

Our Lady Star of the Sea School



Family Handbook 2024-2025

Our Lady Star of the Sea Regional School unites our diverse community through the Catholic values of academic excellence, compassionate service and respect for all our students. We empower students to face life's challenges with a Christian attitude of trust in God.

Visit our School Website: www.olssac.org

INTRODUCTION

Catholic schools serve a vital role in the Church's mission of providing young people with a strong formation in the Faith; they have a particular goal in helping Catholic children and young people grow in faithfulness and apostolic zeal. Our Lady Star of the School is open to all who wish to learn in a Catholic environment. By our works and example, we evangelize our students, their families, and the broader school community. Since humankind is created in the image and likeness of God, all human activity is to image His likeness, and is to be undertaken in an honest and human way, always expressing the will of the Creator. Such activity includes work, sports, hobbies, social interactions and interpersonal relationships. Catholic schools, like all human activity in which the Church participates, must reflect the faith which the Church has received from her divine founder.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

As a community whose primary mission is the teaching of the Faith, Our Lady Star of the School maintains an environment that is true to the teachings of the Church, and it is important that parents/guardians understand this and accept this. By choosing a Catholic school, parents/guardians recognize that they are enrolling their children in a school environment that is shaped by the teachings of the Catholic Church and governed according to those religious beliefs. Parents/guardians must accept that certain standards of behavior and comportment are expected, and agree to support these standards and the mission of the school. If parents/guardians or students oppose Church teaching publicly, or in a way that disrupts or interferes with the teaching mission of the Church, they will be engaged pastorally in an attempt to resolve the differences by explaining the teaching and the reasons for the teaching, and kindly encouraging the parent/guardian or student to respect such teaching. Parents/guardians are advised that continued opposition may result in disenrollment of the student from the school.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

The Catholic Church teaches, "By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept [his or her] sexual identity." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2393). Our Lady Star of the School strives to be welcoming, respectful, and sensitive to each student's unique needs, while always being clear about Church teachings. Because the mission of a Catholic school is to form students in the Faith, we must always be true to the teachings of that Faith, even – indeed especially – when those teachings do not suit society's currently-popular views. Some accommodations to address particular needs may be advisable and possible, but a Catholic school cannot provide accommodations when doing so would in any way compromise the teachings of the Church, or introduce confusion about its teachings.

Accreditation

Our Lady Star of the Sea Regional School is accredited through the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

Absences

- A student who has been absent from school, even for one day, is required to present a written note to his homeroom teacher which is placed in the student's health file.
- A doctor's certificate may be required for absence of an extended nature (3+ days).
- If your child is going to be absent, or arrive late at school, you are required to call the school at (609) 345-0648 by 8 A.M.
- If there is no answer, please leave a voicemail with the name of the student and reason for absence.
- If your child is marked absent and you have not called, you will receive a call or text message from the school to verify the absence. Please help us in this endeavor by calling. Your child's safety and welfare are of great importance to us.
- In the case of illness during the school day, a school official will contact the parent/guardian or the emergency contact number.
- Any child who stays home without his/her parent's knowledge is liable for suspension.
- Any child who leaves school without permission will be suspended.
- One absence due to a high school visit will be excused during the 8th grade year.
- Student appointments for doctors, dentists, etc. made during school hours should be avoided.

Academic Responsibilities

OLSS school encourages all students to reach their full potential through the academic program. Each student is responsible for the timely and satisfactory completion of projects, class work, and homework. A student who does not fulfill his/her academic responsibilities will be placed on academic probation during which time the evaluation of the student's progress is monitored.

Acceptable Use Policy

An Acceptable Use Policy must be signed and returned each year for students to have access to a school device. (See Technology section for more information)

Address Changes

Parent communication is vital for many reasons. Please notify the office of mailing address, phone number, or Email changes as soon as possible.

Admission

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

The school endeavors to accommodate students with special needs as the school's resources and capabilities reasonably permit. The school reserves the right to decline admission or impose reasonable conditions of attendance where indicated under the circumstances.

The necessary forms and certificates for admission are:

- Birth Certificate.
- Baptismal certificate, if applicable.
- A certificate of immunization that must be updated and available for confirmation
- Home Language Survey

Open Enrollment for Our Lady Star of the Sea Regional School begins in February. Families wishing to return to school will be asked to re-register in February for the upcoming school year.

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

- The parents/guardians agree to permit their child(ren) to attend Religion classes and Religious functions that are offered as part of the school program.
- The parents/guardians commit themselves to accept and to promote the philosophy, goals, objectives, and regulations of our school.

After School Care

After school care for all grade levels is available from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM on regular school days and from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM on half days. Holidays and other calendar items may affect these hours. Please contact the school office for more information.

Arrival and Dismissal

During Drop Off and Pick Up parents are to take care when maneuvering in the parking lot. It is preferred that drop off and pick up occur on California Ave. For the safety of all children, at no time should a parent pull around to pass a stopped car.

School begins promptly at 8:00 AM. Students may enter the building through the cafeteria door from 7:30-7:55. After 8:00 students enter through the front door. Students will not be allowed to proceed to class or leave the building during Morning or Afternoon Prayer. Dismissal begins at 3:00 pm and 1:00 pm on most early dismissal days. Please check the school website and calendar for days off and early dismissals.

Our Lady Star of the Sea Regional School faculty and staff work in partnership with parents to enable each child to develop as an independent learner. **Parents should allow their child(ren) to enter the school building on their own each morning.** Various classes invite parent involvement or visits on particular occasions. Teachers are not available to conference with parents before school or while children are present in the classroom.

Tardy students must report directly to the office and be signed in by a parent/guardian.

Students will not be released before 3:00 pm as academic activities continue until dismissal. Removing your child before this time is not in the best interest of the individual students and is disruptive to the class.

Assemblies

The primary purpose of school assemblies is educational. Being part of an appreciative audience is a learning experience; therefore, every student is expected to show proper respect and courtesy at this time. Behavior infractions during assemblies will be taken seriously.

Attendance

Our Lady Star of the Sea School recognizes the vital role that regular attendance plays in academic success and overall student development. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to succeed academically. Consistent attendance contributes to a positive and cohesive learning environment for all students, enhancing the overall school experience. Regular attendance instills a sense of responsibility and discipline in students, preparing them for future challenges.

Attendance Procedures:

- Daily attendance records will be maintained for all students. Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each school day.
- Parents or guardians are required to notify the school by phone or in writing if a student is going to be absent. The notification should include the reason for the absence.
- Excused absences include illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, and other circumstances deemed acceptable by the school administration.
- Unexcused absences are those not covered by the criteria for excused absences.
- Tardiness disrupts the learning environment. Students arriving late must report to the school office before entering class.
- Extended absences due to family trips are discouraged and parents are encouraged to notify the school in advance.
- Parents will be notified when a student has more than 3 unexcused absences.
- The school will work collaboratively with parents to address any underlying issues.
- If absences persist, a meeting may be scheduled with parents, teachers, and school administrators to discuss strategies for improvement.
- An intervention plan may be developed for students with chronic attendance issues. This plan may include additional support, counseling, or other resources.
- The school will maintain accurate documentation of attendance for legal and reporting purposes.
- Students with exemplary attendance records may be recognized through awards, certificates, or other forms of acknowledgment.
- Regular communication between parents and teachers is encouraged to address attendance concerns promptly.

- Students who have 18 or more absences from school are in danger of not being promoted to the next grade

Auxiliary Programs:

Special Education Program

OLSS provides push-in and pull-out services for students who have Individualized Service Plans (ISP) and who would benefit from a specialized learning environment to meet their needs. Special Education students are mainstreamed into regular education classes whenever possible. ISPs are created through the Atlantic City Public Schools by the Child Study Team (CST)

Title 1

Title I is a federally funded program coordinated by the Atlantic City Public Schools and the administration of OLSS. This program provides basic skills instruction to eligible students. The program is designed to provide remedial, corrective, or developmental reading skill reinforcement in the areas of Math and English Language Arts. Students are considered for these programs based on their performance in the STAR Test, grades, classroom teacher recommendation, and/or parental request. These services are coordinated with the classroom teacher to maximize reading, thinking, and learning potential.

Speech and Language Services

Students are selected to receive services when standards of sound production, fluency, language use, form, or content fall below normal standards for the child's age and ability. Referrals for evaluations are initiated by staff, parents/guardians, or the children themselves. Evaluation and therapy are only provided through the Atlantic City Board of Education following the consent of the parent/ guardian.

ESL

ESL programs under Title III increase the English language proficiency of English learners (ELs) by providing effective language instruction educational programs that meet the needs of ELs and increase English language proficiency and student academic achievement. At OLSS School, an ESL teacher is provided through Chapter 192-193 of the State of New Jersey to provide English as a Second Language to students in grades K-8 who do not speak, read, or write English or for whom their emerging skills preclude them from gaining full mastery. ESL classes are held daily to increase English fluency. Students are tested upon entry to determine eligibility and students take the ACCESS Test in the Spring to determine growth.

Birthdays / Parties / Invitations

Birthdays are celebrated and a small treat may be brought to school for the class. Treats must not need refrigeration, heating or assembly. No ice cream or frozen items, no cake or oversized cookies that need cutting and distribution, no items requiring the microwave or a hot plate. No balloons or flowers may be brought to school or delivered. Please remember that birthday

acknowledgements in school are not parties. Party Invitations will only be allowed to be distributed if the entire class is invited. In the past we have seen many children slighted and hurt as a result of not being invited. The school is not permitted to give out phone numbers and addresses.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

I. Introduction

The purpose of the OLSS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is to create a safe, positive, and productive educational environment where students can achieve their maximum potential without being subjected to bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation. This plan has been developed in compliance with the Diocese of Camden's Bullying Prevention Policy and will be reviewed and updated at least every three years.

II. Definitions

- **Aggressor:** A student who engages in bullying or retaliation.
- **Bullying:** The repeated use, by one or more students, of written, oral, or electronic expressions or physical acts or gestures, with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate the victim, directed at a target, which a reasonable person should know would have the effect of:
 - Causing physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property.
 - Placing the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property.
 - Causing the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the target's education.
 - Materially and substantially disrupting the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.
- **Cyber-Bullying:** Bullying through the use of technology or electronic communication, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications.
- **Retaliation:** Any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.
- **Target:** A student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

III. Prohibitions Against Bullying and Retaliation

Bullying and retaliation are strictly prohibited:

- On school grounds.
- On property adjacent to school grounds.

- At any school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether on or off school grounds.
- At a school bus stop.
- On a school bus or any other vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school.
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the school.

Bullying by students is also prohibited at other locations and through other means if it:

- Causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the target's education.
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

IV. Reporting Procedures

Clear procedures for reporting bullying or retaliation include:

- **Anonymous Reporting:** Individuals can report bullying or retaliation anonymously. However, no disciplinary action will be based solely on an anonymous report.
- **Reporting Channels:** Reports can be made in person, by phone, or in writing via email.
- **Immediate Response:** The principal or a designated staff member will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation.

V. Investigation Procedures

Upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, the principal or his/her designee will:

- Conduct a prompt and thorough investigation.
- Review the disciplinary history of the accused student(s) for patterns of similar behavior.
- Prepare a written report of the investigation, including findings of fact, determination of whether acts of bullying were verified, and the disciplinary or non-disciplinary actions taken.

VI. Disciplinary Actions

Disciplinary actions for an aggressor may include:

- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- Detention.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion (in severe cases).

Disciplinary actions will balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

VII. Counseling and Support Services

Strategies for providing counseling or referrals include:

- **For Aggressors:** Referral for behavioral counseling, anger management programs, and social skills training.
- **For Targets:** Referral for emotional support, safety planning, and therapeutic services.
- **For Families:** Referral for information sessions, counseling referrals, and support groups.

VIII. Bullying Prevention Program

OLSS will establish a bullying prevention program or curriculum that includes:

- **Education and Awareness:** Programs to educate students about the impact of bullying and the importance of respectful behavior.
- **Skill-Building:** Activities to develop empathy, conflict resolution skills, and self-esteem.
- **Peer Support:** Initiatives such as peer mentoring and buddy systems.

IX. Informing Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians will be informed about the bullying prevention program through:

- **Parent-Teacher Meetings:** Regular meetings to discuss the program and its implementation.
- **Newsletters and Website:** Updates and resources provided through the school's communication channels.
- **Workshops:** Training sessions for parents on how to support their children in preventing and responding to bullying.

X. Professional Development

Ongoing professional development will be provided to build the skills of all staff members, including:

- **Training Programs:** Workshops and seminars on preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying.
- **Resource Materials:** Access to up-to-date resources and materials on bullying prevention.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Opportunities for staff to share best practices and strategies.

XI. Implementation and Oversight

The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan within the school. This includes:

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular assessment of the plan's effectiveness and making necessary adjustments.
- **Community Involvement:** Engaging the school community in ongoing efforts to create a safe and respectful environment.

XII. Notifications

If the principal or his/her designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he/she shall:

- Notify the local law enforcement agency if required.
- Notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor.
- Notify the parents or guardians of the target.

The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the aggressor will not be disclosed to the parents or guardians of the target unless required by law. If bullying or retaliation involves students from other schools, the principal will notify the appropriate administrator of the other schools.

XIII. Publication and Notice

At the beginning of each school year, the principal or his/her designee shall provide notice to the staff of the policy and the plan. Relevant student-related sections of the plan shall be included in the school handbook provided to the students and their parents or guardians each year. The plan shall also be posted on the school's website.

XIV. Student Assistance

OLSS shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students (both targets and aggressors) affected by bullying or retaliation, as necessary.

XV. Available Consultation

Staff members with questions concerning this policy are encouraged to contact the Catholic Schools Office.

By adhering to this comprehensive Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, OLSS commits to fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students and staff.

Cell Phones and Smartwatches

Cell Phones

- **Carrying and Storage:** Cell phones may be carried to school in a backpack. During the school day, cell phones must be turned off and collected by the classroom teacher to be stored in a secure location.
- **Usage Restrictions:** Phones must remain turned off and may not be used within the school building without the explicit permission of an adult.
- **Responsibility:** The school and its employees are not responsible for the care, protection, or replacement of lost or stolen phones.

Smart Watches

- **Carrying and Usage:** Smart watches that operate on cellular data must be turned off during the school day. These devices, like cell phones, will be collected by the classroom teacher and stored securely.
- **Restrictions:** Smart watches may not be used in the school building without permission from an adult.

Communication and Misuse

- **No Calls or Texts:** Students are not permitted to call or text at any time during the school day. If a student feels ill, they must see the nurse, who will notify parents if the student needs to go home.
- **Consequences of Misuse:** If a student misuses their phone or smartwatch by making a call, sending a text, etc., without permission, the device will be confiscated. A parent or guardian will be required to pick up the device from the school.

Conduct and Social Media

- **Code of Conduct:** Any text messages or social media posts made during school hours that violate the school code of conduct (including bullying, harassment, or use of obscene language) will result in immediate disciplinary consequences.
- **Photography and Posting:** No pictures may be taken during school hours and posted on any social media site.

This policy ensures a focused and distraction-free learning environment while maintaining clear guidelines for the responsible use of personal electronic devices.

Class Participation

Students are expected to be attentive and respectful to school staff, show respect and concern for other students, and actively participate in class by responding orally or in writing as circumstances dictate.

Class Trips

The purpose of every class trip is to enrich the intellectual, cultural, and social experiences of each child. To ensure participation, parent(s)/guardian(s) must complete the official written permission slip for each trip. Verbal permission cannot be accepted.

Students on field trips will utilize school-arranged transportation, typically a chartered school bus or motor coach. While parents may request to provide their own transportation for their child, they should be aware that they are not considered chaperones and act independently of the school. These parents must make their arrangements for admission and any applicable fees if they wish to actively participate in the venue. No discounts or school rates will necessarily apply unless offered by the venue.

Since class trip costs are calculated based on venue fees and transportation expenses, children who do not use school-provided transportation are still responsible for the full trip amount.

Students choosing not to participate in a field trip should report to school and will be assigned work to be completed in another classroom. Absence on a field trip day will be marked as such.

Participation in a class trip is a privilege, not a right. Teachers, in consultation with Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor conduct.

Parents/guardians seeking to be chaperones must have all necessary clearance items on file with the school office.

Conferences

Conferences are scheduled during the first and third quarters. We strongly encourage all families to attend these conferences to discuss their child's progress.

Teachers may not be interrupted during the school day to confer with parents. Arrangements for parent-teacher conferences at other times can be made via email to suit the convenience of both parties or whenever deemed necessary for the benefit of the child. When requesting a conference, please state the nature of the concern, so that the teacher can be prepared. The better the communication, the easier it is to direct your child in his/her educational endeavors.

Curriculum

The curricula followed by the students in the parish elementary schools of the Diocese are developed by and/or approved by the Superintendent of Schools through the Department of Elementary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

- **English Language Arts:** The Diocesan Integrated Language Arts Curriculum (ELA) has strong foundations in literacy: reading, writing, thinking, speaking, listening, and visualizing. Skills are further developed in critical thinking, literacy evaluation, methods of research, competency in self-expression, and metacognitive awareness.

- **Reading:** Anthologies, novels, and guided reading books have a range and variety of literature including non-fiction, classics and contemporary works that include options for study by theme or genre.
- **Writing:** The writing process, with the sub-processes of prewriting, drafting, editing, and publishing, with both linear and recursive movements of revision, is the model plan for the teaching of writing. Writing to learn experiences in the content areas, as well as in ELA classes, serve to increase comprehension and recall of material.
- **Mechanics** (Vocabulary, Phonics, Spelling, Grammar): Components in any literature-based program include direct instructional and developmental lessons in vocabulary, phonics, spelling, and grammar. These skills, however, are not taught in isolation, but in relation to the literacy instruction/assessment classes. A strong emphasis is placed upon the reference skills strand included at each level of the ELA Program.
- **Mathematics and Science:** The Elementary Mathematics and Science Curriculums are carefully planned programs that focus on the understanding of basic concepts and mastery of skills, and applying these skills through extensive instruction and practice. The Diocesan Mathematics and Science Curriculums focus on problem solving which is considered vital to every skill developed. Instruction in these areas also place strong emphasis on communicating mathematically and scientifically, making real-life and content-area connections, and developing reasoning skills.
- **Religion:** Catholic Identity is integrated into all aspects of the day. All students participate in religion class, prayer services, Mass, and service projects within and outside of school.
- **Social Studies:** The Elementary Social Studies Curriculum is based upon the National Council for the Social Studies Scope and Sequence. The goals of the Social Studies Curriculum include the development of knowledge, skills values and social participation appropriate to the children's age grade level.
- **Art/Music:** This area of the curriculum is designed in keeping with the National Standards for Arts Education
- **Physical Education:** Physical education is vital to the development of the student and is required as part of the elementary curriculum of the Diocese of Camden and the New Jersey Department of Education.
- **Technology:** There are two major areas in the use of technology in our schools: basic technology skills and specific curricular applications of technology. Elementary Technology Guidelines include the following topics: general computer literacy, word-processing, spreadsheets, database, and telecommunications.

Curriculum Modifications

Our Lady Star of the Sea Regional School is committed to providing for the needs of individual students. Classroom Modifications are designed to provide adaptations to the curriculum so that high expectations are maintained for all students. The need for curriculum modifications is determined by educational/psychological testing administered by an agent of Special Services of the City of Atlantic City or a privately engaged school psychologist. Parents then join with the teachers and/or administration to develop strategies which will best help students achieve specific goals. Any student who receives modifications will have this noted on their report card.

All goals and modifications are reviewed and agreed upon by the parent, teacher, and administration.

Custodial Agreements and Student Access

It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to **present to the school a notarized copy of the court determining custody agreements.** The copy will be kept in a confidential file. The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Thus, non-custodial parents will be given access to academic records and to information regarding the academic progress of their children, unless there is a court order specifically stating that a non-custodial parent is denied access to that information.

Discipline

Our discipline code is applicable to all students within the school premises, at school-sponsored events, and extends to the broader school/parish community. The guiding principle is to uphold Catholic teachings and maintain a positive reputation for the school. We believe that self-discipline is a learned skill that can be imparted like any other aspect of our curriculum.

In fostering the spiritual, academic, and social development of our students, universal guidelines are established to ensure a safe and effective learning environment. While these guidelines apply school-wide, additional measures are implemented for students in grades five through eight to support their unique developmental stage.

Behavioral Infractions

Written Discipline Referrals

- **Grades 2-8:** Teachers or administrators will issue written discipline referrals for minor behavioral infractions. These referrals aim to assist students in self-correction. Parents/guardians are expected to sign and return the forms promptly.
- **Accumulation of Infractions:** Three behavioral infractions will result in disciplinary consequences as determined by the Principal.

Detentions

- **Schedule:** Detentions will be held after school from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM.
- **Transportation:** Parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation for students serving detention.

Suspension

- **Major Infractions:** Major infractions or repeated negative behaviors may lead to suspension.
- **Types of Suspension:** In-school suspension, removal from school for the remainder of the day, and expulsion are potential consequences applicable to all grades. The choice

between in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension is at the administration's discretion, considering the nature of the situation.

- **Immediate Removal:** Serious infractions such as drug, alcohol, or weapon possession, or significant moral misconduct may result in immediate removal with the intent to dismiss.

Serious Infractions

- **Immediate Dismissal:** Conduct inconsistent with the educational and religious mission of the school may lead to disciplinary action, including immediate dismissal and reporting to legal authorities if necessary.
- **Threats and Harassment:** In cases of threats of violence or harassment, students will require psychological or psychiatric clearance before returning to school.

Unacceptable Conduct

Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Disrespectful behavior towards any staff, student, volunteer, or parent.
- Profane or abusive language or actions.
- Fighting or behavior causing physical injury.
- Improper use of technology tools, including cyberbullying and sexting.
- Bomb scares or triggering false alarms.
- Cheating, plagiarism, or forgery.
- Smoking, vaping, or use/possession of drugs or alcohol.
- Stealing.
- Intimidation, harassment, or threats of any kind.

Universal Application

This policy applies universally, both inside and outside the classroom, within the school community, and beyond, where behavior contradicts Catholic teachings or could bring disrepute to the school. Every disciplinary situation is handled individually, considering all relevant factors. **Outcomes or consequences for students other than your own will not be discussed.**

Early Dismissal

Planned early dismissals are at 1:00 PM. Please check the school calendar for specific dates and times.

Emergency Contact Forms

Information necessary to address student emergencies will be required at the beginning of each school year.

Emergency Dismissal/Snow Days

Parents will need to provide updated telephone and e-mail contact information to support emergency notification after hours and for school closings information.

Extra Curricular Activities

Clubs/activities are available for students as announced. Students must return permission slips and physicals as provided by the coach or teacher supervising for after school activities.

Faith Formation

OLSS school serves the academic, social, and physical development of the students. The primary purpose is religious education and faith formation. OLSS school exists for the purpose of evangelization and catechesis, that is, the proclamation of the Gospel and formation of the entire school community of faith. OLSS school offers a complete Catholic religious education program and makes every effort to develop the faith in all the students so that they may live a full Christian life.

Family Communication

Effective communication is the single, most important factor that assures a positive relationship between the home and school. Communication from school regarding emergencies, school closings and reminders will be sent home electronically through Class Dojo and/or the FACTS student information system. Additionally, the school website and social media pages provide updated information.

Fire and Safety Drills

Fire and Safety drills are conducted on a monthly basis in accordance with New Jersey State Law. Students are to follow and comply with the procedures for each particular drill as directed by their teacher. Failure to cooperate is considered a serious matter and student consequences are commensurate with the offense.

Graduation

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

Participation in closing exercises is a privilege, not a right. The school has the right to deny any student participation in closing exercises if, in the view of the school, the student's conduct, academic, attendance or disciplinary record indicate that the privilege should not be extended

Gum Chewing

Students are not permitted to chew gum on school grounds

Health

In the event of accidents or unusual illnesses at school, immediate reports are made to the Health Office personnel. If a student falls ill or encounters an accident, the parent/guardian is

promptly contacted. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the designated emergency contact will be called upon. It is important to provide the school office with the most updated contact information. Only basic first aid will be administered. Parents will be contacted immediately if there is any uncertainty or concern regarding the nature of an injury.

Communicable Diseases

No student, absent from school because of conditions listed below, may return to school before the specified time period.

- MEASLES/MUMPS/RUBELLA - 4 days from onset of rash.
- WHOOPING COUGH - 7 days after medication is started.
- SCARLET FEVER - 24 hours after medication is started.
- MUMPS- 9 days from onset of swelling.
- FEVER - Fever free for 24 hours without medication.
- COVID - 5 days since the onset of symptoms.
- CHICKEN POX - When all pox have scabs that are dried up.
- PINK EYE - 24 hours after medication is started.
- LICE - May return to school when treatment has been started.
- STREP - 24 hours on medication.

Medical Records/Immunization

The State of New Jersey has mandated that all children entering Pre K/Kindergarten or First Grade present documented proof that the following immunizations have been received:

- DT (Diphtheria/Tetanus) 4 doses - one after the fourth birthday
- Polio, 3 doses
- MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) 2 doses – one dose after 12 months of age
- Influenza (Flu) vaccine by December 31st of each school year.
- Hepatitis B, 3 doses of vaccine- last dose after 6 months
- Varivax (Chicken Pox) - 2 doses (or documentation of live disease)

After the basic series of three Oral Polio Vaccine, Diphtheria and Tetanus, boosters are due between four and six years of age.

For students entering 6th grade, one dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) and one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV) is also necessary. Please submit vaccination records showing these vaccines have been given.

All Preschool children under the age of 5 are required to have a influenza (Flu) vaccine by December 31st of each school year.

Dentist and Physician Reports, along with an Elementary School Student Health History form, are required for students entering Kindergarten or any student entering from out

of state. Subsequent examinations and forms are required from the Dentist in grades 3 and 7 and from the Physician in grade 6 (scoliosis exam is also due at this time.)

Medications

It is generally recommended that prescription medicines be given to the student before and/or after school

In accordance with the physician's directions. In those rare instances where the medication must be given during the school day, it will be administered by the nurse or in the main office. Parents/guardians are required to sign a medication authorization form if the student must take medication at the school. All medications (prescription and over the counter) must have a signed script from your child's pediatrician in order for the school nurse to administer.

Prescription and non-prescription over-the-counter medications must be in the original container with a note from the parent and physician to include: name of medicine, dosage, time of administration, dates to be given, and reason for medication. Medications may be sent in by the day or week. It is recommended that students not carry a full prescription bottle to be taken back and forth daily.

Nurse

A school nurse is provided to OLSS School on a part-time basis through a grant from Chapter 226.. The nurse is not to replace the family doctor for medical/dental exam requirements. **Please do not advise your child to seek the nurse to diagnose illnesses or injuries that occur at home.**

The nurse is responsible for checking the height, weight, hearing, and vision of every child and for making a referral to parents when problems are found. The nurse maintains all health records. Care given in the school is limited to first aid, in accidents or illness, until the parents can be reached to take the child home, to the doctor, or to the hospital. In an emergency, the nurse will arrange to have the student transported to the hospital.

All students are screened yearly under the state-mandated program. The sixth grade students are also screened for scoliosis.

The State of New Jersey requires that each student have a physical examination on file. If a child is entering school for the first time he/she MUST have a physical examination performed by a physician.

- Any student transferring from a school within the State of New Jersey can obtain documentation of their physical from their previous school and it will be accepted for their records.
- If your child is transferring from a school out of state a physical must be performed by a doctor in New Jersey. Documentation of a physical must be presented to the nurse within 30 days of admission.

- Students entering school from another country with a high incidence of Tuberculosis must have a Mantoux test, a skin test to determine exposure to Tuberculosis. The nurse will contact you if the need exists and will require a copy of the test results.

If your child has a specific medical problem, please notify the teacher and the nurse of the problem. Medic-Alert bracelets are strongly recommended for any child with a medical problem.

Emergency cards are kept on file for each student. Please be sure that there is an up-to-date emergency number on file in case of an emergency during the school day involving your child.

Due to the possibility of allergies, nothing containing peanut or peanut products may be brought to school to be shared.

Physicals

All students in grades 6-8 who wish to participate in intramurals, basketball or track are **required to have a yearly physical.**

Homework

Homework refers to an assignment made by a teacher that will positively reinforce a concept presented in class. Homework includes both written and study assignments, and should be done by the student independently. While this does not preclude parental help or interest, the assignments should not require undue parental assistance or supervision. Ample time should be allowed for the completion of out-of- class research assignments or projects.

Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it is difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on assignments. The following time per night is the **maximum** time suggested for homework; this includes reading and written and study assignments:

Kindergarten	20 minutes
Grades 1 and 2	30-45 minutes
Grades 3 and 4	60 minutes
Grades 5 and 6	90 minutes
Grades 7 and 8	90 minutes

Homework may be assigned to students Monday through Thursday. Students may choose to work on long-term assignments over a weekend. No tests or quizzes (with the exception of STAR and daily maintenance) will be given on Monday

Homework Absence Policy:

For short absences students should make arrangements with classmates, check assignments online or obtain them when they return to school. Students will be allowed one make-up day per each day of absence due to illness. For long term absences, please contact the teacher.

Homework Vacation Policy:

Parents are strongly discouraged from planning vacations during the academic year. While family time is certainly valuable time, interruption in the educational process can present difficulties for some children. However, when absences for vacations are unavoidable, please make an appointment with the teacher/teachers to devise a plan to remediate missed skills.

Preparation for Class

The student is responsible for completing all class assignments and homework on time. Failure to do so indicates a lack of serious preparation for class. Incomplete homework assignments will ultimately affect the student's effort grade on the report card. The daily performance of students is assessed by the teacher. Notebooks, worksheets, and class participation are important indicators of overall effort. All students must be encouraged to use notebooks properly. Students should not tear pages from notebooks, skip pages, or use notebooks as a drawing or scribbling pad.

Progress Reports

Academic and social progress for students in grades K-8 is available through FACTS, the online Student Information System (SIS) where student grades and attendance can be viewed.

Hard copies of grades in the form of report cards are printed and sent home quarterly as indicated on the school calendar. When the need arises, parents may be contacted by their child's teacher to alert them to behaviors which may affect their academic success.

Retention

Student progress is monitored throughout the school year. During the third quarter the teacher will contact the parent/guardian of a student who continues to experience difficulty to discuss the possibility of retention and support services. The teacher/teachers will schedule a follow-up meeting with the parent/guardian. If retention is indicated, parent/guardian will receive an official notification which is to be signed and returned to the school administration. Promotion or retention is at the discretion of the administration in consultation with the teacher.

School Uniforms and Dress Code

Maintaining neatness and cleanliness in personal attire is an integral part of a child's education, and it is the responsibility of parents to ensure compliance with the following guidelines:

Uniforms are required every day unless otherwise announced.

Summer Uniforms (First Day of School through October 31 and from May 1 through the Last Day of School):

Regulation navy or khaki shorts to the knee with a belt. Girls may wear navy or khaki shorts, capris, skorts, or skirts to the knee. Shorts may not have cargo pockets. White uniform golf shirt. Blue or white socks.

Winter Uniforms (November 1 through April 30):

Boys:

Navy blue dress pants without cargo pockets (no jeans) with a belt.

Light blue or white oxford dress shirt (tucked in at all times) and navy tie.

Navy blue sweaters (vest, cardigan, or pullover) should be worn.

No sweatshirts (aside from gym days) or turtlenecks.

Navy blue socks.

Sensible black dress shoes or sneakers (white or black).

No excessive jewelry; chains and crosses should be worn under shirts.

Girls:

Uniform jumper, skort, or skirt to the knee.

White uniform blouse or oxford shirt.

Navy blue dress pants (no jeans, cargos, or jeggings).

Navy blue sweaters (vest, cardigan, or pullover) should be worn.

No sweatshirts (aside from gym days) or turtlenecks.

Navy blue socks or tights.

Sensible black dress shoes or sneakers (white or black).

Gym Uniform (Monday and Wednesday):

Solid navy blue sweatpants and sweatshirts (with/without the school logo).

Sweatshorts or gym shorts are acceptable during warmer weather.

OLSS T-shirt, Navy OLSS shorts with no trim or markings.

Pre-K Uniform:

Summer (First Day of School through October 31 and from May 1 through the Last Day of School):

Regulation navy or khaki shorts to the knee with a white golf shirt or gym shorts and shirts.

Sneakers only.

Winter (November 1 through April 30):

Solid navy blue sweat suit with a white golf shirt every day.

Sneakers only.

Jewelry

Religious jewelry is permitted (medals, crosses, etc...)

Earrings should be diminutive in size

Artificial Nails

Artificial nails and/or long natural nails are not permitted

Hair Color

Brightly colored hair is not permitted

Spitting/Biting

Spitting and biting are behaviors that are health related and are strictly prohibited. However, children under the age of five may occasionally be involved in a biting or spitting incident. The staff will observe the child to determine what elicits this inappropriate behavior in an effort to avert it from recurring.

Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior. If the child's behavior persists in being harmful to the individual child or to other children, the parent will be asked to remove the child from school for the day. The parent/parents must be in communication with administration before the child can return to school.

Transportation

In the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians are asked how their child(ren) will arrive at and leave school. Any change in transportation arrangements must be made in writing, even if it is a change for only one day.

Technology

The use of technology within our school, encompassing Internet access and electronic communications, is considered a privilege granted to students and staff, not an inherent right. Recognizing the potential impact on both individuals and the broader school community, this policy is designed to ensure responsible and ethical use of technology, safeguarding the school's values and educational objectives.

Acceptable Use Policy and Social Media:

Our school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) establishes clear guidelines for the proper utilization of technology, covering Internet access, email, social media, and cell phone use. The AUP and the accompanying Social Media Policy can be found in their entirety on the school website, and adherence to these policies is mandatory for all members of the school community.

The Acceptable Use Protocol includes, but is not limited to, the following principles:

- **Email Correspondence:** Students engaging in email correspondence with school personnel should limit discussions to matters directly related to school or deemed appropriate within the school setting.
- **Considerate Communication:** All individuals are reminded to write with the awareness that their electronic communications may be shared beyond the intended recipients. Thoughtful and considerate language is encouraged.
- **Unacceptable Activities:** Bullying or harassing another member of the school community through any electronic means is unacceptable and subject to disciplinary action.

- **Inappropriate Content Sharing:** Posting or sharing statements, pictures, or materials that are false, derogatory, defamatory, degrading, malicious, disrespectful, or threatening towards any member of the school community is strictly prohibited.
- **Unauthorized Use of School Seal or Motto:** Use of the school seal (logo) or motto without the express written permission of the principal is prohibited.
- **Impersonation:** Creating websites, webpage accounts, blogs, or similar content designed to mimic or falsely represent another member of the school community without their explicit written consent is strictly forbidden.
- **Misrepresentation of Official School Communications:** Creating websites or web pages designed to appear as official school postings without authorization is strictly prohibited.

Any individual found in violation of this policy, engaging in inappropriate use of technology that adversely affects the good order, discipline, religious mission, or educational objectives of the school, will be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary measures may range from verbal warnings to suspension, depending on the severity and recurrence of the violation.

Lunch/Recess

Grades	Lunch	Recess
PreK-4	11:55 - 12:30	12:30 - 1:00
5 - 8	12:35 - 1:00	12:00 - 12:35

The school website provides access to the weekly lunch menu.

No student may leave the school premises at any time without permission. Every student must stay within the established boundaries when outdoors for lunch recess.

Office Telephone Use

If a child is detained at school for any reason without prior notification, permission will be granted to use the phone. Urgent messages for students will be relayed to them from the school office. During class time, neither student nor teacher may be called to the phone. Messages can be given to the school office when necessary, and they will be given to the appropriate teacher.

Mighty Writers

The Mighty Writers program functions separately from our school, and once students are dismissed to the Mighty Writers program at 3:00 pm, the school can no longer be held responsible for their supervision or well-being during that time.

As the Mighty Writers program operates independently, it is essential for parents to reach out to Mighty Writers directly for any inquiries related to attendance policies, dismissal procedures, walking trips and behavior guidelines. They will be best equipped to provide you with the specific details and information you may require.

To ensure a seamless transition between the school day and the Mighty Writers program, we encourage you to familiarize yourselves with Mighty Writers' policies and procedures. You can contact them directly at (609) 412-1767 for any questions or clarifications regarding your child's participation in their program.

Release of a Child

A child will not be released to a parent/guardian who does not have physical custody, without the written consent of the custodial parent/guardian. To determine the custodial parent/guardian, all separated or divorced parents of children enrolled in the parish school must **provide the school with a copy of the court order or custodial agreement adjudicating that determination of custody.** This Court Order/Custodial Agreement is placed in a confidential file. Anyone who is not listed on the Emergency Form but has been granted permission by either a written note or phone call to the school office by the parent/guardian must produce proper identification before they are able to take the student.

Religious Formation

In a Christian atmosphere, our students receive daily education in religious truths and traditions. Liturgical services, prayer services, and other forms of devotion suitable to the needs of the students are also included in our Religious Education Program. All students are required to take the religion courses and participate in any religious services conducted as part of the regular school program.

All families are expected to report a religious affiliation at registration. For Catholic families, you will be asked annually to keep your parish registration information current. The reception of First Holy Communion, Reconciliation, and Confirmation are conducted at the home parish of the student.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year to students in Grades K through 8. Pre K students receive a Progress Report at the end of the second quarter and the end of the year. Distribution dates for report cards are listed on the school website and school calendar. Each student is responsible for his/her own report card grade by satisfactorily fulfilling the following requirements:

- major assessments
- quizzes
- oral and written reports
- independent classroom work
- active participation in classroom lessons and activities
- class/individual projects

School Office Hours

The School Office is open on school days from 7:45 am until 3:15 pm. The office is open until 1:30 pm on early dismissal days.

Standardized Testing

STAR Testing is administered in the Fall, Winter and Spring to students in Grades K through 8. All data is examined by the staff and used to drive planning and instruction.

Student Books and Materials

Every student must carry his/her books to and from school in a suitable book bag. Books, notebooks and materials are to be properly identified with a child's name and room number. The student and parent/guardian must pay for all lost or damaged school books, in full. A charge will be made at the rate at which the books were purchased. Students are expected to take care of their personal belongings, their books, and their clothing. They are also asked to help care for the school buildings and the adjoining property. Any malicious damage will necessitate compensation.

Student Searches

Our Lady Star of the Sea School is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all students. The primary goal of any search is to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community. This policy applies to all students enrolled at Our Lady Star of the Sea School and covers searches conducted on school property and school-sponsored events. All searches will be conducted in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. Searches will be reasonable, justified, and conducted with due respect for the dignity and privacy of the students involved.

Search Procedures:

- Individual searches will be conducted if there is a reasonable suspicion that a student possesses prohibited or illegal items. A search will be conducted in the presence of at least one additional adult witness, when possible.
- Searches of lockers, backpacks, or personal property may be conducted based on reasonable grounds to suspect the presence of prohibited or illegal items.
- Principal's authorization is required, and efforts will be made to conduct the search in the presence of the student.
- Items discovered during a search that violate school policies or laws will be confiscated. Contraband will be turned over to law enforcement authorities if required by law.
- All searches will be documented, including the reasons for the search, the individuals involved, and the items discovered. A report will be filed with the principal and, if necessary, law enforcement.
- Parents will be promptly informed of any search involving their child unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

Smoking

The school premises are a smoke-free environment. No smoking is allowed in the school building or on the adjoining property.

Transfer and Registration

If a student is transferring to another school, parents should contact the school office to sign a permission form for release of records. Records are not forwarded to another school until this

form has been **signed by a parent and all financial obligations have been met**. School records will be forwarded to the child's new school upon request from that school.

Transportation

In the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians are asked how their child(ren) will arrive at and leave school. Any change in transportation arrangements must be made in writing, even if it is a change for only one day.

Bicycles/Scooters/Skateboards

OLSS School is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items that are brought to school; all items should remain locked.

Reimbursement is available from your local Board of Education for any student who resides 2.10 or more miles from school. Forms are available in the school business office.

Tuition Policy

Assessing Financial Capability: At Our Lady Star of the Sea School (OLSS), we understand that financing your child's education is a significant commitment. It is the responsibility of parents to assess their individual financial capability to meet tuition obligations over the duration of their children's attendance at OLSS. Parents should carefully consider their financial situation as an important part of their decision to enroll their children.

- **Tuition Assistance:** OLSS is committed to making Catholic education accessible to all families. We offer tuition assistance to families who qualify. To apply for tuition assistance, parents/guardians must submit an application through FACTS, our third party tuition assistance processing provider. Please note that only families who have completed the online tuition assistance application via FACTS and have provided the necessary documentation will be considered for tuition assistance for the current school year. Please note there is a non-refundable \$30 application fee to apply. If you need help completing the online application or have questions about your eligibility to apply, please make an appointment to come to the school so that we can assist you with the process.
- **Unpaid Tuition:** If two tuition payments in a row are not paid, and arrangements to pay the missed payments have not been made with the school office, the student/s will not be permitted to continue in the current school year until tuition is paid up to date. In situations where the student is in the eighth grade, participation in graduation ceremonies and other end-of-year activities will be contingent upon paid tuition.
- **Students Who Unenroll:** If a student unenrolls before completing the school year, the family will be responsible for payment for the days of attendance on a prorated basis. At least two weeks' notice is required if you plan to unenroll your child to avoid being charged for the upcoming month's tuition. In cases where a student unenrolls, and there are outstanding tuition payments owed to the school, the family will have a grace period of 60 days to settle the tuition bill in full. After the 60-day grace period, if the tuition remains unpaid, the account will be handed over to a collection agency. Please note that

families that have an unpaid balance will not be able to enroll at another Diocesan Catholic School until the previous balance is resolved.

- **Completion of Current Year Tuition:** All tuition for the current school year must be paid in full before the last day of the school year. Failure to do so may result in the student's place for the upcoming school year not being guaranteed.
- **Tuition Policy Agreement:** Parents/Guardians are required to sign and cooperate with the tuition policy/contract provided at the time of registration. Tuition Payments made via the FACTS Automated Tuition system are preferred but OLSS will accommodate families who make payments by cash, check, credit card, money order or Venmo. We appreciate your commitment to Catholic education and your understanding of the importance of financial responsibility in supporting the mission of OLSS.

Visitors

All visitors and volunteers must report to the school office. The doors of the school building are kept locked at all times. The main door by the office is the ONLY entrance door. Visitors must come to the main door and ring the bell.

Parents/guardians and visitors are not permitted in the halls or visit any instructional area during the school day, unless permission has been obtained from the principal. Anyone entering the building must sign in and receive a visitor badge and then sign out when leaving.

Parents coming to school to bring forgotten articles or to relay messages must come to the school office. Classes may not be disturbed for these reasons

Volunteers

The assistance of parent volunteers is greatly appreciated and encouraged. We recognize the invaluable assistance given by our students' families, which helps in building a strong learning community.

All volunteers must have current fingerprints on record with the school office in order to volunteer in the school building. Criminal Record checks (fingerprinting) are valid for three (3) years. Volunteers must also attend a Protecting God's Children class within 60 days and receive a certificate of completion to be filed in the school office