

# **PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2022– 2023**



**CHOOSE CHRIST. CHOOSE LOVE. CHOOSE NATIVITY.**

## **NATIVITY B.V.M. CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

1046 Beach Boulevard

BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI 39530

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[www.nativitybvm.org](http://www.nativitybvm.org)

# NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

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This handbook is designed to be a synopsis of the policies and procedures of this school and it is not intended to be all inclusive. General policies applicable to all schools within the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi as well as local school policies govern the school. These are available for your review in the school office. It is expected that the handbook, local policies, and general diocesan policies are consistent, however, at certain times due to human error and/or amendments to various parts, conflicts could arise. To the extent that a conflict exists, general diocesan policies shall take precedence followed by local school policies and finally, this handbook.

The Handbook for Pastors, Principals, and School Advisory Councils dated August, 2013, identifies the roles of pastors, principals, school advisory councils and parent/teacher organizations.

**THE PRINCIPAL RETAINS THE RIGHT TO AMEND THIS HANDBOOK FOR JUST CAUSE. PARENTS WILL BE GIVEN PROMPT NOTIFICATION IF CHANGES ARE MADE.**

Nativity B.V.M. Catholic Elementary School is accredited by the State of Mississippi and by Cognia (formally known as AdvancED.) The school is an institutional member of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) which includes over 7,100 Catholic elementary schools nationwide. All teachers hold valid certification from the State of Mississippi.

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*Dear Nativity Families,*

*On behalf of Fr. Godfrey, our partner parish pastors, and myself, welcome to Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic School! This is our sixty-sixth year educating children of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. From the time the school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy from Ireland in 1956, to today, our school has had a tradition of academic excellence, strong faith, caring faculty and staff, and a love for Jesus Christ. We are honored that you have chosen our school for your precious children.*

*Proverbs 22:6, says, "Train up the young in the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart from it." At Nativity BVM School, we educate not only the mind, but we also do our best to instill in our students, virtues that will serve them well throughout their lives. Of course, it is never far from our minds that Jesus is the reason for our school. We strive to develop our students' God-given gifts, so that they can use them to help others as they journey to be disciples of Jesus Christ.*

*We pray that God's blessings will be upon us all as we make the 22-23 school year one to remember.*

*Many blessings,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Traci Kessler".

*Traci Kessler  
Principal*

*Choose Christ. Choose Love. Choose Nativity.*

Welcome to a new school year! The Nativity faculty and staff are looking forward to working with you and your children to make this a successful and blessed year. You, as the parents and first teachers of your children, play an integral role in our school. We are so blessed to have an active parent association and grandparent club. Thank you for everything you do to make our school a place where students are nurtured...mind, body, and soul.

We are also grateful to the parishes of Nativity B.V.M. Cathedral, Blessed Seelos, Church of the Vietnamese Martyrs, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Michael, and the other parishes of our diocese for their support of our school. We pray for their clergy and parishioners daily and thank God for their generosity.

## **DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENT FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

The Catholic school community within the Diocese of Biloxi, a ministry of the Catholic Church, embracing the teachings and traditions of the past, accepting the challenges and opportunities of the present, and preparing for the demands of the future, provides an education based on Christ's teaching and Catholic values which focus on the formation of strong moral character, the furtherance of academic excellence, the inspiration to serve others, and the motivation to achieve God-given potential in the local and the world communities.

## **DIOCESAN VISION FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Catholic schools of the Diocese of Biloxi recognize themselves as integral to the mission of the church and as the responsibility of the entire church. Our vision includes these ideals:

- God is the center foundation, author, and source of all learning.
- Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship are essential to the well-being of individuals and society.
- All persons have intrinsic value and each person can contribute something of worth to society.
- Each person is responsible and accountable for choices and decisions made.
- Catholic schools are positioned as the heart of church life and as such, share in the responsibility of being church to the world.
- High expectations lead to higher performance which in turn, empowers the individual and strengthens society.
- Learning is a lifelong process essential to a productive and enriched life.
- It is each individual's responsibility to respect oneself as Christ teaches, respect others in a Christ-like manner, and respect one's school as a gift from God.
- The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Biloxi nurture personal growth, scholarship, life-long learning, and service.

## **SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

In an environment of love, prayerfulness, justice, peace, Nativity BVM Catholic School provides a high-quality education that has as its goal, the development of each child's God-given gifts, so that they may share them with others. We live and learn in the Light of Christ.

## PARISH/SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF

Rector	Very Rev. Godfrey Andoh
Principal	Mrs. Traci Kessler
Secretary	Mrs. Cheryl Steinwinder
Business/Social Media Manager	Mrs. Allison Watts
Pre-School 2	Mrs. Kimberly Audo
Assistant	Ms. Jackie Murphy
Pre-School 3	Mrs. Lindsay Illich
Assistant	Mrs. Ann Marie Hill
Pre-School 4	Mrs. Marie Papale
Assistant	Mrs. Bonnie Fountain
Kindergarten	Mrs. Kenna Elbin
Assistant	Miss Jordan Vincent
Grade 1	Mrs. Naomi Foster
Assistant	Miss Kyleigh Louviere
Grade 2	Mrs. Kelly Green
Grade 3	Ms. Cheryl Gruich
Grade 4	Mrs. Tahler Glisson
Grade 5	Mrs. Kimberly Lyons
Grade 6	Mrs. Suzanne Dudiak
Library/Computer Lab	Mrs. Judy Kavanagh
Physical Education	Mrs. Alexandra Smith
Special Education	Ms. Rachel DiMauro
Speech Services	Provided by Biloxi Public School District
Explore/Art	Mrs. Zina Puz
Music/Choir/Band	Mr. Terry Maddox
Child Nutrition Supervisor	Mrs. Martha Montiforte
Cafeteria Manager	Mrs. Erica Gnapp
Cafeteria Assistant Manager	Mrs. Lois Kostmayer
Cafeteria Cook	Ms. Patti Brady

# SCHOOL CALENDAR AND IMPORTANT DATES (All dates and times are tentative.)

## August

Supply Drop-Off	August 4	3:30-5:30 PM
Opening Day of School	August 5	
Mass – Beginning of the School Year	August 11	9:00 AM
Back to School Open House	August 17	5:15 PM
Children’s Mass at the Cathedral	August 21	11:00 AM
Mass – First Responders	August 25	9:00 AM
School Advisory Council Meeting	August 25	5:00 PM
New Family Spaghetti Dinner	August 31	5:15 PM

**Number of school days: 19 days**

## September

Labor Day Holiday – No School	September 5	
Early Dismissal/Prof. Dev.	September 7	2:00 PM
\$3,000 Raffle Drawing	September 7	
Interim Progress Reports	September 7	
Mass – The Feast of the Nativity	September 8	9:00 AM
Children’s Mass at the Cathedral	September 11	9:00 AM
Mass – For Our Grandparents	September 22	9:00 AM
Children’s Mass at the Cathedral	September 25	11:00 AM
School Advisory Council Meeting	September 29	5:00 PM

**Number of school days: 21 days**

## October

Blessing of the Pets Prayer Service	October 4	8:15 AM
Early Dismissal/Prof. Dev.	October 5	2:00 PM
\$3,000 Raffle Drawing	October 5	
End of 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	October 7	
Fall Holiday – No school	October 10 & 11	
Carnival Set-up	October 14	3:15 PM
Halloween Carnival	October 15	Mass at 1:00 PM
Carnival Clean-up	October 16	8:00 AM-until
Report Cards Sent Home	October 19	
Mass - General School Mass with Bishop K.	October 27	9:00 AM
Children’s Mass at the Cathedral	October 30	9:00 AM

**Number of school days: 19 days**

## November

Early Dismissal/Prof. Dev.	November 2	2:00 PM
\$3,000 Raffle Drawing	November 2	
Mass – All Saints	November 3	9:00 AM
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students Visit St. Patrick High School	November 8	9:00-1:00
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students Visit St. Patrick High School	November 9	9:00-1:00
Interim Progress Reports	November 9	
Practice for the Sacrament of Reconciliation	November 10	5:30 PM
Sacrament of Reconciliation at the Cathedral	November 12	10:00 AM
Children’s Mass at the Cathedral	November 13	11:00 AM
St. Patrick High School Open House	November 13	2:00-5:00 PM
Mass – Thanksgiving	November 17	9:00 AM
School Advisory Council Meeting	November 18	5:00 p.m.
Thanksgiving Holiday – No School	November 21-25	

**Number of school days: 17 days**

**December**

Breakfast with Santa	December 3	
Children's Mass at the Cathedral	December 4	9:00 AM
Early Dismissal/Prof. Dev.	December 7	2:00 PM
\$3,000 Raffle Drawing	December 7	
Mass – Immaculate Conception	December 8	9:00 AM
Mass – St. Lucia	December 13	9:00 AM
Christmas Program (PK2 – K)	December 14	9:00 AM
Christmas Program (1 <sup>st</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> )	December 15	9:00 AM & 5:30 PM
Penance Service	December 15	1:15 PM
End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter and 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester – No ASC	December 16	Dismissal at Noon
Children's Mass at the Cathedral/Choir Performs	December 24	3:30 PM
Christmas Holiday - No School	December 19-30	

**Number of school days: 12 days****January**

Christmas Holiday - No School	January 2	
Return to School	January 3	
Report Cards Sent Home	January 11	
Early Dismissal/Prof. Dev.	January 11	2:00 PM
\$3,000 Raffle Drawing	January 11	
Mass – Peace in Our World	January 12	9:00 AM
Children's Mass at the Cathedral	January 15	11:00 AM
MLK Jr. Holiday – No School	January 16	
Mass – General School	January 26	9:00 AM
Catholic School's Week	January 29-February 4	
Children's Mass at the Cathedral (CSW)	January 29	9:00 AM

**Number of school days: 19 days****February**

Early Dismissal/Prof. Dev.	February 1	2:00 PM
Interim Progress Reports	February 1	
\$3,000 Raffle Drawing	February 1	
Mass – Catholic Schools Week	February 2	9:00 AM
Children's Mass at the Cathedral	February 5	11:00 AM
Valentine Dance	February 11	5:30 PM
Mass – General School	February 16	9:00 AM
Mardi Gras Holiday – No School	February 20 & 21	
Mass – Ash Wednesday	February 22	9:00 AM
School Advisory Council Meeting	February 23	5:00 p.m.
Children's Mass at the Cathedral	February 26	9:00 AM

**Number of school days: 19 days****March**

Early Dismissal/Prof. Dev.	March 1	2:00 PM
\$3,000 Raffle Drawing	March 1	
Mass – Lenten	March 2	9:00 AM
Saints Shenanigans Run	March 4	
End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	March 10	
March Break – No School	March 13 & 14	
Mass – General School	March 16	9:00 AM
Children's Mass at the Cathedral	March 19	11:00 AM
Report Cards Sent Home	March 22	
Penance Service	March 23	1:15 PM
1 <sup>st</sup> Communion Retreat	March 23	TBD

**Number of school days: 21 days**

**April**

Brunch with the Bunny	April 1	TBD
Children's Mass at the Cathedral	April 2	11:00 AM
Early Dismissal/Prof. Dev.	April 5	2:00 PM
Interim Progress Reports	April 5	
\$3,000 Raffle Drawing	April 5	
Living Stations of the Cross	April 14	9:00 and 10:30 AM
Easter Holiday	April 7-14	
Mass – General School	April 20	9:00 AM
First Communion Practice	April 20	5:30 PM
First Communion	April 23	9:00 AM
Iowa Assessment (ITBS)	April 24-28	
School Advisory Council Meeting	April 27	5:00 PM

**Number of school days: 14 days****May**

Early Dismissal/Prof. Dev.	May 3	2:00 PM
\$3,000 Raffle Drawing	May 3	
Mass – May Crowning	May 4	9:00 AM
Peace, Love, Crawfish Fun Day	May 6	9:00 AM
May Crowning Mass at the Cathedral	May 7	9:00 AM
Senior Walk-Through	May 10	TBD
Nativity BVM Track Meet	May 13	9:00 AM
Mass – End of the Year	May 18	9:00 AM
Pre-School/Kindergarten Celebration	May 19	9:00 AM
Children's Mass at the Cathedral	May 21	11:00 AM
Awards Day (1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grades)	May 22	9:00 AM
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Lunch/Awards	May 23	12:15 PM
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Mass (Cathedral)	May 24	10:00 AM
Last Day of School –No ASC	May 25	Dismissal at Noon

**Number of school days: 19 days****Emergency days**

October 10 &amp; 11, March 13 &amp; 14

**Last \$3,000 Raffle Drawing**

June 5

## **PARENT/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

At Nativity B.V.M. Catholic School, we work very hard as a school family to provide the highest level of academics and to form intentional disciples of Jesus Christ. The education of a child is a partnership between the parents and the school. If, in the opinion of the school administration, that partnership is irreparably broken, parents may be required to withdraw their child(ren) from our Catholic school. This conduct includes, but is not limited to, physical behavior, social media activities, internet posts, and interaction with local and national media. There are channels to discuss issues that may arise. Social media is not the appropriate forum and only serves to damage the school and the relationship between all parties.

## **DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY**

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or any other circumstances which, in the judgment of the school administration, make it infeasible, unsafe, or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, school shall resume as soon as practical via distance learning and/or other methods adopted and/or developed by the school administration and faculty. Due to continuing financial obligations relating to operational costs, including administrative, faculty, and staff salaries, there shall be no suspension, reduction, or refund of tuition or applicable fees.

## **SCHOOL NAME, LOGO, MOTTO, MASCOT**

The school's name, logo, motto, or mascot may not be used in any form without the permission of the principal. If permission is given, the principal is responsible for ensuring all policies of the school and the Diocese of Biloxi are followed, including background checks and safe environment training for all adults involved.

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

Nativity BVM Catholic School accepts Catholic students from Nativity B.V.M., Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, Keesler AFB, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Michael, Vietnamese Martyrs, and other parishes in the diocese. New families, who provide verification of membership in Nativity B.V.M. Cathedral parish, will have priority. Applications for enrollment are completed online.

- Students of other faiths are accepted on a space available basis.
- A student registering for the 3-year-old program must be 3 years old on or before September 1st while a child registering for the 4-year-old program must be 4 years old on or before September 1st of that school year. Children must be fully toilet trained.
- A student registering for kindergarten must be 5 years old on or before September 1st of that school year.
- A student registering for 1st grade must be 6 years old on or before September 1st of that school year.
- Students transferring from another school after the beginning of the school year are generally accepted if space allows. The decision to admit a student is at the discretion of the principal.
- Students coming from programs that are not accredited by the state or regional accrediting agency, must take the STAR Early Literacy/STAR Reading and STAR Math assessments before being admitted.

## **WITHDRAWALS**

Please notify the school office at least one week prior to the withdrawal of a student. A formal withdrawal form must be completed by the parent/guardian before a child is considered to be officially withdrawn. Records will be mailed to the next school upon their written request.

ALL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS MUST BE SATISFIED BEFORE SCHOOL RECORDS WILL BE RELEASED.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1962, Title IV of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972, Nativity B.V.M. School's Policy assures that no one shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity of the school.

Nativity B.V.M. Catholic School reaffirms that it has a Nondiscriminatory Policy with regard to race and sex, both in the enrollment of students and in the employment of teachers and staff.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

Nativity B.V.M. School will protect the confidentiality of all data in its records of all children, and particularly, any records relative to special education programs.

Information which could identify an individual child will be maintained by this agency and will be provided to other agencies only in accord with the Family Rights and Privacy Act and EHA-B. As a parent, you are guaranteed the right to inspect any such information about your child and to challenge its accuracy. Access to this information is forbidden to any unauthorized person, without informed consent.

If you have any questions regarding the collection, maintenance and use of data about your child, please contact the principal during office hours, 7:30-3:00, at the following address:

Nativity B.V.M. Catholic Elementary School  
1046 Beach Boulevard  
Biloxi, MS 39530  
Telephone: (228) 432-2269

## **CUSTODIAL AGREEMENTS**

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Biloxi adhere to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) in regard to privacy of student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof.

Be advised that if a teacher is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.)

## **CELL PHONES/ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students at Nativity B.V.M. Catholic School are not permitted to have cell phones or other electronic devices in their possession, including in a backpack, pocket, or purse, even if it turned off. These devices include but are not limited to cell phones, smart watches, iPads, tablets, Mp3 players, video gaming systems, etc. The devices may not be used during field trips and other activities at the discretion of the school administration.

**Cell phones and other electronic devices must be taken to the school office upon arrival. They will be kept in the office throughout the day and returned as the student leaves campus.**

## **CELL PHONES/ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES CONTINUED**

Electronic devices, such as Chromebooks and computers, used at school, must only be used for educational purposes. Each student has a personal email address through G Suite for Education. These accounts are not for personal use. Parents are responsible for the use of this email address outside of school. Students are responsible for their own behavior at all times. Student safety is the main priority.

The following consequences will follow any violation of the above conditions:

1. The first violation will result in a conduct detention. The electronic device will be confiscated and turned into the principal's office. It will be returned to the student five (5) consecutive days after the infraction, provided that the student arrives in person to retrieve it.
2. A second violation will result in a one (1) day in-school suspension. The electronic device will be confiscated and turned into the principal's office. It will be returned to the parent/guardian of the student at the end of fifteen (15) consecutive days, provided the parent/guardian and student arrive in person to retrieve it.
3. A third violation will result in a one (1) to three (3) day in-school suspension. The electronic device will be confiscated and turned into the principal's office. It will be returned to the parent/guardian of the student at the end of thirty (30) consecutive days. The student will lose the right to bring and possess a cellular phone or other electronic device on the school campus for the remainder of the school year. The parent/guardian will be informed that the next violation may result in the student being asked to withdraw.
4. A fourth violation may result in the student being asked to withdraw from the school or be subjected to expulsion.
5. Any student attending Nativity BVM Catholic School may be subject to discipline if an electronic device is used in any potentially harmful manner. This applies to any person in which the harm seeks to injure someone's reputation outside of the school environment. This can occur when the matter is brought on campus and interrupts the learning/teaching environment. A more severe discipline ladder than the one stated above may apply to these infractions.

The Administrator of the school reserves the right to grant permission for the usage of cellular or other electronic devices for educational purposes. These educational purposes will be handled as exceptions and must not undermine this policy.

**FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL, PLEASE DO NOT USE CELL PHONES WHILE DRIVING ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.**

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost articles may be retrieved from the lost and found cubby near the school gym.

## **SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS**

It is acceptable to send a treat for a child's birthday or a special celebration day. As a staff we ask that the treat follow the guidelines of the Child Nutrition Office, and be easily served and eaten. Please see Mrs. Martha for questions about acceptable treats. It is best if the teacher is contacted in advance to determine the best time to bring the treat.

Holiday celebrations are generally coordinated by one or two parents with the classroom teacher.

Pick-up by limousine or taxi cab is something that should be discussed with the principal prior to the arrival of the vehicle. Special arrangements for parking and for student pick-up are needed for these types of service.

## INVITATIONS

Children will be allowed to distribute party invitations (birthday, etc.) at school or on school grounds only if all the children in the classroom are invited or if all the boys or all the girls are invited. Since issuing invitations to a select few often results in hurt feelings, the school requests that invitations for only some of the students be given out away from school grounds.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development is required by the State of Mississippi for ongoing school accreditation and for professional growth. Dismissal will generally be on the **first Wednesday** of the month at 2:00 PM to allow for Professional Development. Families will be notified of any changes or additional professional development days well in advance. Afterschool care is generally available.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips, as learning experiences, are encouraged since they can do much to emphasize and build on information learned in the classroom setting. Places are chosen at the discretion of the classroom teacher in order to be appropriate for the age and interest of the students.

Parents or guardians will be requested to sign a permission form for their child. Only the signature of the custodial parent(s) or guardian will be accepted as valid. Parents or guardians driving for field trips are required to possess a valid driver's license. According to Diocese of Biloxi policies, anyone driving students for a field trip must have a level of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per accident liability insurance or a minimum of \$300,000 single liability insurance. A copy of both must be on file in the school office. The vehicle must have a current license plate.

Because a field trip is seen as a privilege and as an opportunity to learn in another way, students are expected to behave appropriately. If the principal (or designee) is contacted because of inappropriate behavior, the parents will be notified and will be required to remove the child from the field trip. Following a meeting with the principal and parents, the child will be suspended for a minimum of two days and will be excluded from future field trips. (Field Trip Policy-4/11/16)

## FREE AND REDUCED MEAL BENEFIT PROGRAM

As part of the National School Lunch Program, applications for free and reduced lunches are available throughout the school year. If you have a change in household income, you may submit a new application at any time. Applications are available in the school cafeteria and office. We encourage each family to complete the application at the beginning of each school year as the federal guidelines change from year to year. Notification regarding free/reduced lunches will be sent home when approved. **Although a family may qualify for free/reduced lunch, any prior balances for school lunches/recess milk must be paid.** A random audit of these applications is conducted each October according to Federal guidelines. Free or reduced lunch qualification only refers to the lunch/lunch beverage.

## FEDERAL LUNCH REQUIREMENTS NOTICE

The school must offer students in elementary schools, when approved by the local School Food Authority, all five food items contained within the four food components of the lunch. Under Offer vs. Serv, students are not required to choose all five meal components. They can choose three, four, or all five, but they must take a half-cup of fruit or vegetables. The choice of fewer than all five items will not affect the charge for the lunch.

Students who bring sack lunches from home may purchase milk to drink with their lunch. If candy is included in a child's lunch, it should only be in a small amount. Chewing gum is not allowed in school at any time. Students with food allergies must have a doctor's note indicating the specific food allergies. This note must be on file with the Cafeteria Manager by the start of the first full week of school.

Children will not be allowed to "skip lunch" without communication between the parent and principal. ALL children are expected to eat a well-balanced meal. Menus are posted on the website at the beginning of each month so that students and families are aware of what is being served.

Table manners and appropriate behaviors are emphasized at all times. As in other situations, failure to meet expectations will be addressed appropriately

The school's wellness policy can be found on our website at [www.nativitybvm.org](http://www.nativitybvm.org).

**PLEASE NOTE: BREAKFAST WILL NOT BE SERVED THIS SCHOOL YEAR.**

### **LUNCH**

All students are encouraged to participate in the Federal Lunch Program. The cost of student lunches will be \$3.50 per day and includes milk. The cost of adult lunches will be \$4.50 per day. These prices are subject to change pending an annual evaluation of per plate costs. According to mandates of the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition, students are not allowed to charge their lunches.

Parents are highly encouraged to pay for lunches, ice cream, and recess drinks via their personal FACTS accounts. Parents can keep money in the cafeteria prepay account and will be notified when additional money needs to be added. Should a parent send cash or a check, the check should be made payable to Nativity BVM Cafeteria and the check or cash should be turned in to the classroom teacher in an envelope with Lunch Money and the student's name and grade on the outside of the envelope.

Students with food allergies must have a doctor's note stating the exact allergy/allergies, as well as acceptable substitutions.

### **RECESS DRINKS/ADDITIONAL SALES**

The Nativity BVM Cafeteria sells milk, juice, and water each day as a recess drink. The cost is \$.50 per beverage. Families who are eligible for free/reduced lunches **are required** to pay the cost of the recess drink.

Nativity BVM Cafeteria sells ice cream on designated days. All items that are sold are within the guidelines of the Mississippi Office of Child Nutrition and range in price from \$0.50 to \$1.00 depending upon the item chosen.

## **NOTIFICATION REGARDING ASBESTOS-CONTAINING MATERIALS AND MANAGEMENT PLAN:**

As you may be aware, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S.E.P.A.) has regulations regarding asbestos-containing materials in school buildings. These regulations require that all schools conduct surveys to identify the presence of friable and non-friable asbestos in their building and implement appropriate response actions, as necessary.

An inspection was performed at Nativity B.V.M. Elementary School in compliance with these regulations, furthermore, a site-specific asbestos management plan was developed, reviewed by the Mississippi Department of Public Health, and has been implemented. This plan describes in great detail how any asbestos exposures will be minimized.

Many years ago, extensive work was done on the Nativity B.V.M. School building in order to bring it into compliance with directives. All ceiling areas in the school building were re-done in 1984 in order to be free of asbestos-containing materials. The suspect-asbestos floor tile in the hallways, offices and library was removed in June 2006.

Parents, teachers, or others are invited to review the inspection and management plan Monday through Friday between 8:30 AM and 3:00 PM at the school's administrative office. Should you have any questions, or desire further information, please address those questions to the principal.

## **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Very Rev. Godfrey Andoh, Pastor  
Traci Kessler, Principal  
Dana Lamey, President  
TBA , Vice President

Kimberly Rasmussen, Secretary/NPA Representative  
Jenny Baker  
Jeremy Thames  
Katie O'Grady

The School Advisory Council assists the school administrator in the implementation of diocesan policy and in the development of local school procedures.

## **NATIVITY PARENT ASSOCIATION**

Kimberly Rasmussen, President  
Tracie Strayham, President-elect  
Jason Rider, Board Member

Committee Chairs, identified for each major event, will provide leadership for special projects and events.

The Nativity Parent Association (NPA) is comprised of all parents and guardians of the students of Nativity BVM Catholic School. Meetings are generally held a few times a year in the cafeteria. Meetings will be noted on the monthly calendar. During months where in-person meetings are not held, a newsletter will be sent home.

The main purpose of the NPA is to raise money for the benefit of the school and its students. Funds raised through NPA efforts are incorporated into the school's annual budget in an effort to keep tuition affordable for our families and to keep our school competitive with its offerings.

Our two main fundraisers each year are:

1. \$30,000 Raffle (a monthly raffle drawing of \$3,000 for ten (10) months)
2. Halloween Carnival

In addition to these fundraisers, our school has smaller, but equally important social events throughout the year.

Outside of fundraising efforts, the NPA coordinates teacher appreciation events for the faculty and staff of our school; The Peace, Love and Saints Field Day in the spring of each year, and t-shirt sales. Volunteers are always welcome to help with any of the events!

## **GRANDPARENT CLUB**

The Grandparent Club was formed during the 2011-2012 school year in an effort to provide support for and further involve family members in the "life" of the school. Information about the club is sent home through the school newsletter or by other means of communication. We welcome all grandparents to participate.

## **PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

### **Parent Meetings:**

Within the first three weeks of school, a school information night is scheduled for parents/guardians of all students. The content of the meeting includes an overview of programs and procedures of the school, services which are provided, curriculum information and classroom expectations.

## **PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT CONTINUED**

Parents/guardians wishing to have a private conference with the teacher are asked to do so at a pre-arranged and mutually agreed upon time and place. Parents are strongly discouraged from initiating a conference in the classroom or on the playground while the teacher is responsible for the safety and well-being of the class or a group of children. At those times, the teacher is unable to give the question or concern full attention and is unable to fully supervise the children appropriately. Parent conferences with the teacher(s) and/or principal are scheduled as convenient for all involved. Emails, telephone calls, and face-to-face conversations are always encouraged.

### **On-going Planning and Review of Programs:**

A weekly newsletter is the major communication vehicle for parents/guardians of Nativity BVM School. The newsletter is will be sent by email to each family, typically on Mondays. The newsletter may also be found on the school's website – [www.nativitybvm.org](http://www.nativitybvm.org).

The school's website, closed Facebook page, ClassDojo, FACTS Alerts, and additional notes are used to share information with parents/guardians. Surveys, questionnaires and response sheets are used to periodically gather information about the effectiveness of the school and its programs and to provide input for planning.

### **On-going Communication:**

Public media (newspapers) and parish publications are often used as ways to communicate with parents/general public about the school and its programs.

FACTS Communication/Alerts, an automated phone/email/text messaging program, is used by the principal or designated person to provide telephone/email/text contact with families. It is used as a means to communicate important information to groups of families or to the entire student body.

The FACTS SIS program is used for student information and student records. Parents are encouraged to access their child's grades regularly, using their FACTS Family Portal.

A homework assignment book is used in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>. The classroom teachers use this as a way of communicating with parents on a daily/weekly basis. Pre-K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers use some sort of daily communication to indicate not only behavior but homework, commitment to work, and completion of tasks. Each student will be provided a School-to-Home Communication folder

Interim progress report cards are distributed halfway through each nine-week marking period for grades 1-6. Report cards are issued quarterly for all students in K-6 and each semester for PK3 and PK4. Written or verbal communication is ongoing between the school and faculty.

### **Shared Responsibility for Student Achievement:**

The school's student/parent handbook is distributed via email or paper copy upon request, to each family and is available on the school's website. Parents/guardians are required to sign the policy page and return it to the school before the end of the first full week of school.

### **Learning Accessibility:**

Nativity BVM School is blessed to have an Educable Child program that is partially funded through a trust fund that was established many years ago. Our principal, classroom teachers, and our special education teacher work closely with the Biloxi Public School District to identify the individual instructional and behavioral needs of our students.

**Learning Accessibility Continued:**

Nativity's special education teacher writes the Individual Service Plans (ISPs) for students that qualify.

As the need arises, translation services are provided for parents. These services are provided by staff members, family members, or qualified resource people.

Because Nativity BVM School is a two-story building without an elevator, meetings are generally held on the first floor of the school building.

**Questions or Concerns:**

If a question or concern arises, parents are encouraged to contact the classroom teacher or appropriate adult who is directly involved in person, in writing, electronically or by telephone. The teacher, principal, or other adult involved will respond in a timely manner. If further discussion is needed, the parent/guardian will be referred to the Rector of the Cathedral.

**Appeals Process**

Appeals to the Diocesan School Advisory Council are for cases of expulsion only. No appeals of a principal's decision can be made to local School Advisory Councils. In the event of a serious situation, after discussion, prayer and reflection, the decisions made by the Nativity B.V.M. Catholic Elementary School Principal are final. If further discussion is needed, the parent/guardian will be referred to the Rector of the Cathedral.

## **BINGO**

The Nativity BVM Cathedral Parish Bingo program supports Nativity BVM School. Bingo is run by a group of interested parishioners and parents who work weekly as callers and supervisors. Parents of Nativity students are asked to work as floor workers or kitchen workers each week. Each parent/family works approximately three-four times per year. If a parent/guardian is unable to work the assigned date, they must give ample notice to the person in charge of bingo and pay \$65 for the substitute. Workers must be 21 years of age or older. Bingo is held each Tuesday evening with Early Bird games beginning at 6:00 p.m. and regular games beginning at 7:00 p.m. Workers are asked to report at 5:30 p.m. The Bingo Mania Hall is located immediately behind the Nativity Sacred Heart Center which is behind Nativity BVM Cathedral.

In order to qualify for subsidy and tuition assistance, families must agree to work Bingo as scheduled. This includes families who are not Catholic but who receive tuition assistance. Families who fail to honor the requirement to work Bingo may have tuition and/or subsidy revoked after consultation with the pastor. Families who do not receive subsidy or tuition assistance are welcome to help with Bingo. Please let the principal know.

## **PARISH SUBSIDY AND TUITION CLASSIFICATION**

The parish staff of our Cathedral parish, in conjunction with the Pastoral Council, wishes to reiterate the already established policy concerning subsidy of our young people at Nativity BVM Catholic School. The Catholic (Active Parishioner) Tuition rate is for Catholic children and their families who are members of a Catholic parish. A baptismal certificate must be on file and the school must receive a signed subsidy form from the pastor of the parish.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Tuition Assistance is available for families through their individual parishes or through Nativity School's Evangelization Grant. A family interested in applying for tuition assistance from Nativity School or Nativity Parish must request an application and return the completed application to the school. Requests for tuition assistance from other Catholic parishes must be made directly to that pastor.

## **PROCEDURE FOR DELINQUENT TUITION**

If a payment is thirty (30) days late, the responsible party will be contacted by the principal of the school. A \$30 late fee may be assessed. If a payment is forty-five (45) days late, the responsible party will be contacted by the pastor of the parish. A \$45 late fee may be assessed. If a payment is sixty (60) days late, the responsible party may be turned over to a collection agency. A \$60 late fee will be assessed by Nativity BVM School. The family may be asked to leave the school.

## **NSF CHECKS**

When the school has received two (2) NSF checks for payment of any fees, then payment by check will no longer be acceptable. Future payments must be made by cash or money order. A \$35 NSF fee may be assessed per returned check.

## **ENROLLMENT ONCE THE SCHOOL YEAR HAS BEGUN**

The registration fees, NPA fee, and general/technology fees remain the same. Tuition is paid for the full month, regardless of the first day of classes.

## **REFUND OF FEES**

Registration and General/Technology fees are non-refundable. Tuition fees are non-refundable once a new month has begun.

## **TWO-YEAR OLD PROGRAM TUITION AND FEE INFORMATION**

Information about PK2 can be found in their handbook.

## **PRE-K3 and K4 TUITION AND FEE INFORMATION**

There are no tuition discounts given for multiple children in preschool.

### **Registration fee**

The registration fee for each child is \$250.00. The registration fee is non-refundable and is required at the time of registration. *This fee reserves the child's place in the classroom.*

### **General fees/Technology fee**

The General Fee/Technology Fee is \$300.00 for the first child and \$250.00 for each additional child in a family. The fee is non-refundable. It is used to purchase snacks/drinks, religion books, consumable books, art and learning materials, as well as, student insurance, and access to FACTS Student Information System. This fee may be paid at the time of registration or it will be included into FACTS payments. Each family is asked to supply their child with a small nap mat and a backpack.

### **NPA Fee**

The Nativity Parent Association Fee is \$50.00 per child and is non-refundable. This fee is used to purchase Nativity spirit shirt, Halloween Carnival class decorations, Halloween Carnival drinks, and in place of donations for Teacher Appreciation celebrations.

### **Raffle Tickets**

Each Nativity School family is asked to sell four (4) \$100 raffle tickets. Monthly drawings for \$3,000 take place for ten months (September - June.) Tickets may be purchased by the family or may be sold. Starting with the fifth ticket sold, and for each additional ticket sold, a \$20 credit will be applied to tuition/fees owed. Each family is responsible for any lost tickets.

### **Tuition**

Full-day tuition per child is \$597.50 per month for ten months.

Half-day tuition (PK-3 ONLY) per child is \$447.50 per month for ten months.

Tuition fees are non-refundable once a new month has started.

### **Half Day Students**

The half day preschool program **for three-year-olds only** lasts until noon. Children remaining after the noon dismissal will be charged the \$30.00 afternoon fee.

Space in the half day program is based on classroom availability. Full time students will receive preference in enrollment through the first day of school.

### **Tuition Payment Options**

Families have two options for payment of tuition:

1. Pay in full on or before the start of school.
2. Monthly payments through the FACTS tuition program. Payment will be due on either the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month, as designated by the family.

Please note that any tuition payments made by credit card will be subject to a 3% fee.

## **K THROUGH GRADE 6 TUITION AND FEE INFORMATION**

### **Registration Fee**

The registration fee for each child is \$250.00. The registration fee is non-refundable and is required at the time of registration. *This fee reserves the child's place in the classroom.*

### **General/Technology Fee**

The General Fee/Technology Fee is \$300.00 for the first child and \$250.00 for each additional child in a family. The fee is used to purchase Religion books, consumable books, art and learning materials as well as student insurance, and access to FACTS Student Information System. This fee may be paid at the time of registration or it will be included into FACTS payments.

### **NPA Fee**

The Nativity Parent Association Fee is \$50.00 per child. This fee will be in place of various collections for activities throughout the year including: Nativity spirit shirts and field day shirt, Halloween Carnival class decorating fee, Halloween Carnival drinks and donation for Teacher Appreciation celebration.

### **Raffle Tickets**

Each Nativity School family is asked to sell four (4) \$100 raffle tickets. Monthly drawings for \$3,000 take place for ten months. Tickets may be purchased by the family or may be sold. Starting with the fifth ticket sold, a family may earn \$20 for each additional ticket sold toward tuition/fees. Each family is responsible for any lost tickets.

### **Tuition – Catholic Families**

One child	\$415.50 per month for 10 months
Two children	\$712.50 per month for 10 months
Three children	\$994.50 per month for 10 months

*A form, verifying parish membership and signed by the pastor, must be submitted to the school prior to the start of school.*

### **Tuition – Non-Catholic Families**

One child	\$617.50 per month for 10 months
Two children	\$1019.50 per month for 10 months
Three children	\$1300.50 per month for 10 months

### **Tuition Payment Options**

Families have two options for payment of tuition:

1. Paid in full by the start of school.
2. Monthly payments through the FACTS tuition program. Payment will be due on either the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month, as designated by the family.

Please note that any tuition payments made by credit card will be subject to a 3% fee.

### **Before School Care**

Before school care begins at 6:45. There is no fee charged for before school care.

### **After School Care**

After school care begins at 3:15 and ends at 5:30. The fee is \$8.00 per day for one child, \$13 per day for two children, \$18 per day for three children and \$23 for four children. A significant late fee will be charged for any children picked up after 5:30 p.m. Please refer to page 29 for a list of these fees.

## AWARDS PROGRAM

Nativity honor roll ribbons are given each of the four marking periods, typically with report cards. The student must have no grades lower than a 90 to receive the A Honor Roll ribbon and no grade lower than an 85 to receive the A/B Honor Roll ribbon. Grades in the B- category (80-84) do not qualify a student for an honor roll ribbon. Children in grades 2-6 will be eligible for the ribbons. Subjects with number grades only are included. The student's conduct and handwriting grades are not considered for this award.

At the end of the year Awards Day, certificates will be given to students in grades 2-6 that meet the below criteria:

**PRINCIPAL'S ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD:** Student has no grade lower than a 93 for year average in each graded subject

**ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD:** Student has no grade lower than a 90 for year average in each graded subject

**ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:** Student has no grade lower than an 85 for year average in each graded subject

The **PRESIDENTIAL ACADEMIC AWARD** is given to sixth grade students at the end of the school year. The award is based on academic grades for grades 4, 5 and 6 and standardized test scores.

Other awards, including those for extracurricular activities, will be awarded at the end of the school year.

## GRADING SCALE

A	93 – 100	4.0
A-	90 – 92	3.5
B	85 – 89	3.0
B-	80 – 84	2.5
C	75 – 79	2.0
D	70 – 74	1.0
F	0 – 69	0.0

## HOMEWORK

As a faculty we are firmly convinced that homework is a necessary part of the child's education in so far as it affords an opportunity for independent personal application of something learned at school each day. Children are responsible for copying down and completing homework. A parent's signature may be asked for depending upon the teacher's policy. This helps her know that the parent or an adult supervised the study and is aware of the quality of work produced by the child.

In an effort to encourage responsibility, no child is allowed to return to the classrooms after 2:45 without the permission of the principal or an adult from the After-School Program.

## REPORT CARDS

Report cards are distributed every nine weeks to students in kindergarten through sixth grade. A progress report is given halfway through the quarter to students in first through sixth grade. PK3 and PK4 students will receive report cards each semester. Grades for 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> students can be viewed anytime through each family's personal FACTS account.

## **PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY**

At Nativity BVM Catholic School, teachers follow Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards (MCCRS.) Minimum proficiency requirements are necessary for students to progress to the next grade level.

- A. Considerations for promotion are:
  - 1. Potential for doing work in the next grade level.
  - 2. Standardized Testing Results
  - 3. Regular attendance.
  - 4. Willingness to complete work.
  - 5. Mastery of the MCCRS at 70% mastery after necessary re-teaching, re-testing.
  - 6. For students in Grades 1 through 6, four (4) of the five (5) major subjects (Reading, English, Mathematics, Science/Health and Social Studies) must be passed in order to be promoted.
- B. Several factors influence a decision to retain a student.
  - 1. Parents will be notified in writing, at mid-year, if the child is failing in more than one subject.
  - 2. Parents will subsequently be notified at least six (6) weeks prior to the closure of school if retention of that child at that grade level is probable.
  - 3. The decision to promote (or retain) a student shall be a joint decision made by the parent, teacher and principal, based on the established criteria and other factors.
  - 4. In the event that an agreement regarding placement cannot be reached, every avenue of discussion will be pursued.
  - 5. If an agreement still cannot be made, the principal, in consultation with the teacher and other personnel, will make the final decision.
  - 6. Documentation of this will be included in the child's cumulative file.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks used by students are either purchased by Nativity School or are purchased and LOANED to Nativity School by the State of Mississippi Department of Education. Each student is assigned specific textbooks for the year and it is the responsibility of each child to maintain the book properly. At the end of the year, fines may be assessed for such book damages as: spills, writing/markings in non-consumable texts, and/or numerous tears or damage. Fines are determined by criteria of the State of Mississippi Department of Education.

## **TESTING**

**The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)** is administered each spring to students in Grades 2-6. The results of this nationally normed test are shared with the parents/guardians and are used, by the staff, to better identify areas of academic strength and areas of academic concern. Because of the scope of the testing, it is extremely important that all children in those grades are in attendance during the entire testing period.

A **dyslexia screener** is given to students, in First Grade during the fall semester, and to kindergarten students during the spring semester, by a certified Dyslexia Therapist.

As students in an accredited school, Nativity B.V.M. children experience and participate in a wide range of learning activities. Students in all grades study Science, Math, Social Studies, Language Arts, Religion, Art, Music and Physical Education. Experimentation, hands-on-learning, differentiated instruction, individual, small group and large group instruction, and the use of technology all assist the child in developing potential and in learning necessary skills.

### **RELIGIOUS FORMATION**

Our goal as Catholic educators is to walk with each child as they learn to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Parents/guardians are the first teachers. We believe that we continue the faith development begun in the home and build on that foundation. Families are encouraged to pray together daily and to worship together as a family with their parish.

Students who are Catholic and in the second grade will be prepared to receive the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation for the first time. Parents/guardians may be asked to participate in adult preparation sessions that are given by the pastor prior to the reception of the sacraments. Information regarding the specific dates for the adult education programs will be given prior to the meetings and will appear on the monthly school calendar.

Parents of Catholic children in third through sixth grade who have not received the sacraments of Eucharist or Reconciliation may meet with the principal to make arrangements to be included in the preparation.

Family members are always welcome to attend any religious celebration or mass with the children. A school Mass or prayer service is celebrated a couple of times each month. Children are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered twice a year at the school; during Advent and Lent.

Children attending Nativity BVM Catholic School who are of other religious traditions are included in all school religious celebrations. They are invited to participate as much as possible.

### **LIBRARY**

Nativity B.V.M. Library is staffed by a certified librarian/media specialist and houses an excellent selection of library books and materials. Students and teachers have access to the materials throughout the school day. Students in preschool through grade six have a weekly time scheduled as a library period.

### **COMPUTER EDUCATION**

A computer lab, adjacent to the library, was re-established in August 2008. The computers in the lab and throughout the school were updated in August, 2016 through a massive fundraising effort organized by the parents of Nativity BVM School.

Children in Pre-School through Grade 6 have regular access to computers and computer instruction in their classroom. Chromebooks are available to all students in their classrooms. Additional exposure to computers is provided through the library program, including the Accelerated Reading program, and in the computer lab itself.

### **ART EDUCATION**

Students in grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grades attend art classes every other week where they will learn drawing, painting, clay, color, and other art concepts.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Students in PK3 and PK4 attend PE classes twice a week. Students in Kindergarten – 6<sup>th</sup> grade have classes three times per week. Our PE Coach focuses on stretching, aerobic exercise, health concepts, sports rules and games, and relaxation. This class is definitely a favorite among our students.

## **MUSIC EDUCATION**

Students in grades PK – 6<sup>th</sup> grades attend music classes every other week. Taught by the Director of Music for Nativity Cathedral, our students not only learn liturgical music, but also holiday appropriate songs, music concepts, training on instruments, and mass preparation. They also prepare for our annual Christmas program in music class.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

Students who have a special education ruling through a public school district receive special services in the Learning Resource Room and in their classrooms. Services are provided by a certified special education teacher.

If a child is experiencing difficulties, the teacher or parent may request screening. Communication with the parent/guardian, classroom teacher and other resource personnel is ongoing throughout the year.

## **SPEECH THERAPY**

Speech therapy is provided through the Biloxi Public School District for those students who qualify for the services in Kindergarten through Grade 6. The screening process, initiated at the local school, determines what services are needed. Speech therapy is given at Nativity BVM School on a designated day of the week for these children.

Pre-School children, residing in the Biloxi Public School District zone, receive services at Nativity School through Biloxi Public Schools. Pre-School students residing outside of the Biloxi City School District, receive speech services at their home district.

## **EXPLORE**

The EXPLORE program is available to students in grades 3-6 who have achieved a certain level of academic performance. Students in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and students new to the school are screened in the fall. Students who pass the screener must then have their IQ tested. An IQ of 120 or higher is required. Students in grade 2 begin classes 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Classes, held every other week, challenge the thinking, creativity and performance of the participants. For specific academic requirements, please speak with the principal.

It is imperative that every student attend school each and every day of the school year. Students are afforded the best opportunity to become successful when parents ensure their child attends school on a regular basis. The ultimate responsibility for attendance of all children belongs to the parents/guardians. Regular attendance includes on time arrival and attendance for the entire length of the school day. Families of students who are not in school are asked to contact the **school office** by 9:00 each morning. If no one has contacted the school, the secretary will attempt to contact the family. If a child is absent due to illness for an extended period of time, please supply the school with a doctor's excuse. **More than eight (8) unexcused absences are considered excessive and may be reported to the local truancy office for the State of Mississippi and The Office of Education in the Diocese of Biloxi.**

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

An absence may be excused when:

- it results from the student's attendance at an authorized school activity, with prior approval of the principal
- it results from an injury or illness that prevents the student's presence at school
- it results from isolation of the student as ordered by the county health officer, the State Board of Health, or appropriate school official
- it is the result of a serious illness or death of an immediate family member including parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and step brothers or sisters
- it results from an official medical or dental appointment
- it results from an appearance in court or administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness
- it results from some type of religious celebration which the parents observe and requests the presence of their child. Requires principal approval.
- it can be demonstrated to the principal that the absence is to take advantage of an educational opportunity including vacations or other family travel. Requires principal approval.

## **STUDENT TARDINESS**

Being able to begin the day with the rest of the class is important for students. Feeling rushed or behind starts them off in the wrong direction. It is a disruption to the class and the teacher when the routine/instruction must stop for tardy students. A child is considered tardy if he/she is not in the classroom by 8:00 AM. Students must be admitted into the school at the office doors if they are late. Morning prayer typically begins just after 8:00. Out of respect for prayer time, we ask that you not ring the doorbell or knock on the door during prayer time. The door will be opened at the conclusion of announcements. Students arriving after 8:00 AM will be marked as tardy.

## **EXTENDED ABSENCES**

Extended absences must be approved by the principal prior to the time away from school. Work will be given in advance, if the teacher is given ample time to prepare. Missing work must be completed within the timeframe given by the teacher in order to receive full credit for the work. Depending upon the nature of the absence, the principal will determine if the absence is excused or unexcused.

## **SIGN-OUT FOR STUDENTS**

Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds without school permission and that of the parent/guardian. **All students must be signed out through the school office.** The school can only release a child to those having a legal right to remove a child or someone who was previously authorized by a parent or legal guardian. Absent a court document stating otherwise, both legal parents have the right to pick up a child. During online

enrollment, parents list individuals who are authorized to pick up and check out their students. If at any time additional people need to be added to the list, you may do that in your personal FACTS account or contact Mrs. Cheryl in the office.

If a person who is not on the school's list for authorized pick-up attempts to pick up a student, and in so doing violated Diocesan policy, disturbs the peace, or violated local, state, or federal law, the school reserves the right to contact law enforcement.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Parents/guardians are strongly discouraged from taking their child out of school before the final dismissal bell at 2:45 PM. Leaving before that time is extremely disruptive to the education of that child, as well as to the entire class. Early dismissal should only be used in rare and extreme circumstances. **All children must be checked out through the school office. No checks-outs will be allowed after 2:30. The teachers and students are preparing for dismissal and this would cause a significant disruption.**

### **MORNING CARE**

Morning care is provided by school personnel from 6:45 AM until 7:30 AM. Children arriving between 7:30 AM and 8:00 AM proceed directly to their classrooms. Anyone arriving after the 8:00 a.m. bell is tardy and must report to the school office for a tardy slip.

### **AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

The After-School Program will begin the first full week of school. Any child in Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 6 who attends Nativity BVM Catholic Elementary School is eligible to attend the After-School Program.

Hours of Service: 3:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Cost of Program: One child - \$8.00 per day; two children - \$13.00; three children - \$18.00 per day. Children will be checked in at 3:15 p.m. at which time charges will begin. There is no cost for students in PK2, PK3, and PK4.

Late charges: Pick-up between 5:30 p.m. and 5:40 p.m. - \$20.00 late fee  
Pick-up between 5:40 p.m. and 5:50 p.m. - \$35.00 late fee  
Pick-up after 5:50 p.m. - \$50.00 late fee

If no authorized adult is able to be reached and the child is still at school at 6:00 p.m., the Biloxi Police Department and the Department of Child Protective Services will be notified.

Students in all grades must wear uniforms each day and are expected to present themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Students are asked to adhere to the entire dress code when dressed in any portion of the uniform, regardless of whether or not on campus. If a specific question arises regarding uniforms, the principal has the final say with regard to policy, whether or not it is stated in this handbook. **All uniform items are sold at Educate and Celebrate on Cowan Rd. in Gulfport. If purchased elsewhere, the items must be the same brand, style, color, etc.** The school emblem must be on all shirts, fleece jackets and vests, sweatshirts, and sweaters. Embroidery price is included when bought from Educate and Celebrate. **If an alternate company is used for embroidery, the logo must be the same exact size, shape, and thread colors.**

## GENERAL RULES THAT APPLY TO GIRLS:

- Hair should be neatly groomed, all **one** natural color, not distracting, and kept out of the eyes.
- No artificial nails or make-up (including colored lip gloss) is permitted.
- The only permissible jewelry is single post or stud earrings and a single religious medal or cross. No dangling or hoop earrings or bracelets.
- Undergarments must not be visible at any time.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.

## GENERAL RULES THAT APPLY TO BOYS:

- Hair must be neatly groomed, all **one** natural color, not distracting, and above the collar and eyebrow.
- The only permissible jewelry is a single religious medal or cross.
- Undershirts must be plain white, short sleeve, crew neck with no prints or graphics. Undershirt sleeves must not be visible.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.

## SPIRIT SHIRT DAYS

- Each Friday students may wear the current year's spirit shirt with uniform bottoms. Students may wear long sleeve, plain white, crew-neck shirts under spirit shirts in cold weather.

## FREE DRESS DAYS

- Hems must be below the fingertips.
- **Shirts must be at least fingertip length if worn with spandex, athletic wear, leggings, or other fitted pants.**
- Shorts must be worn underneath skirts.
- All shirts must have sleeves. No tank tops, spaghetti straps, cold shoulder, or otherwise "uncovered" shoulder shirts may be worn.
- Any logos or graphics shown must be school appropriate, i.e., no weapons, inappropriate language, etc.
- Tennis shoes and socks must be worn.

## UNIFORM VIOLATION CONSEQUENCES

- Step 1: Written Notice sent home, signed by parent, and returned to school.  
Step 2: Written Notice sent home, signed by parent, and returned to school.  
Step 3: Conference held with parent or guardian.  
Step 4: Student must serve detention.

Repeat uniform violations may subject the student to placement on the Discipline Ladder.

## UNIFORM POLICY FOR GIRLS

### TOPS:

- **PRESCHOOL ONLY** - Dark green, short sleeve, t-shirt (Sizes 2T-5/6) **purchased from Nativity School** (On cold days a plain, white, long sleeve t-shirt may be worn underneath the green t-shirt.)
- **PK – 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE** - Dark green or white short or long sleeve polo shirt with collar and school emblem
- **PK – 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE** - White long or short sleeve peter pan collar blouse with school emblem

### DRESS/JUMPER:

- **PRESCHOOL ONLY** – Green Polo Dress with pleated bottom and school emblem (Modesty shorts must be worn underneath and must **not** be visible below the hem line. Two-year-olds should not wear modesty shorts.)
- **PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN ONLY** Plaid 55 dress with school emblem embroidered on collar (Modesty shorts must be worn underneath and must **not** be visible below the hem line. Two-year-olds should not wear modesty shorts.)
- **PK – 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE** - Plaid 55 round neck jumper **worn only with a white peter pan collar blouse** (Modesty shorts must be worn underneath and must **not** be visible below the hem line. Two-year-olds should not wear modesty shorts.)

### BOTTOMS for PK - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:

- Dark navy-blue unisex elastic waist pants/shorts
- Dark navy-blue pants or shorts with belt loops worn with a navy or brown belt (**Should only be worn by students that can use buttons, zippers, and belts without assistance.**)
- Plaid 55 skirt model 43 (Modesty shorts must be worn underneath and must **not** be visible below the hem line. Two-year-olds should not wear modesty shorts.)
- Plaid 55 double pleat skirt (**Should only be worn by students that can use buttons and zippers without assistance.**)
- Dark navy leggings are allowed under jumpers, skirts, and dresses. **Leggings MAY NOT be worn under shorts.**
- Dark navy-blue or white tights may be worn under dresses, jumpers or skirts. **Tights MAY NOT be worn under shorts.** (Modesty shorts must be worn over tights and must **not** be visible below the hem line of bottoms. Two-year-olds should not wear modesty shorts.)

### ACCESSORIES for PK - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:

- White or dark navy-blue fold over, knee-high, or crew length socks, (No brand insignia may be visible. **No-show and lowcut socks are not allowed.**)
- Hair bows, headbands, and hair accessories must be solid navy, solid white, solid red, solid yellow, solid dark green, the school plaid, or any combination of these. Bows may have the school emblem, but it is not required.

### OUTERWEAR for PK - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:

- Dark navy-blue fleece vest or jacket, sweatshirt, pullover, and sweater may be worn in the building. The school emblem must be embroidered on all of these items.
- Coats, jackets, hats, and gloves may be worn on cold weather days and **do not** have to be a particular color. However, they may not be worn in the classroom.

### SHOES for PK - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Tennis shoes must be worn at all times. Velcro-closure is highly encouraged for students that cannot tie their shoes on their own. Tennis shoes must not light up, have glitter, or have characters. No high-tops allowed. Colors that coordinate with the school colors of navy, white, and dark green are preferred. Any other type of shoe, including backless or platform shoes, boots, sandals, roller shoes, etc., will not be permitted. If any other shoe is necessary for medical reasons, prior approval must be received from the principal.

## UNIFORM POLICY FOR BOYS

### **TOPS:**

- **PRESCHOOL ONLY** - Dark green, short sleeve, t-shirt (Sizes 2T-5/6) **purchased from Nativity School** (On cold days a plain, white, long sleeve t-shirt may be worn underneath the green t-shirt.)
- Dark green or white short or long sleeve polo shirt with collar and school emblem

### **BOTTOMS:**

- Dark navy-blue unisex elastic waist pants/shorts
- Dark navy-blue pants or shorts with belt loops worn with a navy or brown belt (**Should only be worn by students that can use buttons, zippers, and belts without assistance.**)

### **ACCESSORIES:**

- Dark navy-blue or white crew length or ankle length socks (No brand insignia may be visible. **No-show and lowcut socks are not allowed.**)

### **OUTERWEAR for PK - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

- Dark navy-blue fleece vest or jacket, sweatshirt, pullover, and sweater may be worn in the building. The school emblem must be embroidered on all of these items.
- Coats, jackets, hats, and gloves may be worn on cold weather days and **do not** have to be a particular color. However, they may not be worn in the classroom.

### **SHOES for PK - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

Tennis shoes must be worn at all times. Velcro-closure is highly encouraged for students that cannot tie their shoes on their own. Tennis shoes must not light up, have glitter, or have characters. No high-tops allowed. Colors that coordinate with the school colors of navy, white, and dark green are preferred. Any other type of shoe, including backless or platform shoes, boots, sandals, roller shoes, etc., will not be permitted. If any other shoe is necessary for medical reasons, prior approval must be received from the principal.

## **SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Appropriate behavior is an important component in the education of each child. Each child is expected to respect others as well as himself/herself. This respect is shown through the ways in which words and actions are expressed. Each child is expected to respond to, and obey, reasonable requests made by school personnel and adult volunteers and do so in an appropriate and polite manner. It is also important that the child assumes responsibility for his/her actions and choices. In keeping with this belief, Nativity BVM School uses a form of discipline that provides structure but also helps the child understand inappropriate behavior. Rules for appropriate behavior in the classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and in after-school care will also be posted and enforced by the school administration, faculty, and staff.

Consequences, appropriate to the developmental age of the child, will be enforced. These consequences will be administered in a fair and consistent way. Parents will be made aware of discipline issues when the faculty/staff deem it necessary. Parental contact will be documented. Corporal punishment is not consistent with the mission of Catholic Education and, therefore, is a prohibited method of discipline within the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi.

If a student repeatedly disregards classroom rules and consequences, or if the behavior is specifically listed on the school discipline ladder, a discipline referral form will be completed by the teacher or responsible adult. The principal will be contacted and will meet with the student and contact the parent. Teachers and parents/guardians will receive a copy of the completed discipline referral form. Parents are asked to sign and return the form.

## **THREAT TO HARM SELF OR OTHERS**

If a student threatens to harm or kill another student or person, the principal will:

- Immediately remove the student from class and isolate the student
- Notify the pastor and consult with the pastor to determine if the law enforcement needs to be notified
- Contact the parents
- Begin to aggressively investigate the incident
- Suspend the student for an indefinite period until the matter is resolved
- Upon completion of the investigation, if it is confirmed that a threat was made, action will be taken to expel the student permanently from the school

If it is not clear whether or not a threat was made, before the student is allowed back in school, the principal shall first obtain, at the expense of the parent/guardian, the written opinion of a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, or comparable mental health care professional to the effect that the student does not pose a danger to himself/herself or others. The student will not be allowed back in school until the written opinion has been sent.

If it is found that no such threat was made, the student shall return to school without undue delay.

If a student threatens or is alleged to have threatened to harm himself/herself, the principal will:

- Immediately remove the student from the class
- Contact the parents/guardians
- Begin to aggressively investigate the incident
- Upon completing the investigation and it is confirmed that a threat of harm to himself/herself was made, the principal shall obtain, at the expense of the parent/guardian, the written opinion of a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, or comparable mental health care professional to the effect that the student does not pose a danger to himself/herself or others. The student will not be allowed back in school until the written opinion has been sent.

## **HARASSMENT/BULLYING**

Harassment of others, whether based upon gender, color, race, age, national origin, disability, or otherwise, is disruptive and immoral, and will not be tolerated. Harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communication, or any physical act or threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiation characteristic that:

- a) Places a student in actual or reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or
- b) Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's performance, opportunities, or benefits.

Bullying is a form of harassment. If any incidents of bullying occur, the administrator will follow the policy outlined in the Handbook of Catholic Schools, Appendix E.

## OFFICE REFERRALS FOR PRE-K3 THROUGH 1<sup>st</sup> GRADE STUDENTS:

Special consideration will be made based upon the child's age.

<u>Offense</u>	<u>Steps</u>
Disrupting instructional time	Step 1
Inappropriate behavior anytime/anywhere	Step 1
Open defiance	Step 1-4
Continuous failure to follow classroom/playground/lunchroom rules	Step 1-4
Name-calling or showing disrespect to adults or other students	Step 1-4
Harassment, intimidation or threatening other students	Step 2-5
Defacing/damaging property that belongs to the school, other students, adults	Step 2-5
Profanity or vulgarity (actions, gestures, words or symbols)	Step 2-4
Bullying (actions, gestures, words, symbols)	Step 2-5
Physical abuse of a student or adult (biting, hitting etc.)	Step 3-5
Any misbehavior as determined severe by the Principal	Step 1-5

Following the first offense that is recorded on the discipline ladder, the student's next severe offense will move to the next step on the discipline ladder.

### **Discipline Ladder Steps**

**Step 1:** The student will meet with the principal. The parents/guardians will be contacted. Consequences will be assigned. A discipline form will be sent home and must be returned, signed by the parent/guardian, to the principal the following day.

**Step 2:** The principal will meet with the parent/guardian. Consequences will be assigned.

**Step 3:** The student will serve a morning, recess, or after-school detention. A discipline form will be sent home and must be returned, signed by the parent/guardian, to the principal the following day.

**Step 4:** A half day to 3-day suspension will be assigned. The length of the suspension, in or out of school will be determined by the principal dependent upon the situation. A discipline form will be sent home and must be returned, signed by the parent/guardian, to the principal the following day.

**Step 5:** A Discipline Committee will be convened to determine what further action, including expulsion, is warranted. The Discipline Committee will be composed of the principal, pastor, teacher and other staff members, if appropriate.

## OFFICE REFERRALS FOR 2<sup>nd</sup> THROUGH 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE STUDENTS:

<u>Offense</u>	<u>Steps</u>
Disrupting instructional time	Step 1-4
Inappropriate behavior anytime/anywhere	Step 1-4
Running, pushing, yelling	Step 1-4
Open defiance	Step 1-4
Continuous failure to follow classroom/playground/lunchroom rules	Step 1-4
Name-calling or showing disrespect to adults or other students	Step 1-4
Leaving the classroom without permission	Step 2-4
Cheating on tests/homework (The student will also receive a "0" for the assignment)	Step 2-4
Harassment, intimidation or threatening other students	Step 2-5
Defacing/damaging property that belongs to the school, other students, adults	Step 2-5
Profanity or vulgarity (actions, gestures, words or symbols)	Step 2-4
Bullying (actions, gestures, words, symbols)	Step 2-5
Stealing	Step 3-4
Physical abuse of a student or adult (biting, hitting etc.)	Step 3-5
Leaving school grounds without permission	Step 3-5
Fighting at school activities	Step 3-5
Use or possession of dangerous objects including fireworks	Step 3-5
Possession of a firearm/weapon	Step 5
Possession of drugs/alcohol/harmful substance	Step 5
Any misbehavior as determined severe by the Principal	Step 1-5

Following the first offense that is recorded on the discipline ladder, the student's next severe offense will move to the next step on the discipline ladder.

### **Discipline Ladder Steps**

**Step 1:** The student will meet with the principal. The parents/guardians will be contacted. Consequences will be assigned. A discipline form will be sent home and must be returned, signed by the parent/guardian, to the principal the following day.

**Step 2:** The principal will meet with the parent/guardian. Consequences will be assigned.

**Step 3:** The student will serve a morning, recess, or after-school detention. A discipline form will be sent home and must be returned, signed by the parent/guardian, to the principal the following day.

**Step 4:** A half day to 3-day suspension will be assigned. The length of the suspension, in or out of school will be determined by the principal dependent upon the situation. A discipline form signed by the parent/guardian, will be sent home and must be returned to the principal the following day.

**Step 5:** A Discipline Committee will be convened to determine what further action, including expulsion, is warranted. The Discipline Committee will be composed of the principal, pastor, teacher and other staff members, if appropriate.

### **Absence of the Principal**

In the absence of the principal, a certified staff member is designated to act on her behalf.

This certified staff member has full authority to act on behalf of the principal, in her absence, in all discipline matters.

### **In-School Suspension**

A student may be suspended according to provisions found in the school discipline plan. The duration of the suspension will be determined by the principal and a conference with the parents/guardians will be held. When in-school suspension is used as a consequence, the student must follow regular school hours. The student should report to the front office, not their classroom. The student may not participate in, or attend, a school sponsored activity during the time of the suspension. The student is expected to complete all work supplied by the teacher. All work, not completed during the time of the suspension, must be completed within two school days. Work that is not returned by that deadline will receive a grade of "0".

### **Out of School Suspension**

A student may be suspended according to provisions found in the school discipline plan. The duration of the suspension will be determined by the principal and a conference with the parents/guardians will be held. When out of school suspension is used as a consequence, the student is prohibited from entering the school grounds. The student may not participate in, or attend, a school sponsored activity during the time of the out of school suspension. All work, missed during the time of the out of school suspension, must be completed within two school days upon return to school. Work that is not returned by that deadline will receive a grade of "0".

### **Expulsion**

A student may be recommended for expulsion if the principal feels that the student's actions warrant such a severe consequence. A Discipline Committee will be convened to determine what action, including expulsion, is warranted. The Discipline Committee will be composed of the principal, pastor, teacher and other staff members, as appropriate. The final decision of the Discipline Committee will be communicated to the parents/guardians by the principal and pastor.

### **CONDUCT GRADING**

The Nativity Discipline Program uses the following in grading a child's conduct:

- **E** Conduct is viewed as excellent. No detentions for behavior.
- **G** Conduct is viewed as good. No detentions for behavior.
- **S** Conduct is viewed as satisfactory. One detention for behavior is allowed.
- **N** Conduct is viewed as needing improvement. One or two detentions for behavior have taken place in a nine-week period.
- **U** Conduct is viewed as unsatisfactory. More than two behavior detentions have taken place in a nine-week period.

## **POLICIES FOR CHILD SAFETY**

Nativity BVM faculty and staff share in the parental concern for the safety of the children and all people in our school building. The following procedures are some of the ways in which we attempt to ensure this:

1. The school building remains locked throughout the school day. Access to the building is through the door nearest to the office. A doorbell is located to the left of the door.
2. All visitors and/or parent volunteers are required to sign in at the office and wear a Visitor Badge during their time on school grounds. (Assemblies and whole-school activities may be an exception to this due to the number of parents/guardians present.)
3. Any child arriving late for school must be accompanied by an adult.
4. Students should never enter the school grounds using the access gate across from the office.
5. Students leaving school before dismissal time must be checked out through the office. The child will only be released to someone listed on the family information card unless prior notification has taken place. Proper identification may be requested.
6. If a child is going home with another student, the school office must receive notification from both families prior to dismissal time.
7. Parents/visitors will not be allowed to go to classrooms to deliver forgotten items to students.
8. Because of the number of students remaining for After-School Care and concerns for their safety, students or adults needing to retrieve items from the classrooms after dismissal time must receive permission from the principal or, in her absence, from adults in the After-School Program.
9. Calls regarding absences, check outs, and changes in the way a child will go home, should be made through the school office. The classroom teacher or a staff member should not be contacted directly to communicate this information.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

In the event of severe weather, please stay tuned to WLOX TV, WXXV TV and WZKX and WVMI radio for information regarding school closing and/or opening. Notifications will also be posted on the school's website and sent out through FACTS.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS/SITUATIONS**

Drills are held on a regular basis for fire, tornado and other emergency situations. A new state law requires schools to have two active shooter drills per year. In the event of a lockdown, no one will be admitted into the school building. Children will only be released when authorities have determined that the situation has been resolved satisfactorily. In the event of a tornado warning, no child will be allowed to be checked out of school until the "all clear signal" has been given. Any adults present in the building during a drill must participate fully.

## **RAINY DAY DISMISSAL**

Children are dismissed from the front doors by the office. Drivers are asked to remain in their cars since the children are escorted to the cars by a member of the school staff. You will exit through the Visitor Center parking lot.

## **PLAYGROUND AND TRAFFIC SAFETY**

**PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY ON THE PLAYGROUND AT ALL TIMES.**

Drivers arriving to pick up children at dismissal time are asked not to block the entrance gate at Benachi Avenue. This practice prevents access to school in case of emergency. Drivers should not cut traffic by driving through non-designated areas. Picking up children at any place other than the school grounds is a very dangerous practice. The Biloxi Police Department has requested that drivers not pick up children on Porter Avenue, Benachi Avenue or Howard Avenue.

## **PARKING ON CAMPUS**

Parking behind the school is reserved for Nativity BVM faculty and staff. Please park along the front of the building or where directed by school personnel.

## **ENTRANCE TO NATIVITY SCHOOL PROPERTY**

The entrance to Nativity BVM School is through the driveway off of Benachi Avenue. If the gates are closed due to children on the playground, please enter through the gate in the Visitor's Center parking lot.

## **VISITORS TO SCHOOL**

ALL VISITORS TO THE BUILDING MUST FIRST CHECK IN AT THE SCHOOL OFFICE AND WEAR A VISITOR'S PASS. In the interest of safety, no one is allowed to go directly to the classrooms. Delivery of forgotten items and/or lunches is done through the school office. Parents/guardians are not allowed to take items to the classrooms. Parents/guardians wishing to observe or visit a class for a period of time are welcome. The classroom teacher must be contacted at least one day in advance to arrange an appropriate time.

## **FAMILY INFORMATION**

Please advise the office of any change of address, telephone number or other information. It is important that the school office has the most current information.

## **HEALTH**

A child may not attend school with any of the following symptoms: fever, undiagnosed rash, vomiting, lice, diarrhea, inflamed eyes and severe cold or sore throat. A child must be fever free for 24 hours, WITHOUT taking fever-reducing medication during that time, before returning to school. A fever is defined as 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally, or 102°F taken rectally (Mississippi Department of Health). A reading of 100.4°F on a no touch thermometer is a fever. The school administrator or designee is authorized to take the temperature of a student. If a child becomes ill or injured while at school, the parent will be called and the child will be isolated from other students until picked up. If parents cannot be reached, the staff will attempt to contact other individuals listed on the emergency contact list.

### **Immunizations**

1. Immunization records are REQUIRED for all students.
2. A Form 121 must be submitted to the school office before the student can begin school.

### **Health Issues/Injuries**

1. Allergies and other health problems must be brought to the attention of the administration in writing.
2. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately a of student illness or an accident of a serious nature.
3. PLEASE BE SURE THAT CURRENT, UP-TO-DATE EMERGENCY INFORMATION IS ON FILE IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE AT ALL TIMES.
4. Parents/guardians are asked to notify the teacher, in writing, of complete details in case of special illness or physical incapacitation.

### **“Too Sick for School” Guidelines**

1. Fever - If a student has a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater, the student may return to school when they have been fever-free for 24 hours WITHOUT fever-reducing medication.
2. Vomiting/Diarrhea – Any student with unexplained vomiting or diarrhea may return to school 24 hours after the last episode.
3. Cough – Keep a child home for serious/sustained coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing.
4. Rash – If a student has any new rash accompanied by a fever, the student may return to school after the rash goes away or clearance is given by the health care provider. In addition, a rash that is draining should be covered.

Certain diseases/conditions are easily passed on in a school setting. Parents will be notified in the event of any public health issue occurring at the school (i.e., head lice, chicken pox, etc.) when it directly affects your child's class. If your child contracts one of the following, we ask that the school office be notified immediately and that the following procedures are followed:

**HEAD LICE:** Parents are encouraged to periodically check their child for this condition. Nits (eggs) will most generally be visible at the hairline, at the base of the neck, behind the ears, or at the crown of the head. Although nits are sometimes mistaken for dandruff, they will not be easily removed from the hair shaft. Treatment with an over the counter or prescription product is required for this. A child will be excluded from school until treatment can take place effectively. Because this is highly transferable, an earnest effort to treat and remove all nits must occur before the child may return to school. Proof of treatment should be kept for records (receipt from the purchase of treatment or a doctor notice).

**CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE):** A student with this highly contagious eye infection must be excluded from school and under treatment for a minimum of twenty-four hours before being readmitted to school.

**RING WORM:** A student with this condition must be under treatment for a minimum of twenty-four hours before being readmitted to school. The affected area must be treated with appropriate medication and remain covered at all times.

**COVID-19:** Principal will advise you of the current protocol.

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION TO STUDENTS**

In order to protect the safety of each person in our school, we ask that the following procedure be followed whenever it is necessary for medications to be administered at school.

1. ALL medication (prescribed medication as well as over the counter items such as Tylenol/Ibuprofen) MUST be brought to the school office in the original container or in a clearly marked container. The diocesan medication administration form must be completed and signed by the parent. If prescription medication must be given at school, and the child's physician must also sign the form.
2. Students are NEVER allowed to keep their own medication and all medication will be kept in the school office.
3. Inhalers for students with asthma will generally be kept in the school office. Inhalers should be clearly marked with the child's name. An "administration of medication form" should be completed at the beginning of the school year and signed by the parent and physician.
4. EpiPens for students with severe allergies will generally be kept in the school office. EpiPens should be clearly marked with the child's name. An "administration of medication form" should be completed at the beginning of the school year and signed by the parent and physician.
5. All medication will be administered by school personnel: school secretary, administrator, and certified or non-certified staff members.
6. Parents/guardians are free to come to school to administer medication to their own child. They should report to the school office and the child will be called to the office to take the medication.
7. For medications that are to be administered for several days or on a daily basis for the entire year, one set of instructions may be written for that time period.
8. Students wearing contact lenses should keep a lens case and solution at school.