immediate dismissal/expulsion.

4202 Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is not to be used under any circumstances in any Diocese of Birmingham school or early learning center. Corporal punishment is the use of physical punishment, involving physical force, such as hitting, paddling, or spanking, as a means of discipline or correction.

4210 Weapons

It is strictly forbidden for any student to possess a weapon on school premises, including in a student's vehicle, in a school owned vehicle or school-authorized transportation, or during any school-related trip or activity.

For the purpose of this policy, a "weapon" is any instrument or device designed primarily for use in inflicting death or injury upon a human being, and which is capable of inflicting death or injury upon a human being when used in the manner for which it was designed. Additionally, any instrument or device of any sort whatsoever which can be used in such a manner as to indicate that an individual intends to inflict death or serious injury upon the other, and which, when so used, is capable of inflicting death upon a human being is a weapon. Facsimiles of weapons used in a threatening fashion are subject to this policy.

Students found possessing a weapon will be subject to expulsion. Law enforcement may also be called.

The principal of the school should immediately notify the Superintendent of Catholic Schools of any violation of this policy

4220 Suspension and Expulsion

It is the expectation of the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic Schools that students will behave in a dignified, Christian manner in accordance with the policies, rules, and regulations of the schools in which they are enrolled. When the rules are violated, the school will impose

reasonable disciplinary measures within the established authority of the school and according to procedures outlined in the school handbook so that students are treated with fairness and firmness.

When it is deemed necessary to take extraordinary disciplinary action, the behavior of the student and the recommended action will be reviewed by the school administrator(s) responsible for student discipline according to school and diocesan policy and implications.

After a thorough investigation is conducted, and it is determined that more severe action is appropriate, such as suspension and/or expulsion, the following procedures will apply:

Suspension:

When it becomes necessary to suspend a student, either in school or out of school, because of a disciplinary problem, violation of school regulations, or pattern of behavior the appropriate school authority will notify the student and the student's parent or legal guardian immediately by telephone and in writing. The reason for the suspension, the duration of the suspension, and any requirements for reinstatement will be included in the communication. Circumstances for how school assignments will be handled are made by the principal, in accordance with school handbook policy.

Expulsion:

When it becomes necessary to consider the expulsion of a student because of a disciplinary problem, violation of school regulations, or pattern of behavior the student may be expelled from school after the principal has met with the student and the student's parent or legal guardian. The principal must consult with the pastor/president and the superintendent prior to meeting with the parent(s) and/or guardian(s). If the principal decides that an expulsion is warranted, a written notice of expulsion will be sent to the parent or legal guardian no later than three (3) days after meeting with the student and the student's parent or legal guardian.

4220P Suspension and Expulsion Appeal Procedure

Expulsions may be appealed to the Principal in writing by the student's parent or legal guardian no later than five (5) school days after the date the parent/legal guardian was notified of the expulsion. The written appeal should be submitted to the principal that clearly states the grounds for the appeal and all the pertinent information and documentation.

Sufficient grounds for an appeal are limited to the following criteria: (1) an issue of procedure, i.e., school officials inappropriately followed procedures explained in the applicable Student Handbook, (2) an issue of policy, i.e., school officials did not follow policy as explained in the applicable Student Handbook, or (3) substantial new information has come forward after the censure was administered.

The principal will immediately forward the appeal letter to the Superintendent of Schools, who establishes Disciplinary Review Committee from a list of previously selected Principals and Assistant Principals. The Committee will consider the application of school policy as indicated in the Student Handbook and will determine if due process was followed.

The Disciplinary Review Committee will communicate its decision to the principal and will send written notification to the parent or legal guardian within 10 business days of receipt of the written appeal by the Superintendent. The decision of the Disciplinary Review Committee is final.

The review will be conducted anonymously, and the committee will be made up of principals, schools pastors, and/or assistant principals from diocesan school locations other than the one named in the appeal. Records of all proceedings will be retained in the Superintendent's office.

School advisory councils or boards are not involved in discipline decisions or appeals at any time.

4310 Alcohol, Tobacco, Electronic Delivery Systems, and Drugs

It is strictly forbidden for any student to use, possess, or distribute alcohol, tobacco and drugs on school premises, in a school-owned vehicle or school-authorized transportation, or during any school-related trip or activity. This includes, but is not limited to, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, opiates, inhalants, mind-altering substances, drug paraphernalia, controlled substances as defined by federal and state law for which the student has no prescription from a duly recognized medical authority or use of another person's prescription, or an electronic nicotine delivery system or other electronic battery-powered device capable of being used to deliver any e-liquid, e-liquid substitute, tobacco, CBD oil, THC oil, herbal extract, or nicotine salt, or any analog thereof. Students found using or possessing alcohol, tobacco, an electronic nicotine delivery system or other electronic battery-powered device as described above, or drugs on their persons, in their personal effects or in their vehicles shall be subject to disciplinary action as outlined by the school's policies and regulations.

2203 State Laws

Catholic Schools shall adhere to the laws of the State of Alabama and the regulations of the state Department of Education as they pertain to church or non-public schools

2401 Protection of Reputation

It is vitally important that the good name and reputation of each student, faculty, and staff member as well as the good name of each school in the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama as an institution of the Catholic Church be protected.

In order to protect students, school employees, the school and the diocesan education institution as a whole, all students enrolled in a Diocese of Birmingham Catholic School are expected to treat the good name and reputation of each of the above with dignity and respect. The same is expected of each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in our schools. Public defamation of any of student, employee, or Catholic school by a student or parent/guardian is a serious matter and will not be tolerated. This includes whether defamation is done orally, in writing, via email, or social media and covers whether it occurs on or off campus, on personal time or on personal devices. Any student or parent found to be participating in any defamatory activity will be

subject to disciplinary/responsive action by the school. This could include dismissal of the student whether the action is by the student or his/her parent/guardian.

2402 Grievances

Any serious grievance regarding a Diocese of Birmingham Catholic school or its personnel that cannot be solved through an informal process using the local chain of authority (teacher, school administrator/principal, pastor/president) shall be resolved through Administrative Recourse. Administrative Recourse shall constitute the exclusive method for resolving such disputes after informal attempts at reconciliation have failed. The parties are bound by its determination as final and binding. Administrative Recourse is specifically limited to grievances as defined within the Administrative Recourse Procedures (2402P).

2402P Grievances: Administrative Recourse

DEFINITION A grievance is a formal complaint about any serious issue regarding a diocesan, parochial, or regional Catholic school or its personnel that needs a formal process of reconciliation in order for it to be resolved.

PURPOSE The primary purpose of Administrative Recourse shall be to secure, at the most proximate administrative level possible, equitable solutions to problems which may from time-to-time arise affecting the welfare or working conditions of persons associated with the school.

BASIC PRINCIPLES Informal attempts using the local chain of authority (teacher, school administrator/principal, pastor) have failed to resolve the grievance. The failure of a grievant to act within the prescribed timeframes shall act as a bar to any further appeal and the school administrator/principal's failure to give a decision within the timeframes shall permit the grievant to proceed to the next level. (See procedure below.) The grievant agrees that discussions during the procedural stages of a grievance shall be kept confidential. There shall be no retaliation against any party or participant in Administrative Recourse. Meetings held pursuant to this procedure shall be conducted by mutual agreement at a time and place that will afford a fair and reasonable opportunity for all persons, including witnesses to attend. Records of formal proceedings at every level shall be kept and made available to all parties involved.

PROCEDURE

Informal Attempts at Resolution

Before differences become formal grievances, every effort shall be made to resolve local-level disputes by way of a free and open discussion between the parties involved in the grievance. Accordingly, a grievant shall not pursue a grievance through the formal procedures outlined in this policy unless the grievant has first engaged in informal attempts with the normal chain of authority (teacher, school administrator/ principal, pastor/president) to reconcile the difference beginning with the person whom the grievance is against. The school administrator/principal or pastor/president may ask a third party to attend and assist the discussion.

Formal Procedures

In the event that informal attempts at resolving the dispute have been unsuccessful, the formal procedures outlined below shall be observed. Complaints to be resolved through these procedures, the following guidelines shall apply:

- For complaints relating to a school administrator/principal, the grievant will begin with LEVEL TWO
 - For complaints relating to a pastor or president, the grievant will begin with LEVEL THREE.
 - All other complaints will begin at Level One.
- LEVEL ONE — SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR/PRINCIPAL

The grievant shall submit the complaint in writing to the school administrator/principal within 10 business days following the occurrence of the event. In the complaint, the grievant must specifically request resolution through Administrative Recourse. The school administrator/principal will hold a meeting within seven business days following receipt of the written statement of grievance. The school administrator/principal, a grievance representative designated by the pastor/president and the grievant shall be present for the meeting. Within seven business days following the meeting, the school administrator/principal shall provide the grievant with a written decision.
- LEVEL TWO — PASTOR/PRESIDENT

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the school administrator/principal's written decision, the grievant may appeal the decision in writing within five days to the pastor/president. If the formal procedure begins with LEVEL TWO, the grievant shall put their complaint in writing and submit it to the pastor/president within 10 business days following the occurrence of the event. The pastor/president will hold a meeting within seven business days following receipt of the written statement of grievance or the appeal, as applicable. The pastor/president, a grievance representative designated by the pastor/president and the grievant shall be present for the meeting. Within seven business days following the meeting, the pastor/president shall provide the grievant and the school administrator/principal with a written decision.
- LEVEL THREE — CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the pastor's/president's written decision, the grievant may appeal the decision in writing within five business days to the Catholic Schools

Office. If the formal procedure begins with LEVEL THREE, the grievant shall put their complaint to writing and submit it to the Catholic Schools Office within 10 days following the occurrence of the event. The Catholic Schools Office or a designated representative of the superintendent will review all evidence and may choose to hold a meeting within 10 days following receipt of the appeal. The Catholic Schools Office will render a decision in writing stating findings of fact and conclusions within 10 business days of the evidence review and a copy of the decision shall be delivered to the grievant, the pastor/president and the school administrator/principal.

- LEVEL FOUR — OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

If the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at LEVEL THREE, a written appeal may be made within five business days to the Bishop. The Bishop or his designee will review the entire record relating to the grievance and may choose to hold a meeting which shall not be later than 15 business days after receipt of the written appeal. The grievant is entitled to attend the meeting, should one be held. The Bishop will render and communicate his recommendation to the Catholic Schools Office and the grievant of his ruling. The decision of the Bishop shall be final and binding.

2001 Bishop of the Diocese

The Bishop of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama exercises vigilance over all Catholic schools pertaining to the Diocese of Birmingham. The Bishop is also the ultimate authority and teacher of Catholic faith in the diocese. The Diocese of Birmingham Catholic schools and their personnel are responsible to the Bishop and his delegates in all matters concerning the Catholic faith.

2002 Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent is appointed by the Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama and executes the Bishop's vision for Catholic education in the Diocese of Birmingham.

The Superintendent:

- Serves as the primary administrator and supervisory officer of the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic Schools.
- Develops policy and supplies direction that exercise and develop the mission of Catholic education in the diocese.
- Provides leadership for developing and implementing plans that ensure a Catholic school climate that teaches Catholic values and is conducive to effective teaching and leadership.
- Serves as the Bishop's delegate in exercising vigilance over all aspects of the administration of Catholic Schools pertaining to the Diocese of Birmingham in

Alabama.

Develops and communicates a clear vision for the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic schools and mobilizes resources necessary to align with that vision.

2003 Diocesan Advisory Council for Catholic Education

The Diocesan Advisory Council for Catholic Education is the chief advisory body to the superintendent regarding the formulation of policies and advising on initiatives affecting diocesan, parochial, and regional Catholic schools.

The Diocesan Advisory Council for Catholic Education is appointed by the Bishop. The bylaws of the Diocesan Advisory Council for Catholic Education are available from the Catholic Schools Office and the Catholic Schools Office website.

2004 Pastor

The Pastor of the Parish or the designated Priest-Administrator of the regional parishes of the school is the spiritual and canonical leader of the school or early learning center. For the purposes of this policy manual, the rights and obligations denoted for a “Pastor” apply to the Pastor of the Parish of a parochial school and the designated Priest-Administrator of a regional school. The ultimate responsibility for decisions rests with the Pastor according to Canon Law and Diocesan Policy. He has the overall responsibility for the spiritual and administrative leadership of the school/early learning center.

The Pastor:

- Develops the faith community of the school and the School Advisory Council.
- Approves the selection of the Principal.
- Provides liturgical and sacramental opportunities and ensures that the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are clearly and accurately presented in the school.
- Establishes the School Advisory Council to assist in the governance of the school and serves as an ex-officio member of the Council.
- Approves School Advisory Council recommendations, including policies.
- Approves the school budget and monitors the financial affairs of the school, ensuring consultation with both the School Advisory Council Finance Committee and the Parish Finance Council.
- Approves the selection and termination of faculty and staff. Signs contracts.
- Evaluates the Principal’s performance on an annual basis.

2006 Principal

Under the supervision of the Pastor/President and the Superintendent, the principal is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the school.

The Principal:

- Executes the day-to-day functions as the spiritual and administrative leader of the school.

- Develops the instructional and operational programming of the school within the policies of the Policy Manual for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Birmingham, the state (as applicable), and the accrediting body.
- Hires faculty and staff with the appropriate credentials in alignment with the faith and mission of the school.
- Develops the curriculum and oversees instruction.
- Supervises staff performance.
- Prepares and manages the school budget with the School Advisory Council finance committee and in consultation with the Parish Council.
- Ensures compliance with all policies and regulations.
- Engages in ongoing assessment and advancement of the mission of the school.
- Keeps the School Pastor or President adequately and timely informed about the operation of the school.

If a Diocesan School does not have a President, the Principal exercises all of the roles listed in policy 2005. The performance of the Principal will be evaluated by the Superintendent.

2101 Governance Structures

Parochial schools are sponsored by a single parish. A parochial school is governed by the Pastor of the parish.

Regional schools are sponsored by multiple parishes that are geographically contiguous. A regional school is governed by a designated Priest-Administrator. The designated Priest-Administrator is typically the Pastor of the parish geographically nearest to the school.

Diocesan schools are overseen by the Superintendent of Schools, or his/her delegate. Diocesan schools typically employ a president to provide spiritual and administrative leadership for the school.

2102 Jurisdiction

Any Catholic school sponsored by the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama or a parish or parishes within the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, including any program from infant care through grade 12, shall be part of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office and subject to the Policy Manual for Catholic Schools.

2104 Homeschooling

The Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama recognizes home schooling by Catholic parents within the Diocese as an extension of the Church's educational apostolate. However, because home schooling groups do not meet the full requirements of an accredited Catholic School, they are not recognized as a Diocese of Birmingham Catholic school.

2201 Accreditation

All Catholic schools under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese

Birmingham in Alabama will be accredited by the recognized state, regional, and/or national accrediting agency identified by the Superintendent of Schools and the Bishop. Each school has the responsibility to meet the accreditation standards and requirements as set forth by the entity and specified by the Catholic Schools Office.

Early learning centers may choose to be accredited by a recognized state, regional, and/or national accrediting agency for early childhood.

2204 Policy Manual/ Handbooks

The school/early learning center will develop an employee handbook and a parent/student handbook which include its philosophy and goals in compliance and alignment with the Policy Manual for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Birmingham and other diocesan policies. The handbooks will also contain the policies and procedures which pertain to that particular school.

Current copies of the employee and student handbooks are to be available to the Catholic Schools Office, School Advisory Council, and faculty and staff. The student handbook is to be available to the parents.

Each school will evaluate its policies and procedures annually with the School Advisory Council. Proposed changes must be reviewed by the Superintendent of Schools prior to implementation.

2301 School Advisory Councils

Each Catholic school in the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama must have a School Advisory Council that follows policies, procedures, and best practices as determined by the Catholic Schools Office for operating Catholic school advisory councils. The purpose of the School Advisory Council is to advise and support the Pastor/President and the Principal.

The School Advisory Council must have a written constitution and bylaws which shall be in accordance with diocesan policies and procedures. Operational procedures provided by the Catholic Schools Office shall be followed.

Membership should include representation from the supporting parish(es), parents, and non-parent supporters of the school. Members should be supportive of the school and demonstrate a willingness to ensure the mission and future of the school. Advisory Council members must support and promote the official teachings of the Catholic Church.

The president/chairperson of the School Advisory Council must be a practicing Catholic in good standing.

2302 Ancillary Organizations

Each school may have ancillary organization(s) whose major function is to foster quality education, extracurriculars, and community-building through cooperation and communication between parents and staff.

Ancillary organizations must be under the direct supervision of the principal or president and have the approval of the Pastor/President.

Each ancillary organization must have a written constitution or charter and by-laws and operate according to all policies and procedures set forth by the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.