

**Diocese of Altoona-
Johnstown
Parent/Student
Handbook**

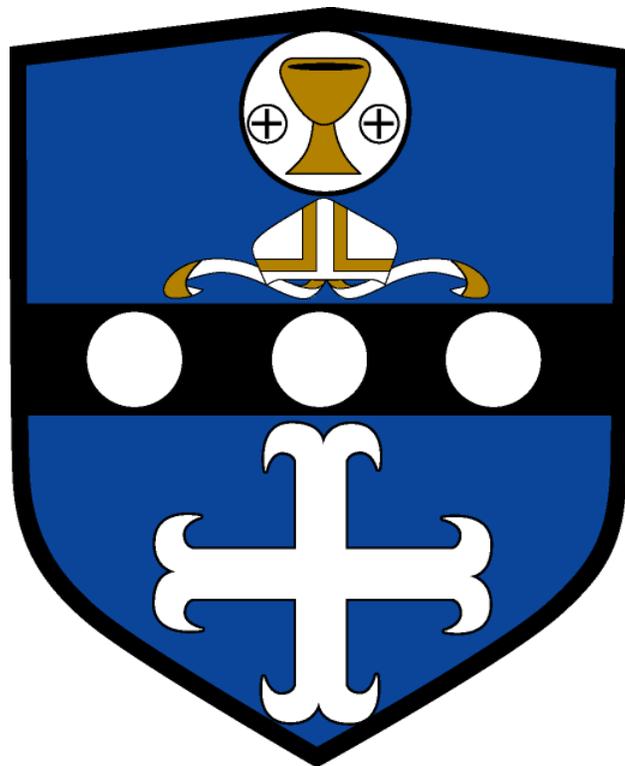


Table of Contents

Mission Statement	4
Administration	5
Admission Policies	6
Kindergarten Admission	6
Immunizations	7
Probation Period for All Students	7
Academic Policies	7
Student Progress.....	7
Grade Retention/Promotion	8
Attendance	8
Communications	8
Confidentiality	9
Support Services	9
Emergency Operation Plan	9
Custody	10
Mandated Reporting	11
Discipline Behavior Management	11
General Overview	12
Authority of Administration, Faculty, and Staff.....	12
Classroom-based Expectations and Management	12
Parent/Guardian Notification	13
Student Consequences of Misbehavior/Misconduct	13
Field Trips	14
Extra-Curriculars	14
Medications	15
Parent/Guardian Cooperation	16
Parental/Guardian Rights	16
Parental/Guardian Responsibilities	16

Family Responsibilities in Cooperation With School	17
Parent/Guardian Service Requirements	18
Retreats and Service Program	18
Technology and Internet.....	18
Personal Property.....	18
Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Devices	19
Use of School Grounds.....	19
Amendments to Handbook.....	19
Signature Page.....	20
Appendix	21
Student Use of the Internet in School.....	22
School Photo Release Form	26
Student Demographic Sharing Form	29
Diocesan School Handbook	After Appendix

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown is to empower students to reach their full spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and moral potential. In this unique Catholic environment, young people are given the opportunity and guidance to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church; come to understand the role of faith in daily life; and help others to discover the same truth and joy of his Gospel.

ADMINISTRATION

Diocesan and parochial schools of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown are those which meet all of the following conditions:

- are recognized as Catholic by the Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown.
- are responsible to the Diocesan Director of Education for such matters as have been determined by the Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown and are subject to the Director's regulations.
- are governed by the Diocesan School Policies and Regulations.
- have written belief and mission statements which identify the school as Catholic.
- have a program of religious education which conforms to the standards determined by the Education Office of Altoona-Johnstown and the Office of Religious Education and Catechesis.
- are recognized by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ADMISSION POLICIES

In accordance with the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Policy 5020 Admission:

Since the formation of students in the Catholic faith heritage and its religious traditions is the primary purpose for which our Catholic schools have been founded, both parents/guardians and students must be willing to abide by the values inherent in our Catholic faith and by our philosophy of Catholic education.

Students and parents/guardians who desire an educational experience founded on the Catholic philosophy of education and who fulfill the requirements and conditions for enrollment specified below, are eligible for admission to the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown without discrimination with respect to sex, race, ethnic origin or disability, if with reasonable accommodation, they can meet the school's requirements, according to the subsequent provisions of this policy.

The request for the admission of students from a public or private school must be carefully reviewed and the reasons for the request examined.

In accordance with diocesan policy, the diocese encourages participation of all children in a kindergarten program prior to entering first grade.

Kindergarten Admission

Those seeking admission to kindergarten must be 5 years of age on or before August 31 of the year of entry.

Registration is ongoing and continues until class is full.

In Pennsylvania, kindergarten is not a required grade.

When registering a kindergarten student, the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall present proof of age and (for a Catholic child) a baptismal certificate. A Christian, non-Catholic student shall present a baptismal certificate and note the denomination when possible. Incoming students shall be given a school health examination form, which must be completed by the

parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student's physician. This form should be returned to the school prior to the beginning of the school year.

Immunizations

The Pennsylvania Department of Health promulgates immunization regulations that require parents or guardians of students enrolled in grades K-12 to have their children immunized against various communicable diseases. Records will need to be given to the administrative offices of the diocesan school on or before the fifth day of class.

Probation Period for all Students

All newly enrolled students are subject to a 9 week probation period. The school reserves the right to determine that the school is not a good fit for the student and to require withdrawal of the student. In such a case, any tuition paid will be refunded.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Student Progress

The school uses the diocesan system (PowerSchool) for reporting pupil progress. This may include progress reports and interim reports which will be based on evidence from multiple assessments which demonstrate a student's understanding of the different academic content standards, teacher observations, or similar feedback, when appropriate.

Standardized Testing is also to be utilized to track student progress. Diocesan curriculum can be found on the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown website: www.dioceseaj.org .

Honor Roll, Parent Conferencing, and Report Card information will be in the School Section if applicable.

Grade scale:

A = 93-100

B = 85-92

C = 76-84

D = 70-75

F = Below 70

Some Schools of the diocese will use a customized standard-based report card. This will be posted in the school section.

Grade Retention/Promotion

Satisfactory completion of each grade is to be expected of every student. Absence itself, for a valid reason, is not a reason for retention of a student if the student has completed the required work.

Retention of students is appropriate where it is intended to enable a student to gain future developmental, emotional and/or educational maturity and success.

ATTENDANCE

Full day attendance is expected of all students. Information pertaining to your school attendance policy will be posted in the School Section.

COMMUNICATIONS

Open communication between home and school is important for student progress and maintaining a healthy school climate. The proper line of communication in discussing any facet of your child's progress is to first contact the teacher directly. This may be done through a written message, e-mail or by telephone. Teachers are unavailable during class hours but will respond within two school days. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the parent/guardian

and/or teacher will inform the principal. If the problem remains unsolved, then the parents/guardians may have recourse to the pastor and or diocesan education office. Because of the interruptions in the teaching-learning process, spontaneous visits to the classrooms are not permitted.

Weather delays/cancellations will be announced via School Messenger, television, and radio by each individual elementary school.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Administrators, counselors, and teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake. Student progress will only be discussed with parents or legal guardian. Progress cannot be discussed with grandparents, friends, etc. without **written permission** from legal guardian.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Counseling, speech, language, occupational therapy, and other services will be provided through the local Intermediate Units.

EMERGENCY OPERATION PLAN

Diocesan Schools have each developed an Emergency Operation Plan in cooperation with state and local authorities. The plan must be approved by the Education Office of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese. Parents/Guardians should stay tuned to local media sites for important information.

CUSTODY

Administrators, counselors and teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake.

The school 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 school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and other school-related information regarding the child. A current physical address, e-mail, and phone number must be provided by the non-custodial parent in order to obtain information.

If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order dealing with the education/visitation of the child. It is also the parent's responsibility to inform the school of the addresses where the student's records should be sent.

Divorced parents must provide the school with a court certified copy of the custody section of the divorce decree. If no such copy is on file, school officials will assume that both parents have custodial rights. Parents/guardians must provide the school with the most current court certified copy of the custody decree.

School officials will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that children are released only to the appropriate parent at the time/days according to the court custody arrangements. However, parents must accept the primary responsibility for such arrangements and should instruct their children as to which parent should have physical custody of them on any given day.

Please note: The school, its teachers, and administrators cannot become involved in adjudicating marital disputes. Parents, in such cases, should strive to keep their personal issues out of school. The school's responsibility is with the child and his/her welfare.

MANDATED REPORTING

Everyone working with your child is a mandated report. We are not permitted to contact parents if a child is interviewed by Children and Youth Services and/or police.

DISCIPLINE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Schools will try to develop the art of discovering the good in every person and show respect for one another. In other words, we...

- include everyone.
- are kind in our words and actions.
- stick up for one another.
- support and encourage each other.

Students recite a “Peacekeeper’s Pledge” that helps to remind them what the expectations are at Diocesan Schools. “I am a _____ Catholic School Peacekeeper. I promise to be kind in my thoughts, words, and actions. By doing this, I will keep our school a safe place to be as Jesus teaches us, I will do unto others as I would have them do unto me.”

When a child makes a poor choice, teachers will talk to the child and decide what action, if any, is to take place. Depending on the severity and/or frequency of the behavior, the teacher will inform the parents/guardians and/or principal to discuss an appropriate action. Ways to handle poor choices can include (but are not limited to) reflection, discussion, writing, temporary isolation (time-out), loss of privileges, etc.

For certain situations, the school pastor will also be included in the disciplinary action.

General Overview

A variety of behavior management techniques, strategies, and procedures will be used to the extent necessary to ensure that the learning environment provided is not disrupted by inappropriate student behavior. Corporal punishment and verbal abuse are not permitted.

Authority of the Administration, Faculty, and Staff

Every teacher, staff member, and administrator has the right to exercise authority as to the conduct and behavior of students in the school during the time they are in attendance.

Classroom-based Expectations and Management

The following chart illustrates categories of student misbehavior/misconduct:

	Example of Infraction Category			
	Bus-specific	Minor	Serious	Major
Includes, but not limited to:	Out of seat, shouting, throwing objects, fighting, etc.	Dress code violation, Classroom misconduct, Profanity, Horseplay, Loitering, Cafeteria misconduct, Repetitive playground offense, unsportsmanlike	Fighting Insubordination, Defiant behavior, Verbal harassment, Sexual harassment, Misuse of	Theft, Vandalism Possession/misuse of lighters, matches, Possession of weapons and/or “look-a-likes”, Assault on staff, Under the influence of or in possession of alcohol, non-prescription drugs,

		conduct (including P.E.)	Technology, Cyberbullying	tobacco products, or abuse of prescription drugs.
--	--	--------------------------	---------------------------	---

This chart is not considered a complete or exhaustive list of infractions, but serves to give illustrative examples and their categorization. The administration has the final say as to the category to which a student’s specific behavior belongs, as well as the consequences thereof.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Depending on the severity of the infraction, if a student commits an infraction, the teacher/administrator may contact the parents/guardians about the situation and meet with the student (and parents/guardians, if applicable) to discuss the consequences. A pattern of continuous infractions will result in a Parent/Guardian Conference.

If a student commits an infraction while riding district-provided transportation (school bus/van), the driver will fill out a referral form and give it to the school office. The administration is responsible for contacting the parents/guardians about the incident and taking any disciplinary action with the student.

Student Consequences of Misbehavior/Misconduct

Each school will maintain a Conduct Record on each student. Each Diocesan Catholic School teacher and/or designated learning support expert maintains his/her own classroom behavior expectations and management procedures. These expectations and procedures are discussed with the students during the first week of classes. Written outlines of classroom expectations and procedures are available upon request. If at any time a student is unwilling or unable to meet the expectations of classroom behavior, he/she may be referred to the administration. Student Conduct Records will be maintained in the school administration office.

FIELD TRIPS

A standard permission form must be signed and returned to the school prior to the scheduled field trip for the student to participate in the trip.

A student who fails to submit a standard permission form prior to the trip will not be permitted to participate. Only the STANDARD PERMISSION FORMS obtained from the school office/published online are acceptable. Notes from parents or legal guardians giving permission are not acceptable.

Field trips must be educational and must be approved by the principal in consultation with Diocesan Education Office

Field trips are a privilege. No student has an absolute right to a field trip. A student may be denied participation if he/she demonstrates inappropriate behavior, or does not meet academic standards including grades, class assignments, and homework. Parents/Guardians have the right to refuse their child's participation in a field trip. However, the child must report to school the day of the field trip or be marked absent.

Participation in field trips is restricted to those students in the class for which the trip is scheduled. Siblings or other children are not permitted to attend field trips. All designated chaperones are required to have completed the diocesan youth protection requirements.

EXTRA-CURRICULARS

Every Student who does participate in a field trip/school sponsored extra-curricular activity is expected to obey all discipline codes as outlined in this handbook.

Students who participate in an extra-curricular activity should behave as if they are representing their Catholic School and should behave accordingly.

Attendance at school is required to participate in school sponsored extra-curricular activities scheduled that day or evening. The Student must be in school for at least half a day to participate. Exceptions may be considered but building principal must be consulted in advance.

MEDICATIONS

A policy implemented by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, regulates the administration of prescription and over the counter medication (OTC) to students throughout the school day. The directives are as follows:

1. **No one except a licensed professional** can dispense prescription or over the counter (OTC) medication in a school. **The office personnel will not dispense Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Tums, cough drops, or prescription medications.**
2. In the absence of a licensed professional, neither the secretary nor the principal can administer OTC meds or those prescribed by a doctor **UNLESS** it is an emergency medication (**epinephrine or asthma inhaler**).

A **doctor's order** must accompany **prescription or OTC** medications to be dispensed only by a licensed professional (school nurse). Again, even with a doctor's order, **office personnel are NOT PERMITTED** to dispense any prescription or OTC medications.

For example, if cough medicine is brought to school it cannot be given unless the doctor has signed an order to be administered during school hours and **ONLY IF THE NURSE IS PRESENT** to dispense the ordered dosage.

3. In the event your child is on a maintenance medication, for example Insulin, arrangements can be made with our district school nurse to administer the medication on the contingency that a doctor's order has been issued and is on file with our office.
4. All medications must be delivered to the office by an adult. Students may not transport medications.

Parents/Guardians are permitted to administer their child's prescription and OTC meds during school hours. When your child is ill and unable to finish out the school day, you will be notified so that you can make a decision on what you think would be the best plan of action for you.

PARENT/GUARDIAN COOPERATION

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

Parental/Guardian Rights

- to have your children's safety be a priority;
- to have your children receive an authentic, Catholic education in a Catholic environment;
- to have your child's learning needs met if the program can reasonably accommodate them;
- to have your children taught by competent teachers who respect and care for them;
- to talk with personnel and to have requests for meetings answered in a timely manner;
- to have your children "try out" for all program activities and teams;
- to review records and respond;
- to participate in the life of the school and parish.

Parental/Guardian Responsibilities

- to be a partner with the school in the education and formation of your children;
- to understand and support the Catholic identity of the school;

- to read all communications from the school and to request clarification when necessary;
- to know your children's teachers and to observe parent-teacher conference dates and any special requests for meetings;
- to discuss concerns and problems with the person(s) most directly involved before contacting other authorities;
- to be as actively involved as you can be in the life of the school and to volunteer assistance when possible;
- to promote our parish(es) and school and to speak well of them to others;
- to know and support school rules; and
- to appreciate that Catholic education/formation is a privilege that many persons do not have.

--adapted from Volunteers in Catholic Education: An Administrator's Guide to Legal Considerations (2nd ed.) by Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN (NCEA, 2007.)

Family Responsibilities in Cooperation With School

Parents/Guardians must be the first to foster a loving and disciplined atmosphere at home. The school provides a setting for learning, but can only operate effectively with the cooperation of the family. To achieve a harmonious relationship parents/guardians are expected to:

- Provide for the spiritual, physical and mental development and well-being of the child.
- Be supportive toward the school and education in word and deeds and in social media outlets.
- Help the child develop into a positive, productive member of society and the church, taking seriously their baptismal promises to fulfill the spiritual upbringing of their children including regular mass attendance.
- Cooperate with and respect school policies and school personnel both in word and deed and in social media outlets.
- Be responsible for any financial obligations incurred by the child in school.
- Know and adhere to school philosophy and policy.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives parents/guardians the right to inspect their child's educational records, and to have a school official explain the records if requested. Any parent/guardian who wishes to see his/her child's records should contact the school principal for an appointment

Parent/Guardian Service Requirements

If the Diocesan School requires service and/or fundraising, details are provided in the individual school section.

Retreats and Service Program

If the Diocesan School offers retreat and service programs, details are provided in the individual school section.

TECHNOLOGY & INTERNET

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown issues an Internet Usage Policy and a Remote Instruction Policy that requires a parent/guardian and student signature of agreement. Schools also issue a

Hardware Use Policy that details the use of devices, acceptable behaviors and financial responsibilities should devices be lost or damaged. The full policy can be found in the Appendix

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The school is not responsible for any personal property brought into the school by the student including electronic devices.

CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones, smartwatches, and other personal electronic devices **are not** to be used during school hours. If used, the device will be taken by the student to the administrative office and can be picked up at the end of the day. The location of the device pick up will be determined by each school.

USE OF SCHOOL GROUNDS

Schools are responsible for students only during posted school hours. Hours should be posted in the Individual School Section. Children are not to be on school grounds unattended at any other times.

AMENDMENTS TO HANDBOOK

The school reserves the right to amend this handbook. Parents/Guardians will be given prompt notice of any amendments.

Prior to the first day of school, parents/guardians must sign and return this agreement either in person or submit electronically:

In consideration of _____ School's provision of a Catholic education for my/our children, I/we, _____ the parent(s)/guardian(s) of _____, have read and agree to be governed by this handbook and to pay all required tuition and fees.

Signature

Date

Appendix

Student Use of the Internet in School

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown (DAJ) is fortunate to have a connection to the Internet to supplement the other educational resources already available to staff and students. Through the Internet, your child will have the entire world at his or her fingertips and be able to explore it.

This wonderful resource brings with it additional responsibility. As Internet users, we must be aware of the many issues that surround the Internet. There are many valuable resources available on the Internet that may not be found elsewhere. There are also many sites that can be considered inappropriate for students and serve no educational value. It is the responsibility of all users, staff and students alike, to ensure that, at all times while in a Diocesan School, the Internet is being used only for educational purposes. When using the Internet, students will be supervised by Diocesan School Staff. However, due to the nature of the Internet and evolving technology, even with supervision, students may get to an inappropriate site. It is the student's responsibility to report any inappropriate site to the teacher and return to the educational topic assigned.

As part of our internet safety policy, schools will educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response. This is required by the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

The following Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) should be read carefully and understood by all Internet users. As parents/guardians, you should review it in detail with your children before they begin using the Internet in their school. The Acceptable Use Policy was developed to ensure the safety of all users.

The DAJ uses a filtering system designed to prevent access to educationally inappropriate sites. However, it is important to understand that no solution is perfect, and we cannot guarantee that students will not have access to inappropriate sites.

Parents should be aware that DAJ educators can request that a specific site be blocked or un-blocked. Such decisions will be made by those responsible for monitoring the filtering service within the DAJ.

It is important that you and your children understand that any violation of the AUP may result in the loss of Internet and e-mail privileges or other disciplinary action. We ask that you work with your children in reinforcing the behaviors associated with the AUP and the attached student contract. Please also note that our filtering system allows us to track and monitor all computer use on the network.

Acceptable Use Policy for Networks, Including the Internet

It is the policy of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown that all technology used to access the network will be used in a responsible, legal, and ethical manner. Failure to do so will result in the termination of network and e-mail privileges for the user.

Individual users of the network—students and adults—are responsible for their use of the network. The use of the network must be in support of education and research and must be consistent with academic actions of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown School System and will be under the supervision of Diocesan Staff. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Use of the network for any illegal or commercial activities is prohibited.

- ❖ A responsible network user will:
- ❖ Use language that is considered appropriate.
- ❖ Be polite.
- ❖ Send information that other users will not find offensive.
- ❖ Conform with copyright laws and always give credit to the author of the material used.
- ❖ Never reveal personal information about any user such as address, telephone number, credit card numbers, social security number, etc.
- ❖ Neither tamper with the system nor alter, delete or destroy any files or data that are not yours.

A responsible network user must be aware that:

- ❖ Use of the network and e-mail is a PRIVILEGE, not a RIGHT.
- ❖ The DAJ network is to be used only for educational purposes.
- ❖ E-mail is not guaranteed to be private.
- ❖ Identifying photos of students with their first and last names may not be used on a web site.
- ❖ It is important to log off the computer at the end of every session, so another user can not use your password.
- ❖ Violation of this policy will result in the possible loss of Internet privileges and/or disciplinary action pursuant to the Code of Ethics for Catholic Schools and/or prosecution under state and federal law.
- ❖ Persons issued an account are responsible for its use at all times.

Acceptable Use Policy for Networks, Including the Internet
Student and Parent/Guardian Signature Page

It is the policy of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown School System that students and staff will use all technology to access electronic (“computer”) networks, including the Internet and email, in a responsible, legal, and ethical manner. Failure to do so may result in the loss of network privileges for the user, disciplinary action under the Code of Ethics for Catholic Schools, or prosecution under federal or state law.

I have read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy for Diocesan Schools Internet use (Attachment 1). I understand that use of the Internet and e-mail in school is a privilege, not a right. Use of the Internet in school is designed strictly for educational purposes. I also understand that the DAJ is taking measures so that my child does not have access to any material deemed inappropriate, but because no filtering system is perfect, my child might gain access to an inappropriate site. I agree that I will not hold the DAJ responsible for any access by my child of any inappropriate materials acquired on the Internet.

By signing below, I give my child permission to work on the Internet and use e-mail for educational purposes.

By not signing, I understand that my child will not be permitted to work on the Internet and use e-mail in school.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

STUDENTS MUST SIGN THE STATEMENT BELOW REGARDING INTERNET USE:

I understand and agree to adhere to the behaviors outlined in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Acceptable Use Policy. I understand that any violation of this policy may result in the loss of Internet and e-mail privileges, disciplinary action, or prosecution under federal or state law.

I understand that if I do not sign this agreement, I will not be permitted to use the Internet and e-mail in school.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Secretary of Education, pursuant to Section 9-923-A of the Public School Code, is authorized to purchase textbooks, instructional materials, and equipment, which may be loaned to all children residing in the Commonwealth who are enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 in nonpublic and private schools. Our school is now in the process of requesting specific textbooks, materials and equipment to be loaned to your child(ren).

In order to participate in the program, a parent/guardian of each child attending the nonpublic or private school must individually request a loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment. The enclosed individual request form fulfills that requirement. Please sign the form, date it, and return it to the school immediately.

Thank you for your continued assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Principal

Certificate of Individual Request

For Loan of Textbooks, Instructional Materials and Equipment

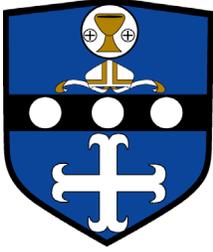
I hereby request the loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment in accordance with the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 for my child(ren) attending

_____ School.

Date Signed: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

This program is available only to Pennsylvania residents.



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Guidelines for Use of Photographic

Images of Children and Youth

The following guidelines will be adhered to and authorization form obtained when required, for use of photographic images of children and youth by diocesan Departments, Parishes, Schools, and Agencies.

For children/youth under 13 years of age:

Parent permission (release form) **Must** be obtained for any photographic images of children **under 13 years of age** that are used for publicity, brochures, newsletter, web sites, etc.

For children/youth between 13 and 18 years of age

If photographic images being used are covering “news” or a specific event, the use of identifiable photographic images is allowed. Examples of this would include sports games/championships, Boy or Girl Scout Jamborees, award services, Youth Ministry Rallies/events, etc.

If identifiable photographic images are being used as a marketing or development item, permission (release form) must be obtained from the parents to use an identifiable picture. Examples of this would be flyers, brochures, web sites, etc., that would be advertising services, schools, programs, etc. In other words, if the project is “planned,” the youth are being used as “models” and the Photographic images are identifiable, then permission (release form) is needed.

If photographic images on a web site are merely to enhance it and are not being used to report news or specific events, then permission (release form) is needed to use identifiable photographic images.

Parental permission (release form) is needed to include any type of video (VHS or streaming) which shows children in a classroom doing “work” or answering questions – this video is considered an “educational record” and cannot be included without permission of parents.

The safest photographic images to use of youth over 13 for enhancement/marketing are “unidentifiable” photographic images – photographic images taken at a distance, from the side, from the “top”, large group activities, etc.

NOTE: Duplicate this letter on Parish, Diocesan Office Department, or School Letterhead

Authorization Form
For Use of Child/Youth Name, Likeness, and/or Photographic Image

This authorization form shall serve as parental permission for the use of name, likeness, and/or photographic image of a child/youth where such permission is required.

I grant permission to

(Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, School)

to use my child’s/youth’s name, likeness, and/or photographic image in the production of following:

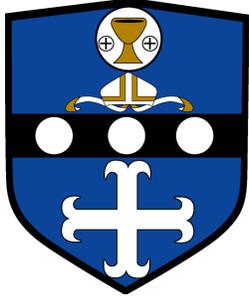
(Above portion must be completed – DO NOT sign if blank.)

I understand that if, for whatever reason, at any point in time, I decide to revoke this agreement, and I so notify the Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, or School in writing, all references to my child/youth (i.e., name, likeness, and/to photographic image) will no longer be used. I understand that web page references and web page photographic images will be removed within thirty (30) days of the written notification. [I understand that the Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, or School is not responsible for access to the internet information or downloads made by users using the web prior to this removal of web references (i.e., name, likeness, and/or photographic image).] I further understand that my child's/youth's name, likeness, and/or photographic image may continue to be used in any publication already printed or published prior to my revocation of the consent provided herein.

Name of Child (Please Print) _____ Date of Birth _____

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

This Authorization Form to be kept on file until the student graduates from High School.



Diocese of Altoona- Johnstown *Education Office*

2713 W Chestnut Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601
Phone: 814-695-5579
www.dioceseaj.org

I give my consent for my child's Diocesan Elementary School to share the following information with a Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Catholic High Schools:

- student name,
- parent/guardian name(s),
- address, telephone number(s),
- email address(es), and
- grade level

This information will be shared for the purposes of enhancing programming. I understand that this information will be treated as confidential and not be released to any other parties except those stated. I understand that participation in sharing this information is voluntary.

I am the parent or legal guardian of the student named and hereby fully release and discharge all Diocesan Schools, and their administrators, employees, and agents, from all liabilities arising out of or in connection with the above described demographic data sharing relative to the above stated organizations. I reserve the right to withdraw my consent at any time by submitting written notification to school administration.

Child's Name Printed

Parent's Name Printed

Parent's Signature

Date



CRUSHERS

SERVING CHRIST IN MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT



www.dmcatholic.org

East Campus
2306 Bedford Street
Johnstown, PA 15904
814-266-3837

GRADES K - 6

West Campus
430 Tioga Street
Johnstown, PA 15905
814-539-5315

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Divine Mercy Catholic Academy is to empower our students through Christ-centered academic excellence within a safe and secure environment that will create a solid foundation of values, leadership, and commitment to self and community.

BELIEF STATEMENT

At Divine Mercy Catholic Academy, we believe:

- Parents and educators work together to ensure the development of a child's academic and spiritual growth.
- Students learn to face challenges by accepting both successes and shortcomings with grace and humility in a safe and respectful environment.
- Students are responsible for their actions and share in the responsibility for their own learning.
- Each student's course of learning begins at home with family and continues at Divine Mercy Catholic Academy with a caring faculty and administration.
- It is important to provide a comprehensive and challenging curriculum that develops the whole child with an appropriate support system tailored to their diverse needs.
- It is important to challenge each student to achieve academic excellence while instilling a desire for lifelong learning of all members of the Divine Mercy community.
- All students have God-given talents which will develop to their full potential.
- Divine Mercy Catholic Academy empowers students, faculty, and staff to build a diverse and inclusive school community.
- Divine Mercy Catholic Academy is committed to academic excellence by implementing a rigorous curriculum which integrates technology, critical thinking, differentiated instruction, and collaborative work in an academic environment that allows each student to express learning in creative ways.
- It is important to foster the development of students to be innovative thinkers, problem solvers, communicators, and lifelong learners.

PROFILE OF A GRADUATE

Upon graduation from sixth grade, Divine Mercy Catholic Academy students will be equipped with the foundation necessary for high school, college, and career life. They will be prepared for learning, for academic achievement, for worship, and for service in a 21st century global society. Their experience with the cutting edge STREAM curriculum will launch them into the world of science, technology, engineering, and math while intertwining their academic knowledge with the importance of aesthetics, and ethical and moral decision making. The students of Divine Mercy will exhibit skills in critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving. They will be the communicators of the future, academically and spiritually.

ADMISSIONS

Divine Mercy Catholic Academy welcomes students of any race, creed, color, sex, nationality, ethnic origin, or religion. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality and/or ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admission policies, tuition assistance, athletics and other school-administered programs, or in hiring personnel. Students are accepted from three years of age and older. Our school day begins at 7:50 a.m. Dismissal is at 2:45 p.m. Students arriving during or after prayers will be marked “tardy” as per state regulations. Building hours are 7:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Members of the Altoona Johnstown Diocesan Parishes may enroll their children at any of our three campus locations. Non-parishioners and non-Catholics are also welcome to enroll their children.

Early Childhood programs offered by Divine Mercy include:

3-year-olds: 5 full days per week **or** 2 full days (T, Th) per week

4-year olds: 5 full days per week **or** 3 full days (M, W, F)

Preschool students must be 3 years of age on or before September 1. All students must also be out of diapers or pull-ups, and be able to perform all personal care routines independently.

Prekindergarten students must be 4 years of age on or before September 1. All students must be able to perform all personal care routines independently. No exceptions.

Kindergarten students must be 5 years of age on or before September 1. No exceptions.

When registering for school, birth certificate, baptismal certificate (when applicable), and current immunization records must be presented.

Since the preschool programs act as a feeder into the elementary program, students who are already in the DMCA Preschool or Pre-Kindergarten programs will be automatically enrolled in its Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten classes. Siblings of current DMCA will have first choice of placement.

Admission of a student to any class or campus is dependent upon space availability.

Registration for the following academic year begins in the Spring. All current students must re-enroll on School Admin.

TSO (FUNDRAISING)

Each family is responsible for \$800 in fund raising over the course of each school year. If a family is unable to meet that goal of \$800, the remaining balance is added to the family’s yearly tuition. This fundraising is part of the school operations budget. There are numerous opportunities available to reach or exceed the goal. The purpose of each families’ fundraising is to provide the opportunity to keep tuition affordable.

LUNCH ACCOUNTS

Divine Mercy Catholic Academy contracts the breakfast and lunch programs through Metz Food Service. Breakfast is available daily from 7:15 am to 7:50 am. Lunch menus are distributed monthly, and applications for free and reduced lunches are available through the school office or on the school website. Parents may choose to set up an online payment account through schoolbucks.com, or may send lunch money to his/her child's campus. In the event of a 2-hour delay, breakfast will not be served. (See CAFETERIA for more information)

AFTERSCHOOL CARE

After school care is available, through the Learning Lamp, to all students who need care from 2:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the West Campus. If care is needed, interested families need to register directly with the Learning Lamp. Information may be found on the DMCA website. Registration is not handled by Divine Mercy Catholic Academy. Students who do not abide by the rules of the program will not be permitted to remain enrolled.

Before school care is also available through Learning Lamp on days of 2-hour delays during the winter months. Interested families must speak directly to Learning Lamp about this service.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

The State of Pennsylvania mandates 180 days of instruction and the successful completion of course requirements in order to grant grade advancement.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to a student's progress and to the formation of good habits. If your child arrives in the classroom after 8:00 am, he/she will be marked tardy. Parents are requested to call the school office between 8:00-9:00 a.m. if your child is going to be absent that day. Please contact the school no later than 10:00 a.m., if you request homework. Please also let the respective offices know if someone will be picking the homework up, or if it needs to be sent home with another student. A text message and/or phone call will be sent to parents when a student is marked absent for the day.

Upon returning to school after an absence, students must present a dated excuse that states (1) the date(s) absent, (2) the reason for the absence, and (3) the signature of the parent/guardian.

After three consecutive days of absence, a doctor's excuse must be presented to the teacher. When a pattern of absences is recognized, parents will be contacted and required to present a doctor's excuse upon the child's return to school.

The parent/guardian will be notified by mail when a student is absent 10 days during the school year; and a meeting will be scheduled with the school principal. A signed note from a doctor will be required upon return to school. Students who are absent in excess of 20 school days may be retained.

Make-up work

Students are expected to make-up work for all absences. All previously assigned work must be turned in the day a student returns to school. This includes tests that were announced before the absence occurred. All new assignments are given a grace period of one day for each absence. Students are given 1 one day to complete assignments for each day absent.

Truancy/Unexcused Absences

Truancy is an UNEXCUSED ABSENCE from school or class. A student is truant if he/she leaves school without signing out in the Main Office, does not report to classes, or are absent from school or class without a lawful excuse. Work missed during an unexcused absence may not be made up. A parent or guardian must accompany a student who has been truant from school before the student can be readmitted. A school administrator will meet with the student and his/her parent or guardian to detail the disciplinary action. Truancy issues will be documented and reported to the student's home school district.

AUXILIARY SERVICES

Auxiliary Services are provided by Pennsylvania Non-Public Schools Act under the direction of the Diocesan Education Department, IU8 Act 89 reading and math programs, and by the local school districts' Title I programs.

- Reading (Title I and IU8)
- Math (Title I and IU8)
- Guidance (IU8)
- Speech (IU8)

Contact your building administration regarding and academic, social, or emotional concerns.

BOOKS

Students are responsible for the care of all textbooks and library books. All hard-backed books may be covered. Book socks or DMCA book covers or covers of any type are optional. Students are to have all papers and books in a book bag before leaving school. Any damaged or lost texts or library books must be paid for at the replacement cost. Teachers will be tracking all classroom texts; the library tracks all library books.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL: WEST CAMPUS

Arrival and dismissal procedures are different at each of the campuses due to location and logistics. The safety of our children is most important at Divine Mercy. Please note the following: All building access is limited. One door will access the school at **morning drop-offs**. The gym/cafeteria door is the drop-off door **until 7:50 a.m.** at which time the door will be locked. The main door (near the office) will be monitored by a staff member to let students into the building. **Parents / grandparents will not be permitted to enter the building with their child/children, nor will they walk to the classroom with their child.** If the parent has office business, he/she will be directed to the main office. All students after 7:50 a.m. must be dropped off at the front door where they will be met by a staff member and will be escorted, if needed, to their classrooms. Students arriving during or after prayers will be marked “tardy” and documented as required by state law.

Morning Drop-Off

In our attempts to upgrade the safety conditions of the school, the “Drop Off Driveway” will be signed “DROP-OFF / PICK UP.” You will enter the driveway on the right side of the church, circle the church, and pull up to the gym door. There, a staff member will assist your child into the gym. You may then continue to exit the main gate area. This will allow for added cars to line up at the gym door egress. Our goal is to keep the vehicles moving while maintaining safety for everyone involved without blocking Tioga Street where school buses park. Please note that Tioga Street in front of the school is one-way. Please turn RIGHT out of the driveway.

Afternoon Pick-Up

Cars will line up by entering the driveway on the right side of the church and pulling around the back of the church to the main gate beside the gym/school. Each car will display a fluorescent sign with the family name in the right passenger dashboard. This will be provided by the school. Students will remain in the gym until such time as their parent/grandparent arrives. They will be seated with family members. Teachers will contact staff members in the gym to release students to their families in order of vehicle arrival. No need to get out of your car. Once your child is in the car, please proceed to exit by following the car(s) in front of you onto Tioga Street. We will continue to wait until the buses have departed, meaning that dismissal for car riders is approximately 2:50 p.m. Should you desire to park and wait at the gym door for your child, you may park in the lot across from the school and walk to the gym door.

Walkers

Parents/Guardians/Siblings who walk to Tioga Street may drop off at the gym door early. A staff member will be on hand to open doors for students. Students who are truly walkers, meaning they live nearby and walk to and/or from school, will be released from the main entrance at 2:50 p.m. (following bus dismissal). Parents may meet them outside.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL: EAST CAMPUS

Morning Drop-Off

Students may begin arriving to school at 7:15 a.m. Students arriving between 7:15 a.m. and 7:50 a.m. are to report to the gymnasium for supervision. If students arrive during or after prayers, they will be marked “tardy” and documented as per state law. Students transported to school by car can be dropped off at two locations:

- Churchill Street—students should walk to the front entrance of the building.
- At the top of the steps between the top and lower parking lot.

Parents are not permitted to accompany their child into the classroom or gym. Faculty will be assigned to the school entrances and will accompany students to the gymnasium or classroom for morning assembly. Prior to the start of school, students may enter the school through the Churchill Street doors or the main doors from the parking lot. Parents wishing to come into the school must proceed directly to the office.

Afternoon Pick-Up

Car riders are dismissed at approximately 2:50 p.m.

Parents who are picking up their child may wait for their child at the upper parking lot stairway.

For the safety of all of our students, parents are asked to wait until all children have reached their vehicles safely before leaving the parking lot.

Parents transporting students are reminded that:

- Cars are NOT permitted anywhere on the lower parking lot between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Parents and students walking from the upper parking lot to the school must stay behind the double yellow lines for safety considerations.
- The upper lot should be used for all parking. Churchill Street and Oakmont Boulevard parking is not permitted. Drivers are subject to being ticketed by the police. Parents parking on Oakmont Boulevard may cause interference with entering and exiting buses.
- We have a “No Note-No Go” policy. If your child is typically a bus rider, you must send in a written notice that your child will be a car rider that day. Your child will be placed on the bus if a note is not provided to the teacher stating that he/she is a car rider.

BOTH CAMPUSES

If there is any change in a student’s routine regarding pick-up, parents must supply a written note, and the student should give the note to his/her teacher in the morning. This pick-up policy is strictly held. If the student does not have a note, he/she will not be allowed a change in transportation. The school will **not** honor a student’s oral instruction. Your child will be placed on the bus if a note is not provided to the teacher stating that he/she is a car rider or has changed bus.

No student will be dismissed early without a written note (or phone call, if short notice) from the parent explaining the reason and particulars of the pick-up. Parents are asked to refrain from calling the school after 2:00 p.m. for transportation changes, unless it is an emergency.

Vacations

Absence caused by travel is considered to be an anticipated absence. Family vacations during the school year are not considered a legal absence. Parents are advised not to take vacations during school term. Assignments missed due to family travel during unscheduled vacations will be the responsibility of the student. Teachers cannot always commit to providing make-up work prior to vacation for various reasons, but will make every effort to prepare missed work if possible, when requested by the parent. The length of time of make-up work should be proportional to the amount of time away. If schoolwork is not completed in a timely manner, the grading for that subject area will be adjusted accordingly.

Weather Delays and Cancellations

In the event of inclement weather, parents will receive a recorded School Messenger phone, text, and/or email announcement. This is first line of communication. The school will also utilize the Divine Mercy Facebook page to post announcements. In addition, WJAC-TV and WTAJ-TV will run delays or cancellations. If a child is bused to school by a district that has cancelled classes, buses will not be available for those DMCA students either in the morning or in the afternoon. The home school district will determine the bus transportation schedule. Parents are welcome to transport children to and from school on these days, weather permitting.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation provided to students in grades K-6 is a **privilege**. Failure to obey rules, exhibiting lack of respect for the driver, or endangerment of passengers is grounds for suspension of riding privileges. The driver has the authority to issue conduct slips for improper behavior on the bus. Drivers have **legal responsibility and authority** for supervision of riders. They may withhold bus privileges from children who do not abide by bus rules. The school will follow-up with proper consequences for students who disregard expectations. It is up to the students, faculty, and parents to work together to build a reputation of good behavior

Please note that the Greater Johnstown School District and Conemaugh Valley School District **will** bus the DMCA pre-k(4) students because they bus their own pre-k children.

Parents may request bus service by calling their local school district transportation department. Students may not deviate from this daily routine of transportation without written notification from parent/guardian and approved by the school administration. Bus change forms are available in the office. Students will receive this permission form when they submit written parental permission. Please check the list in this handbook for phone numbers of local school bus companies.

In the unlikely event of a school bus accident, parents will be notified via school personnel by our Message Sender service. In that event, parents should not rush to the scene of the accident. They should await information or call the school for details about the current situation. They will receive

information regarding where the children are to be taken for treatment or when they will be transported to a pick-up location and where that location will be.

CAFETERIA

Hot lunches and breakfast are available daily through the USDA/PDE. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Applications for free and reduced meals are provided through the school office. If you believe you have been discriminated against, write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.20250. All students are expected to bring nourishing lunches to school when they do not participate in the provided hot lunch/breakfast program. Again, in light of nutritional standards in the state of Pennsylvania as well as those standards directed by the USDA, students should not bring soda or sugary fruit drinks. Water, low sugar, no-sugar, or 100% fruit drinks are recommended. Bottled water is available for purchase. Cups of cold water will be available at no cost.

Students are expected to observe table manners and proper etiquette in the cafeteria, just as they would at home or in a restaurant. Students are also encouraged to assist in keeping their eating area clean after lunch. Students who fail to adhere to rules will be removed from the lunch tables.

COMMUNICATION

Weekly “News and Notes” will be sent home via email. These reminders are sent to inform families of upcoming events, meetings, schedule changes, etc. Daily correspondence from your child’s teacher will be sent home in the student’s folder. Teachers will establish a regular means of communication with families via a personal website, emails, newsletter, or other means. Parents can access teacher websites on the Faculty/Staff page of the school website.

A request for any information regarding a student must be in writing or personal phone call by the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to contact the office and meet with the principal and/or teacher if they have a question or suggestion. Please contact the teacher or principal immediately if a situation develops in school that causes a serious concern.

In case of illness or other emergencies, information given on the emergency information sheet will be used in contacting relatives or friends when parents are not available. Please make every effort to keep this information current.

Parents may contact teachers at the school between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Arrangements will be made for a parent to speak with a teacher. Please refrain from calling the faculty at home or addressing staff for school purposes in public places outside of school hours. Students are not expected to use the office telephone without a legitimate reason. Forgotten items (homework, gym clothes, money) do not constitute a serious reason. DMCA would like to

develop a sense of responsibility among all Divine Mercy students. Parents may email teachers at the email address that the teacher provides, or via website link, or by calling the school office.

When a parent has a question or concern, the protocol to follow is:

1. Contact a child's teacher.
2. Contact the office/principal.
3. Request a conference with either or both, teacher and principal.
4. Meet with the guidance counselor if appropriate.

Please refrain from gossip or negative talk on the sports' fields and parking lots. Go directly to the source for correct information.

CONFERENCES

Beginning in the fall of 2019, mandatory parent/teacher conferences will be held in September. Report cards will not be available at that time, but these conferences will allow us to work together on individual student goals. Conferences at the end of the second marking period will be determined by teacher or parent request. Students are not required to attend these conferences; however, teachers may request that the student be present. Conferences with the principal are always welcome. The building principal has an open-door policy and will see a parent at any time that he/she does not have another commitment.

EMERGENCY OPERATION PLAN

There is a crisis plan in the office to be used in the event of a crisis. Fire drills are to be conducted on a monthly basis. Students practice fire drill procedures beginning the first week of school. When the fire bell is sounded, the students leave the room in single file through the assigned exit. Members of the local fire department may be present to observe one of the school's fire drills. In addition to fire drills, tornado and lock down procedures in case of extreme weather and/or a security breach of our school, are practiced twice yearly.

CURRICULUM

Divine Mercy Catholic Academy follows the recommended curriculum of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese in all subject areas with regard to content and time allotments. Preschool through Grade 4 classes are self-contained; grades 5 and 6 departmentalized.

DETENTION

Detention may be assigned to students in grades 3 through 6. A form will be sent home stating the reason, day, and time of the detention. A parent or guardian must sign this form and indicate the means of transportation the student will use following detention.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Divine Mercy Catholic Academy exists to provide a Catholic education which will help each student grow in his or her awareness of God, self and others. DMCA also strives to develop a student to his/her full potential spiritually, academically, and socially. These objectives provide the standard of judgment and the guide for action in the area of student behavior.

Student Behavior Expectations

The following behaviors are expected at all times, in all places, from all students, staff, and volunteers:

- Treat yourself, adults, peers and property with respect.
- Use school-appropriate language and tone of voice at all times.
- Follow directions given by a person in authority.
- While classes are in session, walk quietly while inside the building.
- Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.

Behavior in Classrooms

- Respect all adults and fellow students.
- Enter a classroom only when a teacher is present.
- If a teacher is not present, line up against the wall outside of the classroom.
- Take pride in your classroom by keeping it neat and clean.

Behavior in Halls

- Students walk on the right side of the hallway and in stairwells.
- When classes are in session, walk quietly and in an orderly manner.
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.

- Take care to keep the walls and halls clean, free from pencil marks, crayons, deliberate scuff marks, etc.
- Cubbies and lockers must be kept clean and orderly throughout the year.

Behavior in the Restrooms

- Wash hands with soap after flushing the toilet.
- Be aware of waste of soap and paper towels.
- Remain quiet in the restroom.
- Dispose of paper products properly

Behavior in the Cafeteria

- Do not leave the cafeteria without a teacher's permission.
- You may only purchase food for yourself, not others.
- Practice good table manners.
- Do not share or trade food.
- Use inside voices when talking.
- Students must clean their table and floor area before being dismissed.
- Refrain from walking around in the cafeteria. Limit your trips to the wastebasket; visit only with children at your table.

Behavior on the Playground

- Stay within the playground boundaries. If a ball goes beyond the boundary, tell a teacher.
- Listen to and cooperate with adults in charge.
- Be thoughtful and considerate of others.
- Use equipment in a safe way. Do not jump from swings and do not climb on the outside of the slides. This is a safety precaution.
- Games like tackle football and other contact activities are not permitted.
- Language and gestures need to be appropriate to the school setting.

Behavior in Church

- Genuflect upon entering your pew, facing the Tabernacle.
- Stand respectfully when answering questions in church.
- Fold hands reverently and bow before receiving Holy Communion.
- Participate fully in all prayers and hymns.
- Refrain from standing on the kneelers.

Behavior on Field Trips

- Students are expected to follow all school and bus rules while on fieldtrips.

Behavior on the Bus

- Follow all directions given by the bus driver. The bus driver will have the final word in all matters and may assign students to specific seats.
- Remain seated at all times.
- Talk quietly.
- Use only appropriate school language on the bus.
- Keep all body parts inside the bus at all times.
- Do not throw objects on or out of the bus.
- Stay in your seat while the bus is moving.

Consequences of Misbehavior

Since learning that consequences result from harmful behavior is important, failure to conform to school expectations, will result in the following behavior penalties. Consequences are listed and consideration will be given to permit the consequence to fit the particular violation and student's history. The degree of consequence will be determined by the administration.

B. Major Behavior Violations

1. **Assaults** (physical attack on student or staff member)
 - a. Parent contact and detention
 - b. Parent conference and 2 detentions
 - c. In-school Suspension (number of days to be determined by administration)

- d. Out of school suspension (number of days to be determined by administration)
- e. Possibility of Expulsion
- 2. **Verbal abuse, harassment, threats**
 - b. Parent contact
 - c. Parent contact and detention
 - d. Parent conference and 2 detentions
 - e. In-school Suspension (number of days to be determined by administration)
 - f. Out of school suspension (number of days to be determined by administration)
 - g. Possibility of Expulsion
- 3. **Theft and/or Property Damage**
 - a. Parent contact and detention
 - b. Parent conference and 2 detentions
 - c. In-school Suspension (number of days to be determined by administration)
 - d. Out of school suspension (number of days to be determined by administration)
 - e. Possibility of Expulsion
- 4. **Fire-related incidents including false alarms**
 - a. Parent conference and 2 detentions
 - b. Suspension with fire marshal and police referral (number of days to be determined by administration)
- 5. **Weapons**
 - a. Parent conference and suspension with police notification (number of days to be determined by administration)
 - b. Expulsion
- 6. **Drug/Alcohol Use/Possession of Paraphernalia**
 - C Parent conference and suspension with police notification (number of days to be determined by administration)
 - D Expulsion

The principal, in consultation with the classroom teacher, is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations.

DRESS CODE POLICY (GRADES K-6)

The dress code provides a standard for our students that fosters an environment conducive to learning and respectful behavior. Final decisions regarding the school uniform rest with the administration. School uniform polo shirts, ties, and sweatshirts are available for purchase (seasonally) online. See school website for information.

All uniforms must be neat and clean. Tight, ill-fitting, and/or oversized clothing is not permitted. All clothing should be labeled with the student's name, especially sweaters and jackets. Students must be in complete uniform or appropriately dressed during school hours or when representing Divine Mercy Catholic Academy in any public forum.

GIRLS

JUMPERS and SKORTS

- Girls in all grades may wear a jumper in navy or khaki year-round. No jumper or cardigan with an attached shirt, and no dresses are uniform. Jumpers and Skorts must be no shorter than two inches above the middle of the kneecap. (A skort is a “skirt” with shorts underneath.)

PANTS

- Dress, navy blue or khaki, Trouser-style pants may be worn year round by girls in all grades. Pants must be modest; i.e., no low-riders will be acceptable. Pants must be navy blue or khaki – not faded or stonewashed blue or khaki. No decorations of any kind may be worn on pants – i.e. rivets, patches, embroidery, jewels, etc. “Skinny-jean” pants are not appropriate uniform clothing.

BELTS

- If a belt is worn, it must be solid black, brown, gray, white or navy with no decorations.

SHORTS/ CAPRIS

- In warmer months, girls may wear navy or khaki shorts. Shorts must be knee-length – no shorter than two inches above the middle of the kneecap. That is, while standing, the fingertip must reach the bottom hem of the shorts. Cargo style shorts are not permitted. The same guidelines that are stated for pants also apply to shorts. The principal will announce when shorts pants are permitted (Usually September, October, April, May, and June).

DRESS SHIRTS

- White, oxford-style collar or rounded collar (for girls), short or long-sleeved shirts may be worn by girls year round, but are required to be worn for Mass days. Shirts must be tucked in at all times. Shirts must be long enough to remain tucked in while seated or when hand is raised.

UNDERGARMENTS

- Any garments worn underneath shirts must be appropriately colored and have no writing

POLOS

- Only uniform polo shirts are permitted--available in short or long sleeve options. Polos must remain in good condition and should be neat and presentable. Polos may be worn on non-Mass days

MASS DAY UNIFORM

- Dress shirt and jumper, skort, or pants with dress shoes and socks *may* be worn on Mass days. Students may *also* wear the red polo shirt with uniform bottoms on Mass day. The

exception to this rule is when the student's gym day is on Mass day. Gym uniform will prevail.

SWEATERS

- Cardigan, crewneck, V-neck and vests may be worn by girls in all grades as weather dictates. Sweaters or vests must be solid navy blue, white, or gray. DMCA and Bishop McCort crewneck and hooded sweatshirts are acceptable.

SOCKS

- Socks must be solid white, navy blue, black, or khaki. Solid blue or white tights may be worn with jumpers. No-show style socks are not permitted.

SHOES

- Solid Black, Blue, Gray or Brown dress shoes must be worn by girls in all grades year round. No variation of athletic, sneaker, or tennis shoes or shoes with lettering and/or striping will be permitted. No boots of any kind may be worn during school hours. Heels must be no higher than 2 inches and must be "chunky." No high heels, slippers, sandals, flip-flops, clogs, athletic shoes, open-heel shoes, or boots of any kind may be worn. Shoestrings must be solid navy, white, brown, or black.

MAKE-UP, HAIR, JEWELRY

- Absolutely no make-up of any kind or tattoos is permitted. Only **natural** color hair is acceptable. One pair of earrings may be worn on earlobes **ONLY**. Earrings must be small; no hoops or dangles. Other jewelry may be worn in moderation- i.e. one bracelet, watch, necklace, etc. Nail polish must be relatively light in color—refrain from black and other dark colors.

GYM CLOTHES

- Students in grades K-6 will wear gym attire to school on their designated gym day.
- **TOPS:** any red DMCA T-shirt, a uniform red polo shirt, or purchase a new DMCA red Crusher T-Shirt.
- **BOTTOMS:** plain black shorts—no logos (to be worn during the months of August, Septembers, October, April, May); **or** plain black sweatpants (open bottom, no logos/stripes); **or purchase DMCA Crusher logo shorts and/or sweatpants.** Leggings are not appropriate gym attire.

DRESS DOWN/UP DAYS

- Blue jeans are permitted on dress down days **ONLY**, as long as they are not low-riding and have no holes. Athletic shoes are permitted on dress down days. T-shirts must have appropriate logos--no offensive or suggestive language. The same guidelines for hair, make-up, jewelry, and sandal-type shoes apply to dress down days as well as regular uniform days. Leggings may only be worn by girls as long as an appropriate length skirt or skort is worn over top. Tight fitting or excessively baggy clothing is **NOT** acceptable. Yoga pants are not permitted. Moderation is key. Keeping up with current trends in fashion should be balanced with modest considerations.

In all cases, the Administration reserves the right to determine and curtail unacceptable articles of dress and hair style.

BOYS

PANTS

- Dress, navy blue or khaki, Trouser-style pants may be worn year round by boys in all grades. Pants must be modest, i.e. no low-riders will be acceptable. Pants must be navy blue or khaki– not faded or stonewashed blue or khaki. No cargo pants are permitted. No skinny pants, cargo pants, jeans, rivets, leggings, bell bottoms, painter pants, or cuffs are permitted. “Skinny-jean” pants are not appropriate uniform clothing.

SHORTS

- In warmer months, boys may wear navy or khaki dress shorts. Shorts must be knee-length – no shorter than two inches above the middle of the kneecap. Cargo style shorts are not permitted. The same guidelines that are stated for pants also apply to shorts. The principal will announce when shorts are permitted (Usually September, October, April, May, and June)

BELTS

- If a belt is worn, it must be solid black, brown, gray, or navy with no decorations.

DRESS SHIRTS

- White, oxford-style collar, short or long-sleeved shirts may be worn by boys year round. Boys must have their top buttons and collars buttoned at all times. Shirts must be tucked in. Shirts must be long enough to remain tucked in while seated or when hand is raised. A navy tie is worn with the white shirt. As an alternative, the red polo shirt may be worn on Mass days.

UNDERGARMENTS

- Undershirts must be appropriately colored and have no writing.

TIES

- Boys in grades K-6 must wear a tie with dress shirt. Boys may wear a navy blue full-length standard tie, available for purchase in the office or elsewhere. Shirts, must be buttoned at top of neck at all times. If shirt is too small, please purchase next size.

POLOS

- Only uniform polo shirts are permitted-- available in short or long sleeve options. Polos must remain in good condition and should be neat and presentable.

MASS DAY UNIFORM

- Dress shirt, tie, and pants with dress shoes and socks, *or* as an alternative, the red polo may be worn on Mass days with uniform bottoms. The exception to this rule is when a student’s gym day is on Mass day. Gym uniform will prevail.

SWEATER

- Cardigan, crewneck, V-neck and vests may be worn by boys in all grades as weather dictates. Sweaters or vests must be solid navy blue, white, or gray. DMCA and Bishop McCort crewneck and hooded sweatshirts are acceptable.

SOCKS

- Socks must be solid white, navy blue, black, or khaki. No-show style socks are not permitted

SHOES

- Solid Black, Blue, Gray or Brown dress shoes must be worn by boys in all grades year round. No variation of athletic, sneaker, or tennis shoes or shoes with lettering and/or striping will be permitted. Boots are uncomfortable during the school day, therefore student must bring shoes. Sandals are not permitted (this includes dress-down days). Shoestrings must be solid navy, white, brown, or black.

MAKE-UP, HAIR, JEWELRY

- Absolutely no make-up of any kind or tattoos is permitted. Hair should be **neatly trimmed**, conservative in style, and **natural** in color. It is not to touch the shirt collar and not be past the student's eyebrows. Earrings are not permitted for boys. Other jewelry may be worn in moderation- i.e. one bracelet, watch, necklace, etc.

GYM CLOTHES

- Students in grades K-6 will wear gym attire to school on their designated gym day.
- TOPS: any red DMCA T-shirt, a uniform red polo shirt, or purchase a new DMCA red Crusher T-Shirt.
- BOTTOMS: plain black shorts—no logos (to be worn during the months of August, Septembers, October, April, May); **or** plain black sweatpants (open bottom, no logos/stripes); **or** purchase DMCA Crusher logo shorts and/or sweatpants.

DRESS DOWN/UP DAYS

- Blue jeans are permitted on dress down days **ONLY** as long as they are not low-riding and have no holes. Athletic shoes are permitted on dress down days. T-shirts must have appropriate logos- no offensive or suggestive language. The same guidelines for hair, jewelry, and sandal-type shoes apply to dress down days as well as regular uniform days. Tight fitting or excessively baggy clothing is **NOT** acceptable. Moderation is key. Keeping up with current trends in fashion should be balanced with modest considerations

In all cases, the Administration reserves the right to determine and curtail unacceptable articles of dress and hair style.

If the dress code is not followed, a Dress Code reminder form will be completed by the homeroom teacher and sent home with student and/or email.

EITC SCHOLARSHIP

Eligible students need not be of the Catholic faith to receive Second Century scholarships. The schools are located in the counties of Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clinton and Somerset.

The EITC Scholarship Fund receives financial support from interested individual and corporate donors who are committed to making a positive impact in the lives of worthy young students in the region. Please consider how a tax-deductible gift can help make the four Catholic high schools and twenty grade schools/preschools in the diocese an option for more and more interested families. These funds will make a quality, faith-based education a more affordable choice for years to come. A large percentage of contributions comes from businesses and corporations that make gifts through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Pre-Kindergarten Tax Credit (PKTC) programs coordinated by the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development. However, gifts from individuals and families also play an important role in providing grants. Visit the website and www.factstuitionaid.com and click on the link to obtain information about obtaining a grant for children in grades PreK through 12. In addition, there are several OSTC grants available (Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit) for students residing in the Greater Johnstown School District. Check the website for additional information. \

GUIDANCE

Appalachia IU08 provides a guidance counselor through the IU8 non-public programs. Students need to inform the office, their teacher or the guidance counselor of their desire to meet individually with the counselor. The guidance counselor also provides developmental guidance with the whole class on a biweekly basis.

HOMEWORK PRACTICE

Homework is essential for the full scholastic development of the child. Children are expected to do a reasonable amount of home study, and it is the responsibility of the parent to supervise this work. Homework may consist of written work, reading, study for review, memorization, or work on special projects.

Parents are encouraged to set aside a period of time for study every day, even when written homework is not assigned.

Failure to complete homework hinders learning as the review of material is necessary for mastery; therefore, if homework is not completed, it will detrimentally reflect in your child's progress report.

Divine Mercy Catholic Academy expects and requires every student to be aware of his/her personal responsibility for ensuring and maintaining complete integrity in all academic work. Cheating, plagiarism, forgery, and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, subject to prompt action by the administration.

HONOR ROLL

Students in grades 4-6 may qualify for academic honors at the end of each marking period. The following are the guidelines for honor roll:

High Honor (All A's)

93% and higher in all solid subjects (religion, English, reading, math, science and social studies.)
Acceptable conduct/performance in all subjects is also required.

Honor (All A's and B's)

85 - 92% and/or 93 - 100% in all solid subjects (religion, English, reading, math, science and social studies.)
Acceptable conduct/performance in all subjects is also required.

LIBRARY

All students are permitted and encouraged to borrow books from the library, subject to established library rules. Students will pay the cost for replacement of any lost or damaged book. We are fortunate to have volunteers to assist students in selecting books. New volunteers are welcome!

LOCKERS

Students may be assigned a locker. In some cases, lockers may need to be shared. Students are responsible for the proper care of the lockers. Lockers are available for the express purpose of housing jackets and book bags. Due to the size of the lockers, wheeled book bags are not permitted. The only things to be placed in the locker are jackets, sweaters, book bags, and lunches. For safety reasons, students may not climb in or on the lockers. If space permits, books may be stored there. Decorations may **not** be placed on the outside of the locker. However, there are many "cool" magnets that students may use to decorate the inside door of the lockers. Please, no tape, no stickers, no writing on lockers. Inappropriate photos and other materials will be removed. There will not be room for any additional shelving inside the locker. Finally, no locks will be permitted on locker doors. Valuables may be kept in the office, if necessary. School lockers are the property of Divine Mercy Catholic Academy. Students DO NOT have a constitutional right to a private locker. Students should be aware that lockers may be searched randomly and periodically without regard to articulated suspicion or alleged infraction of school rules. School officials determine what action to take if inappropriate or illegal substances are found.

NO BULLYING POLICY a.k.a DIVINE MERCY CATHOLIC ACADEMY PEACEKEEPERS PROGRAM

In determining incidents of bullying, staff, students, and parents should refer to the following definition of bullying.

Bullying is defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantial interference with a student's education.
2. Creation of a threatening environment.
3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Such acts can take place either within a school setting and/or outside of school boundaries.

Bullying, as defined here, includes cyberbullying. *School Setting*, as defined here, means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

A person is being bullied when he/she is exposed **repeatedly**, and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Bullying happens when someone with **more** power unfairly hurts someone with **less** power **over and over** again. However, it is **not** bullying when someone is teased in a friendly manner. Additionally, it is not bullying when two students of approximately equal strength, ability, or advantage fight or argue. Such events are "classified" as misbehaviors, not bullying.

All incidents will be investigated and documented. All students involved will report to teacher and/or the office. Documentation will include date, description of incident, reaction, and consequences.

NO BULLYING POLICY: Consequences

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the student behavioral expectations (discipline code), which may include:

1. Counseling within the school
2. Parental conference
3. Loss of school privileges
4. Transfer to another classroom, bus, or school
5. Exclusion from school sponsored activities
6. Detention
7. Suspension
8. Expulsion
9. Counseling/Therapy outside of school
10. Referral to law enforcement officials

RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS

All students, regardless of religious preference, will be instructed in and expected to participate in, the Roman Catholic faith, with the exception of reception of the sacraments. Religion classes are

held on a daily basis. Mass is scheduled weekly, and family and friends are always welcome to join us in prayer. Religious activities include:

- Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Rosary
- Stations of the Cross
- Penance Services
- Prayer Services
- Daily and special prayers
- Adoration

SCHOOL MESSENGER

The DMCA outreach via telephone, email, and text is a service of School Messenger. This program links with PowerSchool daily to keep information up to date. **Parents have access to change their information through PowerSchool.** Parents are asked to keep the school current with their address, phone and/or cell phone, and email information. Parents will receive alerts in emergency situations, weather delays, and announcements/reminders via School Messenger.

SCHOOL SPIRIT

School spirit means loyalty to all functions of the school. A loyal Crusher stands by Bishop McCort/DMCA, does his/her best to keep his/her scholastic, co-curricular, athletic, and moral standards at the highest level, and encourages all other students to do the same.

School Spirit includes:

Courtesy—toward teachers, staff, fellow students, competitors, fans, and officials at athletic events.

Pride—in the school appearance and everything we endeavor to do at Divine Mercy.

Sportsmanship—the ability to gain victory and accept defeat with dignity and graciousness.

SERVICE

Service is part of living out the Baptismal call of Catholic Christians. All have been called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Jesus reached out to people who needed His love and care, especially those who were poor, sick and unwanted. It is essential that DMCA students, staff, and families use their God-given gifts, talents, and interests to love others and help them in times of need.

Students at Divine Mercy complete individual, class, and whole-school church, school, and community projects throughout the year.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Student activities include, but are not limited to: Forensics, Math 24, St. Vincent DePaul, Ski Club, Reading Competition, Sports, Cheerleading, Band, Strings, Choir, Diocesan Youth Chorale, Spelling Bee, Lector, County Chorus, Student Council, Ski Club, Science Fair, Musical performances, S.T.R.E.A.M./First Lego League, and Coding. New clubs and activities are always welcome.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Greater Johnstown School District, Westmont Hilltop School District, Conemaugh Township School District

- McIlwain School Bus Lines
- 814-288-1594 (McIlwain Dispatch)
-

Richland School District/ Forest Hills School District

- Miller Motor Company
- 814-487-5701

Ferndale Area School District

- Mlaker School Bus Lines
- 814-479-2515 (Mlaker Dispatch)

Central Cambria School District

- First Student Transportation
- 814-472-8870 x 306 (District Office)

Ligonier Valley School District

- Lodestar School Bus Lines
- 724-238-5696 (District Office)

Conemaugh Valley School District

- Ribblett School Bus Lines
- 814-539-8322 (Ribblett Dispatch)
-

North Star School District

- Griffith School Bus Lines
- 814-629-5631 x 1106 (District Office)

United School District

- 814-446-5615 (District Office)

VISITORS

Visitors must check in at the school office upon entering the building. Friends of the students may not be brought to school without the prior permission of the principal. Out of respect for the learning process, no one may proceed to a classroom without prior approval of the principal or office staff.

Only authorized persons who have the permission from the office may meet with students once the children have reported to school.

Due to State and Diocesan guidelines, family members may not enter other areas of the school while in session including the cafeteria (lunch time) and playground (recess). Parents are encouraged to become lunch room volunteers by completing approved clearances and the Diocesan Youth Protection Program. Volunteers are required to report to the office to sign in.

VOLUNTEERS

Information on how to become a volunteer in our school may be found on the diocesan website: <https://www.dioceseaj.org/youth-protection/>

All volunteers must take the online Diocesan Youth Protection Program and all volunteers must complete/provide comprehensive background checks. Please see the diocesan website or the Divine Mercy website (www.divinemeracy.academy) for more information.

What forms must I return to the school to complete this training?

- * Completed Employee/Volunteer Application Form
- * Signed Copy of Employee/Volunteer's Code of Conduct
- * Completed Ministry Reference Form
- * Completed Background Check Release Form
- * COPY OF YOUR CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE: AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2015, ALL SCHOOL EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS SHOULD SUBMIT THEIR FORMS TO THEIR RESPECTIVE SCHOOLS. DO NOT SEND DIRECTLY TO THE DIOCESE.

Parent / Student Handbook Signature Page

Please read the handbook located on the website at

www.divine-mercy-academy.com

I have read this handbook and reviewed it with my child(ren). I understand and agree to the content.

Family Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____ Grade _____

Date: _____

Please return this page to your homeroom teacher by **September 10. Parents of students in the same family may use one form for all children.