



PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Mother of God School

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Table of Contents:

Principal Letter.....	4
About.....	5-6
➤ Mother of God School.....	5
➤ History.....	5
➤ Mission Statement.....	5
➤ Philosophy.....	5-6
➤ Accreditation.....	6
General Policies and Procedures.....	6-22
➤ Absence.....	6-7
➤ Admissions Information.....	7-8
➤ Financial Obligations.....	8-10
➤ Mandatory Fundraising and Volunteer Hours.....	10-11
➤ School Hours.....	11
➤ Drop-Off and Pick-Up.....	11-13
➤ Visitors.....	13
➤ Weather.....	13-14
➤ Crisis Plan.....	14
➤ Emergency Drills.....	14
➤ Extended Care.....	14-15
➤ Field Trip.....	15
➤ Library.....	15
➤ Sacramental Program.....	15-16
➤ Service Projects.....	16
➤ Counselor.....	16
➤ Student Directory.....	16
➤ Lost and Found.....	16
➤ Lunch Program.....	16-17
➤ Telephone.....	17
➤ Birthdays.....	17
➤ Gifts.....	17
➤ Parties.....	17
➤ Office Records.....	17
➤ Parents-As-Partners Agreement.....	18
➤ Parents' Role in Education.....	18-19
➤ Home and School Association (HSA).....	19
➤ Home and School Communication.....	19
➤ Parent/Teacher Conferences.....	19
➤ Parent/Teacher Communication.....	19
➤ Student Health	20
➤ Food and Health- Nut Free School Policy.....	20
➤ Technology and Usage Policy.....	20-21
➤ Child Protection Policy.....	21-22
➤ Child Abuse Laws.....	22
➤ Transfer of Records.....	22
➤ Student Records.....	22

Academic Information.....	22-28
➤ Academic Standards.....	22-24
➤ Testing.....	24
➤ Grading Scale.....	25
➤ Honor Roll.....	25-26
➤ Grade Portal.....	26
➤ Academic Probation.....	26
➤ Awards.....	26-27
➤ Homework.....	27
➤ Promotion and Retention Policy.....	27-28
➤ Report Cards and Progress Reports.....	28
Student Regulations and Policies.....	28-32
➤ Conduct.....	28-29
➤ Cell Phones and Smartwatches.....	29
➤ Gum.....	29
➤ Cheating/Plagiarism.....	30
➤ Bullying, Cyberbullying, And Harassment.....	30-31
➤ Sexual Harassment.....	31
➤ Sexting.....	31
➤ Drugs And Alcohol.....	31
➤ School Property.....	31
➤ Discipline/Consequences.....	31-32
Uniform and Dress Code.....	32-36
➤ P.E. Uniforms.....	33
➤ Dress Uniforms.....	33-34
➤ 8th Grade Privileges.....	34-35
➤ Other Uniform Guidelines.....	35
➤ Violations.....	36
➤ Out-of-Uniform Days.....	36
➤ Guidelines for Dressing Out-of-Uniform.....	36
Student Honor Code.....	37
Right to Ammend.....	38
Signature Page.....	39

Dear Parents and Students,

***“What greater work is there than training the mind and
forming the habits of the young?”
St. John Chrysostom***

Welcome to Mother of God School! In choosing Mother of God School, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of Catholic education.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of Mother of God School. Please read this document carefully and sign the Parent Signature Sheet. Your signature states that you intend to abide by the policies of Mother of God School.

The faculty and staff of our school look forward to working with you to promote spiritual development and academic excellence in the tradition of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may continue to nurture and help us to develop according to His will.

May God bless you and your family,

Melissa Furman Sloan, M.A, M.S.
Principal

ABOUT

Mother of God School

Mother of God School is located on the campus of the Mother of God Community in Gaithersburg, MD. The school is an independent Catholic elementary and middle school, affiliated with the Archdiocese of Washington D.C.. Both full and half-day 3 and 4-year-old, year-round, Pre-Kindergarten classes are offered in addition to Kindergarten through 8th grades.

The standards and chosen curriculums stress academic achievement within a Christian community where the child feels that he or she is loved and respected by his/her peers as well as the teacher. Vatican II texts are used so that our theology is in compliance with the bishops of the world. United with each other in meaningful Liturgy and prayer, the students can further come to an understanding of the Christian life. At Mother of God, we are attempting to "teach as Jesus did."

The Archdiocesan academic standards exceed those used by the State of Maryland and inform all subject areas. The standards are marked by current content and research-based approaches to pedagogy. There is an emphasis on integrating principles with fact and learning through problem-solving rather than by precept. We strive to offer a program with a Classical approach to the Humanities with a state-of-the-art Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, S.T.E.M. focus.

History

Mother of God School is a private Catholic school affiliated with the Archdiocese of Washington. It is a ministry of the Mother of God Community, which is recognized by the Archdiocese of Washington as a private lay association of the faithful in accordance with Canon Law. Founded in 1987, the school formally affiliated with the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Washington in 1996. As an affiliated school, we follow the educational program and policies of the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese as they apply to elementary and middle schools. The school seeks to serve the educational mission of the Catholic Church by providing a quality Catholic education for students living in the upper Montgomery County area of the Archdiocese.

Mission Statement

Mother of God School seeks to prepare students who, grounded in sound academics and strong faith, go forth bearing Christ to the world in their personal and professional lives. With Mary as its model, the school accomplishes this in an atmosphere of love and respect

- Through academic excellence in the humanities, arts, and sciences, and
- In living the Good News through worship and service

Philosophy

Mother of God School embraces the teachings of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops on Catholic Education as set forth in their pastoral messages on Catholic Education. At the heart of our school's philosophy is the belief that Catholic Education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Church He founded or *To Teach as Jesus Did*. Through the education we provide, we seek to build an academic and spiritual foundation for our students which will enable them, as they mature, to participate in the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News and to translate this proclamation into action. The school, under the patronage of Mary, the Mother of God, strives to

empower the students and their families to bear Christ and His life to the world as Mary has done for us.

Accreditation

Mother of God School is accredited through Cognia. This process was most recently completed in the Spring of 2022. Previous accreditation was through the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Absence

The following are valid reasons for excused absences from school. Excused absences must be properly documented by the student's parent or guardian when the child returns to school:

- Illness: after three days of illness, the student must provide medical documentation that indicates that the student is able to return to school
- Death in the student's immediate family
- Necessity for a student to attend a judicial proceeding
- Lawful suspension or exclusion from school by the chief administrative officer
- Temporary closing of facilities or suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other conditions requiring the closing or suspension of classes
- Other absence(s) approved ***in advance*** by the principal upon the written request of a parent or guardian. Failure to provide sufficient time may result in an unexcused absence.

Any absence that does not fall into one of the above categories or is not properly documented by the student's parent/guardian is an unexcused absence.

When a student is absent from school, a parent must call or email the office by 9:00 a.m. each day of the absence.

- If the office does not receive a call, a parent will be contacted. This policy is for the protection of school students.
- If a student is absent for 3 or more days a parent may also request the child's homework assignments when they call in the morning to report the absence. Homework may be picked up in the front office between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m.

Students should be free from fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

- Students sent home during the school day with a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, vomiting, or diarrhea will ***not*** be allowed to return to school the next day.

Students who are absent due to illness have one day for each day of absence to make up the missed assignments, quizzes, or tests. For example, a student who was absent for three days would be given three additional school days to complete the missed work. If the student needs an extension, a written explanation must be given to the teacher and subsequently approved.

For short absences, students should make arrangements with classmates regarding assignments or check the FACTS parent and student portal. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school.

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times to minimize the interruption of a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility.

Arrangements for regular classroom tests missed because of an absence are to be made with the individual teacher. These tests must be taken within one week of the original test date. If a vacation is approved by the principal, teachers will provide make-up tests or assignments within one week of return. **If the vacation is not approved in advance, teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments. Assignments are not required to be given in anticipation of the vacation.**

Excessive absence of 40 days or the equivalent of 40 days including tardies, may be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year. The State of Maryland requires the school to report excess unexcused absences

Absence During the School Day

Medical appointments during the school day are discouraged. If an appointment must be scheduled during school hours a written note or email by the parent is required. 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 1/2 hours or more will be counted as absent for 1/2 a day. **If parents need to pick up children early, they should make sure students are picked up before 3:00PM or 12:00PM on half-days, in order to avoid conflict with dismissal and carpool.**

Admissions Information

As openings become available, the following priorities will be used to accept students to Mother of God School:

1. Siblings of current students
2. Children of faculty and staff members
3. Catholic students
4. Non-Catholic students

Certain financial aid decisions are determined by the Archdiocese of Washington. Mother of God School separately assesses need and awards aid based on submission of financial information through mytads.com.

Children entering Pre-K must be three years of age by September 1st.

Children entering Kindergarten must be five years of age by September 1st.

At the time of registration, all new students seeking admission to Mother of God School are evaluated on the basis of current standardized test scores, report cards, MOGS admissions screenings, and shadow visits for students entering grades 4-8. During shadow visits the applicant spends a day in their current grade with classmates, participating in each part of the day. MOGS admissions screenings will happen during the shadow visit.

Enrollment requirements include:

- *Health Records
- *Immunization Records

- *Birth Certificate (original)
- *Baptismal Certificate (Catholic applicants only)
- *Report Cards
- *Standardized Test Results
- *Record of IEP or 504 Plan, if applicable

Students applying for admission in Grades 1-8 must present a copy of the current report card and standardized test results. These will be reviewed to determine whether the program at Mother of God School will meet the educational needs of the student.

Assessment screenings will be held for new incoming students.

All new students will be given a trial period in which to prove him or herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period concerns arise, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at Mother of God School.

Non-Catholic students whose parents accept the philosophy of Mother of God School will be accepted on a space available basis.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

As required by Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article § 26-704(c). "It is the policy of the State of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with: (1) Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and (2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not: i. Discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; ii. Refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or iii. Discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint."

Title IX

Mother of God School adheres to the tenets of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Financial Obligations

School programs and tuition (see website for tuition rates)

Financial assistance applications- made through a family FACTS account. (see website for link)

Tuition Payment Options: FACTS handles all tuition payments through a family portal.

Payment Options:

- Pay in full by July 25 (PIF discount is 2% and is prorated for part-time)
- Pay in four quarterly payments through FACTS
- Enroll in the FACTS Tuition Management Service for ten or twelve months. Payments begin in July.
- Please note that you may pay in full for one child and utilize FACTS monthly payments for another.

Enrollment/Re-Enrollment

- The \$75.00 per family Application Fee for new students must be submitted with the application. The Registration and Enrollment Fees of \$325 per family for new students is due upon acceptance to the school. (\$200 of this fee is credited to the tuition)
- Returning students must reserve their spot by paying the \$300 Pre-Enrollment Fees, \$250 of it is applied to the tuition. All Application and Registration Fees are NON-REFUNDABLE. (Please see the website for a detailed breakdown)
- There will be a \$25 returned check fee for all checks made payable to Mother of God School that do not clear the bank.

FACTS Tuition Management Service Overview

- There is an annual non-refundable \$45 administrative fee for enrollment in the FACTS program per family. This fee will be added to your tuition collected by FACTS – please do not make this payment to the school.
- Pay tuition depending on the frequency option selected via personal check, money order, debit/ credit card (FACTS fee applies when using cards), or automatic account debit.
- All families must register online for FACTS tuition. Contact the Registrar's office or Finance office for specific instructions

Withdrawal Policy:

- Families must notify the school in writing if a student is withdrawn from the school.
- Registered students who withdraw before June 1 will surrender their registration fee.
- Registered students who withdraw after June 1 but 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 1/2 of the tuition.
- Registered students who withdraw after December 15th are responsible for the full tuition amount.
- Appeals may be made to the Principal in cases of job loss or moving residence more than 30 miles away.

FACTS imposes late fees of \$35.

Please all tuition questions to our business office at 301-990-2089 Ext. 15.

K-8 Student Fee

(NON-REFUNDABLE FEE for K-8).....\$450.00

This covers the use of hard-cover textbooks, consumable workbooks, classroom supplies, technology, art materials, physical education equipment (playground balls, jump ropes, etc. for use by classrooms during recess times), and Science lab fees for consumable materials; IT DOES NOT

COVER FIELD TRIPS, BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CARE, ATHLETIC PROGRAMS (basketball, track, soccer, etc.), or other after school activities.

One-to-one program Chromebook Fee..... \$150.00

Graduation Fee Grade 8 \$150.00

Incidental Billing

Incidental billing will be set up through FACTS. Families can decide to automatically pay for each incidental through the same method as tuition or they may receive a bill and initiate payment for each incidental. This is new in the 2025-26 school year. Incidental billing will be used for the following: (This list is not comprehensive)

- Field trips
- PreKindergarten Snack Fee
- Afterschool Programs
- In-house CYO fees (not Archdiocese of Washington CYO teams- they will continue to be billed through Sports Pilot).

Mandatory Fundraising and Volunteer Hours

Fundraising Obligations

All Families Are Expected To Meet A Minimum Fundraising Obligation Of \$300 Per Year. This is readily attainable through participation in the various fundraising programs throughout the year. Fundraising obligation credits may also be applied by volunteering in the school. After the mandatory 15-hour volunteer hours are met the fundraising obligation will be credited at a rate of \$50 per ten documented volunteer hours.

Options to meet the fundraising obligation (other options to be determined):

- All money raised for the "Race for Education"
- All money raised for Globalfest Raffle Ticket sales
- Cash donations
- Etc.

Mandatory Volunteer Hours Obligation: To encourage parent participation in our school community families must volunteer 15 hours during the course of the school year. Families who are unable to accomplish 15 hours in the year may fulfill the obligation by paying the remainder at a rate of \$10 per hour. Volunteer time must be online. A link to the online volunteer log will be placed at the bottom of every weekly newsletter. Volunteer hours must be logged in a timely fashion, preferably on the date of service, but no later than one week after the service has been performed. The areas of greatest demand for volunteers are in our Globalfest celebration as well as participation in a variety of school functions such as the Back to School Picnic, Harvest Party, grade level socials, and lunch and recess duty. Please note: any activity in which the volunteer would be supervising children, for example recess duty, requires Virtus Training and Livescan fingerprinting. (see child protection policy section) *** Mother of God School is currently in the process of assessing a better way to log hours for each family. Families will be notified immediately as a decision has been made and a slow rollout will occur.*

School Hours

Office hours are from 8 – 4 and may close early on half days.

The school day is 8:15 AM – 3:30 PM. Students not in their homeroom at 8:35 AM are considered tardy. Excessive tardiness will have a direct impact on a student's academic evaluation and promotion to the next grade.

At Mother of God School, we work in partnership with parents to enable each child to develop as an independent learner. Parents of children in K-8 should allow their child (ren) to enter the school building on their own each morning using carpool drop-off. Various classes invite parent involvement or visitation on particular occasions.

The school doors are opened for students at 8:15 AM. Students arriving earlier than that time should be registered with the Extended Care Program.

Prayer and afternoon announcements begin at 3:25 PM each day. Dismissal immediately follows. Please check the school calendar and weekly parent email communication for early dismissal dates.

Students not picked up by the end of carpool, at approximately 3:45 PM, will be sent immediately to the Extended Care Program. There will be a \$5 charge. After 15 minutes the full \$15 aftercare fee will be charged.

Parents are to make arrangements for their child (ren) to arrive at school on time and be picked up at dismissal time unless arrangements have been made to use aftercare.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Carpool Procedures

At the beginning of the year, an emergency information form that includes data about who is allowed to pick up children from school is sent home. Please complete this form and return it to the school before the first day of school. Any change in this information during the school year must be sent to the school office. In addition, parents/guardians should notify the school office via a note, or a phone call in case of an emergency or any changes in the regular carpool arrangements.

Morning Drop-off: 8:15 – 8:35

- **ENTER** the school grounds and turn right.
- **DRIVE** down to and around the circle.
- **DROP-OFF** students at the gym building sidewalk where the Safety patrols will open the car door for your child(ren). Students must be dropped off on the sidewalk and not from the other side of the car. A faculty member must be present before children may be released from the car.
- **Drop-off ends at 8:35 AM** and the staff member on duty places the orange cones in the driveway.
- **Once the cones are up**, parents must park in non-reserved spots and walk their child into the main office and sign them in.

The use of drop-off is strongly encouraged, however, parents wishing to walk younger children to their classroom door must park in the upper lot by the white building and use the sidewalk next to Goshen House which leads behind the main school building. Parents should plan to arrive no later than 8:30 a.m. in order to ensure they have enough time to escort their children safely to their classroom door before morning carpool ends. Please note: **children may not be dropped off at this back sidewalk, as there is no staff supervision.**

During active construction students who are dropped off will walk in the front of the building. Parents who are walking PreK students to the Gym building will need to enter the glass Gym doors instead of walking around the building. This procedure will discontinue as soon as it is safe to do so.

Afternoon Pick-up

- **First Carpool**

- *Parking lot opens at 2:45*
- Please do not arrive prior to 2:45 p.m.. If you do, please park in the upper lot to wait until a staff member has moved the cones. At no time should a parent or guardian move the cones.
- **ENTER** school grounds and turn RIGHT.
- **PARK** in one of the spaces closest to the gym building.
- Back into a space.
- **Turn off the ignition.**
- **STUDENTS** are escorted from classrooms to the sidewalk where they wait until all cars are parked and ignitions are turned off.
- The teacher on duty will blow a whistle signaling students to go to cars.
- **No student should be in the parking lot before the first whistle blows.**
- A second whistle means all should be in their cars.
- All ignitions are to remain **OFF** until all students are safely in their cars and the staff member in charge of dismissal signals cars to move.

- **Second Carpool**

- CARS ARRIVING after 3:20 p.m. or 12:20 p.m. on early dismissal days, will not be permitted to take a right into the parking lot.
- They will be directed to turn LEFT and park.
- Parents will back into a parking place, turn off the ignition, and remain in the car.
- First carpool will be closed before 3:20 or 12:20 when all of the spots to the left are filled.
- While the main parking lot is being released, teachers will escort the students behind the building to wait on the balcony until it is safe to be released to the second carpool lot.

- **Third Carpool**

- Will be utilized if parents arrive after second carpool (left lot) is already closed
- Follow the teacher directing traffic for third carpool.
- Depending on the number of cars, parents will drive down in the circle (like morning drop-off) or parents will park face in and students will come to your car.
- Students will be walked back to third carpool
- The students who have not been picked up in the third carpool will be escorted to aftercare. After a brief grace period, charges will apply.

If you are late for the third carpool park and meet your child(ren) in the aftercare program in the gym.

We ask that **NO** cars park in the St. John Neumann parking lot and walk across the road. Traffic on Goshen Road makes this crossing too dangerous. Please cooperate with the school in our attempts to keep everyone safe.

Visitors

A visitor is defined as a person involved in a single activity. Visitors must be accompanied by school personnel at all times while on campus.

- A visitor may not supervise children.
- A visitor may not be alone with children.
- A visitor may not be involved in repeated activities. Each activity is meant to be singular or, at most, a combination of a couple of different activities in a year.

A visitor must be escorted, and their activities overseen by school personnel.

School visitors and volunteers, including parents, 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.

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

Weather

Mother of God School follows the emergency weather closing and delay announcements of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). However, if Mother of God School has a half day and a two-hour delay is announced for MCPS, school will be canceled. Register for Alert MCPS for text messages <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/alertmcps.aspx> While infrequent, if MCPS has a scheduled day off which differs from the MOGS schedule, then MOGS will follow weather announcements made by the Archdiocese of Washington.

If there is a delay, any before-school activities are canceled and morning extended care will open on a delayed basis (e.g., for a two-hour delay, morning care will open two hours late).

If school closes early due to inclement weather conditions, aftercare will contact parents to come as soon as possible so that our staff can have extra time to get home safely.

Please check online, listen to the radio or television announcements, and act on the announcements accordingly. If an emergency arises at the Mother of God School, we will post information on our website (www.mogschool.com) and alert families through our text notification system.

- **Alert MCPS:** <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/alertmcps.aspx>
- **Radio & Websites:** WTOP: 103.5 FM, www.wtop.com etc.
- **Website- school**
 - The Mother of God School website www.mogschool.com will house important information on their parent page. There is no longer a login to the page. All information that needs to be safeguarded with a password will be held on our new Educate parent and student portal.

Crisis Plan

Mother of God School has implemented a “crisis plan” in case of an emergency. All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep your children safe. In the event of an

emergency requiring evacuation, circumstances permitting, students will be moved to a secure designated location:

1. PRIMARY- St. John Neumann Church (across the street)
2. SECONDARY- Goshen Elementary School

Emergency Drills

State Law requires that emergency drills be held regularly. During evacuation drills, students should follow these procedures:

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds
2. Close windows and doors
3. Walk to the assigned place briskly, in a single file line, and in silence
4. Stand in a line facing the supervising adult
5. Return to building when signal is given

Tornado/ extreme weather drills are held periodically. The procedures are:

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds
2. Walk briskly to the assigned place in a single file line
3. Sit, face the wall, and put his/her hands over their head
4. Return to classroom when a signal is given

Other drills include- Active shooter, earthquake, shelter-in-place etc.

Active shooter drills will not be called to the students. They are all called emergency preparedness drills. We follow the ADW guidelines for the use of A.L.I.C.E. training. All drills will be used to make the students feel safe and done in a non-scary and developmentally appropriate way. Discussions and drills for emergency situations will look differently in a Pre-Kindergarten classroom than it will in an 8th grade classroom.

Extended Care

Mother of God School offers an Extended Care Program for all students. Extended Care hours are 6:30 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. In case of emergency, the Extended Care staff can be reached during Extended Care program hours at 301-990-2088 ex. 18.

Parents who will be using the program on a regular basis will be billed the contract monthly rate by the Business Office. Families that use the program occasionally may just drop their child off in the morning or call the office before 3:00 to ask that their child go to extended care that day. These families will be billed for the days used.

Parents are to make arrangements for their child(ren) to arrive at school on time and be picked up at dismissal time unless arrangements have been made to use aftercare. Students who are not picked up by the time aftercare closes will receive:

1. a phone call reminding you to pick up your child(ren) on time
2. a charge of \$1/ minute late after the second time
3. Repeated failure to pick up your child from Extended Care on time may result in your child not being allowed to attend the Extended Care program.

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 trip's compatibility 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 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. Verbal permission **cannot** be accepted. Permission slips are due in the office forty-eight hours after receipt of the permission slip.
9. A **telephone call** will **not** be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.
10. Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the permission slip. Students who do not attend a field trip will remain at home with their parents and will be marked absent for the day.
11. Students who are participating in the field trip must ride the bus, or official transportation, 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.
12. All money collected for the field trip is **non-refundable** and will be billed through FACTS. Parents may still choose to pay in person through the business office.
13. **Cell phones** are **not allowed** on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.
14. 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. Our risk management insurance company insures the "official" chaperones and participation by unofficial chaperones jeopardizes the protection of our students and all other "official" adults on the trip.
15. Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring preschool or school-age siblings on the field trip.
16. All chaperones must be 25 years of age or older and have completed the MOG School Child Protection Program (including fingerprinting and Virtus training) if they are alone with children.

Library

The school has a well-equipped library. Students are encouraged to use the library for curricular enrichment and pleasure reading. The following rules are to be observed:

1. Borrowed books are to be returned on time and in good condition.
2. Books damaged or lost must be paid for by the student before any other materials may be checked out. Students who have lost or damaged books do not receive progress reports or quarterly report cards until their account is cleared.

Sacramental Program

The sacramental life of the children of the Catholic tradition is an important component of the religion program at Mother of God School. Preparations for two sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist, form the core of instruction in 1st and 2nd grades. Confirmation preparation occurs in

Grade 8. Candidates receive these sacraments in their own parishes and parents should check with their parish to find out what the requirements are in each parish.

Parents are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments. The sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation are only conferred to students baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Service Projects

Mother of God School seeks to provide students with the opportunity to make a difference through various service and support programs. We support the St. John Neumann Food Pantry through monthly collections of needed food items. Other service opportunities are provided throughout the year.

Counselor

All counselor recommendations and social-emotional needs will be processed through the Resource Department. Mother of God School will contract with local Catholic counselors on an as needed basis. Please direct any inquiries directly to the principal at principal@mogschool.com or Mrs. Valentino in the Resource Department at Cvalentino@mogschool.com.

Student Directory

A Student Directory listing students' and parents' names, addresses, home telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses is available through the parent and student personal log-in to the FACTS portal. All access to the portal will be provided after the first day of school.

The Student Directory should be used to acquaint parents with the names of their children(s)' classmates and parents. These directories should not be **used** or **sold** for other purposes.

Lost And Found

Any items found in the school building or on the school grounds should be given to the school receptionist to be placed in the Lost and Found basket. **Unclaimed items are donated to charity 3-4 times per year.**

Students who lose a library book, textbook, or workbook must pay the replacement cost of the book plus shipping in order to receive a new copy.

Lunch Program

Mother of God School offers a Lunch program on Mondays through Thursdays through Kay's Katering. Meals are fresh, local, plentiful serving sizes, healthy, and not to mention delicious. Ordering details will be done through Kay's Katering's platform and then distributed to the parents. A link will remain in the newsletter for easy retrieval. Students will eat in the gym unless a special event is scheduled in which case students will eat in their classrooms.

On Fridays students may participate in Pizza Fridays! Order forms to participate in Pizza Fridays will be sent in the school newsletter to be filled out electronically. An order will be taken twice per year in August and March. Orders may only be placed in August and March. This program is optional.

Students may choose to bring their lunch each day. Students should not bring glass bottles, soft drinks, energy drinks, or excessive amounts of candy. **Please follow the School's Nut-Free Policy** when packing lunches and snacks.

Students are expected to use the same manners required in the classroom during lunch. Courtesy toward other students and cooperation with lunch monitors are in order at all times.

Telephone

Permission to use the telephone must be obtained from the school receptionist. Students must submit a note from their teacher. The office phone is a business phone and students are permitted to use it only in case of an emergency. Forgotten homework, athletic equipment, lunch, etc. do not constitute emergencies. Arrangements for after-school visits with friends should be made at home.

Birthdays

Students may come to school dressed out-of-uniform on their birthday or half-birthday day, for summer birthdays. **Birthday treats may be brought to school to share with classmates but must be limited to one simple treat per child.** For older students, in 4th through 8th grades, it will be up to the discretion of the homeroom teacher whether the treat is distributed in the lunch room or during class.

Please be mindful of food allergies and Mother of God School's nut-free school policy when bringing birthday treats to school. All birthday treats must have an ingredient label and be brought to the Front Office to be checked.

Gifts

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture can create hurt feelings among other students. Invitations for slumber parties or birthday parties should be sent to the homes of students unless an invitation is being given to every student in the entire grade. Valentines **will not be** distributed at school unless there is one for every child in the class. This only contributes to hurt feelings.

Parties

Students are permitted three class parties a year. Room parents may assist the classroom teacher with these parties. We request that treats be already prepared into individual servings. **Please be mindful of food allergies and our nut-free school policy when purchasing and preparing treats for classroom parties. All treats and food served for classroom parties must have ingredient labels and be brought into the Front Office for review before distribution.**

Student birthdays may only be celebrated "simply" with a single, nut-free, treat sent to school for every member of the class.

Office Records

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the School Office in writing of any change of address, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, e-mail addresses and/or

phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete, and up-to-date.

Parents As Partners Agreement

As partners in the educational process at Mother of God School, we ask parents:

- To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
 - Gets to bed early and at a consistent time 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
 - Has hot lunch or a nutritional snack and lunch every day.
- To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences
- To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student
- To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy
- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers
- To meet all financial obligations to the school
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly
- To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education
- To support the religious and educational goals of the school
- To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example if Catholic
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student concerns

Parents' Role In Education

We, at Mother of God School, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators in areas of faith and morals of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life; physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of Mother of God School exhibits a desire for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God and with each other, will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at Mother of God School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years of Preschool through 8th grade, your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make

investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn, however, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive, however, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best version of the person God is calling them to be.

Home And School Association (HSA)

Mother of God School Home and School Association, HSA, works to support and enhance the educational ministry of the school. Fund-raising, parent education, and building community are goals of this organization.

Open HSA meetings will be held three times per year, at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. HSA leadership meetings will take place more frequently as needed to prepare for events.

Home-School Communication

In order to insure that all communication from school reaches home in a timely manner, Mother of God School uses email. A weekly email newsletter is sent to each family. It is important that the school be notified if a family's email address, mailing address, and/or phone number change. Families without access to email may request a paper copy to be sent home with their child. Important messages, documents, and papers are posted on the school's website, www.mogschool.com. The monthly Google calendar is also available on the website. The calendar is updated frequently and should be checked weekly for new information.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

- There is a scheduled conference after the first report card.
- Parents/guardians are free to make an appointment at any time with a teacher or teachers by sending a letter or email or calling the office to request a conference.
- Parents/guardians also may schedule a conference with the Principal after they have met with the teacher(s).
- The principal will not discuss parent concerns regarding a teacher without first speaking to the teacher.

Parent/Teacher Communication

- Parents/guardians may use e-mail or send written notes to school as a vehicle of communicating with your child's teachers or school administration.
- In most cases, a parent should expect a response within 24-48 hours.
- Appointments can be made directly with the faculty member.
- Since the teacher needs to give full attention to address a parent's concern, *please refrain from spontaneous classroom visits or conferences.*

Student Health

The well-being of our students is of prime concern. At the beginning of each school year, or when a child joins Mother of God School, parents are asked to submit their child's medical record and a completed dental card. From this information the school keeps a register of health issues, such as allergies and asthma, which is available for all school staff to assist in the care of the students. All health information is kept in the strictest confidence.

Illness

Students should remain home if they have a contagious illness and seek medical care, as appropriate. To prevent the spread of illness, students should be free of fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Medications

While most medications will be given at home, there are circumstances in which medications should be kept on-site for administration as needed at school (e.g., epi pens, inhalers). Any medication that will be administered at school must be brought to the Health Room by the parent along with an appropriate doctor's authorization form, which can be found on the school's website. All prescription medication must be provided in a container with the pharmacist's label attached. Over-the-counter medications must be in an unopened container with the manufacturer's original label. The school does not supply or provide medications for student use. Please note: cough drops are considered to be medication and must follow the aforementioned procedures in order to be kept in the Health Room for the student's use.

Food Allergies And Nut-Free School Policy

Mother of God School recognizes that life threatening food allergies are an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with food allergies. In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening allergic reactions, Mother of God School maintains a nut-free school policy. Foods sent in for lunch, snack, or any class event should be carefully checked to make sure they are peanut and tree nut free. **When purchasing any birthday treats or treats which are intended to be shared with the class, please read the ingredient label carefully.** Common allergens are typically summarized at the end of ingredient labels (e.g., Contains Wheat, Soy, Milk and Eggs). **Please do not purchase anything to bring into school that indicates that it contains nuts or may contain nuts. Be sure to leave the ingredient label on the product** because we have other students with different food allergies and we may need to examine the label to ensure those children can safely consume the treat. If you are baking items yourself, please be sure to bring in the ingredient list(s). Parents' understanding and support in reading the label on every package and complying with the nut restrictions is greatly appreciated as we strive to provide a safe environment for all students. As with all policies, this policy will be reviewed in the year 2025-2026 to determine if it still meets the goals of the school. Determinations will be made by the end of January 2026.

Technology And Internet Usage

Students shall use all technology equipment, including, but not limited to computers, networking systems, Internet, mobile devices, communication devices, cell phones, email, social networking sites, calculators, DVD players, and cameras with care and respect, whether at school, at home, or elsewhere. Students shall not type, send, or otherwise use any inappropriate or offensive words, or display, send, or otherwise use inappropriate or offensive images, sounds, or messages from or on technology equipment. Students shall not use technology equipment in a manner which violates any local, state or federal laws. Students shall immediately report to a teacher or supervising staff member any inappropriate material or misuse of Technology Equipment of which the student becomes aware. Students shall not use Technology Equipment in any way to engage in cyber-bullying behavior. Any student use of cell phones and mobile devices during school hours, carpool, or extended care is prohibited, with the exception of medical emergencies.

When using the school's technology equipment, all students:

- shall not reconfigure any school hardware, software, or network settings
- shall print, download, or otherwise transfer only that information approved by the teacher or supervisor
- shall obtain the permission of a teacher or supervisor before loading a file or disk onto a school computer
- shall not use any school technology equipment to create, store, transfer, or use software or electronic content in a manner which violates copyright law
- shall not plagiarize works on the internet
- shall not load any software onto school computers without first obtaining the teacher's permission
- shall only use the internet for school-related projects and shall only visit the sites assigned by the teacher
- shall not surf the internet or visit any social networking websites while at school
- shall not use the internet without permission from a teacher or supervising staff member
- shall not give out, post, or otherwise distribute personal information of students or staff such as photographs, home addresses, telephone numbers, parents' work addresses, or telephone numbers, or the name and location of the school
- Videotaping or voice recording of a teacher or student while on school property is prohibited without the explicit direction of the supervising teacher or principal for an academic reason.

Child Protection Policy

See school website for:

Complete policy details and volunteer procedures.

Mother of God School treasures our students and is invested in their well-being. MOG School adopted the Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Washington, ADW, from its onset. A new MOG School Child protection policy was promulgated effective August 2025. This policy mirrors the ADW policy following the same procedures and even using the same vendors. This policy will be available to view or download on the school website under "Child Protection Policy and Volunteering" by the end of September, 2025. This policy relates to anyone who has contact with children in the school; employees, volunteers, contractors, and vendors.

The critical distinction is made for persons who have "substantial contact", or the potential to be alone with children, as defined in the ADW Policy. Those who have "substantial contact" must meet

application, FBI fingerprinting, and educational requirements. Those with substantial contact with children are not singular visitors. Please see Visitor Policy.

MOG School personnel who work or volunteer in either our Pre-K or our Extended Care Programs are subject to separate state requirements as well: COMAR Regulations. This separate protocol includes Federal and State background checks through fingerprinting. Additional forms and authorizations also apply.

Included in this policy is an age-appropriate educational component for students Kindergarten through 8th grade. This curriculum is part of the VIRTUS educational program adopted by ADW and many other organizations throughout the world.

Child Abuse Laws

Mother of God School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Maryland. This law mandates that all cases of **suspected** abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

Transfer Of Students

Notice of withdrawal of a student should be made by the parent in writing to the Principal in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare necessary information and settle accounts. **No student records will be forwarded to another school until Business Office accounts have been settled.** (See previous section on Student Records for transcript information.)

Student Records

Mother of God School adheres to the Buckley Amendment, Family Education Rights and Privacy, regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the US Mail. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school. The exception to this rule is documentation related to a medical or educational diagnosis. This includes but is not limited to IEPs, 504s, CAPs, ICEPs, neuropsychological, or educational psychological testing. These documents belong to the parents and students. They will not be transferred to another location. A copy can be picked up at any time by the parent or guardian.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a five school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the School Office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Academic Standards

Mother of God School follows or exceeds the core academic standards created by the Archdiocese of Washington. The school is free to adopt best-practices through research-based initiatives and looks to expand on ADW Standards.

Religion

Catholic doctrine, Tradition, and scripture study comprise the core of our Religion curriculum. Students are prepared for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. Holy Mass is said every Wednesday for the entire school community as well as liturgical celebrations. Our online Google calendar keeps the schedule of liturgies. Every other week the students participate in Mass at 9 a.m. at St. John Neumann Church. On the opposite weeks, the students participate in Mass in the school gym at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays. The students have the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation several times throughout the school year.

Computer Literacy

Technology is integrated into all discipline areas. All students in Kindergarten through 8th grades have a computer class each week. Students in Grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 have a 1-to-1 Chromebook program and have use of an individual Chromebook during the school day. There are several other technologies deployed including mobile Chromebook labs and mobile tablet labs for use in the classrooms.

Enrichment and Resource

Enrichment classes are offered to those students in grades 5-8 who meet the criteria for the Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins University based on their standardized testing results and teacher recommendations. Resource support is offered for those students identified with a diagnosed need or English Language Learners. Our small classes allow for individualized classroom instruction meeting the needs of a wide range of learners.

Fine Arts

Music and Art are offered to all students in Kindergarten through 8th grades. Band participation is offered through the ADW Band Program to students in grades 4 – 8 for an additional fee.

Foreign Language

Spanish classes are offered weekly for Kindergarten through 5th grades and twice each week for middle school students.

Handwriting

Students in Kindergarten and 1st grade are taught to print. Print and cursive is taught in Second Grade. Cursive is taught in 3rd and 4th grades. Handwriting will be practiced through 8th grade.

Language Arts

The Language Arts curriculum offers instruction in Reading, Phonics, English, Spelling, Vocabulary, Composition, Library Skills, and Literature. A Latin component is added in 3rd through 5th grades.

Mathematics

All the students follow the rigorous standards put forth by ADW. Students in grades 5-8 are

advanced to provide students the opportunity to complete High school Algebra 1 or Algebra Foundations in 8th grade. More advanced students in grades 5-8 may have the opportunity to take Math in the class of the next grade up. This decision is not made lightly and is based on standardized testing scores, class performance, student willingness and work ethic, and teacher recommendations.

Physical Education

PE classes are offered to students in Kindergarten through 5th grades twice per week and in preschool and middle school once per week.

Science

General sciences and laboratory experiences are offered in Kindergarten through 5th grades. Grades 6 – 8 focus on more specific topics including hands-on laboratory experiences. Science & Engineering fairs or engagement in regional competitions take place each year. Students in grades 6-8 participate at varying levels.

Social Studies/ History

Our standards have been upgraded to provide a more thorough knowledge of History than the ADW standards dictate. In addition to ADW standards, 3rd grade will have Ancient History, 4th grade Medieval History, 5th grade US History, 6th grade Ancient Civilization to Medieval, 7th grade World History, and 8th grade U.S. History.

Testing

The MAP test is given in Grades 1 through 8 two to three times per year:

- a pre-test in September (required)
- a benchmark assessment to determine progress mid-year (as needed basis based on teacher and resource feedback)
- a final assessment at the end of the year (required)

Parents will receive a copy of their child(ren)'s MAP results:

- in November at Parent/Teacher Conferences
- with the final report card

The High School Placement Test, HSPT, is given to students in Grade 8. Students in 7th grade will take a practice HSPT in the Spring.

Middle School students (Grades 6 – 8) may be given a **maximum of three quizzes or tests per day**.

Middle school students may be involved in a Math final exam to assess the cumulative knowledge taught during the academic year. The Math final exam will help students prepare for the assessment challenges and expectations of high school.

Grading Scale

Grades 4-8

A	93% - 100%
B	85% - 92%
C	77% - 84%
D	70% - 76%
F	Below 70%

Related Arts

E	Excellent
G	Good
S	Satisfactory
I	Improvement Needed
U	Unsatisfactory

Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd grades: Standards Based Grades

EE	Exceeds grade-level expectations
ME	Meets grade-level expectations
AE	Approaching grade-level expectations
NE	Not approaching grade-level expectations at this time
X	Not assessed at this time

Honor Roll

The Honor Roll applies to students in Grades 4-8.

Guidelines and Requirements:

All Grades for Special Subjects must be E or G.

All Behavior grades must be E or G.

Principal's Honors	All A's
First Honors	All A's and One B
Second Honors	All A's and no more than two B's

Report cards are designed to ensure that behavior counts. Among all that we are teaching our students honor and character are among the most important. If students are disrespectful to their teachers or classmates or if they disrupt classroom instruction, they cannot be on the Honor Roll. Our hope is, rather than being punitive, students learn and grow to be men and women of strong character.

Penmanship is not included when determining Honor Roll status.

Grade Portal

Our Student Information System, SIS, is FACTS. It is the same as FACTS that is used for admissions, enrollment, and financial aid. All parents with students in the school will have a personal login to the FACTS family portal. Report cards will be distributed for 1st-3rd quarters in grades 1-8 and 2nd-3rd quarters for Kindergarten. Other important parent-specific information, links, and classroom information will be shared via the portal.

In middle school, grades 6-8, students will have access to the portal. All teachers in grades 6-8 will post grades within two weeks of an assignment. Parents and students will be able to check academic progress and see missing work in real-time. This eliminates the need for progress reports for each student in middle school. Students with a D or F will continue to receive a progress report to assure effective communication with parents. Students in grades 4-5 will continue with universal progress reports. Portal access will be distributed after the students return to school.

Academic Probation

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation will be placed on a two-week improvement plan. At the end of the two-week period, the student's academic progress will be assessed. Students must have a C average to participate in any extracurricular activity. Once disqualified a student will have to improve their grade before being considered to resume this activity. In some cases, a student who is disqualified from participating in an extracurricular activity such as a specific sports or a Drama production, may not be allowed to resume midway through the season or production once already disqualified, if it negatively impacts others.

Awards

Christian Character Award

K- 2nd grades: One boy and one girl in each homeroom each marking period

3rd-8th grades: One student per homeroom each marking period

Student exemplifies the spirit of the mission of Mother of God School.

Criteria:

- +Spirit of reverence
- +Academic effort
- +Appropriate conduct
- +Respect for others
- +Integrity
- +Evidence of service (willingness to help)
- +Exhibits leadership
- +Goes above and beyond the norm

Virtues Award

Each month the students will be studying a different virtue. The teachers and staff will choose students who embrace and live each of the virtues. Parents will be sent home materials and information on each virtue and ways to reinforce it at home.

- September: Kindness
- October: Courage
- November: Gratitude
- December: Generosity
- January: Forgiveness
- February: Temperance and Humility
- March: Hope
- April: Fortitude and Perseverance
- May: Charity (Love)
- June: Faith
- July: Peace and Justice
- August: Prudence and Wisdom

Homework

Formal home-study is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed.

Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, connect learning with families at home, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences.

Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. Children are at school for eight hours per day. They need outside interests, free time, and family time. Homework should not be such a burden that students do not participate in the above mentioned. A good rule is to multiply each grade level by 10 minutes per night. This is not a time limit but a guide. (Ie: First grade- 10 minutes per night, Second grade- 20 minutes per night, etc.) If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted.

Students in 1st-4th grades will receive age appropriate homework. Students in grades 5-8 should expect Math and other weekend homework. Teachers will try to avoid having projects due on the first day of the week.

All homework assignments are posted on the student and parent FACTS portal by 4:30 p.m. the day they are assigned. Students are expected to write down their homework every night in their planner.

Promotion And Retention Policy

Advancement to the next grade in Mother of God School is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level.

Promotion to the next grade depends on the successful completion of all subject areas. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as a requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade

Report Cards/Progress Reports

Report Cards

- important tools for communication
- given four times during the academic school year
- sent electronically through the FACTS portal for Quarters 1-3
- final report card will be printed and picked up with the summer packet

Progress Reports

- In 4th-5th grades, progress reports will be given to all students mid-way between each nine-week grading period.
- In 6th-8th grades, progress reports will be given to all students receiving a D or F in a subject area mid-way between each nine-week grading period. All students or parents may check their grades at any point in the quarter through their FACTS parent and student portals.

Families will not be given a Report Card if tuition, fees, library fines, or Extended Care Program fees are in arrears.

STUDENT REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Conduct

In accordance with the stated philosophy of the school, which emphasizes deep respect for the human dignity and uniqueness of every individual, each student 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. Developmental maturity will always be taken into account.

Items such as, but not limited to, white-out, radios, toys, trading cards, cell phones, electronic devices, cameras, or anything that will detract from a learning situation are not allowed at school at any time unless approved by the teacher for use in a particular lesson. Key chains and toys may not be attached to student backpacks. Knives, guns, matches, laser lights, cigarettes, questionable books or pictures, pagers, and tasers are **never** allowed in school and possession of such may result in suspension or expulsion.

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) only.**

Cell Phones and Smartwatches

We recognize the increased desire of parents to delay cell phone usage and eliminate unmonitored internet and social media access. We wholeheartedly agree and join you in your efforts! We encourage you to consider holding off on cell phones, especially with internet access, and social media until high school.

At Mother of God School, we seek to help our students grow in holiness as a child of God as well as engage in intellectual pursuits. Technology helps us to interact with the world and provides many benefits. Technology can also be a distraction and dangerous.

It is strongly encouraged that students in lower grades do not bring cellphones to school. If it is absolutely necessary, phones must be handed into the front office in the morning and picked up at the end of the day.

Students in 6th through 8th grade are also encouraged to leave cell phones at home unless necessary for afterschool. Students who bring cellphones to school must have them powered off and handed into the provided organizer in their homeroom. Phones may be retrieved at the end of the day.

Cell phones must remain off at all times on the MOGS campus including:

- during the school day
- at carpool
- during after-school activities
- in extended care

Cell phones will not be permitted in backpacks during school or aftercare.

To be permitted to have a cell phone at school parents and students must complete our *Cell Phone Usage Form*. Without this agreement, cell phones are not permitted on school grounds.

Students may not wear or bring a “smartwatch” to school. A smartwatch is considered any watch that can connect via bluetooth or internet regardless of any restriction settings placed on the watch. The watch cannot have games or other apps.

Any violation of these rules will result in an afterschool detention and confiscation of the phone or watch. Parents may pick up their child’s phone or watch from the principal. If a violation happens again, the student will lose the privilege of bringing a cell phone to school. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Gum

Students should not chew gum at any time that they are at school. This includes before school, during school, and after school. Disciplinary action will occur for students who chew gum during the course of the school day or during carpool.

Cheating/Plagiarism

Cheating or plagiarism of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. A student-athlete who is involved in cheating will also be unable to participate in sports. Cheating and plagiarism are defined as the theft and use of another's ideas, answers, or writings as one's own, with or without the knowledge of the other person. This includes not properly citing sources in a written work and using Artificial Intelligence, AI, on assignments for any subject.

Bullying, Cyberbullying, And Harassment

Bullying is **unwanted, aggressive** behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived **power imbalance**. The behavior is **repeated**.

Mother of God School believes and teaches that each of us is called to love our neighbor and to treat them with respect. We are committed to providing a physically safe and emotionally secure learning environment that is free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation in any form, including cyberbullying. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation of any member of the school community is prohibited. All reports of bullying, harassment, and intimidation will be treated seriously. The principal's review and investigation of a credible allegation will be done in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. The developmental age of the child will be taken into account.

Retaliation against anyone who reports acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation is strictly prohibited. All reports of reprisal or retaliation will be treated seriously. The principal's review and investigation of a credible allegation will be done in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be **aggressive** and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Cyberbullying is verbally threatening or harassing behavior conducted through such electronic technology as cell phones, email, social media, or text messaging.

Harassment and intimidation mean any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, including electronic communication that:

1. Physically harms an individual, damages an individual's property, substantially interferes with an individual's education or learning environment, or places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual's person or property

2. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, on a school transportation vehicle or bus, or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

Students and parents should be especially aware of their communication on electronic devices, as any communication that could be deemed as harassment is very serious and could involve legal ramifications.

Students involved in bullying, harassment, or intimidating behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment by one employee of another, by an employee of a student, by a student of an employee, by one student of another, by a parent of a student, or by a student of a parent is unacceptable conduct. Employees, students, or parents who engage in any type of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline, including suspension and/or dismissal. Retaliation in any form against an employee or student who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited, and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary action.

Any employee, parent, or student who knowingly makes false charges against an employee or student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse, or embarrass that individual shall be subject to the sanctions for misconduct set forth above. All incidents need to be reported to the Principal and subsequently the School Board.

Sexting

Students involved in the possession or transmission of inappropriate photos or content on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion.

Drugs And Alcohol

Students who possess drugs and/or alcohol at school or at any school function face suspension and/or expulsion.

School Property

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. Textbooks used by the student must have a proper book cover. No writing in textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented.

Discipline/Consequences

Classroom teachers maintain their own behavior management systems that are based on a student's development. Logical consequences that help form the child in communicating their needs and wants more effectively and forming their conscience is the goal.

Demerits

In addition, at a teacher or supervisor's discretion, demerits may be given to a student at any school activity to provide a consequence for a variety of behaviors including uniform violations.

In 4th and 5th grades, demerits will be given to and maintained by the student's homeroom teacher. Three demerits will result in a lunchtime detention.

In 6th-8th grades, demerits will be signed by both the principal and the parent. A copy will each be given to the homeroom teacher, the parent, and the principal. Three demerits in one academic quarter will result in an after-school detention. Detention will take place from 3:30-4:30 on the date specified by the principal on the detention form sent home for signature.

Detention

Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. Parents are provided with a Detention Form with written notification of the detention. Detention may result from 3 demerits in one academic quarter or an individual situation may be severe enough to merit an automatic detention.

In 4th and 5th grades, detentions are served during lunchtime. At the principal's discretion, an after-school detention may be warranted.

In 6th-8th grades, detentions will take place after school. Detention will take place from 3:30-4:30 on the date specified by the principal on the detention form sent home for signature.

Detention should take precedence over practices, lessons, tutoring, ball games, etc.

Suspension

Students who are given an in-school suspension will be required to report to school each day and complete the work given to them. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will not be allowed on campus during the time of their suspension. Students must complete all class work and tests from the days of suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion is a serious matter. Students who pose a threat to themselves or to others may be expelled from Mother of God School. Students may also be expelled for repeated offenses and apparent inability to respond to the teacher's discipline. Students who have been expelled will not be allowed to return to the school without prior permission from the Principal.

Students whose parents have violated the Parents as Partners agreement in this handbook may also be excluded from Mother of God School.

UNIFORMS AND DRESS CODE

At Mother of God School, uniforms are an intentional decision. Uniforms nurture a sense of unity and belonging. It distinguishes us from other schools. Students do not give up self-expression at the door, instead, uniforms foster true freedom by learning valuable lessons in self-expression, professionalism, and respect for others. By wearing the uniform correctly and with pride, our students demonstrate their commitment to the traditions and values that define our school. We believe that when students are dressed in a uniform, they can better focus their energies on

academic pursuits and personal growth as a child of God. Parents, please join us in this pursuit by ensuring that your children are dressed in a clean and proper uniform each day. If there is ever a legitimate need to be out of uniform, a note from the parent/guardian must be written or emailed to the homeroom teacher. Not every rule or exception is mentioned. These lists are the **only** things acceptable to be worn and the principal has full discretion to decide when something does not meet the uniform requirements.

With the help of parent volunteers, MOGS operates a used uniform closet. Uniforms may be taken from the closet free of charge and families may donate gently used uniforms.

New uniforms may be purchased through:

Flynn & O'Hara Uniforms, Rockville, MD: 301-838-8958 or www.flynnohara.com

Lands' End: www.landsend.com

MOG School Number: 900034679 MOG Logo Number: 9838393K

Fall/Spring Uniform: 1st and 4th Marking Periods

Winter Uniform: 2nd and 3rd Marking Periods

Physical Education Uniforms

PreK: to be worn every day

K-8: to be worn on PE days only

Boys and Girls PreK-8

- Shoes: Athletic sneakers, well-fitting
 - No flat-soled sneakers (ie: Converse)
 - Velcro or slip-on required for PreK and Kindergarten
 - No light-up, roller, or other distracting fashion shoes
- Bottoms:
 - Navy mesh shorts with logo (F&O)-required all seasons
 - Navy sweatpants with logo (F&O)- required over shorts during winter uniform
- Socks: White and must cover the ankle
- Tops:
 - Short or Long sleeve t-shirt with logo (F&O)
 - No other MOG t-shirts are allowed
 - Navy or Red Crew Sweatshirt with logo (F&O)

Dress Uniforms

Girls K-8

- Shoes: Black or Brown Leather Shoes or Tan boat shoes.
 - Kindergarten: velcro or slip-on only
 - Tie shoes must stay tied
- Socks: Plain red, white, or navy blue
 - Knee-high or over the ankle

- Tights
- Leggings- must have the same color socks with leggings
- Bottoms:
 - *Jumpers (F&O):* K-5 no more than 2” above the knee in the front and back
 - *Skirts (F&O):* 6th-8th- no more than 3” above the knee in the front and back
 - Black or white shorts- shorter than the skirt required for modesty
 - *Pants and shorts:* May be worn in place of the jumper or skirt.
 - Khaki-colored uniform style
 - No skinny or cargo pants or shorts
 - Shorts may be worn during Spring/Fall uniform only and must be no shorter than 2” above the knee
 - Black or brown belt must be worn with pants or shorts
- Tops:
 - Short or long-sleeved navy collared shirt with logo (F&O or LE)
 - Must be tucked in at all times on school grounds
 - White collared blouse may be worn under jumper (K-5)
 - *Cold weather tops:* a white or navy turtleneck may be worn under these options:
 - Navy or red logo sweatshirt (K-5)
 - Navy cardigan with logo (F&O and LE)
 - Navy fleece with logo (LE)

Boys: K-8

- Shoes: Black or Brown Leather Shoes or Tan boat shoes.
 - Kindergarten: velcro or slip-on only
 - Tie shoes must stay tied
- Socks: Plain red, white, or navy blue
 - Over the ankle
- Pants and shorts: Khaki-colored uniform style
 - Elastic in the waist **only** may be worn for K-3rd
 - No skinny or cargo pants or shorts
 - Shorts may be worn during *Spring/Fall uniform only*
 - Black or brown belt: **required in 4th-8th** and optional in K-3rd
- Tops:
 - Short or long-sleeved navy polo shirt with logo (F&O or LE)
 - Must be tucked in at all times on school grounds
 - Cold weather tops:
 - Navy or red crewneck sweatshirt with logo (K-5 only)
 - Navy sweater with logo (F&O and LE)
 - Navy fleece with logo (LE)

8th Grade Privileges

During the first quarter, 8th graders will be given the option to purchase a MOGS hoodie. The hoodies may be worn with dress uniforms and PE uniforms. After student council elections,

the 8th graders may propose ideas to Mrs. Sloan for one additional 8th grade privilege to be instituted during the 4th quarter. (Ie: socks, high school sweatshirts, etc.)

Hoodies and other privileges may not be worn on Mass days or other special days announced by the principal.

Other Uniform Guidelines:

Hair: PreK-8

It is mandatory for hair to be kept in its natural color for boys and girls.

Hairstyles that are distracting or extreme are not allowed. The principal will have full discretion in deciding whether a hairstyle is extreme or distracting.

- Boys:
 - Hair must be trimmed above eyes, behind ears, and above shirt collar. Hair may not be pulled back with any hair accessory.
 - Facial hair must be kept at a close shave
- Girls:
 - Hair is not permitted in or over the eyes
 - No ornamentation may be worn as a hair accessory. A simple bow, ribbon, headband, barrette, or basic beads may be worn

Jewelry:

Under no circumstances can a “smartwatch” be worn at school. A smartwatch is considered any watch that can connect via bluetooth or internet regardless of any restriction settings placed on the watch. The watch cannot have games or other apps. If a student is wearing a smartwatch, even if it is not connected to anything, it will be given to the principal and a parent will need to pick it up. If a student wears a smartwatch again they will forfeit the privilege of wearing any watch!

- PreK
 - Girls may wear one small stud in each ear
 - No other jewelry may be worn.
 - To request an exception please email Mrs. Barnes at jbarnes@mogschool.com
- K-8
 - Simple watches may be worn- analog preferred for practice in K-3. (see above)
 - Watches with alarms or beep features must be turned off or kept at home One simple religious necklace, one bracelet, and one ring may be worn.
 - Girls may **only** wear **one** simple stud or small hoop in each ear

Other:

Students who deviate from these rules will be asked to take off make-up or nail polish in the front office.

- Girls may paint clear or pale pink polish on their well-groomed, natural nails.
 - No gel, tips, designs, dip, or long nails
- Clear non-tinted chapstick may be put on outside of class times
- No other make-up may be worn for any reason.
- Permanent or temporary tattoos or writing on the skin is ***not*** permitted

Violations

Certain violations need to be dealt with immediately. In these cases, an item can be borrowed from the principal's office or a parent will be called to bring a replacement. The homeroom teacher will notify parents of a violation through out-of-uniform slips that require a parent's signature. Repeated violations may result in demerits and disciplinary action.

Out-of-Uniform Days

Occasionally students are permitted to dress out of uniform. Students may have an out-of-uniform day on their birthday.

If students are not dressed appropriately, parents may be required to bring a change of clothes to school and students may not be allowed to participate in future free dress days.

Guidelines for dressing out-of-uniform:

- Closed-toe shoes only
- No hair dye or face paint is permitted unless specified
- No "spaghetti" straps or shirts that expose the midriff
- Shorts may only be worn during first and fourth academic quarters
- Shorts or skirts must be no shorter than 3" above the knee
- No inappropriate messages on clothing
- If leggings or tight pants are worn then the shirt must cover their bottom
- Pajamas may ***not*** be worn unless specified by the principal
- Guidelines for hair, jewelry, and make-up remain the same

STUDENT HONOR CODE

- I promise to treat everyone in a Christian manner, showing respect and courtesy with my words and actions.
- I will accept responsibility for my own actions.
- I will respect the opinions and property of others.
- I will respect and care for all school materials and property.
- I will follow the uniform dress code.
- I will exercise self-control.
- I will be quiet and safe when traveling in the hallways and on the stairs.
- I will promote the learning of myself and others by following the teachers' rules.
- I will be a role model in words and actions to my classmates and schoolmates.
- I will live a life of virtue in my daily interactions during and after school.
- I will try my best in everything I do.

****RIGHT TO AMEND**

Mother of God School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via e-mail and posting in the “Weekly Communication” section of the school website.

Uniform Policy amended 2/27/15 WHM

Demerit and Detention policy amended 2/27/15 WHM

2015-2016 amendments 8/18/15 WHM

2016-2017 amendments 7/25/16 WHM

2017-2018 amendments 6/30/17 WHM

2018-2019 amendments 8/15/18 WHM

Uniform Policy amended 6/15/19 MD

2019-2020 amendments 8/1/19 MD & WHM

2020-2021 amendments 7/3/20 MD & WHM

2021-2022 amendments 6/25/21 WHM

2022-2023 amendments 7/26/22 MFS

Uniform Policy amended 7/26/22 MFS

2023-2024 amendments 8/1/23 MFS

2024-2025 amendments to visitor, child protection and student honor code MFS

2025-2026 updates to new FACTS portal, Lunch program, Cheating/Plagerism to include AI. MFS

Parent/Student Signature Page

I/We have read the Parent /Student Handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated.

Family Name (Please print)

Parent signature

Date

Parent signature

Date

Child signature

Date

Child signature

Date

Child signature

Date

Child signature

Date

Child signature

Date