

Nativity of Our Lord School Philosophy

“Nativity of Our Lord School, an integral part of a total Roman Catholic parish community, aims to provide quality education for students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Religion, the core of the curriculum, emphasizes moral and spiritual values, which permeate every aspect of the total instructional program. Achievement, consistent with the student’s academic potential, is second only to those character traits that typify Christian ladies and gentlemen, as well as informed, law-abiding citizens. Participation in sports and co-curricular activities is encouraged and fostered at all levels.

“The philosophy of Nativity of Our Lord is based on a firm belief in the inherent and dignity of each individual. Accordingly, ample opportunities for spiritual and intellectual growth are available to all students. Our philosophy of education also reflects an awareness, on the part of the staff, of the diversity of economic, social and cultural differences within the school community.

“Since Nativity of Our Lord School finds its true justification in the mission of the Church, our educational philosophy is one in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony.”

[From the Philosophy to the Self-Study for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 20002]

Nativity of Our Lord School Policies

A. SCHOOL HOURS

All students in grades kindergarten through eight are required to report to school by 8:15 a.m. All students are to report to the cafeteria when they arrive at school and wait there to be dismissed to their classrooms. The preparation bell at the end of the day rings at 2:25 p.m., the bus students are dismissed between 2:30 and 2:40 p.m. and walkers are dismissed starting at 2:40 p.m. All bus students and walkers are dismissed by grade level, starting with the primary (Kindergarten-Grade 2), then the intermediate grades (3-5) and finally the junior high.

The school office is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Nativity School does permit the early drop-off of students in the morning. Parents may leave students starting at 7:30 a.m. As previously noted, they should report to the cafeteria. They should remain seated and are not allowed to run around in the cafeteria or visit classrooms on the second floor.

On the third Friday of each month there is an 11:20 a.m. dismissal for faculty meetings and teacher in-service. Again, bus students are dismissed first, followed by the walkers starting at about 11:35 a.m.

B. VISITATION

In the interest of safety and good order, all visitors to any part of the school building are requested to first report to the school office. Teachers and staff are always interested in meeting with parents, but unannounced visits are usually unproductive and are not encouraged.

C. TELEPHONE

As a general rule, students are not allowed to use the phone at school without written permission from a faculty member. When deemed necessary, a written pass will be issued which is then to be presented to the school secretary in the main office.

School Office.....662-7572
Religious Education Office....662-2169
Health Room/School Nurse...662-7572
Rectory.....662-9339
Parish Outreach.....662-1302

D. TRANSPORTATION

The Orchard Park School System provides transportation. If there are any questions or problems regarding transportation please call Tom Blidy at 209-6237. If a student should lose something on the bus parents can check with the bus garage at the same number. If a family resides in a different school district it must contact that district’s transportation department to obtain information or settle bus-related problems.

The driver handles behavior problems on the bus. In the case of serious misbehavior, he or she will send out a bus conduct report. The assistant principal is responsible to deal with this problem. A conference with the student is held and a copy of the report is sent home to the parents, the bus garage, and placed in the student’s permanent folder in the main office. If a student receives three reports, that student is suspended from the bus for a week and parents are responsible for transportation to and from school. Any additional reports during that school year will result in suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year.

Anytime that a student deviates from the normal bus routine, taking a different bus home with a friend for example, a note for the homeroom teacher and a note for the bus driver are required and must be signed by the principal. Students are only allowed to ride on buses of the district in which they reside.

Students who ride bicycles to school are urged to lock them in the bike rack on the side of the school building. Helmets must be worn according to New York State law.

Rollerblades or skateboards are not acceptable forms of transportation to or from school.

E. SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Girls: Grades 1-5: Plaid jumper, white short or long sleeve blouse, Peter Pan collar, optional Prescott Red button down cardigan sweater with logo or school sweatshirt. Grades 6-8: Plaid kilt, white short or long sleeve Oxford blouse, button down collar, optional Prescott Red V-Neck or pullover sweater with logo or school sweatshirt. No colorful clothing should be visible through the blouse. The girls in grades 1-8 may wear matching navy blue slacks from November to April.

Just above the knee length of uniform skirts is mandatory for girls.

Jumpers, kilts, and shorts MUST be purchased from the uniform company.

Boys: Navy blue pants, white short or long sleeve shirt with or without button down collar, tie, optional Prescott Red V-Neck pullover sweater with logo or school sweatshirt. (Ties are optional in grades 1-4)

- Clogs or clog-like shoes, platform shoes, combat style boots, roller sneakers, or flip-flops are not allowed in any grade. Shoes are encouraged as a part of the uniform.
- Cargo pants or cargo shorts are NOT allowed as part of the school uniform in any grade.
- No printed t-shirts should be visible through the white dress shirt.
- **Uniform attire will be in effect from the first day of school in September until the last day of school in June.**
- If a child is not dressed in uniform, a written excuse from the parents must be given to the homeroom teacher upon arrival.
- Uniform shorts may be worn with a white shirt with a collar in September, October, May and June.
- **All shirts and blouses are to be tucked into the skirts, pants, or shorts. Failure to comply will result in the student being issued a detention.**
- Boys in grades 1-5 MUST purchase pants and shorts from the uniform company.
- Parent cooperation with the uniform policy is greatly appreciated.

F. CAFETERIA

It is expected that all students will conduct themselves as young ladies and gentlemen while eating in the cafeteria. The following rules are to be observed at all times by all students:

- Raise your hand in order to ask permission to use the lavatory. Two boys and two girls will be allowed out at one time. The cafeteria monitors will issue a pass.
- When the entire table is finished with lunch, then the entire table will raise hands to ask permission to throw away trash. The monitors will excuse one table at a time.
- At the end of lunch, stay in your seat until your teacher comes to pick you up.
- The class going outside at lunch must clean up entirely before being excused by the monitors.
- Raise your hand in order to ask permission to purchase a snack.

G. DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is geared to help the student grow in the understanding of self and of Christian responsibilities to fellow students and others. Well-ordered classes, which create an atmosphere conducive to learning, will lead to an effective School Program. Good discipline aids in the development of students who respect themselves, other persons and duly constituted authority.

Nativity School is a Christian Community based on respect for the individual. However, there are times when it may be necessary to keep a child after school. In grades 1-5, the parents will be given reasonable notice and are expected to handle transportation and consult with the teacher.

In the junior high a detention system has been established. Detention is held on Mondays from 2:45-3:45 p.m. Students can be detained for being late to class, skipping class, disrupting class, being disrespectful to peers or faculty, use of profane language, failing to complete assigned work and other violations of school and classroom rules. Parents are notified by a detention slip via mail.

In all cases, parents must provide transportation, as there is no late bus.

Serving a detention takes precedence over any after-school activity.

Serious disciplinary infractions constitute grounds for suspension or expulsion.

- Delinquency and immorality, which constitutes a definite menace to other students in the school community.
- Chronic and incorrigible misbehavior which undermines the classroom discipline and impedes the academic progress of the other students.
- Persistent defiance of the authority of the teacher or principal
- Assault or battery, or any threat of force or violence directed toward other students or school personnel.

Suspension is a drastic punishment that will be used rarely and only after all remedial measures have been employed without success. The school authorities, the Superintendent of Schools, or the District Superintendent of Schools may suspend the following minors from required attendance upon instruction:

- A minor who is insubordinate or disorderly.
- A minor whose physical or mental condition endangers the health, safety, or morals of himself or other minors.

The permanent dismissal or involuntary transfer of a student for disciplinary reasons is an extreme measure and will be enacted only as a last resort. There may be expulsion or involuntary transfer when crime, scandal, immorality or disruption constituting a threat to the physical or moral welfare of other students is involved.

Substance Abuse: Any student in an elementary school of the Diocese who is detected using, selling, giving, dealing, possessing or under the influence of drugs or alcohol in school or at a school-sponsored event is liable to expulsion. The student will be suspended immediately and a conference will be held with the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) and including the Principal and Pastor. If not expelled, the student will be put on probation. In that case, a second serious offense against any school rule will result in the expulsion of the student. In addition to recommending counseling, the Principal will invoke suitable penalties and procedures to ensure the terms of the probation.

Any student in an elementary school of the Diocese who has drug or alcohol paraphernalia in his or her possession in school or at a school-sponsored event will be assigned a suitable punishment by the Principal. The parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified of the incident and the disciplinary actions.

Tobacco Use Restrictions: Any tobacco use, including cigarettes, pipes, snuff and chew is NOT PERMITTED on school grounds during school and student activity hours. School grounds include ANY BUILDING STRUCTURE and surrounding outdoor grounds within the school's legally defined boundary.

School hours include student activities supervised by the faculty, staff or parents or any other school event such as dances, clubs, sporting events and practices, field trips, etc. Tobacco use is disallowed for students, visitors, repair and construction workers, chaperones, faculty, and other staff. [Federal Pro Child Act of 1994- Goals 2000 Educate America Act]

Search and Seizure: Catholic School officials are free to enter a student's locker or desk at any time to search for questionable items. Searches can be unannounced and selective, and carried out even if there is no report of wrongdoing. If items found are illegal (i.e. Nonprescriptive drugs, alcohol, weapons), they will be turned over to Law Enforcement Authorities. If they violate school rules, school authorities will keep them.

Any student found in possession of a weapon on school property will be immediately expelled from school.

Zero Tolerance and Due Process: Nativity School will not tolerate or ignore any acts or threats of violence against the school faculty, staff and students in school or out of school. If a student does violate the "Zero Tolerance Policy," due process will immediately go into effect. It includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- The pastor or canonical administrator will be immediately notified. In the event that the pastor or canonical administrator is not available, the principal will have the authority to proceed with disciplinary measures.
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student committing the violation will be called immediately and the student will be placed on an out-of-school suspension, which could lead to expulsion pending further investigation.
- A conference with the parent(s) or guardian(s) will include a written statement by the principal and possible consequences pending further investigation.
- Students who have teased or bullied other students causing an outburst of violence will also be placed on disciplinary action. Parents will be called, come in for a conference and a decision made as to the consequences for these students.
- The local police will be notified.
- A letter of explanation to all parents will be sent home as soon as possible assuring them that the safety of their children is a priority and proper measures have been taken to ensure the school is safe.

Sexual Harassment: It is the policy of the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Buffalo that all students have the right to be free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment, in the

school environment. Sexual harassment may take different forms. The following acts, although not automatically sexual harassment, may constitute sexual harassment under certain circumstances:

- Verbal- Sexual innuendoes, jokes of a sexual nature, and sexually degrading language to describe an individual;
- Nonverbal- Displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, leering, and making obscene gestures;
- Physical- Unwanted physical contact or touching, brushing up against the body and any type of coerced sexual activity.

Sexual harassment does not refer to behavior or occasional compliments of a social nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, that is personally offensive, or that fails to respect the rights and dignity of others.

The principal will thoroughly and immediately investigate all claims of sexual harassment. Parents will be notified and the pastor and principal will determine punishment in accordance with due process.

H. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Nativity School has developed an attendance policy in accordance with New York State Education Law Section 3205 and to be implemented on July 1, 2002. This policy will help uphold the philosophy of the school as stated in this handbook.

The elements of our comprehensive attendance policy are as follows:

Objectives: To ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law 3205; to establish a practical mechanism for Nativity School to provide accountability of all students throughout each school day; and to ensure sufficient pupil attendance at all scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised student activities.

Strategies to Meet Objectives: Use of a daily register of attendance (Computerized or written), use of a recording system in departmentalized grades, use of a recording system for excused or unexcused absence for a day or portion of a day, use of a recording system for tardiness or early departure, use of a recording system for each scheduled day of instruction, and use of dates for entries and withdrawal of enrollment.

When Attendance will be recorded: Daily at the elementary level or period-by-period at elementary level that is departmentalized and when students attend special area classrooms.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences: Excused absences shall include sickness,

sickness or death in family, required to be in court, approved high school visits, quarantine, religious observance, attendance at health clinics, or "Take Your Child to Work Day."

Unexcused absences shall include unlawful detention, truancy, suspension, and family vacations.

Attendance and Course Credit: Schools within the Diocese of Buffalo Catholic Education System believe that student attendance in school increases student success. In order for each student to develop their personal talents, pursue academic quality, foster responsibility and leadership, we encourage parental support in the educational success of their children. Regular attendance in school is essential for student success. Subjects are taught in sequence and require the understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation.

Therefore, students who miss thirty(30) days of school, and have not met periodically with the school administration, are in jeopardy of retention. At a conference with the school administration and teachers, alternative education plans will be determined. It is the parent's responsibility to notify school administration of an attendance concern and to request such a conference.

Description of incentives and/or sanctions: Perfect Attendance Award given in accordance with school policy, regular attendance determines participation in special occasion days or events, regular attendance determines promotion, and excessive irregular attendance warrants notification of proper authorities.

Description of Notification of Parents: Parents notify school for absence and/or tardiness by 8 a.m.; school will call if parent has not called by 8 a.m.; students who are tardy must first report to the school office, a written excuse must be completed by the parent giving a specific reason for the absence or tardiness within three(3) days; if an excuse is not received within three(3) days, the absence is recorded as unexcused; unexcused absence or tardiness is recorded in the school register of attendance; a note is submitted to the school office when a student is going to be released early and the parent or guardian must come to the school office and sign out the student to be released.

Description of Intervention Strategies: School personnel will keep the administration aware of persistent attendance problems or patterns. The school notifies the parents of the problem or pattern. If the problem or pattern persists, the school administration will notify the proper authorities.

Identification of Person to Review Attendance Records and Initiate Action: Pupil attendance records shall be reviewed by the principal for the purpose of initiating appropriate action to address unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departure.

I. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

New York State Education Guidelines state that any prescription or over-the-counter medication may be administered by the nurse if a parent submits a written request for medication administration. The following procedure must be followed:

- The child's physician must request in writing that a specific medication be given, prescribe the dose to be given, the time and duration of the treatment, and the reason for the medication being given.
- The parent should sign the request asking the nurse to give the medication.
- The medication should be delivered directly to the designated school personnel (i.e. school nurse) by the parent.
- The medication must be clearly labeled with adequate instructions from the pharmacy.
- The medication will be kept in a locked area, inaccessible to students.
- Children should never carry medication to school or have it with them during the day.

J. SNOW DAYS OR EMERGENCIES

When school must be closed due to weather conditions or some other emergency situation, an announcement will be made on the Buffalo radio stations from 7-9a.m. If a decision is made the night before, announcements will be made on the 11 p.m. newscasts of the Buffalo television stations. If conditions arise during the school day, children may be sent home early. Parents should be ready to receive them or have some plan in place for such an emergency.

K. ACADEMIC PROGRAM

"We believe that knowledge is a means, not an end, to the total development of the complete person. Accordingly, we strive to achieve a balance among the spiritual, intellectual, social, personal, and physical aspects of our educational program. We view knowledge, not merely as the passing down of factual information, but rather as a seeking, imparting, and deepening of truth. This includes an effort to instill in our students an appreciation, not of truth alone, but also of the good and beautiful."

[Nativity of Our Lord Self-Study for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 2002]

Homework is an important part of the student's education and establishes a daily link between home and school. In this way, homework helps provide parents with an opportunity to be involved in the curriculum on a regular basis. For the student, it offers an opportunity to practice skills, review

information learned in class, prepare for upcoming topics and tests, and to develop self-discipline and responsibility. Homework helps teachers in the evaluation of class and individual student progress.

Suggested time allotments for homework are generally to take the grade level and multiply it by ten. For example, a seventh grade student should be doing about 70 minutes of homework per night, on average.

Written homework is collected and inspected by the teacher and then returned to the student. The teacher will contact the parents of students who consistently fail to turn in assigned homework. In the junior high, detention will be assigned for refusal to comply. Detention is not a substitute for completing the work and it is expected that the missing assignment(s) will be handed in to the teacher.

- **Teachers are not required to provide homework or advance lesson plans to students going on family trips.**
- **Parents must call the office by 9:30 to arrange for homework for a student who is absent.**

Student Evaluation Reports, or report cards, are issued four times per year- at the end of each ten(10) week marking period. These issue dates can be found in the school calendar. The report cards are passed out in school and carried home by the students. They should be signed by the parents or legal guardians and returned to school by the student.

Student achievement is assessed through various areas. These include:

- Class participation
- Classwork and homework
- Final exams
- Projects
- Student portfolio
- Unit/Chapter tests and quizzes

Upon accepting a student, the school accepts the responsibility of educating that that child. It is expected that the performance of each child will be directed toward maximizing the individual's abilities and talents. The uniqueness and individual differences of each student are strong beliefs in the value system of Catholic schools and every effort is made to meet the varying needs among our students within the limits of local resources.

Factors to be considered on the **promotion or retention** of a student include:

- Class performance according to grade level requirements
- Student age and ability
- Performance on standardized tests
- Student achievement on tests and examinations
- Successful achievement of required passing average

At the end of each marking period, student achievement is grades 3-8 is recognized through **honor roll and merit roll** lists and awards. Criteria

for **honor roll** are a quarterly average of a least 90% and no grade below 85%. Criteria for **merit roll** are a quarterly average of 85% and no grade below 80%.

In the junior high, **mid-quarter progress reports** are sent home to parents at five-week intervals between report cards, or at any point deemed necessary by the classroom teacher. The reports are designed to allow the teacher to note improved as well as deficient progress on the part of the student. This allows for ample time to make adjustments that will better help the student achieve academically. Teachers will not usually send progress reports to students who are achieving on a satisfactory level.

For the first three quarters in the sixth grade, all students are issued mid-quarter progress reports. This is done because of the difficulty that many students have in adjusting to the departmentalized junior high.

All mid-quarter reports are sent home through the mail.

L. SPORTS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

A student participating in any sport or extra-curricular activity must be working to his or her potential in the classroom. The principal will decide if any disciplinary actions need to be taken for students who fall below his or her academic level, as well as in any cases of behavioral problems that may arise during the school day. Disciplinary actions may include suspension or probation.(See Discipline Policy)

Parental permission in writing is required for all students participating in extra-curricular activities.

It is the intention of the sports program at Nativity School to provide opportunities for student growth and development outside the formal classroom environment. The program will help develop a student's sportsman-like conduct, school spirit, and an attitude of healthy competition. The most important goal of the program is to foster a positive self-image among all participants and to teach the fundamentals in any of the sports.

Diocesan and Parochial League Rules and Regulations prevail.

Students who are absent from school MAY NOT participate in any after school or evening activity.

M. COMPUTER-INTERNET POLICY

The Internet is an electronic communications network, which provides vast, diverse, and unique resources. Our goal in permitting students to access the Internet at school is to promote educational excellence.

Acceptable Use: The purpose of Nativity of Our Lord's Internet network is to support research and education in and among institutions by providing access to unique resources and collaborative work. The use of the Internet must be in support of education consistent with Nativity of Our Lord's Christian and Educational philosophy.

Privileges: The use of the Internet at Nativity is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges. General school rules for behavior and communication apply. The school administration will decide at its sole discretion what is inappropriate use. Use will be denied for violations and parents will be notified.

Supervision: Adult supervision will be provided as resources allow and a filtering system has been installed on the Internet system at Nativity. However, in permitting their children to access the Internet at Nativity, the parents acknowledge that the Internet has available on it material that is inappropriate for children and that no system of supervision or filtering is foolproof or perfect.

Security: Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. Any user identified as a security risk may be denied access to the Internet.

Vandalism: Vandalism will result in the cancellation of privileges. It is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy equipment or alter data of another user, Internet service provider, or any agencies or networks that are connected to the Nativity of Our Lord system. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses or damage to computer stations and printers. The parents will be held responsible for any expenses accrued as a result of their children's vandalism.

N. ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No electronic devices are allowed in school. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, cameras, and MP3 players. If they are found in school they will be sent to the office and kept there until a parent can pick them up. Repeated failure to comply will result in the student being issued a detention.

O. SCHOOL SCHEDULES

Regular(40 Min. Classes)

Period 1: 8:25
Period 2: 9:05
Period 3: 9:45
Period 4: 10:25
Period 5: 11:05(K-2 Lunch)
Period 6: 11:45(3-5 Lunch)
Period 7: 12:25(6-8 Lunch)
Period 8: 1:05
Period 9: 1:45

A.M. Assembly/Mass(30 Min. Classes)

<Homeroom and Assembly or Mass to 9:55>

Period 2: 9:55
Period 3: 10:25
Period 4: 10:55
Period 5: 11:25(K-2 Lunch)
Period 6: 11:55(3-5 Lunch)
Period 7: 12:25(6-8 Lunch)
Period 8: 12:55
Period 9: 1:25
Period 1: 1:55

P.M. Assembly(35 Min. Classes)

Period 9: 8:25
Period 1: 9:00
Period 2: 9:35
Period 3: 10:10
Period 4: 10:45
Period 5: 11:20(K-2 Lunch)
Period 6: 11:55(3-5 Lunch)
Period 7: 12:30(6-8 Lunch)
Period 8: 1:05
<Assembly from 1:45-2:25>

Testing Schedule(33 Min. Classes)

<Standardized Testing from 8:30 to 9:30>

Period 2: 9:30
Period 3: 10:03
Period 4: 10:36
Period 5: 11:09(K-2 Lunch)
Period 6: 11:42(3-5 Lunch)
Period 7: 12:15(6-8 Lunch)
Period 8: 12:48
Period 9: 1:21
Period 1: 1:52

Half-Day Schedule(18 Min. Classes)

8:20 Announcements and Morning Prayer
Period 1: 8:25
Period 2: 8:43
Period 3: 9:01
Period 4: 9:19
Period 5: 9:37
Period 6: 9:55
Period 7: 10:13
Period 8: 10:31
Period 9: 10:49
11:07: Announcements
11:15: Out of District Bus Dismissal
11:25: Orchard Park Bus Dismissal
11:35: Walkers(Primary, Intermediate, Junior High)