

Mater Dolorosa School Handbook

Introduction

The purpose of the school Handbook is to outline the general policies and operating procedures of Mater Dolorosa School. These policies are intended to enrich the environment of Mater Dolorosa School by providing an atmosphere conducive to learning while ensuring the health and safety of all students. Students and parents are responsible for reviewing and abiding by the policies set forth. While it is recognized that no handbook can cover every eventuality we have provided an overview of policies of Mater Dolorosa School. The administration reserves the right to determine policies should the need arise.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Mater Dolorosa School admits students of any race, color, national origin, faith, or ethnic background to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, faith, or ethnic background in the administration of educational policies and financial programs administered by this school.

Statement of Belief

We believe that Mater Dolorosa School, with the involvement and support of parents and guardians, teaches each student to live the values of Jesus and to respect the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church.

We believe that Mater Dolorosa is a place where students from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds receive a quality education in an atmosphere conducive to learning and moral development.

We believe that Mater Dolorosa provides an environment in which our students develop character and deepen their sense of respect and responsibility.

We believe that Mater Dolorosa provides a nurturing and caring environment in which each student is encouraged to develop and share his or her talents and abilities.

We believe that the teachers and staff of Mater Dolorosa are Christian, caring, and committed men and women who are faithful to the ideals of Jesus, enthusiastic about young people, and eager to help them to achieve their potential.

Agreement

By registering at Mater Dolorosa School, parents and students contract to abide by the guidelines, rules, regulations, and policies of this school.

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I. CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION

As a Catholic school, the nurturing and guidance of our students in the tenets of our Catholic faith is the very reason for our existence. Parents, faculty, and staff working together are responsible for taking an active part in the faith journey of the students.

Prayer is an integral part of the school day, shared by all. In addition, students participate in liturgies, the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, and other prayer services during the year.

A. Sacraments

Students in Grade 2 celebrate **First Reconciliation** and receive their **First Communion**.

In order for a child to receive these sacraments, s/he must be baptized and be ready emotionally and spiritually. If the teachers or Principal deem that a child is not ready, the child will receive another year of preparation before receiving the sacraments.

In preparation for the sacraments, it is expected that parents will reinforce at home what is taught in school. It is the responsibility of the parents to set a good example by taking the initiative regarding family prayer time, Sunday worship, and Reconciliation.

If a student transfers into our school, s/he must have attended another Catholic school or participated in a religious education program for at least a year before receiving the sacraments.

B. Spiritual Life

All students have the opportunity to attend Mass regularly. The entire student body attends Mass once a month and on Holy Days. Each class has the opportunity to plan these liturgies with their teachers and is also given the opportunity to participate as lectors, servers, and gift-bearers. The presence of the students and faculty at Mass is an essential part of the spiritual life of the school.

Students are given the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the school year. In addition, 8th grade students attend a retreat in the spring prior to their graduation.

C. Non-Catholic Students

All children, regardless of their faith, are welcome as members of the Mater Dolorosa School family. Non-Catholic students, however, are required to participate in religion classes. They are also expected to attend Liturgies and other Para-liturgical prayer services.

Non-Catholic students may participate in the celebration, but not receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. However, non-Catholic students may receive a blessing from the priest.

II. ACADEMIC POLICIES

A. Admissions

In accordance with the regulations of the Holyoke Public School Department, new Kindergarten students must be five (5) years old on or before September 1st of the school year in which they are enrolling. Age must be verified by a birth certificate. A physical examination is required when a student enters school for the first time. Immunization records must be completed, including evidence of a state mandated lead test. A baptismal certificate must also be presented for Catholic students.

New students who are transferring from other schools should arrange to provide copies of their academic records, as well as their latest report cards for review.

If a student is transferring from another Catholic school all financial debts must be paid before admission to Mater Dolorosa School.

A non-refundable fee of \$25 is required of each family for registration.

B. Awards

Students in grades 4 through 7 receive special recognition for academics and perfect attendance.

Students in 8th grade receive special recognition for academic excellence (Jr. National Honor Society), perfect attendance, and the Oratorical Contest. Scholarships are awarded at the Graduation Ceremony.

C. Conferences

Parents are encouraged to participate in conferences. As a team of parent, teacher, and student we can greatly enhance the student's experience. Parent-teacher conferences are held at the end of the first and third quarter marking periods. Parents are given specific appointments with the teachers of their children, regardless of their academic progress. However, it is not necessary to wait for the regular conference time if a parent has a special concern. Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged and appointments can be made at any time during the school year.

D. Curriculum

We follow the Diocesan core curriculum as mandated by the state. In addition to the regular academic requirements, the following special courses are included:

1. Child Lures Program

Age appropriate lessons for the Child Lures Program are presented to our students in grades Pre-school through Grade 8. This program improves self-reliance, raises self-esteem, and helps students master personal safety skills—all while assuring them that most adults are kind, safe, and committed to their well-being.

2. Computers

All students in grades Kindergarten through 8th attend computer classes. The goal of the computer program is to allow students to broaden their awareness of computer technology and its potential as a learning resource. All computers have monitored Internet capability. Students and parents are required to sign a Computer/Internet agreement.

3. Family Life

Catholic Family Life Education is a required component of the curriculum for all elementary schools. This program provides a setting in which Catholic faith, practices, and values regarding human sexuality are taught to students. The Principal assumes personal supervision of the Family Life Program and parents are kept informed of the program each year.

4. Physical Education

Physical Education is an important part of the educational experience. The development and maintenance of a healthy body is essential for physical well-being and good mental health. We believe that attitude development is an important part of education and we attempt to create an atmosphere for the development of leadership, sportsmanship, and congeniality through our physical education program. Physical education classes are provided once a week for students in grades Kindergarten through 8th.

5. Religious Education

All students are required to participate in Religion classes. Knowledge of the Catholic faith is fundamental for sacramental preparation and for participation in the life of the

Church. Parents' good example is essential to a child's growing in and living the Faith. Mater Dolorosa School is first and foremost Catholic, where the goal of every member of the administration, faculty, and staff is "to teach as Jesus taught." We impress upon our children the importance of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments—especially Reconciliation and Holy Communion—and reinforce this through monthly Mass and Reconciliation.

E. Discipline Code

Students are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy and appropriate behavior at all times during the school day including field trips, picnics, bus transportation, and at all school functions. At the beginning of each school year, students receive information regarding the discipline code for individual classes. A general policy is as follows:

1. Detention

Detention is given when a student receives three (or a combination of three) homework, unprepared, disciplinary, dress code violations, or bus infractions. All slips are cumulative.

Detention is held for one hour after school. Written notification is sent home for parental signature. Twenty-four (24) hours notice is given to parents so that transportation can be arranged.

2. Disciplinary Referrals

Disciplinary referrals will be issued to students for violations against the discipline code and rules, dress code, or any of the following:

- Defiance, dishonesty, inappropriate language, inflammatory or racial remarks, or any misbehavior that, in the opinion of the Administration, is detrimental to the reputation of the school will be liable for disciplinary action
- Threats of violence (verbal or written) towards an individual or the school
- Disrespect toward teachers, staff, students, or property
- Disruptive behavior, continual talking, getting out of seat, or throwing things
- Non-compliance of school uniform
- Chewing gum
- **Any infractions against classroom rules or handbook regulations**

The Discipline Policy affects all students in all classes, as well as at lunch, during special events, on field trips, on the bus, and at all school functions. All disciplinary referrals must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the teacher or school office. If a student's actions make suspension or expulsion a consideration, the school will act in accordance with the **Diocesan Handbook of School Policies**. We cannot sacrifice the education of the whole class because of the disruptive behavior of one student.

3. Loss of Privileges

Four DETENTIONS (12 DEMERIT SLIPS) WILL RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THE CLASS FIELD TRIP. The student must remain at home under the supervision of the parents/guardians.

4. Suspension

For the most serious infractions of school rules and policy, the Principal gives suspensions from school.

Suspensions are given only as a last resort. It signifies that the student's behavior has been so disruptive that the only reasonable way to deal with the situation is to remove the child from the school environment. Parents are required to meet with the Principal before reinstatement can take place.

Reinstatement will not be granted until the Principal and the student's teacher are satisfied that the reason for misconduct has been effectively eliminated.

F. Educational Fair

Each year our students participate in the school Educational Fair. This activity is one of the highlights of our academic year. Parents are encouraged to support this activity and to encourage their children in the selected projects.

G. Field Trips

Classroom teachers schedule field trips within our city and to various points of interest during the school year. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the classroom curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community. Therefore, student participation is a requirement not an option.

Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip date and will be asked to sign field trip permission forms. At times students will be expected to pay for entrance fees and provide their own lunch. The PTO currently provides the cost for transportation. Reasonable care will be taken by the supervisory personnel to see to the safety of the students. The school is not liable for injuries. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to chaperone trips. All parent volunteers are subject to a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check.

H. Graduation

Kindergarten graduation takes place in June.

The date for the 8th grade graduation follows the guidelines set by the Diocesan School Office.

Students in 8th grade failing two major subjects will be issued a certificate of attendance at graduation. Students failing more than two major subjects will not be considered graduates of Mater Dolorosa School and will not be able to participate in graduation exercises.

Participation in Commencement exercises is a privilege for 8th grade students who have met the academic and disciplinary standards of the school.

All tuition and fees must be **paid in full** or the child will not be able to participate in the end of the year field trip and/or graduation exercises (Kindergarten or 8th grade).

I. Homework

Homework provides parental insight into current classroom topics and is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. At the beginning of each school year, students receive information regarding the homework policies for individual classes. A general policy is as follows:

1. Primary

Students in grades Kindergarten-2nd receive homework to provide practice and reinforcement of skills taught in class. All homework assignments are age and grade level appropriate.

2. Intermediate

Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 are expected to complete homework assignments on the designated day. Missing, late, or incomplete assignments will result in a homework notice. Homework notices must be signed by a parent and returned the following day along with the

completed homework. Time will be allowed to make up assignments due to excused absences. **Three homework notices will result in a detention.**

3. Junior High

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are expected to complete homework assignments on the designated day. Missing, late, or incomplete assignments will result in a homework notice. Homework notices must be signed by a parent and returned the following day along with the completed homework. Time will be allowed to make up assignments due to excused absences. **Three homework notices will result in a detention.**

4. Absent Students

It is the responsibility of the student to complete homework assignments within a reasonable amount of time upon his/her return to school. When a child is absent one or two days they should check with their teacher(s) when they return to arrange to make up work missed. When a child is sick **three or more days** parents may request assignments by calling the office by 9:00 a.m. for afternoon pickup. Parents are required to write a note to the teacher explaining the reason for the absence once the child returns.

J. Junior Achievement

Students in the 8th grade participate in the Junior Achievement Program—Project Business. A volunteer consultant from a local business instructs students once a week for ten weeks on topics ranging from economics to career choices.

K. Library/Media Center

The library is open on a regularly scheduled basis and is supervised by the librarian. Library classes are held for all grades for the purpose of library instruction and the enjoyment of materials and books. Quiet and order must prevail in the library at all times.

Students are allowed to use the library with permission of their classroom teacher. Each student may borrow one book for a period of up to one week. There is no fine for overdue books, but the student who borrowed them must pay for lost or damaged books.

L. Pre-school

In carrying on our mission of providing quality Catholic education within a nurturing environment, Mater Dolorosa offers a Pre-school program. Our goal is to provide our pre-schoolers with positive opportunities for growth.

The Pre-school hours are 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

M. Progress Reports

Progress reports are issued during the months of October, December, March, and May. The purpose of the report is to make both parents and students aware of a student's progress and to alert parents that a student may not be working up to his/her potential. The progress reports are to be signed by a parent and returned to the teacher on the next school day. If there are any concerns, parents are asked to contact the teacher.

N. Promotions and Retentions

Promotions and retentions are based on an evaluation of academic performance. Students who fail two major subjects are required to successfully make up the course work in summer school. Documentation of successful completion of summer school is required prior to advancement. A Mater Dolorosa student is required to repeat the grade if s/he has failed three or more major subjects. The primary reasons for considering retention include a student's:

- Indifference or lack of effort
- Inability to fulfill that grades academic requirements
- Lack of maturity appropriate to the age level
- Frequent or long absences

O. Recess

Students in Pre-school through grade 4 have a morning recess each day. During this time, the students are allowed to have a snack brought from home.

All students have outdoor recess following lunch. No student is allowed to leave the school grounds. Parents are asked to dress their children appropriately for weather changes. Only students

with medical excuses or teacher/administration request will be allowed to remain in the building during scheduled outside recess.

P. Report Cards

Report cards are issued following the completion of each grading period, during the months of November, January, April, and June.

Parents should carefully review the report cards and contact the school if there are any questions regarding the grades. Report cards are sent home with the students. Parents are asked to sign and return the report card slip as promptly as possible.

Q. Special Services

Limited speech therapy and services for students with special needs are available through the local public school system. The Principal makes these Chapter 766 referrals. A parent also has the right to request a 766 evaluation.

A Title One remedial reading and math teacher are available to work with students who need extra help.

R. Study Skills

A parent can help his/her child be aware of skills and techniques that make learning easier and more enjoyable. The following are student guidelines for achieving good study habits:

- Come to class prepared with pencils, pens, paper, homework, and other necessary materials
- Be an active participant in class
- Listen well and take part in class discussions
- Ask questions to clarify problems
- Plan your day and schedule time for homework
- Use what is learned and apply it to new situations
- **Strive to do the very best work possible**

S. Testing Program

According to diocesan specifications, students in grades 3, 5, and 7 are administered the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Cognitive Ability Tests in the spring. These tests are used to evaluate student's aptitude and achievement in basic learning areas. The test results are used to help improve and evaluate curriculum and programming to meet the needs of the total school population and the individual. Parents are given a copy of their child's test results in late spring.

T. Textbooks

Textbooks and workbooks are furnished for all students. If a book is lost, misused, or damaged beyond reasonable wear, the students will be held financially responsible. Students are required to see that books are covered throughout the school year.

III. BEHAVIOR

A. Alcohol, Drugs, and Weapons

The possession of weapons, the sale or use of alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled or dangerous substance on the school grounds or buses is strictly forbidden. Violation of this rule will cause expulsion and will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

B. Bus Conduct

The administration and staff of Mater Dolorosa School views conduct on the bus as an extension of classroom behavior. In order to promote the health and safety of each student, the following are the acceptable norms:

- Students should wait in an orderly manner at their designated bus stops
- Students should board and exit the buses in an orderly manner at the direction of the bus driver
- Bus lines should proceed only when led by the teacher
- All students must obey all rules of safety
- They should remain seated and voices controlled, in order to enable the driver to fulfill his/her responsibilities
- For the safety of all, windows are to be opened or closed by the driver except in cases of emergency
- **In order to promote the safe transportation of students, cameras may be used to monitor the students' behavior on buses**

The following acts will result in denial of the privilege to ride the bus:

- Profanity on school buses
- Fighting or other aggressive physical behavior
- Unnecessary distraction of driver
- Destruction of any bus property (restitution will be the parents'/guardians' financial responsibility)
- Violation of rules and safety on school busses
- Any act which interferes with the safe and orderly transportation of students

All offenders of the bus regulations will have their privilege denied for a period of one (1) to three (3) days. More serious offenders may have their privilege denied up to ten (10) days.

Students who are denied the privilege three (3) times or who have seriously misbehaved to the point of endangering other riders may be denied the privilege to ride the bus for the remainder of the school year.

C. Cafeteria

All food, including snacks, must be eaten in the cafeteria. Food is never to be thrown around or carried throughout the school. Students must leave the table and floor clean. The parents' cooperation at home in teaching proper table manners helps in cultivating good habits in school. Glass containers are not allowed. Food is a gift and should never be wasted.

Students are not to bring textbooks, notebooks, or magazines into the cafeteria during lunch.

D. Cheating

Cheating is a serious compromise of a student's integrity and will not be tolerated. If cheating is discovered, the student's work will be confiscated. A failing grade will automatically be recorded for the work and parents will be notified.

E. Electronic Devices/Toys

To avoid disruption to the educational process and maintain the appropriate atmosphere in the school building, students may not use electronic games, radios, walkmans, iPods, or like devices on school property without direct permission from the administration. Students staying for aftercare may bring these items to school to use in aftercare. They must remain in the student's book bag until aftercare begins.

Electronic paging devices, cellular phones, and laser pens/lights are prohibited in the school building and on school grounds at all times. If a child is required by a parent to carry a cell phone, the phone should be turned off during school hours. The school will not be held responsible for lost or stolen phones.

F. Fighting/Threats of Violence

Fighting is strictly forbidden in the school, playground, or bus. Breaking this rule will result in an immediate and automatic suspension.

Threats of violence either written or verbal against individuals or the school will not be tolerated. Breaking this rule will result in immediate disciplinary action and notification to a parent.

G. Gambling

Flipping or matching coins, rolling dice, pools, or any other form of gambling are not permitted.

H. Internet

The Internet service is for educational purposes solely. This will include classroom activities and quality learning. The following items are not permitted:

- Using the Internet for commercial purposes or political campaigning
- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Harassing or insulting others
- Damaging computers – including hardware and software
- Violating copyright laws and plagiarizing
- **Attempting to make contact with anyone else on the Internet**

Failure to follow the directions of the instructor within the confines of the assignment or abide by the rules set forth will result in suspension of Internet privileges.

I. Leaving School Grounds

Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds during school hours without the knowledge and consent of their teacher and the administration. Permission to leave the school grounds will only be granted upon written request from the student's parent.

J. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work as one's own. Misuse of computer generated information, such as found on the Internet, encyclopedias, or reference works is cheating. This is true of all assignments and will be dealt with accordingly.

K. Pornography

Any student found possessing or distributing indecent, pornographic, lewd, or suggestive materials or literature is subject to suspension.

L. Sexual Harassment

In keeping with Diocesan policy and goals, it is the policy of Mater Dolorosa to promote and maintain an educational environment and a working environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Any individual who engages in this harassment will be in violation of this policy.

Complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and in a confidential manner. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported to the administration.

M. Smoking

Smoking is strictly forbidden at school. Students are neither to carry nor use tobacco products of any kind.

N. Stealing

Any students who participates in the theft of money, goods, clothing, etc., or is found to be in possession of such, is subject to disciplinary action and will be held responsible for restitution.

O. Unauthorized Articles

Common sense and consideration are the best guides in determining whether or not to bring personal possessions to school. In general, students should not bring toys or unusual items to school unless they are intended for a specific purpose in the classroom. Toys, videos, CD's, collectible cards of any kind, electronic games, virtual pets, beepers, laser flashlights, or other articles deemed inappropriate are not allowed in school. The sale or exchange of items with other students is not allowed. Any infraction will result in disciplinary action.

P. Vandalism

Our school and school equipment are private property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property is cause for immediate suspension and possible expulsion. The school requires that the damages be paid for before a student is allowed to return to class. If a student accidentally causes damage, s/he should report it to his/her teacher immediately so that the damage is not viewed as vandalism.

Q. Zero Tolerance Policy

Mater Dolorosa School has a Zero Tolerance Policy for threats, uncontrolled anger, violence, hate crimes, and the like. The school offers no apology for this policy. The safety of all our children is our primary focus and concern. Please be sure your child is well aware of this policy.

IV. DRESS CODE

PARENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IF THE UNIFORM POLICY IS NOT ADHERED TO, AND WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMMEDIATELY BRINGING IN THE PROPER UNIFORM SO THAT THEIR CHILD MAY GO TO CLASS.

A. All Students

1. Gym Uniforms

a. May, June, and September

- Navy gym shorts
- Plain white t-shirt (with or without logo)
- Sneakers

b. October through April

- Navy wind pants or sweatpants
- Plain white t-shirt (with or without logo)
- Navy or gray sweatshirt (with or without logo)

2. Hair

a. All Students

Unconventional, bizarre, and eccentric hairstyles or coloring of any kind are not permitted.

b. Boys

Hair may not be lower than the top of the ears on the side or longer than the top of the collar in the back.

3. Jewelry

Necklaces or bracelets for both boys and girls may not be worn. Earrings are permitted as follows:

- **Boys:** One studded earring only
- **Girls:** No dangling earrings or extra large loops

Tattooing or body scarring is not permitted. Fake tattoos are not allowed.

4. Make Up

Make up is not allowed during the school day. This includes lip-gloss, eyeliner, etc. Light colored nail polish is acceptable.

5. Seasonal

a. Summer Uniform (May, June, and September)

- Walking shorts (must be knee length, no substitutions)
- Boys may wear navy cargo shorts
- Light blue or white polo shirts with MD logo
- White t-shirts with or without the school logo
- Navy or white socks
- Socks must be worn at all times
- Sandals may be worn providing they have a back strap
- No flip-flops or backless shoes may be worn

b. Winter Uniform (November through March)

Girls may wear navy slacks purchased through the Harvey Uniform Co. with the Harvey label.

6. Sweatshirts

Plain navy or gray sweatshirts or Mater Dolorosa School sweatshirts may be worn during cold weather. However, sweatshirts with hoods, inappropriate slogans, or any advertising are not allowed. This includes dress down days as well.

In fairness to all students, hooded basketball sweatshirts may not be worn in school but may be worn to and from school.

B. Boys

1. Grades Kindergarten through 8th

- Navy pants
- Light blue or white polo shirt with MD logo (long or short sleeve)
- Dress shoes or sneakers

C. Girls

1. Grades Kindergarten through 8th

- Gray/blue kilt skirt
- Light blue or white polo shirt with MD logo (long or short sleeve)
- Navy, gray or white knee socks or tights
- Dress shoes or sneakers—NO HIGH HEELS

D. Dress Down Days

Occasionally, the students are allowed to dress down. Dress down means that the child may come to school out of school uniform but must be dressed appropriately for school. Over-sized pants and jerseys are not considered part of dress down days. Jerseys with slogans and large chains around the neck or wrist are not allowed. Half shirts and tank tops are not considered for dress down days.

V. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A. Financial Aid

An application for Diocesan Financial Aid may be filed. If aid is denied, parents are responsible for full tuition. Non-parishioners must present a signed voucher from their Pastor if their parish is willing to pay part of their tuition cost.

B. Tuition

Information regarding tuition is explained at the time of registration. At this time, it is agreed and understood that Mater Dolorosa School has an obligation and commitment to provide its students with the best possible education. It is also agreed and understood that all parents/guardians have an obligation and commitment to make a sincere effort to be prompt and faithful in payment of their full tuition bill.

Only persons who are registered parishioners of Mater Dolorosa, have paid their parish membership dues, and have used their parish offering envelopes for at least a year, are entitled to pay the parishioner tuition rate. Those who have not used church envelopes for a year, with a substantial donation, must pay the non-parishioner rate for that year.

Parents will receive a book with 10 monthly tuition bills beginning in August and ending in May. These payments are to be made directly to the parish office. There will be a late charge of \$10.00 per month if the tuition is not paid by the 15th of each month. A charge of \$15.00 will be required for any check returned by the bank for insufficient funds.

No student may start school in September unless all monies (tuition and fees) owed for the previous year have been paid as well as the August and September payments of the current year.

No transcripts, report cards or diplomas will be released until all financial obligations to Mater Dolorosa have been fulfilled.

The cost of educating a child is not completely covered by tuition. The deficit is made up through parish subsidy and fundraising activities. It is vital that every family be involved and supports these programs to the best of their ability.

VI. GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

A. Altar Servers

Students in the 4th through 8th grades are invited to join the altar servers and serve at weekly church liturgies. Practice for altar servers is held during school time.

B. Assemblies

Assemblies are planned as special events on the school calendar. Some typical assembly themes include cultural presentations, professional speakers, prayer services, award presentations, and student assemblies.

C. Athletics

Students have an opportunity to participate in basketball offered by the C.Y.O. in the school gym.

D. Calendar

The current school year calendar indicating holidays, vacation weeks, and in-service days is sent to each family at the beginning of the school year. The Holyoke Public School System sets forth our guidelines.

E. Change of Address/Telephone Number

It is very important, for emergency and administrative reasons, that the office maintains an up-to-date address record for every student. Parents are asked to notify the school immediately if there is a change of address and/or telephone number during the school year.

F. Communications

A monthly calendar of events is sent home each month. In addition, memos containing items of interest to students and parents are distributed when the need arises. It is important that students bring these home and that parents take the time to read them and keep in touch with school events.

G. Community Outreach

Our school is involved in a number of charitable activities throughout the year: Canned goods collection, Baby Shower for the Women's Shelter, Campaneros, collection of toiletries for young children and teens with HIV/AIDS, Math-A-Thon for children with cancer, and the Hop-A-Thon for Muscular Dystrophy.

H. Delay/Cancellation of School

Delay/cancellation of school will take place only during inclement weather, equipment failure, or public crisis.

Every practical means will be used to notify parents of an impending cancellation, including radio and TV. During inclement weather conditions, please listen to WHYN radio 560 or watch Channels 22 or 40 on the TV to find out if school has been delayed, cancelled, or may have an early dismissal.

Our policy regarding the closing of school is in accordance with the Holyoke Public School Department. If their Superintendent authorizes the closing of schools, Mater Dolorosa School will also be closed. In the unusual circumstance where school must be cancelled during the school day, the administration and staff will be sure that all students have satisfactory transportation and supervision before releasing them from school.

I. Doctor/Dentist Appointments

Parents are expected to make every effort to schedule doctor and dentist appointments outside of school hours. When this is not possible, however, students will be excused only with a written, dated request by the parents.

J. Emergency Information

In case of emergency, each student is required to have on file at the school office the following information:

- Parents' names, address, home and work phone numbers
- Emergency phone number of a friend or relative
- Physician's name, phone number, and medical alert information

Changes in the above information should be reported to the office promptly.

K. Extended Care Program

Before and after school care is provided to our students on a daily basis. Provisions are also made to provide after school care on half days. There is an hourly fee for this service and parents are billed bi-monthly. Students play games, receive assistance with homework, and eat their snacks.

L. Food Services

The purpose of the School Lunch Program is to provide a well-balanced nutritional lunch.

The hot lunch program begins operation the first day of school and continues throughout the school year. The menu is determined by the cafeteria staff and is published monthly. The federal government funds our hot lunch program, in part. Applications with eligibility requirements for the free and reduced price lunches are sent home at the beginning of the school year. Milk is available for cold lunches as well.

M. Lost and Found

All found articles are taken to the school cafeteria. Students may claim lost articles after proper identification.

N. Parent/Legal Guardian Respect for Teachers

Parents/legal guardians are held to the same standard as students with regards to respect for teachers. Enrollment of the child in the school implies a partnership between the school,

parents/legal guardian, and child. If the partnership breaks down, parents/legal guardians can be required to withdraw the child from school.

O. Pictures

All students have the opportunity to have their pictures taken by a professional photographer once during the school year, usually in the fall. Parents may purchase prints of these photographs according to the information provided by the photographer.

P. Publications

All school publications must follow these guidelines:

- Anything published must not be libelous or an attack on any person, group, or institution
- A responsible publication is an accurate account, not slanderous or offensive
- All publications should be in good taste and demonstrate Christian values

Q. Rights of Separated/Divorced Parents Regarding Their Children in School

In case of a pending or actual divorce or separation, the following policy and procedures will apply:

- Access to their child's records
- Conferences with the teacher to discuss their child's educational progress

UNLESS RIGHTS HAVE BEEN LIMITED BY COURT ACTIONS

custodial parents who request limitation of the above rights must provide the school with a copy of the relevant court document.

Non-custodial parents **do not have the right to:**

- Meet privately with their child in school or take the child away from school

The only exception to the above will be in the case of specific instruction in writing from the custodial parent or a relevant court document.

Prior to the awarding of legal custody by the courts, schools will assume that both parents retain equal rights in all of the above areas, unless a legal temporary restraining order is presented to the school.

R. School Office Information

Open Monday–Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Closed on holidays and school vacations

Mater Dolorosa School

25 Maple Street

Holyoke MA 01040

Phone number 413/532-2831

Fax number 413/532-8588

E-mail mdschool@comcast.net

Web Site www.mater-dolorosa.com

S. School Supplies

Parents are responsible for supplying their children with the necessary writing tools (pencils and/or pens, paper, and notebooks) as required by his/her teacher. These supplies need to be replenished as needed throughout the school year.

T. Substitute/Part-time Teachers

Substitute and part-time teachers act with full authority in the classroom. Students are expected to be courteous and respectful. Any misconduct in the classroom will be acted on immediately.

U. Telephone

The office telephone is a business phone and is to be used by students only in an emergency.

V. Traffic Regulations

The administration has adopted several parking traffic policies due to the limited parking space around the school. The administration seeks the cooperation of all parents and students in observing this access and parking policies. During school hours, the school does not permit parking on Maple Street. As children are dropped off in the morning, parents are asked to do this as quickly as possible so as not to hold up traffic. Parents who drop off a child are asked **NOT TO PARK DIRECTLY ON MAPLE STREET** in front of the school or parish office in the **drop-off zone**. If there is a need to park, please do so in the church parking lot.

W. Valuables

The school administrators and staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home. If special circumstances make it necessary for a student to bring substantial cash or other valuable possessions to school, these items should be registered and left at the main office.

X. Volunteers

Mater Dolorosa School considers its volunteers a very special resource. Parents, grandparents, and friends are encouraged to help in classrooms, cafeteria, and library. Please call the office if you have time, skills, or special talents you can donate to make our school a better place for students to learn and grow. All persons volunteering at Mater Dolorosa School are required to have a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check.

VII. HEALTH SERVICES

The Holyoke School Department provides a school nurse, as well as a vision and hearing technician, when available. The school nurse's office is located on the first floor of the school. The nurse is responsible for the maintenance of health records, routine health checks, contacting parents concerning health problems, and care of minor injuries.

A. Illness or Injury

In case of illness or serious injury parents will be contacted. The school nurse or a member of the staff will care for the student temporarily. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parents will be contacted. If parents are not available, the child will be taken to the emergency room at the Holyoke Medical Center.

B. Immunizations and Vaccinations

State law requires that every child who is admitted to school must have evidence of successful vaccinations for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, and polio. Also required are a rubella/rubeola vaccination and a tuberculin skin test. A student entering Kindergarten is required to have a lead test. Students entering 7th grade must have a second MMR.

C. Insurance

The Diocese requires that all students have health insurance. School insurance will be offered at the beginning of each year. The cost is small compared to the potential cost of medical care and parents are encouraged to take advantage of this service.

D. Medications

Medicine is treatment, and as such, is not part of the school health services. In most cases, pupils who are on prolonged medication can have the dosage adjusted so the time for taking their prescription will come while they are out of school. Students are never to have medication in their possession during school.

If a child is to receive any medication during the school day the following information must be submitted in writing, with the parent's signature, for each medication:

- Name of child
- Name of physician and phone number
- Name and strength of medication
- Schedule for administration

In the event that a child needs to use an inhaler or cough drops, a dated, written note signed by the parent should be given to the teacher.

VIII. ORGANIZATIONS

A. Mater Dolorosa School Board

The School Board “has as its primary concerns the ministry of Catholic school education: the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development of the students.” The board, operating under the guidance of the School Board of the Diocese of Springfield and in conformity with the policies of the Diocesan Schools Office, concerns itself with the policy matters pertaining to the general excellence of Catholic education at Mater Dolorosa School.

The School Board is made up of members who are elected or appointed for three-year terms. Anyone interested in serving may submit their name to a member of the Board.

B. P.T.O.

The Mater Dolorosa School P.T.O. is highly involved in their ongoing efforts to strengthen the educational environment of Mater Dolorosa School. All parents are urged to become members and to actively participate. Meetings are scheduled on the fourth Wednesday of every month except for December. Notices are sent in advance to remind parents of the meeting.

Each year the P.T.O. sponsors two major fundraisers and with the help of all parents, these fundraisers can be very successful. They allow the P.T.O. to fund many important activities at the school.

IX. SAFETY

A. Bomb Threats

A bomb threat is an extremely rare occurrence. Nevertheless, the school is prepared for this type of emergency. Immediate evacuation of the building and notification of authorities and parents are the standard procedure.

B. Emergency Drills

In keeping with the policies of the Holyoke Fire Department, fire officials will conduct fire drills in the fall and spring of the school year. Additional fire drills will be conducted at appropriate intervals throughout the school year by the administration. All students must leave the building quickly and quietly through the designated exits. Students should walk, not run.

To help prepare the students for a possible dangerous intrusion, lock down drills are conducted periodically as well. In addition to our fire drills and lock down drills, the bus company conducts bus evacuation drills twice a year.

C. Schoolyard Supervision

School staff will supervise the schoolyard during recess. At least two adults are on the playground during regularly scheduled breaks.

D. Search and Seizure

The administration reserves the right to search students' desks, book bags, storage areas, or clothing when reasonable concern exists that there may be items which could potentially threaten the safety or well being of other students or which are deemed inappropriate and against school policy. Any such items will be confiscated.

E. Visitors

Visitors are always welcome at Mater Dolorosa School. All school doors are locked while school is in session. Therefore, ringing the buzzer for admittance is required. All parents and other visitors are required to report to the school office upon entering the building regardless of destination to receive a name tag that should be worn at all times while in the building. No one is allowed anywhere in the building without authorization from the main office.

X. SCHEDULE AND ATTENDANCE

A. Absenteeism

A parent/guardian must call the school by 8:00 a.m. the day of the child's absence. **A dated note signed by a parent is required when the student returns.** If absent for more than three (3) days, a doctor's note is required. The school reserves the right to call parents regarding unreported absences.

The following circumstances are the only justifiable excuses for school absence:

- Personal illness
- Family illness
- Death in the family
- Legal appointments
- Other serious reasons acceptable at the discretion of the Principal

The student is required to give advance notice, in writing, to the school to be excused for any other type of absence. In accordance with the Holyoke Public School Department Attendance and Truancy policy:

“When a student is absent for a maximum of ten (10) days, the school must contact the parent in writing. Parents need to respond within a five-day period. It should be expressly understood through this letter that failure of the parents to respond will result in the case being referred to Student Services, who would follow up with the parents. This also includes tardiness.”

Mater Dolorosa School is required to consult with the Diocesan Office if a student is absent 15 days.

B. Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring an understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation. Persistent absenteeism creates an academic hardship for a student and is regarded as a very serious problem. Classroom teachers are not required to provide schoolwork in advance for students taking extended vacations during the school year.

C. Early Dismissal

In general, students are not permitted to leave the building during school hours. Requests by parents for an early dismissal may be granted for sufficient reason in extraordinary cases. At such times, a parent, or person authorized by a parent, must sign the student out in the front office. A Perfect Attendance Award will be given only when the student has had perfect **full day** attendance.

Early dismissal from school requires a written request from the parent/guardian specifying the time and reason for dismissal. The note must be brought to the school office at the beginning of the day. Mater Dolorosa reserves the right to refuse to release a student to a parent/guardian whose condition could jeopardize the safety of the child. Students may be excused from school or class when illness or unusual circumstances arise during the day. Parents will be notified and must come to the office to sign out the child.

D. Tardiness

Children are expected to be in their designated classrooms by the starting time of 8:00 a.m. and ready to begin school. This is an important part of the day, when directions are given and a tone is set for the day. Parents have a responsibility to see that their child is in school on time.

Any child who arrives after the bell must report to the office for a late slip and will be marked tardy. Only a child who rides the bus to school will be excused if the bus is late. When a child has been tardy three (3) times, the school will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the situation and, if lateness continues, it will be handled as a disciplinary matter. Your child's learning time is lost when s/he is repeatedly tardy. When a child has been tardy ten (10) times a meeting between the parent/guardian and the Principal will be requested.

E. Truancy

Students who are absent from school without authorization from parents or the school will be considered truant. After a conference with the parents/guardian, the offender will be referred to the Principal for disciplinary action.

F. Withdrawals

Notification for withdrawal should be given by the parents of any student who is withdrawing before the end of the academic year. Teachers will summarize the student's progress and prepare the student's file for the Administration. When all obligations to the school have been met, the student's records will be forwarded to the next school of enrollment.

XI. TRANSPORTATION

A. Bicycles and Skateboards

Parental permission in a dated, written note is required informing the school that their child will be riding a bicycle to and from school on certain days. The school is not responsible for stolen bicycles. Students will leave with the car pickup line and must wait until all cars have left the parking lot. In accordance with Massachusetts State Law, helmets must be worn. Skateboards are not allowed.

B. Bus Route and Operating

Bus routes and stops are established by the Holyoke Public School Department and are published through the area newspapers near the beginning of the school year. Parents, who wish to make requests for changes in routes or stops, should contact the Bus Company (413/532-0054). Students and parents are encouraged to notify the school immediately of any safety hazards, which they have observed during bus operations. Students not eligible for bus transportation cannot take the bus for any reason. Changing buses must be done through the Bus Company, not through the school. The Bus Company conducts bus evacuation drills twice a year.

C. Changes in Regular Means of Transportation

In the event that a child is to return home from school by car instead of bus or s/he is to be picked up by a friend or relative, a dated note signed by a parent must be submitted to the school the morning of the day on which this is to occur.

Children who wish to go from school to another student's home must bring a note from their parent giving them permission to do so. This note must be brought to the school office the morning of the child's planned visit. Please remind your child that they will not be allowed to call home at the last minute to make after-school arrangements to visit a friend.