

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2023 - 2024 School Year

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School

FAMILY HANDBOOK

This handbook has been compiled to develop an awareness of the expectations the school has of our students and parents. This allows us to concentrate on developing the potential of our students and equipping our saints for life! Please familiarize yourself with the content of each section of this handbook. Our Lady of Good Counsel School may change any of its policies and procedures and apply them as circumstances dictate. If you have a question about a particular policy or procedure, please contact the Principal or School Office.

*****STUDENTS AND PARENTS MUST ACCEPT AND ABIDE BY OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN ORDER FOR THE STUDENT TO ATTEND OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL.*****

MISSION STATEMENT

"Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School, under the guidance of Mary, seeks to empower students to commit to Christian service, dedicate their lives to Gospel values, and lead with academic excellence."

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission of Elementary Schools. Though not mandatory, we believe that accreditation demonstrates our commitment to excellence and provides a strong endorsement for the value of an Our Lady of Good Counsel School education.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Every Catholic school student has a right to be treated as a child of God, with the love and respect that implies, regardless of family circumstances. In a like manner, the believing community has the right to an education guided by Catholic teaching and identity, unimpeded by pressures contrary to Church teaching.

As a parent/guardian of a student in a Catholic school, I understand, affirm, and support the following:

1. The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is twofold: to strengthen the Catholic community in its faith, and to form students in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.
2. Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church. They are not simply private schools offering a positive moral code. Rather, they exist to advance the faith mission of the sponsoring Catholic parishes, Archdiocese, or Catholic religious community.
3. While Catholic education places a high value on academic excellence and extracurricular achievement, its fundamental priority is fidelity to Catholic teaching and identity.
4. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic teaching and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity and that the school is able to function as a community of faith.
5. In all questions that involve Catholic teaching, morals, and Church law, the final determination rests with the Archbishop.

As a parent/guardian desiring to enroll my child in a Catholic school, I accept this memorandum of understanding. I pledge support for the Catholic identity and mission of this school and by enrolling my child I commit myself to uphold all principles and policies that govern the Catholic School.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

Academic Failures

Attendance at a summer school or a tutoring program is mandatory if a student has two or more failures on the final report card and wishes to return to Our Lady of Good Counsel School for the next year. Notification of successful completion of a program must be given in writing to the school office prior to the first day of school.

Any eighth grade student who fails any of the basic skills (English Language Arts or Mathematics) or who has a failing composite average is required to attend summer school provided by an Archdiocesan High School if they wish to attend an Archdiocesan High School in the Fall.

Academic Probation

A student will be placed on academic probation according to the following stipulations:

- If a student has two or more failures in major subjects for the final grade, that student will be placed on academic probation until the end of the first marking period of the next school year.
- If a student on academic probation incurs even one failure in a major subject at the first marking period, that student would be liable for dismissal from the school.

Administration

The principal of the school, in cooperation with the pastor, is the chief administrator of all functions that have anything to do with the school. The principal initiates programs, directs and supports the faculty, and is an integral part of all decisions that affect the children of Our Lady of Good Counsel School.

Admissions

NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY

In compliance with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Office of Catholic Education, Our Lady of Good Counsel School, mindful of the primary mission as an effective instrument of the educational ministry of the Church and the witness to the love of Christ for all people, shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies and other school administered programs.

Our school endeavors to accommodate students with special needs, as the school's resources and capabilities reasonably permit. Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School reserves the right to decline admission or to impose reasonable conditions of attendance where circumstances indicate. Any child admitted during the actual school year will be on probation for the first full trimester of attendance.

Whenever a student has a change of address or phone number, the parent is asked to notify the child's teacher, as well as the School Office Manager. Falsified information regarding addresses of children may result in immediate transfer.

School Age

A child entering Pre-K 3 must be three (3) years of age by September 1st of the year of admission. A child entering Pre-K 4 must be four (4) years of age by September 1st of the year of admission. A child entering Kindergarten must be five (5) years of age by September 1st of the year of admission. A child entering Grade 1 must be six (6) years of age by September 1st of the year of admission.

Registration

An online application can be found on the school website. This registration is only for new students. There is a non-refundable fee due at the time of registration. Registration fees are published prior to registration along with tuition costs.

Requirements for School Entrance

Students entering Pre-K 3 to Grade 8

1. Parish membership verification
2. Birth certificate
3. Baptismal certificate
4. Immunization document of up-to-date immunizations

Transfer students entering Pre-K 3 to Grade 8

1. Parish membership verification
2. Birth certificate
3. Baptismal certificate
4. Transfer from previous school with a permanent record card
5. Immunization document of up-to-date immunizations

Re-Registration

All families will be automatically re-enrolled for the following school year during the current academic year. A letter will be sent home in late October detailing this initiative each year. All financial obligations must be current before re-enrollment can be processed.

Tuition

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School provides quality Catholic education through the efforts of our parish priests, faculty, staff, P.I.E. Organization, volunteers, parish community, and most of all, through the many sacrifices made by the parents/guardians of the children enrolled in the school.

The pastor, school administration, and business manager determine the tuition costs for the following school year. This information is communicated to all school families before publication.

In justice to all parents and the parish community, parents are expected to keep tuition payments up to date. The pastor, school administration, and business manager review tuition records on a trimester basis. Parents will not receive the interim progress report or the trimester student report card if the tuition account has an outstanding balance, unless

the parent has met with the pastor or the school administration of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Subsidy/Church Contributions

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School relies primarily upon three (3) sources of revenue: subsidy of each parish, tuition, and development by fundraising efforts. Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School remains committed to supporting and assisting any family who desires Catholic education for their children.

Legal Custody

Parents are asked to inform school personnel when legal custody of the child(ren) resides with one parent. It is important for the school to have a copy of the custody decree. This will help school personnel to make effective decisions when the need arises. Custodial parents are likewise asked to supply the school with copies of restraining orders if the need arises.

Those individuals who have legal custody of the student may attend school meetings, participate in educational decisions and review educational records regarding that student. Persons who do not have legal custody (including those with visitation rights but not legal custody) have no such educational rights and may not participate in these matters.

The school may require parents/guardians to sign an agreement regarding the administration of parental participation issues and payment of tuition. A copy of this agreement will be kept on file in the school office.

Unless a court or custody agreement specifies otherwise, each parent/guardian with legal custody is entitled to access all school records of the child. Absent a subpoena or court order, school records of the child(ren) may be disclosed only upon written consent of the parent/guardian with legal custody.

The school is required to provide only one set of school grades, notices, and other related educational materials. The school is not required to hold separate meetings for parents. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to communicate such information to each other.

A child will not be released to a parent/guardian who does not have physical custody, without the written consent of the custodial parent/guardian. To determine the custodial parent/guardian, all separated or divorced parents of children enrolled in the school must provide the school with a copy of the court order or custodial agreement adjudicating that determination of custody. This agreement is placed in a confidential file.

Attendance

Lateness, early dismissals and irregular attendance interfere greatly with a student's academic progress. The illness of a student, death in the immediate family, or "exceptional urgent reasons" constitute reasons for lawful absence.

Student absences must be reported to the classroom teacher by 8:00 AM on the day of the student's absence. In addition, on the first day the child returns to school, written notification of the reason for the absence must be presented to the homeroom teacher. ***A physician's note is required after three days absence.*** Students arriving after 11:00 AM will be marked absent for the morning session. The administration will contact a parent/guardian when a student has an excessive number of days absent. ***Students who miss 18 or more (10%) school days without a physician's note or known valid reason will be considered truant and subject to dismissal.*** The local public school will be notified of dismissal for truancy and that the child is no longer on the school enrollment.

Absence without the parent's knowledge is a serious offense. The offender is automatically suspended and will not be permitted to return to class until the principal interviews at least one of the parents.

Late Arrival

A child is marked late if they arrive later than 8:15 AM. When arriving please pull your car up to the front of the school entrance and escort your child to the front door. Late bus arrivals do not constitute a late arrival.

Early Dismissal

Please email your teacher(s) by 12:00 PM if your child needs to dismiss early. If you are not aware of the early dismissal until after that time, please call the school office 215-357-1300 Ext. 117. When arriving for pick-up, please report to the front entrance, ring the bell, announce your name. On the outside mailbox, early dismissal slips will be available at the front door. Please fill out a slip and hand it in when your child is brought out. ***Any student dismissed before 2:45 will be marked as an early dismissal. This will be recorded on your child's report card.***

Books

The students are expected to treat all textbooks with proper care and respect. Every textbook and workbook must be covered at all times. These covers are to be kept neat and clean. Neither the covers, nor the books themselves, should be defaced in any way. Damaged or lost books, including library books, must be replaced at the student's expense. School bags are required for the protection of school books.

Bullying

The faculty and staff of Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School are committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for our students. The faculty and staff recognize that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation and detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning.

Bullying is defined as a communication or act that is intentional and delivered in electronic, written, verbal, or physical form to another student or students, which occurs in or is related to a school setting or activity that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

- Substantially interfering with a student's education
- Creating an intimidating or threatening school environment
- Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes communication delivered through the Internet, including Social Media (Cyber bullying). School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in vehicles transporting school students, at any assigned bus stop, or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school. Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School prohibits all forms of bullying or cyber bullying whether or not it occurs during school hours, on school transportation or through use of personal computers in the school setting.

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action which may include school discipline, suspension, or expulsion. Investigation of complaints made by students, third parties, and/or parents shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures listed below.

1. **Reporting Procedures** - Complaints alleging violations of this Policy shall be reported to the Principal and/or her designee. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this Policy to the Principal and/or her designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents or legal guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this Policy.
2. **Investigation** - The Principal or her designee is responsible for determining whether the alleged act constitutes a violation of this Policy. The Principal or her designee shall conduct a thorough and complete investigation of the alleged incident. The Principal or her designee will maintain a record of each investigation regarding allegations of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.
3. **Response to an Incident of Bullying** - Some acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be isolated incidents requiring the school to respond appropriately to the individual(s) committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that require a response in the classroom, school building or by law enforcement officials. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students who commit an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying range from counseling interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. ***It should be noted that every effort is taken to follow a prescribed course of action in regard to consequences related to student's behavior and responsibilities. However, each situation is handled on an individual basis taking all factors into consideration. Comparisons should not be made.***
4. **Reprisal or Retaliation** - Reprisal or retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports an act or harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Principal or her designee after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act.

5. **Consequences for False Accusation** - Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying range from counseling interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

*****Please note that in most cases a progression of consequences will be considered.*****

CARES

The CARES Program (Children Are Receiving Extended Services) is a before and after school supervised program run under the guidelines of the Archdiocese. The CARES Program services families who desire both a parochial school education and a supplementary care program in a Catholic environment, for children enrolled in Pre-K through Grade eight (8). This program is limited to the students enrolled in Our Lady of Good Counsel School. Information on hours and rates may be obtained on the school website.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices

Students are permitted to have cell phones at school. However, all cell phones will be collected and stored in the student's homeroom. Any cell phone not placed in a classroom holder and found in use during the school day will be confiscated by the school. **Smart Watches** and **AirPods** are **NOT** permitted in school. If a student needs to call home, they may come to the school office and use the school phone. No student needs to have a cell phone on his/her person at any point during the school day. Any students who do not follow the guidelines above are subject to disciplinary action.

Closing Exercises

Participation in closing exercises is a privilege, not a right. The school has the right to deny any student from participating in the closing exercises of Kindergarten through Grade 8 if all financial obligations have not been met, or in the view of the school, the student's conduct, academic or disciplinary record indicate that the privilege should not be extended.

Communications

Effective communication is the single, most important factor that assures a positive relationship between the home and school. General communication from the school will be posted on the school website or sent via School Messenger. Any communication coming from home should be in a properly labeled envelope and given to the homeroom teacher. Email communication between parents and teachers is also a viable option.

Conferences

Conferences with parents to discuss the child's progress are encouraged. A formal conference is scheduled within the first marking period. Parent/teacher conferences afford opportunities for growth for both parties involved and should result in furthering the child's development. Parents wishing to confer with the principal about a child are welcome to do so after having first conferred with the child's teacher. If parents wish to arrange a conference with a teacher or the principal, they should call the school office or

make a request in writing. It would be helpful if the nature of the concern was stated prior to the conference. No meetings are permitted without an appointment or during dismissal.

Currency

All money sent to school should be placed in individual envelopes marked with the amount, child's name, grade, room number, and purpose for the enclosed money.

Curriculum

The curriculum of Our Lady of Good Counsel School follows the guidelines established by the Office of Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Textbooks are approved by the Archdiocese and reviewed and updated as needed. Religion textbooks are purchased by the school. Other texts are purchased through state funding. Under the guidance of the Office of Education, faculty and administration exert constant efforts to provide a balanced, well-organized, and continuous curriculum. Periodic evaluations and standardized testing, as well as faculty in-service, help to ensure the strength of educational programs.

Dismissal

Dismissal will begin at 2:45 PM. School District buses will pick up in the front of the building. All car riders will be picked up at the gymnasium doors. Students will be dismissed by teachers to their cars. A parent/guardian must be standing outside the car for the teacher and student to see before being dismissed. Student transportation changes must be made before 2:00 PM unless there is an emergency. ***Students are not permitted to ride bikes to school due to safety concerns.***

Dress Code

The personal appearance of a student represents that individual. The personal appearance of the entire student body represents the school to others; therefore Our Lady of Good Counsel School adheres to a strict dress code. A neat appearance demonstrates respect for others and fosters an individual's sense of self-respect and pride. Our Lady of Good Counsel School's uniform consists of:

Spring Boys and Girls Grades 1 to 8

- Regulation Polo shirt
- Gray walking shorts or jumper (Grades 1 to 4) /skort (Grades 5 to 8)
- **White or Black Sneakers** - may **ONLY** be worn with walking shorts **NOT** with jumper or skort
- Solid white or black socks

Gym Spring Boys and Girls

- Light Blue T Shirt with OLGC Logo
- Navy Blue mesh shorts with OLGC Logo
- Sneakers

Gym Winter Boys and Girls

- Light Blue shirt with OLGC Logo only

- Navy Sweatshirt with OLGC Logo only
- Navy Sweatpants with OLGC Logo only
- Dark Grey Dry Fit T-shirt with OLGC logo is optional (Grades 5 to 8)
- Sneakers

Winter Boys

- Solid Grey pants
- Regulation Polo shirt (long or short sleeve) with OLGC logo
- Regulation Navy Blue Sweater if short sleeve polo is worn
- Solid black dress oxford shoe (**NO** sneakers)
- Velcro accepted in lower grades

Winter Girls Grades 1 to 4

- Plaid Grey and Blue Jumper
- White Peter Pan Collar Blouse
- Black or Navy Mary Janes/Oxfords (**NO** sneakers)
- Navy Blue tights or knee socks

Winter Girls Grades 5 to 8

- Plaid Grey and Blue Skort (must be no more than 2" above the knee)
- Blue Long Sleeve Polo shirt with OLGC logo
- Blue Short Sleeve Polo with Long Sleeve Sweater
- Navy tights or knee socks - no athletic socks are permitted
- Black or Navy Blue Oxfords or Black Sketchers School Shoe (**NO** sneakers)

Other Uniform Requirements

- **NO** jewelry of any kind is permitted. Students may wear a watch, ring, and a religious medal or symbol. Girls may wear a pair of small, non-dangling earrings if they have pierced ears. Multiple earrings per ear are not permitted. ***Boys are not permitted to wear earrings.*** No other jewelry is necessary or appropriate and makeup and nail polish are not permitted.
- Hair must be neatly styled. Hair should not be faddishly colored or in their eyes. Boys' hair length should be above the collar. Tails, lines, designs, faddish shaves, cuts or styles are not permitted. Girls' hair ribbons, barrettes, etc. should match the colors of the school uniform. Plain headbands are allowed. ***Headbands with accessories attached to them are not allowed. Large hair bows/flowers or clip on hair accessories are not permitted.*** Extreme hairdos expressing the latest faddish styles are not permitted.
- Bulky sweaters or sweat shirt/jackets are not permitted in the classroom.
- Uniforms should be properly worn. Slacks, skirts and gym shorts must be worn at the waist. Socks are to be worn at proper height and skirts may not be rolled at the waist.

- Hats are not considered appropriate attire during the school day and therefore, they may not be worn inside the school building.
- Students are expected to be in complete school uniform at all times while in the school building and on school property. ***If for some reason a student must be out of uniform, a note from the parent explaining the reason and requesting an exception is required.***

Dress Down Days

At times during the school year, the students may participate in dress down days.

Students should adhere to the following dress code:

- No tank tops, off shoulder tops or bare midriffs.
- No short skirts or shorts (must not be shorter than 2" above the knee).
- No open toe shoes, flip flops, or soccer sandals.
- Sweatshirts, tee shirts, etc. may not have pictures or slogans contrary to the teachings or philosophy of Our Lady of Good Counsel School.
- No frayed shorts or ripped/torn jeans.
- Leggings may be worn but tops must be an appropriate length.

Students dressed inappropriately will be sent to the office upon arrival to school. Parents will be notified and must bring a change of clothes to school.

Emergency Closing

In the event of inclement weather, changes in the school day will be announced via School Messenger. The information will also be posted on the school website and Facebook page. If all Centennial Schools are closed, then Our Lady of Good Counsel School is closed.

If the public school district in which your student resides is closed and Our Lady of Good Counsel School is open, there will be no transportation for your child to or from school. If your public school district opens late and Our Lady of Good Counsel School is open, then your bus schedule will be delayed.

If an emergency school closing occurs during school hours, parents will be notified through phone via School Messenger. Please do **NOT** call the school.

Field/Class Trips

The purpose of every class trip is to broaden the intellectual, cultural, and social experiences of each child. School permission forms must be signed by a parent in order for a child to participate. Insurance information must also be provided. Proper dress and good conduct are essential and expected on all trips. Participation in a class trip is a privilege and the school reserves the right to deny participation to any student whose conduct and attitude are not in keeping with the standards of Our Lady of Good Counsel School. Students not accompanying their class on a specified trip must spend the time in

school doing enrichment assignments. As per the Tuition Policy and Procedures, all tuition balances must be paid in full in order for students to participate in field trips.

Government Services

Catapult Education Services provides services including counseling, psychological testing, speech remediation, and remediation in the areas of reading and mathematics. Act 195 provides limited funding for the purchase of textbooks, and Act 90 provides funding for various instructional materials. Act 372 allows busing of nonpublic school children by the school district in which the child resides. Children not usually bused cannot ride the buses.

Graduation

Eighth grade students who have completed the prescribed course of study and maintained a suitable discipline record are eligible for graduation if all financial obligations have been met. Procedures for graduation are determined by the administration and the eighth grade teachers.

Harassment

Our Lady of Good Counsel School follows the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Policy prohibiting harassment, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual attention, sexual advances, and requests for sexual favors or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. Any student or parent/guardian who is determined to have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of the student. A complete copy of the policy is maintained by the principal and is available upon request.

Health Services

Centennial School District provides our school with nursing services one day per week. Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School provides its own nurse on the other days of the week. Emergency care will be offered to students for an accident or illness occurring *during* school hours. Prolonged illnesses or injuries, which occur outside of school, are parents' responsibility. School nurses are prohibited by law to diagnose injuries or illnesses. Please do not send your child to the nurse for diagnosis.

In order to administer effectively our health-related programs, your assistance is vital in the following areas:

- Emergency cards, forms, questionnaires, etc. need to be completed and returned promptly.
- Changes in a telephone number, address, emergency contact, employment, etc. should be reported to the school nurse and the school office. Information on new immunizations, surgery, accidents, communicable diseases, or special medical conditions should be reported in writing to the school nurse.

- Please keep students out of school if they experience a temperature above 100 degrees, or any vomiting or diarrhea within the twenty-four hour period before school starts.

Administration of Medication

School personnel will administer prescription and non-prescription medications during the school day according to the following regulations:

- Medication must be in the original container and delivered at the beginning of the school day to the school nurse or principal.
- Parent must complete a Medication Form or send a note including the following: student's name, name of medication, dosage, time and date of administration, reason for administration, possible side effects, and any other medications the student is taking, the name of their prescribing physician, and the physician's phone number.
- Non-prescription drugs require a note from a physician including the information above.
- A parent may come to school to administer medications, but must report to the school office **before** dispensing medication to student. Parents may **NOT** dispense medication in the classroom or corridor.

Homework

Homework is given for the following reasons: to foster habits of independent work-study, to reinforce learning that has taken place in school, and to bring home and school together. Each teacher sets up his/her own policy for home assignments. Parents should provide a good study atmosphere, set a definite time for homework each day, and check the homework to ascertain that it has been completed. It is important, however, that parents recognize that homework is the student's responsibility; they should not assume that responsibility for the child. If there is a problem about assigned work, parents should contact the teacher directly.

The Office of Catholic Education suggests the following time allotments for daily homework (includes both written and study assignments):

- Grades 1 and 2 - 30 minutes
- Grades 3 and 4 - 60 minutes
- Grades 5 and 6 - 90 minutes
- Grades 7 and 8 - 120 minutes

All written assignments should be done neatly and legibly. No assignment, projected by a teacher to take a few weeks, can be done overnight or in one weekend. Rather, students should approach long-term assignments by evenly distributing the work over a period of time and not procrastinating until the due date. These time-management skills provide vital training for the future. Parents' signatures on homework are at the discretion of the individual teacher. The teacher reserves the right to detain students during recess for the purpose of completing assignments not submitted.

Homework for Absentees

Parents/guardians may view all homework assignments on individual teacher websites. Please email the teacher if you would like to obtain missed classwork or if a textbook/other materials are required to complete an assignment. ***Grades 5 to 8 please include all of the teachers, not just the homeroom teacher.*** All items will be placed in a white labeled bag and placed in the blue Drop-off/Pick-up bin located by the front entrance bench. The items may be picked up at any time after 2:30 PM. If permission is given, a sibling or a designated friend may pick up the material at the office before 3:30 PM.

Honors Math and Honors ELA Programs

Our Lady of Good Counsel School participates in the Archdiocesan Honors Math program. The Elementary Honors Mathematics Program is intended to meet the needs of those students who are capable of completing the prescribed curriculum in seven (7), instead of eight (8), years. In the beginning of this school year, the students in this program will be identified in grade three (3), and begin formal instruction in grade four (4). An Honors Mathematics teacher will instruct identified students in grades four (4) through eight (8). The Algebra I course used by the secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is the eighth (8th) grade honors curriculum.

The principle criteria for admission to this program, as stated in the Archdiocesan guidelines for the Honors Math Program, include:

1. Cognitive Skills Quotient of 125 or above
2. Standardized test scores in Mathematics Composite above the 90th percentile and Reading Comprehension, above the 80th percentile, and
3. Consistent scores of 85 or better on Archdiocesan Level Evaluations
4. Periodic evaluation will be used to determine continued participation in this program

Participation in the Honors Math Program is contingent upon the approval of the Archdiocesan Mathematics Committee.

Our Lady of Good Counsel School also participates in an Honors ELA program for students in Middle School. In general, Honors students can expect to move through common core material faster and in greater depth than their regular ELA peers.

The principle criteria for admission to this program, as stated in the Archdiocesan guidelines for the Honors English Language Arts Program, include:

1. A combined Reading/Language Arts average of 85 or above in the Reading Comprehension Test of the Standardized Testing
2. Evidence of above average performances on English Language Arts Level Mastery Tests (Diocesan Level Testing) (“Above average performance” is interpreted as a score of 85 or above.)
3. Consistent grades of 85 or above in English Language Arts on Report Card
4. Teacher Recommendation

More particularly, the Honors ELA program at Our Lady of Good Counsel School is designed for students who:

- Work well independently
- Balance short and long term assignments simultaneously
- Read quickly with good comprehension
- Enjoy discussion as a mode of learning

As a result, the course will provide:

- More sophisticated reading and writing opportunities
- A focus on metaphor, rather than literal meaning
- Methods for critical thinking and interdisciplinary study

Library

The Our Lady of Good Counsel School library enables the student to engage in all types of genres through guided instruction, read alouds, book talks, literature circles as well independent reading. Through self-selection of books the student has the ability to experience literacy at an individual level and at their own pace. The student will also develop library skills as well as skills to communicate through various group projects with their peers.

Students may borrow books from the school library during their weekly library period. These books are to be treated with proper care and respect. A replacement charge will be assessed for lost or damaged books.

Schoolyard Regulations

All grades spend a portion of their lunch time outside. This recess period is given to provide a change of pace, exercise, and release of tension. The following rules and regulations are expected to be followed by all students:

- Dressing appropriately for the weather is required.
- All students must remain in the designated area until the bell rings.
- Running, fighting, kicking, taking clothing from another student, taunting, bullying, throwing snow, dirt, stones, etc. and other similar actions will not be tolerated.
- When the bell rings, recess is over. Students must stop playing immediately and walk to their assigned lines.
- Once in their lines, the students are silent.
- Students must enter the building in silence and remain silent at all times in the hallways.

*****For the safety of all students, no lunches are permitted to be dropped off to students during recess in the schoolyard. Parents MUST go to the office to drop off lunches.*****

Cafeteria Regulations

Students are expected to behave as they do in their own home or as they would in a restaurant. Students must be respectful of themselves, others, and their environment. Students choosing to not follow the rules below will be provided with alternate lunch

arrangements, which may include lunch detention. The following rules and regulations are expected to be followed by all students:

- Enter and exit the cafeteria in silence and in line.
- Sit at assigned table and stay seated during entire lunch.
- Keep his/her section clean and tidy.
- Good manners are expected.
- Speak quietly to the people at your table.
- Eat your food; do not play with, swap, or throw it.

Lunch

The children have lunch in the school cafeteria. The students are required to bring a lunch to school or they may purchase lunch. ***Please be sure to notify the school office, school nurse and teachers if your child has any food allergies. Lunch from outside restaurants may not be brought to school for a child's lunch period.***

Morning Arrival

Regular school hours are 8:15 AM to 3:00 PM. Arrival time is 7:45 AM to 8:15 AM. Students will be supervised at all times by an authorized adult designated by the administrator. Students are not permitted in the school before 7:45 AM unless they are part of the CARES Program. If a child needs to arrive before 7:45 AM, they must be dropped off at CARES. The CARES Program is available to provide before and after school services for students in grades Pre-K 3 through 8.

Upon arrival, all students must enter the building through the main school entrance. ***Parents are NOT PERMITTED to enter the school building with students.***

Personal and School Property

Students must be responsible for their own belongings including electronic devices. All clothing, lunches, and other articles must be clearly marked with family names. The school reserves the right to search anything on school property.

Philosophy of Discipline

Personal and Social Growth is a necessary reflection of the philosophy of a Catholic School, which attempts to develop a fully committed Christian. As Christians, the students will respond to their responsibilities and obligations to develop self-control, a necessary element in personal growth and raise students' awareness of their relationship with all community members. The observance of school rules is necessary to create an appropriate atmosphere for learning. Faculty and parents must work together to assist the students in their religious, academic, social, and physical development.

The students are called to be caring, respectful, responsible and enthusiastic. When students do not meet these expectations of behavior, the school staff will utilize interventions that enable students the ability to solve problems while keeping their dignity intact. Such interactions are aimed at helping the students understand how their behavior impacts others.

The discipline code applies to students and parents/guardians in school and at school sponsored events, as well as in the school/parish community and outside the school/parish community where the behavior is contrary to Catholic teachings or could bring disrepute or embarrassment to the school. In-school problems reported by students to parents should be discussed with the classroom teacher as soon as possible.

The following guidelines have been formulated to increase student awareness of personal responsibilities as a student of Our Lady of Good Counsel School. Students are expected to:

- Respect all persons, adult and peer alike, in word, action, and attitude. This includes any adult in the school building, schoolyard, or church. All students should treat each other with consideration and respect.
- Treat all personal and school property with respect.
- Obey all classroom rules established by the teacher.
- Be prepared for class.
- Complete assigned homework.
- Complete assigned class work. Students should work diligently in order to complete class work in the allotted time.
- Comply with the school dress code.
- Observe lunchtime and schoolyard rules.
- Act with due reverence in church.
- Refrain from bringing non-educational material to school.
- Know and comply with all school regulations as stated in the school handbook.

When appropriate, age-appropriate disciplinary consequences result from unacceptable behavior. In an extra effort to support the development of our students, the following steps will be implemented:

- Conferencing- The teacher will interview the student(s) to discuss the behavior, its results and the consequences of their actions.
- Disengage from classroom environment- The student will be removed from the classroom for a brief, specific period of time.
- Service to the school- The student will complete some service to the school in reparation for their action.
- Written response- The student will describe the infraction, define the consequences, indicate who was hurt by their actions and describe subsequent change to behavior.
- Lunch detention- The student will serve supervised lunch detention for a time that reflects the nature of the infraction.

*****These interventions may be combined if the teacher or administrator deems it appropriate and will be communicated to students and parents by means of an infraction report.*****

When a behavioral intervention is used, it will be documented on an ***infraction report***. Parents must sign the report to indicate their receipt of it and return it to school.

Acquisition of one and two infractions will result in a lunch detention. The third infraction will result in an after school detention. Transportation for students is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Each student must be signed out by a parent/guardian. The administration reserves the right to determine the time and day of detentions, as well as the consequences for any major offenses.

If a student receives a fourth infraction, parents will be called to come in for a conference. Five or more infractions may result in suspension/expulsion from Our Lady of Good Counsel School. Infractions will be over the course of the year. An inability of a student to work toward improved self-discipline can result in the recommendation of an alternative school placement.**

Automatic detentions may be issued for serious infractions including but not limited to the following:

- Physical Aggression
- Obscene/Inappropriate Language
- Verbal Harassment
- Disrespect
- Defiance
- Cheating
- Stealing
- Forgery
- Vandalism
- Fighting
- Dishonesty
- Bullying

Please note that immediate detentions, in-school suspension, removal from school for the remainder of a school day, and expulsion can be a consequence for all students in any grade. In-school suspension is sometimes an option in lieu of out-of-school suspension. The determination lies at the discretion of the administration and is relative to the nature of the situation. On occasion and depending upon the situation, parents may be called to remove their child from school for the remainder of the day. Conditions for return to school will be discussed with the parent.

It should be noted that every effort is taken to follow a prescribed course of action in regard to consequences related to student's behavior and responsibilities. However, each situation is handled on an individual basis taking all factors into consideration. Comparisons should not be made.

Serious Infractions, including but not limited to the following, may result in the immediate removal of a child from school with the intent to permanently dismiss:

- Misuse of communication devices in school, at home, or off premises that target any student, teacher, or staff member
- Alcohol and/or drug possession or use

- Weapon possession
- Blatant physical or verbal contact towards a student, teacher, or staff member
- Possession of materials or a display of actions deemed immoral by the Administration

At any time, the administration has the right and authority to impose consequences in keeping with the mission and philosophy of the school in order to protect and preserve the wellbeing and safety of the school community.

It is the intent of the school to provide an educational environment free from all forms of improper threats, intimidation, hostility and offensive and inappropriate behavior. Such improper conduct may take the form of unwanted verbal or physical conduct, verbal or written derogatory or discriminatory statements, and behavior not otherwise conducive to the educational and religious mission of the school.

This policy applies both in and out of the classroom, in the school community generally, and outside the school community, where the behavior is contrary to Catholic teachings or could bring disrepute or embarrassment to Our Lady of Good Counsel School. Conduct by students and parent/guardians, or anyone acting on their behalf, incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the school is grounds for disciplinary action, including, but not limited to the immediate dismissal of the student, as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate.

In addition, in the case of threats of violence or harassment, in any form, including oral, written or electronic, by a student against any member of the school community, the student, if suspended but not dismissed, may be required to have psychological or psychiatric clearance before returning to school.

Photo Release

Our Lady of Good Counsel School reserves the right to use photos and videos of our students with or without names during real-time learning activities for any lawful purpose, including for example such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertising, social media and web content. This permission can be revoked in writing by the parent/guardian of the child. This notice must be signed by the parent/guardian and forwarded to the school office for your child's permanent file.

Promotion/Retention

Education is a cumulative process that builds on learning already achieved. To provide the strongest possible foundation for future learning, Our Lady of Good Counsel School reserves the right to recommend the retention of any student who has not met the specific requirements of his/her grade, or who has demonstrated, through both objective evaluation and teacher judgment, not to be working to his/her potential.

Promotion is at the discretion of the principal. A student is promoted when he/she adequately demonstrates mastery of the material required in the given grade.

Proper Care of School /Vandalism

The physical appearance and cleanliness of our school is a source of great pride. Every child is responsible to maintain this cleanliness at all times. This responsibility extends to school books, desks, interior of classrooms, halls, lavatories and schoolyard. Any malicious damage will necessitate compensation by the student and/or parent.

Religion

The knowledge and practice of the Catholic Faith is the primary focus of the education given to the child at Our Lady of Good Counsel School. This religious development, begun in your home, is continued at our school by following the Diocesan guidelines and participating in liturgical functions. The liturgical experiences provided for our students are a vital part of the religious education of the child.

Report Cards

The evaluation of a student's academic progress is an ongoing process. In accordance with the schedule set up by the Office of Catholic Education, this process is reported formally three times a year. Grades are not merely a summation of test scores, but they reflect the student's daily work, homework, class participation, and project work. Academic progress can be monitored on-line for grades 1 through 8 using FACTS management system. The school provides parents with a User ID and Password. Please check often for grades and other information, as well as maintaining your family profile. The link to FACTS will also appear on the school website.

School Supplies

The students are expected to have necessary supplies on hand at all times. Please consult your child's supply list for his/her specific grade level.

School Telephone

The school telephone is for official use only. Students will be permitted to use the telephone only in case of an emergency. It is the student's responsibility to check school supplies before leaving home. A student will not be permitted to call home for books, lunch, gym supplies, homework, musical instruments, school and / or extracurricular related materials.

Standardized Testing

The Terra Nova Test is administered each year to students in adherence with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia requirements. Parents are asked not to take vacations or schedule doctor appointments during the days of this testing. The results are communicated to parents and are utilized by the school for curriculum planning.

Test Grades

In order for parents to be aware of their child's academic progress with regard to weekly tests, scores will be available to view through the FACTS system. Assessments and tests

will still be sent home after being initialed by the principal and parents should review mistakes with their children.

Transfers

Please notify the school at least one week in advance of the date of transfer to another school. Parents must sign a release form to have all records forwarded to a new school. The following information is necessary:

- Name and grade of student
- Student's date of birth
- Reason for transfer
- Name and address of school child will be attending
- Last date your child will be attending Our Lady of Good Counsel School

Vacation Policy

Although the decision to take a family vacation while school is in session is left to parental discretion, these vacations are discouraged. Children who are absent because of vacations miss valuable classroom instruction which cannot be replaced. The procedures regarding vacations during school time are:

- A note stating the reason and the travel date must be sent to the student's homeroom teacher at least one week prior to the vacation.
- Advance assignments will **NOT** be given to any student prior to the vacation.
- Work, which the student has missed, will be gathered during his/her absence and will be given to the student when he/she returns to school.
- All makeup work will be due within a reasonable amount of time, to be determined by the teacher (not to exceed 10 class days).
- Students will be given ample notification by the teacher as to make-up dates for quizzes or tests missed during vacation.

Visitors

No visitor or volunteer may go directly to any area of the school without first signing in at the office. Each person will receive a visitor's badge and will be directed to the appropriate area.

If anyone sees someone in the school building without a badge, that person should be immediately reported to the office.

For the safety of the children, visitors and volunteers are not permitted to go to a classroom to visit, confer with a teacher without an appointment, or visit any child in class, at lunch, or in the schoolyard.

*****Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic School reserves the right at any time to amend or add to the policies, procedures and protocols contained in this handbook, and to make such changes applicable to current and new students when the situation dictates.*****