



AVE MARIA ACADEMY
CATHOLIC VALUES • ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

**2020-2021
Parent/Student
Handbook**

Revised 8/26/20

PRINCIPAL'S INTRODUCTION

Ave Maria Academy welcomes you...

My name is Mrs. Lynne Lynch, the Principal of Ave Maria Academy. I wanted to take a few moments to speak with you about the development of our Catholic Academy.

My mission as Principal is to create an environment where our children can grow both spiritually and intellectually.

Prior to becoming a Principal, I took some time to reflect on the meaning of a Catholic Education. I brought it back to two principals, *Shared Values* and *Academic Excellence*.

Our faith is both our foundation and the fertile earth from which our values grow. Our children, teachers and I formally share our faith during our group prayers, religious instruction and masses together. Symbols and writings throughout our facilities allows for personal reflection and reinforcement. Beyond this, our school must reinforce the values you would expect in your own home, ones of respectful interactions, courtesy, teamwork and assistance to others. I am blessed to be able to witness this in our children each day in school, at spiritual, academic and athletic events, and in our communities. We all witness their developing values, our values, our shared values.

When you think of a Catholic School education, words like “challenge,” and “excellence” come to mind. Our Diocesan Leadership saw fit to utilize the word “Academy,” in titling Ave Maria, which reflects our goal of high academic standards.

I appreciate the support and feedback you have given me through our meetings, phone calls and e-mails. Rest assured, my primary focus is the ongoing development of our Academy, which is being built on a foundation of faith, shared values and academic excellence. Welcome...

Lynne

Mrs. Lynne Lynch
Principal
Ave Maria Academy

Ave Maria Academy– Mission Statement

Will be developed with stakeholder input.

Ave Maria Academy - Belief Statements

- The goal of education is to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills that will ultimately create lifelong learners and responsible citizens.
- Every individual, as a child of God, has a moral responsibility to actively serve others as Jesus did.
- We believe that an effective Catholic education develops the whole person spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.
- We believe in the importance of instilling a value system consistent with the Catholic faith that will enable a child's moral development.
- We believe that self-discipline is fundamental to the development of the child.
- We believe in a school program that depends on mutual respect and cooperation between teachers, parents, students, and administration so that children will experience the love of Christ within a Catholic environment.
- We believe in the spiritual needs of the students by building on the foundation set by the family and sharing with families the responsibility of reinforcing the Gospel message.
- We believe in providing students the opportunity to interact in a Catholic community, to build trusting relationships, and to witness through worship and service the Christian message as core to our Catholic identity.

Middle States Accreditation

Ave Maria Academy is Middle States accredited.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Ave Maria Academy offers a strong traditional curriculum which is well - rounded and which challenges each student to fully develop his/her talents.

Within the curriculum of instruction, an appreciation of the Arts is fostered, in an effort to awaken interest in, and develop an awareness of the gift of life found in music, drama, painting, song, and creativity. Greater awareness of the world of humanity is brought about through exploration in the field of Social Studies. The wonder of nature and the gifts of the environment, and our responsibility toward it as God's creatures of the earth, are studied in the Natural Sciences.

Religious education is the center of the Catholic School System. The emphasis is placed on Christian living and the life of Jesus. By creating a Christ-centered atmosphere and stressing Christian values in the classroom as well as throughout the entire school environment, we make a conscious effort to integrate religion into the life of each student.

A formal religion program is taught in every grade level. Characteristics of the curriculum are lessons containing a balance of doctrinal content, scriptural understanding, faith formation and prayer, and worship experiences. A variety of materials and resources are employed to foster both spiritual growth and moral development.

Faith experiences are an integral part of the child's religious experience. These are provided through opportunities for weekly Mass, Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, classroom prayer, and service to others. Community is at the heart of Catholic Education not simply as a concept to be learned, but as a reality to be lived.

The Director of Religious Education works with the teachers in the religious development and sacramental preparation of the students. Parent Preparation Programs for Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation are held during the year. These are parish programs and involve all eligible children/parents of the congregation.

Our belief in Jesus has drawn us to this community. Our beliefs are expressed in and strengthened by daily communal prayer. It is hoped that as we meet and pray together as a school community students will take more responsibility for their prayer and develop skills and a taste for the Church's daily worship. Our focus on prayer includes a prayer service each morning with simple prayers for lunchtime.

All textbooks have been selected from an approved list of recommended texts determined by the diocese.

GRADING SCALE

A = 93-100
B = 85- 92
C = 75- 84
D = 70- 74
E = 0- 69

HONOR ROLL

Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 are eligible for Honor Roll at the end of each report card period. Beginning with the first nine weeks of school, Ave Maria Academy 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students may attain HONORS or HIGH HONORS. The criteria for the 'Honor Roll' are listed below:

Honor Roll is a special recognition many 6 - 8th grade students receive for achieving exceptional grades during each nine weeks. At Ave Maria Academy, we encourage every student to achieve their best, and are proud of our students when they earn this honor.

High Honors and Honors are determined by:

- Every subject, except handwriting, is included the calculation that determines a student's grade point average.
- The grade point average is determined by affording each letter grade a numerical value (A=4, B=3). These numerical values are added together and then divided by the number of subjects being included in the calculation.
- If a student receives a 3.80 or higher, they receive High Honors. If a student receives 3.5 to 3.7, they receive Honors.
- Students receiving a C in any class will not be considered for honor roll. A "C" is not a "bad" grade, but is considered average according to the Diocesan report card.

REPORT CARDS

Report Cards are available to the parents electronically through Option C four times a year in November, January, April, and June, each at the end of a nine week period. The interpretation of achievements depends on the teacher's evaluation, the child's effort in developing his/her capabilities, and the child's growth and development in the knowledge of the subject matter.

Parents are encouraged to view their child's progress through Option C at mid-quarter. This lets parents know before conference or report card time how the child is progressing.

A less than mark on the child's report card indicates needs improvement. Greater effort should naturally result in greater accomplishment.

Progress Report Code

Primary - Grades 1, 2 and 3
A - Advanced Performance
B - Proficient Performance
C - Basic Performance
D - Below Basic Performance

Intermediate - Grades 4 - 8
A - 93 - 100
B - 85 - 92
C - 75 - 84
D - 70 - 74
E - Below 70

PROMOTIONS AND RETENTION

Promotions and retention are based on an evaluation of academic, physical, social, and emotional growth. The primary reasons for considering retention are: a) indifference or lack of effort in the part of a capable student, b) physical or social immaturity, and c) frequent or long absences. Retention is usually considered as a more positive alternative during the first and second grades.

Parents can assume their child will be promoted unless the alternative of retention has been discussed during the school year. Parents will be involved in any retention decision.

STUDY SKILLS

Specific skills and techniques can make learning easier and more enjoyable. The following are student guidelines for achieving good study habits:

1. Come to class prepared with pencil, paper, and other necessary materials.
2. Be an active participant in class. Listen well and take part in class.
3. Ask questions to clarify problems.
4. Plan your day and schedule time for homework.
5. Use what is learned and apply it to new situations.
6. Strive to do the very best work possible. Just "getting by" is not a worthwhile goal.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM

Our Academic Support team works with parents to determine if specific learning needs must be addressed. Through Diocesan-provided Growth Plans, accommodations and, if a specific diagnosis exists for a student, adaptations are documented and listed. The Academic Support team is made of up faculty and Intermediate Unit personnel. Parents are an integral part of this team.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

A school counselor will be available for individual counseling, group counseling, and developmental classroom lessons. The counselor is also a resource for organizational skills, conflict resolution, and bullying issues. Written parent permission is required before a student can be seen by the counselor individually on an ongoing basis.

TESTING OPTIONS

Educational psychological testing is offered by the home school district and is available through parent request to determine if a student may have a learning disability. Results are formally reported to the parents, principal and at the parents' discretion to teachers along with a list of recommendations made by the psychologist. This information is kept confidential. Together with the faculty and administration, the Academic Support Program also exists to help students in need of academic assistance.

WEBSITE

The school web-site, www.avemariapgh.org is our best means for parent-staff communication. Parents are informed of the student's progress and other school information as follows:

- Option C
- Announcements
- Important Forms
- Faculty and Administrator e-mails
- Class Pages
- Lunch Menu

CURRICULAR RELATED
ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are planned periodically as special events within the school or outside of the school day. Some typical assembly themes include athletics, cultural presentations, and professional speakers. There is often a significant investment in time and money in preparation for an assembly program. Student attendance is a requirement, not an option. Special attention to etiquette and good Christian citizenship is expected of all students.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be taken to enrich the student's learning. Written permission of the parents must be obtained prior to the activity. The Parent-Teacher Guild of Ave Maria Academy provides assistance with buses for field trips. Parents are informed of the other costs of the trip, if any. It is the policy of the school that at least two chaperones with clearances accompany the teacher on the trip. Children who do not attend the field trip are expected to attend school. Student dress for field trips will be determined by the nature of the trip. **NOTE: Assemblies and field trips are currently suspended due to COVID-19.**

HOMEWORK

The objective of homework is to develop habits and techniques of independent, useful study. It is an integral part of the learning process, since home assignments supplement the daily work of the classroom. The amount of time spent on homework should be proportionate to the age and grade level of the child. The recommended time allotment for homework follows:

Primary Department (Levels 1, 2, 3) 20 to 30 minutes
(includes flash card drill and oral reading)

Intermediate Department (Levels 4 and 5) 30 to 60 minutes

Middle School Department (Levels 6, 7 and 8) 60 to 120 minutes

Too much homework defeats its purpose. If a student is unable to do or complete an assignment, encourage him/her to discuss the matter with the teacher. The teacher should make his/her goals and expectations clear to both parents and students.

Parents play an important part in their child's home study. They should:

1. Cooperate with the school in making homework effective by providing suitable conditions, such as work space, light, and supplies.
2. Encourage the child but avoid undue pressure.
3. Question what the child is studying. Can he/she give you, in some detail, a summary of the topic?
4. Check and review the homework. This is a positive way to keep abreast of what is being taught.

Incomplete work forms will be issued to students failing to complete homework assignment. Repeated infractions of the homework policy will result in demerits/detention and/or will affect the student's grade.

6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Homework Policy

1. If we are given at least one week advanced notice of an excused absence we will do our best to provide you with the work you will miss while you are away. We will attempt to provide work by the last school day before you leave with the expectation that the work will be completed prior to your return.
2. Each teacher will deduct points for late assignments (it is up to the teacher how much will be deducted).
3. Assignments will not be accepted one week past their due date.
4. Projects that are turned in late will be graded as follows:

- 1 day late = highest grade you may receive is a B
- 2 days late = highest grade you may receive is a C
- 3 days late = highest grade you may receive is a D
- 4 + days late = highest grade received will be 50%

5. Homework is to be completed at home. If you are struggling on an assignment you should still try! Call a friend, ask a sibling or a parent for help, or ask to speak with the teacher during the next day. Do not leave questions blank.

DAILY PRACTICES

HOURS

Mt. Lebanon Campus Hours

- School Hours K-8 8:00am – 2:50pm
- Kindergarten Hours:
 - o Morning 8:00am – 12:00pm
 - o All Day 8:00am – 2:50pm
- Preschool Hours:
 - o 3 year old Morning 8:30am - 11:00pm
 - o 4 year old Morning 8:30am - 11:00pm
 - o 4 year old All Day 8:30am – 2:30pm
 - o Pre-Kindergarten (4-Year) 8:00am – 2:30pm
- Extended Day Program Hours
 - o Mornings: 7:00am – 8:00am
 - o Afternoons: after school – 6:00pm

The school day officially begins in levels K-8 at 8:15 A.M and students are encouraged to arrive between 8:00 and 8:15A.M. Students arriving after 8:15 will be marked tardy.

Bethel Park Campus Hours

- School Hours K-8 8:15am – 3:05pm
- Kindergarten Hours:
 - o Morning 8:15am – 12:15pm
 - o All Day 8:15am – 3:05pm
- Preschool Hours:
 - o 3 year old Morning 8:30am - 11:00pm
 - o 4 year old Morning 8:30am - 11:00pm
 - o 4 year old All Day 8:30am – 2:30pm
 - o Pre-Kindergarten (4-Year) 8:15am – 2:45pm
- Extended Day Program Hours
 - o Mornings: 7:00am – 8:00am
 - o Afternoons: after school – 6:00pm

The school day officially begins in levels K-8 at 8:25 A.M and students are encouraged to arrive between 8:15 and 8:25A.M. Students arriving after 8:25 will be marked tardy.

LOST AND FOUND

All items for the child's use (INCLUDING CLOTHING) should be marked with his/ her name. Anyone who has lost an article should check the Lost and Found Box. Unclaimed articles will periodically be given to the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

ADMISSIONS/REGISTRATION POLICIES

Birth and baptismal certificates must be presented at the student's initial enrollment. Verification of these documents is noted on the student's permanent record card.

The following are the immunization requirements for Ave Maria Academy:

	<i>Diphtheria Tetanus</i> (one dose on or after 4th birthday)	<i>Polio</i> Oral or Injected	<i>Measles</i> (one dose on or after 1st birthday)	<i>Mumps</i> (one dose on or after 1st birthday)	<i>Rubella</i> (one dose on or after 1st birthday)	<i>Hepatitis B</i> (3 doses properly spaced)	<i>Chicken Pox</i> **Proof of Immunity
Students entering school for first time (K of first grade)	4 doses	3 doses	2 doses	1 dose	1 dose	3 doses	**Proof of Immunity
Students entering Grade 7	3 doses	3 doses	2 doses	1 dose	1 dose	3 doses	**Proof of Immunity
Students presently enrolled in school	3 doses	3 doses	2 doses	1 dose	1 dose	-----	-----

Varicella (chicken pox) immunity may be proven in ONE of the following ways:

- ** 1 dose of varicella vaccine given on or after first birthday.
- ** 2 doses of varicella vaccine, properly spaced, for students 13 years of age or older.
- ** History of having had chicken pox (written statement of date or age of having had the disease).
- ** Laboratory testing results.

Parents must show proof of immunizations before admission to school.

Children who are five by August 31 may be admitted to kindergarten in August unless there is adequate reason for non-acceptance. Kindergarten children are tested in March to determine their readiness for first grade.

The administration of the school will determine the maximum class size. Diocesan regulations state that class size may not exceed 35.

Parents of children leaving Ave Maria Academy are asked to notify the principal one week in advance. The name and address of the new school is required so that a transfer may be sent in due time. Parents will be asked to sign a release form for the transfer of records to the new school.

PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Registration for Kindergarten and Preschool is held at the end of January during Catholic Schools Week.

Entrance Requirements:

- Kindergarten - Children must be 5 years old on or before August 31st (or District of Residence Date)
- 4 Preschool - Children must be 4 years old by August 31
- 3 Preschool - Children must be 3 years old by August 31

Immunization records must be provided by the first day of school. **Children must be toilet trained.** Copies of birth and baptismal records must be brought to registration.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The diocesan Memorandum of Understanding must be signed for your child to attend our school!

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES

Students should be regular in attendance because attendance has a vital bearing on educational progress. In case of illness, PARENTS SHOULD CALL THE SCHOOL OFFICE (412-341-5444 for the Mt. Lebanon Campus and 412-833-1412 for the Bethel Park Campus) between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. on the first day of the child's absence. If a parent forgets to call, the school will call the home to confirm the reason for the student's absence. A note or email to the homeroom teacher/school office from the family stating the date of and reason for the absence **must** be presented upon return to class and signed by a parent. Excused absences include illness, death in the family, and medical or dental appointments.

Student attendance, whether present partially in the morning/afternoon, is marked as follows:

- Student in attendance less than 2 hours: ABSENT – FULL Day
- Student in attendance for 2-4 hours: ABSENT – ½ Day
- Student in attendance more than 4 hours and less than 6.5 – will be marked Tardy (AM) or Early Dismissal (PM) depending on either morning or afternoon arrival/departure.

Vacations taken during school time are discouraged. If unavoidable, they must be cleared in advance with the principal by completing the 'Planned Absence Excuse Form' located on the school website (www.avemariapgh.org).

In the case of an early dismissal, a note is to be sent to the child's teacher. Parents should make every effort to send in a note or email the teacher/school office by 8:30 a.m. and not call the school office for early dismissals. **FOR THE SAFETY OF THE CHILDREN, parents must come into the school office to meet the child and sign them out.** No student is permitted to leave the building without his or her parent or other authorized adult. The principal may recommend dismissal of any pupil showing symptoms of an illness or an injury. Parents **MUST** list an emergency phone number with the office.

Students have the responsibility of making up work missed during an absence. Normally, books and assignments can be sent home via classmates or communicated over the telephone or email. Homework may be picked up after school if the teacher is notified at the beginning of the day. This allows the teacher time to prepare the assignments. Upon return from extended absence, students will be given a minimum 3 days (one day to complete per each day absent) to complete any work missed. Work requested by student or parent during student absences must be completed upon return of that student to school.

TARDINESS

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Late arrival disrupts class and causes loss of instruction time. Any student who arrives at school after 8:15 A.M. at the Mt. Lebanon Campus or 8:25 A.M. at the Bethel Park Campus will be considered tardy.

DAILY SCHEDULE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements are made in the morning and afternoon to the entire school. All announcements must be received in written form. Morning announcements must be turned in by 8:00 A.M. and afternoon announcements by 2:15 P.M. in the school office.

PRAYER

Daily scheduled Morning Prayer at the beginning and ending of each class may be spontaneous or formal as determined by the teacher. The morning service will include the information about the celebration of the day, a reading appropriate to the day, and pledge of allegiance. Adjustments may be made due to COVID-19 regulations.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Students **should not** arrive before 8:00 a.m. unless taking a district bus. Please carefully review our "Traffic/Student Pedestrian" Policy located in this handbook.

Car riders will be dismissed at 2:50 p.m. from the Mt. Lebanon Campus and 3:05 p.m. from the Bethel Park Campus. Students should be picked up and leave for home no later than 3:00 p.m. at the Mt. Lebanon Campus and 3:15 at the Bethel Park Campus unless involved in an after school activity.

Parents must notify the school office if a child will be late (after 8:15 a.m.) in the morning. Students arriving after 10:00 a.m. will be marked half-day absent a.m. and students leaving before 1:00 p.m. will be marked absent half-day absent p.m.

DISMISSAL (and EARLY DISMISSALS/CHANGE OF TRANSPORTATION)

Parents are asked to **PROMPTLY** pick up their children at dismissal time (2:50 – Mt. Lebanon/3:05 – Bethel Park on regular school days; 11:30 A.M – Mt. Lebanon./12:00 noon – Bethel Park on early days.) This is NOT a time for playground activities. Students are to dismiss from school quietly. For the safety of the children, parents are asked to follow traffic patterns.

Students having an early dismissal/or change of transportation for the day, should bring a detailed note to school in the morning. Please take care of these matters in advance and send a detailed note in with your child. In emergencies, the school can be called before 2:00 p.m. to ensure that the information/change will reach your child.

CAFETERIA

Due to time and space constraints, children may not go home for lunch, and parents are asked not to join their child for lunch unless arrangements have been made with the school office. A hot lunch program consisting of well-balanced meals is provided daily by AVI. Lunches may not be brought in from restaurants. Lunch money is collected in the homerooms in the morning, and a daily lunch count is taken at that time.

If a child forgets his/her lunch bag or money for milk or hot lunch, it may be brought to the school office. It is not to be taken directly to the child's room. The lunch bag or box should be marked with the child's name and room number.

The lunch hour should be a pleasant and relaxing time for all. Therefore, these rules of etiquette are to be observed:

- Students are not to save places in line or at tables.
- No loud talking while waiting in line or while eating.
- Students are expected NOT TO WASTE FOOD.
- Students are not required to take every item on the day's menu.
- Students are expected to deposit bags, wrappers, milk cartons and debris in the waste containers and to take trays to the dish room.
- Food must NOT be taken from the cafeteria.
- Eating is permitted ONLY in the cafeteria.
- Before leaving the cafeteria, students are to be certain the tables and floor are cleared. Chairs are to put in place, all trash disposed of and the child's place at the table wiped clean.
- Students not obeying the cafeteria rules will lose recess time.

Parents who have children with allergies are required to notify their homeroom teacher so appropriate accommodations may be made.

*Due to COVID-19, students may bring their lunch or order a "boxed" lunch from AVI which will be delivered to the classrooms.

PLAYGROUND/RECESS – SAFETY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY

All children from levels K (all day) - 8 participate in outdoor recess. Recess, as part of the entire school program, is essential to the physical, social, and mental well-being of the child.

Playground equipment is available. It is important for each child to be responsible for taking care of the classroom playground equipment so that none of it gets lost. Any item lost due to carelessness must be paid for by the individual or by the group responsible.

Students who bring their own football, etc., from home **MUST** have their family name on it. Only "Nerf" brand equipment is recommended. **NO** hard balls or bats are allowed during recess time. The playground **must be free** of all vehicles during the school day at our Mt. Lebanon site.

Students **MUST** behave themselves with respect for themselves and the well-being of all. To ensure this end, the following playground (parking lot) safety rules are enforced:

1. "Rough housing" is not permitted. This includes any pushing, shoving, pulling of clothing, taking hats, tackle football, and "take-away".
2. Foul language will **NOT** be tolerated.
3. Disrespectful attitudes toward any students or teacher will **NOT** be tolerated.
4. Rules of fair play **MUST** be followed at all times in all playground games.
5. Food, gum and drinks are **NOT** allowed on the playground.
6. Students may **NOT** re-enter the school building during recess unless injured or authorized playground supervisor.
7. Students may not leave the designated play area.
8. Students may not leave the school ground without the permission of the principal.
9. Classes are to enter the building quietly and orderly.

Students who do not respond to a verbal warning will be subject to the discipline policy of the playground supervisor.

Children remain indoors during inclement weather. Quiet activities at their desks are permitted. Coloring books are recommended for the primary levels. Patrols in the hallways are to be respected at **ALL** times.

The playground is **NOT** supervised after school and students are expected to leave for home immediately after dismissal.

NOTE: Due to COVID-19, shared recess equipment will be limited to ensure the health and safety of our students.

EMERGENCIES

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Change of Address/Telephone

It is very important that every student maintain an up-to-date address and telephone number record at the school office. Notify the school immediately if you have a change of address or telephone number during the school year. This also applies to emergency names and telephone numbers.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In case of emergency each student is required to have on file at the school office the following information:

1. Parent(s) or guardian(s) names(s)
2. Complete and up-to-date address.
3. Home phone and parent(s) work phone.
4. Emergency phone number of friend or relative.
5. Medical alert information.

EMERGENCY CLOSING AND SCHOOL DELAY INFORMATION

Especially when winter approaches, please be aware of the following school policies:

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Cancellation of school takes place only during circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. School will not be canceled unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances. Every practical means is used to notify parents of a cancellation, including TV, internet, and Option C Alert. In the unusual circumstance, where school must be canceled during the school day, teachers will determine that all students have satisfactory transportation and supervision to their home before releasing them from school.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

If inclement weather or some other emergency requires that the school be delayed or closed, this information will be announced on WPXI and families will receive a text/message alert through Option C. Because of the number of public districts represented in our school, it is important that you listen for an announcement that identifies your public school district. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL OR RECTORY FOR THIS INFORMATION.**

The following procedures will be adhered to regarding poor weather conditions:

1. If Mount Lebanon or Bethel Park School District School District or the district that provides your transportation has canceled school, but Ave Maria Academy has not canceled school, parents are encouraged to provide transportation **to and from** school for that day for Ave Maria Academy students. Please use your best safe judgment of the road conditions.
2. Individual transportation delays due to inclement weather are dependent upon the school district in which the student lives. For example: if Keystone Oaks has a delay, then **only** those students who are bussed by Keystone Oaks have a delay.
3. You should receive a call and/or text message from the school Option C Parent Alert System. This is a great use of technology, but is not perfect. Consider checking the school website – www.avemariapgh.org, too.

KINDERGARTEN/PRE-SCHOOL SCHEDULE

- When Ave Maria Academy has a two-hour delay, Kindergarten/Pre-School children are to report at 10:00 AM. The following is the modified schedule for pre-school & kindergarten.

Preschool & Kindergarten Schedule:

A.M. Kindergarten 10:00-12:15

4-Year Preschool (A.M.) & 3-Year Preschool (A.M.) – 10:00-11:30 A.M.

All Day Kindergarten – 10:00-2:50 P.M. – (same as 1st – 8th grades)

Important Information

When Ave Maria Academy is delayed, the teachers may be delayed along with the office staff and/or they will be in mandatory meetings. Please do NOT drop your students off at the regular time as there will not be staff in the school to supervise them. There will be no morning Extended Day on days where there is a delay.

T.V. and Internet Contacts

The cancellation of classes due to inclement weather will be announced on WPXI or the school websites.

Some misc. points and examples:

- For safety reasons, Mount Lebanon walkers-those truly walking- should follow the Mount Lebanon School District regarding delays/cancellations. The crossing guards will adhere to the Mount Lebanon School District.
- If your district is delayed and Ave Maria Academy is not delayed, you may drop your child off at the school during normal time or send them on the bus for the delay.
- If for some safety reason, Ave Maria Academy has a two-hour delay and your district does not have a delay, the bus transportation will not be delayed and parents are responsible for transportation. **This will happen very seldom. If Ave Maria Academy has a delay and your district does not, then the parents will need to bring their child to school two hours later unless notified.**

When all districts are delayed and there is a two-hour delay, for safety reasons **DO NOT** drop your child off early to school. They are not to arrive before 10:00 a.m. There are a couple of important reasons for this; First, when Ave Maria Academy is delayed the faculty and staff are delayed, too. Second, there are times when a delay turns into a cancellation. It is important to make sure that this is not the case.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

Ave Maria Academy offers an Extended Day Program from 7:00 – 8:00 A.M. and 3:00 – 6:00 P.M. for our regularly enrolled children in Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade. Our goal is to provide a safe, convenient, affordable, Catholic Christian extended day environment for families. In the Extended Day Program students will have the opportunity to work on homework, relax and participate in recreational and enrichment activities.

The programs will be held for most full-days that school is in session. There is a fee involved and the following forms must be completed and returned to school before admittance:

- Registration/Authorization & Emergency Information Form
- Guidelines and Agreement Form
- Extended Day Monthly Attendance Schedule (extended day only)

The Extended Day Program is billed monthly. Extended Day students can be picked up at our Mt. Lebanon site in the Extended Day Classroom by using the Library/Gym entrance and at our Bethel Park site from the designated Extended Day classroom entrance on the lower level.

NOTE: Due to COVID-19, the amount of students permitted to attend the Extended Day Program will be limited to 8 at a time.

TRANSPORTATION BUS SERVICES

Children are entitled to bus transportation if their school district provides transportation and is within 10 miles of the school. **No** other children are permitted on the bus for insurance purposes. There is **no bus service** for children living in Mt. Lebanon.

The student transportation policies and procedures of the local educational agencies responsible for busing students are applicable to students bused to and from Ave Maria Academy, as are the laws and regulations for parochial schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

It is important that we know the ordinary means by which each child arrives and departs daily. A note is to be sent **when a change** is necessary. For reasons of safety and insurance, each child is to ride his/her assigned bus. Bus transportation is provided by the respective school districts. Students are allowed to ride the busses **from their district only**.

Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior while in route on the bus. Every bus follows the guidelines that are within our own discipline code. If the bus driver/company recommends that a student be removed from the bus, the principal will support it. This will result in the student losing bus privileges. The student/parent will then be responsible to make other arrangements for transportation. Riding A Bus IS NOT A Guaranteed Right.

Students are expected to remain in their seats at all times. This insures their safety and the safety of others. If improper conduct occurs, the driver prepares a report which is sent home to alert the parents to the problem. If the behavior persists, the bus company has the right to ask the school district to suspend the student's privilege of riding the bus, temporarily or permanently.

BUS CONDUCT

The following rules have been established in order to insure the safety of all students who ride busses:

1. Use only the bus and bus stop assigned.
2. Orderly behavior is required at the bus stop.
3. Remain seated, facing front, when bus is in motion.
4. Talk quietly and make no unnecessary noise.
5. Do not talk to the driver unless it is necessary.
6. Keep head and arms inside the bus.
7. Do not litter the inside of the bus or throw anything out the window.
8. Be quiet when the bus is crossing railroad tracks.

Infractions of the above rules will be brought to the attention of parents. Continual abuse of bus privileges will result in the denial of transportation.

No students may ride other district buses due to liability issues from the districts.

CROSSING GUARDS/SAFE WALKING RULES ~ Mt. Lebanon Site

Crossing guards are supplied by the Mt. Lebanon Police Department and are positioned where the students are to cross. They are on duty to protect our children and they should be respected and obeyed at all times. All students walking should observe the following Safe Walking Rules:

- **Never step into the street from between parked cars.**
- **Watch for turning cars.**
- **Look all ways before crossing.**
- **Obey traffic signals.**
- **Walk! Don't run! Allow yourself plenty of time (the average child crosses a street at the rate of three feet per second).**
- **Cross only at corners.**
- **Face traffic when walking on streets without sidewalks.**
- **Be extra alert on snow and rain days.**
- **Go directly to and from school.**
- **Have a partner to walk with if possible.**

In the event a student is approached by a stranger when walking, they should do the following:

- **Do not approach the car.**
- **Immediately run to a safe place.**
- **Inform parent or adult of the incident.**
- **Contact the police.**
- **Try to give a good description of the individual and the vehicle.**

BICYCLES

Students are not permitted to ride or bring bicycles to school.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETIC AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The following is the policy regarding eligibility for athletics and extra-curricular activities at Ave Maria Academy. Academics are always a priority at our school. To maintain eligibility to participate in the extra-curricular activities, a child must maintain certain academic standards. Failure to maintain these standards can result in probation or suspension from these activities.

Probation and Suspension Guidelines for Athletics:

If a student receives a “D” in one of his/her course subject areas (Religion, Math, Reading, English, Spelling, Science or Social Studies) or two “D’s” in his/her special areas (Art, Music, Phys. Ed., Health, Computer, Handwriting, Language) he/she will be placed on a two week probation period beginning with the date the Interim was issued. During this probation period, this student may participate in the extra-curricular activity and is encouraged to let the coach or moderator know of the probation. At the end of the two-week period, if the student’s grade(s) have not improved to at least a “C,” he/she will be suspended from the activity, including games and practices until the grade is brought up to at least a “C” grade.

A student will be suspended for two weeks from athletics and extra-curricular activities, including games and practices, if he/she receives:

1. Two or more “D’s” on his/her report card in core subject areas.
2. Three or more “D’s” on his/her report card in non-core subject areas.
3. One or more “E’s” on their report card in any subject area.

A student can be placed on probation or suspended from athletics or extra-curricular activities at any time due to behavior problems. In particular, any student who violates the discipline policy of the school is subject to suspension from the program at the discretion of the principal after a consultation with the student’s parents. The principal will notify the specific coach in any case of a suspension from the sports program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Facilities Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting and Ventilation

Requirement(s)	Strategies, Policies and Procedures
* Cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and ventilating learning spaces, surfaces, and any other areas used by students (i.e., restrooms, drinking fountains, hallways, and transportation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaning of frequently used surfaces in the classroom will be done by the teacher and students (if applicable) regularly throughout the school day. This includes (but is not limited to) desks, locker handles, doorknobs, etc.• Maintenance staff will sanitize the building in the evening and and/or after any event which takes place after school hours.• Windows will be open during the school day to provide proper ventilation when possible and weather permitting.• Restrooms will be regularly cleaned throughout the day.• Drinking fountains will be closed for use and students will be required to bring their own water bottle each day.• Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms and hallways.

Social Distancing and Other Safety Protocols

Requirement(s)	Strategies, Policies and Procedures
* Classroom/learning space occupancy that allows for 6 feet of separation among students and staff throughout the day, to the maximum extent feasible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student desks should be placed 6 feet apart to the maximum extent possible and all face the same direction.• Face coverings will be required at all times when inside. “Mask breaks” may be taken outside only with social distancing In any situation where the six foot social distancing.• Students will have an assigned seat in the classroom.• Students may stay in the classroom for the entire day with the exception of recess. Teachers may move between classes to teach special area classes and subject specific classes.• Students may eat lunch in their classrooms.• Proper hygiene signs will be placed in restrooms and throughout the building.
* Restricting the use of cafeterias and other congregate settings, and serving meals in alternate settings such as classrooms	
* Hygiene practices for students and staff including the manner and frequency of hand-washing and other best practices	
* Posting signs, in highly visible locations, that promote everyday protective measures, and how to stop the spread of germs	

<p>* Handling sporting activities consistent with the CDC Considerations for Youth Sports for recess and physical education classes</p> <p>Limiting the sharing of materials among students</p> <p>Staggering the use of communal spaces and hallways</p> <p>Adjusting transportation schedules and practices to create social distance between students</p> <p>Limiting the number of individuals in classrooms and other learning spaces, and interactions between groups of students</p> <p>Coordinating with local childcare regarding on site care, transportation protocol changes and, when possible, revised hours of operation or modified school-year calendars</p> <p>Other social distancing and safety practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All non-essential furniture may be removed from the classroom. • Teachers will attend professional development regarding proper cleaning and sanitizing techniques that will be practiced in the building. • Recess protocol will follow the Ave Maria Academy Health and Safety Sports Protocol. • Students will use their own materials. • Decals and floor visuals may indicate six foot distancing in any communal spaces. • Volunteers will be limited. All visitors will have their temperature taken upon entry. Visitors may also need to complete a monitoring form for symptoms. • The number of children in before-school and after-school care will be limited.
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Monitoring Student and Staff Health

Requirement(s)	Strategies, Policies and Procedures
<p>* Monitoring students and staff for symptoms and history of exposure</p> <p>* Isolating or quarantining students, staff, or visitors if they become sick or demonstrate a history of exposure</p> <p>* Returning isolated or quarantined staff, students, or visitors to school</p> <p>Notifying staff, families, and the public of school closures and within-school- year changes in safety protocols</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon entering the building, the temperature of students may be taken. • Daily, staff will be required to take their temperature and complete a monitoring form that asks if they are experiencing any signs of illness or shortness of breath/difficulty breathing. • Any student who is exhibiting signs of illness will be sent to the nurse’s office where the parent/guardian will be contacted by the office staff. • Our, “Exclusion From and Return to School Requirements Form” will be followed when students, staff or visitors wish to return to school.

Other Considerations for Students and Staff

Requirement(s)	Strategies, Policies and Procedures
<p>* Protecting students and staff at higher risk for severe illness</p> <p>* Use of face coverings (masks or face shields) by all staff</p> <p>* Use of face coverings (masks or face shields) by older students (as appropriate)</p> <p>Unique safety protocols for students with complex needs or other vulnerable individuals</p> <p>Strategic deployment of staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A standard health routine will be established to check the health status of all who enter the school. • PPE resources may also be available to all who enter the school and each staff member should know where they are located. • State mandates regarding masks or other face coverings will be followed. • Accommodations will be made on an as needed basis according to the students’ special health needs. • Consultation and collaboration with the students’ medical provider will occur as needed. • The Federation of Diocesan Pittsburgh Schools Agreement will be followed.

ILLNESS

It is often difficult to decide if your child should stay home from school when complaining of illness. An objective sign is an elevated temperature. It is recommended that a child be kept home from school until the temperature has remained normal (below 100 degrees) for 24 hours. If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees or more, skin rash, diarrhea/vomiting, strep throat, or evidence of lice, the child will be sent home. Please inform the school office if your child becomes sick with a contagious illness. When necessary, notes will be sent home with the other children to warn parents of contact and incubation of communicable diseases.

ACCIDENT AND INJURY

In the case of accident or illness at school, parents are contacted to take the child home, to the doctor, or hospital. It is important for your child's safety and comfort, as well as the effective operation of the office that emergency information needed to locate parents is available for each child, and that this information is kept up-to-date by parents. Parents of children who have any type of physical disorder, including allergies, should contact the principal, school nurse, or teachers to make them aware of the problem. All cases of head lice should be reported immediately.

MEDICATION

Medication should be given at home, and physicians should be asked to change the schedule for the administration of medication so that it can be given before and after school hours.

All medications shall be administered by a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, or by the parent or their designee (excluding non-medical school personnel). Ave Maria Academy does not have a school nurse on staff.

The only exception would be emergency medication which can be self-administered, such as an epi-pen or asthma inhaler. However, when medication must be administered during school hours in an emergency situation, a written procedure for student self-administration and storage of medication is required to ensure student safety and to mitigate any liability of the school and school personnel. NOTE: The Pennsylvania Department of Health states that medication should be given by school nurses only as prescribed by a physician. A legal opinion of the Pennsylvania Department of Justice states, "Except in truly emergency situations, teachers may not administer individually prescribed medications."

Students requiring a fast-acting inhaler, such as albuterol for asthma or epinephrine for life-threatening allergies may be self-administered. Students may carry their own medication and administer it during the school day as ordered by their licensed prescriber and authorized by their parent and school. An order from a licensed prescriber for the medication, including a statement that it is necessary for the student to carry the medication and that the student is capable of self-administration, is required before the student may carry the medication on his/her person. A student needing to self-carry emergency medications should have an emergency care plan or a similar form completed by their healthcare provider. Before allowing a student to self-carry medication, the nurse assigned to Ave Maria Academy through the school district will ensure that the student is competent in self-care through demonstration of administration skills and responsible behavior. The student must notify administration immediately following each use.

- When possible, school personnel should supervise the student's self-administration of medication.
- Stored medications administered by a RN, LPN or parent must be in a secure locked location. Students should never be given access to this location.
- The medication should be delivered to the school by the parent, guardian or other responsible adult along with the treating physician's written documentation relative to the diagnosis, prescribed medication, dosage and instructions for the student's self-administration of the medication.
- Medication brought to school must be in a container labeled by a pharmacist or doctor. The label must include the student's name, the name of the physician, date of prescription, dosage, and frequency of administration.
- If the student is not carrying the epi-pen or inhaler, a specific staff member should be given the responsibility of distributing medication to students for self-medication.

- A record book must be maintained indicating the student's name, the name of the medication, the date and time of distribution to the student for self-medication, and the identity of the person distributing medication to the student for self-medication. This record must be marked every time medication is dispensed.

DRILLS

Fire and lockdown drills are held monthly according to Diocesan policy. Students are to remain in absolute silence during all drills. Misconduct of any nature is to be reported to the principal. This is a very serious offense and will be dealt with immediately. The staff will assist students in need of help. Other drills may be required on an annual or bi-annual basis.

VISITORS

For security reasons, anyone entering Ave Maria Academy is to report to the office immediately regardless of the purpose of the visit and sign in/out. For the safety of all students, a visitor's badge must be worn. Communication with teachers and students will be handled by the school office and will be done in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process in the school. Any articles or items to be left for a student will be left in the school office.

Visitation to classrooms, the cafeteria, or the playground to personally visit students and/or teachers is not permitted. This includes walking children to their classrooms in the morning. This is to ensure the safety of all students. Staff and volunteers are the only people permitted to be in these areas. This allows school personnel to know who is in the school building and/or on the grounds at all times. Any personal visitors detract from the students listening to the supervisor in the area and could make securing the area difficult as staff and volunteers may not know the visitor(s).

SECURITY

All doors to the school will be closed and locked at all times. The Main Entrances are monitored through outdoor cameras.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A. Catholic Schools and Staff are expected to:

- a) provide a supportive environment that upholds Gospel values and encourages positive relationships between staff and parent.
- b) increase awareness and understanding of the dynamics of bullying and develop a plan to implement anti-bullying strategies with their schools.
- c) maintain an environment where bullying will be addressed age-appropriately in a manner characterized by respect and civility.
- d) use recourses that will assist in developing appropriate social skills, positive relationships, and discourage unacceptable bullying behaviors.
- e) encourage students to report incidents of bullying and support them in dealing with conflict resolution.
- f) support, monitor, and act upon all reported incidents of bullying to ensure the safety of all students.
- g) model appropriate language and actions for students.
- h) emphasize intervention strategies that are preventative in nature.
- i) recognize that some bullying behaviors may be more serious and require more comprehensive interventions.
- j) keep open lines of communication between the home, school, and parish.

B. Students are expected to:

- a) promote a positive and caring environment for all by developing an awareness of bully issues.
- b) refuse to bully others or to be a bystander to acts of bullying
- c) report all acts of bullying that they may experience or observe to appropriate school personnel.
- d) assist and cooperate in the implementation of school-wide anti-bullying initiatives.

C. Parent/Visitors are expected to:

- a) promote a positive and caring environment for all by developing an awareness of bullying issues.
- b) inform the school if bullying is suspected.
- c) encourage students to discuss any incidents of bullying and reinforce the need to speak out.
- d) support the school when resolving identified incidents of bullying.
- e) support the school through the Student Assistance Program (SAP) in promoting local school anti-bullying initiatives.

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct which may include:

- a) Appropriate Level Conduct Report and coordinating consequences.
- b) Parental conference
- c) Loss of school privileges
- d) Counseling within the Intermediate Unit or school
- e) Exclusion from school-sponsored activities
- f) Detention
- g) Suspension
- h) Expulsion
- i) Counseling/Therapy outside of the Intermediate Unit or school
- j) Referral to law enforcement officials

In keeping with the teachings of Christ, Ave Maria Academy will provide a safe, caring, and supportive school environment, free of bullying, for all members of the school community.

RULES AND EXPECTATIONS**BUILDING RULES**

Students are to walk whenever entering or leaving the building and when moving from one area of the building to another.

There should not be any loud talking or commotion when in the building. Every student has the right to learn, and everyone must work together to maintain a learning atmosphere throughout the building.

The restrooms are to be treated as restrooms at home. No playing or loitering in or around the restrooms is permitted.

Chewing gum is not permitted at any time.

Students are expected to keep the floor in the classroom, hallways, restrooms, and cafeteria clear of paper and debris.

Students are to be considerate of other students' projects which are displayed in the hall.

Students are the best ambassadors of the school. In every situation, their friendliness and appearance speak to the Christian and academic qualities that are present at Ave Maria Academy. Proper respect toward all school staff members is required.

Church is a sacred place to spend time in quiet prayer or in prayer with the Christian Community. When attending Mass or a Liturgical function as a class or school, students are expected to enter and leave quietly out of respect for the Blessed Sacrament.

POLICIES

GENDER POLICY

Policy for Catholic Schools and Parishes Regarding Gender

Applicability: All Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh and all Catechetical programs of parishes

Definitions: The gender of every human being is a gift fashioned by God that enriches the human family through the complementarity of masculinity and femininity. At this time, the Diocese of Pittsburgh recognizes gender according to a student's birth certificate. "Learning to accept our body, to care for it, and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* #155)

Policy and Procedure:

Catholic Schools and all catechetical programs of the Diocese of Pittsburgh recognize that all children, because they are made in the image and likeness of God, deserve to be treated with charity, love and respect. Each school strives to provide a safe educational environment that fosters academic success as well as physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. The teachings of the Church are followed, including those teachings related to gender, in a Christ-centered atmosphere that promotes Gospel values.

Our Catholic schools and catechetical programs will follow these procedures:

1. Administrators will maintain student permanent records and other legal records and documents using the student's legal name and gender.
2. School personnel may honor requests of parents/guardians to address a student by a preferred name or nickname.
3. Students are to use bathrooms according to their God-given gender. Where possible, arrangements are to be made for a private bathroom to address special needs.
4. In all other circumstances, students are expected to comply according to their God-given gender.

Rationale and Authority:

"By his incarnation, the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every human being. This saving event reveals to humanity not only the boundless love of God who 'so loved the world that He gave his only Son' (Jn 3:16), but also the incomparable value of every human person." (Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 2) With these words, St. John Paul II reaffirms our deeply rooted belief in the inherent dignity of every human person. Each person that we encounter is to be regarded as the image of the living God.

According to the divine plan, the image and likeness of God for every human person is embodied in a specific gender as either male or female. The distinction and complementarity of men and women is thus to be accepted from God as a gift to be received, honored, and affirmed. As Pope Francis explains, "The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation" (Pope Francis *Laudato Si*, no. 155).

Instead of seeing gender as something to which we ascribe our own meaning and self determination, the Church believes that the gender each person receives from their mother's womb is a sign of God's love for the person and all humanity. It is on this basis that the Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms that, "Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity [because] physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life" (CCC no. 2333). During the early years of life, children experience the natural developmental process of growth in all areas of their life, but especially in regard to their sexuality. Due to the supreme dignity of human sexuality and the personal feelings that surround the development of a person's sense of personal value, no form of contempt, bullying, or mistreatment in regard to gender will be tolerated in our Catholic Schools. Loving pastoral care should be provided with due consideration to fairness, safety, and the privacy rights of all students.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

The possession, sale, or use of alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled substance on the school campus or busses is strictly forbidden. Violation of this rule will cause immediate expulsion and will be reported to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking is strictly forbidden at school. Students are neither to carry nor use tobacco products of any kind.

WEAPONS POLICY

The safety and well being of our children is most important to all of us. Our children must know that violence of any kind is not acceptable in school or anywhere else.

To ensure the safety of the children, our school will not tolerate weapons of any kind. Guns, including play guns, knives, and other types of weapons are not to be brought to school under any circumstances (including pre-school "show and tell"). In addition, any instruments which can be used as a weapon have no place in school.

The Diocese of Pittsburgh has adapted the following policy:

No weapon may be brought onto school property, including, but not limited to, the school building, outdoor areas, outdoor facilities, or school buses, or to any school related activity. A weapon shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun-chuck stick, fire arm, rifle, or any other tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting bodily injury, which is possessed under circumstances not manifestly appropriate for lawful uses which it may have. This includes firearms which are not loaded or lack a clip or other component to render it immediately operable. This also includes weapon look-alikes. A person in possession of a weapon on school property violates state criminal statutes and school regulations, and shall be subject to the following discipline and penalty:

1. Parents will be immediately notified.
2. The local police will be called.
3. The student will be expelled.

BULLYING POLICY

(In accordance with Diocesan Policies)

Purpose:

All members of the Catholic School community are expected to use non-violent means to resolve conflicts as reflected in the Gospel values.

Applicability:

- Bullying behaviors contradict Gospel values, which are centered in the Teachings of Christ.
- Bullying may contribute to short-term problems for victims (i.e. changes in behavior, drop in grades, frequent absences).
- Persistent bullying may cause long-term psychological problems (i.e. depression, dropping out, suicide ideation).
- Bullying may contribute to involvement in other antisocial activities (i.e. alcohol/drug abuse, gangs) and threaten safety of others.
- Bullying may contribute to a negative school climate which interferes with spiritual development, academic learning, and social responsibility.

Definition: Bullying shall mean an intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or a series of acts

- A. directed at another student or any school community member,
- B. which occurs in or negatively impacts a school setting,
- C. that is severe, persistent or pervasive, and
- D. that has the effect of doing any of the following:
 - i) substantially interfering with a student's education,
 - ii) creating a threatening environment, or
 - iii) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

- E. "School Setting": shall mean 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.
- F. A school entity shall not be prohibited from defining bullying in such a way as to encompass acts that occur outside a school setting if those acts meet the other requirements specified in the definition of bullying.
- G. Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or personnel employed by the school by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs, tweets, etc.). All forms of cyber bullying are unacceptable and to the extent such actions are disruptive of the educational process of the school, offenders shall be the subject of appropriate consequences. Cyber bullying consequences may occur when concerns are verified.

FOOD ALLERGY POLICY & GUIDELINES

Ave Maria Academy will use the following policy and guidelines to better safeguard students in school who have significant food allergies.

Food allergies are abnormal responses of the immune system to a specific food. In a true food allergy there is no tolerance level for the food. At Ave Maria Academy, we value all children as unique gifts from God. We do our best to keep allergy exposures to a minimum. We cannot guarantee that any offending food will not come in contact with an allergic child, but we can certainly try our best to keep all God's children safe in any way we can. If you are a homeroom parent, chairperson, or classroom volunteer, please attach this policy and guidelines to your files for reference. Please contact the office or school nurse for questions about food allergies.

Staff/ Home Room Parents/ School Advisory Council/ PTG/ Activity Chairpersons / School Community:

- Work with parents of child with food allergy to include food-allergic students in school activities. Students should not be excluded from school activities solely based on their food allergy. These activities to the best of the teacher's / chairpersons' / staff's ability should be free of foods that trigger allergy attacks. Example activities: in-class parties, bingos, ice-cream social, breakfast with Santa, field day, etc.
- Although food labels are not 100% protective, foreign processed foods, foods that include warning labels (Manufactured in a plant with ...food allergen (ex: nuts, wheat, milk); and/or this item may have traces offood allergen) are considered as a high risk food and should be avoided. Due to hidden ingredients in food labels, students with food allergies should not consume items without parental permission to do so.
- Clean common-use surfaces prior to and after activity.
- Students will be provided the means to wash their hands after eating.
- Send in an individual snack (for your child only) for any after-school activities (if approved by moderator/coach) with your child.
- Consume food in cafeteria when possible.
- Encourage no baked goods due to cross contamination factors.
- Ensure that 'Peanut Oil' is NOT used for frying/cooking at school functions. This would make the environment dangerous well after the event.

Ave Maria Academy Nurse/School Staff:

- Review the health records submitted by parents and physicians.
- Coordinate with the school nurse to be sure medications are appropriately stored, and be sure that an emergency kit is available which contains a physician's standing order and parental permission for epinephrine or Benadryl. Keep medicine easily accessible in a secure location, central to designated school personnel, not in locked cupboards or drawers. Students should be allowed to carry their own epinephrine, if age appropriate, after approval from the students' physician/clinic, parent, and school nurse, and allowed by state or local regulations.
- Designate school personnel to administer medications in accordance with the State Nursing and Good Samaritan Laws governing the administration of emergency medications.
- Be prepared to handle a reaction and ensure that there is a staff member available who is properly trained to administer medications during the school day.
- Follow federal/state laws and regulations regarding sharing medical information about the student.

- Provide a peanut/tree nut free- ‘Star’ table that is monitored by the cafeteria and school staff.
- All foods prepared by Cafeteria staff, which contain peanut or tree nut by-products, will be isolated by area in the kitchen and utensils used.
- The ‘Star’ table will be cleaned thoroughly before each lunch period, daily. The Cafeteria manager will supervise this task.
- School Staff and Cafeteria Staff will provide supervision in the cafeteria and are trained on what to do in the event students may show allergic reactions.
- Teachers who have students with food allergies will inform homeroom parents of the serious nature of food allergies and explain the food policy for classroom events.
- Unless there is written permission from the food allergy child’s parent, the child with a food allergy will pick an “acceptable snack” from his/her individual snack kit provided by the parent.
- Provide all staff that interacts with the student on a regular basis training to: understand food allergies, recognize specific food allergy symptoms, and knowledge of what to do in an emergency.
- Administration will work with school faculty and staff to eliminate the use of food allergens in the allergic student’s meals, educational tools, arts and crafts projects, or incentives.
- Discuss field trips with the family of the food allergic child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy.
- Take threats or harassment against an allergic child seriously.
- Enforce a "no eating" policy on school buses with exceptions made only to accommodate special needs under federal or similar laws, or school district policy. Discuss appropriate management of food allergy with family.

Parent(s) of Child with Food Allergy:

- Send a kit of non perishable “acceptable snacks” approved by the parent(s) to your child’s homeroom at the beginning of the year.
- Coordinate with homeroom parents or school organization as to “acceptable snacks” to be used for each specific school activity.
- Bring emergency kit(s) to school and make sure there is a completed medication form on file for epinephrine or Benadryl and refill/update kit as needed.
- Provide homeroom parents or school organizations with specific information regarding their child’s food allergy. Work with homeroom parents/ school organizations in planning activities dealing with food.
- Submit a specific ‘Food Allergy Action Plan’ for your child to the school office and school nurse.

To All Parents (Birthday Treats):

In order to comply with the Diocesan Wellness policy and help protect students with food allergies, parents are strongly encouraged to send non-food items (pencil, sticker, bookmark, etc.) to school for their child’s birthday. If you do send in a food item, please consult with your child’s teacher prior to sending in any treat. It is encouraged for you to send in healthy snacks/treats. All food items must be store-bought, labeled, and free of allergens to help keep the entire school environment safe. Depending on the treat, some treats may be sent home to be individually enjoyed later.

AFTER CARE SNACKS

Due to safety and dietary concerns, the school will not provide any food during after care. Parents who want their child to have a snack must provide their own food and drink.

DRESS CODE

Transitional Prekindergarten through 8th Grade Effective 8/20/20

Revised 6/17/2020

Preschool Dress Code (3 & 4 year old half day)

Parents are encouraged to dress their children in sensible and comfortable clothing. Children at this age are involved in a variety of movement during the day from floor to seat. The individual teacher or school will address with the parent any possible concerns as far as clothing is concerned.

Dress Code Policy (Pre-Kindergarten full day 4yr. old – 8th grade)

Our school dress code is designed to provide options for school-appropriate clothing while creating an equitable, modest, disciplined, minimally distracting learning environment consistent with the values of Catholic schooling. We depend on parent cooperation in the enforcement of our dress code and thank you for your continued support. Consistent with our Family Handbook, students will be subject to our discipline policy for their respective grade if in violation. **Any deviation to our dress code will be left to the discretion of our teaching staff which may result in a phone call to the parent and require an appropriate change of attire be brought to the school office.**

SHIRTS:

Shirts must be tucked in at all times unless it is a girl's banded-bottom style. "Brand" logos (Under Armor, Ralph Lauren, etc.) will **not** be permitted.

- Plain, solid polo shirts in white, navy, or light blue
- Plain, athletic-style, moisture-wicking, collared shirt in white, navy, or light blue.
- Plain banded bottom polo shirts in white, navy, or light blue (girls – does not need to be tucked in).
- Oxford style shirts in solid white or light blue
- Shirts may **not** be doubled

For the 2020-2021 school year only, navy, white or light blue uniform shirts with logos from St Bernard, St Anne, St Thomas More or Our Lady of Grace may be worn.

SWEATERS:

- Plain neck crew, vest or cardigan button style knit in white or navy blue
- Sweaters of all types should **not** be oversized or form-fitting.

GYM ATTIRE:

- Plain or Ave Maria logo gray t-shirt or sweatshirt (no hoodie).
- Plain or Ave Maria logo black athletic pants or seasonal plain black fingertip length shorts. NO other logos, volleyball shorts, spandex, or yoga pants. No stripes.
- Plain ankle cut tennis shoes in **solid** white or **solid** black with no skid soles.

Ave Maria gym wear will be available from Ave Maria PTG/AA in July. The gym uniform should be worn on the appropriate gym day.

HOODIES and JACKETS:

All hoodies, sweatshirts, and jackets are considered outerwear and should **not** be worn during school hours.

PANTS:

- Dockers-style pants in khaki or navy blue. No rivets, double stitching on seams, or jeans-type back pockets. No yoga pants!
- A brown, navy, or black buckled waist level belt must be worn with pants. Velcro and magnetic belts may be worn by younger children.

SHORTS:

- Worn in August, September, October, April, May and June
- Dockers-style shorts in khaki or navy blue. No rivets, double stitching on seams, or jeans type back pockets.
- A brown, navy, or black buckled waist level belt must be worn with shorts. Velcro and magnetic belts may be worn by younger children.
- Shorts should be no more than 2" above the knee or not below the knee.

SPECIFIC TO GIRLS ONLY:

Skirts/skorts

- Skirts or skorts in khaki or navy. If your daughter wears a skirt, please be sure to have her wear shorts underneath so she can use playground equipment.
- Skirts and skorts should be no more than 2" above the knee and not below the knee.

Jumpers/Polo Dresses

- Girls in grades K-3 are also permitted to wear a plain khaki or plain navy jumper in place of the skirt/skort. If your daughter wears a jumper, please be sure to have her wear shorts underneath so she can use playground equipment.
- Plain navy polo dresses may also be worn by girls in grades K-3.

SHOES:

- Shoes must have backs and closed toes.
- Plain brown (**solid in color**), black (**solid in color**), or navy (**solid in color**) leather or leather type shoe. No heels.
- Brown/tan (**one solid color**) boat shoes are allowed.
- Plain ankle cut tennis shoes in **solid** white or **solid** black with no skid soles.
- **No** Converse tennis shoes permitted.
- No adornments or embellishments of any kind. Laces must match tennis shoe.

- Velcro closure tennis shoes are acceptable for younger children.
- *All boots (shoe type, leather, suede, faux suede, rain, snow, etc.) are considered outer wear and should **not** be worn during school hours.*

SOCKS:

Girls – solid color ankle or calf length socks, opaque tights, and cable knit tights or knee-high socks in white or navy. Socks should **not** have designs, logos or patterns.

Boys – solid color white, navy, or black ankle or calf length. Socks should **not** have designs, logos or patterns.

Cosmetics, Jewelry, Decorative Accompaniments and Hygiene:

- Girls in grades 7 and 8 may wear very light face make-up such as foundation or lip gloss. Eye make-up is **not** permitted.
- Clear nail polish only.
- Proper hygiene and personal neatness is required at all times.
- Hair styles should allow for clear classroom vision. Boys' hair should not exceed ear length.
- Hair styles that are designed to make a statement (such as purple or pink hair) are not allowed.
- Girls are permitted to wear one set of small stud earrings, a watch, and a small single strand necklace in gold/silver with a crucifix or medal.
- Boys are permitted to wear a watch and one small single strand neck chain with a crucifix or a medal.
- Jewelry that is ostentatious or is intended to make a statement is not permitted.
- Temporary tattoos and face paint are not permitted. Please remove them before coming to school.

Smart Watches and/or Cell Phones:

Teachers will provide direction as to whether their students are permitted to have smart watches in their prospective classroom. Cell phones must be turned off and stored in the student's locker and are not permitted in class or at recess. Parents who need to reach their children should communicate with them through the school office.

Pro 3 Services (formerly Educational Outfitters), 2101 Greentree Road (412-279-1102 / Pro3services.com) provides uniform items for Ave Maria Academy. Gym Uniforms may be purchased through Pro 3 Services. School Uniforms can be purchased through Pro 3 Services. With the ability to purchase some school uniform clothing in various stores, select styles/colors will vary slightly and **not all items purchased at local stores may be acceptable.** Pro 3 Services carries all acceptable uniform items for Ave Maria Academy.

Dress Down Day Attire

Throughout the school year, there may be special “dress down days” to celebrate or recognize certain activities either outside of or inside of the school. Students do “not” have to participate in these days.

The following articles of clothing are **NOT PERMITTED on these special dress down days:**

- Ragged, torn, ripped or clothing with holes (jeans/tops/shorts)
- Sleeveless shirts, halter tops, sheer material, spaghetti straps, tank tops
- Cargo pants, Yoga pants, cut-off jeans, Spandex, leggings WITHOUT a long shirt, caps, or hats
- Low necklines, front or back
- Shirts with any pictures or words advertising or referring to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or sexual situations or double meaning words
- Shorts are not to be shorter than approximately two inches above the knee

The staff will have the final say on acceptable dress.

Enforcement and Misc.

To be fair to all students and parents, this uniform policy will be consistently enforced. Children generally conduct themselves in a manner similar to the way they dress and groom. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children dress according to school policy. Please make sure your child is following the uniform policy before sending them to school. **Violations** of the uniform policy will be subject to **Conduct Reports**. Those wishing to donate gently used uniform clothing to families who need it, may also do so. These items are available in our Uniform Closet. Please contact the school office for more information.

TRAFFIC AND STUDENT PEDESTRIAN POLICY – Mt. Lebanon Site

To ensure safety, the following **MUST** be observed:

Only Preschool School children may enter school through the doors outside the preschool classrooms in the morning. A.M. kindergarten children enter through the back doors with the other students. Only a.m. preschool children exit the building from those doors. The all day 4-year preschool and all day kindergarten will be dismissed on the back porch. Parents should park in the back of the school and pick up their child on the back porch area. Therefore, all students except preschool who are transported by car are to enter the school building through the doors at the back playground behind the school.

For arrival, vehicles bringing children to school may enter the school grounds near the Presbyterian Church or Scott Road. There is no entrance on the other side (referred to as the "Dyke/Pamela's" side). If you are entering from Washington Road, please stop near the back porch and have your children exit to the right of your vehicle and enter through the porch doors. Vehicles will then merge with vehicles entering from Scott Road before exiting. If you are entering from Scott Road, please proceed forward following the painted arrows and have your children exit to the right of the vehicle near the back stairs. All traffic should follow the painted arrows at all times or as directed. Slow and cautious driving is a **MUST** at all times. In the event of snow, please do **NOT** attempt to avoid the driveway and try to make a U-type turn at the top of the parking lot, this will obstruct traffic on Washington Road and prevent other cars from entering our lot.

DO NOT DROP YOUR CHILDREN OFF ON WASHINGTON ROAD OR SCOTT ROAD.

Walkers should always follow the safe walking rules. If you see a child trying to walk across our parking lot to enter school in the front (near the statue of Mary), please give them the right-of-way so they may safely enter school. **AFTER** drop off, vehicles must exit on the "Dyke/Pamela" store side or in the back of our grounds at Scott Road. **DO NOT** drive back up the way you entered. This prohibits other vehicles from getting children to school on time.

Some traffic from 8:00 A.M. Mass parked near the rectory may be leaving this way (and hence, going "against" our traffic), but school families are to follow a set pattern. This directive was issued by the Mt. Lebanon Police Department to ensure a somewhat steady flow of traffic on Washington Road. The line may look long at times, but it really is only a matter of minutes before the cars are moving at a smooth pace. Car riders are **NOT** to be dropped off in the top lot near the rectory.

Students arriving **after 8:15 A.M at the Mt. Lebanon Campus** are tardy and **MUST be accompanied to the school office** by a parent or a guardian.

FOR DISMISSAL, all walkers (students walking off the grounds), and bus students will be dismissed after announcements and prayer. It is our hope to have all those students, walk safely off parish grounds before cars start moving. All car riders will be dismissed from the BACK of the school. **Parents should pick their children up in the back of the school if your child is a car rider.** If the back lot is full and a parent parks elsewhere, please walk to the back to pick up your child. Children will not be dismissed from the front doors if they are a car rider. **ONLY PARENTS OF A.M. PRESCHOOL/ A.M. KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN/ 3-YEAR P.M. PRESCHOOL ARE TO PARK ON THE SIDE.** Please be extra cautious of small children running between cars. Every precaution must be taken for the safety of our children. No cars are to be left unattended in the back lot at dismissal time. Please **SHARE** this information regarding drop-off with anyone (spouse, grandparent, etc.,) who might be transporting your child. All day 4-year preschool and kindergarten students are to be picked up on the back porch. Parents should park in the back lot. Because these students will be dismissed first, the parents must wait until cars are formally given permission to leave by the teachers before leaving the grounds.

Due to COVID-19 ~ changes have been made to our arrival and departure procedures and are available on the school website under our FAQ.

Arrival/Dismissal – Bethel Park Site

Morning Arrival – Doors open at 8:00 a.m. for children arriving by bus only. Parents driving their children to school will enter the car loop (closest to the front doors) and will not be permitted to enter school until 8:15 a.m. upon which time they will report directly to their classroom. This is a quick drop off and children should exit the car and enter the school. If more time is needed, please park in the lot and walk your child to the front doors. Buses utilize the loop farthest from the front door of the school. At no time should cars use this loop. Upon arrival pre-kindergarten will be directed to our extended day room and our kindergarten children will be greeted in the lobby by staff. 1st through 8th grade (who arrive via bus) will be directed to the gym until the 8:15 bell when they will be released to homeroom.

Car riders will be dismissed from the gym starting at 3:05 p.m. Please do not exit your cars due to safety. Students will be brought to your car. A sign with your last name on the dashboard or hanging from your rearview mirror is helpful.

Buses will depart from the two loops in front of the school. No cars are permitted in the loops at the front of the school at the end of the day until all buses have departed.

Valuables:

Common sense and consideration are the best guides in determining whether or not to bring personal possessions to school. The school administrators and staff are not responsible for valuables which students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home. If special circumstances make it necessary for a student to bring substantial cash or other important possessions to school, these items can be safeguarded by registering them and leaving them at the school office. Toys and other distractions are not to be brought to school. Exception: Primary Department Show and Tell days.

It is strongly recommended that all electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, Gameboys, etc.) be left at home. They are not to be used at school. Any electronic item used by a student may be taken by a staff member and stored in the school office until the parent picks it up.

TELEPHONE/CELL PHONES

No child is permitted to use the phone, including cell phones, except for emergencies. Forgotten homework, books, lunch, athletic equipment, musical instruments or changes in afternoon plans do not necessarily constitute emergencies and are not sufficient cause to call home. In all cases, the office will make the phone call home. Permission to use the office telephone must be obtained from the school secretary after the student has received permission from his/her teacher. The telephone in the classroom is for use by the teacher only.

All cell phones must be turned off and stored in the student's book bag or locker at all times. At no time during the day (including homeroom) should a cell phone be in a student's possession. Possession of cellular phones at inappropriate times warrants confiscation by teachers and/or administrators. Middle school homeroom teachers may choose to collect cell phones at the beginning of the day.

If a student is found with a cell phone:

- **First Time:** Cell phone will be turned into the office and the student may retrieve it from the principal at the end of the day.
- **Second Time:** Cell phone will be turned into the school office. A parent must come to the school office between 8:30 am and 3:30 pm to retrieve the phone. Parents will sign a form stating they understand if a child is caught with any phone, from this date forward, it will be kept until the last day of school.
- **Third Time:** If the student is in possession of any phone for the remainder of the school year, the cell phone will be turned into the school office and may be kept until the last day of school.

DISCIPLINE

INTRODUCTION

Ave Maria Academy administration and faculty are committed to teach and model Gospel values to encourage students to live their lives as a reflection of Christ. The philosophy of the school strives to recognize and respect the dignity of each person and to offer a positive, Christ-centered, safe learning environment based on the Social Teachings of the Church. Discipline is considered an element of moral guidance, not as a form of punishment.

Every teacher and staff member shares the responsibility to model appropriate behavior and to support the structure necessary for learning self-discipline. Students are encouraged to assume responsibility for their actions, develop self-control, and accept responsibility and consequences for inappropriate behavior.

A Christ-centered school environment fosters the following behaviors:

- Recognizing and fostering the uniqueness and dignity of each individual.
- Nurturing respect in all relationships involving school and parish community.
- Developing a sense of rights and responsibilities and commitment to the entire school and parish community.

Social skills, both interpersonal and intrapersonal, are taught, modeled, practiced, and infused into the daily life and experience of the school family.

Guiding Principles

The following seven principles are the basis of Catholic Social Teachings and are the principles that guide us in all of our interactions.

- We believe in the life and dignity of the human person. Each person is sacred.
- We believe we are called to family, community, and participation. It is our duty to support each other by our actions.

- We believe that we have rights and responsibilities. Every person has the fundamental right to life and responsibility to and for one another.
- We believe that we have an obligation to the poor and vulnerable. We are called to put the rights of others before our own.
- We believe that we are called to care for God's creation. We are all stewards of the earth.
- We believe that solidarity is our call. We are one family regardless of our differences.
- We believe that workers have rights and that work has dignity. Work is a form of participating in God's creation.

DISCIPLINE POLICY AND CONSEQUENCES

GRADES K – 2

In order to meet the developmental needs of the students in these grades, the teachers will develop behavior codes appropriate to the particular student age group. Suitable consequences will be decided for each child according to the degree and frequency of behaviors. The school reserves the right to insist that a student be professionally evaluated, receive counseling, and/or treatment if the child is to remain in the school.

GRADES 3 – 8

Students in these grades will receive conduct reports, detentions, in-school suspensions, or out-of-school suspensions, depending upon the severity of the behaviors.

Because our students are children, they do not always make the best choices; sometimes as part of their moral development, they must recognize the consequences of inappropriate choices. When this happens, a student may be issued a Conduct Report (CR) for different levels of infractions of school policy and will receive the consequences of that infraction. Students will receive Conduct Reports for violations of the expected behaviors listed in the Behavioral Code. The behaviors listed in the Behavioral Code are illustrated but not exhaustive.

Conduct Report (CR)

There are **four levels** of misconduct and corresponding consequences.

Level One/Possible but not limited to:

1. Chewing gum
2. Disruptive behavior
3. Loitering in hallways/restrooms
4. Disrespectful behavior
5. Peer ridicule
6. Failure to return student conduct report
7. Dress Code Violation
8. Other

Level One Consequence

- Silent Lunch on the day following the infraction
- Three repeated Level One's may bump to a Level Two per individual teacher

Level Two/Possible but not limited to:

1. Improper language and/or gestures
2. Pushing/shoving
3. Forging a signature
4. Verbal/Physical/Psychological abuse
5. Cheating
6. Repeated violation of dress code
7. Other

Level Two Consequences

- One hour after school detention
- Exclusion from the next activity (class parties, activities, field trips, etc.)
- Sixth, seventh, or eighth grade student is ineligible for Honor Roll for the quarter in which the infraction is committed

Level Three/Possible but not limited to:

1. Fighting/Physical Aggression
2. Insubordination
3. Vandalism
4. Stealing
5. Leaving school grounds without permission
6. Other

Level Three Consequences

- Meeting with parent(s), student, and administrative team
- In-school suspension which includes all evening activities
- Exclusion from the next activity (class parties, activities, field trips, etc.)
- Sixth, seventh, or eighth grade student is ineligible for Honor Roll for the quarter in which the infraction is committed
- Out of School Suspension

Level Four/Possible but not limited to:

1. Truancy – skipping school
2. Possession of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, tobacco
3. Violation of weapons policy
4. Repeated fighting
5. Other

Level Four Consequences

- Out of School suspension and meeting of administrative team, student, and parent(s)
- Sixth, seventh, or eighth grade student is ineligible for Honor Roll for the quarter in which the infraction is committed
- For substance abuse and weapons policy violations, action will be taken **in accordance with diocesan guidelines**

Note: Repeated violations at any level will be referred to the administrative team for consideration.

FIGHTING

Fighting is strictly forbidden in the school or on campus. Breaking this rule may result in an immediate and automatic suspension and a conference with the student's parents.

CHEATING

Cheating is a serious compromise of a student's integrity and will not be tolerated. If cheating is discovered, the student's work will be confiscated. A failing grade will automatically be recorded for the work, and parents will be notified. Cheating may result in an automatic detention – Level 2 CR.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Serious and repetitious infractions of school policies and practices may result in suspension from school. The length of time and the determination of "in school" or "at home" suspension will be at the discretion of the principal after consultation with parents.

In the case of "at home" suspension, the responsibility of the students will rest with the parent. Expulsion may result from serious lack of moral responsibility and/or continued serious infractions of school policies and practices. If expulsion is called for, a written notification to the parents and to the regional director shall clearly state the reason for such action.

Suspensions/expulsions are given by the principal for the very worst infractions of school rules and policy. Suspensions/expulsions are not given by teachers. It signifies that the child's behavior has been so disruptive that the only reasonable way to deal with the situation is to remove the child from the school environment.

Reinstatement will only be granted when: all, principal, teacher, parent, and student are satisfied that the reason for misconduct has been effectively eliminated.

PARENTS

PARENT AGREEMENT

Attached as the last page to this Handbook is a Parent Verification Form which must be reviewed and signed by the Ave Maria Academy student's parent or guardian signifying that the student's parent or guardian has read the School Handbook and has agreed to abide by the rules and regulations as written in the Handbook. **The attached Parent Verification Form must be signed and returned.**

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

As partners in the educational process at Ave Maria Academy, we ask parents:

- To set rules, times, and limits for your child
- To get the child to bed early on school nights
- To make sure the child arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
- To make sure the child is dressed according to the school dress code
- To help the child to complete assignments on time
- To make sure the child has lunch money or lunch at the start of the school day
- To support the religious and educational goals of the school
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
- To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences
- To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student
- To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy
- To notify the school of any changes of address or important phone numbers
- To meet all financial obligations to the school
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly
- To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing students problems
- To set a good example for your child(ren)

VOLUNTEERS

The help of volunteers is always needed in the school and at school-sponsored events. Please consider some of your time and talent to help enhance our quality programs. This partnership is invaluable to the success of our school. Parents fill out a volunteer survey at the beginning of every year indicating their areas of interest. **All volunteers who work directly with students or chaperone trips must be in compliance with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy which begins an application on the Diocesan database. This application generates the state police criminal clearance and a signed Pastoral Code of Conduct and Child Protective Lay Services. Volunteers also must have on file in the school office current Department of Child Welfare child abuse clearance, either FBI fingerprint clearance or a signed waiver if the volunteer has lived in Pennsylvania for the past ten years, and proof of attendance at both of Protecting God's Children Workshop and Mandated Reporting Training. These courses are also available online at www.diopitt.org.**

FUNDRAISING

The Diocesan policy for funding elementary Catholic schools calls for each school to have fundraising activities to generate a minimum of 10-15% of its total operating budget. School parents are expected to participate in these fundraising activities to the best of their ability through monetary donations, purchases and/or volunteer work. It is requested that every family volunteer at a minimum of two fundraising events per year. Additionally, a profit of approximately **\$1000 per child** in the school would be necessary to meet the minimum fundraising requirement. **Families that do not wish to participate in fundraising are encouraged to discuss alternatives with the principal.**

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Ave Maria Academy has a School Advisory Council which is an advisory body to the principal. The council provides guidance in area of Spirituality and Ministry, Finance and Development, Curriculum Enrichment, Extracurricular Programming, Cultural Connections, Grounds and Buildings, and Alumni Relations.

PARENT TEACHER GUILD (PTG)

The Parent Teacher Guild is intended to provide opportunities for parents to fulfill their God given role as educators and to give mutual support through collaboration with the school. The membership of the PTG consists of the parents/guardians, principal, and the faculty of the school. The main purpose of the PTG is to facilitate communication between the parents and the school and to provide support and staffing for all fundraising and special events. Additionally, the PTG may offer opportunities for parents to understand the Catholic Philosophy of education and the Diocesan School Program.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The PTG sponsors social activities for special occasions during the school year. No other instructional time should be used for these events without the principal's permission. All parents are encouraged to participate and support the PTG events as much as possible.

ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

The Athletic Association promotes and facilitates athletics at the school. Fundraising is done to benefit the children playing individual sports and to fund the teams and to support the general fundraising of the school.

HOMEROOM PARENTS/PARTIES

Homeroom parents assist teachers in organizing class parties throughout the school year. All parties and special activities must be cleared with BOTH the homeroom teacher and the office. Treats may be brought in only after clearance from the teacher. Also, snacks should be limited to a small treat and juice, preferably nutritional in nature. Homeroom teachers will provide information pertaining to student allergies. Invitations to private parties will not be distributed in school unless every child in the class is invited.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

VERIFIED CATHOLIC TUITION RATE

If a family is not registered in the parish upon enrollment in the school, the family should register immediately and begin supporting the parish. Please call the church office at 412-561-3300 (Mt. Lebanon Site) or 412-833-0031 (Bethel Park Site) to register. To qualify for the "Participating Member of a Catholic Parish" rate, children must be baptized, and the family must be registered in a Catholic parish. The family must be practicing the Catholic faith through regular Mass attendance and regular use of the parish envelope system. If a family belongs to another parish and is active in that parish, the family will pay tuition charged to parishioners. The parents must have their Pastor sign a verification form that must be renewed yearly by September 20th.

FINANCIAL AID POLICY

Lack of finances need not be an obstacle to enrollment in Ave Maria Academy. The Bishop's Education Fund, Scholastic Opportunity Scholarship (SOS), and Ave Maria Academy's Angel Fund (for Parishioners only) have monies available for educational grants to those families with demonstrated need. Applications can be found on the school website. Diocesan Aid deadline is March 15th. Families must apply for Diocesan Aid if also requesting money from the Angel Fund. Angel Fund applications are available by contacting the school office. Angel Fund applications are due by June 15. Recipients of financial assistance from Ave Maria Academy will be required to make timely monthly payments for their portion of the tuition.

TUITION IN DEFAULT FOR K-8 STUDENTS

To ensure that payment plans are being honored, parents will not have access to report card information if we have not received, half of tuition by the end of the semester/second grading period (January 14th). If tuition is not current, you will not have access to Option C. If tuition is not paid in full by the last day of school, parents will not have access to their children's report card information. When transferring, records will not be sent on to the next school if tuition is outstanding. 8th Grade students will not participate in end of year activities and graduations until all fees are paid.

ON-GOING COMMUNICATIONS

Any fliers, etc., that a parent or organization wants distributed, must be approved by the principal and sent to the office electronically. Parents may send back any necessary forms in an envelope. Please review this information promptly.

A calendar and our hot lunch menu are posted on the school website. These items should be saved for quick daily reference.

If at any time a parent needs to confer with his/her child's teacher, arrangements should be made with that teacher. A phone message may be taken by the school office staff during school hours to have a teacher contact the parent at his/her convenience. Parents are NOT to call teachers at their homes. See Parent-Teacher Conferences for further information.

TELEPHONE

No teacher or child will be called from class to the phone except in an emergency. Students are NOT permitted to use the office phone unless it is an important matter and permission is given by the teacher, vice principal, or principal.

VOLUNTEERS

The quality of Christian education at Ave Maria Academy is enhanced by the many hours that volunteers spend assisting our teachers, our office staff, and working with our P.T.G., School Board, and Athletic Association.

All volunteers must be compliant with the Diocese of Pittsburgh Safe Environment Policy. Volunteers are also essential to maintain the wonderful programs provided to our community.

In order to be in compliance, you will need to complete the following:

1. Apply on the Diocese Database Program on the Diocesan web page www.diopitt.org . Contact the local contact when completed at compliance@stbpggh.org .
2. Obtain State Criminal Clearance – Act 34 (This will be done for you after you complete the Diocese Database)
3. Obtain Child Abuse Clearance – Act 151 (You will need to do this after you receive your criminal clearance.)
4. Obtain Mandatory Child Abuse reporting –Act 141.
5. Attend – ‘Protecting God’s Children’ workshop (Check school website, church bulletin, Religious Education, or www.virtus.org for workshop dates.)
6. Read and Sign – ‘Code of Pastoral Conduct’ and ‘Child Protective Service Law’ booklet (Available in the school office.)

The quality of Christian education at Ave Maria Academy is enhanced by the many hours of volunteering done by parents. Each year, through its various means, the PTG provides new equipment and materials for our school. Please remember to contribute a box of paper, ink etc., to the school copier if your group or organization uses it. Also, please remember to participate in the online Box Tops program. The more we save, the more equipment we will have in our school. Parental involvement throughout Ave Maria Academy makes it a special place for all of us. The Ave Maria Academy Directory has a complete listing of faculty and staff, along with a calendar. This is available to you with a membership fee to the PTG.

RIGHT TO AMEND

Ave Maria Academy reserves the right to amend the Parent-Student Handbook at any time. Parents will be given prompt notice of any amendment.

Ave Maria Academy reserves the right to determine, in its discretion, which actions fall short of meeting our Catholic School principles, morals, or values whether described in this handbook or not. We reserve the right to determine in our discretion, when conduct is determined to be unacceptable in the school or at any school related event. Consequences can occur without warnings or intermediate steps, at the discretion of the school principal and/or regional administrator.

Ave Maria Academy

**2020-2021 Student Handbook
Parent Verification Form**

I have read and am aware of the contents of the 2020-2021 Ave Maria Academy Parent/Student Handbook.

Please sign, date, and return this form to the school office by Friday, September 18, 2020.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Please list student(s) in school and their homeroom(s).

Student Name/Homeroom

