

GENERAL PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

OUR LADY OF MERCY ACADEMY

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Our Lady of Mercy Parish

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MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITED
BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE 2011

OUR LADY OF MERCY ACADEMY

PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The mission of Our Lady of Mercy Academy is to provide an education that meets the needs of each child spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. We give witness to our Catholic faith, affirm Christian values, and foster a love of learning.

We believe that:

- Parents are the primary educators of their children.
- Parents are our partners in the education of their children.
- Every person has the right to learn in a safe, supportive, nurturing environment.
- High standards, strong motivation, and effective discipline lead to maximum student achievement.
- Teachers have an obligation to challenge their students and help them to realize their potential.
- Teachers have a responsibility to implement a well-balanced curriculum, stimulate curiosity, and meet the needs of each student by addressing multiple learning styles.
- Catholic students are called to love God and seek Him, love one another as Christ loves them, and follow the precepts and the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.
- All students must form a moral conscience and work for social justice.
- All students must be made aware of their obligation to serve God and others in a changing global community.

Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8

Full Day Pre-Kindergarten

Full Day Kindergarten

Differentiated Reading Programs

Computer Literacy Program

Library Media Center

Formal Science Laboratory

Honors Courses in Literature, Mathematics and Social Studies (Gr. 7-8),
and Science (Gr. 8)

Spanish Language Curriculum (K-8)

Student Activity Period (Gr. 5-8)

SCHOOL HOURS: PreK-8

First Bell: 7:45 am

Late Bell: 7:53 am

Dismissal

Kindergarten: 2:10 pm

Grade 1: 2:15 pm

Grades 2-4: 2:20 pm

Grades 5-8: 2:25 pm

Before Care: 7:00 – 7:50 am

After School Care ("ASK") – Dismissal 5:30 pm

School Psychologist and School Nursing Services

Religious Instruction/Liturgies/Para Liturgies

Resource Room: Grades 1 – 8

Special Instruction in Art, Music, Library Science, Technology, Physical
Education/Health

ATTENDANCE

Except in cases of illness, bereavement, or emergencies; students must attend classes each day school is in session. Parents who schedule vacations outside of the school vacation calendar assume the responsibility for their children's studies during their absence.

While teachers may provide parents with an overview of projected coursework, they are not responsible for providing lessons that they have not yet covered in class.

When a child will be absent, for any reason, the parent or guardian must call the Nurse's office (391-3838 ext. 304) by 9:00 am to report the absence.

An absence note, stating the amount of time, reason for the absence, and signed by parent or guardian, is required on the day the child returns to school.

A doctor's note for any prolonged absence of five or more days is required by law.

No student is permitted to leave the school premises at any time during the day without authorization of the Principal. Students who leave for early dismissal must be signed out by the parent or guardian.

BOOKS

All books are to be covered and clearly labeled. The student's name is to be written inside the front cover. Payment must be made for lost, torn, or defaced books. Books must be carried to and from school in a book bag or backpack. In Grades 2 – 8 students may use backpacks with wheels. For safety reasons, packs with wheels are prohibited in grades K-1.

CLASS TRIPS

Class trips enhance and enrich the curriculum. While we hope that our students will enjoy these trips, their primary purposes are to educate. Students might attend two field trips per year (one in the autumn and one in the spring before May 15).

Chaperones are selected by the classroom teachers who also assign them to student groups. All chaperones must have completed the "Protecting God's Children" workshop and requirements in order to qualify as a chaperone.

Pre-K 1 to 2 Students
K 1 to 4
1 1 to 5
2-4 1 to 7
5-8 1 to 10

All chaperones receive a statement of duties and responsibilities, which they sign. These statements are kept on file in the school office. Please note: It is the responsibility of the parents of students requiring Epi-Pens to accompany them on all class outings and trips. One staff member will carry an "emergency" Epi-Pen on all class trips.

BUS

All students who are eligible for school bus transportation must apply to the local public school district whether they intend to use the bus or not.

While riding the bus, students must behave in a way that insures a safe trip to and from school. Students must ride in their assigned bus. It is against bus regulations to permit any school friends to use the bus in order to visit each other after school. Please do not request permission because the school does NOT have the authority to give this permission.

Students must bring in a note whenever they will not be taking the bus. Students will lose their bus privileges if they do not behave in a responsible manner.

CONFERENCES

Open communication is essential for a good rapport between the school and home. Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled during the year. If additional conferences are desired, they can be arranged by calling the school office between 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, by sending a note to the teacher, or emailing the teacher on the school website. Parents must not disturb a teacher or enter a classroom during instructional time. Instead, call the office and arrange an appointment. Parents must sign in at the school office and receive a visitor's pass before walking through the building.

COPY MACHINE

Use of the copy machine is limited to office staff. No student at any time is to use the copy machine.

DISCIPLINE/DETENTION

A spirit of Christ like charity, respect for authority, and mutual cooperation are essential to providing a Catholic education.

Students are expected to manifest self-discipline and act with courtesy and respect toward all school personnel and one another. They are also expected to obey all school and classroom rules.

If students are requested to remain after regular dismissal for academic assistance or disciplinary reasons, parents will be notified. When detention is required, the parent must sign and return the student's detention notice and must arrange for transportation home. Any student failing to return the signed detention notice on the next day may find that the detention time has been doubled. For further information, please refer to the detention policy in the Middle School Student Handbook.

No harassment or bullying of any sort will be tolerated at Our Lady of Mercy Academy. See the school's bullying policy at the end of this document.

DISMISSAL TIME

Students may not loiter in and around school after being dismissed. Upon exiting the building, **students must leave school property immediately**. No one is to congregate in the cafeteria or play unsupervised in the gym. For safety reasons when children are dismissed, they are to be transported immediately out of the parking lot. Therefore, it is important to be prompt when picking children up at dismissal. We request that you always exit via Fremont Avenue to avoid any cars entering the parking area through the side driveway. Students whose parents are detained will remain with their teacher for 15 minutes. After that time, they will be placed in the A.S.K. Program, and parents will be charged accordingly.

DRESS CODE

All students are required to wear a uniform at all times during school hours. OLMA offers several uniform options. Please refer to the "School Uniform Code" sheet on the website for specific uniform requirements. If for some reason part or all of the uniform cannot be worn on a specific day, a parent note of explanation must be given to the homeroom Teacher on that day. Students who do not present a parent note or who are chronically out of uniform will be issued a uniform infraction slip. The teacher will note consequences on the slip, which must be signed by a parent.

Uniforms may be purchased through our contracted uniform company: CO-ED UNIFORM COMPANY, 100 Broadway, Elmwood Park, NJ 07407, Telephone (201) 296-4220 or at coeduniform.com

All students must wear the uniform navy blue sweater or fleece pullover when necessary. *No other items will be allowed.* Weather permitting; the summer uniform may be worn until October 14 and from April 15 through June. Uniform shoes/sneakers are required for all students.

K-4 girls may not wear make-up or nail polish to school. Girls in Grades 5-8 must adhere to the make-up and nail polish requirements outlined in the Middle School Handbook. With the exception of small post earrings for girls, small crosses, sacred medals, and wristwatches, students are not permitted to wear jewelry to school.

Gum chewing is strictly prohibited on all occasions anywhere on the OLMA campus. Students may not have personal electronic equipment on their person during school hours. All electronic devices are collected each morning by the classroom/homeroom teacher and returned at the end of the day. Violators are subject to detention. (See Middle School Student Handbook.)

Students may not wear unconventional hair styles (length, height and width) or have their hair covering their eyes. For boys, hair must be worn above the collar. Girls may wear long hair; however, it must be brushed back, pinned, or tied appropriately. Dyed/tinted hair is NOT permitted.

Class trip attire will be designated by the classroom teacher according to the situation of the trip. Students will either wear their formal uniforms or their gym uniforms on class trips. At all times, we are to reflect neat, clean, appropriate Christian dress.

DRESS UP DAYS

On general dress up days, the code is "Smart Casual". Students may never wear jeans to school. Students may dress up on their birthday or with a dress-up pass.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

When conditions arise which necessitate the closing of school, such as inclement weather, parents will be notified through our Honeywell Instant Alert System. School closings will also be broadcast on WNBC Channel 4.

EXAMINATION OF SCHOOL RECORDS

Parents/guardians have the right to inspect and/or discuss the contents of all school records pertaining to their children and themselves. A twenty-four hour notice is requested for such inspection.

FACULTY MEETINGS

At least once a month throughout the school year, the faculty and administration meet during the school day. To accommodate these meetings, we dismiss students early. Please check your calendars for dates and times.

FIRE, CODE L, TORNADO, EARTHQUAKE AND CODE E DRILLS

For the safety of the children, fire drills and other evacuation drills (Code E), lockdown drills (Code L) and tornado and earthquake drills are conducted throughout the year. During fire drills, students must move quickly and quietly using the nearest exit. Students are to be cautioned against playing with the fire alarms since this could result in injury and/or fine. During Code L drills, teachers will lock classroom doors, pull down door shades, and sit on the floor with their students away from the classroom doors. During tornado drills, students will move into the hallways away from glass doors and windows. During earthquake drills students will crouch under desks. During Code E drills students will evacuate the school and move into the church.

HEALTH/MEDICAL

According to the New Jersey State Department of Health, no child may be admitted into school without proper verification of the following inoculations:

1. DPT - (4 doses plus booster)
2. Polio - Sabin (3 doses plus booster)
3. Hib - 3 doses + 1 if needed;
4. Mantoux tuberculin testing as required
5. MMR - 2 doses;
6. Hepatitis B - 3 doses
7. Pneumococcal - 3 doses one on or after 1st birthday
8. Varicella - 1 dose on or after 1st birthday
9. Flu-Vaccine – Pre-Kindergarten

Physical exams are required of students in Grades Pre-School; Kindergarten, Three and Six. Annual dental exams are required for Grades Kindergarten through Eight.

Screening, as required by law, will be conducted during the school year:

1. Height, Weight and Blood Pressure (all grades)
2. Vision (all grades)
3. Hearing (all grades)

4. Scoliosis (Grades 4, 6 & 8) - For Scoliosis screening, gym attire is worn. A bathing suit worn under the uniform is suggested female attire. Parents will be notified of the date.

Prescription Medication cannot be given without an authorization form signed by both parent and physician. All medications must be labeled and stored in the Nurse's office. Over the counter medication will be given with authorization by parent only.

As permitted by New Jersey Law, the school shall follow the orders of a physician or advanced practice nurse for emergency administration of epinephrine via Epi-pen for anaphylaxis.

The school nurse shall have primary responsibility for administration of the Epi-pen. In the absence of the school nurse, another school employee-designated and trained in administration of the Epi-pen by the school nurse pursuant to New Jersey law may administer the Epi-pen.

The school and its employees or agents shall have no liability for any injury arising from administration of the Epi-pen to the student. The parents/guardians of the student shall indemnify and hold harmless the school and its employees or agents for any such injury, as provided by law. **Please see attached link for Acknowledgement and Receipt of rules and regulations.**

HOMEWORK

Cooperation on the part of the home in supervising homework is imperative in the learning process. It is the parents' responsibility to provide ample time and opportunity for the completion of assignments.

It is a good policy for the parent to review completed assignments and compare them to the students' assignment pad entry. A parent should initial completed assignment, and upon teacher request, sign papers that supervision of homework took place. A student's homework assignment may also be checked on the teacher's page on the school website.

When a student is absent, assignments may be picked up in the school office between 2:30 and 4:00 p.m. Homework for absentees must be requested before 10:00 a.m. A student will have twice the number of days absent in which to complete missed assignments.

Under normal circumstances, suggested guidelines for the length and frequency of assignments are as follows

Grade K	A total of 10-20 minutes, 2 to 3 times a week
Grades 1-2	A total of 20 -30 minutes, daily
Grades 3-4	A total of 30-40 minutes, daily
Grades 5-6	A total of 45-90 minutes, daily
Grades 7-8	A total of 1 to 2 hours, daily

HOURS/TARDINES

The first bell will ring at 7:45 a.m.; the late bell will sound at 7:53 a.m.

Lessons will begin at 8:00 a.m.

Formal supervision of students begins at 7:40 a.m. Students may enter the building at 7:30 a.m. and report to their designated area.

All students are expected to be on time for school every day. Chronic tardiness cannot be tolerated because it disrupts the learning environment. Therefore, chronic student lateness will result in punitive consequences.

INDIVIDUAL EARLY DISMISSAL

If your child is to be picked up before the scheduled dismissal time, please send a note to the teacher to indicate this. To insure your child's safety, if another party is to pick up your child, you must notify the office beforehand either in a note or by phone. A parent must sign the Early Dismissal Log kept in the nurse's office before the school will release a student.

INSURANCE

All students are covered under the Archdiocesan Student and Sports Program, which is written on an "EXCESS" basis over all other collectible insurance covering the student.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

The library/media center is available to students during the school day. Books may be borrowed for one week at a time. A fine of 10 cents per day is charged for overdue books. Students may not use school computers without supervision.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Students may bring their own lunches to school. Milk is available and is paid for on a monthly/yearly basis according to the payment schedule on the school calendar. Snacks and other beverages are available for purchase.

The Home School Association sponsors lunch 5 days a week. Information on these food days can be found on our website. Students are expected to display proper manners and abide by cafeteria and playground rules.

LUNCH SESSIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Kindergarten – Pre-K	10:45 to 11:35
Grade 1	10:45 to 11:25
Second Session	11:25 to 12:05
Third Session	12:05 to 12:45
Fourth Session	12:45 to 1:25

Weather permitting, after lunch, all students are to go outdoors to the playground unless they are excused by the nurse or principal, or they have permission to return to class. Any student who is requested to return to class by his/her teacher must first show a lunchroom supervisor a pass that has been signed by the teacher. Kindergarten and Pre-K aides supervise the Kindergarten and Pre-K lunch period. One teacher and paid supervisors supervise the three remaining lunch periods.

OFFICE HOURS

During the school year, parents may leave a phone message on the office machine at any time. **Regular hours of operation are from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday to Thursday and 8:00 to 3:00 on Friday.**

PHONE CALLS

Students are permitted to use the office phone in emergency situations only. Parents are not permitted to call to speak with their children during the school day. Office personnel will deliver the message.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education classes are required under New Jersey State Law. All students must participate in classes unless excused by a medical note signed by a physician.

If a student has sustained an injury, please send a note to indicate this and/or a doctor's note stating date for return to full physical education participation. No student will be permitted to take physical education classes if they are in any type of cast.

PROMOTION POLICY

All promotions and retentions will be decided by the principal in consultation with the classroom teacher(s). In February, parents of potential retainees will be notified and requested to meet with the teacher and the principal to discuss a plan that hopefully will bring the child up to grade level. The final responsibility for the pupil's promotion or retentions rests with the school principal.

RECESS

Students in Grades 1-4 will have a 10-minute snack time. Kindergarten students have a ten-minute morning break and a 15-minute recess period each day. K-4 students may bring nutritious snacks such as fruit, vegetables, etc. Parents must obtain the classroom teacher's permission before bringing "birthday cupcakes" and other "finger food" treats to school in celebration of that occasion.

Except for educational purposes, toys and games may not be brought to school.

REPORT CARDS

Report card dates and conferences are published on the school calendar. Report cards are distributed at the end of each trimester to inform parents of the academic progress, religious growth, and personal development of the children. The parent should examine and discuss the contents of the report card with both the teacher and the youngster. Conferences are scheduled at the discretion of teacher and/or by parent request. At the mid-point of each trimester, K-3 parents also receive a written progress report. Parents of fourth through eighth graders may check their children's progress on line (POWERSCHOOL) continually.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Formal suspension is a serious disciplinary action taken by the school authorities against a student whose actions constitute a major disciplinary infraction and are contrary to the good order of the entire school community. There are two types of suspension:

- Denial of School Privileges (Out-of-School Suspension)
- Denial of Class Privileges (In-School-Suspension)

When a student's behavior warrants suspension, the Principal will inform the parents and seek immediate cooperation in a corrective program.

Major discipline infractions consists of:

- a) Continued and willful disobedience
- b) Open defiance of authority

- c) Conduct of such character as to constitute a continuing danger to the physical well-being of other people
- d) Physical assault of another pupil or upon any teacher or other school employee
- e) Taking or attempting to take personal property or money from another student/adult
- f) Threatening the use of physical force to obtain money or personal property from another student/adult
- g) Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to school property
- h) Using or passing alcohol, tobacco, or any form of drugs, or insinuating a transaction of any contraband.
- i) Immorality
- j) Habitual use of derogatory language
- k) Any other offense or conduct that detracts from learning and/or safety

In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, students can be expelled for the behavior of their parents if that behavior interferes with the learning environment of OLMA. Verbal threats to life and limb will not be tolerated at OLMA. In the event of such threats, the local police will be notified.

BULLYING POLICY

OLMA has established a "No Bullying" policy. Our Christian values teach us to respect others, regardless of our differences. Serious disciplinary action will be taken against any student found to engage in bullying practices of any kind.

Bullying happens when on an ongoing basis someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending him or herself.

Examples of bullying include:

- punching, shoving and other acts that hurt people physically
- spreading bad rumors about others
- keeping certain people out of a "group"
- teasing people in a mean way
- getting certain people to "gang up" on others
- sending mean text, email, or instant messages
- posting nasty pictures or messages about others in blogs or websites
- using someone else's user name to spread rumors or lies about someone.

We encourage any student who becomes aware of another student being bullied to report it to a teacher or the principal immediately. Many students who are bullied are scared to tell an adult for fear that the situation will get worse.

SEXUALITY

POLICY ON SEXUALITY AND AGREEMENT FOR STUDENT ENROLLMENT HAVE BEEN APPROVED ECCLESIASTICALLY BY THE METROPOLITAN OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK, THE MOST REVEREND JOHN J. MYERS, ARCHBISHOP.

The learning environment and religious nature of Catholic Schools are guided by the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church can be found at the website for the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops.¹

Among other things, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity."(2393, Catechism of the Catholic Church).

"Except within a valid marriage between a man and a woman (see, e.g. Sections 2360-2363, Catechism of the Catholic Church), Christ is the model of chastity, which all are called upon to emulate. See, e.g. Sections 2392-2397, Catechism of the Catholic Church."

If a student's expression of gender, sexual identity or sexuality should cause confusion or disruption at the Catholic school, if it should mislead others, cause scandal or have the potential for causing scandal, then the matter will be discussed with the student and his/her parents. If not resolved to the satisfaction of the School, which is seeking to uphold Catholic principles, then the student will be expelled from the Catholic School after the parents are first given the option to immediately withdraw the student from the School.

As in the case of students, if serious concerns arise as to the parent's or guardian's (herein "parent's") position or action with respect to the tenets of the Catholic faith, then he/she will be counseled by School. If the matter involving the parents/student(s) is not resolved to the satisfaction of the School, which is seeking to uphold Catholic principles, then the parent will be asked to withdraw child(ren) from School, and they agree to do so immediately. If they fail to do so, parents understand that child(ren) will be expelled from the Catholic school.

¹www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/epub/

AGREEMENT FOR STUDENT ENROLLMENT

All parents and guardians (herein “parents”) who believe that a Catholic School is a proper educational and religious environment for their child, and would like their child to attend a Catholic School, must adhere to the following agreement with their Catholic School:

Parents agree that the learning environment and religious nature of the school are guided by the Catechism of the Catholic Church.¹ Among other things, the Catholic Catechism states: *“By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. (293 Catechism of the Catholic Church.)*

Further, they acknowledge that a Catholic School looks to recent encyclical, *Laudato Si*, wherein Pope Francis stated, *“Our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings,”* and that *“learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology.”* *“Valuing one’s own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment.”*

If serious concerns arise as to a student’s and or parent’s position or action(s) with respect to the tenets of the Catholic faith, then parents will be counseled by School. If the matter involving the parents/student(s) is not resolved to the satisfaction of the School, which is seeking to uphold Catholic principles, then the parent will be asked to withdraw child(ren) from School and they agree to do so immediately. If they fail to do so, parents understand that child(ren) will be expelled from the Catholic School.

Parents understand and acknowledge that prior enrollment in a Catholic School does not establish a precedent for further schooling by Catholic School nor constitute a guarantee of placement for subsequent years.

Parents agree to share with principal and classroom teacher(s), in writing if requested, professional recommendations and/or treatment reports regarding their child’s medical, psychological and/or social situation.

¹The Catechism of the Catholic Church can be found at the website for the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops: www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/pub/

HOME SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Our Lady of Mercy Academy Home Association are to:

- Advance Catholic education and insure the welfare of the children of Our Lady of Mercy Academy.
- Establish and maintain a clear and direct communication between members and the school.
- Strengthen parental involvement so as to understand the special and common concerns of OLMA by providing a forum for the exchange of opinions and ideas.
- Provide an opportunity for parents to assist teachers in the common interest of their children.
- Organize and implement parental school assistance program as detailed each year at the time of registration. These include fundraising and school service needs.
- Encourage educational and spiritual growth within our school family.
- Assist the Advisory Board in keeping parents informed of legislation related to non-public schools.

All parents are required to join the HSA and take the "Protecting God's Children" seminar. Further, we encourage all parents to take part in your child's school life. Please join us at all our school functions.

POLICIES OF OLMA ADVISORY BOARD

Purpose: To develop policies that are compatible with the school philosophy and provide the parish with an appropriate representative body for identifying the education needs of the Christian Community at OLMA.

Meeting dates are published on the school calendar. All are welcome to attend.

Policy #1

Adult Spiritual and Religious Education

Parents of children who attend OLMA shall be encouraged to participate in the Parish Ministries in order to deepen their own spirituality and to fulfill their primary responsibility for the Christian education of their children.

Policy #2

Non-Discrimination

OLMA admits students of all races, colors, creeds and national or ethnic origins. Every student will be required to attend all prescribed courses, including religion.

Policy #3

Pre- K Program

The Pre-K Program is an integral part of OLMA. All parents and students involved in the program enjoy the benefits of the OLMA Community and are encouraged to participate fully in all activities.

Policy #4

Family Life Program

- a. The administration of OLMA will be responsible for the formulation of a program, which complies with the Archdiocesan mandate to provide instruction in family life education. This is to be accomplished with appropriate consultation and participation of teachers, parents, guardians, students, physicians, and other community members. At OLMA, that Christian moral ethic should be emphasized in all aspects of this extensive program which should include the following: an understanding of the physical, mental, emotional, social, economic, and psychological aspects of interpersonal relationships; the various stages of growth and physiological, psychological, and cultural foundations of human development, sexuality and reproduction.
- b. An outline of the curriculum and a list of instructional materials to be used in the Family Life Program shall be made available for review, upon request, prior to the implementation of the program or at any time thereafter.
- c. Parents/Guardians have the right to request exclusion of the child from all or any portion of the Family Life Program. This request must be submitted to the Principal in writing.

Policy #5

Class Size

The number of students in any one class shall not exceed thirty. When the enrollment is expected to exceed thirty students, in any class, the class shall be closed. A waiting list for that class shall be established. When the waiting list contains the names of not less than eight additional students, the students on the waiting list shall be admitted and the class shall be split into two classes. Members of any parish the Archdiocese of Newark and children of the registered school families shall be given first preference in admission to the school.

Policy #5A

The number of students in any one class shall not exceed thirty students (See Policy #5). If the enrollment exceeds 25 students in any one class, a Teacher's Aide may be requested by the Homeroom Teacher. After consideration by the Principal, an assistant may be hired.

Policy #5B

When any grade (1-8) is divided into two (2) sections (i.e. classes), the total number of students in that grade shall not exceed fifty (50), except in extraordinary circumstances approved by the Administrative Pastor.

Policy #6

OLMA Emergency Operations and School Security Plan

The Plan was developed by the Board for the purpose of creating an appropriate and effective response to any emergency or traumatic situation that may occur within, or in the vicinity of the school. It is designated to give direction in situations involving the safety and welfare of the school community. The Plan's primary goal is to protect life and property and to provide emotional support and guidance to students, staff, and other emergency professionals in the event of a crisis. Copies of the Plan are available in the school library for circulation.

Policy #7

Drug Policy

Substance abuse is a concern in society today. Therefore, for the well being of our school community, the possession, sale, distribution or use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs or narcotics by a student at school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored function is harmful to the student and the school, and is prohibited.

In the case of any substance abuse by a student, at any time or place, the school will deal with the student in an appropriate manner for the best interests of the student and the student body. Any discipline shall be at the discretion of the Principal based upon the substance involved and the severity of the abuse. The administration and faculty shall cooperate with parents, clergy, and appropriate authorities in corrective measures in the case of substance abuse or suspected abuse. In severe cases where appropriate remedial action has not succeeded, the student may be required to leave the school.

The school shall provide instruction to teachers, parents, and students with regard to the dangers of substance abuse. The Principal shall keep the Advisory Board informed of any action pursuant to this policy. This topic is detailed in the OLMA Emergency Operations and School Security Plan (See Policy #6)

Policy #8

Child Abuse

The school follows the guidelines of the State of New Jersey and Archdiocesan Policy with regard to child abuse. This topic is detailed in the OLMA Emergency Operations and School Security Plan (See Policy #6)

Policy #9

Conferences

In order to insure communication between the parent/guardian and the teachers, parent-teacher conferences shall be held at least twice a year.

Policy #10

Teacher Certification

Archdiocesan Policy states, "The minimum requirement for a teaching position in the Archdiocese of Newark is a Bachelor's Degree and progress towards New

Jersey State Certification." Teachers employed at OLMA are required to obtain New Jersey State Certification prior to beginning a 4th year of teaching at OLMA.

Policy #11

Teacher Leave

All teachers of OLMA shall be entitled to paid sick, personal, and bereavement leave. The number of days is to be determined by the School Advisory Board and published in the Faculty Handbook.

Policy #12

Budget Reports

The OLMA budget shall be presented to the School Advisory Board by the Finance Committee of the School Advisory Board for review and discussion before or at the March meeting. Since May 31st is the deadline for budget submission to the Archdiocese, final Board approval shall be given no later than the May meeting.

Policy #13

School Fees

Each family of children attending OLMA shall be assessed fees for tuition, books, technology, instructional materials, graduation, and other expenditures as deemed necessary. A late fee will be charged if tuition is not paid at the specific time. Payment of fees and tuition must be completed according to the tuition payment plan selection.

These fees shall be reviewed and established annually. Payment of said fees must be made according to published schedule if a student is to continue to attend regular classes and other school activities. Any exception to the payment must be approved by the Principal

Tuition is paid through the school office or FACTS Tuition Management Services.

Instructional and Book fees are due at the time of annual registration and are non-refundable.

The Technology Fee is payable September 15th.

Policy #13A

Non-Parishioners will pay tuition equal to the total expense per student.

Policy #13B

Our Lady of Mercy Parish Policy

We ask that all our parishioners be good stewards of their time, talent, and treasure. For families with children in OLMA, it is essential that you be good stewards, as well. In order to sustain a parishioner scholarship of tuition, we expect school parents to be active in their support of Our Lady of Mercy Parish. Some people who have limited financial resources are generous with their time and

talent for the school and parish. We ask for support of the parish by using our collection envelopes. We recommend a minimum of \$10 a week. I have written in the past and continue to believe that your active participation in Sunday Mass is my greater concern. So, if that amount is too much, please let me know. I still believe that an empty envelope at Sunday Mass would be a sign of your good will and understanding of our situation.

Rev. Joseph Chapel, Pastor

Policy #14

Tuition Assistance

Our Lady of Mercy is dedicated to providing a quality Catholic education. We recognize that tuition is a significant financial commitment. To the extent that funds are available, tuition assistance will be considered for any K-8 family that has actively participated in the K-8 school community for a minimum of one year. Tuition assistance is meant to provide emergency relief on a short-term basis to families experiencing a job loss, sudden illness or death, or unexpected family crisis. Tuition assistance is not designed to help meet a family's long term needs but rather to address the family's immediate need to pay tuition.

Policy #15

Lunch Safety Program

Teachers are scheduled for lunch on a rotation basis. Overall lunch supervision is conducted by three paid cafeteria workers.

Policy #16

OLMA HSA. Registration/Parental Obligation

Each parent/guardian is required to register with the HSA and pay an annual per family dues. All OLMA families are members of the Home School Association.

The K to 8 parental obligations involves volunteering for one school service or other HSA sponsored fundraiser and one school lunch for each calendar year.

Each OLMA family has a designated fundraising commitment per calendar year. These funds can be raised by supporting the major fundraisers, or you may choose to pay an opt-out fee at the time of HSA registration. The school relies heavily on all fundraisers.

The money raised goes toward the HSA commitment to the school budget. Each year the HSA is given a budget commitment to contribute to the school's operating budget to keep costs down. Once the budget commitment is met, any additional funds are used for extras that benefit the children of OLMA.

Policy 16A

Pre-School Parental Obligation

Each pre-school family is obligated to register with the H.S.A. and pay annual per family dues. In addition, they are required to work one school service.

For Security and general information purposes Parents must sign-in and out in the school office. All visitors must secure a visitor's pass. Parents are not permitted to go to a classroom unless permission has been given from the school office.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT

I acknowledge receipt of the Handbook containing the policies, rules and regulations for Our Lady of Mercy Academy. I have read the Handbook. I understand and agree that the Handbook is binding on the students and parents during the current academic year, and I agree that we will abide by its provisions and content. I understand and agree that the administration of the school will have the authority set forth in the Handbook.

I understand that the policies, rules, and regulations contained in the Handbook are established for the welfare and benefit of all students. I understand my responsibility to support school policies and to see that my child adheres to the rules and regulations set forth in the Handbook.

I also understand and acknowledge that the policy and doctrine of Catholic Schools are firmly rooted in the Catholic Faith. Accordingly, parents acknowledge and agree that in the case of disagreement as to parents' or students' obligations hereunder, or regarding the tenets of the Catholic Church, the matter will be presented to the Archbishop or his designee for interpretation and/or decision. Any decision of the Archbishop or his designee shall be final, conclusive and binding.

Date: _____

Name of Student(s): _____

Signature of Parents or Guardians: _____

If Guardian, state relationship to student(s): _____

Signature of Principal: _____

