



Our Lady of Mercy Academy  
Family Handbook  
2022-2023

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

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“Catholic education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Church He founded. Through education the Church seeks to prepare its members to proclaim the Good News and to translate this proclamation into action. Since the Christian vocation is a call to transform oneself and society with God’s help, the educational efforts of the Church must encompass the twin purposes of personal sanctification and social reform in light of Christian values.”

To Teach as Jesus Did  
National Conference of Catholic Bishops

## PARISH IN THE MONADNOCK REGION

### **Parish of the Holy Spirit**

Saint Bernard Church  
173 Main Street, Keene

Saint Margaret Mary Church  
33 Arch Street, Keene

Saint Joseph Church  
35 Brattleboro Road, Hinsdale

Parish Office  
173 Main Street  
Keene, NH 03431  
(603) 352-3525

**V. Rev. Alan C. Tremblay, VF | *Pastor***  
Rev. Peter Cuong V. Nguyen | *Associate Pastor*  
Rev. Msgr. Daniel O. Lamothe | *Retired*  
Deacon Kenneth J. Swymer | Deacon David L. Romano

## MISSION

**The mission of Our Lady of Mercy Academy is to empower students to grow as informed, inspired, compassionate souls.** We are a private Catholic high school, welcoming families of all faiths from the greater Monadnock region, and serving students in grades 9 through 12. Our faith-based school program promotes high academic standards and positive self-esteem, encourages personal responsibility and public service, and instills a sense of community. We foster kind, thoughtful, joyful souls.

## PHILOSOPHY

We believe in Catholic Education that is centered in the Spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

We believe that our heritage in the Monadnock region gives us a faith-filled view of our school, of life, and of our mission.

We believe that together, the Saint Joseph Regional School and Our Lady of Mercy Academy communities of parents, students, and teachers share a common vision---one formed by the compassionate message of the Gospel. **We affirm the values of high academic standards, responsibility, service, community, and worship.**

Because of our belief in **high academic standards**, we teach for a mastery of the basic learning skills by challenging students to use and develop their talents to the fullest.

Because of our belief in **responsibility**, we encourage our students to work both independently and cooperatively with others in a respectful manner.

Because of our belief in **service**, we teach our students to be aware of the needs of others and to reach out and help them.

Because of our belief in **community**, we choose to be a compassionate people who care for one another and to create a family atmosphere in our school.

Because of our belief in **worship**, we celebrate our personal commitment to Jesus Christ in prayer, in song, in liturgies, in the sacraments, and in religious instruction.

Realizing the beauty of our God-given identity, relatedness and purpose, we strive to form each student into a young adult, responding to those needs by being:

- A Hope-Filled Person
- A Person Who Emulates Christ's Love to All People
- A Whole Person
- A Responsible Person
- An Enthusiastic Person
- A Wise Person
- A Compassionate Person

## **CHANGES AND MODIFICATIONS TO SCHOOL POLICY & PUBLICATIONS**

Our Lady of Mercy Academy reserves the right to add, modify or amend any part of this handbook between publication dates. The school will inform students, faculty and staff through various means when any changes to this handbook are made. These changes will supersede any previously published policies on the same topic.

The creation, distribution, and updating of any information and material to be placed on **OLMA's website shall be specifically approved by the Principal or a person** explicitly designated by her/him as having the authority to approve such materials.

**OLMA reserves the right to remove from its server(s) any material that is outdated, not properly maintained, or not in compliance with school standards.**

### ***Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy As To Students***

*Our Lady of Mercy Academy admits students of any gender, race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.*

## OUR FACULTY AND STAFF

Main Office: 603-352-2720

Fax: 603-358-5465

Principal	Mr. Christopher Smith	csmith@stjosephkeene.org
Dean of Students	Ms. Liberty Ebright	lebright@mercyacademykeene.org
Project Manager/Founder	Mr. Anthony Toscano	atoscano@stjosephkeene.org
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Technology/Music	Mr. Christian Raabe	craabe@mercyacademykeene.org
Theology	Mr. Anthony Sully Mr. Christopher Smith Mrs. Chelsea Herman	asully@mercyacademykeene.org csmith@stjosephkeene.org cherman@mercyacademykeene.org



## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

### Alternating Block Schedule

Our Lady of Mercy Academy follows an Alternating Block Schedule. Students take one-credit classes over two semesters (36 weeks) and 1/2 credit classes over one semester (18 weeks). Students rotate their schedule each day, with four classes on the first day of the schedule (A day) and four other classes on the second day of the schedule (B day). Over a 2-week period, students would meet each class five times.

The Alternating Block Schedule improves the learning experience and outcomes for students. It keeps two of the essential features of the block schedule--extended class periods and only four classes per day. Students will still have the opportunity to do in-depth learning each day and concentrate on just four classes each day. It corrects the limited time for learning inherent in a 4X4 block. It allows sufficient time to maximize teaching and student learning. It adds additional time for students to master content and skills. It avoids gaps between sequential courses. These gaps occurred in the 4X4 block. While students do not forget all they learn, if there was a time lag between semesters when students took core courses, it creates gaps that impede consistent, deep student learning and mastery. While students on the Alternating Block Schedule take four different courses each day, there is also variety in what they are doing. Adding more time for learning the material throughout the year also relieves stress and frustration for students and gives them time to work through difficult concepts before they move on to the next course.

Alternating Block Schedule			
	A DAY	B DAY	
Homeroom			8:05 - 8:15
Class	1	2	8:15 - 9:35
Class	3	4	9:40 - 11:00
Lunch/Flextime			11:00 - 12:00
Class	5	6	12:00 - 1:20
Class	7	8	1:25 - 2:45
Week 1 A/B/A/B/A			
Week 2 B/A/B/A/B			

## Bell Schedules

### Monday-Tuesday-Thursday-Friday

8:00	FIRST BELL
8:05 – 8:15	HOME ROOM (BLOCK 1 CLASS)
8:15 – 9:35	BLOCK 1
9:40 – 11:00	BLOCK 2
11:00 – 12:00	LUNCH & FLEX
12:00 – 1:20	BLOCK 3
1:25 – 2:45	BLOCK 4

### Two-hour delay

10:00	FIRST BELL
10:05 – 10:15	HOME ROOM
10:15 – 11:10	BLOCK 1
11:15 – 12:10	BLOCK 2
12:10 – 12:50	LUNCH & FLEX
12:50 – 1:45	BLOCK 3
1:50 – 2:45	BLOCK 4

### Wednesday

8:00	FIRST BELL
8:05 – 8:15	HOME ROOM (BLOCK 1 CLASS)
8:15 – 9:20	BLOCK 1
9:30 – 10:15	MASS
10:25 – 11:30	BLOCK 2
11:30 – 12:30	LUNCH & FLEX
12:30 – 1:35	BLOCK 3
1:40 – 2:45	BLOCK 4

## Co-Curricular Eligibility

Co-curricular activities that require considerable time after school or away from school are subject to the following eligibility rule: students must pass ALL courses each quarter in order to participate in those activities for the following quarter. Students in academic jeopardy may be suspended from co-curricular activities including sports participation **at any time** at the discretion of the Administration.

## College Admissions

Since admission requirements vary widely between higher education institutions, students should consult college bulletins, catalogs and websites of different institutions early in their high school careers to assure they are completing the necessary requirements. It is important to remember that admissions to college are generally competitive, and students should consider enrolling in course work that exceeds the minimum requirements. The following table generalizes recommended admissions requirements for various post-secondary programs.

	English	Social Studies	Mathematics	Lab Sciences	World Language
<b>Two-Year Colleges</b>	4	3	3	2	0-2
<b>Engineering</b>	4	3	4-5	4-5	2-4
<b>Four-Year Colleges</b>	4	3	3-4	3-4	2-4
<b>Highly Selective Colleges</b>	4	3-4	4-5	4-5	3-5

## College Credit

Running Start is a concurrent enrollment program available through the Community College System of NH (including River Valley Community College) that provides high school students with the opportunity to take college courses while also completing the requirements for high school graduation. Students must elect to sign-up for Running Start near the beginning of the course and pay a reduced tuition (\$150 or less for a 3-credit course). Scholarships may be available for students who qualify.

## College Transcripts

Requests for transcripts may be made to the Counseling Office. When the transcripts are to be sent out with college applications, the applications should be in to the Counseling Office two (2) weeks prior to the college's deadline. There is no fee for sending transcripts of current students. There is a fee of \$5 for alumni requesting transcripts after graduation.

## College Visits

Juniors and seniors are encouraged to visit colleges for tours or interviews on non-school days. If needed, seniors can schedule up to four (4) excused days from school for college interviews, visits or orientations. Juniors are allowed two (2) college visitations in the spring semester. Students must complete a request form and return it to the Counseling Office **at least two (2) school days prior to the visit** in order for these visits to be excused. Without a completed form, the visit is counted as an unexcused absence and the student may forfeit any remaining visitation days. Students are responsible for classwork and homework missed.

## Computers (personal)

OLMA encourages students to use their personal mobile electronic devices (Bring Your Own Device) at school. With teacher approval, students may use devices such as laptops, iPads, tablets and eReaders in the classroom to access and save information from the Internet, collaborate with other learners, and utilize productivity available to them. Cell phones are not allowed in the BYOD network.

## Conferences

Formal parent/teacher conferences are held at the end of the first quarter. Parents are notified of the date and conferences are scheduled through the Main Office, thus coordinating faculty and parent schedules. During the school year, parents are encouraged to maintain contact with their child's teacher through the use of individual conferences. Parents desiring a conference should contact the teacher either by email or by leaving a message with the office. It is helpful at the time of your request to suggest times when you would be available. Teachers will contact parents to schedule a convenient meeting time.

## Contacting School Personnel

*Attendance* – Contact the Main Office by phone or by email to [amurray@mercyacademykeene.org](mailto:amurray@mercyacademykeene.org) by 8:30am on the day of the absence.

*Behavioral issues, co-curricular activities, safety and security of building and grounds* – Please contact the classroom teacher or activity advisor for any behavioral concerns in classes or activities. Continued concerns, or questions regarding attendance or building safety can be directed to the Principal.

*Classroom/Academic issues* – Contact the classroom teacher first, and then our Dean of Students.

*Family/social/emotional issues* – Contact our Dean of Students if your child is experiencing social or emotional issues (personal or family) that might affect their experience during the school day.

## **Counseling**

The goal of the Dean of Students is to assist students and parents in a variety of activities that affect educational development. Among these are scheduling of courses, overseeing internships, counseling for future educational and career opportunities, serving as a liaison between school and community groups, making resources available to students and parents to assist in decision-making, and short-term personal counseling and/or referral. The Dean of Students adheres to a policy of confidentiality, except when the individual or the OLMA community is at risk. The Dean of Students is responsible for assisting students in registering for college admission tests.

## **Course Failures**

A failed course may be made up by repeating the course, completing an approved online course, tutoring by a teacher approved by the administration, or in some cases, demonstrating proficiency of specific course competencies.

## **Course Level Changes**

Students wishing to change a level in any core course must be recommended by the current teacher and a meeting with the Dean of Students for approval. Level Change forms are available in the Dean of Students' Office. Level changes are made when they are academically necessary and in the best interest of the student. All students should be enrolled in challenging but reasonable courses in which they have the ability to succeed. Students in Honors classes must maintain a minimum grade of B- or may be moved to lower-level course.

## **Course Selections**

Students should discuss their course selections with their parents, teachers, and the Dean of Students. Course selections are completed using the course selection forms each spring.

## Credit Requirements

The Program of Studies contains a detailed description of all courses offered. It is important that students consult college catalogues of schools of their choice and plan their course selections according to these requirements if possible. Students are required to complete 28 credits for an OLMA diploma.

## Directed Physical Education for Credit

In accordance with OLMA graduation requirements, students may receive a maximum of 0.5 credit (of the total one credit of PE required) toward the Physical Education credit requirement for participation in one full season of an OLMA approved physical activity or sport. The coach/instructor of the sport/physical activity will determine whether the student participated in one full season. Full season participation is defined as attending approximately 80% of practices and/or competitions/classes. Students are required to keep track of their participation hours daily by completing an Activity Time Log. The total number of hours must be at least 60 in a 90-school day period. The student must complete a written reflection documenting knowledge and understanding of the six core competencies related to physical education. This reflection is due two weeks prior to the end of the semester. The student must submit a completed Request for Directed Physical Education Credit form and Activity Time Log with the Athletic Coordinator's approval to the Dean of Students within the same academic year of participation. Successful completion will grant .5 credit toward the student's PE graduation requirement. Credit will be given Pass/Fail. Students MUST complete their PE requirements BEFORE their senior year. Forms are available from the Dean of Students and the Main Office.

## Exams

Mid-year and final examinations will be administered. Specific details will be course dependent. Students are required to take their exams on the dates scheduled in the school calendar. **No student is permitted to take an exam outside of the scheduled time without the approval of the Dean of Students. Written requests from parents regarding extenuating circumstances must be made to the Dean of Students two weeks prior to the exam period.**

## Financial Responsibilities

Prior to the school year, all parents signed an Enrollment Contract which indicates that students will not be able to take final exams and final grades will be shown as incomplete until an account is up-to-date or there is a written plan approved and on file with the Principal.

## Grading Scale

LETTER GRADE	NUMBER RANGE	College Prep	Honors
A +	100-98	4.0	4.5
A	97-95	4.0	4.5
A-	94-92	3.7	4.2
B+	91-89	3.3	3.8
B	88-86	3.0	3.5
B-	85-83	2.7	3.2
C+	82-80	2.3	2.8
C	79-77	2.0	2.5
C-	76-74	1.7	2.2
D+	73-71	1.3	1.8
D	70-68	1.0	1.5
D-	67-65	.7	1.2
F	64-0	0	0

## Grading System

Numeric grades are provided on report cards and recorded on school transcripts. At OLMA the passing grade is 65. Grades are weighted based on course levels.

Courses may be graded Pass/Fail on a limited basis with the approval of the Dean of Students.

Physical Education courses are graded Pass/Fail.

## Graduation Requirements

The *minimum* graduation requirements are:

### Class of 2025 and 2026

English	4
Math	3
Science	3
Social Studies	4
<i>(*including 1 for Mercy Project)</i>	
Theology	4
Physical Education	1
Health	.5
Technology	.5
World Language	2
Fine Arts	1

### Class of 2023 and 2024

English	4
Math	3
Science	3
Social Studies	4.5
<i>(*including 1.5 for Mercy Project)</i>	
Theology	4
Physical Education	1
Health	.5
Technology	.5
World Language	2
Fine Arts	1

Electives 5  
**Total 28**  
Plus 60 hours of community service.

Electives 4.5  
**Total 28**  
Plus 60 hours of community service.

Courses taken beyond the minimum graduation requirements will count towards elective requirements.

## Homework

Homework may take the form of written assignments, reading, reviewing, or studying/preparing for long range tests or projects and is an integral part of the curriculum and essential to the learning process. Homework is assigned at the discretion of the teacher and may be graded or non-graded. Homework is expected to be submitted on the day it is due.

**Students cannot work together on homework unless explicit permission is given by the teacher.**

## Honors/Awards

Unweighted grades are used to determine distinctions. Graduating seniors may be designated:

<b>Summa Cum Laude</b> (with high honors)	4.0 or higher
<b>Magna Cum Laude</b> (with great honors)	3.8 to 3.99
<b>Cum Laude</b> (with honors)	3.6 to 3.79

Transcripts will show "Candidate for Summa Cum Laude," "Candidate for Magna Cum Laude," or "Candidate for Cum Laude" based on the cumulative and weighted average at the time of the transcript request.

### Honor Roll

Unweighted grades are used for determining honor roll for each quarter report card.

<b>First Honors</b>	Average of 95% or higher with no grade lower than 92%
<b>Second Honors</b>	Average of 92% or higher with no grade lower than 89%

## Incompletes

In cases of extended absence excused by the Principal or Dean of Students, a quarter or final grade of incomplete may be posted on the report card. All Incompletes must be made up at a time agreed upon with the administration.

## Make-up Work

Following an absence from class, the student is required to ask teachers what work was missed. Arrangements to make up work must be done upon the student's return to school. The teacher will determine a reasonable make-up time. Students may be penalized for work not completed on time. **If a student willfully cuts a class or skips school, make-up work may not be allowed.**

When there is a planned absence, the student is required to complete the Planned Absence Form (see Resources section of the OLMA website) to help gather advanced assignments from his/her teachers and to establish a schedule for completing assignments and tests. Since it is not always possible or desirable to provide all of the assignments that will be covered during the time of the absence, some assignments may be required to be completed by the student upon his/her return to school. The Planned Absence Form must be completed at least **two weeks** prior to the planned absence.

Students missing a class because of a scheduled school event, field trip or for other excused absences must make arrangements to complete missed work. A student missing work during an unexcused absence must complete work on the day they return. Parents of students missing school due to personal travel, vacations, extended holidays, or family circumstances **MUST** notify the Main Office with specific reasons and dates of absence at least one week **PRIOR to the absence**. Administrators will determine the appropriate makeup period and notify teachers that the student will not be in attendance. Students are encouraged to travel with their books and follow the class work assigned. Any work not completed in the assigned makeup time may be subject to penalties.

## Parenting Plans

In the case of divorced or separated parents, parents shall submit to the school an updated parenting plan that sets forth the **decision-making, residential and financial** responsibilities of the parents. In the absence of submission to the school of a parenting plan, court order, or decree to the contrary, both parents will have the opportunity to request academic reports and information pertaining to the school.

## Progress Report

Students receive progress reports midway through each quarter as noted on the school calendar. Progress reports include summaries of grades as well as teacher comments and are posted on RenWeb to all parents/guardians.

## Records Release

When students or parents request, permission is granted for OLMA to release the student's transcripts, grades, recommendations and other information required by college. In other cases when transcripts are requested, parents will be asked to sign a "Records Release Form" granting OLMA permission to send requested information. Students 18 years of age and older do not need a parental signature and may sign on their own. **Note: sending test scores to the colleges is the responsibility of the student.**

## RenWeb/FACTS Parent Web

RenWeb/FACTS is a web-based student information system used by Our Lady of Mercy Academy to maintain student data including attendance, grades, and course information, as



well as used by parents for ordering lunches. RenWeb accounts should be created and maintained by all families. Information will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

## **Report Cards**

Report cards are posted on RenWeb/FACTS to parents/guardians at the end of each of the four quarterly marking periods.

## **Service Requirement**

All students are required to complete 15 hours of service each year. Students are required to complete a service form. This community service is a graduation requirement. Project opportunities will be available through Campus Ministry, Mercy Project, and the House system. If the required service hours are not completed, fourth quarter (final) report cards will be withheld.

## **Standardized Testing**

Students in grade 9 will complete NWEA MAP testing in the fall and spring. Students in grade 10 will also complete standardized Science testing at mid-year.

Students in grade 9 can optionally arrange to take the PSAT 8/9 at their home school in April. This test follows the format of the PSAT/SAT tests that are continued in grades 10, 11, and 12. The ninth-grade test measures reading, writing and language, and math. Ninth graders may share their results with Khan Academy for a personalized practice program based on their individual test scores.

Sophomores and juniors should take the PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) in the fall of both their sophomore and junior years. This testing should be arranged at the student's home school. Scores from the junior year testing are used to qualify students for the National Merit Scholarship Program. Results and detailed explanations will be made available to students and parents. Individualized SAT review is available through the College Board.

Students should plan to take the SAT and/or ACT at least twice, usually during the spring of the junior year and the fall of the senior year. As part of the NH State testing program all juniors participate in the SAT free of charge. The optional writing portion is strongly recommended and must be paid for by the family. Students are automatically registered for this special test by Mercy Academy and will be given on site. Once students have taken this test, they can again use the online review materials or register for an SAT prep program to prepare for repeating the test, off site, in the fall of the senior year. The exams are given nationally on specific dates chosen by the College Board. Information is available with the Dean of Students or on the College Board website.

The ACT is another type of college entrance exam. This tests students in the areas of English, Math, Reading and Science with an optional Writing Assessment.

Students in grades 11 and 12 should research the testing requirements of the college(s) in which they have interest to assure they meet the expectations and schedule testing at appropriate times. All student-athletes should pay particular attention to dates as there are sometimes conflicts with athletic events.

## **Transfer Students**

Mercy accepts transfer students as freshmen, sophomores, and first semester juniors only.

All official transcripts will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine credit alignment and graduation requirements. GPAs from accredited schools will be honored.

## **VLACS**

Students are welcome to enroll in VLACS for enrichment. Students are strongly discouraged from enrolling in VLACS courses for which Mercy Academy already has existing courses. Credit will be given for courses with approval from the Dean of Students, however with few exceptions, VLACS grades will not count towards student Mercy Academy GPAs.

# HONESTY AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

## HONESTY

### Care and Use of Facilities

Students are expected to use the buildings, furnishings and equipment only for the purposes intended. A student who by his or her action causes damage to school property is obliged to replace that property. Committing or attempting to commit any act of vandalism against school property, including any school owned computer, the property of another school, the property of any member of the faculty, staff or student body, either on or off campus, or any act that affects a person's life, health or property, is considered a very serious offense. Consequences for such an act may include suspension or dismissal.

### Cheating

The administration and faculty consider cheating a serious violation of trust. Students violating this trust will be held responsible for their actions. The teacher will notify parents of the incident. It will result in a grade of zero for the activity (tests, quizzes, assignments, etc.) and will be reported to the administration. Further sanctions may be imposed by the administration in accordance with the severity of the incident.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism (the representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own) is another form of intellectual dishonesty and will be dealt with on an individual basis. No credit (zero) will be given on an assignment if it is found to have been plagiarized. Disciplinary action will be determined by the Principal on an individual basis. A student engaged in writing and utilizing information from sources other than personal experience will appropriately acknowledge the sources. Plagiarism includes the following:

1. Implementing a direct quotation, graph, table etc. without citing the source.
2. Paraphrasing the ideas, interpretation, and expressions of another without giving credit to the source.
3. Failing to acknowledge or document sources.

Students MUST assume that any paper, project, report or presentation should always give credit to the original source. All sources of information should be credited or cited according to the Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Sheet. Students are always encouraged to seek assistance if confused in any way regarding sources and citations.

### ***Student Responsibilities***

Every student has the responsibility and obligation to assist in protecting the

integrity of the learning process by (1) not participating, either directly or indirectly, in cheating or plagiarism, (2) actively discouraging cheating or plagiarism by others, and (3) and reporting all instances of which a student has knowledge. A person who knowingly assists another person in cheating or plagiarism is as guilty as the person receiving help.

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

At OLMA, it is everyone's responsibility to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and to protect the rights of others. This requires a desire to do what is good and morally right and to develop a sense of personal responsibility. Rules help students set limits, regulate where self-discipline fails, and understand consequences of decisions that are contrary to expected behavior. All students are expected to follow the rules during the school day, at any time they are representing the school or while attending a school-related function. Conduct outside of school that disrupts the community of the school, i.e. cyber-bullying, criminal acts, etc. will be addressed. *(see Appendix I-- Diocesan Bullying Policy)*

OLMA supports the purpose and intent of the laws of the state of New Hampshire that pupils have the right to attend schools that are "safe, secure, and peaceful." OLMA is located in a Safe School Zone as designated by the State of New Hampshire. This is an area that includes any and all school property or properties where school events are conducted, as well as school transportation vehicles (busses, vans, etc.). As a Safe School Zone, our response to incidents of misconduct involving school property and school programs may include cooperation with, or direct involvement with local law enforcement agents (see Disciplinary Procedure in this section).

## Acceptable Use Policy for Computer Network

The Saint Joseph Regional School computer network is established for the **educational and professional use of Our Lady of Mercy Academy students, faculty and staff**. The goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

- Users are expected to avoid actions which are illegal, unethical, or against school rules. **Such actions include, but are not limited to:**
- Making false statements about other people – harassment of any kind, direct or **indirect personal attacks**.
- Deliberate access to inappropriate materials – including "adult" materials.
- Sending e-mail or PM (Personal instant messages) **on the school's computers**.
- Damaging the computers, computer system or computer network – including changing the configuration of the computers and the software, or any disruption of the computer system.
- Violating copyright laws – Users should cite information, found electronically, in the **same way they do information found in printed sources**. Saint Joseph Regional School

**will not** tolerate the use of its system for the illegal copying or storing of illegally acquired **material**.

- Accessing other people's files – Students may not attempt to gain unauthorized access to **any file, computer or network at Saint Joseph Regional School or through its systems, or go beyond authorized access**. This includes any attempt to log in through **another person's account, access another person's files, or take advantage of a user who inadvertently leaves a computer** without logging out.
- Students found in violation of these guidelines will have their network privileges revoked and **may face further disciplinary action**.

## **Anti-Social Behavior/ Bullying Policy**

OLMA is committed to providing an environment free from bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct and hazing. The school will not tolerate, at any time, behavior that is an intentionally written, oral or physical act that can be construed as bullying, cyber-bullying harassment, sexual misconduct or hazing.

Some student behaviors may not rise to the level of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, sexual misconduct or hazing, but are still inappropriate and require referral to the Administration for corrective discipline and/or counseling to change the behavior and remedy its impact. Some examples of anti-social behavior may include rumors, jokes, innuendos, demeaning comments, cartoon drawings, pranks, gestures, or other intentional actions. **(See Appendix I)**

## **Cell Phones/Related Devices**

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.

## Co-Curricular Activities

Students that attend or participate in games, meets, plays, concerts or any other school sponsored events or activities must conduct themselves in a respectful manner as described in this student handbook, the *Student Participant/Parent Agreement*. The academic standing and attendance policy apply to all students who represent OLMA co-curricular activities.

## Disciplinary Procedure

The school has established a progressive disciplinary process to respond to and resolve various cases of misconduct as expediently and effectively as possible.

Standard procedures require students to power down their phones and have them held by the administration pending completion of an investigation or resolution of an issue. Administrators may issue an oral warning, assign an administrative detention, in-school suspension, probation, and/or suspend or expel the student from school. The school administration can exercise its right to terminate a student's association with the high school or ask a parent to withdraw the student when their attendance is deemed no longer desirable or acceptable for the student or the school.

If a student is involved in a very serious discipline issue requiring action from outside enforcement agencies (police arrest, legal charges of wrongdoing, etc.), or is arrested or charged with an offense that took place off campus, the student may be suspended from school and placed on home study until an outcome for the issue is known. A student may be expelled from the school.

Most disciplinary actions involve minor rule or conduct violations during the school day. These actions are determined by assessing the current situation and any previous, related issues. Disciplinary actions range from warnings, counseling, conferences, parent meetings, teacher detentions, administrative detentions, probation, suspensions (internal or external), to expulsion. A student is fully responsible for his/her behavior, and fulfilling any disciplinary action he or she may receive as a consequence for misconduct.

**Social probation** is assigned to restrict a student's involvement in school activities due to specific misconduct or misbehaviors. These activities include, but are not limited to, activity periods and lunch. The student assigned social probation will in most cases spend activity period and/or lunch in the detention room.

## Loss of Senior Privileges

Senior privileges may be withdrawn by the Administration or by a parent. Reasons may include general misconduct by a group of students, a pattern of misbehavior on the part of a senior, a serious offense committed by a student or poor academic performance. Participation in end of year activities (prom, senior trip, bacalaureate, senior dinner, and graduation) are privileges that can be revoked for poor behavioral choices.

## Disciplinary Probation

Students may be placed on Disciplinary Probation for all or part of a school year at the discretion of the administration. Students may be prohibited from attending OLMA events either on or off- campus; they cannot be on school grounds once the school day ends unless approved to work with a teacher; and they cannot participate in athletic or co-curricular activities.

***Class Suspensions*** – When a teacher determines that a student is disrupting the classroom environment to the extent that students can't learn, and teachers can't teach, the student will be sent to the main office for the remainder of the period. The student(s) will meet with the Principal, who may assign further disciplinary action including limitation of athletic and co-curricular activities.

***In-School Suspensions*** involve moving a student from the general population to a location in the building where interaction with teachers and work completion is possible. On the day of suspension, students cannot be on OLMA property or attend OLMA functions after school hours. A student suspended on a Friday may participate on activities or events on Saturday or Sunday. If the Friday suspension is for multiple days and continues the following Monday, weekend school activities are prohibited. A suspended student is responsible for all class material and assignments. The administration will set a reasonable time frame for makeup work.

***Out-of-School Suspensions*** are given for serious disciplinary infractions. Students cannot be on OLMA property or attend OLMA functions while suspended. In the event a student is suspended on a Friday for multiple days, this sanction applies to all weekend activities and events. A suspended student is responsible for all class material and assignments. Reasonable arrangements will be made to send work home and collect work completed. The administration will set a reasonable time frame for makeup work. Students and parents will attend a re-entry meeting with the Principal upon return.

## Electronic Devices for Learning

OLMA affirms the educational use of electronic devices to promote learning and increase computer literacy. You may bring your own device (BYOD). Students may use electronic devices such as laptops, notebooks, and tablets with the following restrictions:

- Students may use electronic devices in the classroom with the **permission of the teacher**.
- Under no circumstance may a student use technology while taking an assessment unless approved by the teacher.
- 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. (See Cell Phone policy for more details.)

## Stealing/Vandalism

Personal and school property are to be treated with care and respect. It is reasonable to expect that our personal belongings will be secure on the school premises as well as at off-site venues for school events. The community also expects students to show respect for the school's property, such as buildings, windows, vans, etc. Violators face disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school.

## Tobacco, Drug, and Alcohol Policy

Please see *Appendix II*.

## Weapons

Per NH RSA 193-D, OLMA maintains a zero-tolerance for possession of knives, pistols, rifles, pellet or BB guns, paintball guns, and any other dangerous weapon. Specifically, RSA 193-D:1e defines possession of a firearm or other dangerous weapon as unlawful in a school or on school property. A student may be expelled from school if found in violation of the policy.

**SAFE SCHOOLS ACT REQUIREMENT:** In accordance with RSA 193-D:4, the principal must immediately report to local law enforcement any acts of theft, destruction, or violence (including, but not limited to, criminal mischief, assault, possession of a weapon, and illegal sale or possession of a controlled drug) on school property. In the event the alleged victim of the theft, destruction, or violence is a student, the principal shall also notify the student's parent or guardian of the alleged act and that a report was made to law enforcement.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Accidents

If a student is injured during school hours, the accident must be reported immediately to the Main Office and parents will be contacted. If parents cannot be reached, the school will use the emergency information names and phone numbers provided by the parents.

### Advising

In the moments when students need to talk about academic, personal, or social matters, or college plans and career questions, the faculty is ready to help. Students and faculty have opportunities for valuable conversations in multiple areas of the building. Most students find a particular faculty member with whom they feel comfortable and to whom they can turn in confidence. The Dean of Students, administrators and the Campus Minister are always available.

### Announcements

Daily announcements are made in the morning and afternoon. Students are responsible for listening attentively and checking with the office if they have questions.

### Assemblies

Assemblies are scheduled throughout the school year to promote a variety of enriching experiences. These are considered academic time and all students are expected to attend.

### 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 or place a phone call to Allison Murray ([amurray@mercyacademykeene.org](mailto:amurray@mercyacademykeene.org)), 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.

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. The third tardy slip will result in a lunchtime detention. OLMA requires all students enrolled at the school, including students eighteen (18) years 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.**

When there is a planned absence, the student is required to complete the **Planned Absence Form** (available online), gather advanced assignments from teachers, and establish a schedule for completing assignments and tests. Since it is not always possible or desirable to provide all of the assignments that will be covered during the time of the absence, some assignments may be required to be completed by the student upon his/her return to school. The Planned Absence Form must be submitted at least **two weeks** prior to the absence.

## **Campus Ministry**

Campus Ministry provides faith experiences including daily prayer, liturgies and retreats, outside speakers, and service opportunities that express our Catholic Identity. The Campus Minister will also make students aware of the programs offered through the Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry. Although it is the prime responsibility of the Campus Minister to foster a caring community, all members of the community participate. The Campus Minister also works with the Dean of Students to assist students with personal and family issues. Parents are welcome to contact the Campus Ministry offices if they have concerns for their children. Confidentiality is honored unless a safety issue exists.

## **Change of Address/ Telephone**

The Main Office must have current contact information for parents or guardians. This includes address, home and cell phone numbers, email and emergency contact information. **This information must be updated at the start of every school year on the online form sent through RenWeb. The emergency NOTIFY number is derived from this information. Parents must notify the school immediately when any information changes.**

## **Chapel**

The Adoration Chapel is available to students and others for quiet prayer and reflection. Class prayer services and reflective activities are held in the chapel throughout the year.

## **Clubs and Organizations**

Students are encouraged to participate actively in clubs and organizations. Students who wish to form a new club or organization should contact the House Advisor.

## **Dances**

The following are the rules that apply to all Mercy Academy school dances.

Offensive language, obscene gestures, and sexually explicit or unsafe dancing is not permitted.

Public displays of affection deemed inappropriate by administration, faculty, and chaperones will not be permitted.

Fighting is not permitted.

Disrespectful behavior toward any administrator, teacher, or chaperone is not allowed.

OLMA students are responsible for their own behavior as well as the behavior of their guests.

Proper attire is required of every OLMA student and their guest. Each student should dress modestly and appropriately for a Catholic school event. Appropriate dress will be interpreted by the administrator, faculty, and chaperones at the dance. Any student or guest who is not dressed appropriately will be asked to either remedy their attire or to leave the dance.

Smoking, the use or possession of e-cigarettes, vaporizers, vape pens, or tobacco products at a dance is prohibited.

Students or guests purchasing, using, selling, distributing or in possession of, or under the influence of drugs/alcohol at a school dance will be dealt with according to OLMA's drug/alcohol policy as stated in the OLMA Family Handbook. The police will be contacted.

If the dance is held on the school campus, all attendees are to be in designated dance areas.

No student will be readmitted to the dance after leaving the premises.

Violation of any of the above policies may result in being asked to leave the dance. All of the above rules and regulations are subject to the interpretation of the designated administrator on duty at the event.

## 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. 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.

For the remainder of the week, students may wear casual pants, jeans (with minimal distressing, but no holes), or athletic wear. Track pants or soccer pants and yoga pants (with pockets and thicker material) are permissible, however traditional sweat pants are not acceptable. No offensive language or messaging on clothing will be permitted. 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.

The dress code is open to administrative interpretation.

## Emergencies

If an emergency were to occur at OLMA or an emergency involving an off-property incident that may affect the health and welfare of our students and staff, parents have certain responsibilities in their response to such a situation. Following these guidelines will assure that our local first responders (police, fire, medical) can easily travel to and access OLMA in an emergency, and will assist in ease of communication between first responders, school personnel, and parents/guardians. Failure to follow these guidelines jeopardizes the safety of students and staff.

Parents will be notified via the RenWeb emergency communication system of any urgent or emergency situations via voice message, email or text. **It is imperative that parents/guardians provide the school with any changes to contact telephone numbers.** After receiving any communication from OLMA regarding such matters, please do not contact or respond to the school or designated off-site location unless directed to do so.

In the event that students are evacuated to an off-site location, you will be notified as to when and where you may pick-up students. You may be asked to provide photo identification to take custody of a student, so please make sure you are prepared. **Only authorized emergency contacts listed in our database will be allowed to take custody of a student.** Please follow directions from the onsite personnel to assist in an efficient release of the students.

One of the safest places for a child to be is in school. Although major incidents are rare, please know that the faculty and staff conduct drills and are prepared to respond to such an event. With your cooperation, we can maximize the protection of all members of the community.

## Field Trips

Field trips may be scheduled during school hours by teachers. A general permission for field trips in Cheshire County is **acknowledged by parents through an online form** at the beginning of the school year. Notification of these trips will be sent home. A separate permission form will be sent home and must be signed by parents for trips outside the local area.

School authorized field trips are excused absences from class. Students are responsible for notifying teachers of courses they may be missing before the field trip and are responsible for making up missed work in a reasonable time period.

## Fire Drills and Procedures

Students should be thoroughly familiar exit routes from each classroom.

- Upon hearing the alarm, all students and staff are to evacuate the building immediately.
- Students should move quietly, quickly and orderly (no running).
- Students should move away from the building and immediately go to his/her assigned area for attendance.
- Students do not re-enter the building until the air horn is heard or until verbal permission is given by an Administrator.

Fire drills are held periodically throughout the year in accordance with the fire code for the City of Keene. Anyone causing a false alarm will be prosecuted. Anyone misusing a fire box or fire extinguisher including pushing a person against it, opening the case and/or handling it will be disciplined and may be prosecuted. Students who witness any such instances are requested to report the incident to an administrator.

## **Food and Beverages**

Food and Beverage should be consumed in the Masiello Room. Reusable water bottles filled with water only are permitted in classrooms.

## **House System**

At its most basic, a House System is a way to divide students into smaller communities within our school. More importantly, the houses create opportunities to build character, relationships, school spirit and engage in public service.

When students enter Our Lady of Mercy Academy, they are assigned to one of four houses: St. Ursula, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Drogo or Saint Josephine. Students will remain in the same house for all four years. Each house will be a mix of grades 9-12.

Each house will have a house color, emblem/logo and Latin motto that is representative of its patron saint. Each house is led by a House Advisor from the faculty and a Head of House elected by students.

Houses compete for house points throughout the year in an effort to win the House Cup at the end of the year. These include: highest cumulative GPA and attendance, service hours and fundraising for charities that promote Catholic values, Good Samaritan Awards, and friendly extracurricular competitions, school club membership and athletics.

The House System is overseen by the Dean of Students, but planning and execution of the system is carried out by the Head of House and their cabinet.

Houses will meet once a week during lunch/flex time to address/plan school related activities.

## Library

OLMA students regardless of their town of residence are eligible to obtain Keene Public Library cards and utilize the library. Applications will be distributed to students at the beginning of the school year.

## Lockers/Storage Cubbies

Students are provided space to organize their personal items in storage cubbies that are located in a few different areas throughout the school building. All personal belongings must be stored in the cubbies. If any personal items are found on the ground, on top, or beside the cubbies, teachers/administrators may bring these items to the Main Office. Students are responsible for collecting any items taken to the office. The school retains ownership of the cubbie areas and does not accept any responsibility for items missing or stolen from these areas. OLMA administrators have the right to search any storage cubbie space when the action is deemed appropriate and necessary.

## Lost and Found

Any items found should be turned into the Main Office. Any questions regarding lost or found articles should be directed to the Main Office. Unclaimed items will be disposed at the end of each semester.

## Mass

Mass and other religious functions are celebrated periodically throughout the year. We attend Mass each Wednesday and on other church holy days. Mass is a special community celebration and all students are required to be present and conduct themselves in a respectful manner.

## Medical Procedures

All incoming freshmen and new students are required by the State of New Hampshire to provide a current physical health form and immunization record to the school. Failure to provide any of these documents will preclude the student from attending school until documents are complete and given to the office.

**Prescription Medication** - All prescription medication must be kept in the Main Office, appropriately identified, and taken by the student in that office. No student is allowed to take medicine unless a physician's note and a parent's note are provided. Inhalants are a prescribed drug and must be checked through the Main Office. Students who need to carry inhalers must have a physician's prescription on file at the school. No student should ever share an inhaler.

**Over-the-Counter Medication** may **not** be carried by students. Ibuprofen and Tylenol are available in the Main Office and may be distributed to students if a parent has signed a release form.

***Illness at School*** - A student who is sick or becomes ill while at school is required to report to the Main Office. Students may remain in the Main Office or for one class period only. If a student is unable to return to class, a parent will be contacted and the student sent home. In the case of a medical emergency, a designated member of the staff will be responsible for getting the student to the proper medical facility, and the office will notify the parents.

## **Off-Campus Lunch**

Off-campus lunch privileges may be granted to Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors. All of the following criteria must be met:

- Students who make First or Second Honors are eligible for off-campus lunch.
- Parents/guardians must approve off-campus lunch for their child. The Off-Campus Lunch permission form must be signed and on file with the OLMA office.
- Students leaving campus must have a cell phone turned on and with them while off campus.
- Students must sign-out in the OLMA office when leaving and sign-in when returning in the Student Sign-in/out log.
- Students are expected to return and be in their next class on time.

This is a privilege that can be revoked for any one of the following reasons:

- A student engages in conduct unbecoming of an OLMA student.
- A student's GPA drops below First or Second Honors.
- A student fails to sign-out/in with the OLMA Main Office.
- A student is late returning to class more than once.

## **Parking Policy**

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.

Parent and visitors to campus should park in the spaces designated with OLMA signage in the back of the building.

## **Permission to Publish**

As part of the educational program at OLMA, students may have the opportunity to publish documents and participate in projects on the school website, yearbook, and in other media. Student generated work may include stories, articles, poems, art work, projects, photography, video casts and other media. This is an opportunity for OLMA to highlight our students and for our students to showcase their work in a variety of forums.

- Photographs or videos may identify the student, an activity or event and where appropriate, the grade level, and/or teacher.

- Student-generated work may include name and grade level but will not include any other identifying information.
- Any photograph or posting of work on the school website will be removed upon written request of the parent/guardian.

OLMA will publish documents and pictures and showcase our students always taking care to ensure their safety

## **Physical Affection**

Public displays of affection at school, on school grounds, on school transportation or at school events either on or off campus may require disciplinary action.

## **Residence**

Students must live with a biological parent or legal guardian to attend OLMA. Parents who allow their students to live in another location must provide the school with the proper address and emergency information for that person.

## **Searches**

The school administration reserves the right to search students, students' property (including motor vehicles), school property used by students (such as desks and lockers), school vehicles off school property, other vehicles on school property, any person or tangible property within the boundaries of the school property, and a student's person and property at any off-campus school activity that is reasonably related to OLMA. School administrators shall have reasonable suspicion to suspect that a student(s) is involved in a violation of school rules or state law before conducting a search, and for searches of a student's person, the school administrator shall have a higher degree of suspicion that the student is in possession of alcohol, drugs, weapons, illegal or prohibited matter, or stolen goods, and that such property is likely to be found on the student's person. The items confiscated in such a search may be turned over to the police, which may result in prosecution.

## **School Hours**

The normal school day is from 8:00 am to 2:45 pm, Monday through Friday.

## **School Telephones**

Students may use an office telephone with permission of office staff. In cases of emergency or illness, the office will contact a parent. Parents should make an effort to refrain from contacting a student on the student's cell phone during the school day, unless it is in the case of emergency.



## School Cancellations

OLMA closely follows the annual school calendar of SAU #29, Keene School District, with limited variations. This calendar is available by the end of May of the previous school year.

When SAU #29 (Keene) closes or cancels school, OLMA may also be closed or cancelled. In the event of an emergency, early closing, cancellations or delayed school openings, any information will be broadcast on these local radio stations:

TV Channel 9, Radio Stations: BOB Country 95.3 & 107.1, OLDIES 104.3 & 96.3, Q106WHDQ, 104.9 Hot Country WYRY, WMUR NH Public Radio. During any inclement weather, please stay tuned for possible cancellations. It will state **Our Lady of Mercy Academy in Keene**.

An automated calling/texting system has been put into place also. To be notified immediately by phone, text, or email, please turn in an authorization form to the office or update your RenWeb account with the proper contact information.

A notification will also appear on our website, and on our social media.

Parents should always make the final decision as to whether their student will travel to school in the event of inclement weather.

## Social Events

In an effort to promote school spirit and community, the school encourages social events during the year.

- Any group wishing to sponsor an activity must get a form from the Main Office and return it for approval at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the event.
- Students who leave a school event will not be permitted to return.
- Only OLMA students and their invited guests are permitted to attend an OLMA function. The OLMA student is responsible for the conduct of his/her guest.
- If a chaperone believes that a student has misbehaved, the student's parents/guardians may be called immediately and asked to remove the student from the event. Parents must be available for contact.
- Refreshments may be served.
- The use or possession of alcohol, tobacco (including vape, chew or other inhalants) or drugs by students or guests will not be permitted on campus or at off-campus school-sponsored events. This includes the internal possession of alcohol/drugs which pertains to students or guests who arrive under the influence.

### ***Procedure after events:***

- All participants (with the exception of students assisting in clean-up) must be off campus immediately after the event ends.
- The area used must be cleaned before leaving the premises.
- Parents who need to pick up their children after an event should be on time so chaperones may leave at a reasonable time following the event.

## **Student Council**

The Student Council includes a President and a Vice President elected from the upper classes, as well as a Treasurer and a Secretary elected from the full student body. There are also Representatives from each of the classes. The Dean of Students will serve as the faculty advisor to the Student Council. Elections are held during the fall of the school year. Student Council meetings take place throughout the year during the lunch/flex time.

## **Visitors**

Those who are interested in attending OLMA are welcomed to spend a day with an OLMA student, but must make arrangements through the Main Office. Visitors must adhere to all school rules and should be appropriately dressed for our school environment. Relatives or friends from other schools are not allowed to visit during the school day without prior approval.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I – Diocesan Bullying Policy

As Catholics, we believe that everyone is created by God and loved by God. As followers of Jesus, we are called to value other people’s dignity and to treat them with respect just as Jesus did. Bullying of any kind goes against our call to be like Jesus and it is never acceptable.

Our Lady of Mercy Academy is committed to providing all students with a safe school environment in which all members of its community are treated with respect. The School believes that protecting against and addressing bullying is critical for creating and maintaining a safe, secure and positive school climate and culture; supporting academic achievement; increasing school engagement; respecting the rights of others; and upholding our Christian values.

The Principal or Principal’s designee is responsible for ensuring that the Anti-Bullying Policy is implemented.

### 1. Definitions

Bullying means a single, significant incident or a pattern of incidents involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another pupil which:

- Physically harms a student or damages the student’s property; or
- Causes emotional distress to a student; or
- Interferes with a student’s educational opportunities; or
- Creates a hostile environment; or
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Cyber bullying means bullying conduct (as defined above) that is undertaken through the use of electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones, computers, pagers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, electronic readers, videogames, and websites.

### 2. Statements of Prohibition

Bullying and cyber bullying shall not be tolerated and are hereby prohibited.

OLMA reserves the right to address all forms of prohibited conduct and, if necessary, impose discipline for such misconduct that occurs on or is delivered to school property or a school-sponsored event on or off school property; or occurs off of school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity or event, if the conduct interferes with a pupil’s educational

opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operations of the school or school-sponsored activity or event.

False Reporting – A student found to have knowingly made a false accusation of bullying may face disciplinary or remedial action within the discretion of the principal or principal’s designee.

Retaliation – Retaliation or false accusations against a victim, witness, or anyone else who in good faith provides information about an act of suspected bullying or cyber bullying is prohibited. Any student found to have engaged in retaliation against those described above shall be subject to disciplinary action.

If an alleged victim or any eye witness expresses to the principal or other staff member that he/she is fearful of retaliation, the principal or principal’s designee shall develop a plan to protect that student from possible retaliation.

### **3. Reporting Incidents of Bullying**

Note: The identity of the reporter will be protected unless otherwise required by State or Federal law.

#### **a. Reporting During School Hours**

##### *Reporting by Students-*

Any student who believes that he/she has been the victim of bullying should report the act immediately to a teacher or to any other school employee.

Any student who has knowledge of or observes bullying of another student is encouraged to report the bullying to a teacher or to any other school employee. If a student is unsure whether an incident learned of or observed may constitute bullying, the incident should be discussed with a teacher or another school employee.

##### *Reporting by Parents/Guardians and School Volunteers-*

Any parent, guardian, or school volunteer who suspects, has witnessed, received a report of, or has information that a student may have been subjected to bullying is encouraged to promptly report such incident to a teacher, a school employee, or the Principal.

##### *Reporting by School Employees-*

Any teacher, staff member, or school employee who suspects, has witnessed, received a report of, or has reliable information that a student has been subjected to bullying or suspected bullying as defined above shall promptly report such incident to the Principal or Principal’s designee.

#### b. Reporting Outside of School Hours

The Diocese will make available a phone number to be used by those who wish to report suspected incidents of bullying outside of school hours. Reports made by this method will be recorded and forwarded to the appropriate school the following business day. Reporters will be encouraged to provide their names, but anonymous reports will be accepted.

### **4. Response to Reports**

#### Investigation

The Principal or Principal's designee shall promptly (within 2 business days) initiate an investigation into any report of bullying or suspected bullying.

#### Initial Notice to Parent/guardian

The Principal or Principal's designee shall promptly (within 2 business days) notify the parents/guardians of the reported victim of bullying and the parents/guardians of the reported perpetrator of bullying of the incident. Such notification may be made orally or in writing. A waiver of this notification may be granted by the Superintendent of Schools if such a waiver is deemed to be in the best interest of the victim or perpetrator.

#### Timeline for Investigation

The investigation will be concluded within 5 business days. An extension may be granted by the Superintendent of Schools if necessary.

#### Notification to Parent/Guardian Upon Completion of Investigation

Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the Principal or Principal's designee shall promptly report the findings of the investigation to the parents/guardians of the reported victim of bullying and the parents/guardians of the reported perpetrator of bullying. Such notifications may be made orally or in writing. The notification must comply with school policy and rules of confidentiality.

#### Written Record

A written record of any substantiated act of bullying shall be maintained by the school.

### **5. Disciplinary Action for Substantiated Bullying**

If an investigation concludes that a student has engaged in bullying conduct prohibited by this policy, the principal or principal's designee shall determine the consequences on a case-by-case basis. Bullying behavior can take many forms. Accordingly, there is no single appropriate response to substantiated acts of bullying.

When acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such acts do not reasonably require a severe disciplinary response in the judgment of the principal or designee, students should be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying.

While bullying as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against the student responsible for the bullying, whether and to what extent disciplinary action is required is a matter for the discretion of the principal or designee. The goal is for the child responsible for the bullying to receive redemption, learn, and refrain from bullying others in the future. Any disciplinary or remedial action shall be designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent future occurrences of such behavior, protect the victim, provide support and assistance to the victim and perpetrator, and prevent the likelihood of retaliation.

Nothing in this policy prevents the school from taking disciplinary action against a student for conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying or cyber bullying but nevertheless is inappropriate for the school.

## **6. Notification**

Handbooks OLMA will provide notice of this Policy to students, staff, parents/guardians, and volunteers via student and employee handbooks.

### Training

*Students* shall participate in education programs which set forth expectations for student behavior and emphasize an understanding of bullying, the school's prohibition of such conduct, and the reasons why the conduct is destructive, unacceptable, and shall lead to discipline.

*Parents* - Periodically, the Principal or Principal's designee shall provide parents/guardians with information about bullying.

*Staff and Volunteers* - The Principal or Principal's designee shall develop appropriate methods of discussing with staff and volunteers the meaning, substance, and application of this Policy and the importance of promoting a positive school climate to minimize the occurrence of bullying.

## Appendix II – Tobacco, Drug, and Alcohol Policy

Student possession, distribution, and use of drugs, tobacco or tobacco products, and/or alcoholic beverages on school property, at school events or functions, on school or chartered buses, and in private vehicles being used for school purposes are prohibited and will not be tolerated. Students found to be in violation of these prohibitions generally will be subject to suspension or expulsion. In addition, in accordance with the Safe Schools Act (RSA 193-D:1.4), the school must make a report to law enforcement in the event of illegal sales or distribution of a controlled drug on school property.

**SAFE SCHOOLS ACT REQUIREMENT:** In accordance with RSA 193-D:4, the principal must immediately report to local law enforcement any acts of theft, destruction, or violence (including, but not limited to, criminal mischief, assault, possession of a weapon, and illegal sale or possession of a controlled drug) on school property and must submit a written report to law enforcement within 48 hours. In the event the alleged victim of the theft, destruction, or violence is a student, the principal shall also notify the student's parent or guardian of the alleged act and that a report was made to law enforcement.

**TOBACCO USE:** The use, possession, and distribution of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or liquid nicotine are prohibited on school grounds and when attending school-sponsored activities. This includes Failure to abide by this prohibition may lead to disciplinary action.

**Students found to be in possession** of drugs or alcohol at school are subject to immediate suspension and/or expulsion. This includes buying, selling, exchanging, consuming, or possessing contraband on school property, as part of a school group, traveling to and from school, attending a school sponsored activity. The length of suspension will be determined according to the severity of the violation. A parent meeting is required prior to the student returning from the suspension. Students may also be remanded to local authorities for prosecution under the law when there is a violation of the New Hampshire Safe Schools Act.

**Students thought to be under the influence** of drugs or alcohol during the school day, on school-provided transportation or during school-sponsored activities/athletics will be reported and/or brought to the administration. If possible, students will be evaluated by school administrators; this can involve drug and/or alcohol testing. The parents or guardian may be requested to obtain a professional diagnosis at their cost, and forward the results to OLMA within 24 hours. A student found under the influence during school hours, or at on- or off-campus school-sponsored events will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Students found to be hosting parties where drugs or alcohol are present** will be suspended and, upon further disciplinary review, may be terminated as an OLMA student. Parents or guardians who are found responsible for hosting parties where drugs or alcohol are present will

be reported to local law enforcement officials. Students attending an event where drugs or alcohol are present, whether or not they partake, may be sanctioned.

**Any student who voluntarily seeks assistance** from an OLMA staff member to address a substance abuse problem will be directed to the Dean of Students or the Campus Minister. The student will be referred for outside professional assistance. A student seeking help will not face punitive action by the school provided the student does not violate school drug and alcohol policies.

### **Searches**

The school reserves the right to initiate and carry out searches on any part of OLMA property to maintain and enforce a drug and alcohol-free school environment. If school Administration believes evidence of drugs or alcohol may be discovered that violates school policy or state law, a search of a person, place or thing will be conducted. The following circumstances apply to searches:

- Reasonable suspicion exists that a student has been using or is under the influence of drugs and alcohol, or is in possession of drugs (including tobacco/alcohol)
- Submission of a written request by the parent or guardian of a student

### **Searching the Student's Person**

The school may conduct a search of a student's person and belongings based on "reasonable suspicion" the student was, is, or may be involved in conduct violating school drug and alcohol policies. Reasonable suspicion can be based on personal observations, information provided by members of the Bishop Brady community, and/or by reliable outside sources. Use of police dogs is an option of the school.

- The search of a student's person will be conducted by a person of the same gender as the student, and at least one additional person shall witness the search.
- Searches shall be conducted as privately as possible and shall be limited to a student's clothing, as well as, any personal objects (purses, bags, backpacks, briefcase, carrying case, etc.).
- The parents or guardian of any student searched by the school will be notified of the search and the outcome of the search by telephone and/or letter.
- Any student refusing to be searched per the request of the school will be suspended pending resolution of the student's refusal; additional disciplinary action can be taken which may include expulsion from the school.

***Searching a Student's Locker*** – Lockers are provided to students for academic use and to use for athletics or physical education. Lockers are the property of the school and are subject to search at any time.

***Searching a Student's Motor Vehicle*** – Any vehicle driven to the school or any non-motorized transportation parked on school grounds is subject to search given "reasonable suspicion" of a violation of the drug/alcohol or other policies.



***Discovered Items*** – Any drugs, drug related items, alcohol, or other illegal items or substances that are discovered during a search shall be seized by school officials. The school may provide seized material to local law enforcement if there is a violation of the New Hampshire Safe Schools Act.

***Drug and Alcohol Testing*** – The school reserves the right to administer drug tests and breath tests to students, and to test substances or liquids belonging to students for the presence of drugs or alcohol. Students may be asked to submit to a drug or alcohol test randomly if there is reasonable suspicion that the student has been using or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. School officials will conduct unannounced drug or alcohol tests as a means to maintain the integrity of the school community. All student drug or alcohol test results will be kept confidential among the student, parents or guardian, and school officials, and the disclosure of test results will be limited to what is required by law. A student refusing to submit to a drug or breath test will be subject to disciplinary action as necessary, which can include suspension and/or expulsion from school. Although the school is committed to helping students who may have a drug or alcohol problem, the primary objective of the OLMA drug and alcohol policy is the safety of students and staff, and any student that fails a drug or alcohol test is subject to disciplinary consequences.

#### **Consequence for a First Infraction or Positive Test Result for Drugs/ Alcohol**

- Students will be suspended from school.
- OLMA will not initiate criminal charges or other legal action against any student based solely on a positive drug test.
- A parent or guardian will be contacted if their student tests positive and will also receive written documentation of the outcome.
- A student may be required to enroll in a school-approved drug education program. All expenses incurred for the education program will be the responsibility of the parents or guardian. Upon completion of an education program, the parents or guardian must provide proof to the school.
- A student that has a First Time Positive test will not be permanently removed from any school-based co-curricular club or team (unless requested by the parents or guardian). However, a student will not be able to continue serving in an elected or appointed position and will be suspended for 20% of the regular season and playoff contests. All suspensions carry over to the next sport, if the suspension has not been fulfilled.
- Any student that tests positive for drugs will be re-tested about 30-days after the positive test date.
- A student that tests positive during the re-test will receive additional consequences.
- Further testing may be conducted at the discretion of the school.
- Failing to comply with the stated provisions may result in expulsion from the school.

#### **Consequence of a Second Infraction or Positive Test Result**

- Student will be suspended.

- OLMA will not initiate criminal charges or other legal action against the student based solely on the failed drug test.
- The student will be required to enroll in a drug education program approved by the school and the school requires proof of the student's participation. Parents or guardian are responsible for all costs of the program.
- The student will be suspended from any school-based co-curricular club, activity, or team. Student athletes will be suspended 50% of the regular season and playoff contests. All suspensions carry over to the next sport, if the suspension has not been fulfilled.
- The student that tests positive again will be re-tested about 30-days after the second test date. Further tests will be given to the student at the discretion of the school.
- Failing to comply with the stated provisions may result in expulsion from the school.

**Consequence of a Third Infraction or Positive Test Result**

- Enrollment at Our Lady of Mercy Academy may be terminated.