



NATIVITY*of***MARY**
SCHOOL

Parent and Student Handbook

2024-2025

Nativity of Mary School
9901 E. Bloomington Freeway
Bloomington, MN 55420

School Office: 952-881-8160
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Creative Clubhouse: 952-881-9103
Email: nativity@nativitybloomington.org

School Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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Our Mission, Our School, and Our Philosophy

Our Mission Statement

Nativity of Mary Catholic School provides a Catholic education that fosters academic, spiritual, social, and emotional growth while preparing students to become impactful members of our community and world. We aim to inspire our children to become the saints of the future!

Our School

Nativity of Mary School was built in 1951 and was staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Over the years, academic excellence, a rich spiritual education, and a caring environment have been the hallmark of this school.

Nativity of Mary is the only Catholic school geographically located in Bloomington. It serves children from the parishes of Nativity of Mary, St. Bonaventure, and St. Edward in Bloomington as well as Pax Christi in Eden Prairie and other neighboring parishes. All students are welcome regardless of race, color, religion, ethnic, or national origin.

The school is blessed to have dedicated faculty and administration along with the guiding support of our School Advisory Council, parish trustees, and our Canonical Administrator. Through a strong, united vision for our future, we continue to expand our areas of academic excellence while providing spiritual growth for our students.

The heart of Nativity of Mary School is the support of our parents. Parents and volunteers give unselfishly of their time and talents to support the students of our school. Those who cannot support us in this way have generously backed our fundraisers.

Our Philosophy

Nativity of Mary is a Catholic school grounded in foundations presented in the Gospels of Jesus, and guided by the wisdom of the rich and diverse history of the Catholic Church. Committed to educational excellence, we provide a comprehensive curriculum with meaningful and challenging instruction. Nativity of Mary provides a supportive environment emphasizing spiritual growth, social interest, peace, justice, and respect for diversity. We empower our students with the tools, skills, and knowledge to be relevant Christians in an ever-changing society. Nativity of Mary prepares and encourages students to be lifelong practitioners of Christian values and to share the Gospel message with others.

Spirituality

Nativity of Mary School:

- encourages students to have a closer relationship with God through the teaching of Catholic doctrine, traditions, and moral values.
- integrates religious values and teachings into the academic areas of the curriculum.
- celebrates weekly Mass, prayer services, and daily prayer, and prepares students for the sacraments.

Curriculum

Nativity of Mary School:

- is accredited by the Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (MNSAA), which utilizes a comprehensive, diversified curriculum that meets
- integrates Catholic values within the curriculum, and provides meaningful and challenging instruction in communication, mathematics, the sciences, technology, the arts, and physical education.
- incorporates up-to-date technology in a well-rounded, engaging learning environment.
- embraces a strong knowledge base, an adeptness of skills, and intrinsic study habits that will prepare students for higher education.
- encourages students to be lifelong learners, to live principled lives, to contribute to a global society, and to be the problem-solvers of the future.

Social

Nativity of Mary School:

- assists in the development of each student as an individual to boost their confidence, foster curiosity and inventiveness, and promote leadership.
- provides a safe and positive environment where the worth of the individual is appreciated.
- nurtures students by giving them emotional support and by assisting them in developing cooperative social skills.
- stresses the importance of setting and accomplishing goals.
- encourages, guides, and supports students to fulfill leadership roles within our school setting and in the broader community.

Community

Nativity of Mary School:

- cultivates the integration of social values with the school, the parish, and local and global communities.
- instills a strong sense of social justice in our students.
- welcomes school families, parishioners, and people from the community to be involved in our school.
- provides students valuable opportunities to participate in a variety of spiritual and service-related activities.
- creates a climate where community service and the desire to help others continues throughout the students' lives.

Mission and Philosophy Statement Review

Our mission and philosophy statements are reviewed regularly by the School Advisory Council, in preparation for our MNSAA accreditation visits.

School Staff

Administration

Pastor
Principal
Assistant Principal

Fr. Bill Duffert
Mrs. Sarah Hickel
Mrs. Rebecca Kasallis

Preschool

Preschool Director
Preschool Coordinator
Preschool
Preschool
Preschool

Mrs. Sarah Hickel
Mrs. Sara Shook
Mrs. Anne Theis
Mrs. Sara Shook
Mrs. Sarah Burg

Preschool Aide
Preschool Aide

Mrs. Ana Montano
Mrs. Tammy Kapsner

Primary Grades

Kindergarten
Kindergarten
Grade 1
Grade 1
Grade 2
Grade 2

Mrs. Maggie Nelson
Mrs. Olivia Smith
Ms. Lupe Galaindo
Mrs. Lisa Hegard
Ms. Anne Zweber
Ms. Nicole Molitor

Intermediate Grades

Grade 3
Grade 3
Grade 4
Grade 4
Grade 5
Grade 5

Mrs. Patty Meyer
Ms. Elizabeth Walker
Mr. David Long
Mrs. Mikala Wahl
Ms. Annie Arndt
Ms. Rebecca Van Heest

Middle School

Grades 6, 7, 8
Grades 6, 7, 8
Grades 6, 7, 8
Grades 6, 7, 8
Grades 6, 7, 8
Grades 6, 7, 8

Mr. Michael Bass Smith
Mrs. Angie Flynn
Mrs. Megan Bayrd
Mrs. Laura Millenacker
Mr. Ross Bellefeuille
Mr. David Maslow

Art

Grades K-5
Grades 6, 7, 8

Mrs. Allyson Benz
Mrs. Andrea Griner

Music

Grades K-8

Mrs. Kirsten Ludewig

Library

Grades K-8

Mrs. Theresa Prusha

Physical Education

Grades K-8

Mr. James Forina

Other Staff

School Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Wanda Hagerty

Marketing & Enrollment Director

Mrs. Melissa Anderson

Health Services Associate

Mrs. Becky Rodier

Title I Coordinator/Learning Specialist

Mrs. Sarah Thornton

Guidance/Counseling K-6

Mrs. Shelby Reller

Guidance/Counseling Grades 7-8

Ms. Rhonda Engelhardt

Maintenance Engineer

Mr. Roger Sansom

Creative Clubhouse Coordinator

Mrs. Maggie Nelson

School Advisory Council—Parent Representatives

Andrea Horvath (Chair), Anna Zagaria Meyer (Vice Chair), Dana Chou (Secretary), Chris Beran, Jenefer Gomez, Wally Kaluza, Heidi Moore, Amy O'Connor, Chris Perske

Admissions & Fees

Admissions

It is the policy of Nativity of Mary to comply with state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination, to the end that no person(s) shall be illegally denied or excluded from enrollment or participation in any educational program or activity operated by the school on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, or disability. Every local effort should be made to provide each qualifying child the opportunity to attend a Catholic school regardless of the financial situation of the family. Families should seek the advice of the principal if financial problems arise.

Enrollment

During the initial registration period (typically in January), students are accepted in the following priority order.

1. All students presently attending the school.
2. New students who are brothers or sisters of students in the school.
3. New students who had brothers or sisters in the school.
4. New students who are members of the Nativity of Mary parish.
5. Students who are not members of Nativity of Mary parish but are members of another Catholic parish.
6. Students who are children of alumni.
7. All other students.

After the priority registration period ends, students are accepted based on the date of completed registration. This includes returning families; registration must be completed during the priority registration period to secure enrollment for the following school year.

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists will be established when grades are filled. During the priority registration period, any students on a waiting list will be accepted in the priority order noted above. After the priority registration period ends, students will be accepted based on the date they were added to the waiting list.

Classroom size limits are as follows.

- Kindergarten and 1st Grade: 20 students
- 2nd-5th Grade: 22 students
- 6th-8th Grade: 24 students

New Students

Nativity of Mary's adherence to specific standards and values may not create a school setting compatible with all students. All incoming transfer students are given a probation period during the first trimester. If the student fails to comply with the school philosophy/core values, code of behavior, or academic expectations, the parents will be asked to withdraw their child from the school. This discussion will occur at a formal conference with the parents after directed help from the teacher(s), parent(s)/guardian(s), and principal.

Entrance to Kindergarten

Nativity of Mary requires children who enter kindergarten to be five years old by September 1 of the year in which they will enroll. A registration due date is published on the school calendar. A waiting list will be established after the registration deadline for kindergarten.

Preschool screening must take place at age three or four. A speech therapist, social worker, and psychologist in the public school district in which they live test children. Parents or guardians are responsible for screening and payment.

Early Entrance into Kindergarten

Early entrance into kindergarten may be an option if the child will turn five years old between September 1 and September 30. Early entrance into kindergarten touches many aspects of the child's life, and several factors need to be considered. The child's overall readiness is more important than academic skills.

Early entrance candidates will be assessed by a Nativity of Mary kindergarten teacher on an academic and social level while in preschool. If a candidate attends a different preschool or daycare, a written evaluation of academic and social readiness must be provided to Nativity of Mary by a current teacher.

Early entrants (children who are not five years of age by September 1) will be considered after all five-year-olds have been enrolled into the kindergarten classroom(s) first.

All early kindergarten entrants are given a probation period during the first trimester. If concerns emerge during the first trimester, a conference will take place between the parent(s)/guardian(s) and principal to discuss best placement. The principal has the final decision as to whether or not the child will continue in the current placement.

Immunization Requirements

The School Immunization Law applies to all students in all grades. School law requires students to be immunized unless parents get legal exemption due to medical reasons or conscientiously held beliefs. Please bring immunization information to the nurse at registration if you are new to the school, or if you were notified that your child needs further or updated immunizations. For specific immunizations needed, please refer to the *Immunization Requirement Details* section of this handbook.

Tuition Schedule: 2024-2025 School Year

Grades K-8*

\$6,275 for first student, K-8

\$11,425 for two students, K-8

\$13,775 for three students, K-8

\$15,600 for four students, K-8

Fifth student or more are free in K-8

*Does not include fees (registration, activity, technology, fundraising, and middle school camp)

Families that are new to Nativity (grades K-8) receive a \$500 tuition discount their first year. Families that previously only had a student enrolled in preschool at Nativity will receive the \$500 new family discount the first year they enroll a child in grades K-8.

Preschool

Preschool tuition varies by class and daily hours. Please check the school website for costs for each variation of our program.

Fees

The following fees are assessed on a per student or per family basis upon registration. They are paid via the same payment plan selected for tuition.

Each K-8 student will pay a \$100 fee at the time of registration. Preschool students will pay \$75 at the time of registration. This is non-refundable and **NOT** applicable to tuition.

Activity Fee

Each K-8 student will pay a \$100 activity fee for the year. This fee covers activities such as field trips.

Technology Fee

Each K-8 student will pay a \$175 fee for the year to help offset technology costs, which include student Chromebooks, Internet, software, and other hardware.

Fundraising Fee

Each family will pay a \$500 fee for the year. This fee correlates to three long-running fundraisers at Nativity. These fundraisers are split in the following way: 52-Club Raffle (\$150), Spirit of Spring Raffle (\$100), and Scrip (\$250). The \$500 responsibility is added to your financial agreement, but you can earn the \$500 back through your own fundraising efforts. See the [fundraising page](#) on the Nativity website for more information.

Camp Fee

Each 6th and 7th grade student will pay a \$185 fee for the year for their expenses related to overnight trips to Camp St. Croix and Camp Ihduhapi.

8th Grade Trip Fee

Each 8th grade student will be charged a fee for the 8th grade end of year trip to Chicago. This amount varies by year based on the cost of the trip and fundraising to help offset costs. Scholarships are available for those needing assistance. Information about the 8th grade trip, cost, and scholarships will be provided to 8th grade families at the start of the school year.

Tuition & Fee Payment Options

Families are asked to set up their tuition and fee payments online through the TADS management system. There are multiple options and payment choices. An electronic processing service fee applies; paying via credit card results in an additional processing fee. All families are required to set up their payment plan by August 1. Families enrolled after August 1 must have a payment plan set up before the first day of attendance.

Nativity Scholarship/Tuition Assistance

In order to receive a Nativity Scholarship, you must complete an online TADS financial aid application. All awards are given on a need basis as recommended through the TADS eligibility formula. Grants for the Nativity Scholarship come from private foundations, area parishes, and Nativity of Mary School and Parish donors. Applications for new families are accepted on a rolling basis. Applications for returning families are typically due in mid-February.

Award amounts are finalized in late spring. Families that apply for financial assistance will be provided with a letter specifying any financial awards received. We make every effort to make Nativity of Mary School an affordable option for your child's education.

We do not guarantee that the same amount of aid given to your family one year will be the same in following years. Each year, your aid is based on your need, total need by school families, and available scholarship dollars.

Past Due Tuition

The principal and director of parish operations will notify families by letter of any tuition past due by more than 90 days. A plan to eliminate the past due balance must be created and approved by administration in order to continue attendance at Nativity. If the family does not cooperate with administration, delinquent families may be turned over to a collection agency.

Books & Technology

Each student is responsible for the good care of all books and technology from the school. Students who damage or lose a book, textbook, or Chromebook will be fined accordingly for the replacement cost or repair. A notice will be sent home with the student prior to the fine.

Attendance

Attendance Policy

Research supports that regular school attendance and punctuality are directly related to success in school academically and socially. It also promotes dependability. Nativity of Mary will adhere to the State of Minnesota regulation concerning school attendance. The following are responsibilities and guidelines to encourage and promote regular attendance.

Shared Responsibility

1. Parents/guardians will inform the school nurse of a student's absence either with an email notification or a phone call that morning by 9:30 a.m. (952-881-8160 x203).
2. If the absence can be anticipated, due to work, travel, or some other reason, parents/guardians should notify the school prior to the absence.
3. Parents/guardians picking up a student before the school day ends **must** pick up their student from the school office and **sign their student out**.
4. Students will request all missed assignments due to absence upon returning to school.
5. Students will arrange a timeline with their teacher(s) for completion of missed work.
6. Teachers will take accurate attendance each day and work collaboratively with parents/guardians to provide students with missing work.
7. The nurse will compile a list of absent and tardy students who have notified the school and compare the list with the teachers' attendance records. Please see a description of tardiness in the sections that follow.
8. The nurse will phone parents/guardians of absent students not accounted for.

9. Administration will work collaboratively with the parents/guardians and staff to help solve attendance problems.
10. Students who miss a combined total of seven or more unexcused days of school are considered truant and in violation of the state law on compulsory instruction. Please see a description of excused and unexcused absences in the sections that follow.

Excused Absences

1. Illness of student or someone in the student's immediate family.
2. Funeral attendance.
3. Family emergency.
4. Appointments with health care providers or other professionals and court appearances when **unable to schedule outside school hours** and when the school is notified in advance.
5. Religious holidays or cultural observances.
6. School-authorized absences such as approved field trips, interscholastic competitions or events, or student recognition/award ceremonies.
7. Extreme weather conditions.
8. Removal of a student pursuant to a removal from class or suspension.
 - a. Removal from class or suspension is to be handled as an excused absence and students will be required to complete make-up work.
9. Family vacations
 - a. The school calendar provides an adequate number of days of vacation from regular school routine for our students. While considered an excused absence, **parents/guardians are strongly discouraged from taking students out of school for vacations at other times.**
 - b. If vacations are taken outside of the scheduled breaks during the year, teachers are not responsible for giving assignments in advance.
10. Organized sports activities, when the school is notified in advance.
 - a. If a student is absent for a sports activity, teachers are not responsible for giving assignments in advance.

Unexcused Absences

1. Truancy: An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent/guardian and/or the school.
2. Missing the bus.
3. Work or babysitting/providing childcare at home.
4. Oversleeping.
5. Excessive absences/tardiness in the judgment of the school without medical verification.

Consequences of Excused Absences

1. Students are required to make up all assignments missed due to the absence, as defined/provided by the teacher(s).

Consequences of Unexcused Absences

1. Students are required to make up all assignments missed due to the absence, as defined/provided by the teacher(s).
2. The parent/guardian of a student who has accumulated five unexcused absences within a school year will be contacted requesting a conference with the administration and/or nurse to help identify the root causes and remove barriers to attendance.

3. Students who accumulate 7 or more unexcused absences within a school year are considered truant and in violation of the state law on compulsory instruction.

Tardiness

1. Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness. The student must report to the school office when arriving late as well as when leaving early. The student must also report to the school office when returning to the school from an appointment/absence before being admitted to class.
2. Tardies become absences when students miss a significant part of a day. A student who arrives two or more hours late or leaves two or more hours early is marked a half-day absent (excused or unexcused depending on the situation).
3. Middle school students are allowed three minutes to pass between classes. After three minutes a student will be considered tardy.

Consequences of Unexcused Tardiness

- 3 tardies: Teacher will contact parents to discuss tardiness.
- 6 tardies: Teacher will contact the administrator. A letter will be sent home by the administrator.
- 9 tardies: Parents will be notified by the administrator and consequences will be determined, which could include loss of recess, additional assignments, or detention.
- 12 tardies: Teacher will refer the student to the administrator. The student may be referred to Hennepin County Truancy Court.

Communications

Thursday Communication

Every Thursday Nativity of Mary School sends an email to each family and newsletter subscriber with weekly communications. This email is titled “News & Notes” and includes the newsletter and other important school information as well as other extracurricular information. Links to relevant flyers are also included. Paper copies of the weekly communication can be requested by contacting the office. **It is very important that families read the school newsletter.**

If you have information that you would like to be considered for inclusion in News & Notes, email newsandnotes@nativitybloomington.org by Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. to be considered for that week. School administration reserves the right to decide what is included in the newsletter, and when.

Classroom Updates

Teachers send communications to families on a regular basis through various formats. Preschool through Grade 5 typically receive weekly communication, while middle school families receive a monthly newsletter along with other regular communications.

Text Messages

Nativity of Mary School will send text messages as needed for school reminders and alerts. Currently, an app called Talking Points is used. You do not need to download the app to your phone to receive the text messages.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences take place both in the fall and in the spring. Parents/guardians are given an opportunity to sign up for a specific time slot to discuss their student's progress with his or her teacher. It is strongly encouraged for parents/guardians to take advantage of these opportunities.

Website

Nativity of Mary School has a website at: school.nativitybloomington.org.

Contacting the School

The school office may be contacted by calling 952-881-8160. If you are not immediately contacted by a staff member, you may leave a voicemail. Please listen for options to leave a voicemail for an individual.

For less urgent matters, you may contact the school via email at nativity@nativitybloomington.org.

School office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on days when school is in session.

Emergency Use of Office Phone

All instructions to students should be communicated to them **before** they leave home. School telephones are for **emergency use only**. Students may use a school telephone only with permission from staff and only for such things as unexpected extracurricular changes. (Parents making changes to a student's afternoon schedule need to notify the office by 1:00 p.m.)

Mobile Phone Use Policy

Students are not allowed to use cell phones/mobile phones or other electronic devices (such as iPods) during the school day. Phone calls, text messages, picture-taking, social media posts, and other similar activities are prohibited during this time. Students may bring a cell phone or other similar electronic device to school, but it must remain in the student's locker or backpack from the time he or she enters the building in the morning until he or she is dismissed at the end of the day, unless given permission by a teacher.

For further description of the student cell phone/mobile phone use policy, including the consequences of not adhering to it, see the *Rules & Discipline Policy Guidelines* section of this handbook.

Curriculum

Academic Curriculum

Nativity of Mary follows the Minnesota State Standards and focuses on academic excellence in every subject. The scope and sequence of each academic area follows the standards and enriches students through an engaged learning experience.

Art

- Minnesota State Art Standards
- In addition, students also experience "Art Adventure" through visits from the Minneapolis Art Institute

Language Arts

- Grades K-2
 - *Believe and Read*
 - *The Superkids Reading Program* (Zaner-Bloser; 2017)
- Grades 3-6
 - *Journeys* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; 2017)
- Grades 7-8
 - Pearson (2017)

Mathematics

- Grades K-6
 - *EnVision Mathematics* (Pearson; 2016)
- Grades 6-8
 - Prentice Hall; 2012

Music

- Minnesota State Music Standards
- Pre-K through Grade 4
 - General music curriculum
- Grades 5-8
 - Bells, band, or choir (student choice)

Physical Education

- Minnesota State Physical Education Standards

Science

- Grades K-5
 - *Discovery Education*; (2020)
- Grades 6-8
 - Pearson; 2013
- C-STEM & Maker Space Programs

Social Studies

- Grades K-5
 - Houghton Mifflin; 2013
- Grades 6-8
 - Grade 6: *Northern Lights Revised 2E Student Edition*, Minnesota Historical Society Press (2013)
 - Grade 7: *A History of US* by Joy Hakim, Oxford University Press
 - Grade 8: *World Geography (Student Edition 2019)*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Spanish

- Grades 6-8
 - Pearson; 2011

Religion

- Grades K-8
 - Sadlier; 2011
 - Lectionary-based catechesis: Pflaum; 2011

Religion Curriculum

As an extension of the family, the school is conscious of educating the whole person. This education includes both spiritual and moral development. As a Catholic school, we feel we have a unique and special alternative to offer our children. We are able to integrate Catholic truth and values throughout each day in every class as well as offer staff who express this integration both inside and outside the classroom.

Religion classes from Kindergarten through 8th grade help instill in students the importance of prayer, sacramental growth, liturgical preparation, familiarity with scriptures, the life of Christ, and the history of the Catholic Church. Teachers, students, and priests are involved in the planning of Masses and prayer services for the school community. Each class day begins and ends with prayer. Middle school students go on retreats and service activities are encouraged. The entire program is designed to set a foundation for a lifelong Catholic commitment. Sacramental preparations for students in Grade 2 wanting to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist are coordinated through the parish. Our teachers partner with the parish to ensure our daily instruction will pair well with the parent workshops planned by the parish in order to help you and your child prepare.

For more information on how the Catholic Christian faith is incorporated into daily life at Nativity of Mary School, visit <https://www.school.nativitybloomington.org/faith>.

Library Books

Students visit the school library periodically and are able to check out books to read at home and return. Any concerns about books in the school library can be brought to the principal or priest. Book donations will be reviewed and added to the school library as deemed appropriate.

Internet Policy

The school supports the use of the Internet and other computer networks in the school's instructional program in order to facilitate learning and teaching through interpersonal communications, access to information, research, and collaboration. The use of the network facilities shall be consistent with the curriculum adopted by the school as well as the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities, and developmental levels of students.

The electronic information available to students and staff does not imply endorsement of the content by the school, nor does the school guarantee the accuracy of information received on the Internet. The school shall not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable when using the network or any information that is retrieved via the Internet.

The school shall not be responsible for any unauthorized charges or fees resulting from student access to the Internet. The school reserves the right to log network use and to monitor file-server space utilization by school users, while respecting the privacy rights of both school users and outside users. The School Advisory Council establishes that use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right; inappropriate, unauthorized, or illegal use will result in the cancellation of those privileges and appropriate disciplinary action.

Homework

Fundamental learning takes place in the classroom, with homework as a supplement to that learning. The amount of homework assigned is geared to the age and grade level of each student. Homework is given that is relevant to the subject matter and necessary for the growth of various skills. The work should be promptly completed by the child with parental encouragement. If a student is absent, all material missed should be made up as soon as possible.

If you have any concerns about your child's homework, please talk with your teacher.

Student Progress Reporting

Our system of reporting student progress is done in trimesters by a report card and through periodic parent conferences (fall and spring). We encourage parents/guardians to stay up to date on their students' progress through the school's Student Information System (Educate). If a student is performing below expected levels of achievement at any time during the trimester, the teacher is responsible for contacting the parent/guardian and informing him or her of the student's progress.

Student Records

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives parents the right to inspect and review their students' education records. Schools need not provide copies of materials in education records unless a parent cannot inspect the records personally. Schools may charge a fee for providing copies of records. To request a review of your child's student records, please call or email the principal directly. The principal has 48 hours to respond and set up a time to have your family come in to review your child's records.

Promotion/Retention

Promotion to the next grade/retention in the current grade will be based on academic achievement and physical, emotional, psychological, and developmental maturity. In the case of retention, parents/guardians will be notified of their child's situation as soon as possible. If a recommendation is made to retain a child and the parent/guardian rejects it, the parent/guardian must sign a written acknowledgment of the school's recommendation. Likewise, if it is a parent/guardian's wish that a child be retained and the school disagrees with this decision, a written acknowledgment must be signed by the parent/guardian.

Holistic Awards

Holistic awards are designed to honor students in 6th through 8th grade who excel in academic studies and conduct as well as being active in at least one other extracurricular activity. Students must have an A-minus average or better in all of the following graded subject areas: Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Religion, Music, Spanish, and Physical Education. Conduct must meet expectations as well. The extracurricular activities can range from sports to Scouting to music lessons. The principal makes the final decision on holistic award recipients, and they are honored along with their families at a breakfast in late spring.

Enrichment Opportunities

Nativity of Mary Catholic School's mission is to "foster academic excellence and spiritual growth." As part of this mission, students have the opportunity to join various clubs. Clubs and extracurricular activities empower students to learn more about their own personal interests and strengths. For a list of current clubs and extracurricular activities that enrich the mind and soul at Nativity, visit <https://school.nativitybloomington.org/clubs/>.

Nativity of Mary athletic opportunities and policies are included later in this handbook.

Food Regulations

The Bloomington Health Department requires that **no** homemade food be served in school. Treats or snacks sent to school for distribution (e.g., for classroom parties) must be commercially produced and packaged. **No treats may be sent for birthdays.** Instead, a child will be recognized on morning announcements and receive an out-of-uniform pass.

Grievance Procedure

If you wish to discuss concerns or problems, it is best to begin with the person with whom you are having difficulty. Communicating openly is the most efficient and effective way to resolve conflict. If this has been done and no resolution is reached, call the school office and request an appointment with the school administrator to discuss the situation. If the situation has not been satisfactorily resolved, call the parish office to request an appointment with the Parish Pastor. If the situation has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the grieved party, the party may be referred to the Archdiocese for due process procedures.

Health Regulations & Policies

Emergency Information

Emergency information for all students must be entered into TADS, which is accessible by the school nurse. In the case of a minor accident or illness, where it seems advisable to dismiss a student from school, the procedure will be as follows.

1. Attempt to contact the parent/guardian via telephone.
2. Contact the other designated person(s) to care for the student until the parent/guardian can be reached.

If a student is seriously injured or ill and requires medical attention or hospital treatment, Nativity of Mary's procedure will be to first call 911 and then to make contact with the parent/guardian or emergency contact as described above. Under certain circumstances, an ambulance may transport your child to the designated hospital (at the parent's expense).

Health Services Role

Nativity of Mary School will have a District #271 employee ("Building Nurse") on site every day school is in session. The hours may vary but are typically between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

The building nurse works with students, parents, and school personnel for the control and prevention of disease and for the development of optimum health for each student. The building nurse will administer first aid and care to persons becoming ill and injured at school.

Health records are kept on each student, plus emergency information. Please contact the school nurse if your child has a chronic health condition, physical handicap, or a diagnosed communicable disease.

Health Conditions

It is extremely important for the school nurse to know of any health conditions your child may have such as asthma, severe allergies, diabetes, seizures, etc. Please contact the school nurse about any

physical limitations or dietary restrictions required while your child is in school as well as any health-related information that could affect your child while at school.

Administering Medications at School

Medication **cannot** be administered to students during school hours (not even acetaminophen or ibuprofen) without both a licensed doctor's order and signature and the written consent of a parent/guardian. If possible, medication should be given at home. Only prescribed medications will be given at school. In order to give any medication at school, including acetaminophen, ibuprofen, cough syrup, or any other over-the-counter medication, the following guidelines must be followed.

Medication Authorization Form

A Medication Authorization Form must be submitted any time a medication is to be administered at school. This form, which is available at the school office, requires a doctor's order with signature, parent/guardian signature, and telephone number.

A new medication authorization form is required in all of the following scenarios.

- When the dosage or time of administration is changed
- At the beginning of each school year
- If discontinued medication is restarted

Labeled Medication

Medication must be sent to school *in its original container* and label from the pharmacy. The following information must be on the label of any prescribed medicine.

- Child's full name
- Name and dosage of medication
 - Note: Mixed dosages in a single container will not be accepted for use at school (for example, 5 mg and 10 mg tablets in the same bottle).
- Date of prescription
- Time and directions for administration (including quantity)
- Licensed prescriber's name

Most pharmacists will make up a separate "school bottle" if you ask for it.

Over-the-counter medications must be in the original container with dosing recommendations visible.

Self-Administration

Self-administration of medicine by students is not allowed, with the potential exception of epi-pens and inhalers. Epi-pens or inhalers may be kept in the student's possession if it is so stated in the doctor's medication order or asthma action plan.

Transportation of Medication

Medications should be brought to the Health Services office by a parent/guardian. If there is medication remaining after treatment or at the end of the school year, please make arrangements for it to be picked up.

Storage of Medicine

All medications administered at school will be kept in the Health Services office.

Immunization Requirement Details

The School Immunization Law applies to all students in all grades of public, private, or parochial elementary or secondary school or day care facilities. This act has been in effect since April 1996. School law requires students to be immunized unless parents get legal exemption due to medical reasons or conscientiously-held beliefs. Please submit immunization information to the school nurse upon registration if you are new to the school or if you were notified that your child needs further or updated immunizations.

Kindergarten Requirements

For Kindergarten, the following immunizations must be completed.

1. DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus)
 - a. 5 doses
 - b. The fifth dose of the DPT vaccine is not needed if the fourth dose was given after age four.
2. Polio
 - a. 4 doses
 - b. The fourth dose of the polio vaccine is not needed if the third dose was given after age four.
3. MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
 - a. 2 doses
4. Hepatitis B
 - a. 3 doses
5. Varicella (Chickenpox)
 - a. 2 doses or a signed statement from a licensed physician stating that the child has had chickenpox

In addition, results from early childhood screening and a certified, state-sealed birth certificate must be turned in to the Health Services office. See the *Admissions and Fees* section of this handbook for more details.

7th Grade Requirements

For entrance into 7th grade, the following immunizations must be on file with the school.

1. DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus)
 - a. At least 3 doses, plus one more dose at age 11-12 years
2. Polio
 - a. At least 3 doses
3. MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
 - a. 2 doses
4. Hepatitis B
 - a. 3 doses
5. Varicella (Chickenpox)
 - a. 2 doses or a signed statement from a licensed physician stating that the child has had chickenpox.
6. Meningitis
 - a. 1 dose

In addition, a Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) sports physical form must be completed by the parent/guardian and licensed physician and submitted to the school Health Services office before a student is eligible to participate in extracurricular sports at Nativity.

Illness

If a student shows symptoms of illness in the morning, parents should keep him or her home for observation. The child may be sent to school at noon if he or she is well.

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parents/guardians will be called to pick up their child. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, a person designated by the parents/guardians will be called.

Students who are too ill to take part in the daily routine should remain at home. Exceptions will be made for long-term conditions such as a broken leg, etc.

If a student is going to be absent from school for any reason, a parent/guardian must notify Health Services by calling the school office (952-881-8160). Please leave a detailed message that includes the symptoms of the illness. The school nurse uses this information to track illness trends in the school.

See the *Attendance Policy* section of this handbook for additional details.

General Guidelines

Parents often wonder whether or not they should send their kids to school when they have a mild illness. If your child has any of the following symptoms, they should be kept home from school.

- Fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit
 - A student may return to school once his or her temperature has remained under 100 degrees for 24 hours.
- Vomiting or diarrhea
 - A student may return to school once he or she has gone through 24 hours without vomiting or diarrhea.
- New, undiagnosed rash
- Purulent (pus-like) eye drainage
- Symptoms of severe illness such as unusual fatigue, uncontrolled cough, or difficulty breathing
- Contagious illness requiring school exclusion

Please contact the school nurse if your child is experiencing any of these symptoms or if you are unsure whether or not your child should attend school.

Communicable Diseases

Please notify the school nurse if your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease (e.g., strep throat, head lice, chicken pox, pink eye, COVID-19). This allows us to send notices to your child's classroom and track disease trends in the school.

Physical Education Attendance/Participation

For injury or illness, students may be excused with a parent/guardian note for one gym session. If the injury or illness extends more than one gym period, a doctor's note needs to be given to the gym teacher and then forwarded to the nurse's office. For grading purposes, students who miss three or more gym periods in a six-week period will have to do an alternative assignment for the instructor.

Meal Program

Nativity of Mary School currently participates in the National School Lunch Program and the Minnesota Department of Education's Free School Meals Program. We offer breakfast and lunch on school days through a vended service, served by our staff and volunteers. Monthly menus are posted to our website and linked in weekly News & Notes emails. K-8 students may participate in our free breakfast and lunch program. It is also an option for students to bring a lunch from home.

Full day preschool students receive free breakfast, and two snacks. Half day preschool students receive free breakfast and a morning snack. Preschool students may purchase school lunch or bring lunch from home.

Applications for Educational Benefits

Nativity's eligibility for funding from federal programs such as the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), and federal after school snack and supper programs is based on free- and reduced-price meal eligibility. Students and families may qualify for other program fee reductions based on their eligibility for free- or reduced-price meals. Please request an [Application for Educational Benefits](#) from the school office or online at any time. Applications must be submitted each school year. If you require assistance with completing an Application for Educational Benefits, please contact the school office.

Breakfast

Breakfast is available to students who are registered with Creative Clubhouse from 8:45–9:15 a.m. The students will eat together in the cafeteria before heading up to their classrooms at 9:15 a.m.

A grab-and-go breakfast is available to students arriving via car or bus. It may be picked up from the entry door between 9:15–9:25 a.m. and taken to the student's classroom to consume between 9:15–9:30 a.m. Trash should be disposed of promptly and respectfully.

Lunch

Lunch is typically eaten in the school cafeteria during a specified time by classroom. There are three tables set aside for students with peanut allergies. Students will eat in their classrooms when the cafeteria is in use for other activities.

Payments

The Free School Meals Program applies to eligible reimbursable school breakfasts and lunches for students. Please see our [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) for details about eligibility. Charges will be applied for any second meals, adult meals, a la carte items, or items/meals that do not meet the reimbursable requirements. Please note that a milk by itself (e.g., to accompany a lunch brought from home) does not meet the minimum requirements to be claimed for reimbursement and will thus be charged as an a la carte item.

Payments for any of the above items can be made online via the TADS Educate system. Families are encouraged to deposit money and check their lunch balance monthly. Log in to your Educate account and go into the cafeteria module. If you need to make a cash or check payment, please label the envelope with your child's name and grade and bring it into the school office.

It is each family's responsibility to ensure that there are funds in your student's meal account. Nativity is not required to provide second meals, non-reimbursable meals, or a la carte items if a student does not have the funds available to pay for the item(s). It is recommended that all students

have some money in their accounts at all times in case they would like to purchase a la carte items or second meals.

If your student has a negative balance in Educate, you will receive an email. Any student who exceeds a meal deficit of \$100 will receive a notice to send cold lunches to school until the balance is paid off.

Questions

For additional information, please see our [Frequently Asked Questions document](#). You may also contact the school office.

Other School Activities

School Celebrations

Nativity of Mary School tries to foster a spirit of generosity and awareness of the poor throughout the year. For this reason, we will celebrate our holidays in this spirit through our involvement in special service projects and field trips. Service projects may include participating in our local chapter of VEAP, visiting nursing homes, or working with the businesses in the community. Students have also served the local Saint Vincent De Paul conference by participating in food and clothing drives and packing snack bags.

As each holiday draws near, we will discuss with the students what might be a meaningful way to celebrate the blessings God has given us. We feel that our children need to learn to share what they have with others, and in doing so we hope to see a difference in how they respond to the community in which they live. Classroom celebrations may be arranged in the beginning of the school year with individual teachers and volunteer room parents/guardians.

Student Gatherings Outside of School

We discourage the distributions of invitations at school. Please do not distribute invitations at school for any individual child's party unless the entire class is being invited.

Field Trips/Retreats

Our teachers arrange annual field trips/retreats that will broaden and deepen concepts being taught in the classroom. Teachers send home permission slips. No child may attend a field trip/retreat unless the signed permission slip has been returned from a parent/guardian. Field trip/retreat transportation will be provided by a school bus. In general, field trip fees are covered by the activity fee paid at the beginning of the year. Students must be in uniform unless otherwise specified.

Photography

Professional Photography

Photographs of each student are taken every school year using a third-party vendor. Photographs may be purchased at the discretion of the parent(s)/guardian(s). This is done through a prepayment program. Graduation photos are taken for 8th grade students. Graduation photographs will be hung in the school hallway and may also be purchased at the discretion of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Media Release Form

The parent(s)/guardian(s) of each child will be asked to sign a "Media Release Form" authorizing the school to take and use photographs of children for the school newsletter, school website, and for marketing purposes.

Safety and Security

Criminal Background Checks

In 2008, the Minnesota legislature made changes to the laws relating to the use of criminal background checks used in schools. Among the changes made is a requirement that all Minnesota schools notify parents and guardians each year about the school's criminal background check policy (Minnesota Laws, ch. 275, sec. 1 123B.03, Subd. 1(e)). This change went into effect September 1, 2008.

A school may decide not to conduct criminal background check on school volunteers who do not have regular or unsupervised contact with minors, as well as vendors or independent contractors.

Our policy at Nativity of Mary Catholic School is as follows.

Mandatory Criminal Background Check Policy

All employees as well as all school volunteers who have regular or unsupervised contact with minors are subject to criminal background checks.

The following positions are subject to mandatory background checks at Nativity of Mary School: teachers, parish staff employees, substitute teachers, tutors, academic coaches, athletic coaches, athletic director, extracurricular leaders, food service personnel, nurses, school staff members, and any volunteer in the school.

Code of Conduct & Safe Environment Training

In addition to the mandatory background check, all school volunteers must attend VIRTUS®safe environment training and keep up-to-date with requirements. They must also sign a code of conduct as a part of the VIRTUS training. These policies are in alignment with the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis's Safe Environment requirements. You may contact our Safe Environment Coordinator Joanne Rachel at jrachel@nativitybloomington.org with any questions about these requirements.

School Closings

Communication of School Closings

An email and text message will be sent out when Nativity of Mary School will be closed, starting late, or closing early. In addition, we post this information on our Facebook page and Instagram account. You may watch local news stations on television for school closings and emergencies at Nativity of Mary School and Parish. **We do follow the District #271 school closings/emergencies, but reserve the right as needed for our own determination for closings.** As a school, we will make that decision and post online and with local media, listed as Nativity of Mary School.

Cold Weather Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide a learning environment that is safe during extremely cold weather conditions and to take appropriate actions when it is not.
- Ensure that the decision to close the school is understood by and communicated to students, staff, parents, and caregivers.
- Take into account the needs of parents and caregivers.

- Keep to a minimum the amount of time the school is closed during adverse conditions.

In Extreme Cold Weather Circumstance

- Nativity of Mary will independently decide if school will be held, even if Bloomington Public Schools close for cold weather, extreme snow, or icy road conditions.
 - For cold weather, a guideline that will be used to make the decision will be that Nativity of Mary School will only be called off if the temperature with wind chill, according to forecasts, falls below -35 degrees Fahrenheit. If the temperature with wind chill is forecasted to be -35 F or warmer, we will not close school.
 - For snow and ice, Nativity of Mary will continue to follow closure decisions made by Bloomington Public Schools.
- Parents will be responsible for getting their students to and from school if Nativity of Mary is in session and the Bloomington busses are not running. (It will be a Parent Drive Day.)
- The same drop-off and pick-up procedures should be observed as on Parent Drive Days.
- Creative Clubhouse will operate as normal if the school remains open. If the school is closed, Creative Clubhouse is closed.
- Evening and extracurricular activities will be canceled as deemed appropriate by the school.
- In the event that Nativity of Mary closes for four or more days in a school year due to extreme weather, we reserve the right to add a make-up day to the school calendar.

Cold Weather Play

When school is in session, indoor recess will be mandatory when the temperature with wind chill is -5 degrees Fahrenheit or colder.

Support Services

Title I

The government-subsidized program that targets children who need special help in reading or mathematics in grades K-5, or as determined each year by the district. Each fall, classroom teachers are asked to conduct an assessment to determine a child's eligibility. Nativity students will participate in national assessments to determine eligibility.

Special Learning Disabilities & Speech

A teacher may recommend or a parent may request to have a student assessed for special learning disabilities. Specialists trained to evaluate individual student needs review this request. If the request is approved to have a student assessed, he/she is given relevant educational tests. Specialists evaluate the results of these tests. Recommendations are then made to the parents. If intervention is indicated, arrangements are made to transport the child to Oak Grove (less than five minutes away), as determined by their need.

Guidance Service

A consulting school counselor is a member of our school staff. This person specializes in children and adolescents, particularly school and family issues. The counselor routinely sees students at their request, parent request, or at the referral of a teacher or administrator with parents' permission. If you do not want your child(ren) to see the counselor, please send a memorandum to the school office.

Transportation

Bus Transportation

Eligibility

School District #271 provides bus transportation for all Bloomington resident students. There is no charge for bussing. Nativity of Mary students that reside in Bloomington, have daycare outside of school hours at a Bloomington address, or participate in the Pay-to-Ride program may use bussing services to and from Nativity of Mary School.

Our bus managers and drivers work cooperatively in establishing bus routes. Students are only allowed to ride the bus to which they are assigned by the Bloomington Transportation Department. Students may not ride a bus home with a friend if it is not on their assigned bus. For the safety of students, students are to get off at their assigned stop. Students are not allowed to shuttle or transfer busses at other schools without permission.

Changes

Any changes to bussing arrangements require a parental/guardian note to the school office and the bus driver. **Phone calls are not acceptable for this type of change.**

Notification of change of address should be directed to Nativity of Mary School at 952-881-8160.

Bussing App

Nativity of Mary families that utilize bussing through Bloomington Public Schools can gain access to the [MyStop app](#). My Stop is a web-based application families can use to view current bus locations and the estimated time of arrival at their neighborhood bus stop. Contact the Nativity of Mary school secretary to get login information to the MyStop App.

Transportation Questions

Questions regarding bus transportation should be directed to the Bloomington Transportation Office at 952-681-6319.

Bus Safety and Behavior Expectations

Nativity of Mary School would like to remind students and their families that **bus transportation is a privilege, not a right**. All students participate in required bus safety drills and review bus behavior expectations in their classroom/homeroom at the beginning of the school year. Parents should also periodically review bus regulations with their student(s). **Please impress upon your children the importance of bus safety!**

Any student that violates the behavior expectations established by the Bloomington School Bus Ridership Program or compromises the safety of himself/herself or others on the bus will not be allowed to ride the bus for a time determined by administration, in consultation with Bloomington Public Transportation. Administration will communicate bus behavior violations and consequences to parents/guardians.

Follow this link for more detailed information on bus behavior expectations and consequences:
<https://www.bloomington.k12.mn.us/sites/default/files/2019-11/BPS%20Bus%20Transportation%20Guide.pdf>

Please contact the Assistant Principal with bus-related concerns.

Arrival and Dismissal

Students may be dropped off at school between 9:15–9:30 a.m. The school day starts at 9:30 a.m. Door 14, the main school office door, is programmed to unlock at 9:15 a.m. and lock again at 9:30 a.m. Students should not be dropped off prior to 9:15 a.m. The doors will be locked and there will not be supervision outside prior to 9:15. If you need childcare before school, Creative Clubhouse is an option that Nativity offers. Please contact the Creative Clubhouse Director.

If you need to enter school after 9:30 a.m. (e.g., for a late drop-off or to volunteer), enter the first set of doors at Door 14. Press the button on the wall to be buzzed in. Sign in at the school office.

No students are allowed to exit the school building unless a supervising adult is present and indicates that it is safe to exit. Only preschool students, kindergarten students, and students of teachers who are supervising dismissal are permitted to exit the school building before 4:00 p.m.

Early or Late Arrivals or Departures

Students will be released after school to authorized persons only. Any student arriving at school after 9:30 a.m. must be signed in by a parent or guardian at the school office. Any child leaving school before dismissal time must be signed out by a parent/guardian in the school office. In emergency situations or in a case where you are running late and are not at school by 4:10 p.m. for pickup, students will be sent to the school office to wait for their ride.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Nativity of Mary staff is committed to ensuring the safety of our community and using efficient procedures that facilitate the arrival and dismissal of students. Please follow the guidelines to ensure a safe entrance and dismissal.

Student Drop-Off/Pickup via Car, Bike, or Foot

All students who are being transported to school by their parents/guardians are to be dropped off and picked up using the *North Parking Lot*.

Guidelines

- *Safety first*, efficiency second
- Follow the instructions of supervising staff
 - Staff members assist with afternoon pickup in the North Lot, supervising crosswalks and directing car traffic.
 - One staff member supervises morning drop-off.
- In the morning, students must enter school via *Door 14 only* (school office door). Door 12 and Door 1, although close to the crosswalks, are not designated entrances for arrival.
- Vehicles
 - Please enter the lot via the easternmost access point.
 - Form two lines until reaching the sidewalk, at which a single-file line should be formed.
 - Proceed all the way to the front of the line/first available space to avoid holding up the line behind you. Do not stop in the middle of the line of cars.
 - Keep crosswalks open for foot traffic. Do not stop your vehicle in the middle of a crosswalk.
 - For visibility and safety, students should only exit or enter vehicles from the driver's side doors.

- All families with preschool students or students that require assistance getting out of/into the vehicle *must park* to avoid disruption in the car line.
- Pedestrians
 - If you will be walking your child to the door, please only cross the north parking lot at the designated crosswalks. Crosswalks are painted bright yellow and are located in front of the preschool playground and Door 1 (church entrance). Staff will help pedestrians safely cross at the crosswalks. *Only cross the parking lot at these designated crosswalks.*

A bike rack is available for use near Door 12. It is recommended to use a bike lock.

Parent Drive Days

There are typically a few days throughout the school year when bussing is not available. In these cases, the following additional guidelines apply.

- K-8 families with last names that start with A-L
 - Drop-off/pickup in the North Lot
- K-8 families with last names that start with M-Z
 - Drop off/pickup in the South Lot
- Preschool students and their siblings should *always* be dropped off/picked up from the *North Lot*.
- Cross on foot only in designated crosswalks (North Lot) or as indicated by a staff patrol (South Lot).

Student Drop-Off/Pickup via Bus

All students who are being transported to school via bus will be dropped off and picked up using the *South Parking Lot*.

Guidelines:

- *Safety first*, efficiency second
- Follow the instructions of supervising staff and bus drivers
 - Two staff members supervise bus arrival in the South Lot and three staff members supervise bus departure. At departure, one staff member will be located at the end of the bus line and another will be located at the beginning of the bus line. The third staff member will direct bus traffic and communicate with drivers and the front office.
 - Failure to comply with staff or bus driver instructions will result in removal from the bus. Parents will be contacted to arrange alternate transportation for their student(s).
- Arrival
 - 9:15–9:30 a.m.
 - Observe caution when exiting the bus. Be mindful of puddles and ice on the sidewalk.
 - Enter the school via *Door 10*.
- Dismissal
 - 4:00–4:15 p.m.

Uniform Code

School Uniform Code and Personal Appearance

Nativity of Mary School believes that students must possess and project an image of personal and academic quality. The values that this school wishes to instill in its students, and to be perceived by the public, are those, which are in alignment with the school's philosophy and mission. Therefore, Nativity of Mary students are to be neatly and uniformly dressed while arriving, attending, and

leaving school. To ensure a positive and uniform appearance for our students, clothing must be in accordance with the School Uniform Code.

Requirements of the Basic School Uniform (Grades K-8)

Pants/Shorts

- All pants must be:
 - Dark navy blue cotton twill (not denim or corduroy).
 - With four inset pockets.
 - With a pleated front or a flat front.
 - Straight fit (no flared legs).
- Types of pants that are not allowed include the following.
 - Zipper pockets
 - Flaps on pockets
 - “Cargo” style pants/pockets
 - “Tech” pants
 - Leggings (unless worn underneath a jumper or skirt)
- Shorts
 - Navy blue pleated front or flat front shorts may be worn through September 30th and starting April 1st. (If the weather is unusually hot, the dates may change at the discretion of the principal.)
 - Shorts length must be three inches above the knee or longer.
- Pants and shorts are to be worn at the waist, above the hips.

Shirts

- Options for shirts include the following.
 - White or hunter green short-sleeved or long-sleeved polo shirts (must be worn tucked in). *Must be embroidered with the current school logo.*
 - White or hunter green short-sleeved or long-sleeved banded “no tuck” shirts. *Must be embroidered with the current school logo.*
 - White or hunter green turtleneck shirts. *Must be embroidered with the current school logo.*
 - White short-sleeved or long-sleeved “Peter Pan” style blouses (found at uniform stores).
- 3/4 length sleeves are not allowed.
- All shirts must have buttons, not snaps.
- If a t-shirt is worn underneath a uniform shirt, it must be white with no print or image on it. A plain white long-sleeved shirt may not be worn under a short-sleeved uniform shirt.
- Except for the top button, shirts or blouses are to be buttoned up.

Jumpers/Skirts

- Grades K-5
 - Girls may wear a Nativity of Mary plaid uniform jumper.
 - Jumpers must be three inches above the knee or longer.
- Grades 6-8
 - Girls may wear a Nativity of Mary plaid uniform skirt.
 - Skirts must be three inches above the knee or longer.
 - Skirts must not be rolled or folded over at the waist.
- Leggings
 - Leggings may be worn under jumpers or skirts if desired.
 - If worn, they must be navy blue, and they must go down to the ankle.
 - Leggings are not to be worn on their own, as uniform pants.

Sweatshirts/Cardigans

- Grades K-5
 - Navy blue sweatshirts with the current school logo may be worn.
 - A navy blue cardigan with the current school logo may be worn.
- Grades 6-8
 - Navy blue or hunter green sweatshirts with the current school logo may be worn.
 - A navy blue or white cardigan with the current school logo may be worn.
 - A uniform shirt must be worn underneath any sweatshirt or cardigan.

Jackets

- The only acceptable jacket worn in the classroom is a full-zip navy blue uniform fleece jacket with the current school logo.
- Outdoor jackets, fleece jackets, and sweatshirts that are not part of the approved school uniform may not be worn in the classroom during the school day and must be kept in lockers.

Shoes

- Dress shoes or tennis shoes may be worn.
- Flip flop sandals, Crocs or other similar foam footwear, and open-toed sandals of any kind are not allowed.
- Keen-type of shoes are allowed.
- Outdoor/snow boots may not be worn in the classroom.
- Any heels on shoes must not be more than two inches high.
- Shoes with laces must be tied at all times.
- Socks must be worn with shoes.

Socks

- Ankle socks must be solid in color and can be white, navy blue, or black.
- Girls have the option to wear solid white or navy blue knee high socks (pulled up to the knee) or tights.

Belts

- Belts are optional.
- If a belt is worn, it must be solid brown, black, tan, white, or navy blue.
- Oversized belt buckles are not allowed.

Requirements for School Uniform Appearance

- Hats, headgear, and sunglasses may not be worn during the school day (including out-of-uniform days).
- Jackets may not be worn during the school day and should be kept in the student's locker.
- All clothing is to be kept clean and in good repair.
- All clothing must be appropriately sized.
- No logos or designer names can appear on clothing.
- Uniforms must be worn on Mass Days (exception: last week of school).

Personal Appearance Guidelines

Hairstyles and Hair Accessories

- Hairstyles and hair accessories should not draw undue attention to the student.
- Hair colors other than normal tones are not allowed (e.g., green, red, pink, yellow, blue, orange, purple).
- Hair paint or chalk is not allowed.
- Haircuts should be neat, with no barriers to visual ability.

Jewelry

- Simple jewelry is acceptable as long as it does not cause a distraction or safety hazard.
- Earrings must be the size of a dime or smaller.
- For safety reasons, earrings may not be long or dangling.

Makeup

- Minimal makeup may be worn in middle school (grades 6-8) only.

Piercings

- Visible body piercings are not allowed, with the exception of pierced ears.

Nails

- Fake nails are not allowed.

Out-of-Uniform Day Requirements

- Clothing must be modest, clean, and in good condition.
- Clothing must not mention alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or vulgar language.
- Clothing must not display explicit sexual or violence-based images.
- Hats, headgear, and sunglasses may not be worn during the school day.
- Shirts
 - Midriffs may not be exposed.
 - Halter tops are not allowed.
 - Tank tops/sleeveless shirts must have straps that are at least three-fingers' wide.
- Pants/shorts
 - Cutoff shorts, short shorts, and sagging pants are not allowed.
 - Short length must be three inches above the knee or longer.
 - Shorts can only be worn until Sept. 30 and after April 1.
 - Yoga-type pants or bicycle-type shorts may only be worn if shirt length goes to the mid-thigh.
- Approved organized activity apparel may be allowed on the days the students are participating in that event (e.g., Scout uniforms, Student Leadership Team, Patrol). Eighth Grade graduation t-shirts may be worn by 8th graders on Fridays.
- For concerts and graduation, shoulders must be covered during the event and reception, following the “three-finger rule.”

Uniform Code Enforcement

1. If a student violates the uniform policy for the first time, the student will be sent to the office to get the proper attire.
2. For all subsequent offenses, a form will be sent home with the violation. Parents will be called to bring in the correct articles of clothing.

Uniform Supplier

Nativity of Mary School's recommended uniform supplier is Educational Outfitters, located at 6002 Excelsior Blvd., St. Louis Park, MN. Website and telephone number: www.educationaloutfitters.com; 952-927-6778.

Visitors

Visits to School

We encourage parents and guardians to attend school meetings, conferences, open houses, special programs, and Catholic Schools' Week activities. Parents wishing to volunteer or make classroom visits should contact the individual teacher and the school office in advance. VIRTUS training will be required (see the *Safety and Security* section of this handbook).

During school hours, all visitors must check in with the office before proceeding to a classroom. Visitors are required to wear a badge. **Please make sure to contact teachers and administration in advance to make appointments.**

Non-Custodial Parents

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of all students, custodial parents/guardians are asked to provide the school with a copy of the custody section of their divorce decree or other comparable custody documentation. This information will assist school officials in determining when, if ever, a child can be released to non-custodial parents or guardians.

Volunteers

Volunteers

Many of the educational opportunities at Nativity of Mary School would not be possible without the help of our volunteers. Volunteers help in the lunchroom, at recess, in the library, as classroom parents, coaches, running clubs and many other events and activities that occur during the school year. Families are asked to fill out a volunteer registration form (paper or online) at the start of each school year and are expected to volunteer at least 20 hours per year to fill the estimated 8,000 hours needed. If you have any questions about volunteer opportunities, please contact the school office or visit the Nativity webpage under the Support tab.

Volunteers working with students are required to have a background check, code of conduct, and be VIRTUS-trained before participating as a volunteer. See the *Safety & Security* section of this handbook for details.

School Advisory Council (SAC)

The purpose of the School Advisory Council is to:

- Provide counsel, advice, and support to the school principal and the pastor to ensure that policies and programs at Nativity of Mary School are consistent with the school's mission and philosophy.

- Provide counsel, advice, and support to the school principal and the pastor in the operation of the school.
- Provide counsel, advice, and support to the school principal and the pastor in the development and implementation of school policies, as well as to monitor the use and implementation of approved policies.

Interested parents and staff apply in the spring of each year to serve a three-year term on the Council. The nominating committee reviews the submitted applications and appoints the new members.

The Council meets monthly. All regular meetings of the School Advisory Council shall be opened to interested parties. All interested parties are invited to attend regular council meetings as observers. Agenda items may be submitted by any interested party to the principal but must pertain to policy matters and must be received at least ten days before the regular meeting. Non-council members who wish to speak at the council meeting must submit their request in writing to the principal no less than ten days before the scheduled meeting.

Nativity of Mary Athletics

Mission Statement

The mission of the Nativity of Mary Athletics program is to allow the students of Nativity of Mary the opportunity to participate in an athletic program that provides an atmosphere that encourages the mental, emotional, physical, and moral development of each participant.

It is the responsibility of the Nativity of Mary School and its coaches to teach an understanding and knowledge of the activity and to promote safe play by each participant. The athletic director and his or her coaches will also promote respect towards teammates, officials, coaches, other teams, school facilities, and equipment.

Athletic Director

The athletic director reports to the school principal. The athletic director provides leadership so that the athletic program is understood and appreciated as being a part of the total educational program of the school.

League Associations

Nativity of Mary School belongs to the South Side Youth Organization (SSYO), which coordinates team and individual activities throughout the school year. Nativity of Mary School follows the policies set forth by the [SSYO](#). The athletic director will evaluate and possibly participate in additional activities outside the SSYO.

Eligibility, Membership Fees, and Forms

To join a Nativity of Mary School athletic team, participants must be currently-enrolled students in Nativity of Mary School. With approval from the athletic director, registered members of Nativity of Mary parish who are not enrolled in Nativity of Mary School (e.g., are homeschooled) may join a Nativity of Mary athletic team.

A sports fee is due before the beginning of each season. No child will be excluded from the program because of inability to pay all or part of the fees. If finances are a concern, the parent or guardian should contact the athletic director or the school administrator. All participants and parents/guardians

are asked to sign a participation agreement, which confirms their agreement with the policy and the code of conduct of Nativity of Mary School.

All 7th and 8th grade students must have a sports physical form completed by a parent/guardian and physician. The form must be submitted to the school Health Office before a student is eligible to participate in any sports activity.

Activities

Nativity of Mary School offers the following activities to eligible participants. Actual team offerings may vary on a yearly basis depending on the availability of coaching volunteers and student registration levels.

Fall

- Intramural Soccer: Boys and girls; grades K-4
- Volleyball: Girls; grades 4-8
- League Soccer: Boys and girls; grades 5-8
- Soccer: Boys and girls; grades 5-8

Winter

- Intramural Basketball: Boys and girls; grades K-1
- Basketball: Boys and girls; grades 2-8

Spring

- Softball: Girls; grades 5-8
- Baseball: Boys; grades 5-8

Levels of Sports

Intramural

Grades K - 4 Soccer

Grades K - 1 Basketball

The intramural program stresses equal participation by all players and an introduction to the basic skills of the sport.

2nd/3rd Grade League

Grades 2 - 3 Basketball

This level is an instructional level intended to teach the players the basic skills needed for an actual game situation.

Cub Level

Grades 4 - 6

The Cub level is an instructional league. All players should know the basic skills at the end of the season. It is mandatory that all players participate to some extent in each game with a seasonal goal toward equal participation providing they have met the team rules concerning practice and conduct.

Varsity Level

Grades 6 - 8

The Varsity level of sports enables coaches to develop players to their fullest potential. Competition level and game participation is to be determined through decisions of coaches. The goal is to allow each player the opportunity to participate.

The role of the athletic director will be to determine the pool of athletes from which the teams will be selected. The primary consideration in determining the pool will be the number of athletes available at each grade level. After the pool is determined, the athletic director will meet with the prospective coaches to select the teams. In the event of disagreement on team assignment, the athletic director will have the authority to determine the team roster.

Funding

Nativity of Mary School Athletics is funded from the following sources.

- Sports fees
- Donations
- Plant Sale
- Concessions
- Other fundraising as needed with prior approval from school administrator

Insurance

Parents are responsible for medical and accident insurance for student athletes. The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis currently provides a Student Accident Insurance Program to help pay the excess medical bills incurred when a student is injured. The parent's medical insurance coverage will still be primary.

Athletics Grievance Procedure

If you wish to discuss concerns or problems, it is best to begin with the person with whom you are having difficulty. Usually, sitting down and communicating openly is the most efficient and effective way to resolve conflicts.

Therefore, the grievance procedure is as follows.

1. Meet with the coach and discuss the conflict.
2. If there is no resolution, meet with the coach and athletic director.
3. If no resolution, meet with the coach, athletic director, and the school administrator.

The athletic director and the school administration will make final decisions.

See the *Grievance Procedure* section for how to handle grievances that are not related to athletics.

Nativity of Mary School Sports Participation Agreement

The following requirements apply to all athletes of Nativity of Mary who participate in the school's sports programs.

1. Honor your commitment to the team by being on time for all practices and games. (If you are unable to attend, your coach must be notified in advance.)
2. Good sportsmanship is first and foremost. There will be absolutely no arguing or abusive language or actions towards any player, coach, parent, or game official. You are representing not only Nativity of Mary but yourself and your family as well.
3. Follow all regulations pertaining to the use of the school, gym, and locker rooms. This includes showing respect for coaches, teammates, other players, other schools, and their property.

4. Coaches will be required to keep their scheduled practice times. Therefore, parents are expected to pick up players promptly at the scheduled end of practice and games. Coaches will not drive players home. Parents must make arrangements to pick up their students on time.
5. Coaches will determine penalties for missing practices or games. An attempt will be made to schedule at least two practices each week. Participants must attend at least one practice per week to be eligible to play in games. Also, those participants who attend all practices will be given playing time priority.
6. Players will wear the uniform that is assigned to them. No other shorts, sweatpants, etc., may be worn under or instead of the uniform. If a t-shirt is worn under the jersey, it must be the **same** color as the jersey. Any player not in the proper uniform will not be allowed to participate in the game until she or he is in proper uniform. Nativity of Mary sport uniforms are to be worn for games only. Uniforms are not to be worn for practice, out of uniform days, etc.
7. Athletes must attend a **full day** of school in order to compete in an athletic contest that same day. Non-illness/injury absences may be excused but must be confirmed with the athletic director. Any student leaving school early to attend SSYO/Nativity of Mary games will receive an unexcused tardy.
8. Players and parents agree to return the uniform to the athletic director at the end of the season. A per day fine will be assessed for any and all uniforms not returned by the date designated by the athletic director.
9. Each participant in a sporting activity must demonstrate a proven effort, in the opinion of the classroom teachers and/or parent/guardian, to progress academically during each sport season.
10. The player and parents acknowledge that the participant is in proper physical condition to participate in any and all athletics at Nativity of Mary School. All 7th and 8th grade students must have a sports physical form completed by the parent/guardian and physician. This form must be submitted to the school Health Office before a student is eligible to participate in any sports activity.

Knights Code Behavior Expectation & Discipline Policy Guidelines


Enacted September 2024

I. Philosophy


Nativity of Mary believes that each student is responsible for his/her own behavior in all aspects of the school day. Our behavior approach teaches respectful, responsible, safe, and Christ-like behaviors that create an environment in which all students achieve academic, spiritual, social and emotional success on their journey toward becoming future saints. Nativity of Mary prioritizes student relationships and modeling the positive behaviors described in the Knights Code behavior matrix.

Nativity of Mary Staff will follow steps in the Discipline Referral Chart and Progressive Discipline Policy when students are not meeting behavior expectations. Minor incidents will receive reteaching, positive reminders, and/or logical consequences. Students that require repeated reteaching of the Knights Code, and major behavior violations, will complete Knights Code Think Sheets and incidents will be recorded.

II. Nativity of Mary School Behavior Expectations

 NATIVITY <i>of</i> MARY SCHOOL	KNIGHTS C.O.D.E. BEHAVIOR MATRIX			
	C Committed To Christ-like Conduct	O Owning Your Own Actions	D Demonstrating Respectful Behavior	E Ensuring Safety For All
In The Classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words and actions Include others Help others Be compassionate Forgive classmates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use time as directed Keep locker organized Come to school prepared Care for classroom materials, furniture, supplies, and equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and follow adult directions Use appropriate volume Follow established classroom rules Speak in turn, listen to classmates Wear appropriate uniform/clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect personal space Use classroom materials appropriately Use walking feet
In The Hallways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words and actions Hold doors Extend silent greetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get materials in a timely manner Keep personal items (phones, snacks, toys, health/beauty products) in lockers Keep hallway clean and organized Close and open lockers gently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and follow directions of any adult or safety patrol Use appropriate volume Stay in line spot Show respect for classes and staff working when traveling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect personal space Keep feet on the ground Clean up spills from drinking fountain Use walking feet
In The Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words and actions Show consideration for others using the bathroom Use water and paper towels in appropriate amounts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be timely Flush toilets Wash hands well Put paper towels in trash bins Only flush toilet paper and bodily waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and follow directions of any adult Use appropriate volume Respect others' space and boundaries Only one person per stall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect personal space Report suspicious behavior to teachers Technology-free zone
Using Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words and actions All content must be school appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport chromebook safely Cell phone turned off, stays in backpack the entire day Smart watches not connected to devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and follow directions of any adult Use appropriate volume Use websites approved by teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only use device assigned to you Use websites approved by teachers
In The Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words and actions Include others Use share bin Show gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on eating Dump milk properly Clean up spills Bring what you need down to the cafeteria Make responsible lunch choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and follow adult directions Use appropriate volume Raise your hand Keep food on tray and hands on own food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect personal space Follow allergy table expectations Stay seated Walk
On The Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words and actions Include others Demonstrate good sportsmanship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End games when whistle blows and line up quickly Use and return equipment properly Ask for verbal permission to enter the building outside of scheduled times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and follow directions of any adult or safety patrol Use appropriate volume Respect personal space and boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect personal space Stay in boundaries Keep snow, sticks, and rocks on the ground Wear appropriate clothing for the weather
In The Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words and actions Participate in Mass Observe silent prayer after Mass Treat church as sacred space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be a positive example for younger students Close kneelers and books gently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and follow directions of any adult Use appropriate volume Pay attention to the Mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait to be dismissed Leave calmly and slowly Walk
Arrival/Dismissal & On The Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use kind words and actions Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be prepared to exit vehicles safely and quickly Be a positive example for other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and follow directions of any adult Use appropriate volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk on sidewalks Walk bicycles on sidewalks Watch for cars and others Cross at designated areas Exit vehicle on driver-side when possible

III. Nativity of Mary Administration Referral and Progressive Discipline

 NATIVITY of MARY SCHOOL		<h2>KNIGHTS C.O.D.E. DISCIPLINE REFERRAL CHART</h2>			
	Level 1 Incidental Violation	Level 2 Minor Violation	Level 3 Major Violation	Level 4 Illegal Violation	
Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not following Knights Code behavior expectations. Including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ignoring directions -Not completing work -Disruptive behavior -Small acts of social aggression (poking fun, name calling, exclusion, whispering, snickering, eye rolling) -Lingering in hallways/bathroom -Uniform violation -Lying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not following Knights Code behavior expectations. Including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pattern of Level 1 violations -Inappropriate language/gestures -Escalated acts of social aggression -Cheating/plagiarism -Technology violation -Engaging in unsafe behavior -Property destruction -Cell phone use during school -Inappropriate physical contact -Lying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not following Knights Code behavior expectations. Including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -THREE minor violations recorded in tracking system -Direct, inappropriate language or gesture -Harassment/bullying -Recording/photographing without consent -Property destruction -Overt defiance -Fighting -Theft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not following Knights Code behavior expectations. Including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Arson -Bomb threat -Weapon threat -Drug use/possession -Vaping/possession -Weapon use/possession 	
Referral to Admin?	• Non Referral	• Non Referral	• Referral	• Referral	
Recorded in Educate?	• Not Recorded in Educate	• Recorded in Educate	• Recorded in Educate	• Recorded in Educate	
Responsible Party?	• Managed by Staff	• Family contact by Staff involved with the situation	• Family contact by Administration	• Family contact by Administration	
Possible Logical Consequence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal warning Reset in another classroom Missing recess/playtime Apology of word or action "You break it, you fix it" Take a break 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family contact by Staff Classroom Think Sheet completed with staff and maintained by homeroom teacher Loss of privilege Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin referral Think Sheet Conference with student and family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin referral Think Sheet Conference with student and family Possible referral to law enforcement 	



KNIGHTS C.O.D.E. PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PLAN

NATIVITY
of **MARY**
SCHOOL

	Violation #1	Violation #2	Violation #3	Every Knight! Every day. Whatever it takes!
Level 1 Incidental Violation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled in classroom • Verbal warning • Redirection/reset • Logical consequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled in classroom • Verbal warning • Redirection /reset • Logical consequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes a Level 2 Minor Violation 	
Level 2 Minor Violation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled in classroom • Think Sheet • Logical consequence • Staff notifies family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handled in classroom • Think Sheet • Logical consequence • Staff notifies family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes a Level 3 Major Violation 	
Level 3 Major Violation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office referral • Think Sheet • Logical consequence • Family contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office referral • Think Sheet • Logical consequence • Family contact • Family meeting with Admin • Option for behavior contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office referral • Think Sheet • Logical consequence • Family contact • Option for behavior contract • Option for suspension • Option for expulsion 	
Level 4 Illegal Violation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office referral • Think Sheet • Logical consequence • Family contact • Option for behavior contract • Option for suspension • Option for expulsion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office referral • Think Sheet • Logical consequence • Family contact • Option for behavior contract • Option for suspension • Option for expulsion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office referral • Think Sheet • Logical consequence • Family contact • Option for behavior contract • Option for suspension • Option for expulsion 	

IV. Prohibited Conduct

Nativity of Mary School specifically prohibits **any** willful conduct by students which, in the opinion of the school:

- violates or may violate any rule of conduct or school policy.
- disrupts or threatens to disrupt the ability of others to obtain an education.
- endangers or has the potential to endanger the student or other students, faculty, administration, or the property of the school in any way.
- adversely affects the desirability of continued enrollment.

Specific examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. Violations Against Persons

1. Assault
2. Battery
3. Sexual Conduct – inappropriate behavior or criminal behavior.
4. Fighting – mutual combat in which both parties have contributed to the situation by verbal or physical action.
5. Bullying – including, but not limited to, physical and/or verbal abuse
6. Harassment – including, but not limited to, sexual and/or racial harassment
7. Inappropriate or profane language
8. Terroristic threat
9. Weapons - all possession and/or use of any device or instrument capable of, or appearing to be capable of inflicting serious bodily harm.

B. Violations Against Property

1. Property destruction
2. Vandalism
3. Theft/burglary
4. Trespassing
5. Robbery/extortion
6. Fires and false alarms - including, but not limited to, arson, negligence, false fire alarm, and unauthorized use of fire extinguisher
7. Pyrotechnic and explosive devices – any and all use or possession of any such devices, including fireworks
8. Computer and technology misuse or abuse

C. Other Violations

1. **Gang** activity in any and all forms is strictly prohibited
2. **Gambling**, poker, and games of chance for stakes are prohibited on school grounds
3. **Tobacco** possession or use is strictly prohibited
4. **Vape Products** possession or use is strictly prohibited
5. **Mood altering chemicals/alcohol** – any use, possession, buying, selling, or giving away of such substances on school grounds, the school bus, or while attending school sponsored events is strictly prohibited
6. **Leaving the school building** without permission is prohibited
7. **Cell phones/Ipods/Electronic Device/Smart Watches** – Unauthorized use of any kind which includes, but is not limited to, phone calls, picture taking, text messaging, etc., is prohibited during the school day. Smart watches may not be connected to devices in lockers, and students should not be able to send/receive messages. Students may bring a cell phone or electronic device to school, but it needs to remain in the student's locker or backpack once they enter the building in the morning until they are dismissed at the end of the day, unless given permission by staff. Students should not carry any unapproved electronic devices around school with them during the school day. If a student has an electronic device in possession during the school day or uses it the consequences are as follows:
 - a. **If an electronic device is out during a test, the student will have the device taken away and receive a zero on the test.**
 - b. If a student has an unauthorized device out during the school day at any other time, consequences follow:
 - i. **First offense:** the phone is taken and given back at the end of the day.
 - ii. **Second offense:** the phone is taken and a parent has to pick up the phone. Parents will be notified.
 - iii. **Third offense and beyond:** the phone is taken and the student will have a further consequence as determined by administration/teacher. Parents will be notified.
8. **Laser pens are not allowed in school**, on school grounds, or on the bus. If a student brings a laser pen, it will be stored in the office until the end of the school year.
9. **Chewing gum** is prohibited on campus, unless provided by Nativity Staff or special circumstances allow.

V. Violation Levels

Minor Misconduct

Minor misconduct includes, but is not limited to: violations of the *Knights Code Behavior Matrix* set forth herein and any other school policies (including but not limited to, the uniform code, internet policy, attendance policy, bus regulations). Discipline for minor misconduct or infractions will be managed by the Nativity Staff and school administration.

Major Misconduct

Student conduct which, in the opinion of the school, constitutes major misconduct, will result in detention, removal from class, in or out-of -school suspension or expulsion. Major misconduct includes, but is not limited to behavior constituting **Prohibited Conduct** as set forth herein.

Major Misconduct Investigation Procedure

- A. Upon receipt of a report or complaint that alleges major misconduct, the Principal shall undertake an investigation. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may include other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator. The Principal may take immediate steps, at the Principal's discretion, to protect the complainant, student(s) or others, pending completion of an investigation of bullying, consistent with applicable law.
- B. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the Principal should consider the surrounding circumstances, the developmental and maturity levels and/or special needs of the students, the nature of the behavior, past incidents, and/or continuing patterns of behavior or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. Whether a particular action(s) or incident(s) constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination by the Principal based on all the facts and the surrounding circumstances.
- C. Upon completion of the investigation, the Principal will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, detention, suspension, exclusion, expulsion or other actions outlined in Section I above. Disciplinary consequences will try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior.
- D. The Principal is not authorized to disclose to a victim educational or personnel data, including any disciplinary action taken against an alleged perpetrator. To the extent permitted by law, the Principal will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student(s) involved in an incident, based on a substantiated report.

Definitions

Removal from Class: any action taken by a teacher, administrator or school to prohibit a student from attending his/her classroom activity period for a period of not more than one day. Work will be assigned and must be completed by the student.

In-School Suspension: a student will be assigned to an out-of-classroom space in school for up to 3 days. Work will be assigned and will need to be completed by the student.

Out-of-School Suspension: an action taken by the school to prohibit a student from attending school for a period of not more than 5 days. While at home, work will be assigned and must be completed by the student. The student will not be allowed to return to school until the student and the parents or guardians have had a conference with the principal.

Expulsion: action taken by the school to prohibit an enrolled student from further attendance at the school.

Bullying Prevention

Purpose and Policy

I. Purpose

The climate of Nativity of Mary Catholic School is one where religious formation and human development are fostered and intricately connected. Students are empowered to gain confidence in social interactions, thus learning to respect themselves and others, solve problems, accept responsibility and make choices that serve the common good. Student self-discipline is the desired goal. The school and parents will work together to achieve this goal. This policy documents Nativity of Mary School's position on bullying and requires a system be established and maintained safeguarding our learning and working environment from acts of bullying.

II. Policy

- A. Position: Nativity of Mary School encourages a welcoming school environment and expects students and employees to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

Nativity of Mary recognizes that a school that is physically and emotionally safe and secure for all students and staff promotes religious formation and human development, good citizenship, increases student attendance and engagement, and supports academic achievement. To protect the rights of all students and staff for a safe and secure learning environment any acts of bullying are expressly prohibited.

- B. Definition: "Bullying" is defined as any unwanted aggressive behavior that is intentional, hurtful, and repeated harassment of a victim or victims by individuals or groups of individuals. It can take the form of physical, verbal, or written act or gesture (including electronically transmitted acts, i.e. cyber bullying, through the use of internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant [pda], computer, or wireless handheld device, currently in use or later developed) that is reasonably perceived as being dehumanizing, intimidating, hostile, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise likely to evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress and which may also be motivated, but not limited, by bias or prejudice based upon any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic, or is based upon association with another person who has or is perceived to have any distinguishing characteristic. Bullying behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time and a perceived or actual imbalance of power often exists. Bullying behaviors that violate rules and procedures and are counter-productive to fostering a positive educational environment will be addressed by respectfully teaching the student an alternative, pro-social behavior.

Bullying Prevention

I. Bullying Prevention Policy

The Nativity of Mary School Advisory Council has established a Bullying Prevention policy to address and prevent bullying and to take action to investigate, respond, remediate, and discipline acts of bullying. The system will also address false reporting, false accusations, and acts of retaliation.

Nativity of Mary prohibits the bullying of any student, group of students, or school employee:

- a. during any educational program or activity conducted by Nativity of Mary; Nativity of Mary property may include a student's walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school related functions, activities, or events.
- b. during any school related or school sponsored program or activity or on any Nativity of Mary property, including any Nativity of Mary school bus and bus stops;
- c. through the use of any electronic device, technology or data while on school property, using computer software that is accessed through a Nativity of Mary school computer, computer system, or computer network. The physical location or time of access of a computer related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action initiated under this section.
- d. who directly engages in an act of bullying, or by indirect behavior, condones or supports another student's act of bullying; and
- e. Nativity of Mary cannot monitor all activities and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when one or more of the students involved is not on school property or at school-related functions or under the direct supervision of school personnel. However, to the extent that such conduct affects the educational environment at Nativity of Mary School, Nativity of Mary School reserves the right to take action to investigate and respond to such conduct.
- f. While prohibiting bullying at these locations and events, the Nativity of Mary School does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations and events.
- g. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the Nativity of Mary School shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying.
- h. Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- i. Retaliation against a target of bullying, good faith reporter, or a witness to bullying is prohibited.
- j. False accusations or reports of bullying against another student are prohibited.
- k. A person who engages in an act of bullying, reprisal, or false reporting of bullying shall be subject to discipline for that act in accordance with Nativity of Mary's policies and procedures. A person who permits, condones, or tolerates bullying may be subject to discipline for that act in accordance with Nativity of Mary's policies and procedures. Nativity of Mary School may take into account the following factors:
 1. The developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved;
 2. The levels of harm, circumstances, and nature of the behavior;
 3. Past incidences, or previous or continuing patterns of behavior;

4. The relationship between the parties involved; and
5. The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Consequences

Consequences for students who commit prohibited acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions including, but not limited to: referral to a school counselor, empathy training, and/or referrals to outside agencies.

Other consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Loss of free time;
- Meeting with the teacher to discuss the incident;
- Apology letter to the victim;
- Loss of recess;
- Detention;
- Parent/teacher conference;
- Meeting with the Principal;
- Behavior contract;
- In-school suspension;
- Out of school suspension; and
- Expulsion.

Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate bullying or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge. Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.

The Principal will act to investigate all complaints of bullying and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school who is found to have violated this policy.

II. Reporting Procedure

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying or any person (employees, parents, and community members) with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall report the alleged act(s) immediately to a staff member. The staff member will take responsibility for the written documentation and at the discretion of the staff member an incident reporting form will be filled out. An oral report shall be considered a complaint as well.

- A. A teacher, school administrator, or other school employee who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall inform the Principal immediately, usually within twenty four (24) hours. The Principal will assume the responsibility for investigating the complaint. If a report is given verbally, the principal shall convert it into written form.
- B. Reports of bullying are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law.

- C. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the complainant's or reporter's grades, educational environment, future employment, work assignments, or work environment.
- D. Information regarding an incident(s) will be communicated to staff that work with the children to ensure consistent supervision and support.
- E. Nativity of Mary School will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witness(es) as much as possible, consistent with the school's obligation to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any legal disclosure obligations.

III. Investigation Procedure

- A. Upon receipt of a report or complaint that alleges bullying, the Principal shall undertake an investigation. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may include other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator. The Principal may take immediate steps, at the Principal's discretion, to protect the complainant, student(s) or others, pending completion of an investigation of bullying, consistent with applicable law.
- B. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the Principal should consider the surrounding circumstances, the developmental and maturity levels and/or special needs of the students, the nature of the behavior, past incidents, and/or continuing patterns of behavior or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. Whether a particular action(s) or incident(s) constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination by the Principal based on all the facts and the surrounding circumstances.
- C. Upon completion of the investigation, the Principal will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, detention, suspension, exclusion, expulsion or other actions outlined in Section I above. Disciplinary consequences will try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior.
- D. The Principal is not authorized to disclose to a victim educational or personnel data, including any disciplinary action taken against an alleged perpetrator. To the extent permitted by law, the Principal will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student(s) involved in a bullying incident, based on a substantiated report.

IV. Reprisal

Nativity of Mary School will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

V. Policy Dissemination & Training

- A. Nativity of Mary School annually will provide information and any applicable training to school staff regarding this policy.

- B. Nativity of Mary School annually will provide education and information to students and parents regarding bullying, including information regarding this school policy prohibiting bullying, the harmful effects of bullying, and other applicable initiatives to prevent bullying.
- C. Nativity of Mary School will implement programs and other initiatives to prevent bullying, to respond to bullying in a manner that does not stigmatize the parties involved and to make resources or referrals to resources available to targets of bullying.
- D. Nativity of Mary School may implement violence prevention and character development education programs to prevent and reduce policy violations. Such programs may offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as empathy, tolerance and kindness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others and their differences, peacemaking, and resourcefulness.

VI. Distribution of Policy

Nativity of Mary School will notify students and parents of the existence and contents of this policy through multiple sources, in such a manner as it deems appropriate. Copies of this bullying prohibition policy shall be made available to all students and parents at the commencement of each school year and to all new students and parents upon enrollment. The policy shall also be available upon request in the Principal's office.