

Nativity of Our Lord School
FAMILY HANDBOOK

Revised December, 2016

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SCHOOL

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STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

This handbook contains certain policies and procedures of Nativity of Our Lord School. Nativity of Our Lord 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.

**STUDENTS AND PARENTS MUST ACCEPT AND ABIDE BY
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SCHOOL POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES IN ORDER FOR THE STUDENT TO ATTEND
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SCHOOL.**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Nativity of Our Lord School is to foster each student's relationship with God and His people while maintaining high academic standards and a commitment to Catholic values.

We work in partnership with our families in the total development of their children to ensure that every student reaches his/her potential.

The Commission on Elementary Schools accredited Nativity of Our Lord School in 1990. Regional Accreditation is a landmark event in the history of any institution. Nativity of Our Lord School is a full and official member in the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

IN 2011 NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SCHOOL WAS NAMED A NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

As 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 to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
2. Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions operated on programs of the Catholic Church; they are not private schools but are administered and supported by the sponsoring parish(es), the Archdiocese, or religious community.
3. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right.
4. While academic excellence and involvement in extracurricular activity (i.e., sports, clubs, etc.) are important, fidelity to the Catholic identity of the school is the fundamental priority.
5. The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity.
6. In all questions involving faith, morals, faith teaching, 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.

Administration

The responsibility for the administration of all parish organizations rests with the pastor. 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 Nativity of Our Lord.

Admissions

Our school admits students of any race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin to all of the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to its students. Nativity of Our Lord School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, its admission policy, or in any school-administered program.

Our school endeavors to accommodate students with special needs, as the school's resources and capabilities reasonably permit. Nativity of Our Lord School reserves the right to decline admission or to impose reasonable conditions of attendance where circumstances indicate.

To enter Nativity's PreK program, a child must be four by September 1st. A child who is five years old by September 1st is eligible for kindergarten. To enter first grade, a child must be six by September 1st. Enrollment days are scheduled during February or early March. Re-Enrollment for current students of Nativity of Our Lord School is in February, followed by enrollment of new families.

The following forms are required for registration:

- Baptismal certificate (unless baptized at Nativity)
- Birth certificate
- Transfer slip from any previous school the student may have attended.
- Children from Nativity, St. Cyril, St. Vincent and St. John Bosco must submit verification of parish membership as required by each individual pastor.
- Medical records – Immunization is required as a condition of attendance at any public or parochial school. The required immunizations are:
 - Hepatitis B – 3 doses
 - Diphtheria and Tetanus – 4 doses, one dose administered after the fourth birthday.
 - Poliomyelitis – 3 doses
 - Measles, Mumps, Rubella – 2 doses
 - Varicella (Chicken Pox) – 2 doses or written verification of occurrence of Chicken Pox
 - 7th grade students only: Meningococcal Conjugate (MCV) & Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) – 1 dose

Re-Enrollment

Families registered in our school are required to re-enroll annually. Re-Enrollment information for the following year is forwarded to each family through the school communication channels in February prior to the next school year. Tuition fees and non-refundable re-enrollment fees are published in February. All financial obligations must be current before re-enrollment can be processed.

Tuition

Our school provides quality Catholic education through the efforts of our parishes, priests, faculty, staff, Home and School Association, volunteers, parish community, and most of all, through the many sacrifices made by the parents/guardians of the children enrolled here.

Tuition is determined in February for the following school year. The school may impose additional fees for other items, such as registration, field trips, art/activities fees. This information is communicated to the parents/guardians through weekly communication channels or through the classroom.

In justice to all parents and the parish community, parents are expected to keep tuition payments up to date. Both parents are jointly responsible for tuition and other fees charged by the school. The Pastor and Administration review tuition records periodically and reserve the right to withhold reports cards, application forms, student recommendations, to dismiss students, and/or withhold school records if tuition payments are not paid in a timely manner. Parents/guardians experiencing financial difficulties should make arrangements with the Pastor for payment of tuition.

Admission of Non-Catholic Students

Our school serves a variety of purposes, including the academic, social and physical development of the students. However, the primary purpose of our school is religious. We exist for the purpose of evangelization and catechesis that is the proclamation of the Gospel and formation of the entire school community of Faith. Our school offers a complete Catholic religious education program and makes every effort to develop the Faith in all students so that they may live a full Christian life.

Non-Catholic students may be admitted to our school under the following conditions:

- The permission of the Pastor is obtained.
- Adequate facilities and space are available, without denying the admission of eligible Catholic students
- The parents/guardians agree in writing to permit their child (ren) to attend Religion classes and Religious functions that are offered as part of the school program.
- The parent/guardians commit themselves in writing to accept and to promote the philosophy, goals, objectives, and regulations of our school.
- The parents/guardians agree in writing to assume responsibility for all financial obligations.

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 parish 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.

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, Nativity of Our Lord 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. Nativity of Our Lord School's uniform consists of:

GIRLS:

Kindergarten to Grade 5

- Green plaid dropped-waist jumper. The skirt cannot be any shorter than directly above the knee.
- Yellow peter-pan collar blouse, short or long sleeve.
- Green knee or crew socks or green tights
- Green V-neck embroidered cardigan sweater*
- Khaki **skort** with yellow knit **banded** embroidered shirt in fall and spring (optional). The skort must be purchased only from Flynn & O'Hara and cannot be any shorter than above the knee.

Grades 6 to 8

- Green plaid pleated skirt. The skirt cannot be any shorter than directly above the knee.
- Yellow oxford cloth blouse, short or long sleeve
- Green knee or crew socks. Socks **MUST** cover ankles
- Green V-neck embroidered sweater, pullover*
- Yellow knit **banded** embroidered shirt in fall and spring (optional)
- Khaki **skort** in fall and spring (optional). The Skort must be purchased only from Flynn & O'Hara and cannot be any shorter than above the knee.

Shoes – Grades K to 8

- A tan suede Bass oxford with an orange sole, an Eastland brown oxford, or a black and white saddle shoe with a white sole (or

non-marking sole) is to be worn with the dress uniform and the fall/spring optional uniform.

- Children may also wear a saddle shoe with Velcro. **NO OTHER SHOES ARE PERMITTED.**

BOYS:

Kindergarten

- Khaki pull-on elastic waist pants **with belt**
- Yellow knit **banded** embroidered shirt, short or long sleeves
- White crew socks
- Green V-neck embroidered sweater, vest or long sleeve*
- Khaki walking shorts in fall and spring (optional)

Grades 1 to 8

- Khaki pants **with belt**
- Yellow oxford cloth button down shirt, short or long sleeve
- White crew socks (**must cover ankles**)
- School tie
- Green V-neck embroidered sweater, vest or long sleeve*
- Yellow knit **banded** embroidered shirt in fall and spring (optional)
- Khaki walking shorts in fall and spring (optional)

Shoes – Grade K to 8

- A tan suede Bass oxford with orange sole or an Eastland brown oxford is to be worn with the dress uniform and the fall/spring optional uniform.

PRE-K3 & PRE-K4 UNIFORM (Girls & Boys)

- Khaki pull-on elastic waist pants
- Yellow knit **banded** embroidered shirt (long or short sleeve)
- Green V-neck sweater vest or pullover with Nativity logo*
- Green nylon mesh gym shorts with Nativity logo (spring and fall)
- *Sneakers only*

GYM UNIFORM GIRLS & BOYS

Pre-K 3 to Grade 8 – worn on each student's scheduled gym day

- Yellow T-shirt with Nativity logo
- Green nylon mesh gym shorts with Nativity logo
- Dark green sweatshirt and sweatpants with Nativity logo (cold weather)
- Sneakers

*Sweaters are mandatory once the winter uniform goes into effect.

School uniforms should be purchased from the vendor selected by the school. School ties may be purchased at the school stationery store.

Uniforms should be properly worn; shirtsleeves should be worn at their full length. Slacks, skorts and gym shorts must be worn at the waist; shirttails must be tucked in. Neckties are to be properly tied. Socks are to be worn at proper height and skorts may not be rolled at the waist.

Students may wear a watch, a ring, and a religious medal or symbol. Girls may wear a pair of small, non-dangling, non-hoop post 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 make-up and nail polish are not permitted. Fingernails must be short and trimmed.

Hair must be neatly styled. Hair should not be faddishly colored or in their eyes. Boys' hair length should be above the collar and not cover the ears. Tails, lines, designs, faddish shaves, cuts or styles are not permitted. Girls' hair ribbons, barrettes, etc. should match the colors of the school uniform.

Hats are not considered appropriate attire during the school day; 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.

Government Services

The Bucks County Intermediate Unit 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 non-public school children by the school district in which the child resides. Children not usually bused cannot ride the buses. Students cannot change their bus without the permission of the resident school district, nor may they ride a school bus from any district other than their resident district.

Health Services

The Centennial School District provides health services to Nativity of Our Lord School. 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.

A health conference is held each year with your child. During the conference, the child is weighed and measured, and his/her vision and hearing are tested. Pennsylvania State law requires that students have a physical examination prior to entry to school, and again in grade six by their private physician or school arranged doctor. A dental examination is required prior to entry to school, and in grades three and seven, either by the family or school arranged dentist. The parent is notified in writing of any deviations found in the screening or examination process.

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, other medications student is taking, name of prescribing physician, and 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 nurse or principal *before* dispensing medication to student. Parents may *not* dispense medication in the classroom, corridor or schoolyard.

Transportation

Busing – Bus transportation is provided by Centennial, Central Bucks, Council Rock, Hatboro-Horsham, and Upper Moreland school districts. Other districts will provide busing if Nativity is within their ten-mile radius. All rules and regulations pertaining to public school students shall apply to Nativity of Our Lord students. Misbehavior or violation of regulations will not be tolerated. Repeated offenses may result in suspension of bus privileges. Children not usually bused cannot ride the buses. Students cannot change their bus without the permission of the resident school district, nor may they ride a school bus from any district other than their resident district.

Cars – All students in grades K-8 being driven to school in the morning must be dropped off in the back schoolyard. Students will proceed directly to their classroom. At dismissal time all car riders will be dismissed into the back schoolyard through the Library courtyard. Students may not be picked up in the front schoolyard or across Street Road. Pre-K students will be dropped off and picked up in a separate location as outlined by the classroom teachers. Preschool arrival time is 8:25 am to 8:35 am. Arrival after 8:35 am, students must be escorted by parents to the main office to be taken to their classroom.

Bikes – Students should know and practice bicycle safety rules before being permitted by parents to ride bikes to school. Students riding bikes to school should *walk* them in and out of the schoolyard. All bikes must be secured with locks.

A change in transportation requires a written notification by the parent to the homeroom teacher.

Schedule

For grades K- 8, the first bell rings at 8:20 AM. No child is permitted to be dropped off in the school yard, or in the school before 8:00AM, without the knowledge and permission of the school. The school cannot assume responsibility for children arriving before that time. The late bell will ring at 8:25AM. Upon arrival students will proceed directly to their classroom. There is a 10 to 15 minute break during the morning session. The usual lunch period extends from 12:25 to 1:15 PM. Grades Pre-K 3 through Grade 4 eat lunch from 12:25 to 12:50PM. Grades five through eight eat from 12:50 to 1:15 PM. Dismissal begins at 3:15 PM. Car riders who are not picked up by 3:45PM will be charged C.A.R.E.S. services. The C.A.R.E.S. Program is available for students who require special scheduling. (See C.A.R.E.S.) Since we are all concerned with the welfare and safety of the children, we ask that the parents cooperate with the school in adhering to the time regulations for arrival and dismissal.

Attendance

Lateness and irregular attendance interfere greatly with a student's academic progress. The illness of a student, death in the immediate family, quarantines, or "exceptional urgent reasons" constitute reasons for lawful absence. **All parents of absent students are required to call the school office (215-675-2820, option #1) to report their children absent.** Please give the child's name, grade, homeroom number, and reason for absence. This is an important aspect of our school procedure, and we urge your cooperation. When an absence is necessary, a written excuse signed by a parent must be presented to the homeroom teacher upon returning to school. A doctor's note is required for an absence exceeding three consecutive days. When an extended absence is expected because of illness or an accident, it is advisable to contact the principal so that assignments may be procured or arrangements may be made with the public school district to obtain home tutoring services.

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.

Perfect Attendance

Perfect Attendance constitutes a student being in school all day, every day. The only exception will be an early dismissal fifteen minutes prior to regular dismissal. There will be no other exceptions.

Late Arrival

Students arriving after the 8:25 AM bell are considered late and must report to the office for a late slip before going to their homeroom. A record is kept of all late arrivals. When a child is late due to a doctor's appointment, a doctor's note is required. Any child who has five unexcused latenesses will receive an after school detention. ALL latenesses impact on a perfect attendance record and constitute a serious infraction. Excessive lateness will not be tolerated. An excused lateness is any lateness for which a parent presents a physician or dentist note. Late bus arrivals do not constitute a late arrival.

Religion

The knowledge and practice of the Catholic Faith is the primary focus of the education given the child at Nativity of Our Lord 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. They are:

- *Children's School Masses* – First Fridays at 9:00 AM, grades 1 through 8. The Mass is prepared by a different grade each month.
- *Penance Services* – The school provides opportunities for the children to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation three times a year during September, Advent, and Lent. Provisions for more frequent reception of the Sacrament is the responsibility of the parents.
- *Stations of the Cross* – Children attend Stations of the Cross on Wednesday afternoons during Lent on a rotating schedule.
- *Para-Liturgical Services* – These services are held throughout the school year. They are seasonal in nature but may also be a response to current needs.
- *Rosary* – Children pray the rosary during the month of May at 12 o'clock in the church on a rotating schedule.

Curriculum

The curriculum of Nativity of Our Lord 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 students; other texts are purchased through state funding.

Under the guidance of the Office of Catholic 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.

Honors Math

Nativity of Our Lord School participates in the Archdiocesan Honors Math program. Students are selected for this accelerated program according to criteria established by the Archdiocese, which includes standardized test results and classroom performance. Students begin the program in grade 4. Those who consistently meet the standards of the program complete the elementary math curriculum by the end of grade 7. In grade 8 these students take a full year Algebra 1 course.

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 schoolbooks.

School Supplies

The students are expected to have necessary supplies on hand at all times. Please consult your child's stationery list for his/her specific grade level. Stationery lists are sent home with every student at the end of the school year and are also posted on the school's website. Trappers and spiral copybooks or notebooks are unacceptable across the grades. A special "Back-to-School" stationery sale is held in late August. For those unable to attend the sale, stationery supplies may be purchased during the first week of school and throughout the year at the school stationery closet.

Multi-Media Room

The Multi-Media Room will be available to students to read books or use the Kindle Fire HD'S for book reading or project-based learning.

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 involved by sending a note.

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

Grades 1&2 –30 min.	Grades 3&4 –60 min.
Grades 5&6 –90 min.	Grades 7&8 - 120 min.

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 or after school hours, with prior parental notification, for the purpose of completing assignments not submitted.

Philosophy of Discipline

Nativity of Our Lord School's goal regarding school discipline is to establish an atmosphere conducive to learning. In adherence to the principles of a Christian community, the discipline policy recognizes the rights and responsibility of all students. It nurtures self-respect and mandates respect for others. It defines and consistently administers firm, positive standards. When appropriate, disciplinary consequences result from unacceptable behavior.

Student Guidelines

The following guidelines have been formulated to increase student awareness of personal responsibilities as a student of Nativity of Our Lord. 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.

Disciplinary Infractions can be issued in written form by a teacher or administrator and will be noted in the student's Conduct Record Module on MSP. Infractions have varying degrees of severity and as such, have been assigned different point values. Once a student has accumulated 10 disciplinary points, he/she will be obligated to serve an after school detention. The Disciplinary Referral form is to be sent home with the student whenever issued by a teacher/administrator.

One copy of the form with the parent signature is to be returned to the issuing teacher/administrator. The parent's signature signifies knowledge of the infraction, not necessarily agreement. Failure to return the form the following day will be addressed by the teacher/administrator with contact to the parent/guardian. A student who has received disciplinary infractions or detention(s) should not expect to receive a "3" or above in Personal and Social Growth on the next report card.

Acquisitions of 10 discipline points will result in detention for students in grades 4 through eight. Detentions will be held on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 pm. Transportation for students is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Each student serving detention must be signed out in the office 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. Any student not picked up from detention by 4:35 pm will be sent to the C.A.R.E.S. program where standard fees will be incurred.

Within the timeframe of one trimester, two or more detentions will warrant a conference with the student, parent/guardian, teacher and administration. A behavioral plan will be developed to be implemented within a time frame mutually agreed upon.

Infraction points:

- Level 1 (1 pt) Multiple Incomplete/Missing Homework
 - Frequently unprepared for class
 - Uniform violation
 - Unexcused lateness

- Level 2 (3 pts) Excessive tardiness (5+)
 - Out of Bounds
 - Disrespect to other students/adults
 - Disruption in class
 - Inappropriate Conduct
 - Lunch/Recess Misconduct
 - Lying/Cheating
 - Technology (inappropriate conduct/use)

- Level 3 (10 pts) Plagiarism
 - Fighting/Bullying
 - Bus Conduct Violation
 - Technology (inappropriate conduct/use)

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

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

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.

The education of your child is a partnership between you as parents and Nativity of Our Lord School. If that partnership becomes irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to recommend that you withdraw your child from our school.

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

The school reserves the right to search anything brought onto school property by its students. 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.

VAPING DEVICES OF ANY KIND ARE STRICTLY FORBIDDEN AT NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SCHOOL. ANY STUDENT USING A VAPING DEVICE OR HAVING ONE IN HIS/HER POSSESSION WILL BE SUSPENDED WITH POSSIBLE EXPULSION.

Harassment

Nativity of Our Lord School follows the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Policy prohibiting harassment, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual attention, sexual advances, 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.

Violent/Threatening/Harassing and Inappropriate Conduct

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. Unacceptable conduct – either by a student or a parent/guardian- includes, but is not limited to the following:

- disrespectful behavior of any kind toward or about any staff, student, volunteer or parent;
- insubordination;
- fighting;
- bomb scares or triggering other false alarms;
- cheating or plagiarism;
- use or possession of drugs or alcohol;
- smoking;
- stealing;
- intimidation, harassment or threats of any kind; and
- possession of any weapon.

These categories do not cover every possible situation. The school will determine which behavior is inappropriate.

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 Nativity of Our Lord School. Conduct by students or 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.

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.

Report Cards

The evaluation of a student's academic progress is an on-going 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; 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 www.gradeconnectelementary.com. The school provides parents with a User ID and Password. The link to [gradeconnectelementary.com](http://www.gradeconnectelementary.com) will also appear on the school/parish website.

Honor Roll

Students in Grades 4 through 8 may earn honors each trimester. The following is the criteria:

First Honors

- 93 or above general average
- 90 or above in every subject area and
- 3 or 4 in Personal and Social Growth, Effort & Study Skills, Special Subjects

Second Honors

- 87 or above general average
- 85 or above in every subject area and
- 3 or 4 in Personal and Social Growth, Effort & Study Skills, Special Subjects

Religious and Effort Awards will be distributed for each homeroom after the final school Mass in June.

Standardized Testing

The Terra Nova Test is administered each year to students in kindergarten through seventh grade. 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 *My Students Progress* program. Assessments and tests will still be sent home, and parents should review mistakes with their children.

Conferences

Conferences with parents to discuss the child's progress are encouraged. For grades 1 to 8 a formal conference is scheduled within the first marking period. Parent/teacher interviews 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. Conferences for Pre-K3, Pre-K4 and Kindergarten students are held in January.

Promotion/Retention

Education is a cumulative process that builds on learning already achieved. To provide the strongest possible foundation for future learning, Nativity of Our Lord 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.

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 Nativity of Our Lord 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 the 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 report period of the next school year.
- If a student on academic probation incurs even one failure in a major subject at the first report card period, that child would be liable for dismissal from the school.

Summer Enrichment Programs

Summer enrichment classes will be available at Nativity for those students who may be in need of reinforcement or remediation. Classes usually offered are in reading, math, and study skills. Information regarding the summer enrichment program will be sent home in the spring.

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.

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 PreK, Kindergarten, and Eighth grade 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.

Early Dismissals

When the school has early dismissal, parents are required to provide transportation whenever bus transportation is not provided. Early dismissals begin at 11:55 AM. For the safety of all our children, we ask that all drivers follow the specific directions sent home at the beginning of each school year.

On a scheduled early dismissal day, **ALL PreK 4 students will be dismissed at 11:45 AM** following their usual routine for pickup. **Pre-K 3 students will be dismissed at 11:30 AM.**

When it is necessary for a child to be excused from school before the regular dismissal time, **a note is required from the parents to the homeroom teacher.** The note must state the date, time, and reason for early dismissal. If your situation changes during the day, please call the school office to relay the dismissal information. **Emails are not an acceptable means of communication when it involves an early dismissal.** Parents are to pick up and sign out their child in the main office. Please use the Early Dismissal request form found on the school's website under Parent Resources.

C.A.R.E.S.

The C.A.R.E.S. Program (Children Are Receiving Extended Services) is a before and after school supervised program run under the guidelines of the Archdiocese. Information on hours and rates may be found on the school website under the link for School/C.A.R.E.S. When school is not in session, C.A.R.E.S. is also closed, however, C.A.R.E.S. will be open in the afternoon on scheduled early dismissal days with prior registration.

LUNCH

In keeping with the philosophy of a Christian community that fosters self-respect and the respect of others, all students are expected to be considerate of others and to be respectful at all times.

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.
- Students may not play in the driveways near the Church and Exit A.
- Students may be permitted on the field or playground based on the discretion of the teacher on duty.
- Running, fighting, kicking, taking clothing from another student, taunting, bullying, throwing snow, dirt, stones, etc. and other similar actions will not be tolerated.
- Basketball, foursquare, and jumping rope are the only games permitted on the blacktop.
- When the hand bell is rung, 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.

Recess monitors are needed to assist the designated teacher on duty with outdoor supervision during lunch recess. Parents are requested to not talk in groups but rather circulate the school yard to ensure that the rules are being followed. The teacher on duty will take appropriate action to attain improvement in students' behaviors during outdoor recess.

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.
- Wipe tables on a rotational basis.
- Good manners are expected.
- Speak quietly, only to those people beside you or in front of you at your table.
- Eat your food; do not play with, swap, or throw it.
- **Students must ask the teacher on duty to get a drink from the fountain or for any bathroom emergency.**

We need lunch monitors to assist students in the cafeteria with a variety of small tasks, such as opening milk cartons and wiping down tables. Lunch monitors are requested to not talk in groups but rather circulate the cafeteria to ensure that the rules are being followed. The teacher on duty will take appropriate action to attain improvement in students' behaviors in the cafeteria.

Cellular Telephones/Pagers/Handheld Electronic Games

Cellular telephones, beepers, pagers, handheld electronic games, personal CD players, and other items that, in the view of the school, may be distracting or disruptive to the learning environment, are permitted **ONLY IF THEY ARE OFF AND REMAIN IN THE STUDENT'S SCHOOL BAG**. If a student is found using any device not permitted by the teacher, the device will be taken from them. We allow cell phones for safety purposes only.

Computers - Acceptable Use Policy

Purpose and Goals

Computers are a valuable tool for education and one of this school's purposes is to encourage the proper use of computer related technology, including the Internet. Students and all users of computer technology have a responsibility to use these tools properly and in accordance with the goals set forth below:

- to provide a variety of electronic tools to help students and teachers develop the ability to evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources and enable them to work effectively with various computer/communications technology.
- to encourage critical thinking and problem solving skills which will be needed in this emerging electronic and global society.

Responsibilities of User

With the right of access comes the responsibility to use the source both correctly and wisely. Access to the Internet may mean that some material found will not meet guidelines set in our Acceptable Use Policy. Monitoring and controlling all such materials is impossible. Nativity of Our Lord School will make every effort to discourage the appearance of such material; however, the opportunities and information made available by the Internet make it necessary to provide access in order that our students can take advantage of the many resources on the information superhighway.

General Requirements for Use of the Internet

- All users are required to take simple Internet training from the computer coordinator or his/her designee.
- All users and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign a student access contract governing use of computer resources, which is provided by the school. A copy of this contract is available for review in the school office.
- Only students issued passes or permission and who have completed training may use the Nativity of Our Lord School's computer resources, which are provided by the school and set forth below.
- Only students issued passes or permission and who have completed training may use the school's computers to access the Internet.
- Use of stations is limited to those who have a clear need for research, with a teacher assignment to back it up.
- Transferring copyrighted material to or from the school without express permission of the owner may be a violation of federal law. The user must insure that this does not incur.
- Use of electronic mail and other Internet facilities to harass, offend, or annoy other users is forbidden.
- E-mail accounts through Nativity of Our Lord School may be restricted and/or monitored.
- Any attempt to circumvent system security, guess passwords, or in any way gain access to secured resources is forbidden.
- Use of the Internet for commercial gain or profit is not allowed from an educational site.
- Users will not move, repair, reconfigure, modify or attach external devices, or load software on the system without the express, prior written consent of Nativity of Our Lord School.
- The system operator has the right to monitor all computer activity without prior notice to the user.
- The school may impose additional rules and restrictions at any time.

Student Rules

- For reasons of personal safety, students must never post or transmit personal information about themselves or other people. This includes name, address, telephone/fax number, school address, social security number, etc.
- Students must not access material that is profane or obscene (e.g., pornography) or that advocates illegal acts, violence, harassment or discrimination toward other people.
- Students must not plagiarize works they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of another and presenting them as if they were one's own.

- Students must not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude or threatening language. Nor will they, through means of the Internet, harass or annoy other users.
- Students must not knowingly or recklessly post or transmit information about persons or organizations that is false or private.
- Students must not make deliberate attempts to disrupt computer systems or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by other means. These actions are illegal.
- The illegal downloading of copyrighted software or other written works for use on home or school computers is prohibited.
- Engagement in cellular phone texting and on-line blogs such as, but not limited to, MySpace, Xanga, Friendster, Facebook, etc may result in disciplinary action if the content of the student's messaging includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish.

Violations of any of these rules may result in any or all of the following, at the discretion of the school:

- Loss of Internet access privileges
- Disciplinary and/or legal action by the school, law enforcement or other involved parties.

School Communications

Effective communication is the single, most important factor that assures a positive relationship between the home and school. Communication from school will be sent home electronically through the Tuesday's "E-envelope" and on occasion through our automated phone system.

Nativity of Our Lord School reserves the right to use student pictures with first names only in marketing and publicity pictures on the school website, promotional materials or advertising. Parents may opt out of this permission by completing the Parental Permission form for Technology Use.

Nativity of Our Lord students or parents are not permitted to post any pictures of school events in non-school publications or media without the expressed written consent of the school principal.

Inclement Weather

Nativity of Our Lord School follows the decisions of Centennial School District in regard to the closing or delayed opening of school due to inclement weather. Our School Closed/Delayed Opening number is **753**. Please listen to KYW (1060 AM) for this number. School closings or delayed openings are also listed on Channels 6 (WPVI), 10 (WCAU), and Fox Philadelphia. Each station's website will also have a school closing link. In addition, we have added a link on the school website (www.noop.org/school) to check for the school closing information. As soon as any information is available regarding our status we will get it posted on this website link. Families residing in school districts other than Centennial need to listen/watch for their school district's number to know if your children will be bused. The numbers for our surrounding districts are:

Central Bucks – 755
Council Rock – 756
Upper Moreland – 310
Hatboro/Horsham – 313

Emergency School Closings

Should an early dismissal be necessary due to bad weather or other emergencies, please listen to KYW (1060 AM) for the Centennial number **753**, or watch Channels 3, 6, 10, and 29. In addition to this, our automated phone system will activate an emergency call to all families who have supplied their emergency call information. This will be utilized only when the children are already in school. Please do not call the school asking for early dismissal information because the school districts are unable to get through. If you receive an automated message from Nativity, **PLEASE LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE FIRST.** Calling the school office to see what the message is defeats the purpose of the automated phone alert system.

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 Nativity of Our Lord School. Students not accompanying their class on a specified trip must spend the time in school doing enrichment assignments.

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 make-up 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.

Invitations

Party invitations may not be distributed at school. If provided, parents may use the classroom list as a reference for addresses to mail invitations.

Visitors

No visitor or volunteer may go directly to any area of the school without first signing in at the main 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.

Student Council

Seventh grade students may run for elections for Student Council Executive Board at the end of the year. All students are permitted to run for election based on the following criteria:

- Students must have an 85 or above in all subjects
- Students must have at least a “3” in conduct and effort grades
- Students must fully complete the application
- Students must receive three teacher signatures for recommendation
- All speeches must be approved

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 new school child will be attending
- Last date your child will be attending Nativity of Our Lord School

Nativity of Our Lord School reserves the right to withhold the transfers of any report cards or school records if tuition/fee payments have not been satisfied.

Nativity of Our Lord School reserves the right at any time to amend or add to the policies, rules and regulations contained in this handbook, and to make such changes applicable to current and new students when the situation dictates.