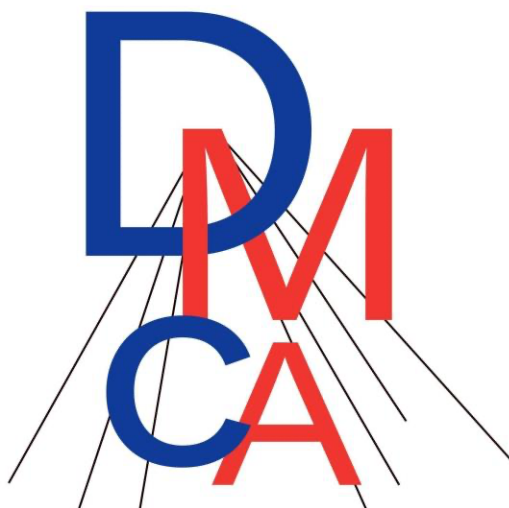


# **Parent-Student Handbook**

## **2022-2023**



### **Divine Mercy Catholic Academy**

**101-60 92<sup>nd</sup> St Ozone Park, NY 11416**

**718-845-3074 (ext. #1)    718-845-5068 (fax)**

**[www.divinemeracyca.org](http://www.divinemeracyca.org)**

## WELCOME LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,

Welcome to Divine Mercy Catholic Academy and the 2022-2023 school year! We are pleased to provide you and your children with a team of professionals dedicated to the highest standard of Catholic education and care of your child(ren).

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

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

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

**At the end of this Handbook are various documents for you to review and sign, as well as an Acknowledgement of Receipt of this Handbook. Please sign and return all these documents by September 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

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

Sincerely,

Sister Francis Marie Wysteppek, C.S.F.N.

Principal

## **DIRECTORY**

### **Faculty and Staff 2022-2023 Divine Mercy Catholic Academy**

Pastor	Father John Tino
Chairman of the Board	Mr. Joseph Cristiano
Principal	Sister Francis Marie Wysteppek, C.S.F.N
Secretary	Mrs. Maria Guzman-Paczkowski
Pre K – 3A	Ms. Alisha Barron / Ms. Christina Wick
Pre K – 3B	Mrs. Julia Natale / Mrs. Shirley D’Souza
Pre K – 4A	Mrs. Karen Friscia / Ms. Brianna Cuomo
Pre K – 4B	Mrs. Karina D’Amico / Ms. Diana Ramirez
Pre K	Mrs. Karen D’Elia / Mrs. Justina Perez
Kindergarten	Ms. Cara Lynch / Mrs. Michele Scarpelli
Grade 1	Mrs. Josephine Maruca
Grade 2	Ms. Deanna D’Elia
Grade 3	Mrs. Dani McAdam
Grade 4	Ms. Josephine Scultore
Grade 5	Ms. Sandra DeMarco
Grade 6	Mrs. Josephine D’Alessandro
Grade 7	Ms. Amanda Gillespie
Grade 8	Mrs. Ann Marie Spies
Spanish	Ms. Maria Suarez
Gym	Ms. Patricia McGlinchey
Art	Mrs. Veronica Boggiano
Office Staff/After School	Mrs. Lisa Ponce (extension #2)
Pre-K Director	Mrs. Kristina Kenny Perretta (ext. #3)
Bookkeeper	Mr. Damiano Manto (ext. #4)

### **Academy Board**

Mr. Joseph Cristiano, Chairperson	Dr. Sonia Martinez
Ms. Diane Piwinski, Co-Chair, Facilities	Dr. Monika Kurzatkowski
Mrs. Maria Mingione, Treasurer, Secretary	Councilman Eric Ulrich

## **ACADEMY OVERVIEW**

### **A. Mission Statement**

The mission of Divine Mercy Catholic Academy is to:

engender a strong sense of the Roman Catholic identity, a deep reverence for the sacraments, and a lifelong commitment to reflect the teachings of Christ throughout their lives;

enrich each child's development by requiring academic excellence and providing opportunities that challenge students and recognize individual achievement;

develop with parents, moral values which guide students to love all of God's creation and to be witness to the world with Christ as their model.

### **B. Our Philosophy**

We are committed in guiding the spirit, mind and body of the Divine Mercy Catholic Academy community by:

- fostering an environment rich in faith and academic excellence
- committing to the development of the whole person
- equipping our students to be true witnesses of Christ

### **C. History of the Academy**

Divine Mercy Catholic Academy was incorporated July 1, 2007. It was formed as a result of the merger of Nativity Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Schools. In September 2006 the above schools were merged as Nativity/St. Stanislaus School with two campuses. Elementary grades, Nursery to Grade 5, were housed in the Nativity building with Sister Marguerite Torre as principal, and St. Stanislaus became the middle school for Grades 6 to 8 with Sister Francis Marie Wysteppek as principal. In the spring of 2007, the decision was made to close both schools and re-open as Divine Mercy Catholic Academy. The school was no longer a parish school but an academy with a board of directors and S. Francis Marie Wysteppek as principal. The two campuses were reunited into one building when the enrollment dropped to one of each grade in 2010.

Nativity School opened in 1920, staffed by the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk to minister to Italian immigrants. St. Stanislaus School opened in 1925, staffed by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth to minister to Polish immigrants. Today, DMCA ministers to all ethnic groups, races, and religions.

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

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

....Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News.  
First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the

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

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

## **I. PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

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

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

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

Finally, in light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues, the Academy reserves the right to address and take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this Handbook. And, in light of the unique and essential religious mission of the Academy, the Academy may take actions in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the Academy, the Diocese of Brooklyn, or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the Academy to perform its

religious mission or to effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the Academy and the community of Faith.

## **II. CATHOLIC IDENTITY**

### **A. Catholic Identity**

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

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

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

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

### **B. Adherence to Catholic Doctrine**

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

### **C. Inclusion of All Other Faiths**

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

## **III. ACADEMICS**

### **A. Academic Expectations**

The Academy expects its students to perform to the best of their ability. Teachers evaluate students' progress on a regular basis with quizzes, tests, homework, presentations, participation, behavior in the classroom, and class presentation. After a test is graded, it will be sent home for a parent/guardian to review and sign. A parent/guardian's signature indicates that the parent/guardian is aware of the student's progress.

### **B. Curriculum & Assessments**

#### **NYS Testing**

Students in grades 4, 6, 7, and 8 will participate in New York State Testing. Parents receive an Individual Student Report (ISR) which includes a breakdown of a student's performance in different skill areas within ELA, Math and Science. This helps parents understand where their child is doing well and in what areas he or she may need additional practice. Parents can use these results to guide a discussion with their child's teacher about additional supports or challenges that may be needed in the classroom, as well as ways to support learning at home.

There are no negative consequences when taking state tests as the tests are considered diagnostic. The ELA and math test results are not recorded on student permanent record cards or report cards. New York State law forbids the use of state test results as the determining factor in promotion.

#### **TerraNova Testing**

Students in grades 3-8 will participate in TerraNova Testing in the fall. TerraNova testing is a nationally- normed, standardized testing program. This series of tests is issued to diagnose student performance and develop student learning goals.

## C. Religious Education

Religion is part of all that we see, teach and do at the Academy, and is a crucial component of students' academic learning. The Academy adheres to the current Diocese of Brooklyn curriculum guidelines in religion. Non-Catholic students are expected to fully participate in all religious education and formation programs, including, but not limited to, religion class, liturgies, and religious functions.

## D. Homework

Homework is an essential part of the Academy's instructional program, as it reinforces learning and provides students with opportunities to practice what they were taught in class. Homework can come in many forms, including, but not limited to, projects, reports, and independent reading. Students are required to complete all homework, including when a student is absent. **Parent, guardian, or other adult assistance with homework is key to a student's academic success!**

ALL students are expected to read independently for 20 minutes per evening (or, in the case of lower grades, to be read to).

Additionally, the time allotments for other homework, not including reading, are *approximately* as follows:

1- The average student should be able to complete written homework assignments in the specified time:

Grades 1 and 2	20-25 minutes
Grades 3 and 4	30-40 minutes
Grades 5 and 6	40-60 minutes
Grades 7 and 8	60-90 minutes

2- Homework is to be recorded and signed according to each teacher's directives. In Grades 2-8, students are to record homework in the assignment planner, and a parent signature is required each night.

3- Regular homework is not given on weekends, but reading may be assigned, incomplete assignments can be made up, or work can be done on long-term assignments. Grades 4, 6, and 7 preparing for state tests may be given required work on weekends and/or during vacation breaks.

4- In order to encourage a sense of responsibility phone calls and return visits to the school are not permitted for forgotten books or assignments.

5- Parents/guardians should check to see that all homework and assignments are neatly completed and that all materials and books are brought to school each day.

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



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

## **E. Grades**

The determination of grades is the responsibility of each individual teacher. Parents/guardians and students must know and understand how grades are determined, and are encouraged to reach out to each student's teacher or teachers.

The following is an overview of grades at the Academy:

**Nursery, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten will utilize the following grading system to identify progress for each area**

- 4: Meeting grade level expectations with distinction
- 3: Meeting grade level expectations
- 2: Progressing toward meeting grade level expectations
- 1: Not meeting grade level expectations
- X: Student is receiving this service

A student's grade is a comprehensive evaluation using a variety of measurement tools, which include:

- classwork/formative assessment
- homework
- tests and quizzes
- class participation
- projects/writing assignments

The percentage of these is given out by the classroom/departmental teachers at parent orientation meetings.

**Grades 1 through 8 will utilize the levels included above and alpha/numeric grades as indicated below:**

A+	= 97 – 100
A	= 93 – 96
B+	= 89 – 92
B	= 85 – 88
C+	= 81 – 84
C	= 77 – 80
D+	= 74 – 76
D	= 70 – 73
F	= Below 70

**For social emotional learning/ personal progress and religion report card evaluations.**

G: Area of Growth  
A: Area of Strength

The grades for each trimester are averaged for a final grade that are recorded on the student's permanent record card. Students who fail a subject for the year are required to attend summer school.

## **Honor Roll**

Grades 5-8 will be eligible for the honor roll based on the following criteria:

Principal's List - 95-100 in the all major subjects: Religion, Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, 90 or above in Spanish, and satisfactory (3 or 4 on report cards) in all special content subjects.

First Honors- 90-94 in subjects as stated above and 85 or above in Spanish

Second Honors - 85-89 in subjects as stated above and 80 or above in Spanish

Effort Award - based on excellent effort in all subjects

Grade 4 honors is based on the following criteria:

Principal's List - A+ in all major subjects as stated above

First Honors - B+ and above in subjects stated above

Second Honors - B and above in subjects stated above

In order to achieve any category on the honor roll, a student must receive at least satisfactory (3 or 4 on report cards) in personal progress, and satisfactory conduct (3 or 4) and effort in all subjects. Excessive absences (unless there is a doctor's note) and more than 5 latenesses will affect eligibility for honors.

## **F. Make-Up Work**

The policy at each grade level is set by the teacher in the parent orientation handouts.

## **G. Protecting Instructional Time**

Maintaining school schedule and structure is of the utmost importance during the school year. As academics make their calendar and schedules, their goal is to protect instructional time as much as possible. In protecting instructional time, parents are asked to refrain from removing their child during the school day for unnecessary activities. Appointments should be scheduled, when possible, before or after the school day in order to avoid disrupting student learning. Vacations and family trips should also be planned, when possible, for existing school vacation weeks. In the event of a necessary absence, parents should alert the school and classroom teacher as soon as possible. If an extended absence is known, parents should communicate with their child's teacher to create a plan for making up missed work.

## **H. Progress Reports & Report Card Schedule**

Parents/ legal guardians will receive report cards three times a year, at the end of each trimester. Parents/ legal guardians will also receive progress reports during each trimester prior to receiving the report cards. It is vital to a student's progress that an open communication exists between parents/ legal guardians and their child's teacher. Any concerns regarding a child's progress should be addressed first to the child's teacher.

### **I. Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parents/ legal guardians will have the opportunity to attend parent teacher conferences at the end of the first and second trimester following receipt of student report cards. While these are formally scheduled conferences, parents are also encouraged to schedule meetings with teachers or other staff, when necessary, to discuss their child's progress and learning goals.

### **J. Admission Policies**

Roman Catholic schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn base their educational purpose and all their activities on the Christian teaching of the essential quality of all persons as rooted in God's love.

The process for admission to the Academy is as follows: parents/guardians must complete the Academy application form and provide all required documents. If necessary, an interview will be held. Following an interview (if held) and evaluation of the materials, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing about whether the Academy is offering the child a position.

While admission is on a first-come, first served basis, the school endeavors to give preference in admission following these guidelines: first, to siblings of currently enrolled students; second, to Catholic students whose parents/guardians are active members of the parish; third, to Catholic students whose parents/guardians are active in another Catholic parish; and fourth, to non-Catholic students.

### **K. Transfers and Withdrawals**

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

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

At the discretion of the Principal, and in accordance with applicable law, the Academy has the right not to certify a student's graduation or provide transcripts of the student's academic record to third parties such as other schools, colleges, or employers, or to issue a diploma to the student, if there has been a breach of a material condition of the educational contract, such as failure to meet

financial obligations, infractions against the school's code of conduct, anti-bullying policy or violations of the policies of the Academy and those set forth in this Handbook.

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

#### **L. Recommendation for Next Grade Level**

The Academy takes the decision whether to promote or retain a student extremely seriously. Sometimes, however, testing, diagnosis and actual performance may indicate that a student cannot follow the school's complete course of study. In accordance with NYS Education Law, Assessment and Performance a student is being considered for retention at the same grade level, teachers will discuss the possibility with the Principal. Although the teacher consults with the Principal, the final decision for retaining a student rests with the Principal. Certain criteria the Principal and teachers may take into account as they consider a recommendation for retention includes that the student has failed to pass major subjects on each grade level and/or has not demonstrated acceptable progress toward mastery of standards, including failure to complete assignments, or repeated low scores in several areas on a report card.

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

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

#### **M. Graduation**

Graduation is the culmination of the school's academic and spiritual formation of its students. All activities are planned with this in mind.

All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are required to display the mastery of all subject areas through achievement of passing grades. Graduation and the rewarding of diplomas are determined by the requirements of the State Education Department of New York in conjunction with the Diocesan Office of Catholic Education and Divine Mercy Catholic Academy. If an 8<sup>th</sup> grader fails one or two subjects, he/she will not receive a diploma at graduation and will be required to attend summer school. The diploma will be given after a written report of successful summer school completion. If more than two subjects are failed, the student will have to repeat the grade at another school and may not take part in graduation exercises. This decision is made in conjunction with the teachers and Principal.

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

#### **N. Distance Learning**

If the need for distant learning arises, the teacher will make arrangements for distant learning through Zoom and Google Classroom.

### **O. Extracurricular Activities**

The Academy offers various extracurricular activities. Students are expected to follow school policy while engaged in any extracurricular activity. Participation in these activities is a privilege, and students are expected to fulfill their obligations in the classroom as a priority to any extracurricular activity.

Failure or difficulty meeting academic or behavioral requirements will result in a student's suspension or dismissal from the activity. The Principal makes the final determination as to participation in an extra-curricular activity.

When participating in extracurricular activities, including sports or otherwise, students must at all times demonstrate Catholic values. It is expected that students, coaches and fans display respect, civility and responsibility during all events, contests, and/or practices.

Students who do not abide by the Academy's policies will lose the opportunity to participate in any extracurricular activity.

### **P. Recess**

With the exception of school-wide events, which may include Mass, daily recess will be provided. If weather permits, the students will attend recess outside. If not, the classroom will be used. If a student has any physical limitation which may affect his or her ability to engage in all recess activities, the Academy must be notified in accordance with the Limitations of Physical Activity policy below.

Students may lose recess privileges for behavior or academic detention.

### **Q. Summer School**

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

Summer school is not held at the Academy. Parents will receive information for summer school programs at other Catholic schools and those provided by the DOE.

The summer school report card must be submitted to the Principal before September 1. Failure to attend summer school when required will result in retention at the same grade level or discharge of the student. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide documentation that summer school

has been successfully completed. In cases in which tutoring is allowed for the remediation, it must be undertaken by a qualified teacher and approved in advance by the Principal.

#### **IV. GENERAL INFORMATION**

##### **A. Academy Calendar and Hours**

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

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

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

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

##### **B. School Hours**

###### **Gr. K – 6**

Schools hours are from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, with the exception of early dismissal days

###### **Gr. 7 – 8**

Schools hours are from 7:45 AM to 3:00 PM, with the exception of early dismissal days

##### **C. School Office Hours**

The school's office is open from 7:30 AM to 2:00 PM

##### **D. Early Release Schedule – (Half Day)**

On these days, dismissal is at 12:30 PM

##### **E. After School Program**

The Academy offers an After School program. This occurs Monday through Friday, 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM and 12:30 PM – 6:00 PM on half-days. The After School program is an extension of the school day, and students are expected to follow all Academy policies and procedures during After School.

Directors of individual activities during After School may also issue rules of behavior, which recognize the special nature of non-classroom activities. In instances where students are picked up, parents/guardians are expected to make arrangements to pick up their children at the end of the program or activity. Students will be released only to a parent/guardian or a person previously specified **in writing** by the parent/guardian. After school program fees are expected to be paid in full upon being invoiced. Past due balances will result in a student not being allowed to participate in the program until the account is brought up to date.

## **F. Attendance**

The Academy has developed our attendance policy in accordance with New York State Education Law. This comprehensive attendance policy will help us uphold the philosophy and mission statement of our Academy.

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

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

Doctor or dental appointments should be scheduled for after regular school hours. Family vacations should not be planned for days when school is in session. Rather, students receive vacation time throughout the year. Teachers are not required to give assignments in anticipation of family vacations, and are not required to give make-up tests for absences due to vacation trips.

## **G. Lateness**

A student who arrives after the time set by the Academy for the beginning of the day will be marked late.

Students in Gr. 7 & 8 who enter the building after 7:45am and students in Gr. K -6 who enter the building after 8:00 am are late and are to stop in the office for a late pass. Lateness disrupts the learning of both the child who is late and the class that is interrupted. Excessive lateness may warrant a parent/teacher/principal conference. Lateness can also keep a student off the honor roll.

## **H. Arrival and Dismissal Policy**

Early arrival begins at 7:30 AM. Parents/guardians are to drop their children off at the main door with a teacher or staff member present. This is the safest place for children—with their peers and with an adult from the Academy present. We strongly encourage parents/guardians to drop their children off at early arrival time, as the additional time gives students more time to prepare for the day and socialize with their peers. For safety reasons parents/guardians and visitors are required to sign in at the Main Office.

At the end of the school day, the students will be dismissed from the various doors:

Kdg. and Gr. 4 - 6 The Main Door

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Gr. 1, 2, and 3 The Door nearest Rockaway Blvd.

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Gr. 7 & 8 The Door on 92<sup>nd</sup> Street

The Academy will not release a student to any adult that is not known to it as a parent, guardian, or custodian. If a parent/guardian sends another individual to pick up his or her child, the parent/guardian must notify the Academy in writing at least 24 hours in advance.

Students who proceed home on their own, either by walking, bicycle, or otherwise, must do so as safely and directly as possible and submit written authorization signed by the parent/guardian to the Academy. They must obey all traffic and trespassing laws, and cross at designated crosswalks. Students in grades K-5 will not be permitted to travel home from the Academy without a parent, guardian or other authorized adult or another pre-arranged travel accommodation (such as a school bus). In the case of a younger student traveling home with an older student, such as an older sibling, the Academy must receive written authorization from a parent/guardian. The Academy reserves the right to not release the student(s) to travel home on their own, either by walking or otherwise, if it deems that is not in the best interest of the students.

## **I. Early Release**

Students are expected to be in attendance for the complete session each school day. If for any reason a student must leave the Academy before the regular dismissal hour, a parent/legal guardian or a person authorized by the parent/legal guardian must come to the Academy office to pick the student up and escort the student out of the building. Parents/ legal guardians must provide authorization for their child to be released to an individual other than a parent/ legal guardian.

## **J. Use of School Grounds**

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

## **K. Dress Code**

The Academy believes that clothes do not define a person. The wearing of a uniform allows everyone to be seen for who they are, not by what they have. The purpose of a uniform is a means



of consistency in student dress, while keeping costs to a minimum. It also reduces the problem of competitive dressing. Students, unless otherwise notified by Administration, will wear the school uniform.

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

Students are expected to present a neat and clean appearance and maintain good hygiene. Each student in Kindergarten to Grade 8 is expected to wear the complete uniform unless otherwise notified. Pre-K3 wears the school gym uniform and is optional for Pre-K4.

<b>Boys</b>	Navy Blue dress pants and belt in grades K-5 (elastic waist allowed for K) Gray dress pants and belt in grades 6-8 White dress shirt, school tie, and red vest Regulation school shoes and dark socks (tied or Velcro, loafers grades 5-8)	(Dockers are not uniform regulation pants)
<b>Girls</b>	Plaid school jumper and tie in grades K - 5 School skirt and red sweater vest in grades 6 -8 White blouse (peter pan in K - 5 and pointed collar in 6 - 8) (School uniform pants may be work from November- March) Regulation school shoes and navy blue knee socks or tights (Regulation shoes are navy//black tied shoes or <u>ankle</u> strap and loafers in Gr. 5-8 )	

**Options for both boys and girls:**

School logo polo shirt and/or navy shorts in Sept.- Oct. and May- June  
Turtleneck with **school logo** from November-March

**In the event any part of the uniform, including shoes, is lost or outgrown during the year a note is to be sent to the homeroom teacher, and the uniform is to be replaced as soon as possible.**

The following are also part of the school dress code:

1- On gym days, students come to school wearing the school gym uniform (shorts and tee shirt or sweats), white socks, and closed athletic sneakers with shoelaces or Velcro closing. Sneakers that light-up are not permitted at any time.

2- The red school sweater or school fleece is the only item to be worn in the classroom in cooler weather. No other items are acceptable. Long-sleeve shirts are never worn under a short-sleeve shirt.

3 - Girls' jumpers or skirts are not to be shorter than the top of the knee. Boys' pants are not baggy or worn below the waist. Shirts/blouses (not polos) are always to be tucked in. Only a plain white tee-shirt may be worn under the school shirt/blouse, and its sleeves cannot be longer than the shirt/blouse.

4- During winter months, boots are not worn in class. School shoes are to be brought to change in the classroom. On a dress-down day or during warmer weather, shoes or sneakers are worn. Gym sweatsuits will be allowed on extremely cold days when the temperature is 32 or below.

**Sandals, open-toe shoes, flip-flops, shoes without backs, canvas shoes, light-up sneakers, or heels are never permitted in school.** For safety reasons, a parent will be called to bring a change of shoes, or the student will be held in the office if any of the above is worn.

If for a serious reason, a student is unable to come to school on a particular day wearing the regulation uniform, the student should arrive at school with a signed note of explanation from his/her parent/guardian. On such a day, the student does not have a dress-down day, he/she should dress appropriately for a school day, not in sneakers, T-shirts, etc.

**Our uniform company is Flynn O'Hara, (718) 894-6561, also located in Atlas Mall.**

## **L. Grooming Code**

Hair must be its natural color, clean, neatly combed, not totally covering the ears or eyes.

- Facial hair is not permitted
- **Hair must be a natural color. Streaking, highlighting, lowlights, glints, etc. are not permitted.**
- Hairstyles, clips, hairbands, etc. are to be appropriate for a school uniform, not to exceed the top of the collar. **NO BOWS, FLOWERS, EARS, ETC.** No elaborate styles, designer cuts, shaved patterns, or fad styles are permitted.

Students are not allowed to wear make-up at any time. This includes eye make-up, nail polish, and acrylic nails. Only appropriate modest and safe jewelry is allowed. One pair of small earrings may be worn by girls only. Necklaces must be tucked into the shirt. Tattoos and body piercings are not allowed.

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

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

## **M. Dress Down Days**

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

- Appropriate length skirt, shorts or dress – no shorter than 3” above the knees
- No torn or tight jeans or pants
- No spaghetti strap tanks, midriffs, tube tops, etc.
- No logo type T-shirts
- No hats (unless specifically designated)
- No loose/baggy pants or shorts
- No make-up or nail polish (including gels/French manicures)
- No hoop earrings or excessive jewelry
- Capris or knee-length shorts are permitted in warmer weather, as determined by the administration

## **N. Field Trips**

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

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

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

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

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

## **O. Care of School Property**

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

Desks, lockers, and any other area on Academy property where students store items are Academy property and subject to searches by school authorities to protect the safety of all.

## **P. Books and Supplies**

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

## **Q. Telephone Use to Call Parent/Guardian/Custodian**

If a parent/guardian needs to reach a student, he or she must call the Main Office. Similarly, if a student seeks to call his or her parent, the student must make the request to the Main Office. **Under no circumstances should a parent/guardian or child call or text each other during school hours from a cell phone.**

## **R. Personal Property**

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

## **S. Announcements**

Informational announcements are handled through the Academy's P.A. system. Students must courteously listen when a message is presented over the P.A. system, especially when prayers are recited.

## **T. Fliers and Informational Brochures**

Students may, upon approval by the Principal, distribute, at reasonable times and places, unofficial material, including petitions, buttons, or other insignia. However, all such material must be in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Failure to comply will result in confiscation of the material and possibly disciplinary action. Further, any such material may not be obscene, libelous, contain indecent or vulgar language or content, advertise a product not permitted to minors by law, constitute insulting or fighting words the purpose of which is to injure or harass other people, or present a high likelihood of causing a disruption at the Academy. Further, parents/guardians may not distribute, either through their child or otherwise, any unofficial material.

## **V. STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND BEHAVIOR**

### **A. Student Behavior and Code of Conduct**

The Academy Student Code of Conduct is as follows:

All students are expected to thrive toward excellent behavior at all times. Behavior problems includes disrespecting authority, including teachers and staff, and other students, teasing, bullying, socially unacceptable behavior, or behavior contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church or the mission of the Academy. If behavioral issues persist, the Academy may request a conference with the parent. Failure on behalf of a parent/guardian to attend a conference may result in the child staying home until the parent/guardian and student attend the conference with the Academy.

#### The Academy Student Code of Conduct:

All students are expected to maintain a Christian atmosphere within the school.

This means, first and foremost, respect for others, for self and school property. It also includes cooperation, good manners, and abiding by the rules and regulations established by the school administrators and the teachers.

Each student is a DMCA student at all times. A student who engages in conduct, even outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school, may be disciplined by school officials.

#### **To maintain a Christian, academic atmosphere as a student of DMCA I will:**

- Treat others as Jesus would treat me.
- Respect my teachers, staff, volunteers and fellow students.
- Obey the rules of my school, home and community.
- Strive to be honest with myself and others.
- Never use obscene language and gestures.
- Develop good study habits and work to the best of my ability.
- Maintain good sportsmanship.
- Take proper care of personal, school, and classmate's property.
- Observe the dress code.
- Refrain from chewing gum on school property.
- Refrain from fighting.
- Refrain from cheating and copying homework.
- Refrain from smoking, using alcohol, drugs, and narcotics.
- Refrain from leaving school without permission.
- Cover all text books.
- Observe bus regulations.
- Not carry or use a weapon which could cause bodily harm.
- Never use a cell phone during school hours.

**Regarding classroom manners I will:**

- Be on time.
- Upon entering the classroom, go directly and quietly to my seat and prepare for the school day.
- Perform assignments completely and on time.
- Comply with the teacher's directives.
- Use my time wisely for my own growth and that of others.
- Obtain the owner's permission before borrowing anything.
- Be courteous at all times.
- Share the responsibility for keeping my classroom clean.
- Cooperate with my teacher, making the teaching-learning experience creative and pleasant.
- Be prepared with necessary covered books and all materials needed for class.
- Use communication folder to bring papers to and from school in a timely fashion.

**Regarding the Church and school and church basement I will:**

- Walk to and from liturgies and assemblies in an orderly, quiet, and respectful manner.
- Be attentive, reverent, and prayerful in church.
- Show politeness and respect toward speakers and performers at all times.
- Participate in assemblies, liturgies, and school functions by actions such as singing, listening, responding, and praying appropriately.

**Regarding bathroom facilities I will:**

- Use the facilities with care and consideration of others.
- Tend to my needs quickly without loitering.
- Bring no objects that will cause damage to the property.
- Conduct myself properly and respect the rights of others.
- Help to maintain the facility.

**Regarding lunch I will:**

- Walk to and stand calmly in line for school lunch.
- Remain seated while eating.
- Use a conversational tone of voice.
- When directed, leave my place clean with the chair in its proper position.
- Dispose of trash and line up to proceed to recess (Gr. 5-8) or stand to be ready for prayer (K – 4).

- Bring the proper clothing for outdoor recess (in the winter months a hat, gloves, and coat are recommended.)
- Obey and respect the teachers, principal, and parent volunteers at all times.

### **Regarding recess I will:**

- Observe free play with everyone.
- Stay in the play area assigned to my class.
- Avoid fighting and pulling on clothing.
- Refrain from throwing any objects.
- When the bell rings to end recess, stop playing and line up quietly in the assigned area.
- Walk to and from recess quietly.

### **School Rules:**

Students will serve detention after dismissal. Parents/guardians will be sent a referral slip to be signed if detention is to be served. Detentions are not optional nor are they at the discretion of parents/guardians. They are an administrative decision.

### **B. Anti-Bullying Policy**

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

Bullying, bias-based harassment/intimidation are intentional, repeated, hurtful acts (physical, verbal, written) committed by one or more persons towards another person or persons. It usually involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power which can be physical, emotional or verbal. If not addressed, bullying can lead to the creation of a hostile, offensive or intimidating school environment and can affect a student's educational opportunities. The behaviors include but are not limited to:

- *Physical:* physical violence, stalking, threats, aggressive or menacing gestures, exclusion from peer groups which is intended to humiliate or isolate the target (relational bullying).
- *Verbal:* taunts, teasing, derogatory language, derogatory jokes, name calling, slurs, spreading rumors
- *Written:* written or graphic material including graffiti containing comments or stereotypes that are electronically written and transmitted via internet, social messaging sites, blogs,

instant messaging, text messages, cell phone, webcams. This would also include forwarding such messages if received. This generally constitutes cyber-bullying.

#### *Reporting Procedures:*

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

### **C. Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy**

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

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

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

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

### **D. Alcohol and Drug Free Zone Policy**

The New York City Tobacco Products Regulations Act of 1994 curtails exposure to tobacco use on school grounds. For the purpose of this legislation "school grounds" means the "buildings, grounds



or facilities, or any part thereof, owned or occupied by public or private institutions for the primary purpose of providing educational instructions to students at or below the twelfth grade level.”

Tobacco use is not permitted on school grounds at any time. A “tobacco product” is any substance which contains tobacco including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, and chewing tobacco. New York City regulations are far more stringent than the regulations promulgated by New York State. However, schools subject to the rules of this municipality, as are the schools of the Diocese of Brooklyn, must follow the local laws. Thus, smoking is prohibited on ALL SCHOOL PREMISES AT ANY TIME.

For the safety of our students, alcohol is also prohibited from being consumed on school premises at any time. At no time is the use of marijuana permitted.

### **E. Impermissible Items**

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

1. White-out or any type of permanent marker
2. Spray cans, smoke bombs, stink bombs, powders/choking agents or chemicals or any kind.
3. Gum
4. Alcohol or drugs of any kind, and matches or lighters, and drug paraphernalia
5. Laser pointers, knives/box cutters, scissors, or any type of weapon
6. Any type of toy weapon
7. Nail files
8. Energy drinks and caffeine
9. Extreme jewelry, more than two wristbands or bracelets, dangling earrings, or hoop earrings larger than the size of a dime
10. Makeup of any kind, including lipstick and nail polish
11. Personal electronic devices may not be brought to school without the permission of the principal/teacher.

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

### **F. Discipline Policy**

The Academy may need to involve disciplinary measures from time to time. The purpose of disciplinary measures are to provide structure to students and for them to learn self-discipline, which strengthens and promotes the values incorporated in our Catholic faith. Disciplinary measures should have as an end the development of the human person who respect’s one self, other persons, and those in authority.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Police will always be called in the case of a weapon.

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

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

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

In any matter of discipline or academics, including a decision to expel a student, the school's decision is final.

### **G. Respect for Life**

A fundamental belief and tenet of the Roman Catholic faith is that human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. All students and parents are expected to live and follow gospel teachings and the Catholic faith in this area.

## **VI. EXPECTATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

### **A. Parental Involvement**

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

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

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

### **B. Proximate Preparation for the Reception of Sacraments**

(See Page 46)

### C. Parental Communication

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

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

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

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

### D. Home Academy Association (HAA)

Every Academy is encouraged to establish a Home Academy Association. Its purpose is the educational enrichment of parents/legal guardians and teachers. The goal of the Home Academy Association is to foster a clearer understanding of the mutual responsibilities of parents/legal guardians and teachers regarding the education of the students.

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

### E. Homework

As a partner in education, parents' role in homework is vital. Parents/guardians or another caretaker should remain available to assist students with homework and ensure that all homework is completed.

## F. Fundraising

Fundraising activities are beneficial to the Academy and are often a quality way to involve students in furthering their school community. Any fundraising program should have the approval of the Principal, and should be organized and executed so that the Academy program is not interrupted.

Part of a family's financial obligation is the support of fundraisers. The **mandatory fundraising per family** depends on the number of children enrolled in the school: **\$250 for one child, \$350 for two children, and \$450 for three or more children.**

Support of other events throughout the year is appreciated. Information, dates, and deadlines for fundraisers will be sent through the youngest child in the family. Parents/ guardians are expected to read and adhere to the dates and directives.

Events are also posted on the school website and announced by parent alerts.

## G. Volunteering, Chaperoning & VIRTUS Training

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

- The VIRTUS program for adults is a three-hour live awareness session that instructs adults of the Church that to protect children you must have continuous awareness and vigilance. This awareness session helps trainees understand signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse, and five empowerment steps to prevent child sexual abuse.
- The Code of Conduct is a document that acknowledges the importance of legal, professional and responsible conduct of all who work with children and young people. All clergy, employees and volunteers are required to read the Code of Conduct and to sign a Statement of Acknowledgement Form. The Code of Conduct is distributed at all VIRTUS sessions.
- All employees and volunteers are also required to have a criminal background screening completed before they start their employment or service. These forms are also distributed at all VIRTUS sessions. As of May 2010, all background screenings (employees and volunteers) will be done through the Safe Environment Office. The searches are done through LexisNexis (volunteers) or HireRight (employees). All information is kept confidential and if a positive result is returned, the pastor/administrator will be notified and appropriate steps will be taken. Background searches will be rerun every 3 years for employees and 5 years for volunteers.

## H. Custody and Guardianship Orders

Parents must provide accurate custodial information to be kept on file at the Academy. Non-custodial parents do have rights. The law protects non-custodial parents and maintains that parents do not cease to be parents when they no longer have custody of their children. The Academy abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the Academy will provide the non-custodial parents

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

## **I. Contacts with Media**

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

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

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

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

## **VII. HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

### **A. Medical Requirements**

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

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

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

## **B. Health Services**

A nurse provided by the DOE is on staff five days a week during school hours, 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

## **C. Illness and Medical Conditions**

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

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

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

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

Policy on nuts and other allergens: Nuts and other allergens are not permitted in the class if there is a student who is allergic. Parents will be notified.

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

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

Contagious Illness: To the extent a child has a contagious illness, please notify the Academy as soon as possible so that we may alert others who came in contact with your child. We also may be required to notify the Department of Health. A student with a contagious illness should not arrive for school. This applies even if the parent/guardian has not received confirmation that the child's illness is contagious, but the child is exhibiting signs of a possible communicable disease, such as a suspicious skin rash, suspicious open wounds, redness of the eyes with intense itching/burning and a thick drainage, painful, reddened sore throat, and a constant cough accompanied by other symptoms. Students with a contagious illness should remain home from school until a doctor advises that he or she is no longer contagious and can resume normal activities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **D. Administering Medication**

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

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

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

#### **E. Administering Epinephrine**



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

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

- to notify the school that the child/student is at risk of anaphylaxis and is in need of the presence of epinephrine on school premises
  - to indicate to the school if the child/student is capable of self-administration of the epinephrine device
  - to supply the school with the epinephrine device\* in its original packaging as received from the pharmacist
  - to replace the epinephrine device when it expires, discolors or has been used
- \*It is recommended that two epinephrine devices be supplied, the second functioning as a back-up in case of malfunction or if an extra dose is necessary in accordance with medical documentation.

#### **F. Administering Epinephrine on Field Trips**

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

#### **G. City & State Health Services**

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

#### **H. Accommodations**

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

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

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

such costs or expenses shall be the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents/guardians.

#### **J. Limitations of Physical Activity**

Students at the Academy will be enrolled in physical education classes. To the extent a student has a physical disability or issue which may impair his or her ability to engage in the class, or which may make the class unsafe, the parents/guardians must notify the Academy at the beginning of the school year or as soon as the issue arises. A written doctor's recommendation may be required. Further, a student will be required to attend the physical education class for the instructional component and observation, and to complete an alternative assignment or to complete missed activities when physically able to participate.

#### **K. Counseling Services**

The Program for the Development of Human Potential (PDHP) provides counseling services through the diocese.

#### **L. Wellness Policy**

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

If a student is running a fever/ran a fever in the past 24 hours, or is showing other signs of an illness, rash, or eye infection, the student should not be sent to school.

#### **M. Breakfast/Lunch Program**

All students remain in school for a supervised lunch program and recess. Each student is expected to eat lunch and a snack each full day of school. The food should be healthy and nutritious and sent to school with the child. Glass bottles are not permitted. Lunches sent to school are not heated up.

From October to May, students have the opportunity to be provided with lunch through the city lunch program. The lunch is received every day for the month or not. There is no choosing of days. Parents are to complete the form sent home from the B.O.E.

During lunch, whether in the classroom or, if the case may be, a lunchroom, each child is expected to remain in his or her seat until dismissed. Each child is also responsible for keeping his or her area clean. Respect and obedience are to be shown at all times to those who are supervising lunch.

#### **N. Accident Policy**

If a student is seriously injured, the parent/guardian will be notified by the Academy as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the student.

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

## **VIII. TECHNOLOGY**

### **A. Acceptable Use Policy**

The use of technology is permitted on school premises under limited conditions as authorized by the Principal for the sole purpose of enhancing academic achievement while respecting the dignity and safety of all members of the Academy community.

In using the information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways, the following conditions of being a digital citizen within the Diocese of Brooklyn are expected:

#### *Respect One's Self*

- Public names should be appropriate
- Be mindful of any and all content you post including photos, personal views, comments, personal information, etc.
- Avoid seeking out and/or viewing inappropriate content
- Do not engage in potentially harmful activities such as communicating with persons unknown to you or internet challenges

#### *Respect Others*

- Be mindful of comments, posts, photos or any content directed toward or including others
- Refrain from engaging in inflammatory, harassing, or any other such disrespectful behavior
- Do not perpetuate inappropriate content by sharing it with or sending it to others
- Warn others of potentially disturbing or harmful content that should be avoided

#### *Protect One's Self and Others*

- Report any and all cyber-abuse committed against you or others to parents, teachers and/or administrators
- Keep groups with friends private to avoid potentially inappropriate or dangerous content and communications from unknown sources

#### *Respect Intellectual Property*

- Cite sources when using any content not originally authored by you

Members of Catholic Academy communities must remember that when electronically communicating with individuals, groups, or institutions, you are doing so as an individual. You

should not represent yourself, your views, ideas, questions, or actions as representing the Catholic Academy you are associated with without the expressed permission of the principal.

### *Security of Technology*

The schools and academies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn assume no responsibility for the theft, loss, repair or replacement of any technology devices that are brought onto school/academy property, whether it is lost, stolen, damaged, or confiscated.

Security on any computer system is a high priority. If you believe you can identify a security issue, you must notify a system administrator, principal, or teacher and not disclose the problem to others in any way. Although there are safeguards in place to protect all users from inappropriate content, we are not responsible for failures in filtering that result in a bypass of our program and/or access to objectionable content. If any inappropriate content bypasses these safeguards, any parties involved should turn off the monitor and report the security breach immediately to a system administrator, teacher or the principal. Additionally, member of the school/academy community shall not:

- Use another's credentials for any reason
- Gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to Diocesan or school/academy computers or computer systems.
- Download or install any software application without prior authorization.

### *Administrative Rights (To monitor use of technology)*

The school/academy reserves the right to monitor both student and employee use of technology and computer accessed content. Due to the evolving nature of technology, the Catholic Schools and Academies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn reserve the right to amend or add to this policy at any time without notice.

### *Personal use of Social Media (Teachers, Students)*

This section refers to the personal use of social media. This includes, but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn, Snapchat or any other such medium. All references to school/academy personnel, students and/or any member of the school/academy community in technology related mediums such as web pages or email which is deemed to be conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or academy are violations of this policy. Any communication with current students by faculty, staff or administration is strictly forbidden on any personal social networking site. Personal posts must use appropriately respectful speech, and refrain from harassing, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, threatening or other inappropriate communications. Representation of the school/academy in whole or part on any personal posts and/or communication is prohibited. The Academy reserves the right to take disciplinary action for activity that occurs on social media or otherwise on the internet, if deemed, in the sole discretion of the Academy, in the best interest of the Academy.

## **B. FACTS Family Portal**

The FACTS Family Portal will be your one-stop destination to view student academic information, school announcements, school calendar and your FACTS payment plan and incidental billing information. You will conveniently be able to access all this information in one centralized location,

eliminating the need for multiple log-ins. Once the FACTS Family Portal is set up your child(rens) school will notify you with some simple instructions on creating log-in credentials. Once you create your user profile, you will be able to access the FACTS Family Portal from any device, including your smart phone whether it is an Apple or Android device.

Our District Code is: DM-NY

### **C. Communications with Teachers**

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

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

### **D. Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices, although useful and helpful tools in many ways, must only be used appropriately by faculty, administration, staff and students. The use of electronic devices by faculty, administration, staff and students must be appropriate to the educational setting, and may not distract the student, other students, or the class as a whole during the course of the school day and after school. (i.e., cell phones, iPads, iPhones, Smart Watches and other personal electronic devices). The Academy is permitted to implement, at any time, any policy regarding electronic devices, such as cell phones, as it deems appropriate. In the event an electronic device, including a student cell phone, is believed to contain evidence of a violation of Academy policy and/or a threat to the school community, the individual possessing the electronic device is obliged to grant the administration of the Academy access to the device and the information on the device to ensure compliance with policy and the safety of the school, and parents/guardians further consent hereto.

Inappropriate use of any electronic device may result in serious consequences, up to and including, expulsion.

Schools are not responsible for the loss, theft or damage to electronic devices.

### **E. Parent/Guardian Monitoring of Child's Non-School Devices**

Today more than ever young individuals need guidance from their parents to help navigate the technological world, create boundaries, and filter out inappropriate content. There are multiple consumer products, including some at no cost, which parents/guardians can secure for monitoring and controlling their child's access to technology. Specifically, products for mobile and cellular services include, but are not exclusive to, Apple Screen Time, Google Family Link, Qustodio and

OpenDNS Family Shield. The Academy expects parents/guardians to equip their child's personal electronic devices, including cellular devices and tablets, with parental controls if not already in place. The Academy expresses no preference or recommendation for any specific product but expects that parent/guardians utilize such a product to monitor their child's electronic activity. Further, as Catholics, we all have an obligation to our fellow Academy-community members. Therefore, the Academy expects that parents/guardians will notify the school if activity on a child's personal electronic device threatens the health and/or safety of any member of the Academy community.

## **IX. SAFETY**

### **A. Commitment to Safety**

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

### **B. Emergency Drills**

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

### **C. School Closings**

The Diocese of Brooklyn will base their closings on the New York City Public School System. If the New York City school system closes due to inclement weather, the schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn are closed. Local academies may also make decisions to close their individual schools based on inclement weather or other hazardous conditions (infrastructure issues, flooding, property damage, etc.). Parents will be notified as soon as possible. In the event of a closure during the school day, proper provisions will be made for students to return home or to be cared for in other premises until usual dismissal time.

### **D. Crisis/Emergency Information**

Should a crisis require evacuation from the school building, the students will be brought to a safe place located at Nativity BVM Church or St. Stanislaus B.M. Church and parents/guardians should meet them at that location. The Academy utilizes SIS – Parent Alert to notify parents/guardians directly about the crisis.

### **E. Reporting Concerns Regarding School Safety**

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

## **F. Visitors**

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

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

## **G. Video Surveillance/Photographs**

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

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

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

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

Students are prohibited from making any and all recordings (including audio and video) on Academy grounds or at an Academy-sponsored event, regardless of whether such event is on Academy grounds. This prohibition applies to the recording of a class or Academy event through the use of a personal electronic device, including, but not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, iPads, tablets, laptops, and/or iPhones. The Academy may, in its sole discretion, authorize the recording of a class or Academy event; however such recording may only be done with the prior consent of the Principal.

## **X. SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

### **B. Child Lures Prevention Program**

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

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

### **C. Child Abuse Laws**

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

### **D. Confidentiality**



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

### **E. Sexual Harassment**

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

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

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

### **F. Child Reporting Abuse to Parents**

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

## **XI. SIGNS OF SUICIDE (SOS) PREVENTION PROGRAM**

SOS Signs of Suicide (SOS) is a universal, school-based prevention program designed for middle school (ages 11-13) and high school (ages 13-17) students. The goals of this program are:

- Decrease suicide and suicide attempts by increasing student knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression
- Encourage personal help-seeking and/or help-seeking on behalf of a friend
- Reduce the stigma of mental illness and acknowledge the importance of seeking help or treatment
- Engage parents and school staff as partners in prevention through “gatekeeper” education

- Encourage schools to develop community-based partnerships to support student mental health
- Raise of awareness of self-harm behaviors, such as cutting and burning

Through a video and guided discussion, students learn to identify warning signs of suicide and depression. At the end of the session, students complete a seven-question screening for depression (anonymous or signed – the school can decide) to further encourage help-seeking and connect students at risk with trusted adults. The curriculum raises awareness about behavioral health and encourages students to ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell) when worried about themselves or their peers.

## **XII. TUITION AND FINANCES**

### **A. School Tuition Policies**

The success of our Academy relies on the commitment of our families to make Catholic education a financial priority. The Academy has full-year contractual and financial obligations that must be met, such as teacher salaries, utility bills, building maintenance and improvements, and other expenses. Families that seek enrollment are required to satisfy the annual tuition by specified due dates.

These policies are not intended to deprive anyone of a Catholic education. It is our desire to maintain a fair approach to collection of tuition and to provide a sound financial policy for the overall welfare of our families. We encourage all responsible parties to maintain open communication with the business office to ensure a complete understanding of each family's financial obligations. The goal of our academy is to provide a Catholic education to every student who desires one, but only by mutual cooperation can we make certain that this goal is met. Parental non-payment or delinquency in meeting financial obligations creates an additional burden for the Academy.

- Tuition contracts specifying a payment schedule will be published and shared with families. All families must sign an enrollment contract that guarantees the family will be responsible for the full payment of tuition for the academic year.
- Academies will arrange for all tuition and fees to be collected through FACTS Tuition Management.
- Tuition payment schedule will follow the most appropriate schedule for the academy and parents: monthly, one payment, or three installments.
- A Tuition Assistance Committee will be in place at every Academy

### **B. Tuition and Other Fee Schedules**

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

Tuition scale is found at the end of this handbook.

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

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

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

### **C. Resources for Tuition Assistance**

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

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

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

### **D. Tuition Assistance Committee**

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

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

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

## **E. FACTS**

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

## **F. Tuition Delinquency**

By standard practice, FACTS will send payment reminders prior to any due date, returned payment notices in the case of a failed payment, and will make automated phone calls to delinquent payers. Payers who fail to communicate with the academy and resolve the delinquency through a payment schedule approved by the academy will result in suspension of services for the student.

**Students will not be permitted to attend class at the start of the trimester should any balance be past due.**

No student will be permitted to begin an academic year unless all registration and other required fees are current. Registration and other required fees are paid through FACTS Tuition Management at enrollment. Enrollment for students whose families are not current in the registration or other required fees by June 30 may be cancelled at the discretion of the academy. In no event will students be permitted to attend class at the commencement of the academic year unless the delinquency is paid in full.

In order to participate in graduation activities, all debts for eighth grade students must be cleared by the first Monday of May. Eighth grade transcripts will not be released to the high schools if the financial obligations have not been met.

For all grades, in order to participate in school activities and field trips, all financial accounts are to be current and up to date.

All fees must be paid in full before records or progress reports will be processed. It is the sole discretion of the academy to withhold trimester exams, report cards, transcripts, records, and diplomas until all financial obligations are satisfied in full.

## **XIII. TRANSPORTATION**

### **A. Bus Procedure**

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

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

Our bus company is Grandpa's Bus (718) 276-7100.

## **B. Use of Other Vehicles**

Only a licensed public carrier that is fully insured should be used to transport students. Teachers or administrators are not permitted to transport students in their personal vehicles.

The Academy does not assume liability for transportation not operated by it, such as Ubers, car service, private buses or van services.

Parents/ legal guardians must provide authorization for their child to be transported by someone else. This includes transportation for dismissal as well as extracurricular activities.

## **XIV. RECORDS**

### **A. Change of Information**

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

### **B. Educational Records Request**

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

### **C. Authorization to Release Records**

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

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

## D. Review of a Child's Official Records

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

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Diocese of Brooklyn  
Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis  
Proximate Preparation for Reception of Sacraments Program  
Handbook Format

**Proximate preparation** takes place during the Faith Formation year immediately preceding the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation. The Five (5) proximate preparation sessions offer the candidates and their families the opportunity to “deepen the life of faith, especially regarding knowledge of the sacraments of the Church.”

“The ‘Year of Renewal’ begins with the core of the mission of Catholic education — to form children in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the Catholic Church. By investing in our children, we are investing in the future of the Church. Education isn’t just in the classroom or the religious education room. It begins and is nourished in the family. ‘Year of Renewal’ provides an opportunity to highlight parents’ roles as primary witnesses of the faith and educators in everyday life...This is just the beginning, and it’s meant to be a spark of awareness that will grow, year after year.”

These words describe the “Year of Renewal for Catholic Education.” This Renewal is a combined effort to enhance Catholic Academies/Schools, Faith Formation Programs, and Parishes. It reflects the missionary call to all God’s people to evangelize and renew the face of the earth. In this Year of Renewal, it is most important that we, as parents and educators, once again familiarize ourselves with the Diocesan guidelines for the reception of sacraments.

“As a family of families, the parish remains the ideal home for Catholic families to join together”, to ensure the integrity of parish life, all constituents should review these guidelines and discuss the pastoral implications. Parents and children should be catechized as to the importance of returning to their home parishes for the reception of sacraments. It is the parish that confers a sacrament, not a Catholic academy or parish school.

**Can. 913** §1 For holy communion to be administered to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and be accurately prepared, so that according to their capacity they understand what the mystery of Christ means, and are able to receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.

**Can. 914** It is primarily the duty of parents and of those who take their place, as it is the duty of the parish priest, to ensure that children who have reached the use of reason are properly prepared and,

having made their sacramental confession, are nourished by this divine food as soon as possible. It is also the duty of the parish priest to see that children who have not reached the use of reason, or whom he has judged to be insufficiently disposed, do not come to holy communion.

#### THOSE TO BE CONFIRMED

**Can. 889 §1.** Every baptized person not yet confirmed and only such a person is capable of receiving confirmation.

**§2.** To receive confirmation licitly outside the danger of death requires that a person who has the use of reason be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew the baptismal promises.

**Can. 890** The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the proper time. Parents and pastors of souls, especially pastors of parishes, are to take care that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the appropriate time.

**Can. 891** The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion unless the conference of bishops has determined another age, or there is the danger of death, or in the judgment of the minister, a grave cause suggests otherwise.

#### SPONSORS

**Can. 892** Insofar as possible, there is to be a sponsor for the person to be confirmed; the sponsor is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this sacrament.

**Can. 893 §1.** To perform the function of sponsor, a person must fulfill the conditions mentioned in **can. 874.** (**Can. 874 §1.** To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must: 1/ be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function; 2/ have completed the sixteenth year of age unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause; 3/ be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on; 4/ not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared; 5/ not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized. **§2.** A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.) **§2.** It is desirable to choose as a sponsor the one who undertook the same function in baptism.

#### What this means:

- All proximate prep must be done through the home parish of each student
- Families must participate in Proximate Prep
- Sponsors must be practicing Catholics

Session One (3 hrs)  
**Preparation of the Candidates**

This first Session should be held at the beginning of the Faith formation Year (September, October). It should follow a Sunday Celebration of the Eucharist. The intention of the Session is to introduce the families to the importance of Faith formation, the Domestic Church, and parish life. The important personnel is the Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Catechetical Leadership, families, and candidates for Sacraments.

**Catechetical Formation:** It is the personal responsibility of the Parents, Pastor, and Catechetical Leadership to ensure the adequate catechetical formation of the candidates and to vouch for such preparation in the presentation of the candidates to the Bishop (in the Sacrament of Confirmation) and to the parish. Because of this presentation, it is not necessary or required to have a public presentation of the candidates during a Sunday Mass prior to the conferral of the Sacraments.

**Sacrament of Penance:** It is important for the Reception of First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation that the candidates be “properly disposed” (**Canon 889**). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that “to receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the Sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit...” (**no. 1310**). For the Sacrament of First Penance and First Holy Communion the Catechism states: According to the Church’s command, “after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year.”<sup>1</sup> Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession.<sup>2</sup> Children must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time.

Candidates should therefore be expected to receive the Sacrament of Penance in proximate preparation for their Confirmation and be given the opportunity to do so. (**no. 1457**)

**Reception of Holy Communion:** Candidates and sponsors should prepare to receive Holy Communion at Mass, including the Confirmation Mass. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that it “is in keeping with the very meaning of the Eucharist that the faithful if they have the required dispositions, *receive communion when* they participate in the Mass” (**no. 1388**). By receiving Holy Communion both the newly confirmed and their sponsors give witness that Christian Initiation is directed toward the Eucharist.

- “A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine.” (**Canon 919 §1**).
- “The elderly, the infirm, and those who care for them can receive the Most Holy Eucharist even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour” (**Canon 919, §3**).
- Family members and invited guests for First Communion should likewise understand the importance of the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist and be spiritually prepared to receive Eucharist.

**Universal Prayer:** The Pastor should encourage the parish community to pray for the candidates for First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation, especially with a petition in the *Universal Prayer* on the Sundays leading up to the date of the sacrament.

**What this means:**



- Weekly Sunday celebration in the home parish is expected
- Parents participate in the preparation of children for sacraments
- Families are known in the parish
- Children are prepared for specific sacraments: First Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation

#### Session Two (3 hrs)

### **The Liturgical Calendar and Advent Season**

This second Session should be held on the first or Second Sunday of Advent. It involves a presentation on the Liturgical calendar and highlights the importance of Advent as a season of preparation for Christmas. The intention of the Session is to (re) introduce the families to the liturgical year, how the Domestic Church celebrates this season with Catholic cultural elements, and how the parish prepares for the coming of the Messiah. The important personnel is the Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Catechetical Leadership, families, and candidates for Sacraments.

### **Celebrating Christmas**

Advent is the period of preparation and waiting for the coming of the Lord. It begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas and it lasts until the 24th of December. As in many other Christian churches, Advent is observed in Catholicism too and is related to a range of preparatory Christmas practices.

Some of them are to make an Advent wreath, to keep an Advent calendar and pray a daily devotional, as well as to set up Christmas decorations and erect a Christmas tree.

Christmas is an extraordinary event for the Catholic Church. It signifies the birth of the savior who is coming (in flesh) to meet people in the world. The Catholic Church designates the four weeks preceding Christmas as Advent. It is a preparatory period of a major event where the Lord is coming as a King and Savior.

According to the Catholic tradition, Christmas is not a one-day celebration, but it is a longer festive period that can last up to 22 days. It is also connected to other holidays that are celebrated in the winter period of the year.

### **What this means:**

- Families will have a deepened understanding of the meaning of Advent/Christmas Season
- Families will participate in a parish-wide celebration
- A family Advent/Christmas project will be presented

#### Session Three (3 hrs)

### **The Liturgical Seasons of Lent/Easter/Pentecost**

This third Session should be held on the first Sunday of Lent. It stresses the importance of the Lenten practices of prayer, self-sacrifice, and charity as a means of preparing for the renewal of **Baptismal promises** at Easter. The intention of the Session is to present a liturgical/spiritual understanding of Lent, provide examples of how the Domestic Church may pray and sacrifice together, present cultural elements of the Easter celebration, and illustrate how the spirit of Pentecost is found in each sacrament's candidates will receive. The important personnel is the Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Catechetical Leadership, families, and candidates for Sacraments.

## **Lenten Devotions**

Lent in the Liturgical Year is a time when families examine the Catholic customs of our heritage. The Catholic cultural traditions, especially in the types of **Easter foods**, can become a special treat and religious experience for the family, which can be handed down to the next generation, and to the next.

**Fasting** conveys a sense of self-sacrifice which is an important theme to teach our children. While Mother and Father may restrict their diet considerably, children should be encouraged to “fast” from desserts or sweets, using their mobile phones, and other electronic devices. References to the fasts in the Bible might be explained several times at dinner during Lent. All family members can also be encouraged to fast from gossip, unkind remarks, or any hurtful behavior. This has been a season of “giving up” things for Lent. Each family member might also be asked to choose one thing to give for every day of Lent. This may be helping someone, donating clothing or food, or some other act of charity.

## **Holy Week**

Holy Week is a serious, deeply religious experience. The week is filled with prayer—formal prayer and private prayer. Families should be encouraged to attend the special Masses and rituals of the week in their home parishes.

From noon till three on Good Friday, many families keep silent. Children should be encouraged to meditate or to say private prayers. Watching a video of the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary while saying the **rosary** or watching a video of the Stations would be appropriate while saying the Stations.

As His apostles today, we want to spread the message. Families may write “He is Risen” on different colored sheets of construction paper, and tape them all over the doors of the domestic church. Greet each other with “He is Risen!” In all these ways, make your family life mirror the life of the church. In that way, it will indeed become the domestic church.

## **What this means:**

- Families will have a deepened understanding of the meaning of Lent/Easter Season
- Families will participate in a parish-wide celebration
- A family Lent/Easter project will be presented

Session Four (1 1/2hrs)

## **Sacraments and Family Life**

This fourth Session should take place on a **weeknight** well before the ritual celebration of the sacraments. The presentation highlights the nature of sacraments, the role of sacraments in family life, and the role of the sacraments in the life growth plan of students. The intention of the Session is to present a liturgical/spiritual understanding of sacramental life in general, provide examples of how the Domestic Church may experience sacraments and present cultural elements of Eucharistic celebration. The important personnel is the Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Catechetical Leadership, families, and candidates for Sacraments.

Many Catholic families live their Faith only one hour a week by attending Sunday Mass. The rest of the week, the cares of the world impinge on the family, and the Faith is practically forgotten. We are

called to lead lives worthy of our baptismal calling. We are to live with God as a constant part of our lives, especially by including Him in our family life. This proximate prep affords the opportunity to reflect on discipleship in light of the sacraments.

To be an authentic Catholic family, we must live a sacramental life. The sacramental life means not only the regular reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist but also the daily practice of using sacramentals, to help us to live the life of prayer and to celebrate the feasts of the liturgical year.

### **Receiving the Sacraments**

Next to the Holy Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is our biggest help in living the Catholic lifestyle. If we are really aiming to be the best possible Catholic family, it is important to stress the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Receiving the Sacrament of Penance frequently will make us concentrate on strengthening our virtues and ultimately improve our Catholic family life.

Parents must be encouraged to raise children to love all the sacraments. The sacramental life involves taking the children to observe the reception of the other sacraments, especially Baptism and Confirmation, and explaining their meaning. When possible, children may opportunities to experience a wedding ceremony, have instruction concerning the deeper meanings of the sacrament of Matrimony according to their age level. When appropriate Children need to witness the Sacrament of the Sick.

### **Sacramentals**

While the Sacramental Life means frequent reception of Penance and Holy Eucharist, it also means the daily use of sacramentals. Sacramentals are a part of our Catholic cultural heritage. They can supplement the daily reception of the Holy Eucharist, and, in some cases, maybe the only way to maintain the sacramental life for some families during the week between Sunday Masses. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines **Sacramentals** as “sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the **sacraments**. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the **Church**. Sacramentals are signs reminding us of God, of the saints, and Catholic truths. While sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ as a direct means of obtaining sanctifying and sacramental graces, sacramentals were instituted by the Church to obtain graces for us.

Sacramentals embody and make alive Catholic traditions which have existed for centuries. The rosary, the scapular, the Advent Wreath, Miraculous Medal—these are not merely objects, but truly represent the Catholic way of life.

### **Living the Faith**

The sacramentals with appropriate prayers are best used in conjunction with the liturgical year. The liturgical year, starting with Advent takes us through the history of mankind awaiting Jesus our Redeemer, and then through the life of Jesus Christ. (cf. Proximate Prep 2)

This is a wonderful way for us to grow spiritually, but best of all, a joyful way to teach our children how to live and practice the authentic Catholic family life.

To be more specific, certain traditional Catholic practices can be started (or maintained) to help us better understand and love our Catholic beliefs. During Advent, the making of the Advent wreath is a very special event.

### **What this means:**

- Families will have a better understanding of the sacramental life of the Church
- Children will be given additional information about sacraments and their meaning
- Parents/Guardians will have the opportunity to address important issues in their adult faith formation

### Session 5 (1 1/2hrs)

### **The Celebration of the Sacraments**

This fifth (final) Session should take place on a **weeknight** before the ritual celebration of the sacraments. The presentation highlights the nature of the particular sacrament to be celebrated. The intention of the Session is to present a liturgical/spiritual understanding of the particular ritual, explain the flow of the ceremony, and present cultural elements of Eucharistic celebration that may be particular to the Diocese or parish, **i.e.**, presentation of candidates, style of clothing acceptable for participants, and specific elements of conduct that are allowed.

### **The Celebration of the Christian Mystery:**

Jesus Christ has made it possible for us to share in the divine nature by conforming to Him through the grace of the Holy Spirit imparted to us through the Sacraments.

The sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. In Confirmation, the baptized is anointed with oil (a sign of abundance, joy, cleansing, healing, and strength) and is thereby consecrated, or imprinted, with the seal of the Holy Spirit. As Christ was marked with his father's seal, Christians are marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit of divine protection in the great Eschatological (end times trial). The primary effect of the sacrament is the (full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.” Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace; it unites us more firmly to Christ; increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit and renders more perfect our bond with the church, And gives us a “special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ...”

The sacrament of the Eucharist (from the Greek meaning “thanksgiving”) completes Christian initiation. The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” The other sacraments, along with all the work of the Church in her ministries, are bound up with and oriented toward the Eucharist. “The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being.” In short, the Eucharist is the “sum and summary of our faith.”

Jesus Christ is present to the church in many ways: in his word, in the church’s prayer, in the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, in the sacraments, in the mass, and the person of the minister. At the same time, he is most especially present in the Eucharist, in the body and blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine. The whole of Christ, his body and blood together with his soul and divinity, is truly, really, and substantially contained in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. This means that Christ is present in the fullest sense when the bread and wine are converted into his body and blood through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**What this means:**

- Families will have a better understanding of the liturgical aspects of the sacraments
- Parents/guardians will receive specific information about the ritual as it is celebrated in the home parish
- Children will have the opportunity to receive final instructions about the reception of a sacrament



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

### **FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

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

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

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

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

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

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child(ren) and Grades: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **FOR STUDENTS GRADES 6-8**

I have read the Parent-Student Handbook, have discussed its contents with my parent/guardian, and agree to abide by all its terms.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





### **ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE AUTHORIZATION**

*If a parent/guardian chooses to sign any form electronically, the following MUST be submitted beforehand to the Academy with an original, and not electronic, signature:*

I authorize the Academy to accept my electronic signature.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**ABSENT NOTE FORM**

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Absence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason for Absence:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Doctor's Note Attached (circle one)? Y N**



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

### **Parent/Guardian**

As the parent/guardian of a student at the Academy, I have read the Acceptable Use policy and agree to abide by its terms, and to ensure my child abides by its terms. I understand that computer and internet access at the Academy is designed for educational purposes. I am aware that it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold the Academy responsible for materials acquired in use. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use of school's technology resources is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission for my child to use the school's technology resources and certify that I have reviewed this information with my child.

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

### **For Students Grades 6-8**

I have read the Acceptable Use Policy in this Handbook.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### **MEDIA AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE**

I hereby consent to the taking of photographs, movies, videos, and images capable of reproduction in any medium of me or my children or children of whom I am the designated guardian by the Academy, Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, and/or Department of Education and their parents, affiliates, trustees, directors, members, officers, employees, volunteers, agents and contractors (the "Parties").

I hereby grant the Parties the right to edit, reproduce, use and reuse images for any and all purposes including, but not limited to, advertising, promotion and display, and I hereby consent to the editing, reproduction, use and re-use of said images in any and all media in existence and all media yet in existence including, but not limited to, video, print, television, internet, and podcasts.

I forever grant, assign, and transfer to the Parties any right, title and interest that I and/or my child/children may have in any images, including negatives, taken of me and/or my children by the Parties. I hereby agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the Parties from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of actions, loss, liability, damage, or cost arising from this authorization.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Grade of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are choosing to opt out of this policy, the Academy MUST receive the signed acknowledgement below and return it to the Principal by the first day of school:**

I have read the Media Authorization and Release Policy and am choosing to opt out.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Grade of Child: \_\_\_\_\_





**Divine Mercy Catholic Academy**  
**TUITION SCALE 2022-2023**

<b>CATHOLIC TUITION RATES</b>				<b>GRADES K-8</b>
<b>Families who are registered and active members of a Catholic Church.</b>				
		<b>PLAN A</b>	<b>PLAN B FACTS*</b>	<b>PLAN C FACTS*</b>
<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Tuition</b>	<b>1 payment Due June Discount \$100</b>	<b>10 monthly payments Aug-May</b>	<b>9 monthly payments Sept- May</b>
<b>1 CHILD</b>	<b>\$5350</b>	<b>\$5250</b>	<b>\$535</b>	<b>\$595</b>
<b>2 CHILDREN</b>	<b>\$6700</b>	<b>\$6600</b>	<b>\$670</b>	<b>\$744</b>
<b>3 CHILDREN OR MORE</b>	<b>\$7600</b>	<b>\$7500</b>	<b>\$760</b>	<b>\$844</b>

\*\$45 enrollment fee for FACTS Program

<b>NON-CATHOLIC TUITION RATES</b>				<b>GRADES K-8</b>
<b>Families who are not registered and active members of a Catholic Church</b>				
		<b>PLAN A</b>	<b>PLAN B FACTS*</b>	<b>PLAN C FACTS*</b>
<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Tuition</b>	<b>1 payment Due June Discount \$100</b>	<b>10 monthly payments Aug-May</b>	<b>9 monthly payments Sept-May</b>
<b>1 CHILD</b>	<b>\$5950</b>	<b>\$5850</b>	<b>\$595</b>	<b>\$661</b>
<b>2 CHILDREN</b>	<b>\$7400</b>	<b>\$7300</b>	<b>\$740</b>	<b>\$822</b>
<b>3 CHILDREN OR MORE</b>	<b>\$8400</b>	<b>\$8300</b>	<b>\$840</b>	<b>\$933</b>

\*\$45 enrollment fee for FACTS Program

**REGISTRATION FEE PER CHILD – NON REFUNDABLE**

**New Students                      \$275**

**Returning Students                \$175**

Registration fees will be paid directly through FACTS (Incidental Billing) Families will receive and email.

<b>FUNDRAISING SCALE: All families are expected to participate in fundraising activities or pay the fundraising fee by May.</b>	
<b>1 child</b>	<b>\$250 per family</b>
<b>2 children</b>	<b>\$375 per family</b>
<b>3 children or more</b>	<b>\$475 per family</b>



## **COVID-19 Guidance and Protocols for 2022-2023**

**NYS DOH, NYSED, NYCDOH and CDC (August 22, 2022) (September 8, 2022)**

### **What has changed in the COVID-19 Guidance?**

- Elimination of the test-to-stay policy recommendation.
- Elimination of Daily Health Screenings
- The NYS DOH Daily Survey is no longer required
- Changed recommendations to conduct screening testing to focus on high-risk activities during high COVID-19 Community Levels or in response to an outbreak.
- Removal of the recommendation to pod/cohort.
- Removal of the recommendation to quarantine, except in high-risk congregate settings.
- Addition of detailed information on when to wear a mask, how to manage cases and exposures, and how to respond to outbreaks.

Catholic Academies and Parish Schools should take a variety of actions every day to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19. The following set of strategies for everyday operations should be in place at all COVID-19 Community Levels, including low levels.

### **Mitigation Strategies:**

- ✓ **Speaking with your Healthcare Provider regarding Vaccination**
  - Schools should encourage their school community to speak with their healthcare provider regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. Staying up to date on routine vaccinations is essential to prevent illness from many different infections. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect eligible people from getting severely ill with COVID-19.
- ✓ **Staying home when sick and getting tested when experiencing COVID-19 symptoms**
  - People who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, should stay home. Testing is recommended for people with symptoms of COVID-19 as soon as possible after symptoms begin. People who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 who test positive should consult with a healthcare provider right away for possible treatment, even if their symptoms are mild. Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases,
  - Symptoms of Covid, but not limited to:
    - Fever or chills
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Fatigue
    - Muscle or body aches
    - Headache
    - New loss of taste or smell
    - Sore throat
    - Congestion or runny nose

- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

✓ **Ventilation**

- Schools should optimize ventilation and maintain improvements to indoor air quality to reduce the risk of germs and contaminants spreading through the air. i.e.
  - Air Purifiers and Filters
  - Portable Air Cleaners with HEPA filters
  - Safely opening windows and doors to increase outdoor air intake

✓ **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

- Schools should teach and reinforce proper handwashing to lower the risk of spreading viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Schools should teach and reinforce covering coughs and sneezes to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

✓ **Cleaning and disinfection**

- Schools should continue to clean surfaces periodically throughout the day to reduce the risk of germs spreading by touching surfaces.
- Schools should continue to nightly disinfect the school building using fogging machines and other disinfection methods.

**Isolating if Positive for COVID-19**

Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for **5 days at home**. For those with symptoms Day 1 is the first full day after symptom onset (Day 0 is the day of symptom onset). For those that had no symptoms Day 0 is the day they were tested (not the day you received your positive test result) and Day 1 is the first full day following the day they were tested—if someone develops symptoms within the 10 days of testing the clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset.

Those with symptoms may resume attending school after the 5 days (on Day 6) if:

- They are fever free without fever reducing medicine for 24 hours and their symptoms are improving; and
- They wear a mask through day 10 (day 1 is the first full day following the day they received positive test result regardless of symptom onset).

OR

- Use antigen tests to shorten the 10 Day Mask Requirement. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart (Start on Day 6), you may remove your mask sooner than day 10.

**Note: After having ended isolation, if COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen,** restart isolation at day 0. Day 0 of isolation is the day of symptom onset. Staff and student's parents/guardians should be advised to talk to a healthcare provider about their symptoms or when to end isolation.

Faculty, Staff and Students **are not** required to submit a doctor's note before returning to school after having tested positive for COVID-19.

**COVID-19 Symptoms While at School**

Students and staff with symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea should be sent home or directed to stay home. If at schools, the individual should isolate and wear a well-fitted mask while arrangements are made to go home even if they have not yet had a test. Testing is recommended for people with symptoms of COVID-19 as soon as possible after symptoms begin. If an individual with COVID-19 symptoms does not get tested for COVID-19 they are required to remain home for 10 days or an alternative diagnosis from a healthcare provider.

### **Exposure to COVID-19**

Quarantine is no longer recommended for people who are exposed to COVID-19.

Schools should, if available, offer at-home test kits to students and staff who may have been exposed while at school. Students and staff who were exposed to COVID-19 should take two tests, at least 24 hours apart on day 4 and day 5 of their exposure. All exposed individuals should monitor for fever and other COVID-19 symptoms for 10 days after their exposure. If symptoms begin, they should not attend school and should isolate and get tested for COVID-19 again right away. Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, are strongly recommended to wear a mask when they were exposed to someone with COVID-19, whether the exposure occurred in school or outside of school. The person should wear a mask for 10 days after their last day of exposure and get tested at least 24 hours apart on day 4 and day 5 of their exposure.

### **Masks:**

Universal masking in school is not required at this time.

Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask when:

- Returning to school after testing positive for COVID-19 through Day 10 after their symptoms began or positive test date (whichever is earlier) **OR** Use antigen tests to shorten the 10 Day Mask Requirement. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart (Start on Day 6), you may remove your mask sooner than day 10. This includes when traveling on a school bus.
- Entering their school's medical room or nurse's office, or a school-based health center
- Exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms at school

Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, are strongly recommended to wear a mask:

- After being exposed to someone who has COVID-19, whether the exposure occurred in or outside of school. Students and staff who were exposed to COVID-19 should wear a mask for 10 days after their last exposure and get tested on Day 5.
- If they are moderately to severely immunocompromised and recommended by their health care provider

Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, may choose to wear a mask all the time or when it makes them feel comfortable (such as when traveling on school bus or for personal health reasons, or because they are not vaccinated or live with someone who is at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19). All schools should have face masks available.

### **COVID REPORTING- NYC DOE Funded PKA-3 and PKA-4 Programs**

Schools that have a NYC DOE funded PKA-3 or PKA-4 program are required to follow the NYC DOE COVID Reporting protocols. (Early Childhood Bulletin 9/8/22 Issue 94)

This includes:

- Reporting any positive COVID case within the PKA-3 or PKA-4 program only, to the NYC DOE Situation Room
- Send the NYC DOE Notification letter – **ONLY** to the PKA-3 or PKA-4 class of the positive individual
- Send home the Home Test Kits supplied by the NYC DOE for the PKA Programs
- School Principal or COVID Coordinator will report the positive case information to the Deputy Superintendent

**NYC DOH Vaccine Mandate for School Staff and Volunteers:**

The NYC DOH Vaccine Mandate remains in place for all School Staff and volunteers.

In accordance with NYC DOH and NYS DOH updated guidelines, bi-weekly COVID Testing is no longer required for unvaccinated faculty, staff or volunteers who have an **approved** exemption on file for the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Remote Instruction:**

**ALL** Schools are required to have the capability to provide remote instruction, if needed, in instances of whole class or school closures due to COVID-19.

**Communication:**

The Principal or the COVID Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- Send class COVID Notification Letter (positive case)
- Send COVID case information to Deputy Superintendent

**Please Note:** The Schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn reserves the right to implement COVID-19 protocols above city and state COVID-19 health protocols.

This information is subject to change as new information is received from city and state agencies.

# Is Your Child Ready for Child Care or School?

2022-2023 School Year

## Learn about required vaccinations in New York City.

All students ages 2 months to 18 years in New York City must get the following vaccinations to go to childcare or school. Review your child's vaccine needs based on their grade level this school year. The number of vaccine doses your child needs may vary based on age and previous vaccine doses received. Your child may need additional vaccines or vaccine doses if they have certain health conditions or if previous doses were given too early.

VACCINATIONS	CHILD CARE, HEAD START, NURSERY, 3K OR PRE-KINDERGARTEN	KINDERGARTEN - Grade 5	GRADES 6 -11	GRADE12
Diphtheria , tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP)	4 doses	5 doses or 4 doses ONLY if the fourth dose was received at age 4 years or older or 3 doses ONLY if the child is age 7 years or older and the series was started at age 1 year or older	3 doses	
Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis booster (Tdap)			1 dose (at or after age 11 years)	
Polio (IPV or OPV)	3 doses	or 3 doses if the third dose was received at age 4 years or older	4 doses	
Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)	1 dose		2 doses	
Hepatitis B	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses or 2 doses of adult hepatitis B vaccine (Recombivax HB®) if the doses at least 4 months apart between ages of 11 through 15 years	
Varicella (chickenpox)	1 dose		2 doses	
Meningococcal conjugate (MenACWY)			Grade 6: Not applicable Grades 7-11: 1 dose	Grade 12: 2 doses or 1 dose if the first dose was received at age 16 years or older
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b conjugate (Hib)	1 to 4 doses Depends on child's age and doses previously received			
Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV)	1 to 4 doses Depends on child's age and doses previously received			
Influenza	1 dose			

Talk to your health care provider if you have questions.

For more information call **311** or visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search for **student vaccines**.



Department of Health  
& Mental Hygiene

Department of  
Education