



VISITATION ACADEMY

Parent-Student Handbook

2020-2021

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www.visitationacademyparamus.org

Visitation Academy

Blue Ribbon School of Excellence ~ Middle States Accredited

Dear Parents and Students,

*"We are called.....to act justly, to love tenderly,
and to walk humbly with our God." Micah 6:8.*

Welcome to Visitation Academy! Thank you for choosing to be part of our school family. By selecting to attend a Catholic school, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of Visitation Academy for the 2020-2021 school year. Please carefully read this document in its entirety and sign the attached agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of Visitation Academy during the 2020-2021 school year.

Please note that due to COVID19, there will be additional amendments to this handbook and they will be given to parents under separate cover before school begins.

The faculty and staff of Visitation Academy look forward to working with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

God bless you,

Ms. Kimberly Harrigan
Principal



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Parents As Partners

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

To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Gets to bed early on school nights;
- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day;
- Is dressed according to the school dress code;
- Completes assignments on time; and
- Has lunch money or nutritional sack lunch every day.

To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health;

To support the religious and educational goals of the school;

To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example;

To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school;

To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems;

To not post negative comments about students, teachers, or the administration on social media.

To actively participate in school activities such as fundraisers and Parent-Teacher Conferences;

To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers;

To meet all financial obligations to the school;

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;

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Visitation Academy Mission Statement

Visitation Academy strives to provide a Catholic education rooted in the Gospel values of Jesus Christ.

We promote Excellence in both academics and faith formation by fostering the total development of each student: spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically.

Our goal is to create an affirmative environment that prepares our students for a diverse, global world so that they will become productive members of society who will respond to the call:

"to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God."

Micah 6:8.

Belief Statement

- We, the family of Visitation Academy, believe in achieving the highest standard of academics while promoting Catholic values and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church.
- We believe the Gospel message is expressed in our school through our Catholicity and modeling of Jesus' teachings.
- We believe that a child's intellect is developed by meeting his/her diverse needs.
- We believe that developing critical thinkers will foster future problem solvers and good, moral global citizens.
- We believe that infusing technology and cooperative lessons into our classroom will help to prepare our students for the 21st century challenges that lie ahead of them.
- We believe that through the establishment of rules, we encourage students to develop a clear view of appropriate behavior, which fosters personal responsibility.
- We believe that we draw from the strengths of our faculty and staff to continue to improve our educational program to meet the ever-changing needs of our students.

Purpose and Use of Handbook

This handbook exists to foster the efficient operation of Visitation Academy. To meet this objective, the school administration is given flexibility and the ability to exercise discretion. In appropriate circumstances, the principal has the discretion to take actions other than those specified in the handbook. This handbook is not intended and should not be considered to create any additional rights for students or parents/guardians.

Amendments to Handbook

This handbook is subject to change at any time when determined to be necessary by the school administration. If changes are made to the handbook, parents/guardians will be promptly notified.

Visitation Academy Accreditation



National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Visitation Academy was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon of Excellence by the United States Department of Education on September 7, 2012. The Department of Education recognized 50 private and 219 public schools across the country for this prestigious award which is based on the schools overall academic excellence.



Middle States Accredited. Visitation Academy was accredited in 2010 and is being re-accredited in 2017 based on demonstrating effectively the advancement of educational experience.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK 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). 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. (2393 Catechism of the Catholic Church.)*

Further, they acknowledge that a Catholic School looks to the 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 the 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.

1 The 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/epub/

Parents 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.

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.

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Section I – Academics

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Being prepared for class each day is the student's responsibility. Student's class and special schedules are clearly outlined at the beginning of the school year. Students will not be permitted to call home for parents to deliver homework, uniforms, items needed for class. Parents can help their children by reminding them what they need in advance for a particular day.

BACKPACKS – The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that parents look for the following when choosing the right backpack:

- **A lightweight pack** that doesn't add a lot of weight to your child's load (for example, even though leather packs look cool, they weigh more than traditional canvas backpacks)
- **Two wide, padded shoulder straps**; straps that are too narrow can dig into shoulders
- **A padded back**, which not only provides increased comfort, but also protects kids from being poked by sharp edges on objects (pencils, rulers, notebooks, etc.) inside the pack
- **A waist belt**, which helps to distribute the weight more evenly across the body
- **Multiple compartments**, which can help distribute the weight more evenly

Backpacks on wheels are permitted. Although backpacks on wheels may be a good option for students who have to lug around really heavy loads, they're extremely difficult to pull up stairs and to roll through snow. They can pose a tripping hazard in the hallways and damage stairs.

BERGEN COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES (BCSS) – BCSS offers the following to the students of Visitation Academy:

- Compensatory and Title I services for children with special needs.
- A certified counselor serves the needs of students and parents through class and individual consultation. Please email the school principal if you wish your child to receive counseling services.

CHEATING - Cheating of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. A student athlete or student involved in extra-curricular activities who is involved in cheating will also be unable to participate in sports/extra-curricular competition.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS - Visitation Academy communicates with all parents/guardians via the school website, weekly newsletters, which will be in your child's backpack each Monday or Tuesday, and the School Messenger Contact Service which offers email, phone call and texts. **It is the parents' responsibility to check school website daily for information and calendar changes.** School Messenger will primarily be used to forward emergency information and important reminders. If you wish to meet with your child's teacher, please do not approach during dismissal. You are free to contact teachers via school email. Please allow 24 hours for response time. Teachers are not expected to answer emails after 4:00 pm until the following morning when school reopens.

FAITH ENVIRONMENT

- **Prayer** – Children listen to the Word of God frequently for the purpose of reflection and study. Both formal and informal prayers are taught. Each day begins and ends with prayer in order to keep Christ as the center of our lives. Non-Catholic students are required to comply with the Catholic philosophy of the school and respect Catholic practices.
- **Liturgy / Mass** – Since Visitation Academy is a Catholic School, Catholic students are expected to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. Part of the Religious program includes worship. Therefore classes celebrate Eucharist once a week or as schedules permit at 8:45am. Parents are invited to attend these masses. Special Liturgies will also be scheduled for the entire school community throughout the school year. **All students must attend the school Masses regardless of creed.**
- **Altar Servers** - Students in grades 4 through 8 are invited to begin their ministry of service as Altar Servers. Altar servers must register with Our Lady of the Visitation Rectory.

Family Life – is an essential part of our curriculum and has been integrated into our Religion Program. Family Life includes the "Protecting God's Children" program.

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Sacraments- A Sacrament is one of our most personal encounters with God. To receive a Sacrament, the following must be present:

- The child's faith must have been nourished and directed through formal instruction (at least two years prior to the reception of the Sacrament)
- Family participation with the worshipping community on a regular basis at the celebration of Mass
- True readiness for the Sacrament on the part of the child
- Full involvement of the parent/guardian in the preparation process along with the Director of Religious Education.
- The desire on the part of the child to receive the Sacrament. Second grade Catholic students receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion. Eighth grade students receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

FIELD TRIPS

1. Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.
2. Field trips are re-evaluated each year to determine the compatibility of the field trip with curricular goals.
3. A field trip is a privilege and not a right.
4. There are no "traditional" field trips. Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip has become a school tradition.
5. All grades do not always have the same number of field trips.
6. Field trips are permissible for all grades when advanced planning, location, and the experience insure a successful learning opportunity.
7. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
8. A written **official permission slip**, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission **cannot** be accepted. Permission slips are due in the office forty-eight hours after receipt of the permission slip.
9. A field trip permission slip is printed at the end of this book. This is the only format that may be used to allow a student to leave school during school hours. If your child fails to bring his/her permission slip home, you may tear out and use or copy the form provided. Call the school for information needed to complete the form. **Note:** a fax does not take the place of an original signature.
10. A **telephone call** will **not** be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.
11. Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend a field trip will remain at home with the parent and will be marked absent for the day. They will be given appropriate work to complete at home if the field trip is part of a learning experience and grade for a class.
12. Students who are participating in the field trip must ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class. Students not on the bus may not participate in the field trip and will be counted absent for the day.
13. All monies collected for the field trip are **non-refundable**.
14. **Cell phones** are **not allowed** on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.
15. Parents who are not "official" chaperones may not drive their car to a field trip destination with the plan of accompanying the class on the field trip.
16. Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring pre-school or school age siblings on the field trip.
17. All chaperones must be 25 years of age or older and be in good standing with Protecting God's Children training and all volunteer requirements.
18. Buses or vans used for field trips must have seat belts available on them and students must wear seatbelts at all times.

Students with allergies who participate in school-sponsored field trips may face challenges to their physical health. Visitation Academy will make reasonable accommodations for all students and will inform field trip chaperones regarding a student's allergy issues. Every effort will be made to provide a safe learning experience for all students.

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A field trip generally occurs in a less controlled environment where allergen triggers may be present.

If a parent is concerned about a child's presence on a field trip due to his/her special health needs, a parent may choose to keep their child at home or come as a chaperone on the day of the field trip.

HOMEWORK - Homework provides essential practice for further development skills, learning and facilitates student responsibility. Failure to do homework can alter a student's overall grade. See Discipline section.

Suggested times for homework Monday thru Thursday:

- Primary (K-3) 30 minutes to one hour (includes studying spelling/vocabulary)
- Intermediate (4-5) 60 minutes to one and one half hours (includes studying, reading)
- Middle School (6-8) 60 minutes to two hours (includes studying, reading)

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY POPE FRANCIS CHAPTER - Criteria and Selection of Middle School Members;

Section 1 - As of 2015, to be eligible for membership, the candidate must be a member of grades 6, 7, or 8. Candidates must have been in attendance at the school for a minimum of two trimesters.

Section 2 - Candidates must have attained Principal's Honors two of the three trimesters prior to the annual induction ceremony. Candidates will also be monitored for excessive tardiness, inappropriate behavior and written warnings. This also includes any I or U on their report card, during each trimester.

Section 3

- Members must maintain the standards of the five pillars of the NJHS.
- Honor students must maintain Principal's Honors each trimester to remain a member of the National Honor Society. Members who do not meet this requirement will be put on probation.
- Members who are excessively late, have received multiple written warnings for inappropriate behavior, or received any I or U on their report card, may also be put on probation.
- Academic or behavioral probation will be allowed only **once** each school year. If the student does not meet the requirements at that time he or she will be removed from the National Honor Society.

Section 4 - The nomination of each new member to the chapter shall be by majority vote of the Faculty Council. A letter of affirmation must be signed by the candidate and parent/guardian and returned to the NJHS Advisor.

PARENTAL RIGHTS TO SCHOOL RECORDS – Visitation Academy abides by the provisions of applicable law with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. The non-custodial parent must provide contact information. In the case of a court order to the contrary, Visitation Academy will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the student's essential academic records. Custodial parent must present a copy of the court order to Visitation Academy.

POWER SCHOOL – This is a student information system that records grades, records attendance and generates Progress Reports and Report Cards. Parents may use a school generated user name and password that is given to them in September, to access their child's grades. **It is the parents' responsibility to sign into Power School to receive Progress reports and Report Cards each trimester.**

PROGRESS REPORTS - Progress Reports are posted on Power School for students in grades one through eight three times a year. Acknowledgement sheets, handed out by the teacher, **MUST** be promptly signed and returned.

REPORT CARDS

- Grades 1 -8 Report Cards are posted on Power School three times a year; December, April and June. Acknowledgement sheets, handed out by teacher, **MUST** be promptly signed and returned.

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- Pre K and Kindergarten Report Cards are given out in January and June.
- Parent Conferences will be held in the 1st Trimester

Students in grades PreK3 to Kindergarten will be evaluated on their progress as the department maintains an original evaluation system that focuses on the needs of early childhood students.

Students in Grades 1 to 3 are assessed on their developmental growth based on the Archdiocesan coding system listed below:

E - Exceeds (High Understanding) S - Secure (Understanding Demonstrated)
 D - Developing (Growth Demonstrated) B - Beginning (Beginning Stages)
 N - Not yet Performing (Assistance Required)

Students in grades 4 through 8 work will be evaluated using the letter grades and numerical equivalents below.

A+ 100	A 92 – 96	B+ 88 – 91	B 83 – 87
C+ 78 – 82	C 73 – 77	D 70 – 72	U below 70 - Failure
<u>Subcategory Code:</u> + Strength		√ Satisfactory	Weakness

Rubric Code for Written Communication (Holistic Scoring):

6 = Very Good 5 = Good 4 = Acceptable
 3 = Below Average 2 = Poor 1 = Unacceptable

The following codes shall be used for Art, Intro to World Language (Grades I to 5), Music, Physical Education, Technology as well as Personal Development.

O=Outstanding S=Satisfactory I=Improvement Needed U=Unsatisfactory

Any grade below 70 is considered a failing grade. Any grade below a 50% is averaged as a 50% to determine term grades. In Grades 4 to 8, a Rubric code for Written Communication is used. Final exams are administered in Grades 4 to 8. These exams are 20% (or 1/5) of the Third Trimester.

Honor Roll - Grades four through eight are eligible for the Honor Roll according to the following criteria;

• **GRADES 4 and 5**

Principal's List

A+ or A in all Academic Subjects,
 O or S in all Specials
 O or S in Personal Development
 No minuses in any subcategory

Honors

Three A's in Academic Subjects,
 No grade less than a B+
 O or S in Specials
 O or S in Personal Development
 No minuses in any subcategory

• **GRADES 6, 7, 8**

Principal's List

All A+ or A in all Academic Subjects
 O or S in all Specials
 O or S in Personal Development
 No minuses in any subcategory

Honors

Three A's in Academic Subjects
 No grade less than a B+
 O or S in all Specials
 O or S in all Personal Development
 No minuses in any subcategory

**Honor Roll criteria revised on 01/08/2021*

RETENTION POLICY - A student cannot be promoted if there is a failing final average in a major subject. A failing grade is any grade below 70. Students will be required to attend summer school or complete 30 hours of instruction by a certified teacher in the failing subject.

STUDENT RECORDS - Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the US Mail with a Transcript Request Form from the requesting school. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new

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school. Students requesting records, transcripts, or recommendations must make a five school-day request to the School Office.

In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive reports about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra reports sent to more than one home address.

TESTING

- Students are assessed on subject matter in the classroom at the discretion of their teacher.
- **MAP GROWTH (NWEA)** is a computerized standardized test used in the Archdiocese of Newark designed to assess student achievement in reading, language arts, mathematics, science and vocabulary. **NWEA** testing is administered three times during the school year. Results are shared with parents upon completion.
- During the year, students work in a **CLASSWORKS** program that aligns to the **MAP GROWTH** testing in order to improve knowledge and understanding of subject matter that they had difficulty with on the assessment.
- **NCEA ACRE** test is administered to students in 5th through 8th grade. The acronym stands for Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education. This test is published by the **NCEA** (National Catholic Educational Association). The NCEA ACRE is an assessment designed to strengthen religious education programs based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the most recent catechetical documents.
- **HSPT** (High School Placement Test) is given to eight grade students who wish to attend a Catholic High School in early November.

TEXTBOOKS- All hard covered textbooks must be covered. If books are lost or damaged, parents or students must replace them or pay for the damage. Several book companies have their books on-line. Many textbooks are now available as eBooks. Please check publisher's website for additional information if you are interested.

Section II – Admissions

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS - PLEASE GO TO THE ADMISSIONS TAB ON OUR WEBSITE TO INQUIRE OR REGISTER AT VISITATION ACADEMY. TUITION AND REGISTRATION FEES ARE EXPLAINED IN DETAIL.

Required for admissions is your child's birth certificate, baptismal certificate if applicable and health records including all required immunizations. Please refer to health section for required immunizations.

a. Technical Requirements:

A birth certificate must be submitted for proof of age.

- The Pre-Kindergarten 3 child must be three years old on or before Oct. 1st.
- The Pre-Kindergarten 4 child must be four years old on or before Oct. 1st.
- The Kindergarten child must be five years old on or before October 1st.
- The First Grade child must be six years old on or before October 1st.

b. Non-Discrimination - The non-Catholic student is welcome at Visitation Academy. The non-Catholic student is expected to understand and agree that the School exists to educate in the framework of Catholic values. Non-Catholic students must participate in the Religion classes and liturgical services scheduled for the students during the school year.

c. Probationary Period - All new students will be given a trial period of not less than 30 days in which to prove himself/herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period there are any problems, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at Visitation Academy. The recommendation and decision of the school is final. Visitation Academy is limited in its human capital resources and will make **reasonable** accommodations for learning differences when possible. Visitation Academy cannot

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accommodate students who have **extraordinary** learning differences. If after admission, the educational and/or behavioral needs of a student exceed what would be considered **reasonable**, the student may need to be separated from Visitation Academy. This decision will be made for the student's educational and/or behavioral needs to be fully met in another educational setting. If the decision to separate the student from Visitation Academy is made by the school, the student's tuition due would be prorated.

d. Transfer Students – A transfer notification from the previous school, a recent report card and test scores are required before acceptance into Visitation Academy. An interview with the Principal and a letter of recommendation is also required for students in grades 4 through 8. Entrance exams will be given to discern student's academic level.

e. Withdrawal Policy

- Families must notify the school in writing if a student is withdrawn from the school.
- Registered students who withdraw before the first full day of school are responsible for 1/3 of the full tuition amount.
- Registered students who withdraw between the first day of school and December 15th are responsible for ½ of the full tuition amount.
- Registered students who withdraw after December 15th are responsible for the full tuition amount.
- The school will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance.

HOME SCHOOL ASSOCIATION –The H.S.A. is meant to facilitate communication and cooperation between school and home. The Association is under the direction of an H.S.A. board of parents with the school principal as moderator. The H.S.A. board assists the Principal in maintaining services through fundraising efforts, to the teachers and the students and includes but are not limited to cafeteria and recess responsibilities. Please visit our Home School Association webpage under the "Parents" tab for officers and contact information.

- **Fundraising Obligation** - The Home School Association raises additional money each year in order to keep tuition at an affordable rate. To meet the assessment, each family must pay a yearly \$450.00 fee The HSA sends out payment options for this fee in September. Early Childhood part time students are obligated to raise \$225.00.

TRANSPORTATION – Bus service is provided through the Board of Education from some towns. Various towns reimburse parents in lieu of busing services, upon application, if they qualify. It is important that every family complete the Transportation Form and return to the to the school office. All forms will be submitted to the appropriate BOE.

TUITION – Visitation Academy participates in the SMART Tuition Program. SMART allows you to make monthly payments through automatic deduction. Payments to SMART will begin in either July or August and end in April or May respectively.

Timely tuition payments each month are essential for the fiscal health of our school. You can check on your account balance by calling SMART at 1-800-SMART-03 or maintaining your account online with www.smarttuition.com. According to Archdiocesan Policy, if you fall 2 months behind in your tuition, educational services will be suspended and your child/children may not attend school until the finance office has cleared your account. This policy will be enforced.

- A fee of \$25 will be charged for any returned payment
- A late fee of \$15 will be charged for any payment made after the posted due date.

If you have SMART Tuition questions or problems, you can email our SMART Tuition representative at smart@visitationacademyparamus.org.

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Financial Aid - Financial Aid is extremely limited and only available to current parents who may be experiencing temporary financial setbacks. To request an application for "Tuition Angel," please submit a letter to the Business Administrator with an explanation of your circumstances. All applicants are reviewed on a need basis and tax forms must be submitted. No student may receive more than half of his or her tuition for any one year.

SECTION III - ATTENDANCE POLICIES

ABSENCE - A conference with parents will be required when a student exceeds 10 consecutive absent days. An extended illness of 3 or more days requires a doctor's clearance note. If a child is not attending school, please call the school to state the reason before 9:00am. **A child's absence cannot be communicated by email.** If a call is not received, a call to you at home or your place of employment will be made to insure the safety of your child. All absences must be explained. A note from parent/doctor is expected upon return. See NURSE section page 24.

Eighth graders who visit high schools will receive **one excused absence**. Any other absence for this reason will count. We encourage students to schedule visits, whenever possible, on days when Visitation Academy is closed. Visiting a school on a teacher's professional day is often a better choice than visiting on a school day.

- **Absence During the School Day**
Students needing medical appointments during school hours require a written note by the parent. Parents are required to sign out their child. If the child returns to school during the same school day, he/she must be signed back into school in the office. Students who are away from school for an appointment for 3 ½ hours or more will be counted as absent for ½ a day. Three (3) early withdrawals each of which are less than 3 ½ hours are considered a one-half day absence. Due to compulsory attendance requirements, excessive tardies may result in a student needing to be retained and to repeat the school year.
- **Homework due to Vacations/Planned Absences**
The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility. **Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignment will be given in anticipation of the vacation.** There will be no exceptions to this policy. Please do not ask the teacher to make an exception or offer payment for homework given in advance of an absence.
- **Homework Policy Due to Illness**
When a student is **absent for three or more days**, a parent may call the school office before 9:30 AM to arrange for homework assignments. Homework assignments may be picked up at the school office between 3PM–3:30PM. For short absences, students should make arrangement with classmates regarding assignments. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school.

Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignment will be given in anticipation of the vacation.

Arrangements for regular classroom tests missed because of an absence are to be made with the teachers. These tests must be taken within one week of the original test date. Due to the educational advantage of returning graded tests to students in a timely manner, some missed tests may not be made up.

Excessive absence (40) days or the equivalent of 40 days including tardies, can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year.

(Days of attendance and absences may be altered due to COVID)

CALENDAR – A calendar of the entire school year can be found on our website. Click on the word “Calendar” to view the entire month. Please refer to the Calendar column for any changes. The calendar is well documented with regard to our early dismissal days. It is important to make note of these days so children are picked up on time and no one is inconvenienced.

DISMISSAL

- Visitation Academy will permit only the custodial parents or his/her guardian to pick up the child during or at the end of the school day. The non-custodial parent will not be permitted to remove the child from school during or at the end of the school day, unless there is written authorization from the custodial parent. In an extreme emergency, a clearly defined, one-time telephone authorization may be acceptable.
- If a student is going to be dismissed to “Uber” or a cab/car service, the Principal must receive a written note from the student’s parent prior to the arrangement.
- A telephone call to the school office regarding a change in the student’s dismissal procedure **must be made by 2pm** to assure communication to your child.

1. Dismissal Procedures (Please review the COVID DROP OFF AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES on the front page of our website)

In order to ensure the safety of our children and to conform to the safety recommendations of the Department of Homeland Security, Visitation Academy has revised its dismissal procedures. Beginning in September 2018, no one will be admitted entry to the school building during dismissal. All students will exit the building so that parents or guardians can pick up their children.

- Pre-K and Kindergarten classes will exit the rear door of the school building into the lower lot at 2:45pm. Students will be walked to a designated area where they can be picked up by their parents or guardians.
- Grades 1 through 3 will dismiss to the lower parking lot at 3pm. Parents are to park in the lower lot ONLY for pick-up. Students will be walked to a designated area where they can be picked up by their parents or guardians.
- Grades 4 through 8 will dismiss through the "Mosaic" door. Parents are to park in the upper lot ONLY for pick-up. All classes from 4 through 8 will report to the gym first. Once in the gym, the principal or the principal's designee will dismiss each class in grade order. The class will exit through the "Mosaic" door and proceed to meet their parent/guardian.
- Please, do not remove your child from the class until the entire class reaches its designated spot. Once the class has stopped, parents or guardians may retrieve their child or children; please inform the teacher that you are taking your child or children. For safety reasons, the teacher must see you in order to release a student from the line.
- All students must go to their parents immediately. No students can congregate in the parking lot to socialize; it is too dangerous.
- If your child is not picked up by 3:15pm, he/she will be sent to the After Care Program and you will be billed accordingly.
- **After Care / Homework Club students** will line up in the auditorium and proceed to designated areas with assigned faculty member.

2. Parking for Dismissal - In order to safely allow the students to be picked up, the two lanes at the front of the school will be closed to traffic. Please park in designated areas only. It is the goal of the administration, faculty, and staff of Visitation Academy to ensure the greatest level of safety and security for our students.

3. Returning to School After Dismissal - Students are not permitted to return to the school building after the 3PM dismissal unless accompanied by a teacher. Students who choose to return to school after 3PM without a teacher, face detention, suspension, or expulsion. This policy is designed for the protection of your child in addition to helping your child to become more organized and personally

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responsible.

DOCTOR AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS – Removing a child from class disrupts the child and the class. Appointments should be made after school, professional days, or holidays. First Friday dismissals are at 12:00pm. In the event of an emergency or special circumstance, the school office must be notified in the morning. **No child may be picked up early in the office after 2:30pm.**

DROP OFF PROCEDURES (MORNING) - Morning drop off will be as follows, for the safety of our students; **Please review the COVID DROP OFF AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES on the front page of our website)**

- Drop off takes place between 7:55am and 8:15am.
- All parents MUST drive down to the lower parking lot and let their children off at the curb. Visitation faculty and Safety Patrol will escort children to the auditorium for morning assembly.
- Although it is not necessary, parents who feel the need to walk their children to the door must park in the upper lot and walk their child to the lower parking lot door.
- The main school entrance (blue doors) and Mosaic doors will be locked at all times.
- Late arrivals must ring the bell and enter through the main school entrance.
- No parking ever in handicap spaces without a legal handicap sticker.

EMERGENCY CLOSING – If there is to be no school, each family will be notified by School Messenger by 7:00am.

FAMILY VACATIONS – Family vacations must be planned outside school time for the benefit of your child/children. Should this policy not be honored, the teachers cannot be responsible for academic progress during the absence.

LATENESS – After 8:15am, students are considered late and must enter through the blue main doors to obtain a late pass. The lower lot doors close promptly at 8:15am. A student will not be permitted into class without a pass. No parent may escort a student to his/her classroom without permission from the office. Excessive tardiness will be handled as follows:

- 5 tardies will result in lunch recess detention
- 6 to 10 tardies will result in loss of class trip privilege
- 10 tardies will result in parent conferences and 30 minute after school detention to perform school service.

SCHOOL HOURS - Prompt, regular attendance is absolutely essential in order to maximize our students' opportunity for success. **Please review the COVID DROP OFF AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES on the front page of our website**

- PreK3 half-day program begins promptly at 8:15am and ends at 12:00pm.
- PreK3, PreK4 and Kindergarten programs begin promptly at 8:15am and ends at 2:45pm.
- Grades 1 through 8 must be in the auditorium by 8:15am for Morning Assembly. Supervision begins at 7:55am when the auditorium doors are opened.
- Before School Care Program is from 7:00am-7:55am. Registration forms are available on our website.
- Dismissal is at 3:00pm. If your child is not picked up by 3:15pm he/she will be sent to the After School Program. You will be expected to pay a fee for this service beyond 15 minutes.

Half Days – Half-day dismissal is 12:00pm. The first Friday of each month will have a 12pm dismissal. Please refer to the school calendar on our website for half day dismissals. No lunch is served on these days.

The school office is open on all school days from 7:45am – 3:30pm.

Section IV – Discipline

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CODE OF CONDUCT - A spirit of Christ-like charity, respect for authority and mutual cooperation are essential elements of the learning environment at Visitation Academy. Students are always being reminded of our Mission Statement..."to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God." Micah 6:8.

In accordance with the stated philosophy, each student, teacher and staff member will be considerate of the rights of others in all interactions. All students are expected to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school which

are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility. This requires courtesy in all personal relationships, promptness in fulfilling obligations, concern for the environment, and many other factors which the students' sense of appropriateness will indicate to them.

The Principal reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an action if any doubt arises.

Items such as, but not limited to, vaping, questionable books and pictures, White-out®, Sharpie® markers, knives, guns, matches, cigarettes, toys, trading cards, laser lights, CDs, cameras, fidget spinners, or anything that will detract from a learning situation are not allowed at school at any time. **Key chains and toys may not be attached to student backpacks.**

The school administration, in accordance with state laws, will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of these items in the school. **Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) on the last day of the school year.**

CRIMINAL INCIDENTS - If the possibility of danger or criminal activity exists to persons or property within the Visitation Academy building or grounds, the principal has the right to search the contents of any/all students' book bags, purses, or sling packs. The principal may request that students' empty pockets. At such time, the principal and a designee shall be present. Any threat against a person's property is considered a terroristic threat. (NJS 2C:12-3) Any student who threatens the safety of another student or adult will be brought to the principal's office and the parents and Paramus Police Department will immediately be notified. If anyone brings a weapon on school grounds the parents and Paramus Police will be immediately notified. Further disposition is at the discretion of the principal.

Consequences- Actions which violate the law, threaten or cause harm to other students or faculty and staff, or disrupt the immediate welfare and progress of the school, or are considered to be HIB, will not be tolerated. Such actions can result in the following;

1. Loss of privileges
2. Removal from school clubs / societies
3. Detention
4. Suspension
5. Expulsion

DISCIPLINE POLICY – This policy will be strictly enforced during school hours and school sponsored events.

How do we work with unwanted behavior?

- Step 1: Verbal warning by Teacher
- Step 2: Written warning and Teacher / Student Conference. Warning must be signed by parent.
- Step 3: Teacher / Student / Principal Conference. Parent Contacted. Behavior contract written. Loss of privilege, possible in-school or out of school suspension or expulsion based on severity of the behavior.
- Step 4: Detention – If a student is given detention, an infraction notice will be sent home one day prior to the detention. Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, games etc.

Other consequences may include: Written apology; Stay in at recess; A call home; Counseling (individual or group) with school social worker; Letter of apology; Apologize in person; Change in seating assignment; Loss of Field Trip; Loss of dress up/down day.

Loss of Privilege may include: Lunch Recess; Field Trips; Class Parties; Dress Up/Down Day

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The following would mandate strong disciplinary actions;

- Ethnic slurs/profanity to each other or teachers
- Repeated disrespect or “bullying” of other students
- Leaving school without permission
- Continued disobedience or defiance to a teacher
- Immoral conduct during school hours
- Conduct that proves to be a disruption or hindrance to the progress of the class or school
- Use of drugs, cigarettes or alcohol in/on the premises
- Destruction of school property
- Fighting on school premises (no such thing as a "fooling around" fight)
- Improper use of computers/ social media relating to school or at home involving classmates or school personnel.

Parent’s responsibility: The beginning of any school year is a good time to speak with your child about the importance of first impressions. Let your child know how important the first couple of weeks of school are in terms of getting along in class and doing well. Students who present themselves as respectful and responsible makes a big difference for them. Teaching your child to be polite to their teachers, peers and adults and not talking back is a great place to start.

Remember, if parents have a problem with a teacher or the school, they should never discuss it in front of their child. If you undermine the teacher openly at home, it becomes almost impossible at some later date to get your child to behave appropriately. Parents won’t always agree with their child’s teacher but these discussions should be made in private. This will teach your child the importance of respecting their school and acting respectfully.

Professionals agree it is important to teach your children acceptance at a young age, to learn to get along. There are going to be good times and bad times. There are going to be people who don’t like you and people you don’t like.” The key is not to eliminate everything your child doesn’t like in life; the key is to help him manage things even when life is difficult. After all, there’s going to be injustice in school and in life.

PARENTS: Remember to take TIME...

- Talk together with the teacher. Schedule a meeting
- Information - Gather information from your child and talk openly together about the situation
- Meet with the Principal if there is no resolution with the teacher
- Everyone agrees to move forward in a positive manner

NJ ANTI-BULLYING BILL OF RIGHTS - WHAT IS HIB? “Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it is a single incident or a series of incidents:

1. That is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, national ancestry, natural origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, or a mental or physical sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic...
2. That takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored event, on a school bus, or off school grounds and if it...
3. Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that...
4. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
5. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students OR...
6. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student and interferes with the student's education by severely or persuasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

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Reporting an Act - The principal and faculty can only address problems that they have been made aware of. Therefore it is expected that all students and adults take the responsibility to report HIB acts immediately so that concerns may be given the proper attention. All reports and concerns will be acknowledged *and* immediately addressed. Confidentiality will be respected.

- Any student having witnessed or has been subjected to a HIB act must report the incident immediately, verbally or in writing to a teacher, the school nurse, or the principal/pastor.
- Reporting a HIB incident will not affect student's status or grades.
- Reports may be made anonymously but an investigation will be conducted, as formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on the anonymous report.
- All faculty, staff, or volunteers of the school community that have witnessed or have knowledge of a HIB act must report the incident verbally or in writing to the principal.

Consequences for HIB - Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who commits one or more acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Visitation Academy prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports *an* act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequences for reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the principal after consideration of the nature of the severity and circumstances of the act.

Actions that are prohibited at school and against the law:

1. Prolonged disruptive behavior that does not improve, even after working on a behavior plan.
2. Acts of aggression to students or faculty and staff.
3. Physical fights
4. Social media harassment
5. Any substance abuse (cigarettes, drugs, alcohol)
6. Possession of illegal drugs with intention to distribute or sell
7. Destruction of School Property
8. Use of profanity
9. Sexual Harassment
10. Bringing concealed weapons on school grounds

*STUDIES SHOW THAT IF A BYSTANDER
DISCOURAGES THE BULLY,
THERE IS A 50% CHANCE THE BULLYING WILL STOP.*

TEACH YOUR CHILD TO BE AN UPSTANDER

- Take time each day to talk to your child about their day-to-day life and activities.
- If a child is comfortable talking to their parent about school, friends and activities, they will feel comfortable talking to their parent if they become a target of bullying.
- Be involved in the school community.
- Lead by example with signs and expressions of kindness. Children learn from watching and observing their parents.
- Encourage your child to stand-up to those being bullied.
- Establish and enforce family rules that let children know bullying is harmful to others and is not acceptable.
- Teach your children about cyber-bullying and impact of sending mean, cruel, or threatening Internet messages.

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TIPS FOR PARENTS TO HELP PREVENT BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Take bullying seriously. Make sure your children understand that you will not tolerate bullying at home or anywhere else. Establish rules about bullying and stick to them. If you punish your child by taking away privileges, be sure it's meaningful. Teach more appropriate (and nonviolent) ways to react; like walking away.

- **Teach children to treat others with respect and kindness.** Teach your child that it is wrong to ridicule differences (i.e. race, religion, appearance, special needs, gender, or economic status) and try to instill a sense of empathy for those who are different. Consider getting involved together in a community group where your child can interact with those who are different.
- **Encourage good behavior.** Positive reinforcement can be more powerful than negative discipline. Catch your children doing good — and when they handle situations in ways that are constructive or positive, take notice and praise them for it.
- **Set a good example.** Think carefully about how you talk around your children and how you handle conflict and problems. If you behave aggressively — toward or in front of your children — chances are they will follow your example. Instead, point out the positives in others, rather than the negatives. And when conflicts arise in your own life, be open about frustrations you have and how you cope with your feelings.

More information at your fingertips:

<http://www.stopbullying.gov> — a federal government website to help parents, students, educators and more.

<http://www.ni.gov/education/students/safety/behavior/hib> - a NJ state website; routinely updated

<http://cyberbully.org/cyberbully/docs/cbctparents.pdf> - prevent, understand cyber bullying

<http://www.netlingo.com/top50/acronyms-for-parnets.php> - internet/text lingo

Section V – Dress Code

***POLO SHIRTS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS MAY BE WORN DURING THE ENTIRE 2020-21 SCHOOLYEAR**

DRESS CODE - A “Dress Code” is an important standard for Visitation Academy. It must fit appropriately, be clean and worn with pride. Uniforms may be purchased from the Flynn and O’Hara Uniform Company, 489 Old Hook Rd, Emerson, NJ 07630, [\(201\) 634-0111](tel:2016340111).

- Each student must be in FULL UNIFORM.
- No substituting of various items is allowed.
- Each item must be labeled with the child's name.
- Uniforms must be purchased from the Flynn and O’Hara Uniform Company. Slightly used uniforms are available for a nominal fee in our uniform exchange room.

PreK3 and Pre K

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Visitation Academy uniform gym suit will be required. Gym suit consists of sweatshirt and pants, shorts and t-shirt. Sneakers will be worn each day of attendance. Flynn and O'Hara can assist you in purchasing the uniform gym suit and shorts, which they supply to the other grades.

Kindergarten through Grade five:

- Girls must wear blue uniform blouse, blue plaid jumper and blue knee socks or navy blue tights. The uniform sweater or **uniform fleece** may be worn on cold days. Navy flat front slacks are also available.
- Boys must wear blue uniform pants, blue shirt and uniform tie. The uniform sweater or **uniform fleece** may be worn on cold days. **Shirts must be tucked in and uniform belt worn.** Navy or black socks must be worn with the winter uniform.
- Students may wear "Spirit Wear" the first Friday of each month. Any Visitation Academy t-shirt with gym sweat pants.

Grades six, seven and eight:

- **Girls** must wear gray uniform skirt, white blouse and blue knee socks or tights. The blue uniform vest, sweater or uniform fleece may be worn on cold days. Navy uniform slacks are available and must be worn with sweater or vest. All blouses must be tucked in. Girls' skirts cannot be shorter than 2 inches above the knee. Hair accessories that detract from the uniform are not permitted. (Burgundy sweaters etc. will be allowed for the 2018-2019 school year only)
- **Boys** must wear the grey uniform pants, white shirt tucked in so belt is visible, a uniform tie, and gray or dark crew socks. No white socks. A dark or grey belt must be worn at all times. **Only the uniform fleece pullover or Navy Vest with school logo may be worn on cold days. NO SUBSTITUTES.**
- If undershirts are worn, they must be plain white. Undergarments need to be white.
- Students may wear "Spirit Wear" the first Friday of each month. Any Visitation Academy t-shirt with gym sweat pants.

SPRING AND FALL SUMMER UNIFORM - September through the last Friday in October and the second Monday in April through June.

- **Kindergarten through 5 Boys** - Navy blue warm weather shorts and short sleeve knit shirt with logo. Uniform knit shirts may also be worn with long trousers during these months only.
- **Middle school boys** - White or grey short sleeve knit shirt with logo with grey pants or blue warm weather shorts. All shirts must be tucked in.
- **Kindergarten through 5 Girls** - Blue warm weather shorts or solid skort and short sleeve white knit shirt with logo.
- **Middle school girls** may wear the uniform skirt or blue skort with the short sleeve banded bottom knit shirt with logo.
- **The uniform sweater or uniform fleece** may be worn on colder days with summer uniform.
- **School shoes must be worn with white, blue or black crew socks.** No sports or any other emblem allowed on socks. Sneakers may not be worn with the summer uniform.

DRESS DOWN DAYS – Throughout the school year, "Dress Down Days" will be scheduled as a celebration or fund-raiser. Dress Down clothing must be worn in an appropriate manner for a Catholic School setting.

Students may wear:

- Jeans
- Tennis shoes
- Shorts/ skorts no shorter than three inches above the knee
- Skirts no shorter than three inches above the knee

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- Sweatshirts
- Jogging suits
- Nail polish
- Jewelry
- Dresses

Students may not wear:

- Flip-flop sandals
- No open back shoes
- Tank tops
- T-shirts with inappropriate writing
- Tennis shoes that convert to roller skates
- Biker shorts
- Pajama pants, yoga pants

- Leggings worn as pants – leggings must be worn with a dress or skirt
- Make-up
- Low cut blouses/tops
- Clothing that is extremely tight
- Hats
- Artificial eyelashes

Good Rule: If you think you shouldn't wear it, you shouldn't.

ALL UNIFORM REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES ARE SUBJECT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE PRINCIPAL.

EARRINGS – Only one set of small earrings may be worn to school. No body visible piercings, no dangles, no large hoops, no tattoos or any jewelry that distracts from the uniform are permitted. This rule applies to both boys and girls.

GYM UNIFORM – Uniform sweat pants, gym shirt and sweatshirt with the Visitation Academy logo and “Spirit Wear” t-shirts and sweat shirts may be worn. During warm weather, the uniform blue knit shorts and the gym shirt may be worn with sneakers and white crew socks.

HAIR STYLES – To meet the standards of Visitation Academy all students are expected to have a hairstyle that is neat and appropriately trimmed. **Boys’ hair must be above the ears, eyebrows, and shirt collar. Fad hairstyles such as buzz haircuts, shaving, coloring of hair; frostings and highlighting are not permitted. This applies to both boys and girls.** Only plain hair bands (brown, beige, navy, black or clear colors) plain clips, or Flynn and O’Hara hair bands are allowed. Large, sparkly or distracting bows and hairpieces are not permitted.

JEWELRY –Students are not permitted to wear good jewelry to school. Our insurance does not cover loss or theft. Conservative and religious jewelry is allowed in moderation. Fad, costume, and/or large pieces of jewelry are not permitted. Inappropriate jewelry will be given to the teacher and claimed after school.

MAKE UP - No face or eye make-up, false nails or eyelashes are permitted. Nail polish must be clear, light pink, beige or white pearl only. Students will be asked to remove any other nail polish. No artificial eyelashes or long nails.

SCHOOL SHOES - Visitation Academy requires Middle School students to wear blue or black Oxford shoes. Students in K through 5 may wear blue or black oxford tie shoes or “Mary Jane” shoes for girls. Rubber soles are mandatory for all students. Uniform shoes are for the safety of your children. Ballerina type shoes and slip on shoes are not permitted,

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Section VI – Health / Nutrition

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN- The School's Asbestos Management plan is on file in the School Office as required by the Federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (A.H.E.R.A.). This document is available for examinations upon request.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Immunization Requirements – an applicant whose immunization record is incomplete will not be admitted.

- a. DTP: a minimum of four doses
- b. OPV: a minimum of three doses, provided at least one dose is given on or after the fourth birthday
- c. Measles Vaccine: one dose administered on or after the first birthday

- d. Rubella Vaccine: administered on or after the first birthday. Children who were immunized before the first birthday are to be re-immunized.
- e. Mumps Vaccine: one dose administered on or after the first birthday. Children who were immunized before the first birthday are to be re-immunized.

There are some exemptions to these requirements, both medical and religious. Addressment from the City is necessary. **(DUE TO COVID THERE MIGHT BE IMMUNIZATION OR OTHER HEALTH CHANGES AS THEY OCCUR. PARENTS WILL RECEIVE NOTIFICATION)**

The school nurse will notify all parents in advance of;

- **Tests** - The Health Program for the children includes height, weight, vision and audiometric (hearing) screening tests. You will be notified of any problems.
- **Scoliosis** - We will be checking the children 10 years of age and older for scoliosis. If your child is under the care of a doctor for scoliosis, please notify us in writing. If you prefer to have the screening done by your own physician or do not wish your child to participate, please notify us.
- **Physical Exams** - Physical exam forms will be sent home to the third and sixth grade children. New students entering during the school year will also receive these forms.

LUNCH PROGRAM –(DUE TO COVID our LUNCH PROGRAM HAS BEEN CHANGED TO SIMPLY GOURMET. PLEASE REFER TO OUR WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

All students are expected to eat lunch during their lunch period either purchased from the cafeteria or brought from home. Parents will be notified if this is not followed. **No outside meals are allowed to be brought** to the student. Parents must notify the school if their child/children is on a special diet or has any food allergies.

MEDICATION – Visitation Academy staff and/or faculty does not administer prescription or non-prescription medications in school or on field trips. However, if it is absolutely essential that a student receive medication while under school supervision, the following procedures apply:

1. A parent/guardian can come to the School and personally administer the medication.
2. If this arrangement is not possible, the School Nurse or the Principal (or designee) will administer the medication under the following conditions:
 - a. The medication must be given to the School Nurse or principal by the parent/guardian.
 - b. The medication must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container, and
 - c. The parent/guardian and the student's physician must complete and sign an "Authorization to Administer Medication in School" form. This form must be filled out PRIOR to administering.

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Students will be permitted to self-administer medication only for life-threatening illnesses or conditions. The parent/guardian must schedule a conference with the School Nurse to discuss in detail the need for the medication.

NURSE – Our school nurse is provided for our school partially with a state grant and partially by the school. We have full time nurse coverage. If you receive a call from the school nurse, please call back as your child may be ill and need to go home.

1. Child needs to be fever and vomiting free for 24 hours before returning to school.
2. If your child is absent due to illness please contact the office stating reason before 9am. If a call is not received, a call to you at home or your place of employment will be made to insure the safety of your child.
3. An extended illness of 3 or more days requires a doctor's clearance note. **A child's absence cannot be communicated by email.**

POSSESSION OF DRUGS / ALCOHOL WITH INTENT TO SELL - Visitation Academy is a drug-free zone. No smoking allowed on premises.

1. Notify parents.
2. Notify police.
3. Administrative consultation with all relevant parties to determine the necessity of the removal of the child from the school community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Students have physical education class once a week. No student may be excused from gym class unless a doctor's note is presented. Students are expected to wear the gym uniform available from Flynn and O'Hara. Sensible sneakers are a must and may only be worn on physical education day.

SNACKS – Students in grades PreK-Grade3 have a recess time. In compliance with the New Jersey State School Nutrition Policy, only healthy snacks are permitted.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE – Visitation Academy is a drug-free learning environment. We fully seek to comply with the laws of the State of New Jersey – 18A:40 – regarding Substance Abuse. The use of drugs and/or alcohol, unless prescribed by a physician, is prohibited by school students during school, on school property, coming to and from school and at any school function or event.

In School Procedures – Any school personnel who suspects the use of alcohol and/or drugs by a member of the student body immediately notifies the Principal or her designee. The School Administration shall notify the parents/guardian and require an immediate medical examination of the pupil. If the child's physician is not available, the child, accompanied by his/her parent or guardian, shall go directly to the local emergency room to determine intoxication or drug influence. A written medical report should be submitted within 24 hours.

If the child is found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, he/she is to return home and school attendance cannot be resumed until the student submits to the guidelines and criteria set forth by the school. A conference will be called at the sole discretion of the school to determine re-admittance to classes and school activities. The following procedure may be invoked based upon positive test results due to intoxication or substance abuse:

- 1st Offense: Develop a plan of intervention with the family. Monthly follow-up with family and student regarding the intervention plan
- 2nd Offense: Notification of parents, with immediate suspension. Enrollment in AA or therapy
- 3rd Offense: School expulsion

If a student is detected of drug or alcohol abuse, the following process will be followed:

1. The principal and pastor will meet with the student.
2. The principal and pastor will meet with the parents and student.
3. The student will be suspended until the administration is assured that the student is in a counseling program.
4. Student will be monitored by faculty and administration.

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5. All special privileges will be taken away until the administration along with the faculty feel that the student has proven trustworthy.
6. If student cannot adjust to the above process, he or she will be invited to transfer to another school.

Section VII – Safety

ACCIDENTS - The Christian Brothers Insurance, insures accidents upon registration. Accidents are covered during the school days or in after school activity. Please notify the school office immediately.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY - Visitation Academy fully seeks to comply with Statutes of the State of New Jersey regarding all cases of child abuse and/or neglect. Child abuse cases will be referred to **Child Protective Services**. In the event that a teacher (school staff member) suspects child abuse or neglect, the staff person is to report this to the proper authority. The Administration will also report to **Child Protective Services** when necessary. All documentation and relevant information pertaining to the cases will be kept confidential.

COURT ORDERS – Visitation Academy must be informed to act in a manner which best serves the student. If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents, it is the responsibility of the custodial parents to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. The custodial parents should supply the Principal with the “custody section” of the divorce decree if it contains information, which may be useful to the school in fulfilling its obligations. The school will only permit the custodial parent/guardian to pick up student at the end of the school day unless there is **written authorization** from the custodial parent.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT – In the event of an emergency that requires dismissal prior to the appropriate time, it is important to have emergency numbers and emails updated.

Visitation Academy has a School Crisis Plan in the school office and in every classroom. This is a plan for responding to, recovering from and mitigating an emergency. The School Crisis Plan is also on file with the Paramus Police Department and the Archdiocese of Newark. Parents will be notified to pick up their children. Our designated area is Paramus High School. Teachers will remain with their class until all children are picked up. Fire drills, severe weather drills and lock down drills are conducted monthly and recorded.

PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN – **Faculty, staff and volunteers must be in compliance with the directives for “Protecting God’s Children.”** This program is a mandatory training program through the Archdiocese of Newark for anyone who works with minors. "Working with Minors" is defined as having direct, usual or frequent contact with minors. Dates available can be found on the school website or at www.rcan.org.

- **VOLUNTEERS** - All Visitation Academy volunteers, in any capacity, **MUST** participate in the workshop. Activities include fundraisers, class parties, cafeteria duty, class parent, HSA board members, Father's Club members, field trips, sports, field day, chaperoning of any kind. Please note that this workshop is **MANDATORY**.

A Volunteer Handbook is available online. All individuals who volunteer in the school must complete the Volunteer Sign-Up sheet and will be asked to complete the Diocesan mandated application, background check, code of conduct, as well as **Protecting God’s Children** safe environment training.

All volunteers are expected to dress appropriately. Clothing should be modest and neat. The main responsibility of a volunteer is to assist the administration or teachers. For this reason, pre-school siblings are not allowed to accompany parent volunteers to school for meetings, to serve lunches, to assist with class parties, or to decorate bulletin boards.

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SAFETY PATROL- The responsibilities of grade seven and eight "Safety Patrol" is to help supervise students during the A.M. entry into the school, to welcome bus students, and to assist with the orderly movement of cars. At dismissal, the "Safety Patrol" assists teachers to ensure an orderly dismissal. The entire school community, parents and students are to respect the role of the Safety Patrol.

- **Parking Lot** – Be aware of children/parents walking. Drive slowly. NO parking in handicap spaces for drop off and pick up.

SCHOOL MESSENGER - Provides Visitation Academy with the most advanced, state-of-the-art school to parent communications system available on the market today. School Messenger will be used for school closings,

emergency communications, meeting reminders and more. Home Phone and cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses need to be provided. School Messenger can call as many and any kind of phones that you have.

- Caller ID will display the main number for the school.
- When receiving a School Messenger call, answer your phone as you normally would. Say "hello" once, saying multiple "hellos" may delay the start of the message. Please note that there is a short pause in the beginning of the call.
- **IMPORTANT:** Set your answering machine to answer in **four rings or less** to ensure best message delivery. **Note:** Short, succinct answering machine greetings are best for our machine detection and delivery process. Long answering machine greetings, or greetings with pauses or gaps, may cause the School Messenger message to begin too soon.
- To listen to a message again, wait for the 'press any key' prompt at the end of the message and after pressing a key you'll hear the message again in its entirety.
- A live or machine answer will complete the notification cycle and cease any future calls for a particular message broadcast. If the School Messenger system encounters a busy, no answer or failed (bad number or line) condition, the system will typically retry that number(s) twice more in 15 minute increments.
- You may receive simultaneous calls on your home, cell and/or work numbers.

SCHOOL SAFETY - Visitation Academy attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (**seriously, in jest or online**) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The Principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. In the event that the school suspects danger to a student or the school community, the school reserves the right to call the police.

- **Search** - The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property. This includes cell phones and other electronic devices.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT - All parents/students must review the **following on Sexual Harassment** below and return the **Visitation Academy Consent Form** with signatures of parents and student, located at the back of this handbook.

ARCHDIOCESE SEXUALITY AND HARASSMENT REPORTING, POLICIES AND INVESTIGATING PROCEDURES

It is the expressed policy of the Diocese of Newark to encourage persons who believe they have been victim of sexual harassment to report all such incidents, which may have occurred during the school day or at any school-sponsored event/activity. The school shall ensure that the privacy and due process rights of all parties involved in the incident are protected insofar as possible. All interviews should take place as expediently as possible.

1. Students who believe they have been harassed, or who have witnessed harassment, or who have told of incidents of harassment should report the incidents promptly. These reports can be made to any teacher, [Type here]

school nurse, counselor or administrator.

2. Any teacher, counselor or administrator who receives a student's report of sexual harassment shall immediately make these reports known to the proper authorities i.e. the proper authority in the case of an elementary school is the pastor and principal.
3. The administrator or his/her designee's first step is to interview and document the alleged incident(s) with the alleged victim, noting any witnesses to the incident(s). Due to the nature of this complaint, this
4. Interview should take place with another member of the school staff present in a neutral office and be non-confrontational.
5. The administrator or his/her designee must then interview the alleged perpetrator, separate from the victim. This interview should take place in a neutral office and be non-confrontational with another member of the school staff present.
6. The administrator or his/her designee must then interview any witnesses to the incident(s), again in a neutral office and be non-confrontational with another member of the school staff present.
7. All data will be evaluated by the administrator. If it is determined that probable cause exists, the administrator must decide the seriousness of the offense. This decision will impact on whether administrative action is taken (within the scope of the school's disciplinary code/complaint procedure), or if the information should be turned over to law enforcement officials. The Diocesan School Office must be informed at this point, in either case. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of the alleged victim and perpetrator must also be informed of the incident at this point in the procedure and the action being taken by the administrator as soon as practical.
8. All parties involved must be informed of the action being taken by the administrator.

School Sanctions - Sexual harassment is a serious offense and violation of federal and State Law. It is inappropriate and unacceptable behavior in any Diocesan school. If there is a substantiated claim that a

student sexually harassed someone, the perpetrator is subject to disciplinary action. Depending upon the type of incident, a sexual harasser may:

- Receive a verbal reprimand
- Be required to receive counseling
- Receive detention
- Be suspended from school
- Be invited to withdraw from school and/or such other actions that the school principal feels may be in the best interest of the victim and the accused.
- Be subject to such other or further action, including action by the government authorities, as is deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS – Visitation Academy recognizes that attempting to maintain the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors to our school is implemented with a multifaceted approach. To the extent that modern technology provides tools to maintain safety and security, the use of video surveillance cameras are in place in the school and on school property. Cameras will not be permitted in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

VISITORS – School visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must come to the main office. For safety and security reasons, each person is required to sign in at the office when he/she enters the building for any reason. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to wear a designated badge that may be picked up in the office. Visitors and/or volunteers are to sign out at the time of departure. Visitors may be asked to show identification in the form of a driver's license or other government issued identification.

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Parents who volunteer to serve lunch or who volunteer in another capacity in the school **may not drop in to a classroom to see their child** during the day. This is an interruption to the teacher and to the educational process.

- **Forgotten Items during the Day**

According to grade level, with or without your help, it is important for your child to learn the responsibility of remembering their school items each day. If your child forgets a needed item or lunch and you have to

bring it to school, you can buzz the office then come up the elevator and leave it on the “forgotten cart” that will be placed next to the church entrance door. Please put the item in a bag clearly marked with your child’s name and grade. The cart will be checked periodically and items will be delivered to the student.

Students will not be allowed to call home once the school day has begun for forgotten items. This interrupts their learning and takes them out of their class. Teachers will allow one day for students to bring in forgotten projects or uniform pieces. If your child forgets their lunch you can also make arrangements for them to receive a hot lunch on a credit with DMS Food Service.

Section VIII– Student Life

AFTER CARE – (DUE TO COVID AFTERCARE WILL END AT 6PM.) The After School Program provides our children with a safe, friendly place until the parents’ work day ends. The program is supervised by qualified adults. Registration forms and costs are available on our website.

HOMEWORK HUB – (CANCELED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE) For a small fee, students may attend Homework Hub and work on Homework with certified teachers. It will run until 4:30 pm. Students may then attend After Care or get picked up at the conclusion of Homework Hub. **Please see information on the school website about these programs.**

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND CLUBS – We offer programs and clubs intended to enrich the lives of our students by providing opportunities for them to refine special skills and knowledge, discover new areas of interest and develop character. Several of the programs are free of charge and organized by Visitation Academy teachers. All information pertaining to After School Programs/Clubs will be posted on our website under “Extra Curriculum.”

BEFORE SCHOOL CARE – (CANCELED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE) This program, located on the third floor, provides working parents a safe place for their children from 7:00am-7:55am. Children are provided with cereal, milk and the opportunity to talk or study under the supervision of a teacher. Children must be registered in this program. Registration forms and costs are available on our website.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS - Student birthdays may be observed but must be kept simple. Parents must contact the teacher in advance. The celebration should occur at teacher’s discretion or during lunch time. No cakes are allowed. Cupcakes, brownies, donuts and cookies are fine. Finger food and a nutritional drink are encouraged. Please check with your child’s teacher about allergies before you bring in any treats. – ***Invitations to home parties may not be distributed to children in the classroom unless it is to the whole class or all the girls or boys.***

GUM CHEWING – Gum chewing is NOT PERMITTED in school, on school property or on class trips.

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SAFETY PATROL- The responsibilities of grade seven and eight “Safety Patrol” is to help supervise students during the A.M. entry into the school, to welcome bus students, and to assist with the orderly movement of cars. At dismissal, the “Safety Patrol” assists teachers to ensure an orderly dismissal. The entire school community, parents and students are to respect the role of the Safety Patrol.

SPORTS – All sports are dependent on parent volunteers for coaching. (CHANGES IN SPORTS DUE TO COVID WILL HANDED DOWN THROUGH THE ARCHDIOCESEAN CYO OFFICE)

- **Basketball** – The Basketball program is open to students of Visitation Academy and parishioners of Our Lady of the Visitation in grades K through 8. Information will be sent home and on our school website for registration as it becomes available.
- **Track and Field** – In spring, students of Visitation Academy in grades K-8 can compete in running, jumping and throwing events at parochial track meets. Technique, training and proper warm-ups are emphasized in practices.
- **Volleyball** - The Volleyball program is open to girls of Visitation Academy grades 2 through 8. Information will be sent home and on our school website for registration as it becomes available.

STUDENT COUNCIL – The Student Council consists of students voted in by their classmates under the leadership of a Middle School moderator. Their function is to assist fellow classmates in generating school spirit, engage in charitable services and being of service where and when needed. The Student Council representatives also serve as liaisons between the principal and the students.

Section IX - Technology

It is mandatory that **parents and students** adhere to responsible and acceptable use of the Internet and Technology (Computers, iPads, Chrome books, cell phones, etc.). All parents/students must review the Visitation Academy Acceptable Use Agreement for Technology and the Internet Inside and Outside of School below and return the Visitation Academy Consent Form with signatures of parents and student, located at the back of this handbook.

BLOGS - Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to Facebook®, Twitter®, Instagram®, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student or parent’s blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students, other parents, or the parish.

No parent should open a Facebook®, Twitter®, Instagram® account under the name of the school or a particular grade or organization. The only official Visitation Academy Facebook® or Twitter® page is the one created and monitored by Visitation Academy. The classroom teacher and the principal will be included in the

“friend” list of each such group. A parent who chooses to create such an account may subject his/her child(ren) to separation from the school.

CELL PHONE USE - At no time will students be permitted to use their cell phones during the hours that school is in session. Cell phones must be turned off from arrival at school through **departure from school property**. Cell phones will be collected by the students’ homeroom teacher at the start of the day and be kept in the classroom closet. They will be returned at the end of the day. If a student does not comply, the phone will be brought to the office and parents/guardians will be called and the phone will be returned to the parent/guardian. In a second infraction, the cell phone will not be returned for one week. The administration reserves the right to search the contents of a confiscated cell phone. Emergency calls must be made from the nurse or the school office.

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PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

- NO EAR/AIR PODS, APPLE/ELECTRONIC WATCHES
- No electronic devices are permitted unless it is requested and approved
- Visitation Academy provides iPads and Chrome books during school for school use.
- Students may not use Messenger or other apps to message an outside person while using school devices.
- No technology is permitted during recess time.
- Children are encouraged to bring board games, checkers, chess etc. for inclement weather requiring indoor recess.

COMPUTERS, IPADS AND CHROMEBOOKS - All technology at Visitation Academy is monitored by a firewall to filter and control web content students have access to. Weekly computer classes will be provided for each student. Additionally, iPads and Chrome books are provided to students during school for academic purposes only. While using technology, students will not visit any site not authorized by the teacher - including email and social media sites or attempt to bypass the firewall. If a student does not comply, the student will lose the privilege of using the technology in class, parents/guardians will be contacted and the student will not be permitted to use the technology for one week. At the end of the week, the technology will be returned to the student for use in class, but will be in a restricted state for an additional week. Students failing to respect the Visitation Academy

Acceptable Use Policy will be refused the privilege of using computers in the Computer Room and device technology in the classroom.

MAKERSPACE - Students will visit the Makerspace to participate in STEM activities with their classroom teacher. Students must use all technology and materials appropriately while in the Makerspace. Students must work cooperatively and respectfully with students in their groups. By failing to do so students will be refused the privilege of utilizing the Makerspace.

PHOTOGRAPHS – FACEBOOK®, INSTAGRAM®, AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA POSTINGS OF STUDENT

PHOTOGRAPHS

Visitation Academy works to protect the confidentiality rights of all students. The Child Protection Act of 2012 (CPA) was designed to protect personally identifiable information of minors. Visitation Academy adheres to this law in its attempt to protect the privacy rights of all students. As a result, the parents of students enrolled at Visitation Academy are forbidden from posting photographs taken at school sponsored events that include the images of students other than their own on their personal Facebook®, Instagram®, or any social media page. The students of parents who post such photos may be separated from Visitation Academy.



TECHNOLOGY RULES OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

- May not reconfigure or tamper with the network system in any way, nor attempt to access or alter files without proper authorization.
- May not unlawfully copy software or information.
- May not use illegal software.
- Must cite properly all information that is required from electronic sources and used in their assignments.
- Are held responsible for all activity conducted on school-issued computer/I-Pad, Chrome book under the student password - including harassment.
- May not access personal e-mail accounts or use school equipment for personal electronic communication.
- Are expected to abide by generally accepted rules of Internet network etiquette, as well as school decorum. These include common courtesy, politeness, Catholic morals and the avoidance of inappropriate language.

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- May not run non-institutional computer games on any school-owned computer/I-Pad, Chrome book server or network system.
- May not visit any site not authorized by the teacher - including all social media sites.
- May never reveal their name, where they live, their phone number or any other personal information to anyone on the Internet.
- May not instant message, group chat or text message inappropriately outside of school and never in school.
- May not post private or personal information about or photographs of another student, teacher or staff member on the Internet, including without limitation, all social media networking sites or via cell phone.
- May not change the configuration of any of the school's computers/I-Pads/Chrome books i.e. desktops, screensavers, etc.
- May not attempt to log in through another person's e-mail account or to access another person's files.
- May not post to chain letters or engage in "spamming." (Spamming means sending annoying or unnecessary messages to large numbers of people).
- May not participate in any communication that threatens, intimidates, or harasses any other student, teacher, or staff member; or violate any laws. May not post any picture or image of or about Visitation Academy on the Internet or via cell phone.
- May not commit copyright infringement. Copyright infringement occurs when a person inappropriately reproduces or transmits material that is protected by copyright. In these instances, permission from the copyright owner must be granted.
- May not plagiarize any material at any time for any reason.

DUE TO COVID, ADDITIONAL AT HOME USE and remote learning RULES FOR TECHNOLOGY WILL BE ADDED AND GIVEN TO PARENTS BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS)

VISITATION ACADEMY ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT FOR TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

The use of computer and technological device services at Visitation Academy is a privilege, not a right. As a technology user, I am expected to make responsible, ethical and appropriate choices when using computers, device technology and information services at all times. Visitation Academy holds specific expectations for students at each grade level regarding the use of computers and device technology before, during, and after school in either the computer lab, classroom, or off school premises. Computer services include: use of school network, computers/iPads, Chrome books and related equipment, the Internet and all associated software. As a technology user, I agree to follow the rules and code of ethics in all of my work with all technology while attending Visitation Academy:

1. I recognize that all technology users have the same right to use the equipment; therefore, I will not use the technology resources for non-academic purposes. I will not visit any site not authorized by the teacher - including all social media sites. I understand that use of personal email is strictly prohibited. When I am using a technological device, I will keep my work area clean and free of food and liquids.
2. I will not commit copyright infringement. Copyright infringement occurs when a person inappropriately reproduces or transmits material that is protected by copyright. In these instances, permission from the copyright owner must be granted. I also understand that I will not plagiarize any material at any time for any reason.
3. I recognize that software is protected by copyright laws; therefore, I will not make unauthorized copies of software and I will not give, lend, or sell copies of software to others. I understand that I will not be allowed to

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bring software applications, or games from home to be used on school equipment without proof of licensure and prior approval of appropriate school personnel.

4. I recognize that the work of all users is valuable; therefore, I will protect the privacy of others by not trying to learn their password; I will not copy, change, read, or use files from another user without prior permission from that user; I will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to system programs for technology equipment.

5. I will not use technology systems to disturb or harass other technology users or use inappropriate language in my communications. I will not participate in any communication that threatens, intimidates, or harasses any other student, teacher, or staff member; or violate any laws, while in school or outside of school. I will not post any picture or image of or about Visitation Academy on the Internet or via cell phone. As a student, I will abide by generally accepted rules of Internet network etiquette, as well as school decorum. These include common courtesy, politeness, Catholic morals and the avoidance of inappropriate language.

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

7. Each student who received Internet access will be instructed in the proper use of the network. The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research consistent with the educational objectives of the school. Students must not reconfigure or tamper with the network system in any way, nor attempt to access or alter files without proper authorization. Students using network resources must comply with the appropriate rules for that network or resource.

9. As a user of a network, I will not use bulletin boards nor chat lines for personal use. In addition, I will not reveal my personal information, home address, or personal phone number or those of students, teachers, or other staff
10. members. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. The use of school computers, technology and networking resources for commercial activities is not permitted. Their use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.

9. Parents must realize that their students may encounter material on a network that they do not consider appropriate (vulgar jokes, statements of belief that some might consider immoral, etc.) The student is responsible for not pursuing material that could be considered offensive.

10. The use of school technology resources is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of these privileges. Vandalism or intentional modification of system settings will result in cancellation of privileges and/or school disciplinary action. The school reserves the right to seek financial restitution for any damage caused by a student or other user. The system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decision is final. The administration, faculty, and staff of the school may request that the system administrator deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges. Violations of the rules and code of ethics described above will be dealt with seriously.



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