



Saint Joseph Regional School Our Lady of Mercy Academy



August 23, 2024

Empowering students to grow as informed, inspired, compassionate souls.



Dear Parents, Students, and Staff,

In a few short days, students will return to St. Joseph and Our Lady of Mercy for the new school year, filled with plenty of excitement and even a little bit of anxiety as we begin 2024-2025.

Be assured that we have some fabulous things in store for all of our students and their families for the coming year, not the least of which is the team of dedicated and qualified new staff members. Please make sure you check out each school's website for the complete staff list and watch for updated staff profiles there as well.

One of our first fabulous activities is the traditional "Clap In" of Grade 8 students on day one, in the gym, as part of morning prayer. Parents are most welcome to join us and afterwards head downstairs to the cafeteria for the inaugural "Boo Hoo Yahoo" gathering. It will be a time to have coffee, introduce ourselves, learn about volunteering opportunities, and sign up to be a part of the new parent group, the Home and School Association.

To Grade 8 and Senior Class Parents: we hope to see you at our first school Mass on Wednesday, August 28 at 9:30 am, when Fr. Alan Tremblay, our President and Pastor, will commission the students in these two special classes as the leaders of their respective schools.

Please also mark your calendars for the chance to hear from each teacher, returning and new, and to talk with them about the plans for the year when we hold our Back to School Nights on:

September 17 for Grades 5-8

September 18 for PK, K and Grades 1-4

September 19 for Grades 9-12

These are very important meetings for parents as they will receive a great deal of information to help them understand and organize their child's schoolwork.

A reminder to all our parents that e-mail is the major way that we communicate with you, so please check yours regularly, or let us know if you are not receiving our newsletter and other messages.

On behalf of Fr. Alan and all the staff, I welcome you to St. Joseph and Our Lady of Mercy for the 2024-2025 year, a year that will be marked by remembrance of our heritage and hope for our bright future, as we recommit ourselves to providing the best quality education for our students and to giving them opportunities to discover their faith and come to know of God's love for them as His precious children.

In His service,

Miss Victoria Farrington
Principal

JEREMIAH 29:11

For I know well the plans
I have in mind for you—
oracle of the LORD—
plans for your welfare and
not for woe, so as to give
you a future of hope.

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday 8/26 -- FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!

Wednesday 8/28 -- All-school Mass/Grade 8,
Seniors Leadership Commissioning -- 9:30am

Monday 9/2 -- Labor Day -- NO SCHOOL

Friday 9/13 -- Back-to-School Picnic -- 5:30-
7:30pm

Thursday 9/19 -- Back-to-School Night

Saturday 9/28 -- **Golf Tournament at Bretwood**
(see details below)

Monday 10/14 -- Columbus Day -- **NO SCHOOL**

Thursday 10/15 -- Picture Day

**[CLICK HERE](#) for the UPDATED 2024-2025
SCHOOL CALENDAR**

ABOUT THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

High school is an exciting time! For incoming freshmen, it is a new, more independent environment. For upperclassmen transferring from other schools, their experience will also be new and different. In a typical year, all students will likely feel some degree of anxiety. Please be patient and encouraging with your children throughout the first few weeks of school. We always welcome families into our buildings, but as a first step to independence, we strongly encourage parents to refrain from accompanying their students into the building on the first day of school. This can be difficult, but your student must learn to navigate this experience on their own. These first few days of school are a tremendous growth opportunity for all of our new and returning students.

SUMMER READING

The following list of books is the summer reading for all students in preparation for fall 2024. This is required reading and must be completed by the first day of school. Students should bring their books to class on the first day and be ready for a quiz, discussion, and/or possible essay.



Grade 9 – *Jacob Have I Loved* by Katherine Paterson

Grade 10 – *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai

Grade 11 – *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy

Grade 12 – *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

ARRIVAL

Students are expected to arrive at Our Lady of Mercy Academy **by 8:00am**, which is the warning bell for the start of homeroom. A student is considered tardy when they are not in

their homeroom (first block) **by 8:05am**. Students must enter the building every day at the main front door facing Main Street.

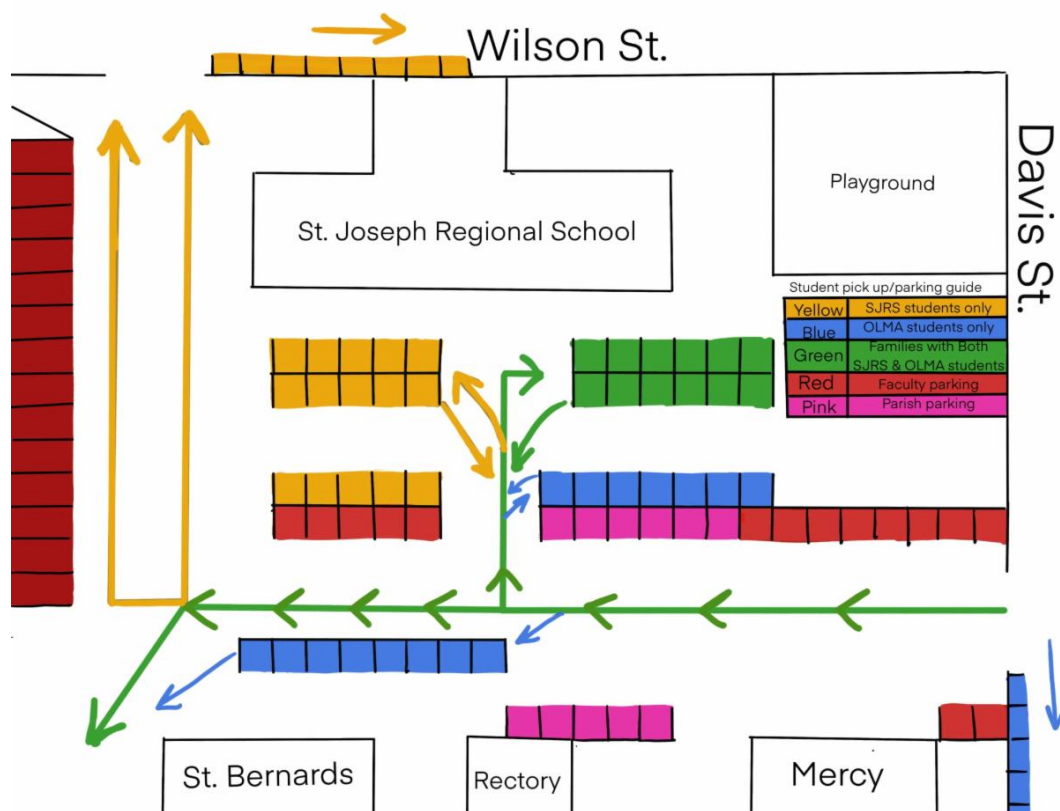
PLEASE DO NOT ever drop off or pick up on Main Street as this will impact the traffic moving through town at a busy time of day. We have specifically been asked by the City of Keene not to have cars stopping on Main Street.

DISMISSAL

School ends at 2:45pm. As always, safety is our top priority. Always be aware of students walking in the parking lot and always drive slowly. **Please see the map below as a guide for dismissal time.**

If you are entering the parking lot for dismissal, **you must enter via Davis Street (GREEN ARROW)**. **When exiting, you must exit on the SOUTH side of St. Bernard's Church (GREEN/BLUE ARROWS)**.

Students may be picked up along Davis Street or from the parking lot immediately behind Mercy Academy (**BLUE**). Any students leaving the school campus on foot after school must exit the building from the front door facing Main Street and utilize the sidewalks. Mercy students may pick up their siblings at SJRS at the playground door (known as the "Mercy door") and walk the students to your parked car in the parking lot near the flagpole (**GREEN**).



LUNCHES

Please note that hot lunches will NOT be available during the first week of school. Hot lunches will be available **starting on Tuesday, September 3**. Ordering via Renweb will be available late next week. Our available lunch options will be:

Monday -- Cheese pizza -- \$2.75/slice Pepperoni pizza -- \$3.00/slice
Tuesday -- Chicken nuggets with mac & cheese -- \$5.00
Wednesday -- Ham/turkey/bologna/veggie sandwich with chips -- \$5.00
Friday -- Cheese pizza -- \$2.75/slice Pepperoni pizza -- \$3.00/slice

At OLMA, all students have access in the Masiello Room to a microwave oven, refrigerator, and freezer for their lunches.

2024-2025 OLMA FAMILY HANDBOOK

Please make certain to review the updated OLMA Family Handbook prior to the start of the school year.

CLICK HERE to view the 2024-2025 OLMA Family Handbook on our website.

2024-2025 PARKING PERMITS

Students who hold a valid New Hampshire driver's license may apply for a parking permit. Students who are granted parking privileges will be charged a \$25 annual fee to help defer the cost of parking lot maintenance. Passes are not prorated. They must be purchased at the Main Office at full price at any point during the school year. **The Parking Permit Application can be found on our website HERE.**

CELL PHONE POLICY

OLMA's cell phone policy is guided by the principle of being present. Students are expected to actively engage with their teachers and other students. The school recognizes the convenience, educational, logistical and safety advantages of cell phones, iPods, smart watches, etc. **A student may have these electronic devices at school, but use will be limited to before school, after school, passing periods, and during lunch. Use of such devices during class time is prohibited, unless directed by a teacher for legitimate educational purposes.** Students will be directed to turn off/silence cell phones/smart watches at the beginning of class and store them in the provided storage compartments located in each classroom. Students may retrieve their phones/smart watches at the end of the class period.

Continued violation of this rule may result in confiscation of the device and/or other corrective action. The school reserves the right to examine any such confiscated device, and when appropriate, a student may be held accountable for violations of this behavior policy. If a student's cell phone/smart watch is confiscated, a parent must pick up the device from the office. Students are responsible for notifying their parents if their device has been taken.

In general, we encourage parents/guardians to try to limit contact with their student directly on his/her cell phone or other communication device during the school day.

DRESS CODE

Since the educational process is a formal endeavor, OLMA has a student dress code. This dress code supports the attitude of respect we have for one another. Cleanliness, neatness, sensibility, and safety (in the case of shoes), while maintaining comfort, guide the choices of the dress code.

On Wednesdays, Our Lady of Mercy Academy attends Mass; these days will be "dress up" days. The expectation on Wednesdays is that students should be dressed significantly nicer and be more "put together" than on other school days. Students may choose from a buttoned down, collared shirt (tucked in) with tie, dress pants, and a belt; dress pants (with a belt as needed) and a blouse, a dress, or blouse and skirt that reaches the tips of fingers when hands are held naturally at the side of the body. Shoes must be clean and in good condition. Hoodies and other casual outerwear may not be worn on dress up days. Hats may not be worn at all during the school day on dress up days. Hair must be appropriately styled, combed, etc. (i.e. no bed head, etc.).

For the remainder of the week, students may wear casual pants, jeans (with minimal distressing, but no holes), or athletic wear. Yoga pants or leggings must be covered appropriately with a long shirt or sweater or a skirt. No offensive, inflammatory or political

language/messaging on clothing will be permitted, nor messaging which runs counter to the Catholic identity of our schools. No plunging necklines. No exposed midriffs or spaghetti straps. Tank tops may be worn for PE classes, but straps must be a minimum of two inches wide. Midriffs must remain covered when arms are lifted above the head. All dresses, skirts, and shorts must reach the tips of fingers when hands are held naturally at the side of the body. Hoods on hoodies must be worn down during class time. No hats or beanies are to be worn during class time. Hair must be worn out of the student's face. No flip flops or slides. No pajamas or slippers.

Students arriving to school not appropriately attired will be given the option of borrowing clothing from our lending closet or calling home for their parents/guardians to deliver appropriate clothing.

The dress code is open to administrative interpretation.



Our annual GOLF TOURNAMENT is coming up!

Join us to hit the beautiful fairways of Bretwood Golf Course. Play is Scramble format with great prizes. The field will be limited to the first 100 golfers (25 foursomes) to register, so gather your family, friends, and colleagues! **CLICK HERE for details and to register!**

Highlight your business with us as one of our **sponsors!** Personal/individual sponsorships are welcome also. Lots of different sponsor levels are available.

<https://www.mercyacademykeene.org/golf-sponsorships>

ATTENDANCE/TARDY POLICY

Students are expected to arrive at Our Lady of Mercy Academy by 8:00am, which is the warning bell for the start of homeroom. A student is considered tardy when they are not in their homeroom (first block) by 8:05am. If your student is going to be late for school, please send an email to **attendance@mercacademykeene.org** or place a phone call to the Main Office, with a valid reason by 8:30am. Excused absence/tardy include illness, medical/dental appointments, and death in the family. All other reasons are unexcused. Determinations of excused/unexcused absence/tardy will be made by the administration. Habitual tardiness will be dealt with on an individual basis. In general, a student who exceeds three unexcused tardies for a first block class will receive disciplinary action.

For blocks 2, 3, and 4 during the school day, students are expected to be in their classrooms when the bell rings to mark the start of the class period. If they are not present when the bell rings, tardy slips will be given and disciplinary action will be taken (such as detention, loss of cell phone privileges, etc.). OLMA requires all students enrolled at the school,

including students 18 years of age or older, to attend classes each day that school is in session.

Regular ON TIME attendance is essential to the academic process, to achieving the maximum benefit from Mercy Academy's education programs, and to preparing students for success beyond high school.

50/50 RAFFLE COMING SOON

This fall we will once again be having our annual 50/50 raffle! Each student will receive an allotment of 12 tickets. All families will be responsible for either selling their allotted tickets OR they may purchase the tickets themselves. Keep an eye out for more details and your tickets coming to you on the Back-to-School Night! If you have questions, please contact Jen Marshall (jmarshall@stjosephkeene.org).



Our Lady of Mercy Academy | 161 Main Street | Keene, NH 03431 US

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